Self-publishing and Building Glocal Scenes: Between State Socialism and Neoliberal Capitalism

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Abstract

ŠIMA, Karel – MICHELA, Miroslav: Self-publishing and Building Glocal Scenes: Between State Socialism and Neoliberal Capitalism.

In this article we introduce the theme of special issue focusing on sel-publishing activities In Central and Easter Europe from 1980s to 2000s. The articles presented in this issue offer an interdisciplinary view on the history of independent publishing in both the late socialist and post-socialist periods. We would like to enrich the scholarly debate beyond the dichotomies of communism/capitalism, socialism/post-socialism, East/West and samizdat/fanzine, respectively. Different variants of do-it-yourself cultural creativity highlight the space that lies between the established high-brow and popular low-brow cultures. Specifically, the intersections between the approaches of art history, musicology, cultural studies, sociology, literary history, and media studies constitute a representative spectrum for these reconciliations. We would like to highlight the observation of all our contributors that self-published press and books bring a specific value to the building of communities or scenes that are not only locally embedded, but also interlinked globally, and show how various cultural trends were established and developed in different sociocultural and national settings. They bring so-called hidden voices to the forefront, which allows the building of one's own creative space for different kind of activities with significant value also in our post-digital era. Our cases show that the socialist and post-socialist contexts enabled interesting shifts in the economic and social positioning of self-publishing activities. In this respect, we would see the most interesting cases for further research in situations when different agents from different parts of the cultural field meet together, connect different audiences, and foster new ways of creativity that can transgress the logic of late capitalism.

Keywords: Central and Eastern Europe; fanzines; samizdat; self-publishing; alternative press; scenes; socialism; post-socialism

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In our special issue we would like to open the debate about the different contexts where we can find self-publishing and alternative publication strategies intended to build or maintain various scenes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Compared to the previous issue of *Forum Historiae,* which was dedicated to subcultural zines, we opened the discussion for a wider spectrum of independent publishing which played a specific role in socialist and post-socialist societies. Stepping out of the narrow boundaries of subcultures and their fanzines, we would like to reflect on alternative publishing in a much broader sense of different kinds of zines, literature and art books, produced mostly in small print runs for insiders and supporters.

The articles presented in this special issue offer an interdisciplinary view on the history of independent publishing activities both in the late socialism and post-socialism periods. They cover the period from the 1970s to the 2000s, inviting readers to think about the topic beyond the dichotomies of communist/ capitalist regimes, socialism/post-socialism, East/West and samizdat/fanzine, respectively. The contributions allow the intersections between different disciplinary discourses that challenge the relation between genuine artistic creation and mainstream cultural complex to be seen. Different variants of do-it-yourself cultural creativity highlight the space that lies between the established high-brow and popular low-brow cultures. Specifically, the intersections between the approaches of art history, musicology, cultural studies, sociology, literary history, and media studies constitute a representative spectrum for these reconciliations.

Self-publishing is often recognized as an oppositional activity – to oppressive state socialist regimes or a savage capitalist state – but it does not answer the question of why such practices persisted and even flourished in post-socialist societies. Regarding the regional context of CEE,[1] we would like to address the questions: What are the limits of post-socialist research on pre-1989 self-publishing? How can we go beyond understanding it solely as an oppositional press to state socialist regimes?

In this sense we would like to highlight the observation of all our contributors: that self-published press and books bring a specific value to building communities or scenes that are not only locally embedded, but also interlinked globally. They help to share information, alternative cultural narratives and joy. They bring so-called hidden voices to the forefront, which allows them to build their own creative space for different kinds of activities, mostly connected with music, art, literature, or beliefs. They establish cultural and personal networks and interconnections with the world beyond regional or state borders. Alternative media can help build collective identities and at the same inform them about similar symbols, ideologies, values etc. in the global context. In CEE our studies show that even if the Iron Curtain represented a significant barrier to the global circulation of cultural material, at least in some cases the transnational and East/West information channels were essential for the local cultural spaces and led to similar cultural practices on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Our aim in this special issue is to show how various alternative cultural trends were established and developed in different socio-cultural and national settings. In doing so, we would like to contribute to debates over the relationship between the local and the global in contemporary history. Ewa Mazierska proposes that scholars should focus more on "participation", that is, they should consider the popular music of CEE as an *"articulation of local culture and an act of participation in the global phenomenon of popular music."*[2] "Imperialist" Anglo-Ameri-

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1   We have included the article by Alexandra Karamoutsiou, even though it does not fit in geopolitical space of CEE and state socialism. However, we observe interesting comparative dimensions that enable the comparison of Greek subcultures with CEE, especially because they were also perceived as a part of "the other" Europe.

2   MAZIERSKA Ewa. Introduction. In MAZIERSKA Ewa (ed.) *Popular Music in Eastern Europe. Breaking*

can pop-rock music was adapted to meet local needs and sensibilities, as well as dynamic global trends. By shifting the focus, a space emerges in which the relationship between the post-colonial and the post-socialist can be debated.[3] Hence, we need to study self-publishing as a "glocal" phenomenon. Motti Regev argues that *"in late modernity, we have to treat world culture as one complexly interconnected entity, in which social groupings of all types around the globe growingly share wide common grounds in their aesthetic perceptions, expressive forms, and cultural practices."*[4]

Finally, we would like to point out in this introduction that independent publishing has principal value in our post-digital era, too. In our late capitalist context, when we are increasingly overwhelmed by digital content, more and more creators are turning back to printed publications as material objects full of emotional, embodied experience that enable people to relate to others through extended physical contact. This trend is also moving the interest in independent publishing towards the artistic expression of individual and collective creativity.

Self-publishing and alternative press

In this thematic issue, we would like to offer a broad conceptual framework of alternative and self-publishing strategies in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The authors of the articles primarily discuss the creators' motivations and production strategies, and they reflect on the technological and socio-political changes that have affected self-publishing, where economic benefit is not the main activity driver. Based on this observation we would like to introduce here two concepts that reflect on these characteristics, even if they cover empirical material narrower than the case studies in our issue.

According to the seminal work of Chris Atton and James F. Hamilton, alternative journalism proceeds from dissatisfaction not only with the mainstream coverage of certain issues and topics but also with the epistemology of the news, and it can include the media of protest groups, dissidents, fringe political organizations, or even fans and hobbyists.[5] Alternative media also pose challenges to the dominant representational practices of mainstream news. They offer a remarkable critique through activities that may be part of a broader self-reflection of contemporary academia and society. Alternative journalism suggests that authority does not need to be located institutionally or professionally; that credibility and trustworthiness can be derived from accounts of lived experience not only from objectively detached reporting; and that perhaps there is no need to separate facts from values.[6] In all the case studies in this special issue this affectual relationship towards the values of the scenes represents a crucial motivation for self-publishing.

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      the Cold War Paradigm. London : Palgrave, 2016, p. 4.
3   OWCZARZAK, Jill. Introduction: Postcolonial Studies and Postsocialism in Eastern Europe. In *Focaal*, 2009, Vol. 53, No. 3, p. 3-5.
4   REGEVS, Motti. *Pop-rock Music: Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism in Late Modernity*. Cambridge : Polity Press, 2013, quoted in MAZIERSKA 2016, p. 5.
5   ATTON, Chris – HAMILTON, Jeff. *Alternative Journalism*. London : SAGE, 2008, p. 1.
6   ATTON, Chris. Why Alternative Journalism Matters. *Journalism*, 2009, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 283-285.

Figure 1. Fanzines for sale at zine fest organized in creative centre Kubik in Trnava, Slovakia. Source: Peter Lančarič/Kubik.

In research on CEE history and in public debate, the role of alternative media and self-publishing has been basically overlooked by academia, with the exception of samizdat, which is presented as an important part of dissent heritage. There are probably several reasons why this is so, but we can generally observe a certain blindness to these historical sources because they are perceived as marginal activities with limited circulation and a negligible impact on general historical trends, i.e. the "Great Narratives" of the Iron Curtain and its fall. Even research on samizdat, whose role in the struggles against communist regimes was acknowledged as early as in the 1990s, did not develop significantly among academic scholars until the 2010s. However, in recent the alternative media – whether identified as "grassroots," "independent," "community," "participatory," "self-managed," "autonomous," "tactical," or "alternative" – has moved from the margins of political and academic debate to the centre. The emergence of the Internet in the late 1990s and new digital communication platforms in the 2000s played an important role in gaining alternative media more serious recognition, as they opened up new opportunities for self-expression and community building. In this respect the Internet started a new era of digital activism.[7] However, alternative or non-institutionalized media channels have also enabled the expansive spreading of fake news and conspiracy theories in recent years.

Olga Baily et al. suggest that *"alternative media are articulated in many different ways – not only in relation to the mainstream media, but also as community media,*

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7   PAJNIK, Mojca – DOWNING, John. Introduction: The Challenges of "Nano-media". In PAJNIK, Mojca – DOWNING, John (eds.). *Alternative Media and the Politics of Resistance: Perspectives and Challenges*. Ljubljana : Mirovni Inštitut, 2008, p. 7-9.

as civil society media, and as rhizomatic media".[8] The concept of the rhizome is associated with the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who suggest that rhizomes are a useful metaphor for the *"juxtaposition of rhizomatic and arbolic thinking."* Underpinning alternative, collaborative, and community media, then, are links with civil society that form intersection points with other structures. So, rather than viewing community media and alternative media as fixed, it becomes possible to see these as *"organizational structures where alternative media organisations can remain grounded in local communities and become simultaneously engaged in translocal networks."* These translocal networks are fluid and diverse and have been established so that they avoid the *"dichotomised positioning of alternative media in relationship to the local and the global,"* or the market and the progressive, or the consumer and the producer. Thus, the rhizome highlights a different way of speculating about how the *"local and global touch and strengthen each other within alternative media".*[9]

As was mentioned by Miloš Hroch, even if the Internet dominates the communication in alternative scenes today, there are still activists who have not abandoned the publication of paper zines.[10] In recent years we can see a clear trend towards a zine revival.[11] The idea of self-publishing is promoted at book markets and zinefests full of various kinds of art books and zines. On one hand, the medium of the zine has become a form of artistic expression presented both in galleries and independent press markets. On the other hand, alternative scenes still have a demand for personal contact through self-published material, and the experience embodied by creating and sharing paper publications seems to be even more attractive in the post-digital era than before. There are even some significant changes in releases, content, and layout in comparison to the 1980s – 1990s. Our impression tells us that physical contact via self-published books and magazines still enables the creating and cultivating of an independent space for scenes today and is still an important part of subcultural and alternative way of life.[12]

Scenes

Self-published media, as shown in this special issue, were an important mediator within varied communities. There is also a diverse level of theorization of the communities involved in different disciplinary contexts, but the conceptual debate has been well developed, first of all within subcultural studies. The concept of a subculture as the main denominator of the alternative communities was already being criticized in the 1990s, when the concept of the scene became very

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8   BAILEY, Olga – CAMMAERTS, Bart – CARPENTER, Nico. *Understanding Alternative Media.* Maidenhead : Oxford University Press, 2008, p. xii.
9   BAILEY – CAMMAERTS – CARPENTER 2008, p. 27.
10   HROCH, Miloš. Zprávy z první linie. Proměny hardcore-punkových fanzinů v postdigitální době. In Český lid, 2019, Vol. 106, No. 1, pp. 29-47.
11   We have lived through a pandemic during the preparation of this special issue, which seems to force an opposite trend—towards complete digitisation of communication. We think that this trend could paradoxically make the demand for authentic and self-published print media that contain personal footprints even stronger.
12   KUŘÍK, Bob – SLAČÁLEK, Ondřej – CHARVÁT, Jan. Úvod: mládež, hudba, politika. Jak zkoumáme politizaci subkulturních scén? In CHARVÁT, Jan – KUŘÍK, Bob et al. *Mikrofon je naše bomba. Politika a hudební subkultury mládeže v postsocialistickém Česku.* Prague : Togga, 2018, s. 33.

Figure 2. Picture taken on the recent exhibition of Ethnographic Museum of the National Museum in Prague, Czech Republic, dedicated to different faces of the Do It Yourself phenomenon. Source: Miroslav Michela.

widely used in popular music studies and was presented as a superior alternative to "subculture". It highlighted a contrast between local participatory practices and the dominant or mainstream culture. In the words of Barry Shank: *"spectators become fans, fans become musicians, musicians are always already fans"* and they create a productive environment for they activities. A scene itself was defined as an over-productive signifying community.[13]

In this respect – as noted by Will Straw – scenes can be both local and translocal, because they can designate both *"face-to-face sociability and a lazy synonym for globalized virtual communities of taste"*.[14] This ambivalent spatial notion of a scene was stressed by Keith Kahn-Harris, who published his ethnography of the extreme metal scene in 2007. In his study he viewed metal fanzines as initiators of both local and global communication about the music: *"Fanzines were a crucial institution of the scene. As a medium of communication, fanzines produce a kind of dialogic intimacy between reader and writer, which facilitates the formation of the scene as an 'imagined community'"*.[15]

In the 2000s the debate around the post-subcultural turn in cultural studies brought several other concepts, which were sometimes presented as competing with one another. Within the *Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes: Youth Cultures in the 21st Century* conference held in 2003 in Northampton, UK, the advantages and disadvantages of these concepts were debated.[16] David Hesmodalgh summarized the key criticism of these concepts,[17] arguing that subculture, scene, and tribe were developed as concepts analysing the relationship between youth and popular music, which is just a specific case coming from specific historical circumstances. In this introduction we do not have the ambition to contribute to this debate with a novel interpretation, and we would rather stick to the moderate

13 SHANK, Barry. *Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin, Texas*. Hanover : Wesleyan University Press, 1994, p. 131.
14 STRAW, Will. Scenes and Sensibilities. In *Public*, 2002, No 22/23, p. 245–257 and 248.
15 KAHN-HARRIS, Keith. *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*. Oxford; New York : Berg, 2006, p. 86.
16 See KOZOROG, Miha – STANOJEVIĆ, Dragan. Towards a definition of the concept of scene: Communicating on the basis of things that matter. In *Sociologija*, 2013, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 353-374. The conference book appeared four years later HODKINSON, Paul – DEICKE, Wolfgang (eds.) *Youth Cultures: Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes*. New York and London: Routledge, 2007.
17 HESMONDHALGH, David. Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes? None of the Above. In *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2005, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 28-29.

position that each of these concepts can be productively used for analysis, depending on the context of the empirical case.

In this respect, these concepts can be seen as more complementary than competing. Even if some of the authors presented in this issue use subcultures as the framework of their analysis, others have very diverse notions of the community that surrounded the self-published publications. However, in our view all of them relate the local and trans-local contexts of publishing activities and thus invite us to see them as scenes in broader terms. The classic combination of subcultural style and rock music is the subject of the analysis of Alexandra Karamoutsiou, who discusses the connection between a local fanzine from Thessaloniki and the music and cultural scene. Similarly, Janis Daugavietis focuses on the local scene in the Russian speaking underground community in late Soviet Riga. Jan Blüml also analyses local rock music fan clubs – in Brno in 1980s – but with a global popular music context. He shows how the music fandom of the Beatles and Frank Zappa were localized in this late socialist regional centre. Mahulena Kopecká takes the case of the classic feminist subcultural style of riot grrrls and asks how the role and characteristics of the fanzine changed within local anarcho-feminist scene in Czech Republic around the transformation from a paper medium to an online digital medium. Martin Tharp focuses his analysis on the specific place that offered new possibilities in publishing print media right after the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Petra Loučová's case highlights the efforts to build a scene of supporters of independent book publishing in the same decade, and Kristin Watterott's artists' community can also be viewed as a local scene with a connection (or at least an ambition) to the global context of the contemporary art world.

Case Studies

Art historian Kristin Watterott examines in her article the unrecognized double function of Czech surrealist samizdats, both as an archiving technique and as independent artistic projects. By the selection, compilation, and presentation of the works, the self-published projects appear as a self-archiving medium adopted by the artistic community. The strategy of archiving is shown in this context as a process that creates its own realities through self-reflection. Nevertheless, the catalogue shows itself to be the result of collective action, the result of joint reflection, action, and creation. In the 1980s, when there was no public reception of collective surrealist creation in museums, institutions, and the scientific community, the group itself provides a remedy by presenting and reappraising its own view of Czech surrealism and group history.

Musicologist Jan Blüml discusses the reception of two of the most influential representatives of Anglo-American popular music in Communist Czechoslovakia, the Beatles and Frank Zappa. The reception of both musical stars is analysed in the specific space of the Brno scene of the 1980s, within the framework of fan clubs and their periodicals, which had no parallel anywhere else in the country. The study demonstrates the specifics of American and British rock fandom du-

ring state socialism and challenges the long-held narrative about the supremacy of the political functions of rock behind the Iron Curtain.

Music historian Alexandra Karamoutsiou focuses on Thessaloniki's emblematic fanzine *Rollin Under*, which was active from 1985 to 1992, and describes the relationship between the fanzine, the Thessaloniki music scene, the DIY ethos, and Greece's historical and political context of that time. She describes fanzines as alternative cultural spaces through which music historians can find the untold stories of the participants of the music scenes. She argues that zines could help to clarify the vague traces that DIY scenes left behind, reveal histories that otherwise would possibly remain hidden and untold, and, most importantly, give us the opportunity to listen to the protagonists' voices and their historical narrations as they wrote them at the time. Hence, *Rollin Under* and similar zines in general should not be considered merely as invaluable primary data but also as alternative cultural spaces that thrive in the ruptures of the global capitalist complex and can offer "a silent revolution" against it.

In his case study on the *От Винта* (*Ot Vinta*) periodical from Soviet Latvia, cultural sociologist Jānis Daugavietis addresses the question of how Western fanzines and music samizdat in the East can be analysed in relation to one another. Thus far, they have been regarded as separate phenomena, but do these two forms of underground literature differ so greatly that they should be analysed using different theoretical approaches? The case examined in the paper is a Russian-language music samizdat published in 1987 – 1991 in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. The paper explores the history of *Ot Vinta* as a central magazine of the local underground and semi-official rock music scene, tightly interconnected with the unofficial rock music scene of the whole country. Daugavietis argues that there are no significant differences between Soviet music samizdat and Western zines, though there are, of course, differences in design determined by the different means of production and reproduction. There were also differences in the attitude of the state towards zines and samizdat, but the role of music samizdat within the political resistance, which until recently was the dominant thesis in samizdat research, must be questioned.

Historical sociologist Martin Tharp takes a relatively unconventional angle for his investigation of the abrupt shift in Czech unofficial journalistic culture from severely repressed samizdat before November 1989 to a significant social force in the first years of the subsequent decade. It takes as its locus the Prague office building at the address Bolzanova 7, a former Czech Rail property assigned to the samizdat-based independent journalistic agency Informační servis at the end of 1990. Here, in the hectic early years of uncensored publication, the rapid diversification of Czech independent periodicals witnessed the emergence of both culturally prestigious publishing projects (the weekly magazine *Respekt*, the quarterly cultural journal *Revolver Revue*) and attempts to reformulate the counterculture under radically different conditions (the transformation of the underground samizdat journal *Voknoviny* into the cultural bulletin *Kontra* and subsequently into

the anarchist periodical *A-Kontra*). The post-Velvet Revolution era brought an impulse for new movements to emerge, among them new subculture fanzines.

From the perspective of the history of literature publishing, Petra Loučová introduces the "mission" of the Club of Liberated Samizdat on the Czechoslovak post-revolutionary book market, which began being promoted just a few month after the famous editorial of Václav Havel, titled "Goodbye samizdat", in the final issue of the clandestine *Lidové noviny* from December 1989, that embraced the new publishing possibilities for all. The idea of a "return to samizdat", organized by former samizdat producers, was based on self-publishing practices as a revolt against the principles of market economics in the era of liberalization and transformation. Solidarity and a shared enthusiasm were to motivate people to participate in the running of this "parallel" literary institution without any remuneration. However, these activities were not shown to be sustainable in the long run. Nowadays, we can follow very similar activities in fanzine and art production, often based on crowdfunding or pre-orders.

Mahulena Kopecká presents in her detailed analysis, based in media studies, the transformation of the Czech anarcho-feminist zine *Bloody Mary* under the impact of the Internet, blogging, and computer graphics software used in the production of the zine in the 2000s. She explores several analytical categories regarding content, form, and readers' reception of the fanzine to determine the impact of personal computers and the Internet on the changes in its existence. In this sense, the influence of the Internet could be traced in the use of sources of information, in the zine's format, and in the relation to anarchist and feminist groups abroad. However, other categories were not influenced by the Internet to such a great extent, partly owing to the authors' stable attitudes towards feminism, their viewing of queer topics, or by their material surroundings. She interestingly documents the changing practices of zine making during the digitization era: from classic riot grrrl cut-and-paste fanzine to a web-based blog and to an attempt to return to the cut-and-paste format that finally led to the end of this fanzine.

Conclusions

When thinking about the intersections between the particular case studies, we would like to finally confront them with the conceptual scheme developed by Sheila Liming based on Pierre Bourdieau's famous analysis of the literary field. Bourdieu saw that to understand a work of art, we must look not only at the piece of art itself, but rather at the conditions of its production and reception, the specific logic characterising the field of cultural production, and the way in which that field relates to the wider fields of power and class relations. He argued that the field of cultural production is cut through by two opposing principles of hierarchization; the autonomous and heteronomous principles, i.e. the degree of independence from the financial imperatives of the economic sphere, and the degree of consecration differentiating between the limited, closed audiences and the mass audience. Sheila Liming, inspired by Bourdieau's work, proposed a revised

version of his scheme,[18] in which zines are shown in the context of print media and in relationship to comparable new media forms (blogs, both those used for political/argumentative or informational purposes, and "personal" blogs, often attached to social networking sites). She pointed out that although zines present a revolt and give space to marginalized voices, they are embedded in the dominant middle class milieu (see the figure 3), because their creators benefit from privileged access to information and technologies, usually have relatively high social and cultural capital, and have high cultural and social competences and entrepreneurship.
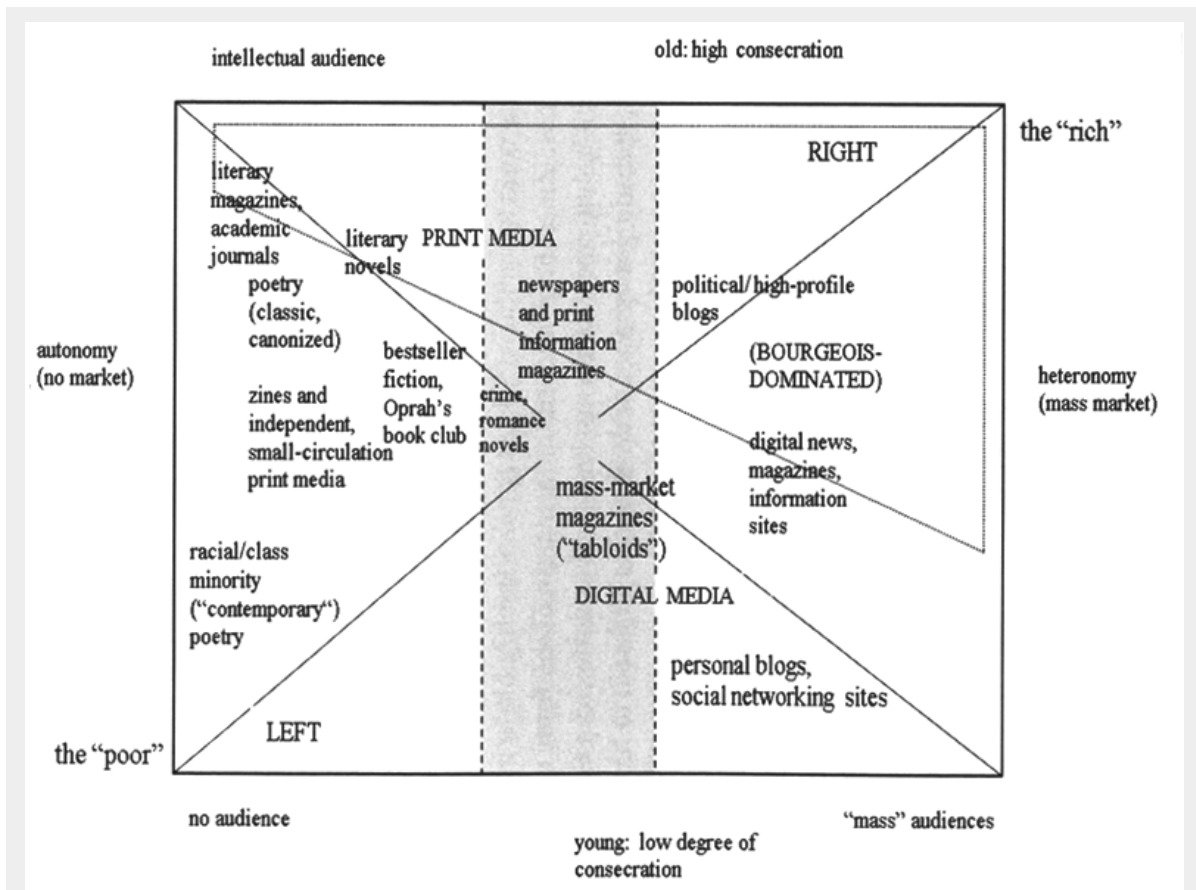
Figure 3. Revised literary field prepared by Sheila Liming. Source: LIMING 2010, p. 133.

In our cases of self-published media, we can locate even more positions within the diagram. Watterott's surrealist samizdats are clearly in the left upper corner, being completely out of the market and with limited intellectual audience. Blüml identifies the borderline between the Beatles and Frank Zappa fan clubs and fanzines that could be placed in the opposite corners of the diagram, and their juxtaposition is possible because of the specific historical circumstances of the late socialist regime. Karamoutsiou analyses in her study a classic subcultural milieu with high value for autonomy (left side) and a moderate level of consecration and class position. Similarly, Daugavietis takes the case of independent, small

18   LIMING, Sheila. Of Anarchy and Amateurism: Zine Publication and Print Dissent. In *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 2010, Vol. 43, No. 2, p. 121-145.

circulation print-media which corresponds to the position of zines in Liming's diagram. Interestingly, Tharp shows the climax of the changes of the political and economic regime, when actors and media from different parts of the diagram could meet literally in the same building. Reflecting on the later post-socialist situation of the Czech book sector, Loučová demonstrates how the attempt to connect high quality literary production (upper part) with an interested but numerous audience failed to justify its position in the middle of the diagram. Last but not least, Kopecká clearly shows what is changing when moving from the classic zine (middle left) to the digital magazine (middle right).

To sum up, our cases show that the socialist and post-socialist contexts enabled interesting shifts in the economic and social positioning of self-publishing activities. In this respect, we would see the most interesting cases for further research in situations when different agents from different parts of the cultural field meet together, connect different audiences, and foster new ways of creativity that can transgress the logic of late capitalism.

Writing the history of alternative culture is not just capturing stories of groups and activities that were overlooked by the mainstream culture. It is also important in terms of understanding the critique of the dominant way of life and reflecting on what is considered to be the majority. Self-published publications provide primarily information about what was happening in relatively smaller communities, subcultures, and scenes, but they also open up issues that in many cases sooner or later became important challenges for society at large. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, very pressing topics of today – environmental protection and climate change – appeared and were debated on the pages of self-published zines. Activism in the alternative culture and non-profit sector introduced in the Czech Republic in 2000s the third wave of feminism that has only hit the mainstream cultural industry in recent years.[19]

The strategies used by the self-publishers to deal with the hegemony of the Communist Party or the market can set up a "crooked mirror" for the dominant discourses and power relations of the time period. The transition from state socialism to post-socialism meant not only significant economic and political changes, but also a rapid transformation of what was understood as the cultural mainstream. From the imaginary West, as designated by Alexey Yurchak, the West became overrepresented in mainstream media and at the same time adored as a utopian model for a transformation of the society.[20] Contemporary witnesses often reflect on this period as a short epoch, when "everything was possible" and

19 HAŠKOVÁ, Hana – KŘÍŽKOVÁ, Alena. Rozhodčí a hráči: Vliv socio-ekonomické transformace a evropské integrace na ženské občanské skupiny. In HAŠKOVÁ, Hana – KŘÍŽKOVÁ, Alena – LINKOVÁ, Marcela (eds.) *Mnohohlasem. Vyjednávání ženských prostorů po roce 1989*. Praha : Sociologický ústav AV ČR, 2006, pp. 84-87. See also: ROBINSON, Lucy. Zines and history : zines as history. In SUBCULTURES NETWORK (eds) *Ripped, Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976.* Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2018, p. 39-54.
20 YURCHAK, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 170-175.

the borders of the mainstream could expand relatively freely within the general enthusiasm of the new era.

Although research on subcultures and self-publishing is gradually getting underway in CEE, there is a lack of institutional structures that would support it. There are no academic or research organizations profiled in this field of research; financial support is limited, and public, state-sponsored organizations have little interest in this field. The historical sources analysed in this issue are usually not available in official archives and libraries but are held by private collectors or independent organisations. In countries like Germany, France, Great Britain, or the United States of America systematic and long-term run institutional platforms for archiving and processing these sources are relatively well established. We also have some recent successful examples in CEE dealing primarily with samizdat literature and independent art production from the state socialist era. Just to mention a few: the library of samizdat and exile literature Libri Prohibiti in Prague, Fundacja Ośrodka KARTA in Warsaw, or the Artpool Art Research Center in Budapest, where fanzines – even from post-communist era – are also available.[21]

The independent archival project, in which we both participate – the Czech and Slovak subcultural archive – showed us that this type of work has important differences as compared to classical archival approaches. Even if the self-published media are public materials, they do not come from either the public or commercial institutional context. In some cases their creators openly criticize the state and market institutions and see the struggle against them as part of their agenda. This is, of course, a major obstacle for public archives to obtain such material, so we think that independent platforms are more appropriate for collecting and archiving these media.

The magazines we work with still have significance in the subcultural environment, even after a significant shift to Internet communication in the 2000s. Independent press activities have always provided and provide still today space for the transformation of identities and the development of "frontier" discourses that transgress the current perception of "the normal" in society. Still today, it is very tempting to erase the strictly divided roles between producer and consumer.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that most of the research on samizdat or fanzine culture is conducted by people who actively participated in these activities and communities, which brings up important methodological and ethical issues. In this respect, the reflexivity of one's own research position becomes an important issue. We, scholars in this field, should clearly define our position in relation to the researched activities and community, and self-reflexivity should be an explicit part of the research and analysis of the sources. We think that this

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21 For more institutions and collections dealing with cultural opposition in the period of state socialism in CEE, see: http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/.

moment can bring new impulses to recent debates about the canonization of memorial discourses, such as the anti-communist narratives of "totalitarian regimes" that present bipolar schemes of the fight of "good" against "evil".

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Self-publishing as a Surrealist Strategy: The Samizdat Catalogues of the Surrealist Group in Czechoslovakia

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Abstract

WATTEROTT, Kristin: Self-publishing as a Surrealist Strategy: The Samizdat Catalogues of the Surrealist Group in Czechoslovakia.

During the period of so-called normalization in the former Czechoslovakia, the restrictive cultural policy ousted numerous oppositional artists, theoreticians, and writers from the public cultural sphere through bans on exhibitions and publications. As a consequence, the affected individuals developed their own means of enabling creative, scientific, and literary work beyond censorship. A key medium for the realization of officially banned texts, studies, and projects was illegal and clandestine self-publishing, also called "samizdat".

This article discusses the phenomenon of samizdat using the example of the self-produced collections of the Surrealistická skupina v Československu. In the 1980s, the community created two (fictitious) exhibition catalogues, *Sféra snu* (1983) and *Proměny humoru* (1984), which presented the individual and collective surrealist activities with images, quotations, and written descriptions. However, the editions were not only a media of documentation to reconstruct surrealist practice. They were at the same time a creative way to exhibit their content in its own specific artistic forms and theories of art. In this paper, I explore the unacknowledged dual-function of the '70s and '80s Czech surrealist samizdat as both an archival technique and a work of art. I investigate the function of these volumes for group artistic praxis and how it reflects creative production under the social conditions of the time.

Keywords: samizdat, Czech Surrealism, self-publishing, Surrealist Group in Czechoslovakia, exhibition catalogue, communism, normalization

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The Czech Surrealist Group was founded in 1934.[1] Despite external influences that disrupted the network for some time and led to shifts in the structure and self-understanding of the collective, over 80 years later a surrealist community still exists in Czech Republic which follows the idea of uniting the practice of art and life.[2]

However, the 1970s and 1980s marked a specific period for the group.[3] With the beginning of so-called "normalization" after the violent end of the Prague

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1   *Skupina surrealistů v ČSR* (Group of Surrealists in Czechoslovakia) was founded officially with the manifesto *Surrealismus v ČSR* (Surrealism in ČSR) in March 1934. In the 1970s the group renamed itself to *Surrealistická skupina v Československu. Surrealismus v ČSR.* In *Zvěrokruh 1; Zvěrokruh 2; Surrealismus v ČSR; Mezinárodní bulletin surrealismu; Surrealismus.* Prague : Torst, 2004, pp. 115-118. Author's note: all quotations are in the original published form.

2   For the history of the development of the surrealist community and its manifestations, see the study: TIPPNER, Anja. *Die permanente Avantgarde? Surrealismus in Prag.* Cologne : Böhlau, 2006. For the early years: BYDŽOVSKÁ, Lenka – SRP, Karel (ed.) *Český surrealismus 1929-1953.* Prague : Argo 1996.

3   It must be mentioned that the *Surrealistická skupina v Československu* was not the only circle of surrealist protagonists in Czechoslovakia. However, when naming the surrealists, the paper is referring to

Spring, the communist regime expelled the surrealists from the public sphere of art and culture.[4] In the course of the restorative cultural policy, their works were classified as "cosmopolitan." The government declared the community to be the "Trojan horse of anticommunism".[5] Surrealist editions disappeared from Czech publishing programmes and the group received a collective exhibition ban. Surrealist practice was considered anti-government and was officially prohibited.[6]


Figure 1. Meeting in the flat of Jan Švankmajer, 1973: from left to right: D. Marenčinová, A. Marenčin, E. Švankmajerová, J. Švankmajer, V. Effenberger, E. Effenbergerová. In: Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Z dějin československého surrealismu 1968-1989, 2004, No. 41/42, p.29.

From this point onwards, meetings, artistic exchanges, and collective interaction took place in private, for example in the apartments and studios of the members.[7] With the new circumstances, the creative expression, presence in public, and forms of distribution of the surrealist works changed. Internally, the community devoted itself to experimental actions, such as surrealist games, internal surveys, and collective objects.[8] Their activities pursued concrete aims. The focus was not on the production of a work of art, but the exploration of the creative process itself, with all its correlations. As a result of surrealist studies, thematic ensembles were created, for example on the phenomena of dreams, fear, or eroticism. In addition to collaborative projects, the collections contained theoretical texts and individual works by the members.[9] The contributions were recorded

that specific group or its members.

4   At the same time, it must be emphasized that some surrealist projects could not be realized even before 1970 due to political sanctions.

5   "Surrealismus jako trojský kůň antikomunismu" See DVORSKÝ, Stanislav – DRYJE, František – STEJSKAL, Martin (ed.) *Surrealistická východiska (1948-1989): Odklony, Návraty, Přesahy. Znamení zvěrokruhu, Okruh pěti Objektů, UDS, Surrealistická skupina v Československu*. Praha : Společnost Karla Teiga 2011, p. 51.

6   The restriction applied to group practice and to some projects of the members. Nevertheless, various members of the community were still able to realise individual exhibition projects.

7   DRYJE, František. Editorial: 1968-1975. In *Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Z dějin československého surrealismu 1968 – 1989*, 2004, No. 41/42, p. ii.

8   Collective objects are works of everyday items or collages that the Surrealists designed together to form a theme. In the case of the surrealist game, the community devoted itself to an interactive project similar to the concept of parlour games. The group's internal surveys are theme-based interviews on phenomena such as dreams, eroticism, and fear, and served to determine the members' positions.

9   SURREALISTICKÁ SKUPINA V ČESKOSLOVENSKU. Úvod. In ŠVANKMAJER, Jan (ed.) *Otevřená hra. Mezi surrealismem a surracionalismem. Antologie tvorby Surrealistické skupiny v Československu 1969-1979*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1979, p. 5.

by the community in independently produced, privately circulated documents, so-called *samizdat* publications.[10]
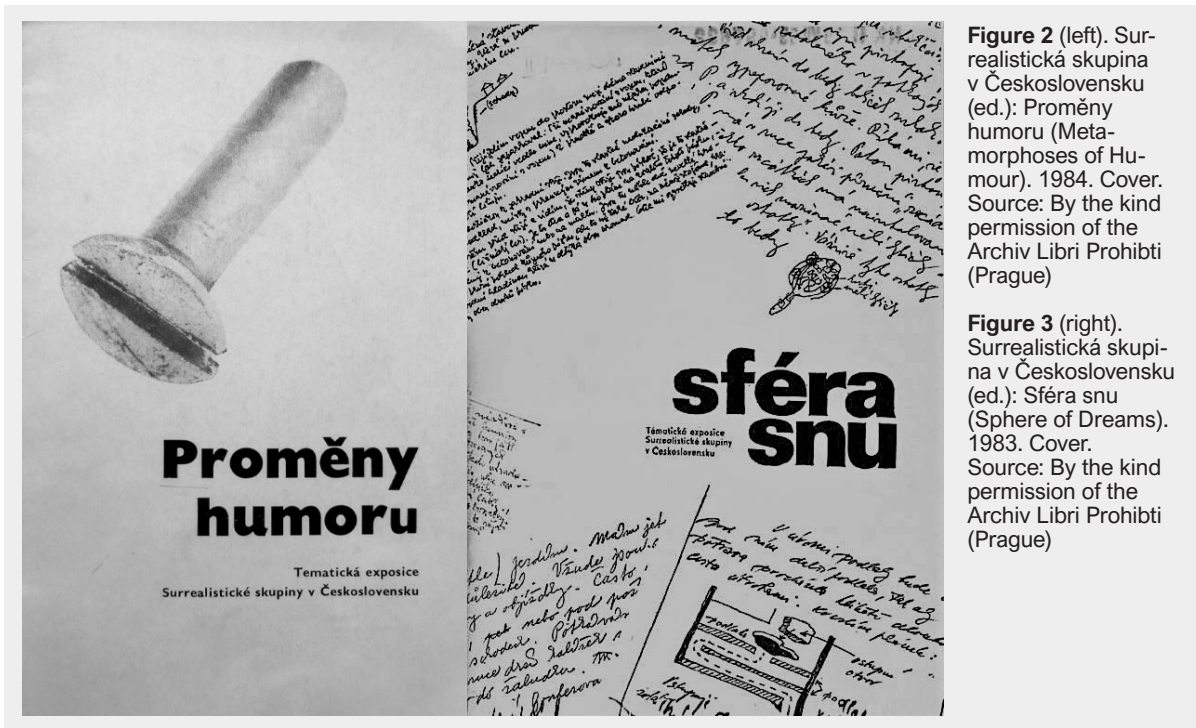
Figure 2 (left). Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984. Cover. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague)

Figure 3 (right). Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Sféra snu (Sphere of Dreams). 1983. Cover. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague)

In 20 years of public isolation, six collective samizdat projects were created by the group, including two self-published catalogues, *Sféra snu* (Sphere of Dream, 1983) and *Proměny humoru* (Transformations of Humour, 1984).[11] Both editions contain the subtitle *Tématická exposice Surrealistické skupiny* v *Československu* (Thematic exposition of the Surrealist Group in Czechoslovakia), which classifies the activities as part of an installation that is seemingly taking place.[12] Nevertheless, the two issues represent a specific form of exhibition catalogue: they were not exposed to the contemporary public at large but appear instead as actions that record the surrealistic activities of the community that took place in the private sphere.[13] At the same time, they express various forms of creative self-staging and artistic positions on the basis of their programmatic, organisational,

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10 The word and the term *samizdat* refer to a kind of "copyright" note of the poet Nikolai Glazkov from the 1940s. Publishers of that time did not print his works, so he noted on his volumes of poetry the reference *samsebjaizdat* (self-published). EICHWEDE, Wolfgang. Archipel Samizdat. In EICHWEDE, Wolfgang (ed.) *Samizdat. Alternative Kultur in Zentral- und Osteuropa: Die 60er bis 80er Jahre.* Bremen : Edition Temmen, 2000, p. 8.

11 Collective projects refer to activities in which the group and its members are present in terms of content and which were produced by the majority of its protagonists. The mentioned editions are part of the series *Le La*, in which the following works were also created: the anthologies *Otevřená hra* (Open Game) and *Opak zrcadla* (The Reverse of a Mirror) as well as the journal *Gambra*. The title *Le La* refers to the surrealist circle of the same name in Switzerland, with which the members of the Prague group collaborated. For this reason, the reference to Geneva as a (fictional) production place is also found on the volumes. Another joint edition was *Studijní materiály a dokumentace* (Study materials and documentation).

12 See *Sféra snu. Tématická exposice Surrealistické skupiny* v *Československu.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1983. *Proměny humoru. Tématická exposice Surrealistické skupiny* v *Československu.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984.

13 Note: The project *Sféra snu* was nevertheless planned as an exhibition project, but it never took place in a public space.

and productive arrangement, as well as their form of documentary implementation. Hence, surrealist samizdat is also the result of a common artistic practice and can be read as an autonomous creative strategy that reflects the principles of surrealist art appreciation.

This paper examines the unrecognized double function of Czech surrealist samizdats, both as an archiving technique and as independent artistic projects. Following a description of the editions, the conceptual structure and mediation strategies of surrealist activities are to be determined through an analysis of examples. Based on the results, conclusions should be drawn about the specific form of art production, which had different functions for the community.

The surrealistic catalogues and their presentation of the material

The catalogue projects *Sphere of Dream* and *Transformations of Humour* were created in the mid-1980s and appear in A5 format in black and white print with over 30 pages. The production was done internally, with all of the work steps remaining within the sphere of activity of the community. The following were involved in their realization: Karol Baron, František Dryje, Vratislav Effenberger, Jiří Koubek, Albert Marenčin, Emila Medková, Alena Nádvorníková, Martin Stejskal, Ludvík Šváb, Jan Švankmajer, and Eva Švankmajerová.[14]

During their material creation, the members first produced a template of the individual pages in typesetting using a letterpress, which was cut by hand and put in the correct order. With the help of a printer, the created pages were photographed and transferred onto metal templates. The reproduction was done by means of small offset printers on special offset paper. The pages were bound and wrapped in a cover. The volumes ran between 100 and 300 copies in their circulation.[15]

The collective catalogue projects are thematically structured in their content. They demonstrate surrealist activities on the phenomena of humour and dreams, respectively, which took place in the 1970s and 1980s. The volumes present works on various media; they compile them in a collection and record them with images and text. In addition to the group activities in the form of surrealist games, individual contributions, such as theoretical essays, poetic texts, notes and commentaries, as well as film scripts, dream descriptions and prose, are included. The field of visual works ranges from photography, collages and graphics to drawings, images of object art and painting.

In its systematization of the material, the community developed thematic categories. *Sphere of Dream* is divided into three sections: *Mezi spánkem a bděním* (Between Sleep and Waking), *Vnitřním zrakem* (Through Inner Vision) and *Noční návštěvy* (Night Visits). The catalogue *Transformations of Humour* covers more than ten thematic areas, including *Humor a hra* (Humour and a Game),

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14 Cooperation reconstructed from the contributions of the catalogues. Note: Koubek is not named in the *Transformation of Humour* project.
15 KOŠNAROVÁ, Veronika. LE LA. In PŘIBÁŇ, Michal (ed.) *Český literární samizdat 1949 – 1989: Edice, časopisy, sborníky*. Prague : Academia, 2018, p. 303.

Snový humor (Dreamy Humour), *Humor a erotika* (Humour and Eroticism), *Humor a strach* (Humour and Fear).

The individual sections are characterized in their conception by media diversity: Theory merges with visual art and poetry. The individual parts are not arranged according to actor, form of expression or chronology of the creation. Moreover, its diversity is also reflected in the presence of the members. The categories are formed by contributions of different authors, not by individual members' works. The thematic focus of each section is established only through interaction.

The catalogues have an equal ratio of images and texts, which are not presented separately. The visual works link with the written works on one page, side by side. Yet the picture and text are not by the same author. In the material presentation of surrealist practice, the contributions are characterized by extracts. Some of the works are signed with the tag *Fragmenty* (Fragments). These concern theoretical essays, poetic writings and creative works. The extent and context of the "original version" remains open. In addition, the community provides only limited information about its work. The visual images are titled with author, title and year, but in some cases only the name of the creator is noted. Information about dimensions, material, colour and location are not provided. Further, no explanations of the content or detailed references to the author's contribution are included.

At the same time, the printed format in the catalogue does not indicate the real dimensions of the works. Photographs, paintings, collages and object art do not appear in any unified size pattern or in sizes relative to each other. No dimensional references can be deduced from the illustrations. The text contributions mainly present only the author, title and year. Only a few writings are noted without title or year.

Transformations of Humour – documentary practice

In its depictive element, the surrealist catalogue is a means of preserving thoughts, concepts, writings, and records of artistic works. In this regard, it does not only list the surrealistic material but constructs content by way of creation and combination. The reappraisal of the surrealist work is initially subject to design principles and to the technical possibilities inherent to the book object. The print format allows artistic works to appear in a different reality: they lack physicality, scale, and colourfulness, as well as forms, movements, and sound effects, due to the transfer of media.[16] In the course of this, the modifications in media can formulate expanded elements, perspectives, and statements and also create new modes of perception. In *Transformations of Humour* this can be seen in different media, such as film, photography, and object art.

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16 BOSSE, Dagmar. Souvenir, Dokument und Substitut. Die Abbildung im Ausstellungskatalog. In BOSSE, Dagmar – GLASMEIER, Michael – PRUS, Agnes (ed.) *Der Ausstellungskatalog. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie*. Cologne : Salon Verlag, 2004, p. 38.
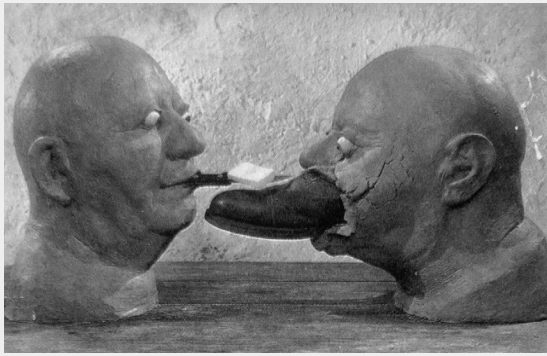
Figure 4. J. Švankmajer: Možnosti dialogu (Dimensions of Dialogue, 1982)/film. In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p. 17. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague).
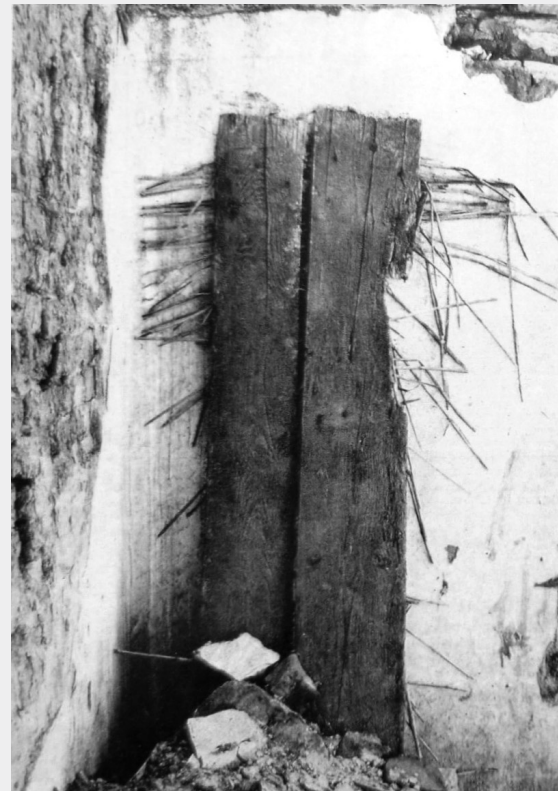

Figure 5. J. Švankmajer: Možnosti dialogu (Dimensions of Dialogue, 1982)/film In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p. 18. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague).

Švankmajer's short film *Možnosti dialogu* (Dimensions of Dialogue, 1982) is presented in two photographic sequences.[17] The contribution shows a visual excerpt of Švankmajer's work, which in its presentation is subject to a double transfer of media. In the fragmentation of the photographic images, it is on the one hand returned to the original format of the individual picture of which it consists, and on the other hand, it is reproduced again in the catalogue as a print.

The medial change of the work *Dimensions of Dialogue* – from the moving image to the still image – leads to a different reception of its technical and content-related elements. Formal data, such as the length of film, sound, and genre, as well as design features in the form of the subject, theme, and action, cannot be registered. Only the title of the picture refers to the film medium. The extracts of the image sequences modify the perception: the protagonists and their characteristics are at the centre of view. Thus, the focus shifts from the plot of the action to the presence of the characters.

Photographic works create their own modes of perception in transfer due to their media-specific characteristics. In contrast to film, photography appears in the catalogue in its original form as a photographic image, for example, the study *Šebestián* (Sebastian, 1977) by Medková.[18] The black-and-white photograph

Figure 6. E. Medková: Šebestián (Sebastian, 1977)/photograph. In: Surrealistická skupina v Československsku (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p. 12. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague).

17 ŠVANKMAJER, Jan. Možnosti dialogu. In *Proměny humour.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 17-18.
18 MEDKOVÁ, Emila. Šebestián. In *Proměny humoru.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 12.

shows and interprets natural materials of the environment: in front of a stone wall with loosened plaster a wooden board is leaning, with straw stalks protruding from its sides.

Samizdat captures the photograph *Sebastian* in a changed form. With regard to the first version, the work is presented in a print on a reduced scale.[19] In its transfer, the light-dark effects, paper quality, and excerpt of the work are changed. In its reproduction, photography appears as a reinterpretation of the surrealistic perception of the surroundings, as other ways of seeing arise. New views also open up through changed contexts. The thematic location in *Transformations of Humour* refers to the humorous elements in Medková's work, which can be experienced in their cohesive observation through their integration into the catalogue project.

The change of media not only produces an altered experience of the content, formal, and contextual elements of the surrealist works but also plays with forms of appropriation. Švankmajer's tactile poem *Prázdniny* (Holidays, 1983) employs the sense of touch.[20] His object consists of hand gestures pressed into clay. According to the author, his poetry takes place in the inner eye, by stimulating the recipient's imagination through touch.[21] Individual word descriptions are attributed to them.[22]

Figure 7: J. Švankmajer: Prázdniny (Holidays, 1983)/ tactile poem. In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p. 5. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague).

In the photographic depiction in the catalogue, Švankmajer's poem can only be received visually. Nevertheless, the form of presentation may aim at individual experience. The viewer can see materials, forms and words that trigger familiar patterns of perception, e.g. the feeling of clay on the skin. The recipient can develop his own associations based on subjective recognition. The pictorial representation leads to a different form of reading than intended in the first work. Instead of stimulating the imagination by feeling, experiences are stimulated by seeing.

The dissolution of media-specific characteristics of the forms of expression caused by the change of media

19   The work is located in the *Moravská galerie*, Brno, Inventory number: MG 12323, 28.1 cm x 38.2 cm, paper, matt. Available online: http://sbirky.moravska-galerie.cz/dielo/CZE:MG.MG_12323
20   ŠVANKMAJER, Jan. Prázdniny (gestická báseň). In *Proměny humoru*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 5.
21   The recipient is forced to understand the poem not as an artefact, but as the emotions of the creator, which is directed to the mental imagination of the recipient. ŠVANKMAJER, Jan. Gestural Sculpture. In ŠVANKMAJER, Jan (ed.) *Evašvankmajerjan: Anima Animus Animation, Between Film and Free Expression*. Prague : Arbor vitae, 1997, p. 74.
22   For example: *led* (ice), *mozeček* (cerebellum), *piliny* (sawdust).

creates an apparently uniform appearance of the visual works in the catalogue. Formal analogies arise in their recording and transfer into a two-dimensional medium. The different reproduction strategies stand side by side on an equal footing. In their altered presentation, they allow the Surrealist group to accentuate the elements essential to the project *Transformations of Humour*. Content, theme, and narratives are the focus of the recording. Medial properties, such as dimensions, colour application, and state of preservation, take a subordinate role – which becomes visible not least in the deprivation of data. Their reproduction enables a modified perception and the creation of new meaning.[23]

Due to their arrangements, the registered entries are given an extended construction of meaning in the form of their presentation in the catalogue. The intermedial combination of images and word art is the main characteristic of the *Transformations of Humour*.[24]
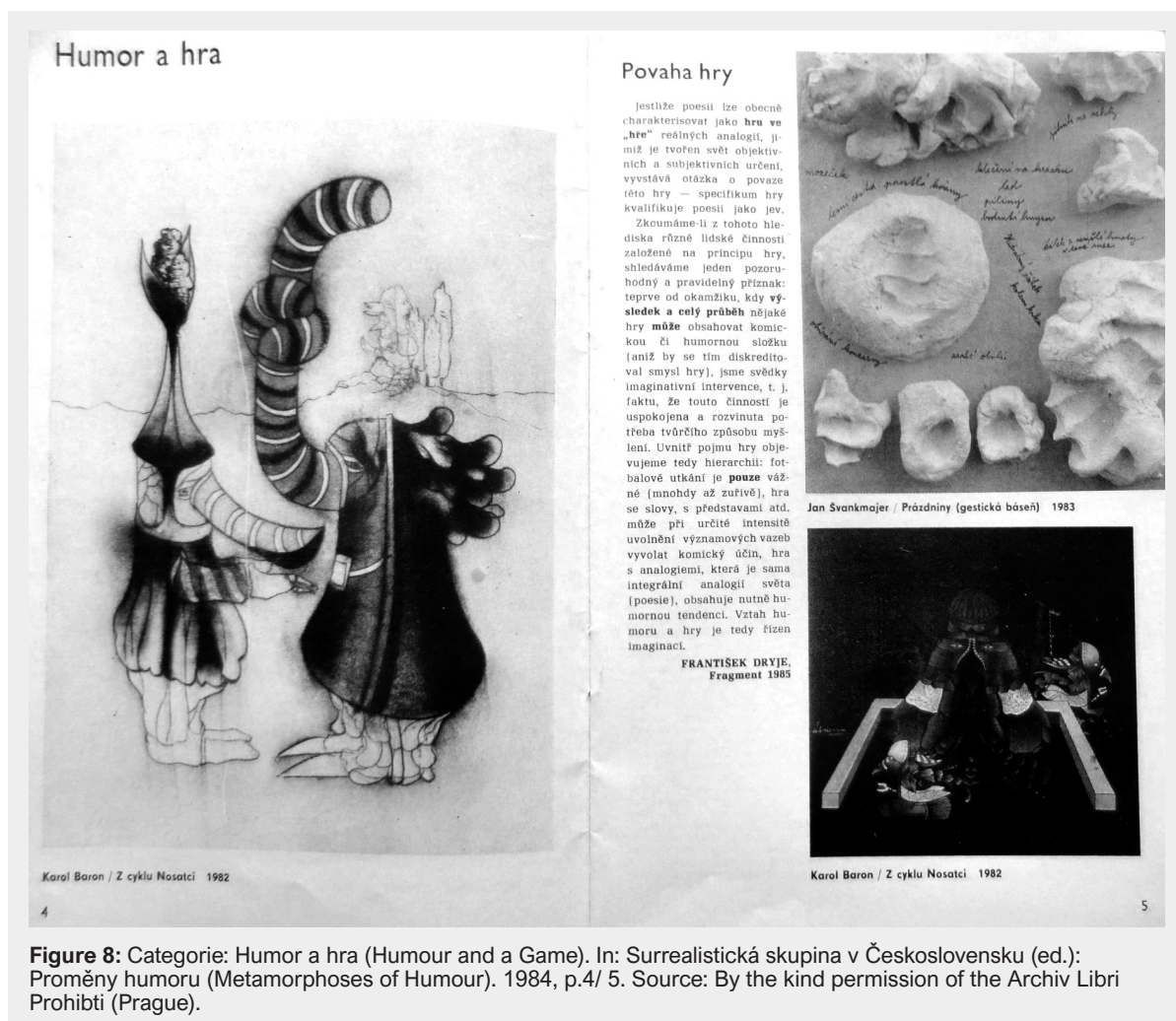
Figure 8: Categorie: Humor a hra (Humour and a Game). In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p.4/ 5. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague).

23 GEIMER, Peter. The Art of Resurrection Malraux's Musée imaginaire. In CARAFFA, Costanza (ed.) *Fotografie als Instrument und Medium der Kunstgeschichte*. Berlin – München : Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009, p. 78.
24 Intermediality refers to the combination and interference of different media and forms of expression within a frame of reference. RAJEWSKY, Irina O. *Intermedialität*. Munich : UTB, 2002, p. 13.

In the systematization of the category *Humour and a Game*, the group depicts four different types of works. Two pictures by Baron from the cycle *Nosatci* (1982) are presented.[25] His visual contributions show fictional figures in grotesque landscapes, which carry the viewer into a poetic world. In their characteristic form they play with imaginative perception in a humorous way and bring the mysterious to life.[26] Baron's works are complemented by Švankmajer's tactile poem *Holidays* and the text *Povaha hry* (The Character of the Game, 1985) by Dryje, presented as a fragment. Dryje's analytical explanations provide clarification of humorous elements in the game, which – as he emphasizes – are expressed through the implementation of imaginative processes.[27]

The chapter *Humour and a Game* is realized by linking all the contributions. Baron and Švankmajer's works transform Dryje's theoretical descriptions into a visual and creative form. Conversely, the creative works make the analytical explanations visually experienceable by playing with and opening up humorous emotions in the appropriation.

The creative works are not aesthetic elements; they are rather statements that complement one another. Even if the works can be viewed individually, it is the interplay of the media difference that constitutes the construct of the chapter's meaning and thus specifies the playful component of the humour and makes it accessible to experience. The documentary practice that is expressed in the catalogue not only fixes the surrealist activities but also makes altered access to the works possible in the form of its implementation.

A specific challenge: the recording of ephemeral projects

Besides the reappraisal of reconstructions of artistic, theoretical, and poetic works, the community is confronted with the task of recording ludic projects, which are determined by the characteristic of performativity. The form of the activities is characterized by an ephemeral, interactive, and experimental character. The practical implementation of the action is marked by situational, action-oriented, and transitory elements.

In the catalogue *Transformations of Humour*, under the category *Surrealistická experimentace* (Surrealistic Experimentation), the ephemeral project *Jedním uchem dovnitř* (One Ear In, 1984) appears. The surrealist game happened in February 1984 under the direction of Švankmajer. In addition to him, ten other members of the group took part: Baron, Dryje, Effenberger, Koubek, Marenčin, Medková, Nádvorníková, Stejskal, Šváb, and Švankmajerová.[28]

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25 BARON, Karol. Z cyklu Nosatci. In *Proměny humour.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 4-5.
26 The works are also characterized by their variety of colours. Baron contrasts the mystical landscape with the imaginative beings in a humorous way through colourfulness. In the catalogue the works appear in black and white print. DRYJE, František. Úvodní slovo. Karol Baron – Rozhněvaný snivec. Available online: http://gej.vejr.cz/?page_id=8453.
27 DRYJE, František. Povaha hry. In *Proměny humoru*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 5.
28 Surrealistická experimentace. In *Proměny humoru*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 29.

Figure 9: Surrealistická experimentace (Surrealistic Experimentation): Jedním uchem dovnitř (One Ear In, 1984)/ game In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Proměny humoru (Metamorphoses of Humour). 1984, p. 29. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague)

The starting object of the activity was a drawing from the satirical magazine *Dikobraz* (Porcupine) with the title *Jedním uchem dovnitř*.[29] Švankmajer only used the phrase "One ear in" as an element of play.[30] The game concept required the members to create a humorous illustration of the subtext by the means of interpretative appropriation. The participants were familiar only with the phrase and not with the caricature. In the creative implementation, the choice of means of expression – from drawing to painting to object art – was entirely up to the players. Once the task was realized according to the instructions, the act was evaluated. In the recording of personal contributions, the answers were noted, categorized, and classified. The aim of the analysis was to systematize the types of humour.[31]

In the catalogue the game *One Ear In* is recorded on one page. The community used written and visual material in the representation of the collective action. The presence took the form of a listing of the data: Name of the game, name of the game leader and rules, time of realization, registration of the participants, and the method.[32] Švankmajer's evaluative commentary makes the aims and objectives of the action comprehensible.

In the form of its documentary recording, the presentation in the catalogue reveals itself to be a separate strategy for determining its performative character. The central element is the title of the section: *Surrealistic Experimentation*. It classifies the contribution as a project of interactive action.

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29 The magazine *Dikobraz* appeared as a weekly satirical magazine between 1945 and 1989. The conception and content of the issues were subordinated to the political line of KSČ. Examples can be found online: https://dikobraz.cz/archiv.

30 Švankmajer calls the selected image *kreslený vtip* (a cartoon). See Jedním uchem dovnitř. In *Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Z dějin československého surrealismu 1968-1989*, 2004, No. 41/42, p. 122.

31 Surrealistická experimentace. In *Proměny humour*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1984, p. 29.

32 The initials of the players are listed alphabetically as follows K.B., F.D., V.E., J.K., A.M., E.M., A.N.,M.S., L.Š.,E.Š., J.Š. The game master (J.Š.) is also a participant.

Figure 10: Game object with title Jedním uchem dovnitř from magazine Dikobraz In: Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Z dějin československého surrealismu 1968-1989, 2004, No. 41/42, p. 122.

The description of the game is chronological. Thus, the community determines the sequence of the stations: At the beginning, the data of the game is listed, which refers to the planning phase. By means of explanations of the rules and game elements and the naming of participants, the course of the playful interaction is recorded. The subsequent presentation of the reactions and the illustration of the creative answers make the results comprehensible.

The act of playing represents a temporary action. The form in which the group subsequently documents it dissolves the central feature of the ephemeral.[33] The catalogue appears as a source of particular events which are retrospectively recordable and re-constructible.[34] In this intention, the documentary presence reveals itself as a surrealist strategy. The game invites the reader to replay and repeat, as rules, game objects, and objectives can be received.[35] The form of interaction and reaction is opened, as it lacks the surrealistic game instructions.

The principle of repetition is understood in surrealistic practice as a creative and epistemological process.[36] Reproductive appropriation implies the interpretation of what has already happened. The old familiar is examined, questioned, and put to the test. The interpretive perception of the material in connection with one's own experience and subjective views leads to a new way of seeing and a modified order of existing.[37] Associations are set free, which unfolds their creative potential in practical implementation.

In the realization, repetition also gains psychoanalytical significance. The process of repetition is based on the method of working through, which enables access to suppressed stimuli and encodings as expressed in dreams and imaginative phenomena.[38] In the process, the repetitive self-reference creates the ever-same

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33 TIPPNER, Anja. *Die permanente Avantgarde? Surrealismus in Prag*. Cologne : Böhlau, 2006, p. 185.
34 AUSLANDER, Philip. Zur Performativität der Performancedokumentation. In CLAUSEN, Barbara (ed.) *After the Act. Die (Re)Produktion der Performancekunst*. Nürnberg : Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2006, p. 26.
35 TIPPNER 2006, p. 191.
36 TIPPNER 2006, p. 191.
37 TIPPNER 2006, p. 95 and 99.
38 This shows the relevance of the theory *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through* of Sigmund

in the field of the socially imaginary. The permanent reproduction dissolves mere perception and leads into irreality.[39]

According to the surrealist view, irrationality allows access to inspiration and the imaginative sphere. It opens the path to the perception of one's own self and the experience of true thoughts and feelings, as Nádvorníková defines in the text *Surrealist Cognition*: *"It changes not only the world but also itself through the permanent activity that is the destruction of the static image of the world. It is a cognition that is a concrete act through which we change what we recognize and we change through such a cognition."*[40] This understanding expresses the surrealistic conviction that the reception of an artistic work is an active and creative principle.[41] The collective project does not exclusively convey information but determines the process of perception as a creative act and a means of self-knowledge.

The process of "replay" is characterized by interactive elements. Reading becomes a participatory action, which maintains the performative character of the game.[42] Reflection involves the viewer in the surrealistic project and makes him or her part of the work.[43] In this way the boundaries between the two positions dissolve. The reader is both consumer and producer.[44] This reflects a central concern of surrealist practice, as the community emphasizes: *"...the author and the viewer are both interpreters or, to be more precise, from a surrealist activity is neither creative work or its consumptions, but COMMUNICATION."*[45] The documentary recording of the game functions as a medium between mediation and communication. Surrealistic activity cannot only be received visually, but experienced with all senses and staged in its repetition. Anyone who interprets the game becomes an "artist".

This reflects the surrealistic view that authentic (creative) expression is not subject to any profession.[46] Creativity is independent of rules, guidelines, and education. Thus, the surrealist understanding is also directed against the predetermined social, economic, and intellectual status of an artist. The community follows the opinion that *"art will be made by all"*.[47] It negates the attribution of being an artist as a professional phenomenon and is directed against an apparent aesthetic of genius based on talent, aptitude, and technical abilities.[48]

Freud. SCHWEPPENHÄUSER, Gerhard. *Ästhetik. Philosophische Grundlagen und Schlüsselbegriffe.* Frankfurt/Main : campus, 2007, p. 180.

39 SCHWEPPENHÄUSER 2007, pp. 181-182. TIPPNER 2006, p. 122.

40 See NÁDVORNÍKOVÁ, Alena. Surrealist Cognition. In *Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Genius loci – imaginace prostoru*, 2005, No. 44/45, pp. xiii-xiv.

41 TIPPNER 2006, p. 191.

42 TIPPNER 2006, p. 191.

43 GELDMACHER, Pamela. *Re-Writing Avantgarde: Fortschritt, Utopie, Kollektiv und Partizipation in der Performance-Kunst.* Bielefeld : transcript, 2015. p. 49.

44 CONVENTS, Ralf. *Surrealistische Spiele: vom "Cadavre exquis" zum "Jeu de Marseille".* Frankfurt : Peter Lang, 1996, p. 1.

45 THE GROUP OF CZECH AND SLOVAK SURREALISTS. In DRYJE, František (ed.) *Invention. Imagination. Interpretation. A Retrospective Exhibition of the Group of Czech and Slovak Surrealists.* Swansea, 1998, p. 3.

46 Already André Breton claimed, *"the absolute equality of all human beings in front of the unconscious".* See CONVENTS 1996, p. 179.

47 See SVITÁK, Ivan. *Windmills of Humanity: On Culture and Surrealism in the Manipulated World.* Chicago : Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., 2014, p. 121.

48 RECKWITZ, Andreas. *Kreativität und soziale Praxis.* Bielefeld : transcript, 2016, p. 191.

Following the principle, the Surrealist group also adopts the dual position of consumer and producer in the realization of the ludic project. In implementing Švankmajer's rules of the game, the participants create artistic works based on the imaginative interpretation of the original object. The form of the subsequent evaluation opens up a further level of reception by classifying, categorizing, and documenting the creative works.[49]

The permanent role reversal and mutual transformation of the game elements – from artistic design to creative interpretation to documentation – opens up a continuous communication process. The communicative exchange takes place not only among the surrealist actors, but also involves the reader by means of documentary strategies.[50]

The concept of repetition and the participation of the recipient in the creative process manifest the permanent renewal of surrealist activity.[51] Here, the creative appropriation of the game is not subject to the reproduction of the past but is characterized by a difference in content and form.[52] The replay in its communicative element becomes a continuation of playing. In its renewed implementation, more and more components of the surrealist game emerge, which are not comprehensible in their whole.

The game project and the form of its documentation are characterized by an open structure. The constant interaction of production, action, and active appropriation by the viewer creates a constantly new work.[53] In this context, the continuous expansion and transformation opens up the question of the "original" artistic work.[54] Walter Benjamin, in his essay *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, 1935), defines the element of authenticity as the central criterion of the original: *"The here and now of the original makes up the concept of its authenticity.* [...] *The authenticity of a thing is the epitome of everything from its origin to what can be passed on, from its material duration to its historical testimony."*[55] Benjamin summarizes the characteristics under the term aura, which he denies to reproduced works of art.[56] Because by *"reproducing, reproduction takes the place of its unique occurrence in its masses."*[57]

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49 In this context, Švankmajer, the director of the game, also had a dual position.
50 EDER, Johanna Gundula. *Homo Creans. Kreativität und Kreativitätsbildung im Kontext transmedialer Kunst.* Bielefeld *:* transcript, 2016, p. 330.
51 SPIES, Werner. *Der Surrealismus: Kanon einer Bewegung.* Cologne : DuMont-Literatur-und-Kunst-Verlag, 2003, p. 97.
52 GELDMACHER 2015, p. 42.
53 EDER 2016, p. 38.
54 TIPPNER 2016, p. 150, 190.
55 *"Das Hier und Jetzt des Originals macht den Begriff seiner Echtheit aus.* [...] *Die Echtheit einer Sache ist der Inbegriff alles von Ursprung her an ihr Tradierbaren, von ihrer materiellen Dauer bis zu ihrer geschichtlichen Zeugenschaft."* See BENJAMIN, Walter. *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.* Frankfurt/Main : Suhrkamp, 1963, p. 12-13.
56 *"... was im Zeitalter der technischen Reproduzierbarkeit des Kunstwerks verkümmert, das ist seine Aura"* [*"... what atrophies in the age of technical reproducibility of the work of art is its aura"*]. See BENJAMIN 1963, p. 13.
57 *"...die Reproduktion vervielfältigt, setzt sie an die Stelle seines einmaligen Vorkommens sein massenweises."* See BENJAMIN 1963, p. 13.

The Surrealist collective, on the other hand, understands the reproductive appropriation of artistic works as an independent creative process. The repetition of a work does not represent a copy of the original. In the process, the views and insights gained are examined, questioned, and restructured, leading to further possibilities of observation and perception. In the surrealist point of view, repetition does not express the identical, but rather the subjective and own – which is not only presented in the game but also seen in the transfer of individual works into the catalogue, which creates new content in their intermedial arrangement and form of reproduction.[58]

Sphere of Dream – a medium of creative practice

Reproduction as a creative and epistemological method is also evident in the structural implementation of the samizdat catalogues. The works presented in the volumes are not simply reconstructed, but staged using surrealist methods. In the specific form of creation as well as conception, the editions make the creative practice of the community and surrealist strategies accessible and tangible. The catalogue project itself becomes an artistic work and an expression of surrealist positions.

In the form of presentation, the community transforms its works into something new. It draws attention to the other by placing different projects into a common context. The reproduction does not repeat the apparent but makes the invisible visible in the accentuation.[59] The catalogue becomes a stimulus for altered observation and opens up extended contexts of surrealist creativity.[60]

For the mediation, communication, and reception of surrealist practice, the community developed its own experimental strategies in the typography of the catalogue *Sphere of Dream*. Emotional, physical and psychological effects as well as stimuli were created through creative means. The organization of the elements established a "poetics of typography"[61] that reflected the programmatic and artistic guiding principles of surrealist activity.

By means of graphic design, the catalogue cover announces the dream phenomenon actively and creatively. In various font sizes and types, the project title *Sféra snu* is accompanied by several dream protocols in handwriting. Different written fonts are chosen to present the individual dream experiences. The handwriting expresses subjective characteristics which – like the experience of a dream – refer to the own self. In terms of extractability and legibility, the viewer can only perceive the written text in fragments, which cause confusion and mystery. The combination of the added drawings stimulates the reader's imagination. The decoding of the images and text segments triggers imaginative thoughts and associations,

58 HILMES, Carola. Auf der Suche nach dem surrealistischen Ich. Individualität und Wiederholung: Magritte und Breton. In HILMES, Carola – MATHY, Dietrich (ed.) *Dasselbe noch einmal: Die Ästhetik der Wiederholung*. Wiesbaden : VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1998, p. 141.
59 GEIMER 2009, p. 89.
60 BOSSE 2004, p. 53.
61 See HULTSCH, Anne – RINCK, Julia. *Zirkus in der Druckerei. Tschechische Avantgarde.* Available online: http://www.collegium-carolinum.de/veranstaltungen/bohemisten-treffen/exposes-bohemisten-treffen/exposes2018.html

through which non-receptive words are supplemented by the reader's own experiences. The surrealistic stories mix with personal stories and (dream) experiences. In the form of strategic design, the cover takes the viewer on an emotional journey into the world of dreams, which begins with turning the first page.

Intermediality is not only a documentary principle of communicating the content and formal elements of the contributions. In the combination of the works, the community develops a creative project that reflects the many-sided positions of surrealist practice in its medial diversity. This reveals the universality of expression, the interdisciplinarity of the group, and its broad understanding of art.

Collages, photographs, painting, and object art as well as analytical and poetic texts are equally important means of presenting surrealist work on the phenomenon of the dream. Their composition is not subject to any aesthetic or organizational restrictions, since the goal is to achieve the utmost artistic freedom of creation.[62] Dryje determines in this respect: *"From a Surrealist perspective this universality of expression ought to reflect an attempt at universality of thought. It ignores both genre and aesthetic aspirations, and yet in the spite of this – or because of it – it creates a new and unrepeatable context that allows unusually authentic and effective work to be produced."*[63] The dissolution of genre-specific characteristics and aesthetic criteria is connected with the attempt to break down the traditional, formal, medial, and structural boundaries of the arts as well as their genre affiliation and artistic categories in order to arrive at their own authentic expression.[64] Nevertheless, in its autonomous expression, the community differentiates itself from abstract concepts of representation. Surrealist activity does not follow any preconceived formal order but leaves absolute freedom in the choice of means of articulation and external form.[65]

An (active) mediation of surrealistic practice: The image-text references in the catalogue

In the creative development, seemingly contradictory elements are combined, which lead to altered modes of representation. It is above all a picture-text reference that distinguishes surrealistic projects.

The linguistic-artistic works are based on the model of imagination and poetry.[66] According to the surrealist understanding, the word productions are grounded on active elements, as the community explains: *"Poetry is not cognition in the traditional, ordinary sense of the word. It is a more analogous, magical transformation*

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62 ROLOFF, Volker: Metamorphosen des Surrealismus in Spanien und Lateinamerika. Medienästhetische Aspekte. In ROLOFF, Volker – FELTEN, Uta (ed.). *Spielformen der Intermedialität im spanischen und lateinamerikanischen Surrealismus.* Bielefeld : transcript, 2015, p. 28.

63 See DRYJE, František. Formative Meetings. In ŠVANKMAJER, Jan (ed.) *Evašvankmajerjan: Anima Animus Animation, Between Film and Free Expression.* Prague : Arbor vitae, 1997, p. 12.

64 ROLOFF, Volker. Einleitung. In ROLOFF, Volker – RIßLER-PIPKA, Nanette – QUEIPO MAURER, Isabel (ed.) *Die grausamen Spiele des »Minotaure«.* Bielefeld : transcript, 2015, p. 7.

65 This can be seen not least in the surrealistic games of the community, in which free choice of means of expression is allowed in the design of the creative answers to the questions asked. EFFENBERGER, Vratislav. Variants, Constants and Dominants of Surrealism. In *Analogon. Surrealismus – Psychoanalýza – Antropologie – Příčné Vědy. Z dějin československého surrealismu 1968-1989*, 2004, No. 41/42, p. iii.

66 TIPPNER 2016, p. 148.

Figure 11: J. Švankmajer: Útěk z deprese (Escape from Depression)/ film script In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Sféra snu (Sphere of Dreams). 1983, p. 28/ 29. Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague)

and metamorphosis; it releases from the depths of the unconscious a kind of mental catalyst, the action of which amplifies and strengthens the whole complex of consciousness."[67] The source of surrealistic poetic texts are their own sensations and subjective images, which are expressed in the unconscious. Thereby it is the imagination that leads all creative processes. It creates mental pictures and provokes associations that find material expression in the texts. Thus, writings reflect and transform personal thoughts into words and language of different forms, such as poems, essays, and autobiographical tracts. Thereby visual elements blur in textual contributions and vice versa.

Švankmajer's film script *Útěk z deprese* (Escape from Depression) in *Sphere of Dream* is presented in fragments and describes a shopping scene: The first-person narrator enters a store with the intention of buying leeks, which at the moment of selection turns into garbage and then into books (picture 11).[68]

Švankmajer's contribution is based on dreams of different nights, which he brings together in his screenplay as an imaginative cycle. His dreamy experiences deal with personal moments and play with emotions like shame and excitement:[69] *"135/close up – My hands go through piles of nothing but trash. The camera pans from the dirty hands to my desperate face. 137/half detail – I'm all nervous*

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67 *"Poesie není poznáním v tradičním, běžném slova smyslu. Je více analogickou, magickou transformací a metamorfosou; uvolňuje z hlubin nevědomí jakýsi mentální katalysátor, jehož působením se umocňuje a zesiluje celý komplex vědomí."* See SURREALISTICKÁ SKUPINA V ČESKOSLOVENSKU. Nalezené vědomí. In ŠVANKMAJER, Jan – KOUBEK, Jiří (ed.). *Opak zrcadla. Surrealistická poesie. Antologie tvorby Surrealistické skupiny v Československu 1980-1985*. Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1979, p. 7.

68 ŠVANKMAJER, Jan. Útěk z deprese. In *Sféra snu.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1983, pp. 28-30.

69 The script includes other dreamy scenes reflecting experiences of his childhood and thoughts on his work, including a meeting of the surrealist community with André Breton, where Švankmajer presents his game *Restaurátor*. The excerpts are not shown in *Sphere of Dream*. SCHMITT, Bertrand. Detailed biography with commentary (II) 1971-1989. In DRYJE, František – SCHMITT, Bertrand (ed.). *Jan Švankmajer. Dimensions of Dialogue. Between Film and Fine Art*. Prague : Arbor Vitae, 2013, p. 145.

and always going through the shelves with the garbage. The camera pans to my hands. The piles of garbage suddenly turn into orderly rows of books. My hands are now going through the shelves full of book."[70] According to the dream protocols, the passages are based on mental images, which are transformed into written scenes in their reflection. *Escape from Depression* materializes the unconscious and poetic

Figure 12: E. Švankmajerová: Nespavost (Insomnia)/ painting
In: Surrealistická skupina v Československu (ed.): Sféra snu (Sphere of Dreams). 1983, p.10.
Source: By the kind permission of the Archiv Libri Prohibti (Prague)

processes of the author. However, the film project does not aim at the technical realization but rather tries to convey fictional images and create further ones in its appropriation.[71]

By transforming his dreamy experiences into an imaginative script, Švankmajer plays with commonalities between film and the phenomenon of dream, which Dryje presents in his treatise *sen a film* (dream and film, 1981). Dreams, like a film, appear as a performance that makes time and space, independent of reality, tangible in an imaginative way. In his leading role the spectator meets imaginary characters and objects and experiences a number of different states. A film, which reproduces an apparent external reality, possesses the mysterious ability to stimulate psychological processes and create inner images – just like the process of dreaming.[72]

Conversely, the artistic contributions are also characterized by narrative elements. The painted work *Nespavost* (Insomnia) by Švankmajerová depicts an imaginative creature in the shape of a mouse with grotesquely frightening human features.[73] The mysterious creature appears in its ghostly form with empty eyes as a threat on a pedestal – the danger of dreams.

Švankmajerová complements the picture by describing the negative experience of insomnia at night, which she calls desperate hours (zoufalé hodiny): *"Bad luck. I often see four o'clock on the dial – what a sad view. [...] When I am in my bed, which is like mousetraps, I have gone through so many moments without*

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70 „*135/D – Nyní se moje ruce přehrabují již jen v hromadě odpadků. Kamera panoramuje ze špinavých rukou na mou zoufalou tvář. [...] 137/PD – Celý znervóznělý, přehrabují se v regálech s odpadky. Kamera panoramuje s mýma rukama. Hromady odpadků poznenáhlu přecházejí ve srovnané řady knih. Moje ruce se nyní přehrabují v regálech plných knih.*" See ŠVANKMAJER 1983, p. 29.

71 OWEN, Jonathan. Films for the Drawer: Postwar Czech Surrealism and the Impossible Encounter with Cinema. In FERREBOEUF, Rebecca – NOBLE, Fiona – PLUNKETT, Tara (ed.) *Preservation, Radicalism, and the Avant-Garde Canon*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016, p. 243.

72 In the psychoanalytical sense, film and dreams can unconsciously influence different levels of human behaviour and psyche, where the principle of reality becomes the pleasure principle. DRYJE, František. sen a film. In *Sféra snu.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1983, p. 27.

73 ŠVANKMAJEROVÁ, Eva. Nespavost. In *Sféra snu.* Geneva (Prague) : Le La, 1983, p. 10.

blinking."[74] The contribution *Insomnia* transforms the narrative sensations into a surrealistic visual language. The words become images and tell a personal story: The bed – the mousetrap – appears as a place of imprisonment, which terrifies the own ego in the form of the mouse, and the symbol of insomnia is a ghostly and frightening human experience which manifests itself in the expression of a face. This is a view into the abyss, into which one is torn by sleep deprivation. Švankmajerová's visual work plays with imagination and its own experiences in its realization: "*I do, however, know very precisely that at times when I could hardly sleep at all, pictures used to bounce into my mind. Blinks. Condensed spasmodic reports or visions. As if I was sleeping dreaming.*"[75] The work *Insomnia* appears as a visual analogy of inner processes. The term "insomnia" becomes a poetic image that is far from logical explanations and rational interpretations. It is based – as Švankmajerová emphasizes – on personal experience and unfolds its magical meaning through imaginative associations and illusory transformation.

The inseparable interconnection of image and text becomes an autonomous creative element. As a consequence, new forms of expression and artistic genres emerge, which require changed patterns of perception and reception.[76] The reflective appropriation of the works plays with conventional reading and viewing habits and causes dissolution of classical genres.

Surrealistic pictorial works are not only seen, but read. The creative works thus extend the traditionally ascribed visual form of appropriation of pictorial works by means of media combination and permanent reference by a further level of sensory experience. Nevertheless, the transformation of written sources into visual material shifts the process of reading to the act of seeing.

The multi-layered references require a constant alternation between reading and seeing in order to open up encoded contents in the objects and texts. They challenge the viewer by interrupting rational linear reading experiences and seemingly logical forms of reception.

In the mediation of surrealistic contributions, the community makes various forms of received reading available. Reading is not only a passive act; it also unfolds creative elements. Švankmajer's imaginary script creates poetic scenes that create images and convey emotions. In the detailed description of individual passages and the recording of concrete camera angles, the script becomes an imaginative film guide. The dreamy segments do not communicate real moments. They stimulate the reader's imaginative vision by linking everyday experiences – such as shopping – with fictional events. In combination with captured feelings

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74 "*Jaká smůla. Často vídávám na ciferníku čtyři ranní hodiny – jak truchlivý výhled.* […] *Když už jsem ve svých postelích, zdáli podobných pastičkám na myši, proválela tolik chvil, aniž jsem cosi mhouřila.*" See ŠVANKMAJEROVÁ 1983, p. 10.
75 See SVANKMAJEROVÁ, Eva. In ŠVANKMAJER, Jan (ed.) *Evašvankmajerjan: Anima Animus Animation, Between Film and Free Expression.* Prague : Arbor vitae, 1997, p. 136.
76 LOMMEL, Michael – ROLOFF, Volker – SCHUHEN, Gregor. Intermedialität im europäischen Surrealismus. In *SPIEL (Siegener Periodicum für internationale empirische Literaturwissenschaft)*, 2001, No. 20 (2), p. 246.

(*"I'm all nervous..."*), they evoke associations that provoke familiar sensations in the recipient. In the concept of imagination, the film is realized in the mind's eye of the reader and unfolds its artistic potential.[77] The representation in the fragments stimulates the thoughts of the viewer, who can continue or end the film in his or her personal imagination. Reading is thus not only an active experience, but it also makes the spectators an extended component of surrealistic practice through their own inspiration.

In the mental realization of the film, the communication of surrealist theory is at the same time evident. The script – between dream protocol and film – puts Dryje's analytical description *dream and film* into practice by means of an imaginary performance. Thus, in *Sphere of Dream*, not only theoretical processes are presented, but can be experienced and verified in artistic appropriation.

In the coherence of image and text, seeing and reading as part of the creative and theoretical programme, the surrealist community creates a specific form of art mediation. *Sphere of Dream* is linked to the concept of the implied reader, which in the presentation of the contributions takes into account the construct of effect and the perception of the recipient. In the principle of repetition and the model of the imagination, the unrepresented – such as the film *Escape from Depression* – is presented in the consciousness of the reader.[78] Reading is declared a dynamic process that triggers interactions and communication structures between author, work, and reader.[79] At the same time, a liberating force is ascribed to reading. In the reflection of the works, the group stimulates unconscious processes, which in the practical implementation unfold a consciousness-creating and psychological effect. The knowledge gained leads to a modification of perception, which allows a different view of the environment.

Sphere of Dream – exhibition catalogue or exhibition?

In its (interactive) characteristics, the catalogue appears as the projection of an ideal exhibition format. The surrealistic "book" becomes a space of experience that puts the viewer in a position to receive, touch, and create art.

In his essay *The New Art of Making Books* (1975), the artist Ulises Carrión defines a book as a sequence of spaces:[80] "*What a book is. A book is a sequence of spaces. Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment – a book is also a sequence of moments.* [...] *A book is a space-time sequence.*"[81] In accordance with Carrión's conception, *Sphere of Dream* forms three thematic (exhibition) sequences in its

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77 In times of political repression, however, this imaginative strategy shows itself to be a possibility for realizing the film. Švankmajer was banned from working as a filmmaker in the 1970s.

78 *"Das Konzept des impliziten Lesers umschreibt daher einen Übertragungsvorgang, durch den sich die Textstrukturen über die Vorstellungsakte in den Erfahrungshaushalt des Lesers übersetzen."* [*"The concept of implied reader therefore describes a transfer process through which text structures are translated via the act of representation into the reader's experience balance."*]. See ISER, Wolfgang. *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*. Munich : UTB, 1976, p. 67.

79 ISER 1976, p. 176.

80 DEINERT, Katja. *Künstlerbücher. Historische, systematische und didaktische Aspekte*. Hamburg : Dr. Kovač, 1995, p. 210.

81 See CARRIÓN, Ulises. *Second Thoughts*. Amsterdam : VOID distributors, 1980, pp. 7-8.

classification: I/ Between Sleep and Waking (p. 4-10); II/ Through Inner Vision (p. 11-19), III/ Night Visits (p. 20-32). The recipient becomes a visitor who walks through the rooms. He can pass the works by turning the pages; he can stand still and experience the work by reading and seeing, and interact with the work by repeating it. The temporal component is realized by leafing through the works in the sense of the duration of an exhibition visit.

The production of the catalogue reflects its organizational elements: in the design, the community assumes the function of curator, who decides on the selection of works and their hanging. At the same time, it holds the position of the exhibiting artist, who makes his or her works available.[82] The surrealistic samizdat catalogue reflects the idea of a portable museum.[83] This museum concept expresses the intention to create a mobile exhibition project.[84] In its implementation, the self-published volume of the community follows the tradition of surrealist exhibition staging. The catalogue presents itself as a world of experience in its own way.[85]

The group conceives its installation as a "social" event, not as a passive act of observation.[86] It does not simply present surrealist works but stages a space for specific perception, experience, and emotion. They understand their exhibition as an active experience that challenges and provokes the "visitor" through his or her senses, while at the same time providing creative and theoretical guidelines. Their modes of representation play with the confusion of the recipient and ascribe to him a central role in the realization of their contributions. Through imaginative stimulation, the viewer can watch films and participate in a playful performance. He can interactively experience the medial diversity and universality of creation.

The community project takes the format of the exhibition out of the gallery space or museum and transforms it into a mobile (book) form. The group shows that art does not receive its creative value because it staged in a gallery or is present in a museum. It does not acquire its significance in the local context, but rather in the reflection of individual creative impulses independent of spatial conditions. In passing on the samizdat, any place can become a place of experiencing art. No specific institution is required for this.

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82 The catalogue points out parallels to the exhibition practice of the community since its foundation. As a tendency, all organizational tasks for the installation remain within the group.

83 In addition, the surrealist catalogue shows parallels to the idea of the *Musée Imaginaire* by André Malraux (1947). In his paper, Malraux contrasts the reproduction of art in the context of the museum and the illustrated book. It is not about technical criteria (Walter Benjamin), but rather about the form of archiving and the contextualization of art. Malraux discusses photographic reproduction in this context. Despite the overlap in the concept of the surrealist catalogue in Malraux's explanations, due to the diversity of media – from commentary to theoretical treatises to games – only a reference can be made at this point. For more, see: MALRAUX, André. *Le musée imaginaire*. Paris : Gallimard, 1996. GEIMER 2009, p. 80.

84 Marcel Duchamp created an early precursor with *La Boîte-en-valise*, which contains reproductions and objects such as photographs.

85 Numerous surrealist exhibitions are staged as experiences, including the exhibition *Princip Slasti* (Pleasure Principle, Prague, Bratislava, Brno 1968).

86 TIPPNER 2016, p. 59.

In this context, the catalogue as a surrealist strategy questions the principle of the exhibition as an act of displaying material works. Through a change of media, the community presents its works in their physical absence. Nevertheless, the images and texts in their reproductions are not to be understood as simple copies. They create something new, which in its conceptual mediation makes the surrealist guidelines accessible. The communication of the creative practice is not tied to a concrete object, material, or a certain form.[87] The community designs an exhibition without art and points out that the reception of art is a form of open dynamic thinking and not the contemplation of an aestheticized artefact.[88]

The surrealist concept: the samizdat catalogues and their functions

The complex formal, content-related, and conceptual references assign different positions to the samizdat catalogues. In the selection, compilation, and presentation of the works, the self-published projects appear as a self-archiving medium. The community adopts the principles of collecting, preserving, and researching. It systematizes its practice in a context and makes it accessible. In the process, a surrealist archive, which is a place of encounter, communication, and creation as well as a repository and producer of knowledge, is created.

In its structural implementation it determines the form of interpretation and the reception of art. The community makes use of documentary methods of arrangement and intermediality, which not only convey concrete content, but also surrealistic creative premises. The recipient not only determines these in terms of content but also actively experiences them. At the same time, the group-internal selection of the material and the form of its presentation generate subjective views of the theme.[89] The catalogue communicates its own view on everyday phenomena and thus the perception of the environment and the world.[90] The strategy of archiving is shown in this context as a process that creates its own realities through self-reflection.

In the reappraisal of surrealist practice, the catalogue nevertheless shows itself to be the result of collective action. It is the result of joint reflection, action, and creation – from individual contributions to a collection of works, from the idea of the design and the concept to material implementation. It is only through the interplay of the individual elements that the surrealist project, whose concept reflects a specific conception of art, emerges. Artistic creation is understood as a dynamic process of permanent renewal which is not bound to material and media forms of expression.

In its multi-layered references, the community's catalogue projects refer to different constructions of meaning. In times when there is no public reception of the collective surrealist creation in museums, institutions, and the scientific commu-

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87 Only the catalogue can be seen as a material work in its collective production.
88 Without Art understands art in terms of its representational nature.
89 This also includes, for example, the capture in the fragment.
90 DEINERT 1995, p. 209.

nity, the group itself provides a remedy by presenting and reappraising its own view of Czech surrealism and group history. They make their activities visible and permanently accessible, and this takes place within a closed framework. They record and document ephemeral actions and presents them in their ideal exhibitions. At the same time, the community designs a creative object that reflects the guidelines of its practice. The internal self-publishing becomes a symbol of surrealistic diversity that cannot be reduced to a moment of meaning.

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Beatlephiles and Zappists: Rock Fandom in Communist Czechoslovakia in the Context of the Scene in Brno in the 1980s[*]

Jan Blüml

Abstract

BLÜML, Jan: Beatlephiles and Zappists: Rock Fandom in Communist Czechoslovakia in the Context of the Scene in Brno in the 1980s.

The history of rock in Communist Europe has been viewed by a number of domestic and foreign authors as a series of events with a dominant political content, either in the form of a general youth revolt or directly in the spirit of anti-communist opposition. In this regard, the present study extends the current simplifying concept with an emphasis on the reception history, including relevant issues related to the typology of listeners and aesthetics. The primary subject of this paper is the reception of two of the most influential representatives of Anglo-American popular music in Communist Czechoslovakia, these being the Beatles and Frank Zappa. The reception of both artistic subjects is reflected in the specific space of the Brno scene of the 1980s, within the framework of the artist fan clubs which had no parallel anywhere else in the country. The study demonstrates the specifics of American and British rock fandom in the given time and space and challenges the long-held narrative about the supremacy of the political functions of rock behind the Iron Curtain.

Keywords: The Beatles, Frank Zappa, Czechoslovakia, Communism, rock music, rock fandom, Brno, Moravia, reception history

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The present study examines the reception of Anglo-American popular music in the specific environment of the South Moravian metropolis of Brno in the period of late normalization. The topic is analysed through the history of fan clubs which were established in the second largest city of the Czech Socialist Republic[1] during the 1980s and whose systematic and long-term functioning at that time – at least according to the current state of knowledge – was unparalleled anywhere else in the country. This was first the fan club of the British band the Beatles formed in 1982 in Hrušovany, near Brno, and second, the fan club of a representative of rock in the United States, Frank Zappa, established in Brno in 1986. Both institutionalized communities, concentrated around musical idols from the West, shared roots in the Czechoslovak and Moravian rock tradition. Additionally, each of them benefited in an original way from the possibilities provided by the Brno scene at that time. Based on archival documents and interviews with the protagonists in the described events, the article maps out the activities of both

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1 As a member state of the federal Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the years 1969 – 1990. In 1980, Brno had almost 400,000 inhabitants, and the capital city of Prague had approximately 1,100,000 inhabitants.

clubs, not only in the light of contemporary cultural policy and the tradition of Czechoslovak rock fandom, but also taking into account the specific functions that the Beatles and Frank Zappa fulfilled within Czechoslovak culture over the long run.[2]

Both the Beatles and Frank Zappa became the subject of original Czech monographs during the Communist era, which did not apply to anyone else in the field of foreign rock. In the first case, the authors were Jiří Černý and his wife Miroslava Černá (*Poplach kolem Beatles*, 1966) and Antonín Matzner (*Beatles: výpověď o jedné generaci*, 1987); in the second case, it was Petr Dorůžka (*Šuplík plný Zappy*, 1984). The first LP by the Beatles was officially released in Czechoslovakia in 1969 (*A Collection of Beatles Oldies but Goldies*), followed by several others.[3] The release of music by the Mothers of Invention was planned by the Supraphon Gramophone Club as early as 1972,[4] while the first and last official medium (cassette tape) with Zappa's music appeared only in 1977.[5] For many listeners, the artists in question represented the counterparts or archetypes of rock of the 1960s: American and British style – the first rational and critically focused on the present, the second intuitive and with a nostalgic glance to the past.[6] This confrontation actually took place directly through Zappa's album *We're Only in It for the Money* (1968) parodying the fantastic world of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) by the Beatles.

The polarization of the mainstream band the Beatles and the underground artist Frank Zappa took on a special meaning in the Czechoslovak reception of popular music during the normalization process after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968. While the Beatles became part of the so-called official scene, for example, through nostalgic songs by pop singers such as Karel Gott,[7] through presentations in television series,[8] through propaganda films such as *Atentát na kulturu* (1977) or through ironic allusions in materials such as Úkoly české alternativní hudby (1979) by Josef Vlček, Frank Zappa acquired the status of an iconic figure of underground and alternative rock, where he inspired groups such as the Plastic People of the Universe[9] or personalities such as Mikoláš Chadima.[10] Despite a number of natural overlaps, in terms of the Czechoslovak reception of Anglo-American popular music, in this sense, one can actually register two relatively distinctive audiences – "Beatlephiles" and "Zappists" – more or less defining themselves in relation to one another in terms

2   With its emphasis on the history of music reception, including relevant aesthetic and other issues, the article is based in the field of musicology. Its primary ambition is not to examine fandom in terms of the formation of social and other identities, as other disciplines, including Media Studies, do. SHUKER, Roy. *Popular Music: The Key Concepts*. London and New York : Routledge, 2005, pp. 98-99.
3   DIESTLER, Radek. *Cizí desky v zemích českých, aneb, Ochutnávka na samém kraji útesu*. Praha : Popmuzeum, 2008.
4   Z domova. In *Melodie*, 1972, Vol. 10, No. 6, p. 172.
5   DIESTLER 2008.
6   ŠŤASTNÝ, Jaroslav. Zappa jako „vážný skladatel". In DORŮŽKA, Petr. *Šuplík plný Zappy*. Praha : Volvox Globator, 2016, pp. 209-210.
7   See the list of songs at Brouci.com, https://rb.gy/j1imry.
8   For instance, *Inženýrská odysea* (1979), *Dobrá voda* (1982) or *My všichni školou povinní* (1984).
9   RIEDEL, Jaroslav. *Plastic People a český underground*. Praha : Galén, 2016, p. 123.
10   Cf. CHADIMA, Mikoláš. *Alternativa I*. Praha : Galén, 2015; CHADIMA, Mikoláš. *Alternativa II*. Praha : Galén, 2018.

of aesthetics, especially in relation to humour and irony in rock, but partly also by their attitudes to the social functions of music.

It was not just Zappa, however, whose name was strongly politicized in the Czech popular music context, at least by certain social circles. The second cult figure, unparalleled among the idols of Anglo-American popular music in Czechoslovakia, was the founder of the Beatles, John Lennon, whose tragic passing on 8 December 1980, was described as the "death of the century" by the dissident and future president Václav Havel: *"Perhaps because it so urgently transcends itself; as if there was latently present more tragically distinctive contexts, problems and crisis aspects of today's world than in any other incident of this kind."*[11] This link to the well-known figure of anti-communist opposition also existed in the case of Frank Zappa, whom Havel met personally immediately after the Velvet Revolution in January 1990. After Zappa's death on 4 December 1993, Havel was the author of the musician's obituary, where he called the American artist the "God" of Czech underground, a great rock personality and his friend.[12] The unique process of canonization of both artistic subjects was later underlined by extraordinary events, such as the exhibition of the Czech Museum of Music *Beatlemania!* (2010)[13] and the interdisciplinary conference *The Phenomenon of Zappa* (2013) held by the Department of Czech Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of South Bohemia.[14]

The following comparative paper on both Moravian fan clubs based in Brno will be closely connected with the broader issue of the reception of Anglo-American popular music in Czechoslovakia in the aforementioned sense. Regarding the international discussion on the functioning of Western rock in European Communist countries, the text primarily follows Ewa Mazierska's current critique of the "Cold War Paradigm",[15] which rejects the simplistic perception of Eastern Bloc rock history as established in the early 1990s,[16] this being a view which attributes the genre primarily with revolt and anti-communist attitudes, for example in the spirit of Leslie Woodhead's later book *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*.[17] In this regard, the article seeks to demonstrate that Anglo-American rock music, in many of its genre variations (even ideologically quite contradictory), functioned behind the Iron Curtain primarily as an aesthetic object; moreover, often under the auspices and with considerable support of official institutions. It additionally aims to display the extent to which Moravian rock culture differed from that of the capital city of Prague – the central scene which through selected local witnesses served as one of the starting points for the narrative

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11   HAVEL, Václav. *Dopisy Olze (Spisy 5)*. Praha : Torst, 1999, p. 232.
12   The original text in English (*The New Yorker*, December 20, 1993) was translated and published in samizdat *Zapparition*, No. 1, later also in *Zappostrophe*, 1996, No. 45, p. 5.
13   See the catalogue *Beatlemánie!* Praha : Národní muzeum, 2010.
14   See PAPOUŠEK, Vladimír – SKALICKÝ, David (eds). *Fenomén Zappa*. Praha : Akropolis, 2016.
15   MAZIERSKA, Ewa. Introduction. Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the "Cold War Paradigm". In MAZIERSKA, Ewa (ed.) *Popular Music in Eastern Europe*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 3-4.
16   Especially by RYBACK, Timothy. *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, 1954 – 1988*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1990, and RAMET, Sabrina Petra (ed.) *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Boulder : Westview Press, 1994.
17   WOODHEAD, Leslie. *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin. The Untold Story of a Noisy Revolution*. New York : Bloomsbury, 2013.

of the "revolutionary role of the electric guitar in Communist Europe" presented in Timothy Ryback's paradigmatic work *Rock Around the Bloc* (1990).[18]

"The Beatles' and Ex-Beatles' Music Friends Club": Between the Cult of John Lennon and the Brigades in "Action Z" (1982 – 1990)

Fan clubs of foreign popular music stars began to emerge in Czechoslovakia especially in the liberal atmosphere of the second half of the 1960s, as evidenced by magazines such as *Melodie* and *Mladý svět*. For example in 1969, the latter published a complaint about the lack of seriousness of the official Czechoslovak Beatles fan club by the reader Zdena Homolková from Prague. Apart from the entry pass card, the author of the complaint had received no information during her four-year membership and expressed her outrage even in a letter sent to the Beatles' central fan institution in London.[19] Another magazine with a focus on fan clubs since mid-1969 was *Pop Music Expres*: in the twelfth issue of the same year, for instance, the address of the "Official Beatles Fan Club the Czechoslovak", led by Pavel Chaloupka and based in the North Bohemian town of Ústí nad Labem, was published.[20] As far as the United States scene was concerned, in the second half of the 1960s there were fan clubs for Paul Anka, Carl Perkins, and up until 1969 also a fan club for Elvis Presley in Prague;[21] there is no evidence of the existence of a Frank Zappa fan club from this period.

Similarly to *Pop Music Expres*, which was abolished after a short existence in 1968 – 1969, fan clubs of Anglo-American popular music stars soon succumbed to normalization pressure and disappeared as well. Their partial return occurred only in the specific conditions of the 1980s, with the gradual rehabilitation of rock in all its forms and mostly as a result of the activity of the second rock generation – a generation which did not actively experience the "golden sixties" but learned about it from parents or older siblings and friends. The above-mentioned generational feature did not concern only Eastern Bloc countries, however, but characterised, in a way, popular music globally. The original British fan club of the "Fab Four" ended, for example, after the band broke up in the early 1970s, and one of its successor organizations became the London Beatles Fan Club founded in 1988 by Richard Porter (b. 1963) – a devoted fan of the group since the mid-1970s, who was significantly affected by the death of John Lennon and who established the club after several years of musical correspondence acquaintances.[22] Similar starting points also characterised the founders of the Hrušovany Beatles fan club, which tested the possibilities of official existence at the cost of concessions to contemporary cultural-political norms.

One of the direct impulses for founding the club was the aforementioned death of John Lennon on December 8, 1980. As Timothy Ryback writes, the assassi-

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18 Cf. RYBACK, Timothy. Rock Around the Bloc Revisited: Researching Pop Culture in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union Then and Now. In BLÜML, Jan – KAJANOVÁ, Yvetta – RITTER, Rüdiger (eds.) *Popular Music in Communist and Post-Communist Europe*. Berlin : Peter Lang, 2019, pp. 13-22.
19 HOMOLKOVÁ, Zdena. Fan Club Beatles. In *Mladý svět*, 1969, Vol. 11, No. 36, p. 21.
20 Fan Cluby. In *Pop Music Expres*, 1969, Vol. 2, No. 12, p. 11.
21 ČERNOCKÝ, Pavel. *Takoví jsme byli*. Praha : Nakladatelství BVD, 2019, p. 144.
22 See London Beatles Walks with Richard Porter, https://beatlesinlondon.com/richard-porter/.

nation aroused an extraordinary response not only in the West but also across the countries of Communist Europe. The coverage of the official media often differed, as Lennon was celebrated as a progressive artist with left-wing views but was cursed as a celebrity of Western popular music.[23] On December 10, the press body of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, *Rudé právo*, printed a short mystifying report "He did not sign an autograph, he received a bullet";[24] consequently, on December 18, a brief reflection on Lennon's death followed, with an emphasis on the singer's leftist thoughts and with excerpts from the translated lyrics of the song *Imagine*.[25] The death of the famous ex-Beatle was also reported by *Mladá fronta*[26] and other dailies, as well as by the main popular music magazine *Melodie*.[27] Texts about Lennon also eventually appeared in unofficial literature, including the well-known underground samizdat *Vokno*.[28]

The death of John Lennon invoked a number of spontaneous reverential events by fans in many places across Czechoslovakia: in Prague, for example, it was the embankment, the park near Čertovka, and especially Velkopřevorské náměstí (Grand Priory Square) in the Kampa district, where in the mid-December 1980, on one of the adjacent walls, a symbolic grave (the so-called Lennon Wall)[29] was painted. The square consequently became a space where annual commemorative events took place, which in the second half of the 1980s turned into political demonstrations.[30] In 1982, a Lennon monument was erected in Liberec, and in the same year, an attempt to install a bust of John Lennon in Karlova Ves near Bratislava took place.[31] In later years, Beatles' fans established similar reverential spots in Zlín (then Gottwaldov), Plzeň[32] or Karlovy Vary.[33] At the end of 1981, an analogous place existed in Brno for a short time, specifically, a wooden cross with Lennon's photo on the wall in the Denis Gardens under Petrov hill. A year later, in September 1982, Jan Břečka and a secondary school classmate tried to restore the monument; they hammered a memorial poster into one of the niches on the wall next to the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul. This monument did not last long on the site either. The pietà for John Lennon in Brno gained an exceptional dimension when Břečka arranged a mass for the founder of the Beatles on December 5, 1982, at the parish office of the aforementioned cathedral: *"It was so easy that I couldn't believe it! True, the pastor kindly rejected the notes of 'Help' and 'A Day in the Life' imposed by me – the parishioners were allegedly used to different songs – but otherwise he wrote down and confirmed everything. […] I don't want to brag about it here, but I don't know of any other event of this kind that would have been settled anywhere else in the country in the early 1980s – and most importantly, that would*

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23 RYBACK 1990, pp. 191-193.
24 Nedal autogram, dostal kulku. In *Rudé právo*, 10 December 1980, p. 7.
25 kz. Malé zamyšlení. Vražda č. 701. In *Rudé právo*, 18 December 1980, p. 5.
26 išt. John Lennon: vyměnil život za autogram. In *Mladá fronta*, 10 December 1980, p. 5; ČECH, Karel. Smrt čtyřhlavého Orfea. In *Mladá fronta (Víkend)*, 10 January 1981, p. 8.
27 ČERNÝ, Jiří. Cesta do marmeládového nebe. In *Melodie*, 1981, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 46.
28 JIROUSOVÁ, Věra. V Praze na Kampě je hrob Johna Lennona. In *Vokno*, 1981, Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 80-82.
29 BLAŽEK, Petr – LAUBE, Roman – POSPÍŠIL, Filip. *Lennonova zeď v Praze*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2003, pp. 10-11.
30 BLAŽEK – LAUBE – POSPÍŠIL 2003, pp. 18-52.
31 BLAŽEK – LAUBE – POSPÍŠIL 2003, pp. 27-28.
32 BLAŽEK – LAUBE – POSPÍŠIL 2003, p. 46.
33 BLAŽEK – LAUBE – POSPÍŠIL 2003, pp. 27-28.

have actually taken place. Although it was just an ordinary Mass, John's name was actually heard at it."[34] In January 1981, the later founder of the club in Hrušovany, Petr Dorňák (b. 1955; today a journalist using his original name Petr Gratias, which will be used in the following text), presented a two-part programme with recorded music about Lennon in the cultural hall in Černovice; a month later, on February 2, 1981, the Brno Small Theatre of Music also presented a show about Lennon.[35]

As Petr Gratias recalls, he was deeply touched by John Lennon's death, which led to thoughts about establishing a club dedicated to the "Fab Four", along with other friends whom he met with regularly at Saturday's unofficial record exchanges in the city centre under the Janáček Theatre. Gratias's friend Cyril Fanta (1948 – 1990), seven years older, was a crucial personality connected mainly with the administrative management of the club. According to Gratias, he was a decent, kind, and helpful man, a company clerk who loved the Beatles and who also excelled in organizational talent, had a business spirit, and could find or arrange anything.[36] Jan Břečka recalls Fanta from the records exchanges as a peculiar figure, usually with a black leather briefcase, crammed with high-quality black-and-white photographs not only of the Beatles. His flat usually served as a base where slides were taken and the music to be used in the club's programmes was recorded late into the night.[37] According to the renowned Czech journalist Jiří Černý, Fanta's home was more reminiscent of a Beatles' museum than a civil flat. Černý's memory dates back to the beginning of 1990, when Cyril Fanta died, and when his friends in the Rajhrad ceremonial hall allowed him to play *Mr. Moonlight*, his favourite song recorded by the Liverpool quartet.[38]

If Cyril Fanta ensured the club's administration, Petr Gratias focused mainly on its dramaturgy, the key part of which was educational programmes with recorded music accompanied by spoken word and audio-visual materials (in Czech the so-called listening programmes). From his first meetings with Gratias, Jan Břečka recalls his deep voice, George Harrison's visage from 1970 and an insightful talk about the life of the Beatles.[39] Gratias, a graduate of the Brno Polygraphic Secondary School, was employed as a proof-reader at *Rudé právo* until 1992 and loved 1960s and 1970s rock (but would take primarily the Beatles "to a desert island" if necessary).[40] He represented a specific type of recipient of popular music, which was formed under the musical changes at the turn of the 1970s. He was a recipient who in no way fit with the conservative idea still prevalent in the 1960s, for whom listening to popular music was a mere transition phase to understanding the "higher values" of classical music over the course of the natural process

34 BŘEČKA, Jan. Jak jsem potkal Beatles, manuscript, Brno 2008. Archive of J. Břečka.
35 JANÁČKOVÁ, Libuše. *Malé divadlo hudby a poezie v Brně 1962 – 1995*. Brno : Ústav hudební vědy FF MU, 2017, p. 222.
36 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.
37 BŘEČKA 2008.
38 ČERNÝ, Jiří. Beatlemanie česky i slovensky. In *Načerno: internetové stránky Jiřího Černého*, 8 September 2008, https://rb.gy/vl2yvj
39 BŘEČKA 2008.
40 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.

of maturing,[41] namely by connecting traditional attributes of classical music re-ception with admired "art rock". According to Gratias, listening to popular music assumed a necessary preparation in advance, including a knowledge of relevant historical and aesthetic contexts and song lyrics. Additionally, the autonomous listening function and respect for the totality of the musical work were essential – in the case of art rock specifically for the (concept) LP record: *"If I feel like Pink Floyd or King Crimson, I'll play the whole albums. […] I was an LP-man. I've never been into tapes or cassettes, nor have I recorded from the radio. The record was an artefact for me, even at the cost of it being more expensive."*[42]

In addition to Cyril Fanta and Petr Gratias, the founders of the fan club also includ-ed the aforementioned Jan Břečka (b. 1966). He described the inaugural meeting of the club on November 20, 1982, in the lounge of the restaurant Na Benátkách in Brno-Židenice with regard to the overall character of the emerging fellowship: *"I remember going to the meeting with the uplifting feeling that I was becoming part of a community of Beatles lovers that accepted me as an equal, although I was much younger than the others. For the meeting, I properly 'fashioned' myself with my old grandfather's coat, beads on my neck, leather pendants and a cross, lon-ger hair, just 'hippie', as it should be. Then I was a little surprised that apart from the real 'hairies'* [máničky] *Petr Dorňák and Bohouš Šašecí (both in 'Plastic Ono Nuclear Band' T-shirts), everyone else looked like completely ordinary 'guys' with their wives, moreover, as I later found out, many of them were members of the Com-munist party."*[43] Cyril Fanta, in whose home town of Hrušovany near Brno (at that time a village with almost three thousand inhabitants and less than 20 kilometres from Brno) the club was finally established, was also a member of the Communist Party. As Petr Gratias confirms, it would have been quite difficult to establish such a club directly in Brno at the time.[44] The club existed until 1990, when it slowly and quietly *"disappeared into the lost"*,[45] not only due to general cultural transfor-mations, but mainly due to the premature death of the leading integrating per-sonality of Cyril Fanta.

The originally intended name "The Beatles' and Ex-Beatles' Music Friends Club" had to be abandoned due to the cultural-political norms of the cover organization, which was the local Educational Institute (Osvětová beseda). Accordingly, the com-munity was given a neutral label "The Friends of Music Club at OB Hrušovany near Brno". As an official organization, the club was subject to appropriate legislation: it elected a chairman, two vice-chairmen, an executive-secretary, a treasurer-manager and an audit committee; every first Saturday of the month, a commit-tee meeting was supposed to be held. In addition to paying membership fees in the amount of 50 crowns, members were also obliged to work five brigade-hours
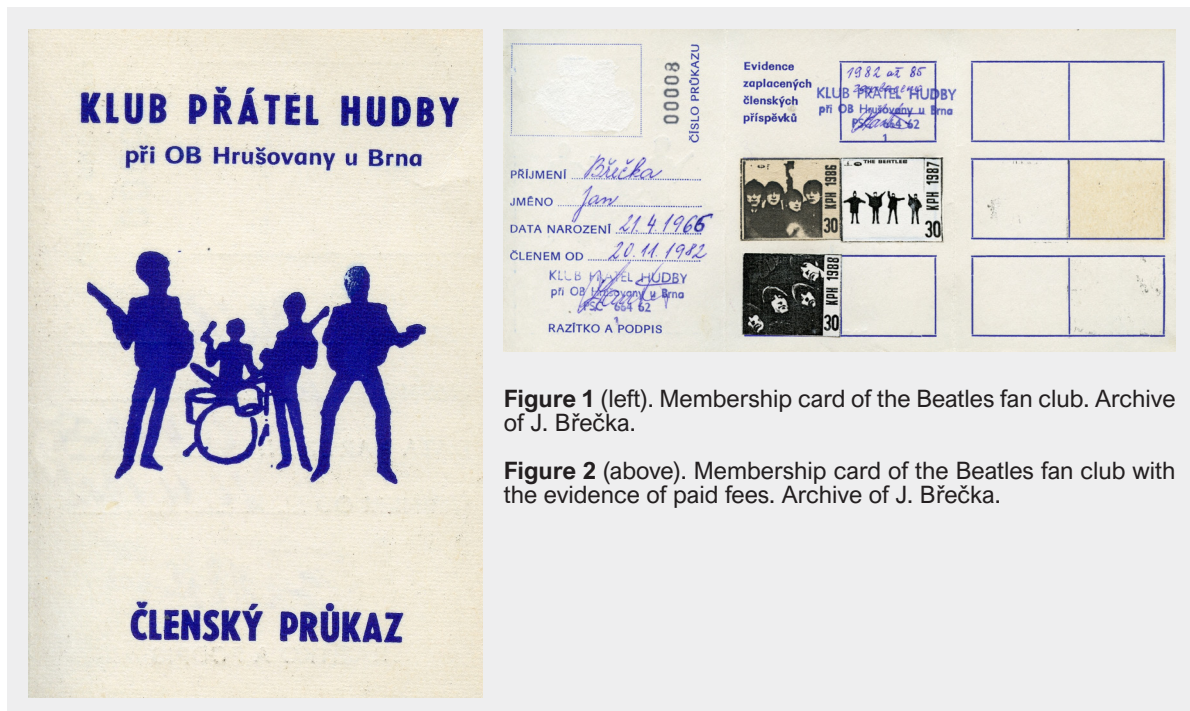
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41 BLÜML, Jan. *Progresivní rock: světová a československá scéna ve vybraných reflexích*. Praha : Togga, 2017, pp. 269-270.
42 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.
43 BŘEČKA 2008.
44 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.
45 BŘEČKA 2008.

Figure 1 (left). Membership card of the Beatles fan club. Archive of J. Břečka.

Figure 2 (above). Membership card of the Beatles fan club with the evidence of paid fees. Archive of J. Břečka.

per year in "Action Z", organized by the Hrušovany National Committee; at the end of 1983, the club reported a solid result of 105 hours worked.[46]

The membership base of the club was originally comprised of fans from Brno and its surroundings; however, over the course of the decade it gradually expanded with members from more distant parts of Moravia and Bohemia through pen-pal acquaintances and other contacts. In 1984, when the age for joining the club was lowered from 18 to 16, the membership base included 30 people. By the end of the following year it was already 64 members; at the end of March 1988, the club had 144 members, and by the end of the 1980s, it had grown to 181 members.[47] Let us add that it was an active club for the entire duration, where members were gradually accepted, but also expelled, for example, for non-fulfilment of obligations, but also at their own request (due to lack of interest in regular "meetings", participation in brigades, etc.). In order to promote personal contacts and exchange information, the club regularly published the members' addresses in its fanzine. Thanks to this, there is a clear picture as to what kind of impact this seemingly inconspicuous initiative led by several Beatles' lovers at the specific time of late normalization and in a space outside the centre, had. The directory from 1986, which contains 104 addresses, is dominated by members from the Brno region, but one can also find the South Moravian towns of Břeclav or Znojmo and moving to the north, towns such as Olomouc, Jeseník, Ostrava, Třinec, Český Těšín or Karviná. Outside Moravia, the club had members in East Bohemian Hradec Králové, West Bohemian Plzeň, or in South Bohemian České Budějovice, Strakonice, Písek, Kardašova Řečice or Černá v Pošumaví; fans from Prague showed up later. In 1986, the oldest member of the club was 41 years old and the youngest

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46   The following information regarding the club activities comes largely from the fanzine *Občasník*, which is stored in the private archive of J. Břečka.
47   BŘEČKA, Jan. Ohlédnutí za starými časy. In *Beatles včera a dnes*, 1995, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 10.

was 16 years old. Most of the members belonged to the second rock generation (69 members in total); specifically, these were fans born in the 1960s, therefore between 17 and 26 years of age in 1986. There were 14 women among the club members in 1986.

From the very beginning, the primary activity of the club consisted of presentations of educational listening programmes based on the model of Jiří Černý's "anti-discotheques",[48] but also in accordance with the long tradition of Czechoslovak Music Theatres.[49] As early as 1983, the club presented a two-part programme about John Lennon by Petr Gratias, as well as *Concert for Bangladesh* and *Paul McCartney – Wings*. The participation of almost 100 paying spectators in each of these programmes, including reruns, i.e. reaching the maximum capacity of the U Nádraží wine bar in which the club activities took place, represented an immediate success. Additionally, the interest fused several generations, when the age limit of the visitors ranged from 14 to 60 years of age. Representatives of the Local National Committee also took part in the first premiere about Lennon with an atypical dramaturgy, as Jan Břečka recalls: *"I don't know anyone who, before or after, included 'songs' from the very first solo albums of John and Yoko in such a programme (I mean 'Unfinished Music No. 1 – Two Virgins', 'Unfinished Music No. 2 – Life with the Lions' and 'Wedding Album'). The author of the programme, Petr Dorňák, did so, and I have to admit that the first listening was difficult even for us, the Beatles fans. Several local politicians came to the June premiere, I don't know, whether out of duty or curiosity, wondering what kind of club this guy Fanta actually ran. I will never forget the expression on their faces during the tiring demonstrations of Yoko Ono screaming or over the course of the recording of the 'wedding-album' calling of John and Yoko."*[50]
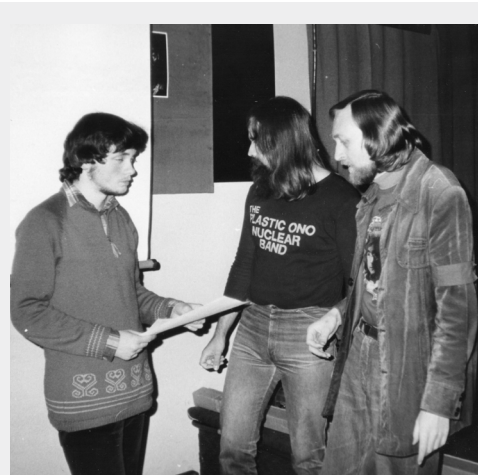
Figure 3. The wine bar in Hrušovany during the premiere of the listening programme dedicated to Lennon in 1983. Archive of J. Břečka.

Figure 4. Jan Břečka, Petr Gratias and Cyril Fanta (from left), 1983. Archive of J. Břečka.

48   RIEDEL, Jaroslav. *Kritik bez konzervatoře*. Praha : Galén, 2015, p. 223.
49   Založení Divadla hudby. In *Historie společnosti Supraphon*, https://rb.gy/bhtkcn
50   BŘEČKA 1995, p. 10.

Starting in 1984, Jiří Černý was a regular guest at the club, with listening programmes largely focused on the Beatles. The fact that the British band's output was still well received in the mid-1980s is confirmed by the evaluation of Jiří Černý's five-part series, presented during April and May 1985. A report from the club fanzine states that these shows attracted a great many people, with the number of visitors considerably exceeding the very limits of the wine bar. In addition, the Beatles allegedly once again proved to be attractive to all generations, with the youngest visitor being ten years old and the oldest 66 years old. The club contributed to the show's success by providing nearly 1,000 black-and-white and colour slides; therefore, *"the Beatles series strengthened the club's position, broadened its audience and increased its prestige."*[51]

Given the general demand for information on Western rock music, as well as due to current changes on the music scene, the club gradually expanded its scope to other areas. Apart from the Beatles, Jiří Černý himself provided the club with programmes about British art rock (Genesis, Pink Floyd, Jethro Tull), later also about hard rock (Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple), as well as about various historical and contemporary groups and personalities, such as Dire Straits, Bruce Springsteen, Talking Heads, Bob Dylan, Queen, U2, Peter Gabriel, Simon and Garfunkel, Manfred Mann, Frank Zappa, Okudzhava, Vysotsky, the Sex Pistols or the Velvet Underground. Especially at the end of the 1980s, the dramaturgy of the club reached considerable breadth thanks to new arriving younger members interested mostly in then fashionable heavy metal. This genre appeared not just in programmes with recorded music, but also as part of the club's new medium of concerts. In terms of live music, the club organized five continuations of the Hrušovanské rockování festival in the years 1984 – 1988, where, apart from local bands, well-known guests from Prague, such as Precedens, Vítkovo kvarteto or Mama Bubo, performed. It was specifically this event that entailed an extraordinary organizational burden and which mostly resulted in a "financial crash", which the club's management eventually compensated for with other activities. The audit carried out, for example, in 1987, indicates that the club's income for the previous year 1986 was 32 052 crowns (the amount was the cash balance from 1985, membership fees plus registration fees, tickets sold and subsidies from the Educational Institute), and the expenditure of 30 943 crowns (payment for productions, copyrights, travel expenses, posters, slides, paper, postage, rent, etc.). The final balance, therefore, was positive, with this also being the case for other years of operation.[52]
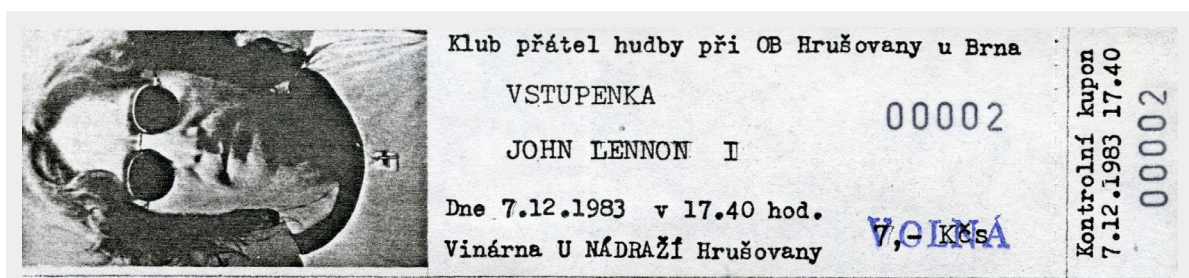

Figure 5. Ticket to the listening programme dedicated to Lennon. Archive of J. Břečka

51 ŠAŠECÍ, Bohumír. 5x The Beatles. In *Občasník*, 1985, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 2.
52 *Občasník*, 1987, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 2.

At present, the club's fanzine *Občasník* best testifies to the functioning of the institution. Although the historian Miroslav Vaněk, referring to information from the samizdat *Oslí uši* from 1990, states that the very first domestic purely musical samizdat was the Brno magazine *Druhá strana*,[53] the first issue of which was published in October 1985, the primacy actually goes to *Občasník*, the first issue of which appeared in autumn 1983. The fanzine is currently not registered, however, in the Prague Libri Prohibiti library and is only briefly mentioned in a thesis by Pavel Kadlec on the underground community in Dolní Kounice near Brno in the 1980s. Kadlec makes mention of it, along with additional unofficial publications from the Brno region, such as *Revue 88* or the music samizdat *Šot* from the late 1980s.[54]

Twenty-three issues were published over the period 1983 – 1989; with the exception of the first and last year, four issues were published annually. Cyril Fanta contributed to the publication of *Občasník* with a cyclostyle thanks to his acquaintances and ties to official institutions. The most prominent authors were Petr Gratias and Bohumír Šašecí, both employees of the state company Tisk. Although the club could not directly refer to the Beatles by its name, it expressed its affiliation with the English group with at least a small logo at the top of the cover, specifically through a typical silhouette of the performing band, immediately recognizable to fans. They also, of course, used photographs on the covers, which in most cases showed the Beatles or one of its members; only in a few cases did someone else appear here (Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Yoko Ono). From just three pages in the first issue of 1983, in the coming years, *Občasník* expanded to 22 pages in the third issue of 1986; the average fanzine range was usually around 12 pages. Similar to other semi-official or unofficial magazines focused on popular music and rock of the normalization era (typically the Jazz Section's bulletin *Jazz*), *Občasník* tended to have a broader genre scope, as was the case with the aforementioned listening programmes, on the basis of which thematic article-series were published.

The first major series, published in 1983 – 1986, was dedicated to the cult figure of John Lennon. In addition, Lennon was mentioned in other texts, including celebratory commemorations, such as Requiem for J. W. Lennon by Petr Gratias. From 1986 to 1988, Lennon was followed by a series on Ringo Starr and the next was on George Harrison. Other articles focused on diverse issues related to the Beatles: the band's history in dates, a series on the so-called bootlegs, unknown recordings, foreign as well as domestic cover versions, Beatles EPs with attempts at an analytical commentary and aesthetic evaluation. Apart from the Beatles, the periodical featured additional studies on the Doors, Leonard Cohen, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Waits, U2, Syd Barrett, Deep Purple, Bulat Okudzahava, and Scottish bands such as Simple Minds, Cocteau Twins, and Marillion. The authors of *Občasník* usually drew the information from the British magazines *Melody*

53 VANĚK, Miroslav. *Byl to jenom rock'n'roll? Hudební alternativa v komunistickém Československu 1956 – 1989*. Praha : Academia, 2010, p. 529.
54 KADLEC, Pavel. *Undergroundová komunita 1980 – 1991 v Dolních Kounicích: případová studie neoficiální kultury na malém městě*. Brno : Ústav hudební vědy FF MU, 2012, pp. 26-27.

Maker and *New Musical Express*, as well as from the West German *Musikexpress/Sounds*, and the Polish *Panorama*, not unlike the professionals from *Melodie*.

"Frank Zappa Fan Club, Brno, Czechoslovakia": Zappists in the Underground in the Era of "Glasnost" (1986 – 1991)

While the first news about the Beatles came to Czechoslovakia in 1963,[55] it was not until the last third of the 1960s that the local audience became slowly acquainted with Frank Zappa. This was mainly due to the Primitives Group in Prague, which was one of the first to focus on American avant-garde and which was later followed by the Plastic People of the Universe.[56] Around 1968, when the Beatles already enjoyed the recognition of a relatively wider strata of Czechoslovak society, the renowned musicologist Josef Kotek warned against Frank Zappa and the Western underground. In a report from the Internationale Essener Song Tage, he drew attention to the protests of Western European youth transforming into provocations, and in this connection also mentioned Zappa, who *"did not publicly masturbate on the Essen stage (in the United States, he did it allegedly just one time)"* but did devote a good half-hour to an inspirational reflection on masturbation in music at the press conference.[57] Although Kotek, in another article from 1969, negated the possibility of the Western underground transferring to Czechoslovakia,[58] the change in the political course after the occupation in August 1968 created the conditions for a specific domestic form of the underground with more or less obvious attributes of anti-regime opposition. In this context, Frank Zappa's name resonated not only thanks to the artist's creative exclusivity and distinctive humour but also due to his political attitudes and rejection of censorship of any kind. This relationship was crowned by a personal meeting of the Czech underground with Zappa during the artist's first visit to Prague immediately after the Velvet Revolution on January 20 – 24, 1990.[59]

The founder of the Frank Zappa fan club, Bohumil "Bohouš" Jůza (b. 1954), first learned about American counterculture in 1969, when, thanks to his father, who worked in Egypt for the air defence, he received a yearbook from *Life* magazine with the celebrated photograph of the Mothers of Invention with infants as part of an article on California hippies. A year later, as a student at the Brno High School of Applied Arts, Jůza became acquainted with Zappa's first recordings, which were brought from the United States before the occupation by the father of one of his classmates. Even at the turn of the 1970s, Jůza perceived Zappa's work, in light of the then fashionable hard rock, as something "weird", but he completely fell in love with it after returning from his military service in 1975, when he bought the original first edition of *Hot Rats* (1969): *"We played it at the party the whole evening, just again and again… There was no going back from there,*

55 BŘEČKA, Jan – TUČAPSKÝ, Vladimír. *Beatles v Čechách: přehled písemných a fotografických materiálů o Beatles v českých tiskovinách z let 1963 – 1970*. Ostrava : Komers, 1998.
56 RIEDEL, Jaroslav. Vliv Franka Zappy na skupinu The Plastic People of the Universe. In PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, pp. 111-117.
57 KOTEK, Josef. Paradoxy z Essenu. In *Hudební rozhledy*, 1968, Vol. 21, No. 20, p. 630.
58 KOTEK, Josef. Underground Music a její sociální otazníky. In *Melodie*, 1969, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 37.
59 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, pp. 181-224.

moreover, when the accident brought me a friend Václav Válka, who was getting loads of records from Germany. It was possible to order anything from him then, and within a month, a novelty-smelling record (for a third of my salary, of course) was in my hands. And there we went... Absolutely Free (1967), 200 Motels (1971), Chunga's Revenge (1970), and my beloved Fillmore East – June 1971 (1971). From that moment on, I needed more than just music. Information, information and more information..."[60] As a result, Jůza soon established personal contact, with a regular exchange of recordings and other materials, with Petr Dorůžka. In addition, pen-pals were essential: as soon as an ad appeared in one of the periodicals (*Melodie*, *Gramorevue*, *Mladá fronta*, printed materials of the Young Music Section, etc.) saying *"I will sell Zappa or I will buy Zappa..., I would write immediately".*[61] During the normalization period, rockers who collected information usually had more steady correspondence acquaintances, while the contact proceeded mostly at a distance and physical meetings took place only occasionally, sometimes after years of exchanging letters. It was on this basis that the extensive social network of the later Frank Zappa fan club was established, covering a number of places in Czechoslovakia and partly abroad. Even in the second half of the 1970s, however, no one was apparently on the lookout for a fan club as such – fan clubs were not "in" at that time.[62]

As was the case with Petr Gratias, Bohumil Jůza was also characterised by a comprehensive approach to the object of his interest, including a deep affection for music and the creator's personality, a desire for maximum possible knowledge related to the given artist, and last but not least, the desire to pass on the information to other people. It is of importance to mention here the renowned Club Brno IV, Křenová 75 "Esenc", operating under the Socialist Union of Youth (SSM) organization, where Jůza on September 22, 1978, at the invitation of the talented artistic leader Vlaďka Smýkalová (later Smutná), presented an hour-long listening programme about Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart during the opening of his cartoon humour exhibition. The success of the show immediately established a tradition that lasted in Křenová for almost the entire 1980s. The premiere of the first three-hour long listening show entitled *Francis Vincent Zappa* on December 8, 1978, was exceptionally well received: *"We expected only friends to come, but it was crowded, people were standing, about two hundred of them. The boys from Progress and Synkopy, the legendary local bands, arrived, simply everyone who meant something in music in Brno."*[63] Over the following years, an extensive six-part series about Zappa was gradually created, which was often shown on successive days (in renewed premieres and reruns) in related clubs not only in Brno, but also in other cities of Bohemia (Hradec Králové, Jihlava) and Moravia (Olomouc, Hodonín, Prostějov, Blansko). The entire series about Zappa was also presented in the discussed club in Hušovany in 1987.[64]

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60 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, pp. 162-163.
61 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 163.
62 Interview with B. Jůza from September 2020, author's archive.
63 Interview with B. Jůza from September 2020, author's archive.
64 *Zappostrophe*, March 1987. The fanzine is stored in the private archive of B. Jůza.

While the Beatles fan club was established on the outskirts of Brno in a relatively short period of time under the neutral designation of "friends of music", the constitution of the Frank Zappa fan club, as a regular institution of its kind without any evasive manoeuvres, took several years. The initial impulse was brought by Jůza's acquaintance with Milan "Gogo" Krampota through an advertisement in *Melodie* at the beginning of the 1980s. Originally from the Moravian city of Olomouc, but since the end of the 1970s an emigrant in Vienna, Krampota was supposedly the biggest collector of Zappa's artefacts in Europe and even rented an entire flat in the Austrian capital for his collection. He became not only the main supplier of exclusive material, such as bootlegs, books, etc. but also a mediator of contacts with the American artist himself. Krampota first met Zappa in person after his concert in Vienna in June 1982, when he and his friends tracked him down at the Imperial Vienna Hotel. Closer contact came about, however, after the subsequent concert in Linz, after which Czech fans spent about an hour with the artist: *"Frank was very interested in the reasons for our emigration, but also in how people live in a Communist state."*[65] The relationship developed over the following years, and thanks especially to Krampota, resulted in the already mentioned first Zappa visit to Prague after the Velvet Revolution.[66]

As early as 1982, the club had an emblem, created by Jůza's friend and graphics collaborator, Jaroslav Kobylinský, which carried the text "FRANK ZAPPA'S FAN CLUB, Brno Czechoslovakia".[67] The emblem was originally made as an appendix to a letter to Frank Zappa, in which Brno fans naively asked the American musician if they could even start a club with his name.[68] According to Jůza, however, the conditions for the actual establishment of the club were still unsuitable due to the rock trials taking place in Czechoslovakia: an attempt to liquidate the Czech new wave in 1983, to dissolve the Jazz Section in 1984, to abolish the original editorial staff of *Melodie* magazine in 1984, etc. The actual constitution of the Frank Zappa fan club did not take place until four years later and without any legal registration, as Jůza recalls: *"In September 1986, together with the passionate Plzeň Zappist Vašek Pěnkava and a native of České Budějovice – now inhabitant of Brno – Evžen Cyrner, we officially founded a club in Vyškovská pub in Brno, and symbolically prepared the first issue of our fanzine for December."*[69]

While the club in Hrušovany worked mainly with the format of educational listening programmes which took place in a local wine bar and later focused even outside the history of the "Fab Four", the Frank Zappa club concept was primarily based on the idea of sharing individual private archives, with the club fanzine *Zappostrophe* supposed to become a kind of "superarchive" in this regard. In the first phase, the club's founders selected 30 devoted Zappists and conse-

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65 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, pp. 176-177.
66 An interview with Krampota about the "real background" of Zappa's visit to Prague in 1990 was published in *Zappostrophe* No. 129 from 2014. Archive of B. Jůza.
67 The emblem and other materials, including the covers of the *Zappostrophe* fanzine, can be viewed on the older website https://zappa.mypage.cz/menu/historie-klubu; the new one is available at https://zappa-mypage2.webgarden.cz/rubriky/fan-klub-franka-zappy
68 Interview with B. Jůza from August 2020, author's archive.
69 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 164.

quently expanded the number to 50 in 1988. The members of the club came literally from all over Czechoslovakia (Aš, Cheb, Mariánské Lázně, Plzeň, Prachatice, České Budějovice, Česká Lípa, Prague, Liberec, Hradec Králové, Pardubice, Jihlava, Třešť, Olomouc, Ostrava, Brno, Břeclav, Hodonín, Bratislava, Nové Zámky, etc.). The original limited number of members was related both to the caution towards the state authorities and to the possibilities of printing the fanzine. The fact that the magazine would be freely copied among the community of each individual member, and thus an extensive secondary layer of *Zappostrophe*'s readers would gradually emerge, was expected from the beginning.
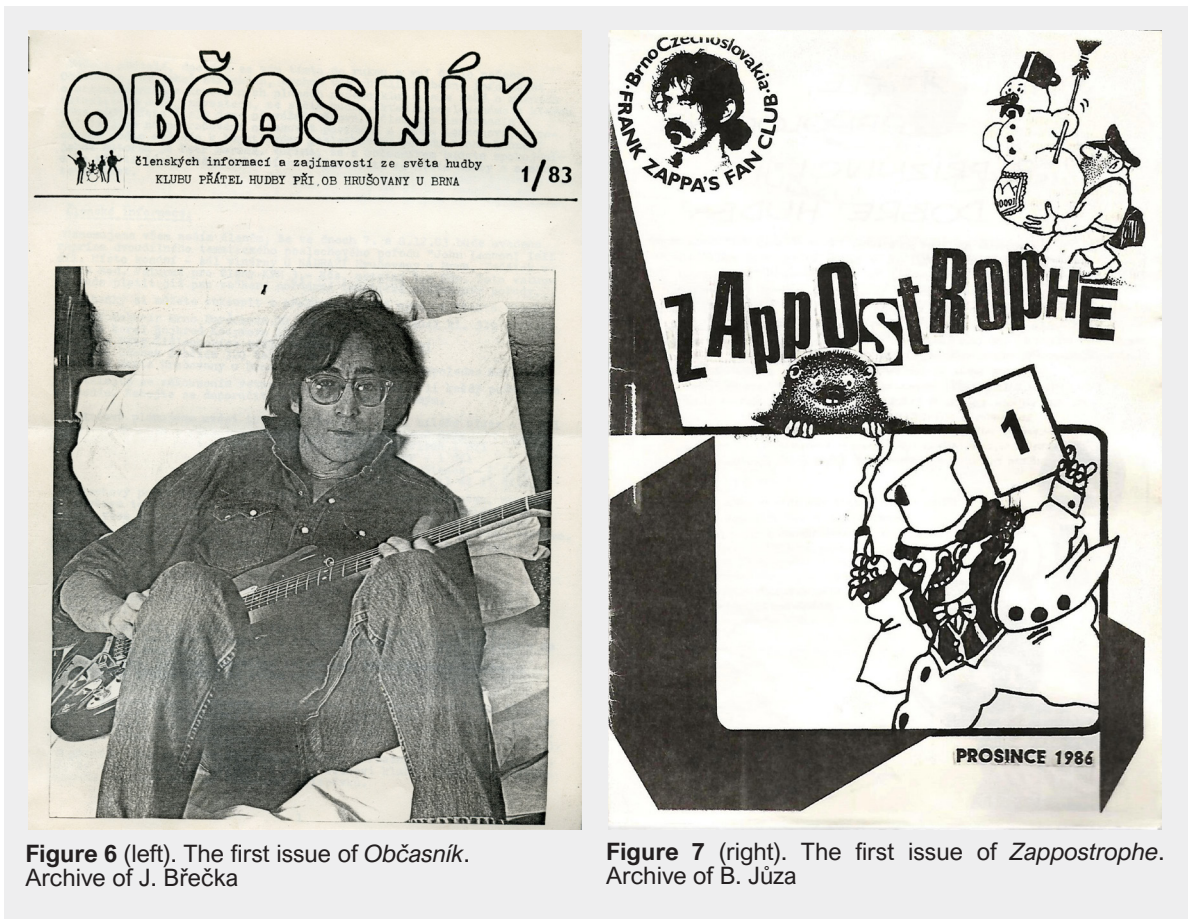
Figure 6 (left). The first issue of *Občasník*. Archive of J. Břečka

Figure 7 (right). The first issue of *Zappostrophe*. Archive of B. Jůza

While *Občasník* presented a purely informational publication with a predominance of standard typescript text and only occasional photographs or comics, *Zappostrophe* emphasized the artistic component based on the style of Zappa's album covers, in some respects anticipating the playful graphic design of punk and the new wave: *"We didn't want to multiply it on a cyclostyle or ormig, or rewrite materials on typewriters. It had to have a dense, high-quality, unlimited content and graphic form that would ideally correspond to the cover expression of Cal Schenkel, especially the pictures and photographs."*[70] Before 1989, *Zappostrophe* was copied unofficially through Xerox in a photographic services company in the centre of Brno: *"At first they quibbled a little bit, whether we had a stamp of the organization and such, but in the end we became friends with the women*

70 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 164-165.

working there, so it was done in a big way. The girls received Tuzex candy boxes, they did it after working hours."[71] The club's fanzine was published irregularly and to a varying extent, always at a time when, thanks to various domestic as well as foreign contributors, a sufficient amount of material was collected. While the first issue from 1986 only consisted of two double-sided A4 sheets folded in half, the *Zappostrophe EXTRA 1989* yearbook contained over 80 pages.[72] The material was organized thematically and supplemented by general information and smaller reports, as needed. The frequency of publication was relatively stable until 1990: 1986 (1 issue), 1987 (10 issues), 1988 (8 issues plus 1 special), 1989 (8 issues plus 1 extra yearbook), 1990 (8 issues plus 1 extra yearbook and 1 collection of illustrated translations of lyrics). The turning point came in the following years, when the club, under the influence of general changes, actually disintegrated for some time.

The technique of gluing cuttings to paper and subsequent copying with Xerox resulted in a dynamic look, an asymmetrical combination of various text and image fields as well as humorous intertextual puns. In the magazine, photocopies of domestic and foreign texts from various sources – articles, interviews, reports, or just the subtitles (in German, English, but also French, Spanish or Italian) – freely intertwined and overlapped; further, there were typewritten and handwritten texts (original or adapted), photographs, drawings, cartoon jokes, comics, etc. In a sense, the magazine was a clippings chronicle, which many avid rock listeners were already frequently creating in the 1960s. In this case, however, such an archive was transformed into a higher form of shared medium, while at the same time being an artefact that has its own specific social history. Thematically, *Zappostrophe* focused mainly on the history of Frank Zappa (detailed descriptions of records, translations of lyrics, analyses of pirate recordings, concert tours, album covers, the history of Zappa's teammates, such as Captain Beefheart, etc.); the artist's history in Czechoslovakia was not omitted, though (the history of listening programmes in the Křenová club, the history of the fan club itself, original interviews with Czech artists and Zappa, club polls, discussions and record exchanges, specific sections, such as "Zappa through the eyes of our women", Zappa's visit to Prague, etc.). Naturally, the magazine also reported on purely club matters, including regular "congresses" of Zappists in various parts of Bohemia and Moravia, which were also occasionally discussed in *Melodie*.[73]

For the first year, the membership fee of the Zappa fan club was set at 100 crowns, which was to cover the reproduction of the magazine, translations of foreign texts, photographs or postage; in 1989, the annual fee was increased to 200 crowns. Special supplements were paid separately to order, which also applied to the audio materials that the club released for the needs of the members on its own label Motyčkovy Kazetky. Already in the first issue of *Zappostrophe*, 90-minute cassettes with selections from the best concerts and bootlegs were promised; between

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71 Interview with B. Jůza from August 2020, author's archive.
72 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 165.
73 OPEKAR, Aleš. 5. Frank Zappa's Fan-Club Congress. In *Melodie*, 1990, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 15.

1987 and 1998, 13 titles were finally released, some of which even had three cassettes.[74] VHS joined the cassettes in 1990, and afterwards the club switched to CD and DVD publishing. As with *Občasník*, *Zappostrophe* is not currently registered by the Libri Prohibiti library, and in connection with Czech musical samizdat, it is not mentioned by the authors of summary works on domestic rock, such as Miroslav Vaněk.[75]

Figure 8. Motyčkovy Kazetky label. Archive of B. Jůza.

Conclusion

The history of both Brno fan clubs reveals a number of remarkable facts. In a narrower sense, it is the specific tradition of the Beatles and Frank Zappa fandom in Czechoslovakia and the mutual relationship between the two communities. In connection with the era of normalization, Jiří Černý characterised Zappists as *"the cutest, because there were the fewest of them"*.[76] Probably no one has ever described the much larger and therefore more diverse community of Beatles' supporters in this way; however, in the international context, it is sometimes generally associated with *"the most amazing people"*.[77] Within the Brno scene, both the Beatlephiles and the Zappists knew each other well; they were often friends or comrades of friends, visited the same pubs, and met regularly at concerts and record exchanges. The founders of both clubs represented typical rock aficionados,[78] who shared the same generational experience, in which the legacy of the 1960s resonated strongly, as it entered the culture of the Central European country and the Moravian region. According to Petr Gratias, a certain number

74 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 168.
75 VANĚK 2010.
76 Czech television series created in 1995 – 2000, *Bigbít*, episode 19.
77 Cf. the entry "Beatles fandom" at *Urban Dictionary*, https://rb.gy/1jl8ex
78 SHUKER 2005, p. 99.

of people *"rode on the train where the Beatles were listened to, Jaroslav Foglar and Karl May read, where Zdeněk Burian and Kája Saudek were perceived, so when these people with these views met, a diverse mix of debate circles arose."*[79] In fact, Jules Verne's novels with Burian's illustrations and Kája Saudek's "insurmountable" comics at the very least also shaped the artistic experience of the Zappist Bohumil Jůza.

There were also peculiar confrontations between fans of the Beatles and Frank Zappa, which were not meant as hostile, but instead reflected the different poles of taste and reception of rock (especially the relationship to humour and irony in rock and its possible socio-critical function). Petr Gratias recalls how the Zappists would ironically ask him: *"So, are you still listening to 'she loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah?'"*[80] According to Jůza, ironizing "the best band ever", the Beatles, belonged to local folklore and humour, over which listeners from Prague were even puzzled. Not only fans of the Beatles, however, ridiculed the Zappists for building a cult of personality and fetishism, for example, in the form of archiving Zappa's cigarette butt from the artist's visit to Prague. When the Zappists appeared at the Brno record exchange, the sellers would say straight away: *"Hide it, they don't understand it, they only listen to Zappa."* The Zappists usually replied: *"Wrong, we listen to everything to hear everyone play worse than the Master."*[81]

Figure 9. Zappart Beat the Beatles! by Bohouš Jůza. Archive of B. Jůza.

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79 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.
80 Interview with P. Gratias from June 2020, author's archive.
81 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 162.

On a more general level, the history of Brno fan clubs illustrates the development of Communist cultural policy in relation to Western popular music from the era of political causes with rock in the early 1980s to the relative benevolence of the authorities at the end of the same decade. Although the motivation to establish a fan club in both cases existed as early as 1982, overcoming the traditional format of club listening programmes towards an autonomous fan club with an adequate name, with an overlap abroad, including contact with the admired artist, with distribution of recordings and a fanzine, which is not just a reporting outlet but which also fulfils additional artistic and social functions, was only managed by the Zappists after 1986. In terms of the concrete manifestations of state cultural policy, however, Brno and thus the entire Moravian scene displayed certain specifics. As Jana Soukupová claims: *"During normalization, Brno's advantage was that the political bodies based here always preferred a dialogue over confrontation."*[82]

Mikoláš Chadima recalls, for example, how Frank Zappa was perceived in the Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia: *"We started with his music, we played him with the Electric Bus band, and we were chased by the police because of that. I really remember the interrogations at the StB, when the police shouted at us: 'We'll get that Zappa out of your head!' He was apparently considered a political and ideological ruler or some head of an anti-communist diversion centre. So Zappa represented this for our generation who played it."*[83] Conversely, this was not the case for rockers in Brno, who regularly introduced Zappa's music to the general public through the listening programmes in Křenová club, which were also reported on in the official press. According to Jůza, Brno was a large village where everyone knew each other and got along well together: *"After the Saturday music exchanges, we met at the pub called U Formana, where friends from Charter 77, including Petr Cibulka, usually sat with us. The secret StB officers also visited the place; we recognised them, and we knew that they wouldn't say anything. When we got drunk, we always quarrelled and shouted at each other: 'You fucking Chartist!' or 'You fucking Zappist!' It was just fun."*[84]

If we compare Brno with Prague, the specific processes of the institutionalization of the Beatles fan communities in both cities during the 1980s were also quite symptomatic. While in Brno the Lennon cult stood at the beginning of the fan club in Hrušovany, which was always focused exclusively on music, in Prague, the Lennon tradition resulted in the constitution of the John Lennon Peace Club in 1988, with primarily political goals.[85] In this sense, the scene in Brno considerably challenges the frequent interpretation of post-communist historiography on rock in Eastern Europe as political music par excellence, as has already been indicated in connection with the concept of Ewa Mazierska in the introduction to this text. This eventually touches on other related interpretive stereotypes, such

82 SOUKUPOVÁ, Jana. Zázrak jménem Revue 88 aneb Když samizdat dělali studenti. In *iDNES.cz*, 28 March 2010, https://rb.gy/sxxfgk
83 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 215.
84 Interview with B. Jůza from August 2020, author's archive.
85 The club's archive is stored in the Libri Prohibiti library.

as "rock as a place of escape from normalization greyness" or "normalization and its information vacuum regarding Western popular music."[86]

The fact that long-term fan clubs of representatives of Anglo-American popular music at the time of normalization are not documented in the Czechoslovak capital may be related to a number of factors: among other things, the level of information background and general knowledge of the local rock community as an important prerequisite for the motivation to build musically defined social networks, the level of local repression, etc. In addition, the fact that the potential founders of specific fan clubs in Prague were integrated by more widely conceived educational institutions in the field of alternative or less available popular music genres, such as the Jazz Section or the Young Music Section, played a role.[87] The founders of the Brno fan clubs were members of both Prague institutions; however, they developed their musical-popularization model in their region in an original way – in the spirit of Petr Hrabalík's thesis that the most remarkable things that appeared in Czech rock in the 1980s came from Brno.[88]

There is currently no evidence of the Frank Zappa fan club's existence in neighbouring Communist countries. The situation was different, however, in the case of the Beatles, who had a fan club in Lublin, Poland, in the early 1980s. Thanks to this club, it is possible to compare similar activities not only on the Brno – Prague axis, but also the Czechoslovakia – Poland axis. The number of common denominators between Brno and Lublin is remarkable: a similar population, a similar relationship to the capital (including typical connotations of the "centre" – "periphery" polarization), a similar position within the country's geography, a lively rock scene, etc. The Beatles official fan club in Lublin was established in October 1982,[89] a month before the inaugural meeting of the fan club in Hrušovany. Although both clubs were established at a time of increased cultural restrictions (Poland saw the introduction of martial law in 1981 – 1983), they sought to have an official status. Both clubs were founded by members of the second rock generation – in Lublin it was Krzysztof Jan Werner (b. 1960), only five years younger than Petr Gratias. The starting point in both cases was the death of John Lennon; in both cases, the fan club was quite exceptional in the context of the whole country. The common denominator was also the emphasis on concentrated and intense musical enlightenment without any political ambitions.

Not only the similarities, however, attract attention. The Lublin fan club also dealt with a number of administrative problems during its existence, eventually even achieving higher goals partly as a result of the more accommodating relationship of Polish cultural policy to popular music. The club managed to take part, for example, in the Beatles' international fandom, and despite the Iron Curtain, established contact with primary institutions in Great Britain. From the point of view

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86 Cf. TV series *Bigbít*.
87 KOUŘIL, Vladimír. *Jazzová sekce v čase a nečase*. Praha : Torst, 1999.
88 HRABALÍK, Petr. Brněnská alternativní scéna. In *Internetová encyklopedie rocku Bigbít*, https://rb.gy/bdkaeo.
89 WERNER, Krysztof Stanisław. *Działalność Fan Club-u The Beatles w Lublinie w PRL-owskiej rzeczywistości lat 80*. Lublin : Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej W Lublinie, Wydział Politologii, 2014, p. 63.

of Communist Czechoslovakia, the promotion of the Lublin fan club in the Polish media, including a programme dedicated to the Beatles by Piotr Metz which had been broadcast by Polish Radio Program III since 1982, seems to be a completely unseen fact. One should add that the programme could also be tuned into in the North Moravian region, thanks to which the Lublin fan club gained a number of members from Czechoslovak towns such as Karviná, Třinec, Opava, or Bruntál. At the end of the 1980s, the Lublin fan club had more than 500 members (of all ages, but mostly aged 15 – 35), including fans from East Germany and the Soviet Union.[90] Both fan clubs ceased operations in 1990: the one in Lublin for economic and administrative reasons, the one in Brno – as mentioned earlier – due to the death of the leading personality Cyril Fanta.

Jiří Černý's article "Beatlemania in Czech and Slovak" was published in 2008, which indicates the important role played by Beatles' fandom especially in the eastern parts of the country. The author argues that the Prague performance of the Bratislava band the Beatmen in 1965 brought us all to the Beatles in the most radical and best way. Out of a range of unofficial normalization publications about the Beatles, Černý mentions the beautifully bound samizdat text by the Bzenec rock "missionaries" Pavel Hanák and Jan Grombíř, and views the song by the Association of Friends of Mild Humour *If John Lennon was from Moravia* as the most original of all South Moravian Beatles' inspirations. The article naturally also mentions Hrušovany near Brno, which the author called a *"fortress of true Beatles' enthusiasts"*. [91] In this regard, it is remarkable that the first officially registered fan club of the Beatles in the post-communist era, which some of the members of the original institution in Hrušovany also joined, was established in the North Moravian Region in Ostrava in 1994. [92] A Beatles' fan club is also documented at that time in the Slovak town of Nitra.[93]

The immediate post-revolutionary development of Frank Zappa's fan club brought a short-term increase in the membership base up to 168 people, caused mainly by the artist's media attention during his stay in Prague in 1990, followed by its official registration by the Ministry of the Interior. There was finally also the actual disintegration of the club under the influence of general changes: *"We all began to carry out our personal plans, some still celebrating freedom, others doing business, stealing, engaging in politics, doing drugs, trying out various dubious religious associations, travelling abroad to work."*[94] From 1991 to 1995, the *Zappostrophe* was published only minimally and there were no regular club meetings as in the past. The search for sponsors was not particularly successful, as the original media interest in alternative music, including all the accompanying phenomena, began to decline significantly after 1992.[95] As occurred to other

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90 Correspondence with the president of the re-established Beatles fan club in Lublin Krysztof Stanisław Werner from September 2020, author's archive.
91 ČERNÝ 2008.
92 Cf. the fanzine *Beatles včera a dnes* published in 1994 – 2000, available at the state libraries.
93 Fankluby ve světě. In *Beatles včera a dnes*, 1994, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 18.
94 PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 171.
95 Cf. the document by Czech television *Ladí, neladí* (2006) with Marián Varga and Mikoláš Chadima as guests.

creators of pre-revolutionary samizdats, the new copyright context did not allow the Zappists to implement the plan for the official publication of the Czech translation of the crucial *The Real Frank Zappa Book* (1989); the translation was finally published in 1995, albeit in an unsaleable volume of only 100 units, which later became a sought-after rarity for collectors.[96] In this sense, the renewed Frank Zappa fan club with a membership base of no more than 50 people returned to its original underground existence in the following years, ignoring any calls from the authorities and without any obligation to deal with mandatory copies for state libraries.[97]

96   PAPOUŠEK – SKALICKÝ 2016, p. 170.
97   Interview with B. Jůza from August 2020, author's archive.

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Not Just a Zine: the "Rollin Under" Zine and Thessaloniki's DIY Music-making (1985 – 1990). Thessaloniki's DIY Music Scene

Alexandra Karamoutsiou

Abstract

KARAMOUTSIOU, Alexandra: Not Just a Zine: the "Rollin Under" Zine and Thessaloniki's DIY Music--making (1985 – 1990). Thessaloniki's DIY Music Scene.

From the early 1980s, with the common ground of the DIY ethos, lots of and different kinds of popular music idioms (from hardcore, punk to reggae and trip-hop) blossomed in Thessaloniki, Greece. This rich and constant music-making would not have been as vivid during its first period (1982 – 1994) without its own pillars of distribution, which consisted of independent labels and music stores, pirate radio stations and fanzines. In this essay I will focus on Thessaloniki's emblematic fanzine *Rollin Under*, which was active from 1985 to 1992. I will show the relationship between *Rollin Under*, Thessaloniki's music scene, the DIY ethos and the Greece's historical and political context of that time. Finally, I will describe fanzines as alternative cultural spaces through which we music historians can "hear" the voices and untold stories of the participants of the music we research.

Keywords: DIY Music Scenes, fanzines, 1980s in Greece, Metapolitefsi, "bottom-up" music historiography

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For over 30 years now, musicians from different scenes, ages and educational backgrounds have been meeting at do-it-yourself (DIY) rehearsal and recording studios in Thessaloniki. These studios are located on the upper floors of old buildings, especially on the west side of the city centre, above stores and bars and outside of the recorded, official and local histories of musical life. From the mid-1980s these places were the springboard for a series of crucial musical osmoses, operating as places of communication and networking but also the formation of musical collectives. With the DIY ethos as common ground and Thessaloniki as their urban site, several different kinds of popular music idioms (from hardcore, punk to reggae and trip hop) blossomed throughout these 30 years of ceaseless musical creation. But is it sufficient to describe these musical activities under the term "music scene"?

The use of the "music scene" concept outside the field of journalism started during the 1980s as a critical opposition to the term "subculture".[1] Music scenes have

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[1] PETERSON, Richard A. – BENNETT, Andy. Introducing Music Scenes. In PETERSON, Richard A. – BENNETT, Andy (eds.) *Music Scenes, Local, Translocal and Virtual*. Nashville : Vanderbilt University Press, 2004, p. 1.

been defined in several ways. For example, Straw describes a scene as a space where different musical practices interact and coexist in a specific geographical region[2] or in a specific urban setting.[3] Similarly, Shank defines a music scene as a productive community that represents itself through music in a specific geographical place.

The concept of a community was used before "music scene" and is considered to imply a not so stable and homogeneous group of people.[4] Nevertheless, recent critical approaches use the term "community" to describe a more romantic and wider construction in which music is a common practice of its members and is exalted as a common way of living, away from the hierarchical relationships of the music industry.[5]

In any case, if we try to describe the DIY music activities of Thessaloniki through the aforementioned concepts, we are faced with several problems. In the case of using the term "music scene", we will not be able to deal either with the plurality of the music idioms that we meet in the DIY music of the Thessaloniki phenomenon (because when we are talking about a "music scene" we usually talk about a specific music idiom[6]) or with the historical background of the phenomenon. Moreover, DIY music studio activities have not been as clearly removed from the hierarchical relationships of the music industry as the concept of a music community (Stefanou, Graham) implies.

However, in this essay, I am exploring stories and activities from a specific period (1985 – 1990) of DIY music-making in Thessaloniki, as they were written and documented in the *Rollin Under* fanzine.[7] We could describe Thessaloniki's music-making DIY activities during those years using Shank's scene definition. We are therefore talking about a productive DIY music community in Thessaloniki that represents itself mostly through specific rock idioms, such as, punk, post punk, garage punk, new wave and hardcore.

DIY is the acronym of the phrase "do it yourself", which constitutes a political attitude[8] that was first expressed artistically through punk music.[9] However, this

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2   STRAW, Will. Systems of Articulations, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music. In *Cultural Studies*, 1991, No. 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502389100490311

3   BEALLE, John. *DIY Music and Scene Theory*. Revision of a paper presented at a meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology. 13 April 2013, https://www.academia.edu/4406896/DIY_Music_and_Scene_Theory

4   STRAW 1991, p. 373.

5   STEFANOU, Danae. "Sharing what we lack": Contextualizing live experimental music in post-2009 Athens. In TRAGAKI, Dafni (ed.) *Made in Greece: Studies in Greek Popular Music.* London; New York : Routledge, 2018, pp. 132-133; GRAHAM, Stephen*. Notes of the Underground: A Cultural, Political and Aesthetic Mapping of Underground Music. (PhD Dissertation)*. Goldsmiths College : University of London, 2012, p. 44.

6   BENNETT – PETERSON 2004, Introduction.

7   I would like to mention here that this is ongoing research; thus, there will probably be some gaps, omission or maybe mistakes in my narration. I feel extremely thankful for all the people who trusted me through their live interviews up until now. For this essay I want to specially thank Babis Argyriou.

8   *"Whilst also having political implications, providing an alternative to dominant cultural channels of capitalism as it does."* GRAHAM 2012, p. 67.

9   MORAN, Ian P. Punk. The Do-It-Yourself Subculture. In *Social Sciences Journal*, 2010, Vol. 10, No. 1, http:// repository.wcsu.edu/ssj/vol10/iss1/13

concept could be used to comprehend a broader context of autonomous artistic practices, as is the case of Thessaloniki's music scene. Spencer delimits DIY theoretically and historically to a more general basis, as an ethos that expresses *"the urge to create a new cultural form and transmit it to others on your own terms".*[10] So, DIY efforts can be seen as an attempt to recover a more active attitude towards artistic creation in general. DIY's starting point is self-organized, "bottom-up" creation. This practically means that music is created, for instance, in self-organized studios and distributed through independent labels, promoted by fanzines and pirate stations and performed in self-organized live gigs, festivals, parties and squats. This is exactly what was happening in Thessaloniki during the mid-1980s and 1990s.[11]

The Zine: a "labour of love"[12]

The fanzine seems to be the ideal embodiment of the DIY ethos[13] because it is, using Spencer's words, *"a cultural form that it is transmitted to others on its own terms"* under no control and censorship.[14] It is a small-scale, underground, self-funded[15] and self-organized publication created by music lovers[16] who are not professional writers; it has a non-profit goal and most of the time is produced and distributed at a financial loss.[17] The zine's editors and writers are not to be considered as pathetic fans[18] but as actively involved members of the scene[19] searching freely for their own voice. *"When you are a part of a minority and out of the system, you create your own world and communicate with your own language* [...] *you have to be free and do something on your own without a master."*[20] In our case, we are talking about a music zine which usually referred to bands and their music, Greek or not, that were not promoted by the mainstream media.[21] However, *Rollin Under*'s first

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10 SPENCER, Amy. *DIY: The Rise of Lo-fi Culture*. London; New York : Marion Boyars, 2005, Introduction.
11 As Duncombe puts it: *"(T)he Scene: the loose confederation of self-consciously 'alternative' publications, bands, shows, radio stations, cafes and bookstores and people that make up modern bohemia."* DUNCOMBE, Stephen. *Notes form the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*. Portland : Microcosm Publishing, 2008, p. 58.
12 Larry Bob's quote, see DUNN, Kevin. *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*. New York; London : Bloomsbury, 2016, p. 161.
13 SOUZAS, Nikos. What fanzines are? From the uninterrupted personal expression to the composition of new forms of socialization. In ARAPINIS, Pantelis (ed.) *Anti-culture: The Emergence of a New Social Subject after 1980*. Sparta : Idiomorfi, 2012, pp. 59-71.
14 DUNN 2016, p. 162.
15 Usually a fanzine is funded by its own editors and writers, by its fee, if there is one, and by self-organized parties and gigs. SOUZAS 2012, pp. 59-71.
16 LAING, Dave. *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock*. Oakland : PM Press, 2015, p. 23.
17 DUNN 2016, p. 160; It is important to mention that Pakis Tzilis in *Rollin Under*'s issue 13 describes a fanzine's labour in the exact same way: *"Quite a lot of people (and if only boosted) have decided to oppose their anti-informing to the official informing with conditions that they define and constitute an expression of their need. Loving what they're doing, lack of speculative goals and mostly the willingness for creation (I don't like what is being served by anybody that is craving for profit, I will do something of mine, on my own or with my gang) are the main fanzines' characteristics..."* TZILIS, Pakis. Fanzines. In *Rollin Under*, 1988, No. 13, pp. 10-12.
18 SOUZAS 2012, pp. 59-71.
19 DUNN 2016, p. 169.
20 Babis Argyriou, live interview.
21 SPENCER 2005, p. 88; On *Rollin Under*'s 15 issue cover we can see a photo of the band Jesus Couldn't Drum. This is an indicative example of this attitude. Because as Argyriou explains: *"(N)o big music magazine could publish something like that in Greece at that time. This kind of band wasn't known by many*

intention was to promote the local scene, so in a way we are talking about a music scene zine.[22]

In this essay I will focus on Thessaloniki's emblematic fanzine *Rollin Under*, which was active from 1985 to 1992. I will show the relationship between *Rollin Under*, the Thessaloniki music scene, the DIY ethos and Greece's historical and political context of that time. This will be mostly achieved through the following questions: Why and under what conditions was *Rollin Under* born? Who were the creators? What was the content and means of expression? What are the hidden stories that we can find in its pages? Ultimately, answering those questions will contribute to the description of fanzines as alternative cultural spaces through which we music historians can "hear" the voices and the untold stories of the participants of the music we are researching.

The 1980s in Greece: Music, DIY and its artifacts as a "way out" for youngsters

In 1981, Greek elections were won by the socialist Panhellenic Socialist Movement, or PASOK, and along with it the supposed and desired "change"[23] had arrived in Greece's reality. During Greece's modern history this was the first time that a leftist government was coming into power without any interference from the military.[24] In fact, Greek democracy was still pretty young at that time, because a military junta had been governing the country for a seven-year period (1967 – 1974) as recently as 14 years before. From 1974 until 1981, Greece experienced the transition to parliamentary democracy (Metapolitefsi), with the right-wing government of the New Democracy party trying to restore the democratic state's institutions, but in general, being conservative. New Democracy couldn't or didn't want to follow the radicalization of Greek society, particularly of young people.[25]

An example of this radicalization was the squatting movement that was born during students' reaction to a new educational law of the conservative New Democracy's government in 1979 – 1980. Through this movement, a new field of doubting, a new political "space"[26] emerged and was formed. It was colour-

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people. But we liked it and made a cover with it. Even the band was really surprised they didn't expect to be on the cover of any magazine." From Babis Argyriou live interview. You can find the cover by following the link https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under

22 Scene zines: *"These contain views and news of the local music and underground cultural scene in the writer's area."* DUNCOMBE 2008, p. 18.

23 "Change", apart from PASOK's electoral slogan, was the word that could characterize the climate of the 1980s generally in Greece. SOTIROPOULOS, Dimitris. Change. In VAMVAKAS, Vasilis – PANAGIOTOPOU-LOS, Panagis (eds.) *Greece in the 80s: A Social, Political and Cultural Vocabulary*. Athens : Epikentro, pp. 19-20.

24 *"The electoral success of PASOK in 1981 and the smooth transition of the reins of power to a party with such a radical agenda as PASOK had, did, in fact, consolidate democracy in the land where it had been abolished only 14 years earlier."* KOLIOPOULOS, John S. – VEREMIS, Thanos M. *Modern Greece: A History since 1821*. Oxford : Blackwell publishing, 2010, p. 161. The same opinion is supported by other historians, too, such as: VOULGARIS, Giannis. *Metapolitefsi in Greece: 1974 – 2009*. Athens : Polis, 2013, p. 95; NIKOLAKOPOU-LOS, Ilias. Elections in 1981. In VAMVAKAS, Vasilis – PANAGIOTOPOULOS, Panagis (eds.) *Greece in the 80s: A Social, Political and Cultural Vocabulary*. Athens : Epikentro 2010, p. 150.

25 SKLAVENITIS, Dimitris. *"Katse kala Gerasime": Student's movement and squatting, 1974 – 2000*. Athens : Asini, 2016, p. 104.

26 SKLAVENITIS 2016, p. 89.

ful, dynamic, radical, self-organized and autonomous, like a Greek analogy to the movements springing out of May 1968.[27] Specifically, through this "space" new subjects of problematization emerged: environmental issues, self-determination and sexual orientation, feminism and patriarchy.[28] We could say that the *"signification of politics was broadened in order to conclude all the activities and relationships of everyday life".*[29]

Hence, the first steps of the DIY ethos in Greece and its artifacts, such as music scenes, zines and pirate radio stations, can be examined in this context. Under this light, it cannot be a mere coincidence that at least 40 new bands were born in Thessaloniki in 1980.[30] Those bands were searching their own sound and voice away from the political art of the popular Greek music that had dominated the left wing during the Metapolitefsi (democratic transition) and was promoted by the state of "change".[31] In general *"Young people of the 80s were suffocated by the dominant political discourse, party guidance and conservatism of Greek society".*[32] Punk and new wave, along with the DIY ethos, were the way that the new generation liberated itself.

As Giannis Aggelakas[33] wrote: *"rock was a way out for us* […] *on the other side was the political songs of the Metapolitefsi, which were getting on our nerves* […] *in that period we had already lived punk and all this stuff, and we started to be more political beings, but we were not involved in parties* […] *it was something that was coming out of our music too".*[34] So an increasing amount of DIY music appeared in Thessaloniki during the early 1980s, with the launch of the first DIY music studios on the east side of the city in the Depot and Kalamaria areas

27   SOUZAS, Nikos. *"Stop Talking about Death, Baby": Politics and Culture in the Antagonistic Movement of Greece (1974 – 1998)*. Thessaloniki : Nautilos, 2015, p. 72.

28   KARAMANOLAKIS, Vangelis. From the fall of the «junta» to «Change»: the «timid» transition of higher education in Greece (1974 – 1982). In *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, 2015, No. 2, pp. 33-48, http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2015.002.002.003

29   SOUZAS 2015, p. 72.

30   DIMATATIS, Ntinos. *Get that Beat, Greek Rock of 80s & 90s, Vol. II*. Thessaloniki : Katsanos, 2001, p. 12. Up until now, through my research, I have discovered 47 bands that started their activities between 1980 and 1985.

31   This refers mostly to a Greek music idiom based on the artistic elaboration of popular or traditional Greek instruments, like the bouzouki or the Cretan lyra, mainly by Mikis Theodorakis and Giannis Markopoulos. This music was forbidden during the junta years mostly because of its lyrics which were coming from leftist poets of that time. During the Metapolitefsi there was a massification of these songs and sometimes a commercialization that led lots of young people to react and try to find new ways to express themselves musically through rock idioms. Notably, PASOK, the new government voted in power in 1981, had a leftist and socialist background, so in a way it firmly promoted these music idioms during the 1980s.
You can find more information about culture issues during the Metapolitefsi here: PAPADOGIANNIS, Nikos. *Culture during the Years of the Metapolitefsi*, http://metapolitefsi.com/

32   KUMIONIS, Stelios. Rock Scene. In VAMVAKAS, Vasilis – PANAGIOTOPOULOS, Panagis (eds.) *Greece in the 80s: A Social, Political and Cultural Vocabulary*. Athens : Epikentro, pp. 520-521.

33   https://www.discogs.com/artist/766553

34   Giannis Aggelakas interview to "Start the scene", available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThsO7COHhL0&t=4s&ab_channel=StartASceneProductions

and bands like Mpeste skuloi aleste[35] (punk) and Moot Point[36]; on the west side of the city, in the Neapoli area, were bands like Berkebe (punk), Grover[37], Indignant Citizens[38], Gulag[39], Out of Control[40], Holes[41] and others.[42] Therefore, we could say that the radicalization of youth was empowered and expressed through the DIY ethos and its artifacts, and vice versa.[43]

Rollin Under

Within these rich DIY music activities in Thessaloniki *Rollin Under* was born as an effort to promote and distribute Thessaloniki's music groups. *"To get a record out was an impossible dream* […] *because of the political songs during the Metapolitefsi and* […] *I didn't want their (the music groups) work to get lost* […] *there was nothing about Thessaloniki in Maximumrocknroll, let's say, and I didn't send anything, obviously."*[44] Thus, Babis Argyriou was experiencing the vivid music life of Thessaloniki and felt that he should do something to capture it, promote it and distribute it. He was running a pirate radio station at that time, Radio Free, with the technical support of Makis Terzopoulos. Argyriou was also collecting LPs and cassettes and realized that he loved sharing the music he liked with other people.[45]

Some years before, he had played keyboards and guitar and sang in the music group Life in Cage[46], but he soon left that dream and focused on searching for[47] and listening to music, attending live gigs in the city and sharing his experiences. He recorded live gigs with a Sony Professional Walkman and began playing them at his radio station in 1980. After a trip to the USA in 1984, he came back to

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35 Tourkovasilis in his book *Rock Diaries*, mentions them as one of the first punk groups in Thessaloniki. Their drummer is a well-known DJ in Thessaloniki and maybe the only stable member of the band. As characteristically mentions in an interview: *"Yes I started as a musician in a punk band that we formed in 1982. According to Rock Diaries we were one of the first 2-3 punk groups in Thessaloniki, but we had a problem. We did our gigs without rehearsals and we never played with the same consistency"*. http://www.ough.gr/index.php?mod=articles&op=view&id=523

36 Rock'N'Roll/Punk band formed in 1984 in Thessaloniki, Greece, https://www.discogs.com/artist/1434978-Moot-Point

37 Post punk band formed during 1981, https://www.discogs.com/artist/689941

38 Romanized to Aganaktismenoi Polites. Hardcore band formed in 1986 in Thessaloniki. https://www.discogs.com/artist/1558916

39 Gulag, the name taken from the Soviet forced labour camps, is a Greek band from Thessaloniki formed in December 1985. Their music is a mixture of punk, hardcore with some metal and melodic elements, https://www.discogs.com/artist/709953-

40 Romanized to Ektos Elenghou. A Punk/Rock'N'Roll band from Thessaloniki. They started playing in 1982. https://www.discogs.com/artist/766558

41 Romanized to Tripes. A post punk group from Thessaloniki Greece. They started playing in 1983 https://www.discogs.com/artist/766552

42 KARAMOUTSIOU, Alexandra. *"At the mercy of modernization...": Histories of DIY music-making in Thessaloniki and the case of "NAFTIA"*. The upcoming paper was presented at an International PhD graduate Student Conference in Thessaloniki in February 2018.

43 As Chu Julie put it: *"For zine publishers the media environment provides some of the few remaining resources and opportunities for youths to carve out a space for themselves."* CHU, Julie. Navigating the media environment: How youth claim a place through zines. In *Social Justice*, 1997, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 71-85, www.jstor.org/stable/29767022

44 Babis Argyriou, live interview.

45 Babis Argyriou, live interview.

46 You can listen to the cassette by following the link https://lazydogrecords.bandcamp.com/album/life-in-cage

47 There were some vinyl stores at that time in Thessaloniki, such as Stereo-disc and Blow Up, and some bookstores that imported fanzines from abroad, mostly from the USA. These were Babis's main source of information and not so much the mainstream Greek media of that time, such as Pop and Rock or the more alternative Sound (Romanized to Echos).

Thessaloniki with a four-track cassette recorder in his luggage and started recording his favourite local bands. In 1985 he asked his favourite local bands to participate in a cassette collection, and this is how the first issue of *Rollin Under* was born: *"I proposed to the groups whose gigs I like to listen, to participate in a cassette collection that I was preparing. They accepted with pleasure, but I soon found out that the collection wasn't enough for me. I wanted to include a booklet with some information that eventually had 24 pages and was called Rollin Under."*[48] So, *Rollin Under* was first supposed to be a booklet to accompany cassette collections of music from local bands. However, this happened only for the first three issues, and Babis Argyriou continued his recordings and distribution, running Lazy Dog Records at the same time.[49] During that period, he met Giannis Plohoras and asked him to become *Rollin Under*'s co-editor. After the first issue there was also an open call for anyone to send his/her article and to take part as a writer. Argyriou and Plohoras were the main editors and worked together until issue 20 in the early 1990s, then Plohoras published two issues on his own, and that was *Rollin Under*'s last breath.[50]

However, *Rollin Under* was only one of the dozens of fanzines that were born in Greece at that time. From the mid-1980s and 1990s countless of fanzines were created and most of them were music zines[51] that documented and supported local scenes. After 1985 zines were spread almost all over Greece, contributing not

Figure 1. Cassette release of Rollin Under's issue 1, 1985 (source: https://lazydogrecords.bandcamp.com/album/give-bees-a-chance).

Figure 2. Cassette release of Rollin Under's issue 2, 1986 (source: https://lazydogrecords.bandcamp.com/album/no-dogs-fly-here).

Figure 3. Cassette release of Rollin Under's issue 3, 1986 (source: https://lazydogrecords.bandcamp.com/album/never-trash-a-pretty-face).

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48 http://www.babisargyriou.gr/rollin-under-fanzine
49 https://lazydogrecords.bandcamp.com
50 Babis Argyriou, live interview.
51 KOLOVOS, Giannis. *"Social Waste": The History of the Punk Scene in Athens (1979 – 2015)*. Athens : Aprovleptes, 2015, intro.

only to the empowerment of their local scenes but to the connection of the local scenes with each other and with similar movements abroad.[52] Specifically, a fanzine called *Papari* (which is Greek slang for testicle) claimed that in 1985 there were 27 active fanzines in Greece. It is interesting to see the way their writers described their activities and efforts: *"Notebook recording"*; *"alternative independent expression"*; *"It is just a hobby and a way to help the scene"*; *"A magazine for the never found passages"*; *"personal and fanatically amateur"*; *"determined to work for fun"*; *"amateur document that talks about music across mass media"*; *"a casual, amateur, dirty but so real press".*[53]

Thus, we are talking about publications springing from their writers shared love for music. These were not widely accessible and were not promoted by the mainstream music media. Writers were guided by their urge to share the music, local or not, that they were searching for, discovering and listening to, in their own way, through their own means. *"We were writing for everything that moved us and stimulated us; we were interviewing local and foreign groups through mail or live, before or after their gigs. Writers decided on and proposed a subject that they wanted to talk about, and sometimes they brought it directly, with no warning."*[54]

Rollin Under was admittedly, along with *Open City* (Romanized *Anichti Poli*), very effective to its readers on matters of musical and political preferences.[55] At the same time, through *Rollin Under,* a reader could be informed in detail about the music life of Thessaloniki and sometimes Athens and be "transported" to almost every gig that was taking place at that time by Greek or other bands. Moreover, *Rollin Under* was also a source of information about what was happening in Europe at that time, through the experiences of writers who were attending gigs there, or the diaries of musicians who were touring. Through their stories, readers were informed about and connected with Europe's squats, their activities and their networks.[56]

Rollin Under was mostly distributed in Thessaloniki's vinyl stores, such as Blow up, Stereodisc and Billboard, as well as in some bookstores, too. Moreover, Argyriou or Plohoras also travelled by train and distributed the zine in person to Athens's vinyl stores (Music Machine, Happening, Art-nouveau, Jazz Rock, etc.) and bookstores (Vavel, Para Pente), too. They carried the issues around (two or three hundred of them) mostly on foot and collected fees from previous sales door-to-door at each record shop. After that, they were free to hang around the vinyl stores to search for and buy LPs. Lots of issues were also distributed by hand and by mail through readers who became friends of the zine and helped with

52 SOUZAS 2012, pp. 59-71.
53 A Glance to Greek Fanzines' Underworld. In *Papari*, 1989, No. 6, pp. 3-10.
54 http://www.babisargyriou.gr/rollin-under-fanzine
55 SOUZAS 2012, pp. 59-71.
56 This is exactly what Duncombe describes: *"The idea of a zine holding a scene together is not new... some do it by providing tour guides to the bohemian diaspore scattered across terra firma. This function explains the almost ubiquitous presence in punk zines of the band tour diary. In these diaries the zine writer takes the reader on a day by day tour with the band: riding in vans, playing at clubs, eating bad food, crashing on couches."* DUNCOMBE 2008, p. 61.

the distribution in smaller cities in the country. The maximum number of copies printed was 1500 and the minimum 300; they probably published 25 issues, one every two-three months from 1985 – 1991 or 1992.[57]

The zine was never handwritten. Writers sent their articles to Argyriou and he typed them out on his sister's typewriter. *"Assembling the issue was a very joyful process, before we got involved with printers and book binders, when photocopies were getting in line, folded and stapled by the drafting group, in between the jokes and the badinage."*[58]

During the zine's publication, the group grew. Most of the members were friends before the zine started, and some were added along the way, among them Kostas Apostolidis, Lambros Skouz, Babis Halatsis, Pakis Tzilis, Dhmitris Veldemiris, Panos Konidaris, Vassilis Giatsis and others. Argyriou added photos and designed the titles with Letraset letters or letters cut out of other magazines[59], and Plohoras sometimes drew the covers. It is interesting that there was no stable logo for the name of the zine. Almost every issue was bigger than the previous one (24 - 68 pages) and some of the last issues were in four-colour print, too. As the issues became richer and bigger, they were typewritten by a printing centre and sometimes designed by a graphic artist.[60]

Figure 4. Issue 1, 1985 (source: https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).
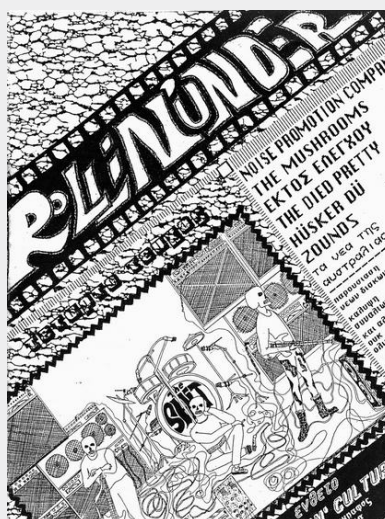
Figure 5. Issue 4, 1987 (source https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).

Figure 6. Issue 9, 1987 (source: https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).

As the years went by, the zine evolved and got bigger, richer and more elaborated. Thus, one might wonder: was it still a zine or was it becoming more akin to a music magazine? This is a question that arose during the early 1990s, as the DIY scene was becoming an alternative scene, occasionally promoted and subsumed

57   Babis Argyriou, live interview; Babis Argyriou, personal site: http://www.babisargyriou.gr/rollin-under-fanzine and https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under
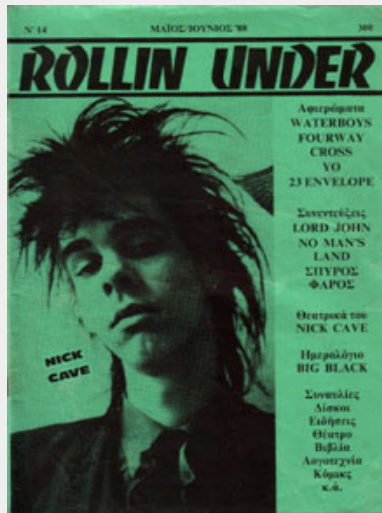
58   Babis Argyriou, live interview.

59   *"Everything was photocopied and then paginated and bound with scissors and glue."* Babis Argyriou, live interview.
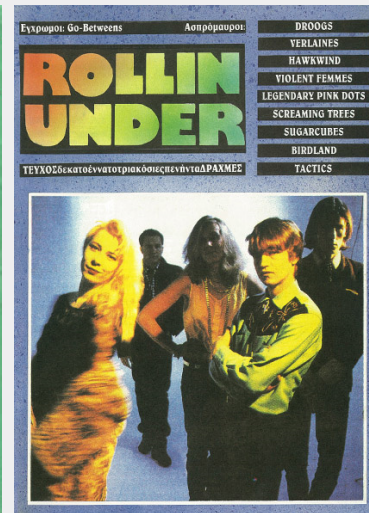
60   Babis Argyriou, personal site: http://www.babisargyriou.gr/rollin-under-fanzine
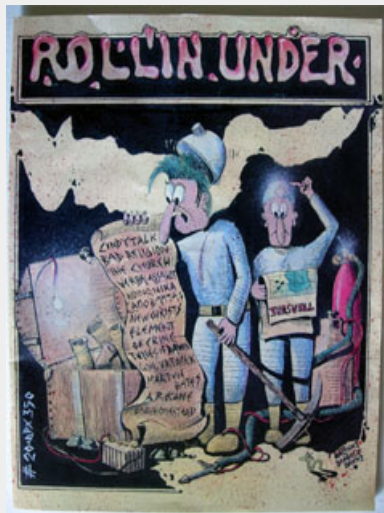
Figure 7. Issue 16, 1988 (source: https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).

Figure 8. Issue 18, 1989 (source: https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).

Figure 9. Issue 19, 1989, (source: https://www.fanzines.gr/rollin-under).

by more mainstream media and labels. Some mainstream music magazines were now referring to zines, and some zines were advertising small record labels in their pages. This evolution led to a public dialogue and problematization about the zines' identity and ontology. In *Rollin Under*'s issue 23, Kostas Apostolidis wrote an article about this matter as an answer to the cruel critique about the fact that small labels were advertised through the zines. In his text, Apostolidis noted that the freedom of speech was a basic characteristic of a zine and could not be suppressed in any way.[61] *Rollin Under* ceased its circulation exactly during the time that this problematization was at its peak. Babis Argyriou stopped being involved with the zine two issues before the zine's last breath, as he felt really exhausted[62], and instead focused on his Lazy Dog Records label and the publication and distribution of LPs.[63]

The late 1980s in Thessaloniki...

Through the first three issues of *Rollin Under*, we are informed about the music life of Thessaloniki through responses to almost every live gig that happened in 1985 – 1986. From the descriptions we can learn about the places (Up Tempo, Moon, Romanized to Selini, and Suspense)[64] where live gigs were taking place and realize that the main problem of the scene at that time was that there was no proper venue with adequate sound equipment for the bands to play. During the summer of 1986 two open air festivals took place in Thessaloniki: one in the Wood Theatre (Romanized to Theatro Dasous) and the other at the Nuns (Romanized to Kalogries), as people

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61 SOUZAS 2015, p. 285.
62 Publishing a fanzine is very hard work; this is something that I understood through interviewing Babis Argyriou, but that is also documented by other zinesters too. *"Erik Nakamura, publisher of the popular Giant Robot told me he spent approximately 100 hours in getting the writing, photos and layout together for his 4th issue* [...] *'burn out' is quite common in zine publishing."* CHU 1997, pp. 80-81.
63 Some years later he opened his own vinyl store with the name Rollin Under; it closed in 2009. At the same time, he started running a music online site in the year 2000 that is still active today (http://www.mic.gr), and he wrote three music novels and one collection of short stories.
64 Gigs very often took place in cinemas, too.

at that time called it. They were probably referring to the playing field of an abandoned orphanage on the west side of the city (Stavroupoli) or to the now days famous open theatre of Thessaloniki "Moni Lazariston". Those two events were covered by four to five articles and interviews in two different issues, three and four. And this is indicative of their impact on the members of the scene and fans, as dozens of groups from Thessaloniki and all over Greece took part. Of course, through the zine's pages we are also informed about that year's releases and realize that the musical creativity of the groups was empowered from year to year.

After issue four, one notices that the zine was also enriched with articles about literature and the cinema.[65] There were also some comic strips included. In issue 4 we can read an interview with a local band called Noise Promotion Company.[66] Through this interview we are informed that this band participated in the 2nd Biennale of Young Artists from Mediterranean Europe that took place in Thessaloniki in 1986[67], along with No Man's Land[68] a band from Athens. Two years later, in 1988, Noise Promotion Company participated in Bologna's Biennale of Young Artists of Mediterranean Europe.[69] These events, along with the fact that foreign fanzines started to mention Greek bands[70] and *Rollin Under* was mentioned in the American zine *Maximum Rocknroll* (MRR) and described as a very rich-in-content music zine[71], that lead us to the assumption that during the 80s the local scene of Thessaloniki tried to communicate and promote its artifacts to a broader international audience.[72] Moreover, Gulag, a very active punk band of that time, shared through a travel diary that was included in *Rollin Under* their experiences from their tour in Europe (25 October to 20 November) in 1988.[73] Gulag, along with Naftia, were bands from Thessaloniki that utilized the networks between the DIY scenes of Europe (Germany, Italy, Netherlands, etc.) of the 1980s and early 1990s.[74] Naftia actually made six European tours from 1987 – 1994.[75]

In 1988 the most talked-about event, even in Thessaloniki, was the Rock Festival in Athens, which was organized under the auspices of the General Secretariat for the New Generation and Municipality of Athens, with bands and artists from Greece, Britain, California and Australia.[76] The event concluded with brutal fights

65 There is a thorough description about the issue's content and its differences from the previous ones at: ARGYRIOU, Babis – PLOHORAS, Giannis. Index. In *Rollin Under,* 1987, No. 4, p. 2.
66   Post-Punk band formed in 1984 in Thessaloniki, Greece, https://www.discogs.com/artist/559093-Noise-Promotion-Company
67 You can find more information about this event by following this link: http://www.bjcem.org/biennali/ii-biennial-of-young-artists-from-mediterranean-europe-thessaloniki-1986/
68 https://www.discogs.com/artist/1446383-No-Mans-Land-6
69 http://www.bjcem.org/biennali/iv-biennial-of-young-artists-from-mediterranean-europe-bologna-1988
70 Unknown writer. Foreigners write for not so foreign records. In *Rollin Under*, 1987, No. 9, p. 44.
71 TRIGAS, Nikos. Letters. In *Rollin Under*, 1989, No. 17, p. 64.
72 In Issue 9, p. 44, we can find an article about foreign zines that mentioned Greek bands.
73 APOSTOLIDIS, Kostas. Gulag: The Diary of their last tour in Europe. In *Rollin Under*, 1988, No. 17, pp. 10-14.
74 KOLOVOS 2015, p. 223.
75 KARAMOUTSIOU 2019, Upcoming.
76 You can find more information about this festival here: http://lemonostiftis.blogspot.com/2012/03/rock-festival-88.html; You can see the festival ticket by following this link: https://lefkisymphonia.gr/photoalbums/lefki-symfonia-postersflyerstickets/1988-lefki-symphonia-live-at-athens-rock-festival/

between the attendants and the police. The event was covered by articles and an interview with the bassist of PiL (Public Image Ltd), whose refusal to play was supposed to be the reason that violent fights started in the first place.[77] The years 1988 – 1989 seem to be very vivid and productive years for Thessaloniki's musical life, but probably the most famous event was the concert of Siouxsie and the Banshees during the International Exhibition of Thessaloniki. It is interesting to see that it was covered at the bottom of the page five of issue 17 with really tiny letters.[78] It was described as a nostalgic and "out of time" event that was organized in a commercial and fully controlled environment.[79] All the aforementioned stories were written in a personal, funny and imaginative way. The nonprofessional writers expressed themselves freely in experiential and sentimental tone[80], and this is one of the reasons that makes this zine so pleasing to read.

Rollin Under and the neighbors

From the research so far it cannot be assumed that there was any systematic communication between *Rollin Under* and similar DIY artifacts from the scenes of the neighboring Eastern Bloc countries. As Argyriou says: *"There was no co-operation. If an author discovered anything, it was by chance. Our reporters were usually Greeks that lived or studied in a Western country, and they sent us reports, usually from concerts".*[81] However, we can find some scattered references regarding performances or albums, mostly about Yugoslavia and some for Hungary and Bulgaria.[82] Specifically, information about Yugoslavia can inform us about the performance conditions there and lead us to interesting conclusions for both countries.

More analytically , there is a huge possibility that the punk groups Disorder[83] (Bristol) and Homo Detritus[84] (Oslo) played in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, in 1988, right before appearing in Thessaloniki.[85] This hypothesis is based on their conversation about their experiences from Yugoslavia included in *Rollin Under*'s volume 13

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77 JOURNALISTES Illegitimates s. Epics and Days of six poor beings and a dog. In *Rollin Under*, 1988, No. 16, pp. 18-20; KOTZIABASI, Fiona – ARGYRIOU, Babis. An interview with Alex Dias PiL's bassist. In *Rollin Under*, 1988, No. 16, pp. 26-27; There is a fun fact about this issue. There are actually two different issues with this number, one is called Issue number 13 and the other the 13th Issue.

78 Let's not forget that Gulag's four-page diary was in the same issue. For a zine like *Rollin Under*, a local band's European tour was a more important subject than the live concert of a very famous band, such as Siouxsie and the Banshees.

79 KAZIS, Dimitris. Siouxsie and the Banshees, 10 December 1988, EXPO. In *Rollin Under*, 1988. No. 17, p. 5; The following description is indicative of the critical state of mind of the zines' readers, who were sending their opinions of the concert: *"(T)here are two kinds of concerts: The ones when the hands of the people in the front line touch the stage that artist is on and the others when there is a protective barrage between the stage and the audience and bodyguards in between."*

80 SOUZAS 2012, pp. 59-71.

81 Babis Argyriou, live interview.

82 The only Bulgarian reference that I have found was a critique of the album: *Le mystere des voix Bulgares - a cathedral concert* by Pakis Tzilis in volume 19, p. 36 in the Various section.

83 https://www.discogs.com/artist/292799-Disorder-3

84 https://www.discogs.com/Seppo-Goes-To-Holocaust-Seppo-Goes-To-Holocaust/release/1908861

85 This speculation can be confirmed by the following videos: Disorder: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdXt4aWEWZE&ab_channel=duleklc, Homo Detritus: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTxy5ROiIbs&t=569s&ab_channel=disordertaf; The last video gives us more information about the time and place of the gig, which seems to have taken place at the University of Sarajevo on 9 January 1988.

(2), which was published in March 1988. *"Taf (Disorder): It's quite easy to play in Yugoslavia. There are lots of places that are the state's property. When there is a concert there, everybody says there is a pop concert going on, even if Metallica are playing. And everybody is attending. I really like that. Things are quite different there. Some people manage their own places for concerts but in order to organize them they have to ask for the police's permission and they usually get it. The police want to know what is happening and if you try to do it without police's permission then they will come and stop you. Because, you know, they have the ultimate power [...] so they organize them (concerts) through the system."*[86]

Through Taf's telling we learn about the conditions related to the concert venues and the organization of the performances. Through his narration we can ascertain that socialist regimes during the period of late socialism were on the one hand more tolerant with their citizen's tastes but on the other wanted to control them[87], probably through the police's displays of power.

Moreover, in volume 3 there is an interview with the Watermelon Men, a group with some members from Hungary. The journalist asks them about their song "Hungarian Heart" and then he is interested in Hungary's political situation at that time: *"How are people there? I've heard that they are a bit of gloomy. Eric (drummer) tells me that right now things are changing and there is a turn to the Western way of life."*[88] It seems that there was a general view among the Greek people that life in the Eastern Bloc was difficult and gloomy. In the same vein, Argyriou and Plohoras in the 4th volume compared Greece's and Yugoslavia's situation in order to be optimistic and humorous about the bad economic conditions in Greece, because obviously they believed that the situation in Yugoslavia was much more difficult. *"The economy's development and the new tax laws makes it certain that all the people that are occupied with music will pay much more for cassettes, LPs and instruments, but there is always worse! In Yugoslavia importing LPs is forbidden and the circulation of foreign LPs is limited. Just imagine not finding Iron Maiden's new LP [...] (Don't you feel better already?)."*[89] This feeling that this *"was more difficult there than in Western countries"*[90] is common in *Rollin Under*'s reporters. However, in our case this didn't work as a driving force to search more about the East Bloc scenes, as was the case for French fanzines, for example.[91] Probably the reason was that Greece in the 1980s was still a young democracy, trying to make up for lost time, and not a typical Western country.[92] Thus, Greek

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86 Disorder's interview In *Rollin Under*'s, Vol. 13 (2), p. 63; It would be interesting to further research the tours of several bands in Central and East Europe and try to discover if any interconnections and communications came into being between Thessaloniki's and Sarajevo's scenes.
87 ŠIMA, Karel - Michela Miroslav. Why fanzines? Perspectives, topics, and limits in research on Central Eastern Europe. In *Forum Historiae*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 1, DOI: https://doi. org/10.31577/forhist.2020.14.1.1
88 KONIDARIS, Panos, GIATSIS Vasilis, In *Rollin Under*, Vol. 3, p. 13-14.
89 ARGYRIOU Babis, PLOHORAS Giannis, In *Rollin Under*, Vol. 4: p. 2.
90 ETIENNE, Samuel. Echoes of Central and Eastern Europe Underground Scenes in French Fanzines Before and After the Fall of the Berlin Wall. In *Forum Historiae*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 53-67. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/forhist.2020.14.1.5
91 ETIENNE 2020, p. 64.
92 See in this article's subchapter: The 1980s in Greece: Music, DIY and its artifacts as a "way out" for young-

zinesters were maybe more occupied following and reporting mostly the West's developments, apart from their own scene's development.

Not just a zine...

Rollin Under was one of the longest lived, most informative[93], self-organized, participatory and DIY-oriented fanzines of the 1980s and early 1990s. Through *Rollin Under*'s pages a reader or researcher can discover lots of bands that were famous in their time but which are now facing near obscurity, can be informed about Greek bands' annual releases and learn about dozens of venues and live gigs. Therefore, I consider *Rollin Under* and zines in general not only as containing very important data and being a research tool for tracing the "messy" tracks that the DIY scenes left behind[94], but as historical records that offer us *"rich amounts of materials for research into subculture communication and community networks and marginalized subjects who are otherwise not present within archival holdings".*[95] They narrate the raw hidden stories that most of the time are glossed over, ignored and assigned to oblivion.[96] Zines are often the *"only representation of ephemeral and otherwise undocumented spaces"*, the only *"archival traces of marginalized communities".*[97]

Moreover, when someone is researching the music activities of a small DIY music community there is very often no previous research background (bibliography). In that case the main research tool is live interviews from the people who were active participants on the scene. However, through a zine's interviews, such as those in *Rollin Under*, for example, the researcher has the chance to re-meet the same narrators in their mid-20s and analyse their discourses and stories from an entirely different point of view. So, from that perspective I recognize *Rollin Under* as a crucial preliminary data source that not only empowers our aspirations for bottom-up music historiography but also teaches us that *"anyone can DIY their own history"*[98] as music zinesters do in our case, through recording and sharing the music and musicians they love. Zines are living proof that *"possessing the means of recording allows you to impose your own noise"*[99] and why not *"herald*

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sters.

93 It is indicative that in his book *Stop Talking about Death, Baby: Politics and Culture in the Antagonistic Movement of Greece (1974 – 1998)* Souzas refers to *Rollin Under* at least 15 times.

94 As Robinson puts it: *"The zine, as it passes from hand to hand, acts as a marker buoy for loose connections, shared spaces and moments of transient recognition that build a subculture or scene. The zine is currency in subcultural capital."* ROBINSON, Lucy. Zines and History: Zines as History. In THE SUBCULTURES NETWORK (eds.) *Ripped Torn and Cut: Pop Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976.* Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2018, pp. 84-101.

95 FIFE, Kirsty. *The Personal is Historical: The Ethics of Archiving Zine Subcultures.* Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA in Archives and Records Management, UCL, 2013, p. 13.

96 Anne Elizabeth Moore quoted in DUNN 2012, p. 162; As Robinson puts it *"It is hardly news that groups of people have been excluded or written out of history."* ROBINSON 2018, p. 88.

97 FIFE, Kristy. Not for you? Ethical implications of archiving zines. In *Punk & Post Punk*, 2019, Vol. 8, pp. 227-242, https://doi.org/10.1386%2Fpunk.8.2.227_1

98 ROBINSON 2018, pp. 84-101.

99 ATTALI, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music.* Minneapolis; London : University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p. 145.

a society in which individuals and small groups dare to reclaim the right to develop their own procedures and their own networks".[100]

In conclusion, zines can help us find and clarify the vague traces that DIY scenes left behind, reveal histories that would possibly otherwise remain hidden and untold and, most importantly, give us the opportunity to listen to the protagonists' voices and their historical narrations as they were written at that time. All the aforementioned zines' advantages enhance our effort for a bottom-up music historiography and teach us that we can all DIY our own history. Hence, *Rollin Under* and zines in general should be considered not just as zines, not only invaluable preliminary data tools that should at least *"take their place among other sources such as letters, diaries, and oral history interviews"*[101], but, I would dare to say, as alternative cultural spaces that thrive in the system's ruptures and operate as silent revolutions.[102]

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100 McCLARY, Susan. Afterword: The Politics of Silence and Sound. In ATTALI, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Minneapolis; London : University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p. 185.
101 CHIDGEY, Red. The resisting subject: Per-zines as life story data. In *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2006, No. 10, pp. 1-13.
102 Here I paraphrase Hakim Bey's terminology about TAZ (temporal alternative zone). BEY, Hakim. *The Temporary Autonomous Zone. Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. Brooklyn; NY : Autonomedia/Anti-copyright, 1985/1991, p. 77.

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Music Samizdat as Zines?
The Case of "Ot Vinta" from Soviet Latvia

Jānis Daugavietis

Abstract

DAUGAVIETIS, Jānis: Music Samizdat as Zines? The Case of "Ot Vinta" from Soviet Latvia.

The conceptual problem this article aims to research is how zines (of the Western or "the first world") and music samizdat (of socialist countries or "the second world") should be analysed. Thus far, they have been regarded as separate phenomena; however, do these two forms of underground literature differ so greatly that they should be analysed using different theoretical approaches? The subject of the paper, *От Винта* (*Ot Vinta*), is a Russian-language music samizdat from the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic which was published in the late Soviet period. It came out in Riga between 1987 and 1991 and was closely connected to the local underground and semi-official rock scene. As Soviet music samizdat is an under-researched topic, and the Latvian one is practically unexplored, an important part of the paper is devoted to a description of this field and the context in which it appeared. The paper also explores the history of *Ot Vinta*, which is based primarily on original interviews, and an analysis of the content of the publication itself. *Ot Vinta* was the central magazine of the Riga Russian language underground music scene of its time and is closely linked to the unofficial rock music subculture of the whole Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, making it a very important historical source for this time and for this music. The final conclusion is that there are no significant differences between Soviet music samizdat and Western zines. There are differences in design, determined by the different means of production and reproduction, as well as by the poor circulation of information about Western underground zines until the late 1980s. There are also differences in the attitude of the state towards zines and samizdat. The political resistance of music samizdat, which until recently was the dominant thesis in samizdat research, is now being questioned. Such discussion is also taking place in zine research (and in the sociology of culture and taste in general), which is a further reason why research of these forms of alternative press in the two worlds of Christian civilization (the "first" and the "second") should not be separated.

Keywords: USSR; Latvia; music samizdat; zines; socialism; post-socialism

"It is difficult now to find people who have preserved this value system – it is still marginal. Neither readers of the Soviet music samizdat, nor, moreover, its researchers, can now be found. The former died out; the latter were not born. Collectors remained."[1]

During the first wave of research and reflection on samizdat in the Soviet Union, which began after the democratization of the political system in the second half of the 1980s, statements such as the following were often made: *"The Westerner will hardly understand the meaning of rock samizdat,"*[2] [because] *"in a civilized democratic society, samizdat does not exist, because almost everything can be printed in a normal press; in totalitarian, dictatorial regimes it is also absent due to the complete absence of freedoms."*[3]

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1   НЕМЦОВ, Максим. Октябрьские тезисы. In ВОЛКОВ, Александр С. – ГУРЬЕВ, Сергей (eds.) *Контркультура. Опыт креативного саморазрушения 1989 – 2002*. Москва : Сияние, 2017, p. 7.

2   ЛАВРЕНТЬЕВА, Анна. Самиздат: иллюзии и реальность. In *За Зеленым Забором*, 1989, Vol. 3, p. 22.

3   СУЕТНОВ, Александр. *Самиздат: библиографический указатель. Каталог нетрадиционных*

Would we still argue today that Soviet music samizdat is something so original and unique to the Soviet Union (as well as some other socialist countries)? Is there something fundamentally different between the alternative and underground media born in Western democracies (which when referring to the underground music press we will hereby refer to as zines)? If we look at the research to date on such publications, it seems that yes, music-oriented zines and samizdat are phenomena that originate from different areas. Published works tend to look at one or the other, practically never together.

The fact that the Russian term "samizdat" has become internationally used to refer to illegal literature published in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other socialist countries supports the thesis that samizdat is something unique. However, is this a sufficient argument? Amateur zines created by music fans in both socialist and capitalist countries appeared simultaneously in the second half of the 1960s,[4] the only difference being that in non-democratic countries such an initiative of the citizenry, which was outside the official press and censorship system, was drastically kept in check, while zine-makers in the West were free to continue producing. Their fate was largely dependent on market demand and/or the enthusiasm of the publishers.

This raises the question: are there any significant differences between unofficial, underground music samizdat published in the Soviet Union and Western zines? If the difference is only in the reactions of state regimes – in one case prohibition, in the other, ignorance – maybe these two phenomena should be analysed within the framework of a single theory? I will attempt to provide provisional answers to this conceptual question by examining one example of Soviet, music-oriented samizdat: *Ot Vinta* (1987 – 1991), which was published in Riga during the last years of Soviet Latvia.

As there is still very little academic research on Soviet samizdat, and none at all on *Ot Vinta* and the Latvian zine scene, I will begin with a review of the literature in this field. This will be followed by the story of how the publication was created and produced. Two sources are used: firstly, original interviews with the publishers and authors, and, secondly, the content of the publications themselves. Since the publication was produced completely independent of the official Soviet publishing system and was invisible in the official Soviet mass media, one has to rely on secondary data and oral history.

Zine Theory?

The concept of zines has long seemed so self-evident that it is often not even defined in academic texts. However, in this case it is necessary if we want to compare zines with music samizdat. The following is a definition given by Stephen

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изданий (*1985 – 1991*), *Архив нетрадиционной печати*, дополненное издание 2-е. Москва : Центр образовательных программ института Новых технологий образования, 1992, p. 6.

4   GINSBURG, David D. Rock Is a Way of Life: The World of Rock 'n' Roll Fanzines and Fandom. In *Serials Review*, 1979, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 29-46; КУШНИР, Александр (ed.) *Золотое подполье: полная иллюстрированная энциклопедия рок-самиздата 1967 – 1994: история, антология, библиография*. Нижний Новгород : ДЕКОМ, 1994.

Duncombe in one of the most authoritative books on the subject, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*: *"Zines are non-commercial, non-professional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves."*[5] English dictionaries also have similar definitions of zines, for example *"a small magazine that is produced cheaply by one person or a small group of people and is about a subject they are interested in;"*[6] or *"a non-commercial often homemade or online publication usually devoted to specialized and often unconventional subject matter."*[7]

The most common technical characteristics of zines are the following:

- made by amateurs, non-professionals, music fans;
- issued by one, a couple, or a few people;
- produced and published with the creator's own resources;
- dedicated to a specific genre/theme; and
- having a small circulation.

Not all of these conditions have to be met for a publication to be called a zine. There can always be various exceptions; for example, a zine can be published by professional journalists; it can have a print run of thousands or even tens of thousands, and it can be dedicated to different topics and so on. However, these attributes are considered to be suitably representative of the technical structure of zines and are regularly found in their explicit or implicit definitions.[8]

Zines are a specific form of text circulation largely determined by the limited resources of their publishers, especially pre-Internet. Since most music zines specialize in a particular genre or style of music, their distribution only made sense within specific subcultures or scenes. Consequently, zine distribution was most often very local, often using only informal channels and institutions, based on social ties and reproducing a specific subcultural identity.

More problematic are those features of zines that are value-laden. These include: being created in the do-it-yourself (DIY) tradition, being deliberately non-commercial, supporting the community, being a form of political protest, being created to please, etc. Firstly, zines are diverse in their content and aesthetic and political orientation, and such statements cannot be generalized, even in the context

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5   DUNCOMBE, Stephen. *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*. London; New York : Verso, 1997, p. 10.

6   Subject word: Zine. In *The Cambridge English Dictionary 2020*, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/zine.

7   Subject word: Zine. In *Merriam-Webster 2020*, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zine.

8   See: FLEMING, Linda. The American SF Subculture. In *Science Fiction Studies*, 1977, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 265; GINSBURG 1979, p. 30; JAMES, David E. Poetry / Punk / Production: Some Recent Writing in LA. In *Minnesota Review*, 1984, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 141; BURT, Stephen. Reviewed Work(s): Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture by Stephen Duncombe: Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music by Simon Frith: Postmodernism and Popular Culture by Angela McRobbie: Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital by Sarah Thornton. In *Transition*, 1998, No. 77, p. 148, https://doi.org/10.2307/2903206; ATTON, Chris. *Alternative Media*. London : Sage, 2002, p. 55, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446220153; FREEDMAN, Jenna. Pinko vs. Punk: A Generational Comparison of Alternative Press Publications and Zines. In WALLACE, K. Martin et al. (eds.) *The Generation X Librarian: Essays on Leadership, Technology, Pop Culture, Social Responsibility and Professional Identity*. North Carolina : McFarland, 2011, p. 150; GUERRA, Paula. Fast, Furious and Xerox: Punk, Fanzines and DIY Cultures. In GUERRA, Paula – QUINTELA, Pedro (eds.) *Punk, Fanzines and DIY Cultures in a Global World: Fast, Furious and Xerox*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, p. 1, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28876-1 etc.

of the zines of one music genre. Secondly, zines can be analysed through various conceptual and theoretical prisms, which often lead to contradictory conclusions. Can zines be considered tools of political resistance or just expressions of aesthetic pleasure? It is, in fact, a discussion well known in the modern research of subcultures and in cultural sociology in general. On the one hand, the Marxist-structural approach (Dick Hebdige, Pierre Bourdieu) views cultural production and consumption, including taste, as arising from economic relations, emphasizing the political importance of artistic and cultural practices whose function is either to preserve the status quo or to change it. On the other hand, the postmodern approach (Antoine Hennion, Andy Bennett) questions the thesis of economic determinism in the modern context, attributing to individuals much greater freedom and influence over their own behaviour, tastes, and ways of enjoyment.

Although this discussion also occurs in the research field of zines,[9] these two approaches should not be considered mutually exclusive. Firstly, the political may be combined with entertainment: *"A revolution without dancing is a revolution not worth having"*.[10] Secondly, it is a question of how we interpret politics: how explicit and intentional should the contents of the publication be in order to be able to say with certainty that this or that zine is political? This clash of theoretical approaches is, however, essentially about one question: how can the emergence of subcultures (including zines) be interpreted? One tradition sees the phenomenon as the symbolic response (protest) of the subordinated; the other tradition sees it is an expression of aesthetic needs.

Music-oriented Samizdat as Zines?

To investigate the degree to which samizdat resembles or differs from zines, I will use both the technical parameters of zines (being the self-published work of one or a few amateur autodidactic music fans geared to a specific theme or genre) and the contradictory "ideological" theses of either political protest or aesthetic pleasure. In addition, I will pay particular attention to aspects of Soviet music samizdat production and distribution that differ from Western zines. These details may not play a significant role in the comparative conceptualization of music samizdat, but they are often fascinating and worthy of note.

It is generally assumed that the content of classic samizdat consisted of both artistic and political work that was forbidden for publication, as well as content that would most likely be banned or censored, thus emphasizing the political aspect of this type of publishing. Within this interpretation, samizdat implicitly implies political opposition to a totalitarian (or at least undemocratic) regime. It should be noted that in Stalin's Soviet Union, samizdat did not exist due to total state control and immediate persecution. Likewise, no punk zines were issued in

9   See: ATTON 2002; ŠIMA, Karel – MICHELA, Miroslav. Why Fanzines? Perspectives, Topics and Limits in Research on Central Eastern Europe. In *Forum Historiae*, 2020, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1-16, https://doi.org/10.31577/forhist.2020.14.1.1; ATTON, Chris. Popular Music Fanzines: Genre, Aesthetics, and the 'Democratic Conversation'. In *Popular Music and Society*, 2010, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 517-531 etc.
10 A statement commonly but wrongly attributed to Emma Goldman, an anarchist political activist and writer.

the German Democratic Republic from 1979 to 1983.[11] It was only with the softening of the Soviet regime that a gradual change in attitudes towards unofficial publishing practices took place, from a policy of total eradication to controlled surveillance from the early 1970s.[12]

In any case, the transfer of a Western Neo-Marxist theory of subcultures to the USSR is problematic. It would be difficult to argue that Soviet subcultural expressions (poetry, literature, underground music) were a response to the exploitation of the working class of the late Socialist period. It was not the workers or the peasants whom the Soviet state regarded as producers and consumers of samizdat. Instead, they identified the technical and creative intelligentsia, students, and representatives of various religious and nationalist groups to be the problematic groups.

Samizdat was also fed by Soviet artistic or aesthetic censorship, which may not always be seen as political interference in art. When the "artistically inferior" essays rejected by publishing editors were published by the authors themselves, both professionals and amateurs, these also became samizdat. In fact, we can also consider translated and published foreign pulp fiction, esoteric literature, pornographic material, horoscopes, games, etc. as samizdat.[13]

We can also consider music samizdat as a political act, because it was in deliberate opposition to Soviet cultural and aesthetic canons and the official (and sole) Soviet cultural policy. The small number of such publications in the pre-Perestroika era and the evidence of systematic repression enacted by the USSR's oppressive institutions support this thesis. At the same time, it can be assumed that overt or covert criticism of the political regime was not the dominant driving force behind the music samizdat. The impetus was basically the desire of adherents of the new rock aesthetics to talk about music that was dear to them: *"Throughout its short history, the underground rock press has consistently opposed the two »upper inhabitants« – Soviet society (until 1987) and »wild capitalism« (since 1990)."*[14] This opposition, even if it was purely aesthetic, was also political, as any direct or indirect criticism of socialist artistic canons and cultural policy positions implied disloyalty or even resistance to the regime. This created some tension between zinesters and public authorities, which could manifest itself in the universities where zinesters studied or in the places where they worked, and it could lead to the involvement of the KGB (Committee for State Security).

11 SCHMIDT, Christian. Meanings of fanzines in the beginning of Punk in the GDR and FRG. An approach towards a medium between staging, communication and the construction of collective identities. In *Volume! La revue des musiques populaires*, 2006, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 61, https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.636.

12 GRIBANOV, Alexander – KOWELL, Masha. Samizdat According to Andropov. In *Poetics Today*, 2009, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 89-106.

13 KHANIUTIN, Alexei. Teenage Samizdat: Song-Album Scrapbooks as Mass Communication. In *Journal of Communication*, 1991, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 55-65; DREIMANE, Jana. Officially Non-Existent: Storage and Use of Banned Literature in the Soviet Latvia in the 1970s – 1980s. In *Knygotyra*, 2017, Vol. 68, pp. 143-160, https://doi.org/10.15388/Knygotyra.68.10719.

14 ГУРЬЕВ, Сергей. Пограничные столбы рок-самиздата (опыт описания описания). In КУШНИР, Александр (ed.) *Золотое подполье: полная иллюстрированная энциклопедия рок-самиздата 1967 – 1994: история, антология, библиография*. Нижний Новгород : ДЕКОМ, 1994, p. 7.

Creators of samizdat used many methods to avoid confrontation with the KGB, ranging from self-censorship and collaboration with the regime (for example, establishing so-called "Rock Clubs") to various conspiratorial methods, such as small circulation, pseudonyms, writing text in other languages, reverse translations, confused edition numbering and title changes, and the use of different typewriters. Despite this, however, there were recorded cases of confrontations with the KGB and censorship in the period up until 1989. One reason for this is that the samizdat publisher could be prosecuted under several articles of the Criminal Code.[15] Communication with Soviet state power during the Perestroika period was gentler than before, but a "call from a KGB employee" or an "invitation to visit the KGB" were still relatively common in 1987/1988.[16]

Research of Music-Oriented Samizdat

The first wave of research – or more precisely, bibliographic organisation – into music samizdat in the territory of the USSR began in the very last years of the Soviet Union's existence. This was a time when samizdat was no longer considered a politico-ideological taboo from a forbidden culture. There was instead an interest both in the USSR and beyond in what had recently been forbidden fruit.

Music samizdat was sometimes included in the cataloguing of samizdat in general, but as it was not a thematic priority, it occupied a marginal and undeveloped place. The main focus was on political publications and those that focused on literature and poetry. It could be argued that in the context of music samizdat, a bibliographic-historical interest prevailed at the time. Essentially, there were two motivations for this. One was the attempt by insiders of the underground and music samizdat scene to perform a comprehensive audit and to document the field; the other was the efforts of professional bibliographers to formally catalogue all previously unofficial publishing. Both groups actually carried out their work at the same time, i.e. 1989 – 1991.

The most important contribution of librarians and bibliographers of that time came from Alexander Suetnov, whose main interests were dissidents, human-rights defenders, and informal literature in general. His most significant collection, Самиздат: библиографический указатель. Каталог нетрадиционных изданий (1985 – 1991) (*Samizdat: bibliograficheskij ukazatel'. Katalog netradicionnyh izdanij (1985 – 1991)*), has a separate chapter devoted to music publishing, Музыкальные издания (*Muzykal'nye izdanija*).[17] It lists 158 issues (numbers 1171 – 1328). Although the book has a fairly detailed introduction and commentary on the history, functioning, and chronology of Soviet samizdat, music samizdat is not specifically analysed. For the publications included in the catalogue, only

15 СУЕТНОВ 1992, p. 11.
16 See also: ГУРЬЕВ 1994, p. 7; СЕРЖАНТ, Александр – SUMAROKOV, Dmitry. Он ранен был в живот. In *Даугава*, 2004, Vol. 245, No. 3, pp. 139-157; ТУПИКИН, Влад. Записка о русскоязычном самиздате 1990-х и двухтысячных. In *Неприкосновенный Запас,* 2009, Vol. 65, No. 5 pp. 182-190; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov [in Russian], interviewer Jānis Daugavietis, from 26 September 2019, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3484696; ТУПИКИН, Влад. Самиздат после перестройки. In *Индекс / Досье На Цензуру*, 2001, Vol. 13, http://index.org.ru/journal/13/tupikin1301.html etc.
17 СУЕТНОВ 1992, pp. 188-204.

concise bibliographic information is given: title, type, edition, start year, issues, edition. The introduction notes that the chapter on music samizdat *Muzykal'nye izdanija* was created with Aleksandr Kushnir.[18]

Aleksandr Kushnir (born 1964) was an underground music journalist and producer during the Soviet period who has compiled the most authoritative catalogue of USSR music samizdat to date, Дискретная энциклопедия рок-самиздата (*Diskretnaja enciklopedija rok-samizdata*), which was published in the leading independent music fanzine/journal of those times, КонтрКультУр'а (*KontrKul'tUr'a*) number three,[19] in which he acted as both author and editor.[20] This research was written between 1988 and 1990, and Kushnir's sources of information and informants came from the very scene he had been personally involved in since the early 1980s. The 45 pages of the magazine briefly describe 165 Soviet music samizdat fanzines (mainly rock music), beginning with the first editions of the late 1960s. For each fanzine, data is provided on the number of issues, dates of the first and last issues, edition, format, type of publication, the composition of the editorial board, and city. The individual fanzines are described concisely, with their front page and an editorial photo. It should be noted that: *"Editions with a circulation of one copy were also included in the encyclopaedia on an equal footing, because the moment of success with the reproduction of products has no sociocultural significance for samizdat: the fact of the presence of an internal impulse, rather than an external perception, is important."*[21] This is and will be one of the practical problems in studying Soviet music samizdat: how to decide which handwritten single-copy "magazines" that look like a notebook, a draft book or a diary are considered to be a zine, and which are not?

A few years later, this encyclopaedia was expanded into a book Золотое подполье: полная иллюстрированная энциклопедия рок-самиздата 1967 – 1994: история, антология, библиография (*Zolotoe podpol'e: polnaja illjustrirovannaja jenciklopedija rok-samizdata 1967 – 1994: istorija, antologija, bibliografija*).[22] It deals, in the same way, with some 250 editions from about 90 USSR and former-USSR cities, but the core, i.e. the major and better-known publications remain virtually unchanged, as most of them were no longer being published by 1991 or were in hibernation. The book also publishes two analytical introductory articles (by Sergej Gurjev and Aleksandr Kushnir) and more than 50 reprints of classic samizdat articles from various editions of different periods.

To this day, Kushnir's work is considered to be the most authoritative source of rock-oriented samizdat in the USSR, there being no other study or publication to rival its comprehensive detailing of the genre.[23] It covers Russian-language

18 СУЕТНОВ 1992, p. 4.
19 КУШНИР, Александр. Дискретная энциклопедия рок-самиздата. In *Контр Культ Ур'а*, 1991, Vol. 3, pp. 49-94.
20 ВОЛКОВ, Александр С. – ГУРЬЕВ Сергей (eds.) *Контркультура. Опыт креативного саморазрушения 1989-2002*. Москва : Сияние, 2017, 480 p.
21 КУШНИР 1991, p. 50.
22 КУШНИР 1994.
23 STRUKOVA Elena letter to Jānis Daugavietis. Sovetskij muzikalnij samizdat, [Personal e-mail communication], 18 February 2019.

samizdat well; however, it does not include or cover issues in other languages apart from a few written in Ukrainian and Belarusian. It is possible that this was not only due to the language barrier presented by the other, non-Slavic languages of the USSR, but also because these other Soviet states had their own distinct national scenes. Within one Soviet republic, or even one city, there could be two or more quite distinct scenes, which not only differed along the lines of their aesthetic preferences, but also along the lines of nationality and ethnicity, language, and political ideology. Granted, this second thesis remains only an unexplored assumption; however, we can see a similar Slavic-centric vision in all samizdat bibliographies, including Suetnov's.[24]

The next wave of exploration and systematisation of music-oriented samizdat began in the late 1990s, and this time it was more extensive and diverse. It was no longer just underground activists and professional Russian librarians who were interested in dissident literature, but also literary scientists, linguists, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. They were no longer just from the capital cities of the former USSR. They included among their number amateur scientists and researchers from the outermost regions of the former Soviet Union and beyond.

More and more memoir-type publications are beginning to emerge that focus on specific instances of music samizdat, either on single publications and/or specific urban and regional samizdat scenes.[25] As a rule, these are not academic articles. The authors are witnesses to or even creators of the events described. In addition to giving valuable first-hand evidence on the production and distribution of publications, the relations with official authorities, the local and USSR-wide rock scene, and the content of editions, they often contain the conceptual generalizations of insiders on this subject.

A somewhat idealistic and romanticized interpretation of the emergence of Soviet music samizdat is often present, namely the perception of it being a means of seeking and practicing *freedom*.[26] If this freedom is not put forward as being the only or dominant motivating factor, then this assumption does not stand in contradiction to other concepts or theories. There are indications that during Perestroika one of the driving forces of music samizdat was economic considerations. This period (1986 – 1987 and onwards) saw not only greater democratic rights for the citizenry, but also greater freedom for individual businesses. Concerts by previously unrecognized or even banned rock bands were now legal. These bands, many of which had been underground and present solely in the col-

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24 СУЕТНОВ 1992.
25 See: ДОЛГИХ, Ольга – КУЗНЕЦОВ, Аркадий. История тюменского журнального рок-самиздата 1980-х–1990-х годов. In *Журналист. Социальные Коммуникации*, 2014, Vol. 4, No. 16, pp. 118-26; МЕДВЕДЕВ, Владимир. Артефакт. Тюменский самиздат. In *Топос: лит.-филос. журн*, 2002, [e-resource] http://www.topos.ru/article/700; САВЕНКО, Елена. *На пути к свободе слова: очерки истории самиздата Сибири.* Новосибирск : ГПНТБ СО РАН, 2008, 200 p.; САВИЦКИЙ, Станислав. *Андеграунд. История и Мифы Ленинградской Неофициальной Литературы* (PhD Thesis, University of Helsinki, 2002), https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/19242; СЕРЖАНТ and SUMAROKOV, 2004; LIUBINIENĖ, Neringa. Metalo muzikos gerbėjų fanzinai: subkultūrinės grupės tapatybės kodai. In *Grupės ir aplinkos*, 2009, No. 1, pp. 199-220; MCMICHAEL, Polly. "After all, you're a rock and roll star (at least, that's what they say)": Roksi and the Creation of the Soviet Rock Musician. In *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 2005, Vol. 83, No. 4, pp. 664-684.
26 ГУРЬЕВ 1994.

umns of music samizdat, were now able to play in stadiums. The same people who had issued samizdat publications and had organised illegal "apartment concerts-*kvartirniki*" (small concerts held in apartments), now started to organise big concerts and festivals. Although profit may not have been the main motivation for some, it was an undeniably strong factor for others.

The creators of the music samizdat Урлайт (*Urlait,* 1985 – 1992) (which later transformed into *KontrKul'tUr'a*) remember the conflict with the Moscow's *Rock-Laboratory*, modelled on the Leningrad and Riga Rock Clubs,[27] and thus under the supervision of the KGB:[28] *"At the same time, there was a war with the Rock-Laboratory, which, as we now understand, tried to put the underground under the control of the KGB and open concert activities under this hood. We were closely connected with a group of managers who wanted to do all this completely independently of the KGB."*[29]

In the early 00s, a new wave of late Soviet socialist research emerged in the humanities and social sciences, sometimes involving a reinterpretation of the function and meaning of samizdat (including music samizdat). The informal press and some other allegedly non-state activities of this period of the Soviet regime were no longer viewed as being an expression of binary opposition to a repressive power. Instead, researchers viewed them in a more nuanced way,[30] even beginning to question the resistance of the music samizdat to the regime.[31]

One of the least studied areas to date is the content of music-oriented samizdat. The only examples of this genre that have been commented on, republished, or analysed are the classic big publications of Рокси (*Roksi*) and *KontrKul'tUr'a* and a pair of regional samizdat. If we focus on Soviet-era music samizdat from Latvia, it can be said that there has been virtually no research. The collections of libraries and archives in Latvia and other countries have not been studied, and private collections have not been identified. Although there are some crumbs of information in memoirs and retrospective interviews, most knowledge is to be found in previously untold oral histories.

To sum up the exploration of music samizdat of the Soviet period so far, it can, first of all, be concluded that there is still very little academic research. Bibliographic work and memoir-type publications dominate. Secondly, more than ten years after the collapse of the USSR, samizdat was viewed as a unique phenomenon of the totalitarian Soviet state, which may have been one of the reasons why Western

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27 See footnote on these clubs later in subsection "Production of *Ot Vinta*".
28 See also: ГУРЬЕВ, Сергей. Лучший враг. In ВОЛКОВ, Александр – ГУРЬЕВ, Сергей (eds.) *Контркультура. Опыт креативного саморазрушения 1989 – 2002*. Москва : Сияние, 2017, pp. 31-38.
29 ГУРЬЕВ, Сергей. «Контркультура» — главный журнал рок-самиздата, 4 October 2013, [e-resource] https://daily.afisha.ru/archive/volna/context/kontrkultura-glavnyy-zhurnal-roksamizdata.
30 ЮРЧАК, Алексей. *Это было навсегда, пока не кончилось. Последнее советское поколение*. Москва : Новое Литературное Обозрение, 2014, 664 p.; САВИЦКИЙ 2002; YURCHAK, Alexei. Suspending the Political: Late Soviet Artistic Experiments on the Margins of the State. In *Poetics Today*, 2008, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 713-733; OUSHAKINE, Serguei Alex. The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat. In *Public Culture*, 2001, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 191-214.
31 ГАНСКАЯ, Екатерина. Критический дискурс о русской рок-культуре в текстах советского музыкального самиздата. In *Litera*, 2019, No. 2, pp. 22-30, https://doi.org/10.25136/2409-8698.2019.2.29557.

theories were not used in its analysis. This tradition, viewed in the light of political dissentism and based primarily on a descriptive rather than conceptual analysis, is still strong, although the discourse on the interpretation of samizdat is beginning to change, especially since Alexei Yurchak's publications on the everyday life and activities of those in the artistic field in late socialist societies.

Production of *Ot Vinta*

Ot Vinta (1987 – 1991) was one of the first Latvian music zines, as this term is understood in the West – an "unofficial" rock magazine made by amateurs and music fans/musicians, with a small circulation (a few dozen) and mainly devoted to the local underground scene. At the same time, it represented the Soviet tradition of samizdat, which in fact was, originally, its sole influence.[32] Apart from the Latvian (language)-issued new wave/punk fanzine *Stieple* (1984 – 1990), there had only been a few editions of music or art-oriented amateur publications in the Latvian SSR. We can say that they qualify as samizdat, if we accept Kushnir's definition that a single copy edition is enough.[33] These include *Zirgābols*, *WCZLS*, and *Seque*, published by Hardijs Lediņš and Juris Boiko in 1971 – 1974,[34] and Без Жмогас (*Bez Zhmogas*) in 1974.[35] These were one-issue editions of Riga school pupils, and they were very much like notebooks, diaries, or manuscripts, where young people expressed their music and artistic aspirations and tastes in a collage or in non-illustrated handwriting.[36] Although there was only one copy of such samizdat, they were often circulated widely. Most often this just meant a circle of friends, acquaintances, and classmates; however, sometimes it also came to the attention and investigation of the repressive state authorities, causing real trouble for their authors.[37]

According to the most generalized periodization of Soviet samizdat, *Ot Vinta* is a publication belonging to the second phase of the perestroika period. It began in 1987, when various changes brought about by the reforms had already become real. Although the situation varied in different regions and cities of the country, the state's attitude towards informal media became more and more liberal, especially regarding explicitly non-political samizdat. Although there is more evidence of the KGB's interest in and repression of music samizdat in 1987 and 1988, including in Latvia,[38] this was not the case with *Ot Vinta*. The years 1987 – 1988

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32 Interview with Sergei Volchenko [in Russian], interviewer Jānis Daugavietis, from 29 October 2019, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3522363; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.

33 КУШНИР 1991, p. 50.

34 ASTAHOVSKA, Ieva – ŽEIKARE, Māra (eds.) *Nebijušu sajūtu restaurēšanas darbnīca. Juris Boiko un Hardijs Lediņš: Workshop for restoration of unfelt feelings. Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš*. Rīga : Latvijas Laikmetīgās mākslas centrs, 2016, p. 23.

35 ИОФФЕ, Марк. Зин: стёб и кэмп. In *Интернет-журнал ГЕФТЕР*, 17 March 2017, [e-resource], http://gefter.ru/archive/21542, acc. 14 February 2020; YOFFE, Mark. Soviet Rock Collection and International Counterculture Archive at the Global Resources Center of the George Washington University Libraries. In *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, Vo. 21, No. 1-2, pp. 112-132.

36 See: KGB non-confiscated issues of Lediņš & Boiko: *Seque. 1972 – 1974 Samizdats*, [e-resource], http://pietura.lv/seque/?grupa=seque&tkst=samizdats, acc. 14 February 2020. Surviving originals are held in the private archives of the Boiko and Lediņš families.

37 ASTAHOVSKA – ŽEIKARE 2016, p. 23.

38 СЕРЖАНТ, Александр – СУМАРОКОВ, Дмитрий 2004; NEIBARTE, Sarmīte. *Zum, Zum Dzejniek! Aivars Neibarts*. Rīga : Pētergailis, 2019, p. 232.

were the busiest period for the magazine (five issues were published), with no retaliation from the KGB or other state institutions, only mild interest.[39]

Jānis Daugavietis (JD): *"There are only authors' nicknames practically. Why? Scared or just because?"*

Sergei Volchenko (SV): *"Generally no one really wanted to sign with their real names, I can tell you more when 1 – 2, maybe Nr. 3 came out, one of the authors came up to me and said, »If you get dragged in to KBG, you know, I have nothing to do with this«! Because of course you could get something for that* […]*. Even though we had peace. There were no objections at all* [*from the state*]*."*[40]

Ot Vinta content was markedly musical, and if anything political or socio-critical appeared, it was not an overly radical view. Most likely, the KGB's priorities in Latvia were purely political publications that had already begun to call for the restoration of Latvia's sovereignty or even independence or cultivated other ideas that were hateful to the Soviet authorities.[41] It would have been difficult to rebuke *Ot Vinta* for "bourgeois nationalism" (one of the regime's main ideological enemies in the so-called national republics) if only for the reason that it came out in Russian, there were no ethnic Latvians in the editorial team, and most of the content was devoted to Riga's Russian-language rock music scene.

At the same time, pseudonyms were used by virtually all the writers contributing to the magazine; there was no information about the editorial team, no addresses, and no instructions on how to acquire the publication. Some issues bear the words На правах рукописи (*Na pravah rukopisi*, that is *As a manuscript*), as if to suggest that there was no intention to circulate the publication and that it should not, therefore, be subject to censorship. Alternatively, there was the ironic use of Винт – движитель рекламы (*Vint – dvizhitel' reklamy* or *Vint – advertising engine*), Пролетариям всех стран (*Proletarijam vseh stran* or *To the proletarians of all countries*), and the use of the title font of the main Communist Party newspaper Правда (*Pravda* or *Truth*) for the title of *Ot Vinta* (see fig. 3, 6, 8). It was both a tradition of pre-Perestroika samizdat conspiracy and precautionary practices and a technique of "steb" (mockery or derision).

SV: *"In fact, if you read the title in a row without pauses, then the expression »To the proletarians of all countries Ot Vinta« can be interpreted as »The proletarians of all countries have pofig (do not care)«.*

»Propeller – an advertising vehicle« was borrowed from an article by Ilya Smirnov (Moscow) about the Bravo group, which became popular after being screwed up [»svintili«, that is, arrested] *right at the concert. There is even a photo where a ment* [militiaman] *comes up on the stage to Zhanna Aguzarova* [the front women].*"*[42]

39 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
40 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
41 For this topic see: BRODSKY-ZISSERMAN, Dina (ed.). *Constructing Ethnopolitics in the Soviet Union: Samizdat, Deprivation and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 294 p., https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403973627.
42 Volchenko, Sergei, letter to Jānis Daugavietis. Re: *Ot Vinta* Nr. 5., [Personal e-mail communication], 20 March 2020.

Ot Vinta's chief editor, Sergei Volchenko (born 1962), was a volunteer worker at the Riga Rock Club[43] from 1985. His duties included collecting membership fees and taking care of the club's sound equipment.[44] There is no mention anywhere in the issues of the publication that it is an organ or voice of the Rock Club, and it positions itself in interviews as independent. However, despite this, *Ot Vinta*'s affiliation with this institution is obvious (several members of the "editorial board" were involved in the management of the club, played in groups, and the contents of the journal covered the activities of the rock club). The Rock Club was an official institution of the Soviet state. Its "parent organization" was the Latvian Communist Youth (Komsomol) division of the City of Riga and it was supervised by the KGB.[45] It therefore had to comply with the laws and cultural policy of that time. For example, club groups had to submit their lyrics for approval (censorship) to the respective Komsomol employee, the rock club curator.[46] *Ot Vinta* also probably managed to maintain a level of self-censorship that satisfied both parties. In interviews, the creators of *Ot Vinta* say that the KGB was aware of its contents but did not give them any direct comment or recommendation.[47]

SV: *"When nr. 3 – 4 came out* [...] *I knew a man who was related to a »cantor«* [KBG]. *I asked him, »Can you find out there with your* [...] *acquaintances* [laughs] *how and what is happening* [...] *« A week later he says, »They have seen it, read it, and said that there will be no sanctions. You can sleep peacefully«…*[laughs].*"*

JD: *"Probably there was no bourgeois nationalism there* [*Ot Vinta*]*?"*

43 The Riga Rock Club was formed in the autumn of 1983, bringing together unofficial rock bands to form a state-approved formal organization under the direct authority and supervision of the state. The model was the Leningrad rock club, founded in 1981. See: TROITSKY, Artemy. *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia*. Boston; London : Faber and Faber, 1988, 160 p.; EASTON, Paul. The Rock Music Community. In RIORDAN, Jim (ed.) *Soviet Youth Culture*. London : Palgrave Macmillan, 1989, pp. 45-82; STEINHOLT, Yngvar Bordewich. *Rock in the Reservation: Songs from Leningrad Rock Club 1981 – 1986*. New York; Bergen : Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2005, 230 p. The Riga Rock Club was the second such formation in the USSR, although the first unsuccessful attempts were made in Moscow and Leningrad in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See: МИХАЙЛОВ, Николай Дмитриевич. Что Такое 'Ленинградский Рок-Клуб'? [e-resource, blog Берег Питера, accessible now only through archive.org, 2013], https://web.archive.org/web/20140517001234/http://beregpitera.ru/; КАН, Александр. Ленинградский рок-клуб: заметки очевидца. In *BBC News Русская служба*, 20 March 2011, [e-resource], https://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2011/03/110320_5floor_rock_club.shtml; STARR, S. Frederick. The Rock Inundation. In *The Wilson Quarterly*, 1983, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 58-67. The rock club gave the underground groups who became members a chance to play in rare semi-closed club concerts (which were not advertised) and later, during the perestroika years, to perform outside Riga in cities of other republics. It became the most important rock music institution of its time in Riga and all of Latvia. It featured different genre groups ranging from hard rock to avant-garde and noise.
44 ГОРСКАЯ, Анна. За рок-н-ролл! In *Бизнес&Балтия*, 19 November 2008, Vol. 3592, No. 221. p. 10, [e-resource], http://arhiv.bb.lv/?p=1&i=4160&s=8&a=152426; Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
45 There is no research on the relationship between the first USSR rock clubs (Leningrad, Riga and Moscow) and the KGB. Memoirs and interviews usually mention special rock club KGB curators and seats at rock club concerts that were actually reserved for observers from the Komsomol and this security institution. See: Interview with Raimonds Legimovs, interviewer Kristaps Lejiņš: Dambis par alternatīvās skatuves pirmsākumiem un attīstību. In *Alternative.lv*, from 10 December 2012, [e-resource], http://www.alternative.lv/intervijas/dambis-par-alternativas-skatuves-pirmsakumiem-un-attistibu-212/; МИХАЙЛОВ 2013.
46 Interview with Andrej "Kastot" Kostanenko [unrecorded], interviewer Jānis Daugavietis, from 23 January 2019; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
47 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.

SV: *"Nationalism was not there, of course. Probably at that time they had something else to deal with…"*[48]

Ot Vinta was created by young amateurs with no previous experience of producing such publications. Previously, they had read samizdat, and Volchenko had even reproduced some editions of samizdat, including some articles of music-oriented samizdat.[49] The person with the greatest experience was Andrei "Kastot" Kostanenko (born 1964), who had produced handwritten editions of Орган БЭКО (*Organ BEKO)* with friends and other musicians from the emerging Bolderāja scene since 1984 (or earlier).[50] Neither Kastot nor Sergei Volchenko and Dmitry Sumarokov (born as Sustretov in 1967), who made up the first "editorial board", nor any of the other original authors of *Ot Vinta* had any specialized education in media production or publishing.

Volchenko and Sumarokov had extramural engineering studies at the Riga Polytechnic Institute (now Riga Technical University) and worked at ЭЛЛАР (*EL-LAR*, Factory of the USSR Ministry of Electronic Industry), where hardware for the manufacture of microchips was produced. They both sat at the same table in an experimental mechanical engineering design bureau, and it is here that the production of *Ot Vinta* took place,[51] illegally, of course, using the resources of a public authority during working hours without permission and without payment.

Technically, *Ot Vinta* was created using the classic samizdat technique of that time: typewriter, paper, carbon paper, photo, scissors, and glue. Five or six copies of the magazine were printed at the same time by using carbon paper. Photographs were then glued on to each of these originals, plus a cover or other illustrations, whether in the form of a drawing, collage, or the like.[52] Sergei Volchenko says that his duties ended after he had edited and typed up the articles, and then put the publication together. He left one or two copies for himself (the archive), and distributed the rest to the Rock Club, the authors, and acquaintances. However, *Ot Vinta* gained a greater circulation thanks to copies made by others. For example, Dmitry Sumarokov remembers having reproduced the magazine on the spot, in the factory, secretly using the "soviet xerox" there. He also manually stitched the printed pages with a wire used in the electrical industry and placed it in a transparent cover.[53]

48 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
49 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
50 КОСТАНЕНКО, Андрей. Шванцен-Штоппер – Золотой дозняк. Der Kunstmeisters aus Bolderaa, 1984 – 1999. In *Малая Земля*, 1999, [e-resource], http://malajazemlja.narod.ru/mztrio/mztrio1.html; КУШНИР 1991, p. 82. Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019. Bolderāja is one of the most remote neighbourhoods of Riga, and in everyday language it is often understood to include another neighbouring district, Daugavgrīva. It developed rapidly during the Soviet era thanks to industrialization and military bases, in which mainly immigrants from other USSR republics worked and served, making it the most "Russian" area of Riga.
51 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
52 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
53 Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
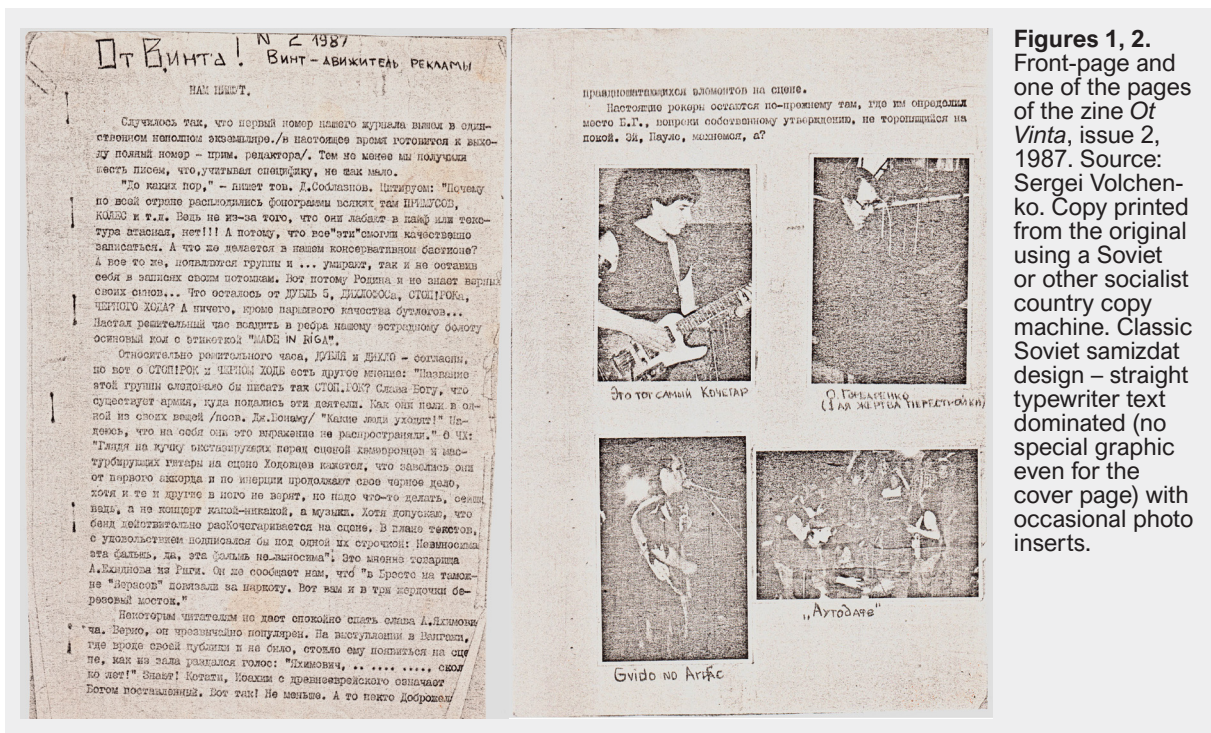
Figures 1, 2.
Front-page and one of the pages of the zine *Ot Vinta*, issue 2, 1987. Source: Sergei Volchenko. Copy printed from the original using a Soviet or other socialist country copy machine. Classic Soviet samizdat design – straight typewriter text dominated (no special graphic even for the cover page) with occasional photo inserts.

Further reproduction of the finished edition of the samizdat was spontaneous and uncontrolled. If someone who had a samizdat edition in their hands was exposed to its contents and had the appropriate means of production at his or her disposal (e.g., a typewriter, although this was not compulsory as handwritten samizdat were circulating in the early 1990s),[54] and he/she was not afraid, then they made as many copies as possible. The same thing happened with music samizdat. This was a widespread practice that had the approval of the samizdat community. Therefore, it is difficult to judge the number of *Ot Vinta* magazines that were reproduced, but it can be assumed with certainty that there were five – six original copies produced in Riga (typewriter, carbon paper copying, with real photos) and a few dozen "xerocopied" copies. How and by what means *Ot Vinta* was propagated in other cities of the USSR is unknown and unstudied.

Due to the traditions of samizdat and the technical means available, including the education of the creators of the *Ot Vinta* makers (they did not go to art schools), its design is laconic-technocratic: straight, uninterrupted, typewritten A4 or A5 pages on one side, with maybe a photograph, drawing or collage in the middle (or on the whole page) (see Figures 1 – 7). When they began publishing *Ot Vinta*, its makers had only seen Soviet samizdat, including some examples of music samizdat,[55] so the visual and design aesthetics of classical western punk/DIY cannot be seen in the first issues of their magazine. This came later, due to, firstly, the flow of information coming from the West; and, secondly, the greater availability of xerox machines in the USSR at the end of the 1980s.
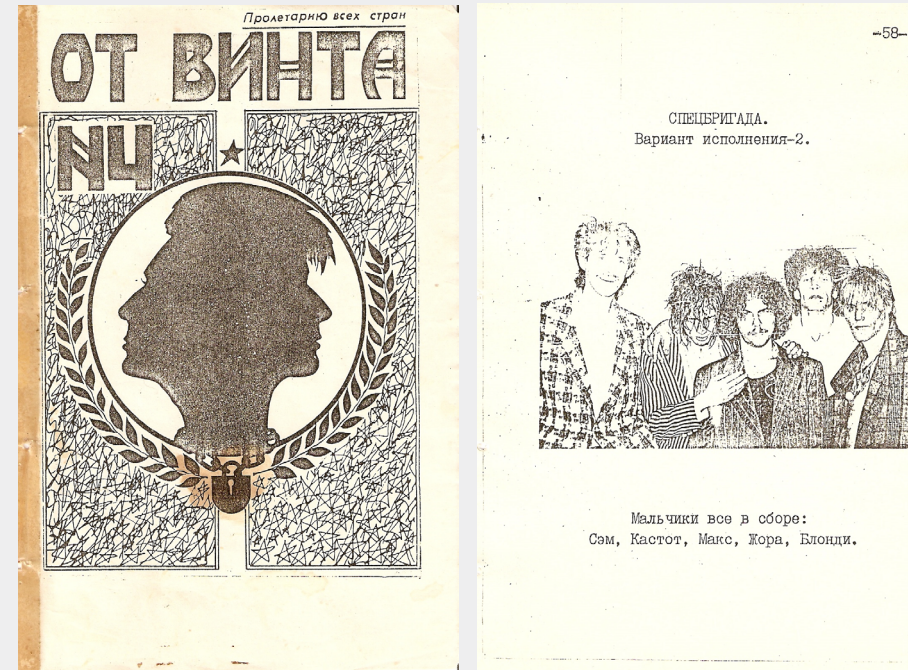
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54 ГУРЬЕВ 2013.
55 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019; Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
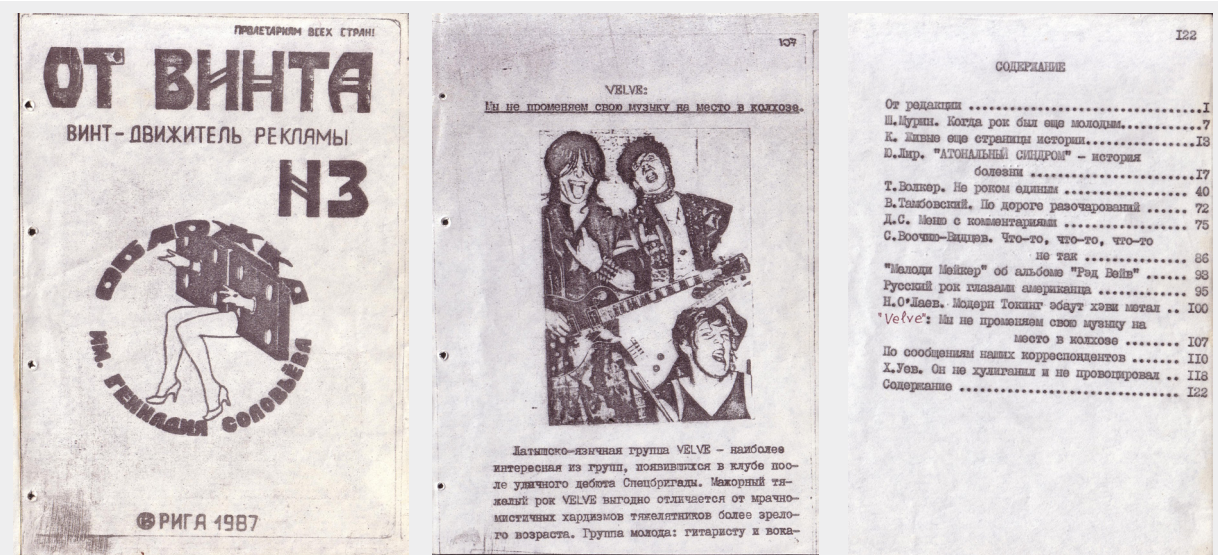
Figures 3, 4, 5. Front page and two of the pages of the zine *Ot Vinta*, issue 3, 1987. Source: Raimonds "Dambis" Lagimovs. Typewriters usually had only one alphabet, in this case Cyrillic.

Figures 6, 7. Front page and one of the pages of the zine *Ot Vinta,* issue 4, 1987. Source: Sergei Volchenko. In Fig.7, the group *Specbrigada*, with its leader and one of the founders of *Ot Vinta*, Kastot (second from the left).
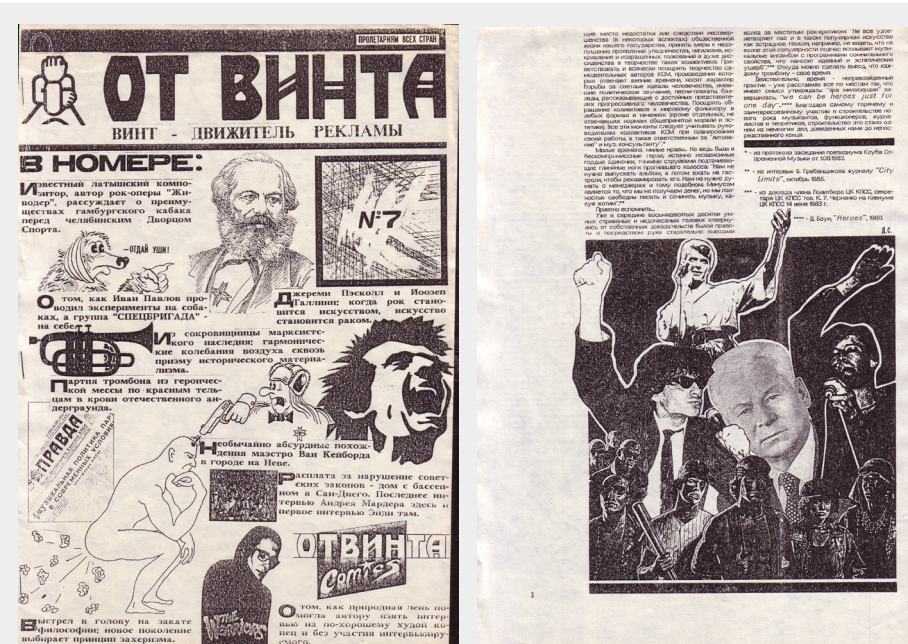

Figure 8, 9. Front page and one of the pages of the zine *Ot Vinta*, issue 7, 1991. Source: Raimonds "Dambis" Lagimovs. A new approach to design and a typewriter replaced by a computer.

SV: *"Ot Vinta started in the beginning of 1987. Kastot and I were walking down the street and he started telling me a practically finished article, pretty well. I said to him, »Go on, write it«!*

He replies, »Everything is written«."[56]

Ot Vinta number one came about after Kastot showed Volchenko a handwritten notebook in late 1986 or early 1987, which was actually a ready-made edition. Volchenko offered to rewrite it on a typewriter.[57] This resulted in the second version of the first issue of *Ot Vinta* – printed and with one or two articles added by other authors. Handwritten and single copy style, Kastot and his fellow musicians from the Bolderāja underground scene had previously published a very local edition, *Organ BEKO*. The year 1986 was a notable one for Kastot and his rock band Specbrigada, as they had started playing their first concerts outside Bolderāja and using electric instruments (electric guitar and amplifying equipment). They had, moreover, become a member of the Riga Rock Club and increasingly involved in the USSR underground scene, getting more contacts and information about activities in other cities.[58]

"According to legend, the origin of the magazine is connected with a certain Buddhist from Ulan-Ude, to whom the aforementioned Andrei Kostanenko somehow promised to send a publication that not-boringly reflects some aspects of the Riga rock movement. Fulfilling the promise, Kastot single-handedly prepared the debut issue, which was a 24-page notebook with hand-written materials and pasted photos."[59]

In the second issue of *Ot Vinta* (Spring 1987), half is written by Kastot, his main pen name being Х. Уев (Kh. Uev), and the rest by three other authors. The third issue (Summer 1987) of 122 pages in an A5 format contains articles by at least seven authors. It should be noted that all the authors used pseudonyms or nicknames that were known to people in the scene. The *Ot Vinta* editorial board was not a formal institution, so it is difficult to pinpoint its boundaries, but besides the three authors mentioned above, we can, after the second issue, add the authors Igor Detkovsky and Sergey Rozhko.[60] Both were also directly affiliated with the Riga Rock Club.

The last issue of the year (number four) contains 76 pages, with contributions from five authors. During this time, an editorial split was underway which saw two important authors leaving: Kastot, who started *Малая Земля* (*Malaja Zemlja*) in 1988, and Rozhko, who began publishing *СПИДЪ* (*SPID*) in the same year.[61] *Ot Vinta* number five came out in the summer of 1988, with 87 pages featuring articles from 12 authors (or pseudonyms). The sixth issue (1989) is the so-called "Garbarenko issue", as it was based on the letters of legendary Riga avant-garde musician Oleg Garbarenko (born 1950 – 1992), frontman of the band Атональный Синдром (Atonal'nyj Sindrom). Only one copy of the issue was published.

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56 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
57 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
58 Interview with Andrej "Kastot" Kostanenko, from 23 January 2019.
59 КУШНИР 1994, p. 162.
60 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
61 КУШНИР 1994, p. 163.

The year 1989 can be considered as the year when censorship effectively ended in the Latvian SSR.[62] This meant that samizdat could be published officially and viewed as a commercial opportunity. In terms of its population, Latvia is a relatively small country, comprising at that time approximately 2.7 million people. Although half of the population belonged to the Russian-speaking community, it was difficult for the Russian-speaking press to compete with Russia's (All-Soviet) magazines. While some new "normal" (not samizdat) music-oriented Latvian-language magazines appeared at that time, in 1990 – 1991 (e.g., *Parks*, *Una*, *Patsnieku Iela*), none appeared in Russian. The *Ot Vinta* editorial board had considered publishing a "normal" music magazine but concluded that it would not be cost-effective.[63] The Russian-language music samizdat in Latvia continued to function in the style of a fanzine until the early 1990s (e.g., *Малая Земля*, *ИБО*, *Авось, Ересь* – *Malaja Zemlja*, *IBO*, *Avos'*, *Eres'*), finally ending around 1991 – l992.

The last two issues of *Ot Vinta* were released after a pause of two years. The first of these was an unnamed four-page "blues number" dedicated to the birthday of Riga guitarist Jānis Vanadziņš (born 1951) and was published at the beginning of 1991. The last edition, the seventh, was released at the end of the year. It consists of 25 eclectic pages, and the reader can feel that the material has been stretched over a few years. Volchenko and Sumarokov continued their work with samizdat sporadically through the 1990s and beyond; however, it was no longer a systematic activity. They re-issued the Garbarenko edition twice (in 1994 and 1995).[64] A final attempt to create a new issue of *Ot Vinta* took place in 1996; however, it didn't progress beyond the draft stage and an unfinished layout design.[65]

The drop off in intensity after 1987, when only four issues were published in the next four years, can be explained not only by changes in the editorial composition, but also by rapid and cardinal changes in the socio-political-economic context in Latvia. These changes began at the end of 1987, with the democratization of the public sphere, the strengthening of the national independence movement, and the legalization of some forms of private business. On May 4, 1990, the Parliament of the Latvian SSR proclaimed independence from the USSR. Although this was a significant historical moment, the very rapid economic crisis taking place at that time had a much greater impact on the daily lives of the population. It was marked by a decline in industrial production and trade, a shortage of commodities and foodstuffs, high unemployment, and a growing state of social anomie.[66]

This economic recession followed a period in which rock music and other popular musical genres were completely legalised by the state administration and freed from state control. The incredible mass attendance at concerts that had taken place in

62 STRODS, Heinrihs. *PSRS politiskā cenzūra Latvijā, 1940 – 1990*. Rīga : Jumava, 2010, 472 p.; BRIEDIS, Raimonds. *Teksta cenzūras īsais kurss: prozas teksts un cenzūra padomju gados Latvijā*. Rīga : LU Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts, 2010, 183 p.
63 Interview with Dmitry Sumarokov, from 26 September 2019.
64 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 20 March 2020; ЛЕВКИН, Андрей. Гарбаренко и др. In *Бизнес & Балтия*, 3 July 1995, Vol. 278, No. 75, p. 16, [e-resource], http://arhiv.bb.lv/?p=1&i=51&s=8&a=1918.
65 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 29 October 2019.
66 DREIFELDS, Juris. *Latvia in Transition*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1997, 224 p.; PABRIKS, Artis – PURS, Aldis. *Latvia: The Challenges of Change*. London ; New York : Routledge, 2001, 184 p.

1988 – 1989 disappeared as a result of this economic strife.[67] The lifting of censorship and the transformation of the economy saw a change in the role of the Riga Rock Club. This shift from the Soviet totalitarian cultural policy to one characterised by market-based music production and mechanisms of circulation resulted in a lessening of its influence. After all, the most important function it had played for rock musicians during the Soviet period, namely securing a legal gig, was no longer relevant. Moreover, the idea of a central "rock organisation" did not correspond to the new spirit of the time. Competing organisations emerged; many of Riga's Russian-speaking musicians emigrated, and a new generation of musicians entered the scene.

The last big Riga Rock Club festival took place in the fall of 1991, and Sergei Volchenko, one of its organizers, remembers it with a hint of bitterness: *"...at the last gig of the Rock Rudens Festival in 1991, a man without a ticket appeared, pulls out a gun and starts yelling: »Now I'll shoot everyone if you don't let me into the hall«! They twisted him up, of course, threw him away, and the pistol was taken away, but I did not want to continue doing anything. It is not interesting to strive for such thrash."*[68] In a similar vein, Volchenko comments on the ending of *Ot Vinta*: *"Rather, interest simply disappeared and it all became irrelevant."*[69]

In parallel with the work on *Ot Vinta*, some of its authors had already started cooperating with the official Russian-language media of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1987, for example, writing in the weekly *Рок диалог* (*Rok dialog*) section in the newspaper *Советская Молодежь* (*Sovetskaya Molodezh*), published by the Latvian Komsomol. They continue to practice journalism, including music, even after restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia in 1990, joining the new professional Russian-language mass media system[70] as well as trying out other types of business.

Conclusions

It is likely that differences in the nature of zine and music samizdat research is not a result of any theoretical disagreement but rather due to the competence and subjective or aesthetic interests of the researchers. In most cases, research is dominated by a more or less pronounced insider approach,[71] and every researcher is likely to have come from a zine or samizdat scene of a certain time and geographic location. This paper is no exception, and so it is narrowly specialized. We have, therefore, the American Stephen Duncombe with a book on, basically, American zines;[72] the Brit Matthew Worley with publications on British punk zines;[73] the Soviet-Ukrain-

67 ALKSNE, Andra. *Credo: Veltījums leģendārajai Latvijas rokgrupai 'Credo', liktenim un laikam*. Rīga : Poligrāfijas infocentrs, 2008, 335 p.; PAPĒDIS, Māris. *Remix...Pie laika*. Rīga : Upett, 2015, 383 p.
68 ГОРСКАЯ 2008, p. 10.
69 Interview with Sergei Volchenko, from 20 March 2020.
70 They worked in the editorial office of *Балтийское Время* (*Baltijskoe Vremja*), which from 1988 to 1992 was published as a Popular Front of Latvia weekly newspaper in Russian, but then operated as an independent enterprise, becoming the leading Russian-language newspaper in Latvia.
71 ŠIMA – MICHELA 2020, p. 2.
72 DUNCOMBE 1997.
73 WORLEY, Matthew. Punk, Politics and British (Fan)Zines, 1976 – 84: 'While the World Was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?' In *History Workshop Journal*, 2015, Vol. 79, No. 1, pp. 76-106, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbu043; WORLEY, Matthew. Whose Culture? Fanzines, Politics and Agency. In GILDART, Keith et al. (eds.) *Ripped, Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976.* Manchester :

ian-Russian author Aleksandr Kushnir on Soviet (basically Slavic) rock samizdat;[74] and the Portuguese researchers Paul Guerra and Pedro Quintela with studies on Portuguese punk zines.[75] These are cases of classical ethnocentrism that take the form of Slav-centrism, British-centrism, or UK punk-centrism in zines and samizdat research.

"While other media are produced for money or prestige or public approval, zines are done […] *for love: love of expression, love of sharing, love of communication."*[76] These words can be fully attributed to the creation and production of *Ot Vinta*, the Soviet Latvian music samizdat discussed in this article. It had a small circulation and was made by non-professional "journalists" and "publishers" in the DIY spirit. They were rock music fans and music lovers, some of whom had already become musicians. The creators of *Ot Vinta*, as musicians and support staff, were closely linked to the underground rock scene in Riga, and most *Ot Vinta* content was devoted to it.

The production of *Ot Vinta* was certainly also a protest, however. By defending their aesthetic tastes, the authors of this samizdat opposed, directly or indirectly, the values of the Soviet ideology and its accepted cultural policy. It was the period of late socialism, which had already passed through Перестройка (Perestroika) and Гласность (Glasnost), and had a reformed, more democratic society and administration. It was a political act to question socialist realism (however unpredictable and contradictory it may have been) and other canons of official culture, and to opt for the mass music of "rotting Western capitalism". However, in the case of *Ot Vinta*, it cannot be said that the driving force behind its publication was political protest.

At the same time, it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between aesthetic and political values. Is it possible to discern any "pure" aesthetic values from Western rock music, as well as from Soviet pop music, without considering social or political values? Can the rebellion of the former – sexual and substance (ab)use, inactivity, isolation, pessimism – or the positivism of the latter – collectivism and conformism – somewhere die away or transform? It is possible, but not at that time and not in that context.

Did Soviet *Ot Vinta* differ from the zines of the Western world? No. There are no significant differences in terms of production, distribution, values, or ideology. There are differences in the details of production (in design, in the means used, in distribution channels, and in the degree of conspiracy required) as well as in the attitude of the ruling political regime (ignorance or control). However, these are features that lie outside the definition of what is a zine, so the main conclusion of this article is that Western music zines and Soviet music samizdat are one and the same phenomenon.

Returning to and ending with the case of *Ot Vinta*, a few things need to be repeated. First, the content of this zine (or music samizdat) is a unique source of historical

Manchester University Press, 2018, pp. 55-71, http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/81421/; WORLEY, Matthew. "If I Had More Time It Could Be Better, but the New Wave's about Spontaneity, Right?": Finding Meaning in Britain's Early Punk Fanzines (1976 – 77). In *Punk and Post-Punk*, 2020, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 223-245.

74 КУШНИР 1994.

75 GUERRA – QUINTELA 2020; QUINTELA, Pedro – GUERRA, Paula. Punk Fanzines in Portugal (1978 – 2013): A Mapping Exercise. In *Keep It Simple, Make It Fast! An Approach to Underground Music Scenes*, 2016, Vol. 2, pp. 59-67; GUERRA, Paula – QUINTELA, Pedro. Spreading the Message! Fanzines and the Punk Scene in Portugal. In *Punk & Post Punk*, 2014, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 203-224.

76 DUNCOMBE 1997, p. 18.

information about the underground music (mainly Russian-language) scene of Riga during its time. It came from and belonged to this informal culture, which remained largely undocumented in official media or other documents. Secondly, this is the first study of the most important Riga zine of its time, during which two hitherto digitally unavailable numbers were digitized and made public. Thirdly, the preliminary study of the Soviet music-oriented samizdat collections reveals that the largest collections are in private hands, while the largest collections of publications in state libraries and archives are to be found outside of the countries where they were produced, which is the case for both Latvia and Russia.[77] This, in turn, implies researching archives, library collections and private collections in the name of the national interest of these countries, with the aim of cataloguing, digitizing or even purchasing such publications.

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Space, Paper, Transition/ality at Bolzanova 7. The Dissolution of the Czech Samizdat Scene and the Growth of Zine Culture in the 1990s

Martin Tharp

Abstract

THARP, Martin: Space, Paper, Transition/ality at Bolzanova 7. The Dissolution of the Czech Samizdat Scene and the Growth of Zine Culture in the 1990s.

The present contribution takes a relatively unconventional angle for its investigation of the abrupt shift in Czech unofficial journalistic culture from severely repressed samizdat before November 1989 to significant social force in the first years of the subsequent decade. It takes as its locus the Prague office building at the address Bolzanova 7, a former Czech Rail property assigned to the samizdat-based independent journalistic agency Informační servis at the end of 1990. Here, in the hectic early years of uncensored publication, the rapid diversification of Czech independent periodicals witnessed the emergence of both culturally prestigious organs (the weekly magazine *Respekt*, the quarterly cultural journal *Revolver Revue*) and of attempts to reformulate a counterculture under radically different conditions – specifically the transformation of the underground information bulletin *Voknoviny* into the anarchist periodical *A-Kontra*. My interest in the present study is in examining the processes involved in this particular historical moment, as much from an analytical as well as a (necessary) descriptive aspect.

Keywords: Czech, samizdat, independent press, dissent, postsocialism, 1990s

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In cultural histories of the late 20th century, particularly those that examine the world of pre-cyberspace periodicals, one question is likely to remain a vexing topic of debate. The last decade before the cyberspace revolution witnessed a rapid flourishing of independent paper-based journalism, very often closely tied to independent musical cultures, the publications that rapidly became known as "zines". Chronologically, though, the efflorescence of zine culture in the 1990s is no less remarkable for its following upon a very different form of self-publication activity: samizdat production under the state-socialist regimes of the USSR and its satellite states in Europe, prevalent throughout the post-Stalinist era up until the rapid dismantling of government censorship and the command-economy control of print technology in the 1989 – 1991 period.

The historical proximity between the two tendencies is far too strong to be ascribed to coincidence alone – yet the exact form of the connection is harder to discern. Zine culture, while definitely established long before 1989 and its subsequent ramifications, was clearly given its post-1989 impetus by the reflected moral credit of anti-communist dissidence, or more specifically the credit of cultural opposition to a state order of aesthetic policing, a brave defiance of the world

of grey polyester suits and "estrada" musical kitsch.[1] Samizdat, by contrast, essentially vanished as a political phenomenon with the ending of state control over content and production, often with its authors and publishers rapidly – in some cases, as we shall see, almost literally overnight – moving into the sphere of an official post-1989 culture.

Further adding to the difficulty is the peculiar circumstance of the historical overlap of two different forms of autonomous periodical publication. Specifically, this observation affects the emergence in the final years of Communist rule of subcultural self-created publications that more closely match Western zines than more traditionally political or intellectual samizdat. Likewise linked to popular music or sports fandom, the zines of the Communist/post-Communist regions had their own trajectory and their own history; more significantly, they represented still another manifestation of the search for an independent culture outside of either state-imposed or commercial paradigms. And, more notably, they lie outside of the established paradigms of dissent and assent, of (totalitarian) state and (democratic) civil society, pointing the way towards a public sphere without the omnipresent pressure of continual agonistic conflicts between state control and autonomous culture.

With all this in mind, the relation between zine and samizdat clearly shows, with the benefit of historical hindsight, the occurrence of a major shift, indeed a sharp discontinuity, and that the historic breakpoint of (more or less) the year of 1990 witnessed a genuine transition from one distinct social order to another. As much as this claim may sound like a banal truism, it is worth reiterating, particularly as these circumstances, here subsumed under the ugly neologism "transitionality", retreat further into the past. Indeed, the term "transition" has clearly moved (or – pardon the pun – "transitioned") from politics and international relations into gender studies[2], and seismic alterations in global power-balances have – after Dipesh Chakrabarty – quite successfully "provincialized" the Cold War division into a regional dispute within today's Global North.[3] If only for historical accuracy's sake, we need to recall how, from both a historical and a sociological standpoint, the conditions for cultural production under direct state management differ from those where the state does not view aesthetic divergence as an immediate assault on its authority.

To examine this moment of transitionality, I have selected, somewhat anoma-lously, not a publication but a physical location: the building located in Prague at the address Bolzanova 7, which immediately after the collapse of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia served as the central location for the formerly samiz-

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1   Strictly speaking, the cultural form of the "estrada" was restricted to the USSR, though the use of the term as a pejorative categorisation for official popular performance in other state-socialist countries was somewhat common in unofficial circles.
2   Note the recent work of BRUBAKER, Rogers. *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities.* Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2016. It is indeed symptomatic that Brubaker's research in a pre-vious era addressed questions of nationalism and national identity, most notably BRUBAKER, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1996.
3   CHAKRABARTY, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2000.

dat, now legal independent press. For several months in 1990, Bolzanova 7 was the literal centre of autonomous publication in the Czech language (not counting, of course, the still-active exile press). Alongside this undeniable historical significance, though, the location of Bolzanova 7 is not merely emblematic but actively instructive, drawing attention to the essentially spatial dimensions of publishing activity, both linguistic and physical.

In linguistic terms, every publication is limited and defined by its language; concomitantly, the circulation range of a periodical – whether national newspaper or handmade fanzine – is itself a definition of its group of readers. Classically, Benedict Anderson noted the relation between the periodical and the emergence of collective awareness, expanding language to the wider territory of nation.[4] However, among the scholars of nationalism it may be Ernest Gellner who has hitherto provided the most trenchant depiction of the processes of collective self-reification inherent in the national configuration of the "smaller" linguistic communities, with a special eye towards post-Habsburg Europe. Gellner's paradigm case of "Ruritania" is, invariably, one of the severe difficulties of harmoniously mapping language onto geography; its result, as he noted with characteristic irony, has most often been the brutal reality of physical displacement: the ethnographic map that *"resembles not Kokoschka, but, say, Modigliani* […] *generally plain where one begins and another ends, and there is little if any ambiguity or overlap."*[5]

To work in scholarship within the Modigliani-landscape of the Ruritanias, in essence, is to have methodological nationalism forced upon us. And it is hard to avoid the impression, when examining Czechoslovakia's post-1968 "normalization", that the artistic analogy might less match Modigliani than Mark Rothko in the massive social homogenisation imposed by thoroughgoing, unreformed state control. Nonetheless, Gellner's predominantly linguistic understanding of "Ruritanian" nationalism needs to be supplemented with a more finely calibrated spatial awareness: the crucial role of differences of physical size and scale, and the spatialities of post-Habsburg national entities, including (though not limited to) the relation between urban centres and rural peripheries. Specifically, the idea of the capitol city of the small nation-state as the centre for language production and, in Anderson's term, "print-capitalism"[6] should be examined more thoroughly and with greater rigour than the standard cliches of journalistic accounts or even participant testimony that, all too often, tends to be interpreted as mere personality-driven gossip. Against this alternative, I would like to propose a methodological optic that balances the individual accounts of the specific historic moment – predominantly oral or media interviews – against an analysis grounded in the ample corpus of theories of nationalism and national language-communities, yet with an awareness of the complexity of their division, as per 20th-century Europe, within the concrete, often devastatingly real physical spaces of national borders, exile-writing enclaves, or indeed city plans or capitol-periphery social divisions.

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4   ANDERSON, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London : Verso, 1990, pp. 34-36.
5   GELLNER, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1983, pp. 139-140.
6   ANDERSON 1990.

Within this framework of language as a predominantly spatial entity, I aim to argue that the end of the system that – both politically and economically – made samizdat a forced exigency implied a wide-ranging social shift in which the integration of the former opposition into the new social order was a natural, indeed near-inevitable outcome. And conversely, that the connection between samizdat, even of a conventionally "subcultural" orientation, and the rise of the paper zines of the 1990s should, at least within the Czech-language space, be viewed as tenuous at best.

The story of Bolzanova 7 is relatively simple, yet highly revelatory. Essentially, this unoccupied former office building for Czechoslovak Rail was offered by the Czechoslovak state to an organisation known as the Independent Press Centre (Nezávislé tiskové středisko – NTS). This group of Prague-based samizdat publishers, closely linked to the central dissident base of Charter 77 (if not, indeed, actual signatories to this declaration), was formed literally within hours of the police attack on student demonstrators on 17. November 1989, with editorial space offered in the Galerie u Řečických, at the address Vodičkova 10. The precise course of events is, understandably, somewhat uncertain, based on differing recollections among the various participants[7]; what is of greater importance for the present considerations is the extreme rapidity of the response from Czech samizdat and the striking cohesiveness of its participants once events came to a head. The NTS took as its mission the provision of information directly to international journalists and press agencies, avoiding the still largely compliant state media such as the Czech News Agency (Česká tisková kancelář – ČTK). By 1990, however, more or less in March[8], not only had the emphasis shifted towards creating a new, free and legal print media for the new conditions, but the organisation had far outgrown the gallery space. One floor above the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Society offices[9], a semi-permanent office space was created for the news agency Informační servis (Information Service) – soon to become the newsweekly *Respekt* – alongside the editorships of several other periodicals, both samizdat publications now unexpectedly thrust into legality as well as entirely new titles. Some of them, like the originally underground cultural journal *Revolver Revue*, managed to survive up to the present as highly prestigious institutions; others, like the university newspaper *Studentské listy* or the music journal *Konzerva/Na hudbu*[10] are hardly remembered today. However, one of the publications should be of particular interest,

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7   To cite but two examples: PETRÁČEK, Zbyněk. Zprávy a chaos U Řečických. In *Lidové noviny*, 14. November 2009, https://www.lidovky.cz/noviny/zpravy-a-chaos-u-recickych.A091114_000118_ln_noviny_sko, or POSPÍCHAL, Petr. Vzpomínky na revoluce: 20. listopad. In *Deník Referendum*, http://denikreferendum.cz/clanek/19201-vzpominky-na-revoluci-20-listopad. Perhaps the most extensive descriptions, with ample pictorial material, have been provided by two of the major publications to emerge from the NTS: the special issue of the cultural quarterly *Revolver Revue* HOŘEJŠÍ, Tamara (ed.) *15 let Revolver Revue.* Praha : Edice Revolver Revue, 2001, specifically pp. XXX, or BROLÍK, Tomáš. Týdeník Respekt: rok jedna. In *Respekt*, 23. November 2014, https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2014/48/rok-jedna or https://www.respekt.cz/25-let-respektu/ivan-lamper-nebyt-toho-taxikare-respekt-by-nevznikl.

8   Nezávislé tiskové středisko was, however, only registered officially as a "cooperative" (družstvo) on 27. July of the same year, according to the official documentation available at https://rejstrik.penize.cz/00550604-nezavisle-tiskove-stredisko-v-likvidaci.

9   BROLÍK 2014.

10 Literally *Can for Music*. Twelve issues were published until 1996, according to the holdings of the Czech National Library; the title was registered with the Ministry of Culture until 2003: https://www.mkcr.cz/databaze-periodickeho-tisku-pro-verejnost-978.html?do[loadP]=1&item.id=662

since it perhaps corresponds best to the idea of the amateur-countercultural ethos of the fanzine: the former samizdat publication *Vokno*.[11]

Vokno was at this time hardly a new title: it dated back to 1979, when the first handmade issues began to circulate among counterculturally-minded youth connected to the Czech illegal rock scene in the wake of the famous trial of the Plastic People of the Universe. Moreover, even its genre as a periodical set it apart from the better-known part of Czech samizdat in the 1970s, which tended to consist of manuscripts by authors of a certain pre-1968 standing: poets (Jaroslav Seifert), novelists (Ivan Klíma), philosophers (Jan Patočka) or historians. And for a third, its circles of distribution and production lay at a notable remove from Prague intellectuals, ranging largely among the hippie-influenced working-class young in provincial industrial towns. *Vokno*'s geographic base was situated in the strange social laboratory of the Czech Sudetenland,[12] most notably in the various communal-living experiments in decrepit German farmhouses.[13]

To a large extent, *Vokno* represented the printed (typed) voice of the state-defined category of "defective youth" (závadná mládež) caught up against their will in the state-socialist machinery: long-haired working-class quasi-dropouts, choosing unskilled employment and (whenever possible) avoiding military service, favouring illegal rock concerts over the doubtful attractions of Socialist Youth Union activities.[14] And not surprisingly, it was attacked far more harshly by the state's judicial machinery. Its main editors and producers – František Stárek Čuňas, Ivan Martin Jirous, Michal Hýbek, Milan Frič – were arrested following a long surveillance campaign by the Czechoslovak political police (Státní bezpečnost – StB), under the designation Akce Satan, which in the words of its official evaluation planned *"the paralysing of enemy activities of leading organisers from the ranks of hippies, underground and signers of CH-77* [Charter 77] *in the North Bohemia region and Czechoslovakia".*[15] After their conviction in May 1982 on charges of *"hooliganism"* and *"disturbing the peace"*, along with a false marijuana accusation, all four were likewise given significant prison sentences.[16] Yet *Vokno* was not an explicitly political publication, at least in the sense of presenting a concerted

11 All the samizdat issues of *Vokno* are accessible online at https://www.vons.cz/vokno.

12 Note e.g. SPURNÝ, Matěj. *Most do budoucnosti: Laboratoř socialistické modernity na severu Čech*. Prague : Karolinum, 2016, or for an English-language treatment GLASSHEIM, Eagle. *Cleansing the Czechoslovak Borderlands: Migration, Environment and Health in the Former Sudetenland*. Pittsburgh : University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016.

13 A history – admittedly only partial – of this phenomenon is found in STÁREK, František Čuňas – KOSTÚR, Jiří. *Baráky. Souostroví svobody*. Prague : Pulchra, 2011.

14 The Socialist Youth Union (Socialistický svaz mládeže), active from 1970 until 1989, formed the primary implement of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the formation and shaping of youth activity during the post-1968 "normalisation" years, including the power to approve or ban music groups for public performance. Note in particular KUDRNA, Ladislav – STÁREK, František Čuňas. *Kapela. Pozadí akce, která stvořila Chartu 77*. Prague : Academia – Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, 2017, esp. pp. 63-72, for a discussion of state-approved youth culture in Czechoslovakia in the early 1970s.

15 The wording of the report *"Vyhodnocení prováděcího plánu na rok 1982 Státní bezpečnosti Ústí nad Labem z 1. listopadu 1982"*, cited in DENČEVA, Ivana. *Underground jako politický fenomén.* Diploma project. Prague : Department of Central European Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2013, p. 118.

16 Descriptions of the *Vokno* trial are available in the extensive biography of ŠVEHLA, Marek. *Magor a jeho doba*. Prague : Torst, 2017, p. 431 and following; discussion of the preceding secret-police campaign and its effects on the cultural underground is provided (in part by another participant, i.e. Stárek himself) in KUDRNA – STÁREK 2017, pp. 160-203. The standpoint of a third participant is provided in BERNARD, Jan. Filmař disentu Michal Hýbek. In *dok.revue*, 2019, No. 4, https://www.dokrevue.cz/clanky/filmar-dizentu-michal-hybek, excerpt from forthcoming publication from Nakladatelství AMU, 2020.

opposition to the regime. While it did not omit the unavoidable clashes with the state repressive forces (e.g. issue 8, which printed Stárek's courtroom appeal as well as the official judgment of the magazine's literary qualities from Dr. Vítězslav Rzounek of Charles University), it focused on providing its reader-network with information on international cultural goods under official embargo – above all, music – or the actual products of its network (poems and stories by various participants, reviews of underground bands).

In many respects, then, *Vokno* significantly resembled the zines of the decade to come: its stress on immediate personal testifying, its anchoring in musical subcultures, its gritty handmade aesthetic, its deliberate embrace of the socially autonomous sphere of its recipients. And yet these traits are offset by no less significant differences – lying less within the textual and physical form of the periodical itself than within its broader social ramifications and its actual role among opposition-minded youth in normalization-era Czechoslovakia. In other words, a certain correspondence of the physical object (the handmade periodical) in varying historical and social settings need not necessarily imply that the actual pragmatics of the creation and circulation of the similar objects are indeed similar. Semiotic references on a cultural level, in short, may often obscure the necessity of "sociologising" the culture behind both sign and signifier, let alone the conditions for the basic material emergence of one and the free exercising of the other.

Chief among these aspects, perhaps even the crucial deciding factor, is the story of *Vokno* under conditions of free and legal publication – the years in Bolzanova 7 up until the journal's dissolution five years later. Unlike its editorial neighbours *Respekt* and *Revolver Revue,* which are major journalistic and cultural institutions even today, *Vokno* not only failed to survive the turbulence of the 1990s but had even, at the point of its spatial institutionalisation, moved far from its beginnings. The primary *spiritus agens* of samizdat *Vokno*, and the veteran of several years' imprisonment for this contribution, František Čuňas Stárek, found a radically different field of activity immediately after the old regime's fall: joining the newly established Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Democracy (Úřad pro ochranu ústavy a demokracie) of the federal Interior Ministry as of its founding on 16. February 1990,[17] essentially the post-Communist intelligence service, and remaining in his post up through the establishment of the current Czech intelligence agency (Bezpečnostní informační služba – BIS) until resigning in 2007. The two main contributors to *Vokno*, Miroslav Vodrážka and Lubomír Drozd (better-known by his more frequent pseudonym Blumfeld SM), during this period focused far more intensively on presenting international – i.e. Anglo-American – cultural information in Czech translation than on offering a forum for domestic self-expression. Even more tellingly, the informational supplement to *Vokno*, entitled *Voknoviny*[18], under the direction of Jakub Polák, by 1991 became the expli-

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17 *Historie vzniku BIS*, https://www.bis.cz/historie/.
18 It should be noted, however, that *Voknoviny* was revived by Čuňas Stárek as an informational bulletin for underground and proto-underground music and cultural events after his departure from BIS. See ŠELIGA, Vojtěch. *Současná undergroundová subkultura a Voknoviny.* MA thesis. Prague : Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences, 2018.

citly political left-anarchist *A-Kontra,* at the time among the strongest critical forums within Czech publishing as a whole – underscoring (if such were necessary) the rapid divergences of opinion among ex-dissidents in the new order.

By 1994, *Vokno* had sufficiently ensconced itself in public awareness as to become an easily appreciable satirical reference from popular novelist Michal Viewegh, mentioned as a fashion-attribute of Prague's gilded pseudo-bohemian youth in his novel *Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia.*[19] One year later, its final issue, no. 30, appeared, while two of the professional graphic designers, Klára Kvízová and Petr Krejzek, soon shifted to the journal often regarded as *Vokno*'s successor, the cyberpunk-influenced *Živel.*[20] Of course, the high production values of *Živel* and its notable distance from both the aesthetics and the stance of the old underground – Krejzek himself preferred to describe the new journal as *"overground"*[21] – show clearly the trajectory of professionalisation and convergence with the rising market economy. The suddenness of the establishment of official status, though, along with the spatial and personal links to the new order, only provokes a question that perhaps lay in the background from the outset: Was samizdat always moving towards the resumption of "normality", to forming the new establishment once the normalisation-era gerontocracy finally left the scene? Or in another formulation – and one that can be generalised further to include other areas of post-1989 life – was it essentially a shadow establishment, a conservative element hoping for its correct, "normal" institutionalisation?

Obviously, the assumption contained in these rhetorical questions regards samizdat as an essentially conservative force, yearning for official legality, or at most a mere exigency of a situation regarded as "abnormal". And a further assumption is that samizdat production could be subsumed into a unified, organised, unequivocally political opposition – which is definitely an overstatement even within pre-1989 Czechoslovakia, and even taking into account the high degree of personal concentration of dissent into relatively restricted networks (*Charter 77*, the early underground associated with *Vokno*, the Prague cultural underground associated with *Revolver Revue* as prominent focal points). The chief error in these assumptions, in my own view, is the tendency to reify samizdat into a system of production, where the printed object (whether by typescript, offset or even conventional press) is the final aim. Samizdat should correctly be viewed less from the librarian's perspective than the network analyst's;[22] the material object – even for all the difficulties of its physical creation – invariably bore less importance than the conditions of its circulation among the readers, who very often were its further (re)producers within the broader distribution network.

19 VIEWEGH, Michal. *Výchova dívek v Čechách.* Prague : Český spisovatel, 1994; English translation TURNER, Gerald. *Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia.* London : Readers International, 1997.
20 Literally "element". The most extensive discussion of *Živel* in scholarly literature to date has been KEJLOVÁ, Sabine. *Časopis Živel a alternativní kulturní scéna 2009 — 2012*. BA thesis. Prague : Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences, 2014, pp. 11-12.
21 According to *Živel*'s co-founder: ADAMOVIČ, Ivan. Zakládání kyberkultury v Čechách. In *Nový Prostor*, 2018, No. 515, http://novyprostor.cz/clanky/515/zakladani-kyberkultury-v-cechach.
22 This argument is the central thesis of THARP, Martin. Šest aktérů odloučení: K teoretickému konceptu opozičních sítí a policejních zásahů. In KUDRNA, Ladislav (ed.) *Od mániček k undergroundu.* Prague : Ústav pro studium totalitních režímů 2019, p. 148-161.

Viewing this paradigm, in turn, from a slightly different angle, the spatiality of samizdat formed its own map – in a somewhat 20th-century term, we could call it a "countermap" – of interpersonal connections involved in the production/consumption/reproduction linkages: a map almost invariably kept invisible (for reasons too obvious to bear description) but nonetheless highly resilient in its reliance on "who knows whom". It is a spatialising of openness (the "free" public arena of the reader/author/typist community) that is forced into a largely unwanted enclosure, simply to ensure safety from the political police. Indeed, the wider trajectory of Czech samizdat from the later 1970s onward tended strongly towards the expansion of the network from that of immediate personal friendships into a broader, increasingly impersonal[23] proto-civil society. Between *Vokno* and *Revolver Revue*,[24] as underscored by many conversations with former participants in Czech underground networks, there emerged not only a greater level of technological sophistication, possible only through strategic personal connections with trained printing experts[25], but even more crucially the awareness that such "mainstreaming", as it were, was vital to the formulation of sufficient interpersonal space as the medium for true intellectual freedom. Only in a civil society – understood not in any sense as a normative label of approval but as the intellectual understanding forged in the late-20th-century reaction to Europe's totalitarian legacy – can there be the distance for independence in general, and indeed for independent thought or independent cultural production.

The de-materialising aspect of samizdat production, as paradoxical as it might sound, is nonetheless understandable when considering the material conditions of a fully state-controlled economy.[26] In this sense, it is worth recalling an often overlooked yet highly insightful critique emerging out of ex-Marxist dissidence – in this case the Budapest School – that addressed the command economy directly: the thesis of the "dictatorship over needs" proposed in the 1980s by Ferenc Fehér, Ágnes Heller and György Márkus.[27] My brief and inevitably crude treatment does little justice to the sophistication of this dissident-Marxist critique of "really existing socialism", but for the present purposes one central point should be raised: for Fehér, Heller and Márkus, the shortages and restrictions

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23 Note, for instance, the extensive use of nicknames in underground circles – often to the extent that longstanding underground participants never even knew the "official" names of relatively close friends. While this practice bears resemblance to the use of nicknames in other unofficial Czech subcultures (e.g. the "tramping" culture or unofficial/illegal Scouting organisations), its strict application among core members of underground networks may have further ramifications – possibly a formulation of a proto-civil society between familial networks and the atomised state sphere. I have discussed this aspect in somewhat greater detail in THARP, Martin. *Six Agents of Separation. Towards a Theoretical Concept for Oppositional Networks and Police Intervention*, in process.

24 For several of its still-illegal issues, *Revolver Revue* bore the (English) subtitle *"off ghetto magazine"*. A more extensive description was offered in a post-1989 address by Jáchym Topol originally delivered in English in the US. TOPOL, Jáchym. Contribution to a Closer Understanding of the Last Samizdat Generation. In MACHOVEC, Martin (ed.) *Views from the Inside. Czech Underground Literature and Culture 1948 – 1989.* Prague : Charles University-Karolinum Press, 2018.

25 See HOŘEJŠÍ 2001.

26 It is worth remembering that socialist Czechoslovakia had a far higher degree of state control over economic activities than many other of its Warsaw Pact neighbours: not only in the massive collectivisation of agriculture but equally in the absence of private shops (e.g. Hungary) or even private activity in skilled crafts (GDR).

27 FEHÉR, Ferenc – HELLER, Ágnes – MÁRKUS, György. *Dictatorship over Needs: An Analysis of Soviet Societies*. Oxford : Blackwell, 1986.

of the command economy were less of a bug than a necessary feature, related to the (highly un-Marxist) normative judgments of the state in its resource allocation. Creating a samizdat publication meant defying not only the censors of written content, but even the material strictures of assembling enough paper, carbon sheets, typewriter ribbons, or later printer ink, simply to create the physical medium of samizdat.[28] Totalitarianism in normalisation-era Czechoslovakia, in short, should not be reduced merely to the use of police force to impose Great Generation taste, however important it is to keep this fact in collective memory both within and without the nation's borders. The extent to which the command economy served as a no less effective instrument of social control has yet to receive its due within Czech historiography, let alone in investigating the area of cultural-semiotic resistance specifically.

A secondary factor within the "dictatorship over needs" – also addressed by the work's authors – was the emergence of a kind of Marxist commodity fetishism, again in sharp contradiction to the regime's declared ideology. Increasingly, scholarship addressing the semiotic-aesthetic aspects of socialist Alltagsgeschichte has focused on the conditions of material uniformity and the subsequent fetishization both of imported goods and (more to the current point) of the "Socialist Biedermeier" of domestic art or craft-objects.[29] Samizdat, by contrast, was a network where the consumer-producer divide was by necessity deliberately blurred, and where the "object" was never intended for possession or contemplation, but instead recirculation and active duplication. Never was there any deliberate stress placed on the production conditions as a guarantee of authenticity or of aesthetic force: no adherence to typescript when, for instance, offset printing suddenly appeared as a realistic possibility. Hence it was no surprise that the publication as a de-individuated – in Walter Benjamin's sense, entirely aura-free[30] – industrial product was grasped with such avidity once it became a feasible and legal alternative, as in the offices at Bolzanova 7. The smooth fluidity of periodical circulation, with professional print technology and the full logistical support of post office and retail sales, was anything but a betrayal, a sell-out: instead, it was the necessary final point of ensuring a place within civil society where previously it had required such incredible risk and effort to create something even approximating such a "civil" order in the first place.

And a further aspect of the process of creating a genuine public space is itself mirrored in the spatial relations of the Bolzanova 7 offices. Here, we return to spatiality but not in the integrative sense of the post-Habsburg/Ruritanian capitol city

28 Martin Machovec, who has studied Czech samizdat from the unique standpoint of both participant and scholar, has drawn attention to this often-overlooked dimension of samizdat. *"I, for one, tend to agree with opinions, suggesting that the criterion may not be so much of a purely political, but more of an economic character, at least as far as the totality of Stalinist, or neo-Stalinist type is concerned (but probably of a fascist type as well)."* MACHOVEC, Martin. The Types and Function of Šamizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948 – 1989. In *Poetics Today*, 2009, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 1-26.

29 The crucial discussion of this cultural atmosphere in normalisation-era Czechoslovakia is ČINÁTL, Kamil. *Časy normalizace.* In BÍLEK, Petr A. – ČINÁTLOVÁ, Blanka (eds.) *Tesilová kavalérie. Popkulturní obrazy normalizace.* Příbram : Pistorius & Olšanská, 2010, pp. 166-187, esp. p. 178.

30 BENJAMIN, Walter. Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner mechanischer Reproduzierbarkeit, originally: L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée. In *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1936,Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 40-67.

– instead, the dislocation of a distinct, professional editorial space away from the forced dissolution of production into daily life that samizdat production implied. An editorial office distinct from home is, once again, a semi-public space, an interior where efforts towards the widest of public spheres are concentrated. Samizdat, contrastingly, had to be produced in a domestic space: the flat or the weekend cottage, or occasionally the farmhouse of an underground commune; and no less crucial was the private-within-the-private, i.e. the secret chamber or attic where presses, typewriters or finished copies could be hidden in the event of a police raid.[31] The moment of 1990, when an open society was being constructed literally from minute to minute, implied less of a physical "incorporation" of the new ex-dissident cultural elite than the assumption of professional methods and the re-valorization of the long-discredited public space. As important as access to printing technologies and materials was the necessary separation of the professional from the private, the vital "room of one's own" in which creative participation can emerge.

In a deliberately crude yet revelatory analogy, the samizdat vs. fanzine split of the early 1990s could be matched to a longstanding and deeply influential (even if somewhat problematic) division within worldwide social thought. Legalised, legitimated and indeed newly assimilated samizdat now expressed a desire for the distance and differentiation of a liberal, open-society Gesellschaft, including integration into the capitalist marketplace as a vital, indeed necessary factor. Post-1989 zines, contrastingly, could form a yearning for the strongly communitarian ties of Gemeinschaft – regardless of their geographic production point on either side of the dissolved Iron Curtain – as the close community of readership circulation forming a safe haven of kindred spirits in the anomic whirl of free-market triumphalism. *Vokno*, with its "Western countercultural" orientation placing it in uncertain balance between its guiding influences of the dual "Western" and "countercultural" stances in the agonistic moment of Communism's collapse, understandably found itself faced by its own transitional dilemma. Even amid the endlessly proclaimed optimism, the awareness remains that transitionality was merciless in its elimination of anything more ambiguous than these new Modigliani-colourfields of sharply defined ideological stances.

Vokno's Bolzanova 7 neighbours like *Respekt* or *Revolver Revue* successfully "transitioned" into full professionality and ever-increasing production values; the periodical as anodyne industrial product: *Vokno* itself occupied too much of a liminal state to do so. While of course personal factors, i.e. the succession of individual editors and authors, had their own part in *Vokno*'s fate, it is tempting to ascribe its tortuous course through the early 1990s to a kind of inevitability. Not, of course, a Marxist-teleological one, but one of random contingency, a necessity of the immediate historical situation: the startling, sudden outbreak of an open

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31 Tellingly, one participant in Czech samizdat, author and translator Jindřich Pokorný, refused – in an interview conducted a full decade after 1989 – to state where precisely his samizdat hiding-place was: *"Mr. Gruntorád recommends that you don't say these things. You never really know."* See: POKORNÝ, Jindřich. Kádrový posudek si každý napsal sám (interview with Adam Drda and Viktor Karlík). In *Revolver Revue*, 1999, No. 39, pp. 311-333, reprinted in *RR Rozhovory*. Praha : Revolver Revue, 2016, p. 433. Such reluctance, though, was rare in my own research among *Vokno*'s participants: several respondents asked if I would be interested in photographing their reproduction equipment and their hiding-places.

society, where the differentiation of the semi-enclosed/semi-open network no longer needed to be guarded with such excruciating care but instead now became the broadest principle of social organisation. Now, ironically, the space of the entire Czech nation could become what *Vokno* had, on such a modest scale, hoped to achieve for its isolated participants.

The ending of both political and – no less crucially – economic restrictions on print-material production within transition-era Czechoslovakia had, as one of its main results, an abrupt shift in the condition of the printed Czech language across the board. The free spatiality on the mental, interpersonal level of samizdat had moved, indeed been rapidly transplanted, fully and legitimately, into the physical realm. Not only the immediate factors of the individual psychology of key actors and the dynamism of events at the start of the 1990s, but more significantly the internal dynamics of Czech dissent, simultaneously aesthetic and political, drove pre-1989 samizdat either into a mainstream role or into the fatal dilemma faced by *Vokno* as the decade continued. With a (relatively) open print-market intact, the conditions were now ready for secondary communities to emerge, among them the new subcultural fanzines of all possible orientations – including the skinhead or football-hooligan cultures actively hostile to the liberalism of indifference and eager to follow the narrowest calls for belonging. Yet while not wishing to dismiss the potential dangers of illiberal print-communities, it is nonetheless worth stressing that any such restricted-circulation language production in conditions outside of European state-socialism remains significantly different, if not occasionally in appearance, in ambitions and wider social ramifications from pre-1989 samizdat.

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The "Old" Samizdat Is Dead, Long Live the "New" Samizdat! The Liberated Samizdat Club in the Post-Communist Czechoslovak Book Market[*]

Petra Loučová

Abstract

LOUČOVÁ, Petra: The "Old" Samizdat Is Dead, Long Live the "New" Samizdat! The Liberated Samizdat Club in the Post-Communist Czechoslovak Book Market.

In the final issue of the clandestine *Lidové noviny* from December 1989, Václav Havel bid farewell to the newspaper's samizdat era in his "Goodbye samizdat" editorial: *"Goodbye samizdat Lidové noviny, goodbye conspiracies, goodbye interrogations! Hello printer, hello new readers, hello freedom!"* A few months later the press began to report about an extraordinary project by the Liberated Samizdat Club and its promise to literally "return to samizdat" by self-publishing the first editions of previously unpublished books. All the participants were to work for free, and the size of the print run was to be determined by previous subscriptions. This "new" samizdat, as a revolt against the principles of market economics in the era of liberalisation and transformation, is at once a specific chapter in the post-Communist history of the Czechoslovak book market and a contribution to the history of samizdat and its continuities and discontinuities.

Keywords: samizdat, Velvet Revolution, book market, post-Communism, Liberated Samizdat Club (Klub osvobozeného samizdatu); František Kautman

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Supposing it is at all possible to define, the phenomenon of samizdat can be described as *"all independent literature that, for whatever reason, came to be in contradiction to the mandatory cultural policies of a totalitarian state and was thus disseminated privately by citizens despite threats of repression."*[1] Although there is evidence of samizdat efforts as early as during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, samizdat did not truly flourish in Czechoslovakia until after the Communist coup in February 1948, especially during the so-called normalisation period in the 1970s and 1980s, when this parallel circulation offered a viable alternative to scores of authors who were excluded from official literary communication. The appearance of such a circulation was a typical consequence of the presence of authoritarian literary censorship.[2] Probably the greatest

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[1] PŘIBÁŇ, Michal. I. K terminologii samizdatu. In PŘIBÁŇ, Michal et al.: *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989: Edice, časopisy, sborníky.* Praha : Academia – Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, 2018, p. 16. All quotes in this article have been translated from Czech.

[2] ŠÁMAL, Petr. Část sedmá: 1949–1989: V zájmu pracujícího lidu: Literární cenzura v době centrálního plánování a paralelních oběhů. In WÖGERBAUER, Michael et al. (eds.). *V obecném zájmu: Cenzura a sociální*

popularity was achieved by literary samizdat in the form of a plethora of more or less organised imprints, workshops, magazines, or almanacs,[3] but non-literary samizdat was also highly diverse and widespread (in the fields of music, art, theatre, religion, spirituality, politics, philosophy, economics, ecology, etc.); of course, themes and genres intermingled. Samizdat output also often shared a specific generational, subcultural, or group affiliation (surrealism, underground, punk, Czech tramping, Scouting, sci-fi, programming, etc., but also students of secondary schools or universities).

Insufficient technological support meant that Czechoslovak samizdat was never developed to the extent of the Polish *drugi obieg*, which featured print runs of thousands of copies and a high reach throughout the population. Czechoslovak samizdat was mostly characterised by limited numbers of typewritten copies (one typescript usually amounted to twelve copies) with a greater emphasis on the aesthetic and overall visual appearance of the product compared to its Polish counterpart.[4] Improved equipment and financial backing from the West led a number of major samizdat publishers to endeavour to refine – or professionalise, even legalise – their printing and publishing ventures (in both the quality and quantity of "prints") in the late 1980s. Over the course of 1989 and in response to the new Housing, Consumer, and Producer Cooperatives Act (94/1988 Sb.), Brno dissident circles and later the writing team of the samizdat magazine *Obsah* (Contents) began to establish the publishing cooperative Atlantis, which obtained its publisher's licence as early as 30 November 1989. The extensive documentation for this audacious plan includes correspondence by Václav Havel: *"Independent literature, both at home and in exile, is disseminated in quite copious amounts in Czechoslovakia today both through samizdat, which long ago stopped relying solely on typewriters but has limited options nonetheless, and through the importation of what is published in exile. What these two paths have in common is that they are – how to put it? – simply somewhat wild: being either borderline legal or in some way or other open to persecution or at least complications. The time is ripe for another step to be made. The way I – and most of the people around me – feel it, this next step would be the founding of an independent yet fully legal (i.e., 'registered') independent [sic] publishing cooperative in Czechoslovakia. It is the task of us who live here to secure such a publishing cooperative,"* Václav Havel informed his friends beyond the borders of the country about the publishing venture he intended to back financially, among other ways, in June 1989.[5]

regulace literatury v moderní české kultuře 1749–2014: Svazek II/1938–2014. Praha : Academia – Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, 2015, p. 1124.

3 An overview of Czech literary samizdat in the encyclopaedic form was created by a group of authors – see PŘIBÁŇ, Michal et al. *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989: Edice, časopisy, sborníky.* Praha : Academia – Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, 2018. For more on the topic of Czechoslovak samizdat, see the following sets of thematic studies: GLANC, Tomáš (ed.). *Samizdat Past & Present.* Praha : Institute of Czech Literature – Karolinum Press, 2018; MACHOVEC, Martin. *Writing Underground: Reflections on Samizdat Literature in Totalitarian Czechoslovakia.* Praha : Karolinum Press, 2019.

4 KANDZIORA, Jerzy. Druhý oběh a bibliografie mimocenzurních tisků: Polská zkušenost. In *Česká literatura*, 2016, Vol. 64, No. 6, pp. 918–928; on the differences and similarities of samizdat in the former Soviet bloc, see OLASZEK, Jan. Drugi obieg wydawniczy w PRL i samizdat w innych państwach bloku sowieckiego: podobieństwa, róznice, wzajemne wpływy. In GASZTOLD-SEŃ, Przemysław – JARSKA, Natalia – OLASZEK, Jan (eds.). *Drugi obieg w PRL na tle samizdatu w państwach bloku sowieckiego po 1956 roku.* Warszawa : Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2016, pp. 15–57.

5 HAVEL, Václav. Nakladatelství Atlantis a "režie" Franfurktu. P16/1 Václav Havel Güntheru Christiansenovi, Klausu Junckerovi, Jiřímu Grušovi, Pavlu Kohoutovi, Vilému Prečanovi. Praha, 22. června 1989.

Besides Atlantis, the first private publishing companies to launch in the post-November 1989 era was the erstwhile typewritten Česká expedice (Czech Distribution; from 1978) of Jaromír Hořec, whose registration was approved by the Ministry of Culture on 5 December 1989.[6] The year 1989 does not offer a clear-cut delineation, as some samizdat organisations continued to produce scheduled titles in the early 1990s. Others, such as Pražská imaginace (Prague Imagination), Sefer (formerly Alef), etc., decided to maintain continuity with their previous work (with varying degrees of success). The same was true for samizdat magazines – some have lasted until today: *Host, Prostor, Revolver Revue, Střední Evropa, Možnost* (online); others lasted a number of years: *Akord, Box, Hanťa press, Kritický sborník, Lázeňský host, Teologické texty,* or *Vokno* and *Voknoviny*, among others; and some just briefly: *Kvašňák* or *Sklepník*. The publishers of *Lidové noviny* (The People's News) strove to "officialise" the monthly in the conditions of state-sanctioned socialism, and they also received preliminary approval for publication on 5 December 1989. It has functioned as a national daily newspaper since April 1990. Some samizdat magazines continued to exist as alternative media or as periodicals closely related to specific subcultures. Examples include the punk fanzines *Sračka*, *Šot*, *Mašurkovské podzemné*, etc.[7] In October 1990 Jiří Gruntorád oversaw the launch of a private library of "forbidden books", Libri prohibiti.[8]

It seemed at first that the post-1989 era provided an excellent opportunity to publish and disseminate the samizdat (and exile) works of previously silenced authors to readers. Samizdat as a method of self-publication would no longer be needed and could be permanently abandoned, since the fall of the socialist dictatorship meant that literature was no longer endangered by censorship, and its creators or publishers did not have to fear repression or persecution. However, this premise was not confirmed: just as quickly as the illusions about the functioning of a free book market were lost, it soon became clear that this was not the end of samizdat either. Besides the aforementioned magazine enterprises, which fundamentally diverged from the mainstream media, and numerous post-samizdat occasional prints – practically collector's editions of sorts[9] – a unique case in this context is the initiative later known as Klub osvobozeného samizdatu (the Liberated Samizdat Club), whose representatives chose an unusual approach considering their advanced age: to establish a completely new entity, whose publishing principles would not conform to the market conditions of the time, but which

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In HAVEL, Václav – PREČAN, Vilém. K*orespondence (1983–1989).* Eds. Vojtěch Čelko and Vilém Prečan. Praha : Československé dokumentační středisko, o.p.s., 2011, p. 746.

6   It is often claimed that the first private publishing house was Paseka. Although it was informally established on 9 December 1989 at a congress of the Anti-Alcohol Society of Doctor Řimsa, official approval was not provided to Ladislav Horáček until March 1990.

7   For more on these transformations, see JANÁČEK, Pavel. Část osmá: 1989–2014: V zájmu jednotlivce: Literární cenzura v období neoliberalismu a postmoderny. In WÖGERBAUER, Michael et al. (eds.): *V obecném zájmu: Cenzura a sociální regulace literatury v moderní české kultuře 1749–2014: Svazek II/1938–2014.* Praha : Academia – Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, 2015, pp. 1380–1385; PŘIBÁŇ, Michal. II. K dějinám českého literárního samizdatu. In PŘIBÁŇ, Michal et al. *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989: Edice, časopisy, sborníky.* Praha : Academia – Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, 2018, pp. 42–43.

8   For more on this, see https://www.libpro.cz/en/establishment-of-library/.

9   For more on this, see MACHOVEC, Martin. The Types and Functions of Samizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948–1989. In MACHOVEC, Martin. *Writing Underground: Reflections on Samizdat Literature in Totalitarian Czechoslovakia.* Praha : Karolinum Press, 2019, p. 154.

would instead adopt and apply the ideas and experience gleaned from samizdat during the period of oppression. Therefore, whereas the question of integrating the three previous strands or communicational channels of Czech literature (official, exile, samizdat)[10] was being hotly debated on one hand, on the other, some former samizdat participants again endeavoured to develop new, independent operations with the aim of standing up to the lucrativeness of the book industry and helping Czech books survive.

The present article builds on a study of archival documents and contemporary journalism to map the story of the Liberated Samizdat Club and to reconstruct and assess the success (or lack thereof) of its samizdat rhetoric and practice in the post-Communist Czech culture of the first half of the 1990s.

A non-profit publisher

Literary history has paid little to no attention to the Liberated Samizdat Club to date. Besides helping to complete our understanding of the history of Czechoslovak samizdat and to shed light on its continuities and discontinuities, the club's concept also takes us back to the time of the "revolution" and subsequent transformation of the Czech book market. The customary presentation of the post-1989 book scene is replete with rich imagery of crises linked to the demise of "Czech books". The impacts of the Velvet Revolution and the developments that followed in the book market were experienced as a literal "horror".[11] In retrospect, the first half of 1990 can be termed a liberalisation phase, which was characterised by the repayment of debts, that is, the frantic publication of mostly exile and samizdat texts and many other previously prohibited or unacceptable titles in bookshops, with a sharp rise in the number of publishing companies. This period quickly outgrew its means, and in the second half of the year the book market moved into a transformation phase, which lasted roughly until the end of 1991. This phase was characterised by privatisation, market over-saturation, and the accumulation of unsellable books, especially newly published titles of previously prohibited literature, caused by the unrealistically large print runs with hundreds of thousands of copies and erroneous estimations of the short-lived interest of readers, while the market was also inundated with so-called "paraliterature".[12]

In these rather chaotic times, the literary historian and theoretician, author, Charter 77 signatory, and samizdat participant František Kautman – previously also editor-in-chief of Československý spisovatel (The Czechoslovak Writer) from 1949–1952 – turned to his friend, the poet, translator, and erstwhile publisher of the samizdat imprint Kvart, Jan Vladislav in France in August 1990 with a specific proposal:

10 For an assessment of the period, see the compendium *Česká nezávislá literatura po pěti letech v referátech.* Praha : Primus, 1995.
11 ŠMEJKALOVÁ, Jiřina. Kniha: *K teorii a praxi knižní kultury*. Brno : Host, 2000, p. 137.
12 For more on this, see JANÁČEK 2015, pp. 1432–1433; ŠIMEČEK, Zdeněk – TRÁVNÍČEK, Jiří. *Knihy kupovati...: Dějiny knižního trhu v českých zemích.* Praha : Academia, 2015, pp. 386–390; ŠMEJKALOVÁ 2000, pp. 138–141; ŠMEJKALOVÁ, Jiřina. *Cold War Books in the "Other" Europe and What Came After.* Leiden : Brill, 2011, pp. 285–293.

"What do you say we found a non-profit publishing house 'Samizdat' (I would not even eschew the Russian name), which would employ a single paid worker [...]. *The rest of the team would be volunteers – mainly the editorial staff, which I would like to have you chair; I would acquire a few younger people (not too many, but hard-working and committed to the notion), who would assess incoming manuscripts globally, the way it was done in samizdat; that is, the manuscripts would be unedited, un-amended, etc.; there would just be the essential decision 'do – don't do'; the author would then process the manuscript himself, and its production (using cheap and quick equipment, computers – diskettes etc.) and distribution would be organised by the said employee (who would also proofread it). There would be no royalties (like in samizdat), but if some publishing firm were to show interest in another edition, no one would prevent the author from making that offer. The distribution base would be the 'Samizdat Readers' Club', whose members would generally subscribe to individual books based on a pre-announced publishing schedule."*[13]

The idea was to self-publish previously unpublished books in first editions. All the participants were to work for free; the size of each print run was to be determined by previous subscriptions, and the enterprise was to be unprofitable. Jan Vladislav agreed, and Kautman soon started approaching potential members of the editorial board of the planned organisation. Their reactions varied. Some considered it a good and plausible plan;[14] others were unsure of the need for a new samizdat.[15] For example, Klement Lukeš angrily replied: *"My first reaction was quite unsavoury: 'Bollocks! There are so many publishing firms, houses, and similar as yet unnamed activities being launched at the moment, and you come at me with samizdat?'"*[16] Conversely, the poet Zdeněk Rotrekl wrote enthusiastically to Kautman that he himself, as an author of exclusively samizdat and exile publications, welcomed the notion wholeheartedly.[17]

The editorial board was made up of Jan Vladislav (chairman), František Kautman, Iva Kotrlá, Klement Lukeš, Karel Pecka, Vilém Prečan, Sylvie Richterová, and Zdeněk Rotrekl, and its members met for the first time on 18 October 1990. All of them had participated in samizdat before 1989: "*activists of the erstwhile samizdat*" or "*old samizdat workers*", as František Kautman called them. The initial concept also counted on maintaining ties with Prečan's Czechoslovak Documentary Centre of Independent Literature in Scheinfeld, to which it would provide samizdat materials that the latter did not yet have in its collection, and conversely, the centre would help distribute the club's books abroad. Kautman also wondered if it might be possible for the centre to find some benefactor.[18] Vilém Prečan later suggested specific forms of cooperation, namely that they could bilaterally provide each

13 Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature (LA CML), fond Klub osvobozeného samizdatu (Liberated Samizdat Club collection; LSC), box 2, letter from František Kautman to Jan Vladislav, 3 August 1990.
14 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Ludvík Vaculík to František Kautman, 22 September 1990.
15 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Jan Trefulka to František Kautman, 27 September 1990.
16 LUKEŠ, Klement. Náš host Klement Lukeš, člen ediční rady včerejšího samizdatu – i dnešního (prepared by D. Hajná). In Zápisník, 1991, Vol. 35, No. 11, p. 2.
17 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Zdeněk Rotrekl to František Kautman, 24 October 1990.
18 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from František Kautman to Jan Vladislav, 3 August 1990.

other with their publications and subscription base and that the centre would also help print some of the materials[19] – but without any actual results.

The newly developing project was first given the working title of Samizdat (along with the parallel Samizdat Readers' Club). Contemporary correspondence shows that the exact form of the name was debated in autumn 1990, the hot issue being whether it was suitable to use a Russianism in these liberated conditions. For example, that was precisely why "samizdat" was not accepted as a term in Poland even before 1989. One of the future authors and representatives of the Liberated Samizdat Club (LSC), Jan Kameníček, gave František Kautman the following advice: "*Ad vocem of the imprint's title: I see no reason why not to call it Samizdat. It is a word with a great tradition – after all, khozraschyot, perestroika, or vodka are also terms known throughout the world. And seeing that I reckon we are still living in Communism to a certain extent, I do not know why we should suddenly choose terms for a new era if that has not yet fully arrived.*"[20] The editorial board finally agreed on the definitive names of both the samizdat imprint and the subscribers' club: Osvobozený samizdat (Liberated Samizdat) and the Liberated Samizdat Club.[21]

At the same time, Kautman formulated the key document, *Výzva* (Appeal), which summarised the premises and message of Liberated Samizdat. Both the text and the idea itself immediately enjoyed the widespread attention of the press.[22] The full text of the "Appeal" is included as an appendix to this article, and so it will suffice to quote its concluding imperative here to illustrate its tone of urgency: "*And so we call on all creators and readers of good Czech books: help us overcome the difficult situation of the current book market by supporting this self--sustaining initiative.*"[23] The founding meeting of the Liberated Samizdat
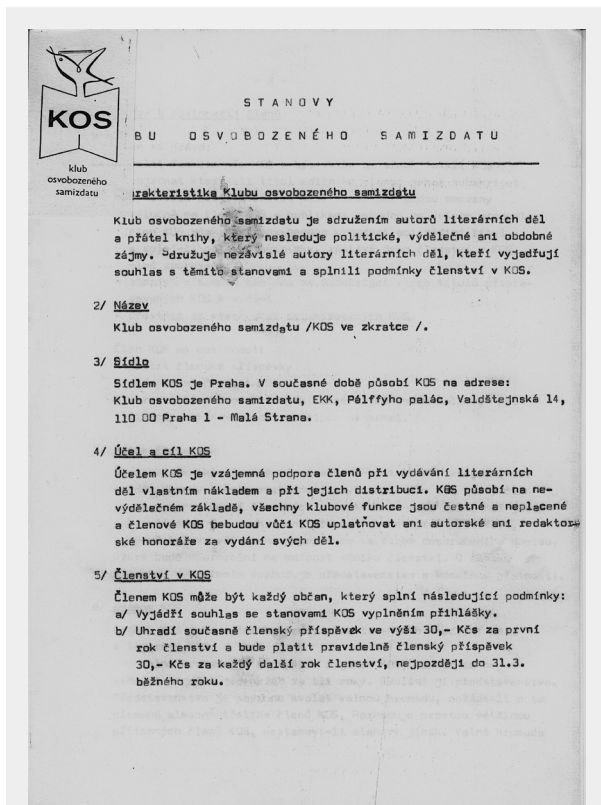
Figure 1. Statutes of the Liberated Samizdat Club. (Source: Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature, Liberated Samizdat Club collection)

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19 LA CML, LSC, box 1, Zápis z ediční rady samizdatové edice (Minutes from the editorial board of the samizdat imprint), 30 October 1990. Efforts to cooperate with the Institute of Czech and World Literature and the Institute of Contemporary History (both of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences) were similarly unsuccessful.

20 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Jan Kameníček to František Kautman, 20 September 1990.

21 LA CML, LSC, box 1, Zápis z ediční rady samizdatové edice (Minutes from the editorial board of the samizdat imprint), 30 October 1990.

22 Besides Czech newspapers and magazines, mentions of the new club also appeared in foreign periodicals (*Der Standard*) and the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe or the BBC, among others. Several thousand printed flyers were distributed to advertise the club.

23 LA CML, LSC, box 1, Výzva (Appeal).

Club took place in Prague on 9 November 1991, where the organisation's statutes were approved and its managing board was appointed.

The "Old" and the "new" samizdat

It is remarkable that just shortly after the events of November 1989, both Kautman's interpretation and the contemporary press quickly associated pre-revolutionary samizdat with epithets like "classic", "old", or "yesterday's", whereas Kautman's proposed samizdat was "new", "liberated", or "samizdat in a new role". In this sense, the club enjoyed an almost fervid reception, as it was an act that directly responded to the unfavourable economic conditions in the book market, in which the organisers reckoned that certain books had no chance of finding a publisher.[24] The fact that this conduct defied contemporary expectations is inadvertently evidenced by journalistic descriptions such as *"an extraordinary initiative"* or *"an utterly peculiar cultural institution"*.[25] However, the public was in no quandary about the benefits of the LSC, and so its activities were further characterised as "noble" or "praiseworthy"; one writer even suggested that it was *"a heroism almost comparable to the time when the illegal distribution of samizdats was punishable by prison."*[26] The first general meeting of the club in November 1991 is notable for a newspaper report that compared the members of the editorial board to the Christian apostles: *"In either case, they never gave up. They have that in common. As well as their permanently defiant nature: when others are silent (or blather), they get down to important work. With or without danger, but always for free. Samizdat skirmishers who have come out of their holes and refused to crawl in again and quietly whine about how our culture will be ruined without subsidies. Thirteen apostolic lunatics with a profound sense of reality. I know that is a contradiction. But it is not."*[27]

Figure 2. Information about the founding of the Liberated Samizdat Club also reached the international press – an article from the Austrian daily *Der Standard* from 2–3 February 1991. (Source: Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature, Liberated Samizdat Club collection)

24 For more on the growing sense of so-called economic censorship, see JANÁČEK 2015, pp. 1435–1436.
25 GRYM, Pavel. Osvobozený samizdat. In *Tvar*, 1990, Vol. 1, No. 39, p. 3.
26 GOSMAN, Svatoslav. Osvobozený samizdat. In *Labyrint*, 1991, Vol. 1, No. 8, p. 2.
27 FILIPOVÁ, Miroslava. Pod korouhví bláznů. In *Práce*, Vol. 47, No. 274, 23 November 1991, supplement No. 47, p. 4.

The aforementioned František Kautman was especially active in promoting the new organisation in the media. His participation in pre-1989 samizdat endeavours gave him credibility, and he was also the bearer and disseminator of the ethos of samizdat revival that was then taken up by others. The LSC regarded itself as the direct successor to the samizdat tradition of the "normalisation" period: *"It seemed that old samizdat – the self-sustained copying of manuscripts of forbidden authors on typewriters and their dissemination to at least a small circle of readers – had died after November 1989. But something else soon appeared instead..."*[28] In fact, the final months of 1990 gave rise to other projects born of the dissatisfaction with cultural developments and the general post-revolutionary disillusionment in this area (the Parliament of Independent Culture, the Pant Club for literature and art, the alternative culture centre Artforum, which also ran a bookshop specialising in the sale of short-run publications and non-commercial literature, and many others).

Kautman and his colleagues had actually merely refreshed samizdat as a certain type of independent production and distribution process, which was devoid of the threat of persecution. However, at the same time their efforts still included an element of disavowal, though in this case it was unfettered resistance to market mechanisms, which could result in mere economic failure instead of state oppression. Kautman himself noted somewhat paradoxically: *"I realised at the time that the idea of samizdat could be implemented much better in a state of freedom than under totalitarian conditions. Without State Security pressure, using modern computer technology. This new samizdat is linked to the samizdat of the past in that the authors receive no fees, the reviewers also work for free, so the earnings from the book merely cover the production costs."*[29] He simply claimed that *"samizdat can still play a useful part"* if its old virtues are revived at a new and higher technical level.[30] There could be much discussion about the use of the term samizdat in a free society, but that is not in the scope of this article. Let it just be said that some literary historians refuse this usage because they consider samizdat to be meaningful *"only under specific socio-political conditions, in which the publication and dissemination of documents is restricted and usually also 'penalisable' or punishable by law."*[31]

The Liberated Samizdat Club appears rather to have been a certain form of institutionalised samizdat. For example, although Kautman repeatedly emphasised that the LSC was an "author-reader subscription society" and that their ambition was not to participate in market economics,[32] he and other members of the editorial board also published in standard publishing houses at the time. Purely samizdat methods and do-it-yourself (DIY) procedures of publication in the early

28 KAUTMAN, František. Samizdat žije… In *Nové knihy*, 1991, No. 48, p. 1.
29 KAUTMAN, František. Samizdat v nové úloze (prepared by M. Fronková). In *Lidová demokracie*, Vol. 48, No. 57, 7 March 1992, p. 4.
30 KAUTMAN 1991, Samizdat žije..., p. 1.
31 MACHOVEC, Martin. Obecně přijímaná definice samizdatu neexistuje. In *Česká literatura*, 2016, Vol. 64, No. 6, p. 943.
32 KAUTMAN, František. Zpíval KOS kosici fistulí... (prepared by M. Nyklová). In *Svobodné slovo*, Vol. 48, No. 9, 11 January 1992, supplement Slovo na sobotu, p. 3.

1990s were generally used only by subcultures and various (anarchist, feminist, ecological, religious, etc.) movements. The DIY strategies used in these environments are an expression of efforts to achieve cultural and social autonomy, while fanzine production represents an alternative means of communication in opposition to mass media and the mainstream environment, creating a sense of affinity within the given community.[33] The "boom" of diversely focused magazines/zines (*10:15 Fakezine, A-kontra, Filtré, Konserva/Na hudbu, Plivník, Rock 88, Spark, Scene Report, ROK, UNI,* and others) is typical for the early 1990s.[34]

Either way, the LSC was highly successful at evoking its legitimacy as a post-revolutionary continuation of samizdat.[35] This was most notably manifested in František Kautman's text "Návrat k samizdatu" ("Return to samizdat"), published in *Listy* (Pages), in which he gave an exposition of the history of Czechoslovak samizdat before 1989, outlined the effects of market economics on the book market, and presented the new samizdat programme offered by the LSC, concluding his text with a message about the invincibility of Czech books and the experience and ethics of samizdat, which could help maintain book culture in post-Communist countries and beyond.[36] The article – and other media depictions and reactions to the club – aptly capture a characteristic feature of the early 1990s: *"One of the defining principles of the representation of the book transformation was the mechanical conversion of the material and economic aspects of text production (from decaying bookbindings to indebted distributors) to the ideological level in the sense of 'the fall of national culture'. In other words, technical production issues of the book market were placed in direct relation to questions of ethics and nationality."*[37]

As time passed, the need to unambiguously define the LSC's essence caused the original references to "old" samizdat to weaken, although this was still maintained in the name of the club, and it came to refer to itself more as an "author-reader society/citizens' association", "voluntary free-time organisation of readers and authors", "non-professional voluntary organisation", or "voluntary non-profit organisation". However, Kautman himself continued to publicly defend samizdat and its qualities both in the past and in the present.[38]

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33 For more on this, see DANIEL, Ondřej et al. *Kultura svépomocí: Ekonomické a politické rozměry v českém subkulturním prostředí pozdního státního socialismus a postsocialismu*. Praha : Univerzita Karlova, 2016; HROCH, Miloš. *Křičím: "To jsem já.": Příběhy českého fanzinu od 80. let po současnost.* Praha : PageFive, 2017; MICHELA, Miroslav – LOMÍČEK, Jan. Fanziny: Subkulturní symbol. In Milan HLAVAČKA – Jakub RAŠKA et al. *Symboly doby: Historické eseje.* Praha : Historický ústav, 2019, pp. 159–169.

34 Other fanzines can be found, for example, in the Czech and Slovak Archives of Subcultures (ziny.info) or in the archives of BigMag, http://bigmag.cz/?lang=cs.

35 In a meeting in November 1991, the managing board decided, among others, that one copy of each LSC publication was to be sent to the Libri prohibiti library of Jiří Gruntorád. LA CML, LSC, box 5, Záznam ze schůze představenstva Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu (Minutes from the meeting of the managing board of the LSC), 9 November 1991.

36 KAUTMAN, František. Návrat k samizdatu. In *Listy*, 1991, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 89–92.

37 ŠMEJKALOVÁ 2000, p. 162.

38 See KAUTMAN, František. Odkaz samizdatu. In *KOS: Bulletin Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu*, 1994, Nos. 2–3, pp. 1–3; KAUTMAN, František. Je exilová a samizdatová literatura úspěšná? In *Česká nezávislá literatura po pěti letech v referátech*. Praha : Primus, 1995, pp. 20–25.

Friends of Czech books

The numerous newspaper and magazine articles reporting about the LSC led to large numbers of people applying to join it from all over Czechoslovakia and from various generations – ranging from university students to pensioners. The "Appeal" written by the editorial board was highly suggestive both in its description of the book market crisis and in its solicitation of the broader readership (see Appendix). Some readers responded ardently to this call to action, as exemplified by one of the letters that the club received: *"If it really is so tragic and if it helps Czech books, you can count on our family."*[39] A number of readers shared this worried outlook on the future and quality of "our" books, and so they expressed their gratitude that the club had taken up *"such a thankless task in this day and age"*.[40] They looked with sympathy at the *"attempt to get good book products to the readers despite the tough conditions for books"* and regarded this as an invaluable service. One reader joyfully welcomed the fact that *"I will receive delightful book morsels through your efforts"*.[41] It seems that the club managed to respond well to contemporary moods and concerns about the situation in the book market, both on the side of publishers and booksellers[42] and among readers themselves. Future members then expressed the hope that, conversely, the club's books would be interesting and "*mainly also for a manageable price"*(!), and they thanked them for *"this service to us lovers of good books, who do not need books that are finely dressed, but ones that tell something, and that is what counts."*[43] We can assume that, especially for regional applicants, their future membership in the club was seen as a guarantee of access to something "better" and "exalted". Combined with the offer of exclusivity,[44] this must have undoubtedly appealed especially to older readers.

From the beginning, the LSC counted on acquiring members from among the old samizdat subscribers,[45] and this intention was also reflected in the aforementioned "Appeal" (see Appendix). Some readers still had very clear memories of samizdat, and many of the letters sent to the club evince echoes of the reception of samizdat before 1989. These include the brief allusions of former regular recipients of samizdat: Mr Jan H. wrote to the club as a *"long-standing samizdat reader"*,[46] Mr Stanislav K. welcomed the idea of a club as he had previously only borrowed the books for one or two feverish nights, and so he would be grateful for the option to buy an interesting book.[47] Mr Martin S. confessed to having very much enjoyed reading samizdat literature, noted that he would like to continue doing so, and wished the club much success and as large a response from readers *"as back then"*.[48] Applications were also sent in by recent samizdat participants,

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39 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Helena B., undated.
40 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Jindra T., 4 March 1991.
41 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Zdeněk T., undated.
42 Some regional booksellers also offered to help promote the club's activities.
43 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Jiří Š., 27 March 1991.
44 The club's advertising materials used this strategy intentionally: *"Would you be interested in one of these books? They cannot be bought or ordered at bookshops, but you can get them if you become a member of the Liberated Samizdat Club (LSC for short)."* LA CML, LSC, box 1, advertising flyer.
45 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from F. Kautman to J. Vladislav, 3 August 1990.
46 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Jan H., 12 February 1991.
47 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Stanislav K., 18 February 1991.
48 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Martin S., 23 February 1991.

including regional figures – Pavel Frait from Hořice (the magazine *Sklepník*), Erwin Kukuczka (the imprint *Louč*), Vladimír Liberda from Ostrava, Petr Náhlík from Pilsen, Petr Pavlovský (the magazine *Acta incognitorum*), Mojmír Trávníček from Nový Hrozenkov, Julius Augustin Varga from Šumperk, and others. Membership was requested by well-known former dissidents, such as Rudolf Battěk, Ivan M. Havel, Olga Havlová, Eva Kantůrková, Radim Palouš, Vilém Prečan, Jan Ruml, experts on Czech studies from both at home (Miroslav Červenka, Milan Jankovič, Lubomír Machala, etc.) and abroad (Ivo Bock from Bremen), and even some institutions (the Museum of Czech Literature, the Josef Škvorecký Society, the library of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, etc.).

Figure 3. Membership application and pre-order by Olga Havlová, a former samizdat participant and the husband of then Czechoslovak President Václav Havel. (Source: Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature, Liberated Samizdat Club collection)

Thanks to its declared strategy of samizdat revival, the membership base of the LSC in the early 1990s did in fact "absorb" some of the core figures of pre-1989 samizdat. By November 1991, 274 members had been accepted; in April 1992, there were 365 members; in 1994, 410 members were listed; and finally, as of 1 March 1995, memberships amounted to 315 entries.[49]

Samizdat utopia

The idea of a supportive community of friends of new Czech books soon began to collapse, however. LSC volumes were published[50] in paperback and, bar some exceptions, with a unified graphic style, which was created together with the club's logo by the artist Klára Rasochová *pro bono*, in the LSC spirit, and which was deemed tasteful[51] but, honestly, not especially attractive. The print runs were planned to consist of 200 to 400 copies (although initial estimates gave a range

49 In each year, there were always some members who did not pay their membership fee, which begs the question as to how actively they then subscribed to the pre-order of books.
50 The actual publication of books was initially arranged in cooperation with the European Culture Club, later primarily with the publisher Pavel Primus and his eponymous publishing company.
51 Potential readers were enticed with the literal promise of a *"modestly produced, yet charming collector's edition"*. LA CML, LSC, box 1, advertising flyer.

of 600 to 2,000 copies), but the actual numbers were determined by the subscribers. Their professed interest then also designated the order in which the individual titles would be published. People initially ordered publications in apparent euphoria, with the main goal of supporting the club's existence. This was no doubt aided by the project's publicity, which was copious in 1990–1991 but then gradually abated, causing the LSC to struggle to promote its operations and its books. Another problem was that the club's publishing scope was so broad that members were often interested in just a single title and not the whole catalogue; there was no need to own a complete series, despite the publications' unified visuals. The given method of financing the "self-sustaining unremunerated publishing house" via membership fees – which were initially set to CSK 20, then CSK 30, but then rose to CSK 50 per year in 1992 – and the payment of production costs from book sales proved to be insufficient. This was something of a paradox because, economically, the club endeavoured to make its publications as cheap and accessible as possible, especially seeing that no one was going to profit from them.[52] Members were thus repeatedly called on to promote the LSC principles among their acquaintances and help acquire new members, as larger print runs would help reduce the cost of each copy. The subscription system can theoretically be seen as building on the approach of publishing ventures such as the erstwhile Evropský literární klub (European Literary Club) or Družstevní práce (Cooperative Works) or the later Čtenářský klub (Readers' Club; administered by the State Publisher of Fine Literature, Music, and Art, later the State Publisher of Fine Literature and Art, finally Odeon). Book clubs had become popular especially after World War II, and practically ever larger publishing house maintained its own club or participated in one. Club publications generally featured solid editing, high-quality typography and art, affordable prices, and large print runs. These attributes, easily appreciated by customers of the large official publishing houses of the past, were largely missing in the LSC series. However, if one was to look for some similarity with pre-1989 alternative culture, it could be likened to the book subscription of Jazzová sekce (Jazz Section), with all the difficulties inherent to this kind of interest-based production and distribution of books for members (longer waits, higher prices, etc.).[53]

Sky-rocketing prices in the printing industry and rising postage costs led the LSC to approach myriad institutions with requests for grants as early as late 1992, as it did not want to burden its members by increasing membership fees, instead wishing to enable them to pre-order books for more reasonable prices. All the same, the club found itself in a crisis in 1993,[54] one which had long been anticipated, as evidenced by one recollection of the author Jan Kameníček: *"Only there arose problems that*

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52 See LUKEŠ 1991, p. 3; KAUTMAN, František – SOBOTKOVÁ, Alena. Jedeme dál! Samizdatové nakladatelství bude pokračovat ve své práci i v nových podmínkách (prepared by M. Kolomacká). In *Práce*, Vol. 47, No. 46, 23 February 1991, supplement No. 8, p. 5.

53 The subscription format was used to a much lesser degree by some larger samizdat imprints as well, and by some samizdat magazines (e.g., *Spektrum*); in those cases, the publishers could be more certain of covering their considerable production costs.

54 It is worth noting that, from 1992, the book market had to contend with the peculiar privatisation of Knižní velkoobchod (the Book Wholesaler) and with the liquidation of the state enterprise Kniha (Book) and its stock.
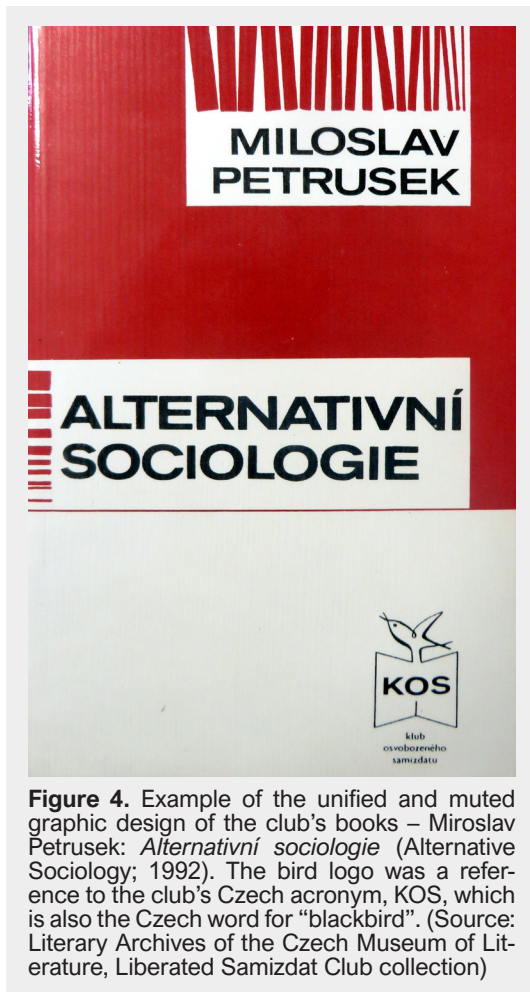
Figure 4. Example of the unified and muted graphic design of the club's books – Miroslav Petrusek: *Alternativní sociologie* (Alternative Sociology; 1992). The bird logo was a reference to the club's Czech acronym, KOS, which is also the Czech word for "blackbird". (Source: Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature, Liberated Samizdat Club collection)

we had not accounted for. We could not have imagined that it was the end of idealism and that the 'ruthless hand of the market', as it was often called, was beginning to take effect. Paper costs were rising steeply each half year. The printer refused to cooperate altruistically. And the distribution, which was conceived as a subscription for members and was sent COD, was no longer affordable."[55]

The club's operations were resurrected in 1994 with several successful subsidy applications (the Ministry of Culture, the Czech Literary Fund), which allowed the LSC, among others, to organise literary events for newly published titles, which secured them at least a certain degree of advertising, and to begin publishing its *Bulletin Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu* (Liberated Samizdat Club Bulletin). In its first issue from 1994, Kautman again defended the purpose of the club, but added: *"Perhaps our initial plans were too generous, especially with regard to the number and speed of books to be published. Practice has shown that we must be more modest."*[56]

Even so, the LSC was unable to effectively respond to the changing conditions of the book market in the first half of the 1990s, which included the overall transformation of the lifestyle of the Czech population and the redefining of free-time activities after 1989, decreasing purchasing power, and shifting reading behaviour. It was becoming increasingly difficult to reach prospective readers. The strategy of *"the reader will always find the book"* had to be abandoned in favour of *"the book must get to the reader"*.[57] This went in hand with the collapse of the 1990s image of a persistent readers' community, which – while limited in numbers – used to buy books, bought books, would buy books *"even if there was nothing to eat"*, and would continue to show their love for Czech books by permanently subscribing to them.[58] Members were repeatedly warned that their pre-orders were binding, and the publishing process was also delayed by members' hesitations – it was thus necessary to order books as quickly as possible. Members were also supposed to pay their membership fees on time. However, it seems that members soon began to question what sense there was in

55 KAMENÍČEK, Jan. O počátcích Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu. In BUBENÍKOVÁ, Miluša – HŘÍBKOVÁ, Radka (eds.). *Na trnitých cestách života a tvorby: Sborník příspěvků ze sympozia pořádaného u příležitosti životního jubilea Františka Kautmana.* Praha : Národní knihovna ČR – Slovanská knihovna, 2015, p. 144.

56 KAUTMAN, František. Vážení členové. In *KOS: Bulletin Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu*, 1994, No. 1, p. 1.

57 ŠIMEČEK – TRÁVNÍČEK 2015, pp. 391–392; see also HALADA, Jan. *Člověk a kniha: Úvod do nakladatelské specializace.* Praha : Univerzita Karlova, 1993, p. 63; ŠMEJKALOVÁ 2000, p. 155.

58 See KAUTMAN, František: Nakladatelé, autoři, knižní trh a čtenáři. In *Labyrint*, 1991, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 2.

paying membership fees to await the mercurial arrival of a modest catalogue that might not contain anything of interest to them. Other offers appeared to be much more attractive, notwithstanding that readers were becoming ever more accustomed to sales and special discounts, as with other types of goods. Various classic novels could be bought on sale at the time, mainly from the clearance of stock of disbanded publishing firms, for prices in the single digits of Czech crowns, whereas the final costs of LSC books were often higher than estimated in the subscription catalogue and reached as high as CZK 100.

The club's situation was aptly summarised by one regular member, Evžen Sláma from Brno, who ruminated in one of the bulletins from late 1994 that the LSC had mainly come to be preferred by authors, who saw in it the chance to get their manuscripts published, rather than the people who would then actually buy those books: *"Especially now, when a vast miscellany of books is being published, their price continues to rise, and those interested in good books are not known for having funds to spare. Especially in cases when the author might be of fine quality but little or no renown, there will probably not be many people willing to purchase his book for a relatively high price."*[59] He recommended that the club should stop focusing on beginning or unknown authors and that it would be good if the LSC strove to publish at least one book that would *"be remarkable and cause a sensation"*, which could then attract the much-desired attention.[60]

All the same, the membership base of the club continued to deteriorate alongside persistent issues with the existing system of pre-orders. Collaborative ties with the publishing house Primus were relinquished with the comment that *"the path of co-production with commercial publishers is unfeasible for the LSC"*.[61] The club continued to be plagued by rising production costs and the price of paper. In spring 1995 the organisation's general meeting debated whether to call an end to the project. Members voted to keep the operation running, but with a changed approach. The subscribers were to send the money ahead of time, so that the pre-ordered books would not be refused; it was also necessary to ensure there would be shorter waiting times between the making of the subscription offer and the publishing of the book – with a maximum period of three months. It was also deemed essential to grow the membership and activist base so that the brunt of the work would not be borne by just a few individuals, and a new managing board was appointed. Nonetheless, in the second half of the year, financial difficulties and a lack of public interest caused the Liberated Samizdat Club to close down for good.

The literary historian and journalist Vladimír Novotný commented on the event in an article titled "Literární úbytě" (Literary losses), in which he juxtaposed the dissolution of *"the samizdat grandstand of the Czech underground"*, the magazine

59 SLÁMA, Evžen: Vážení Kosové. In *KOS: Bulletin Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu*, 1994, Nos. 2–3, p. 4.
60 SLÁMA 1994, p. 4.
61 LA CML, LSC, box 1, letter from František Kautman to František Hrdlička, 21 March 1995.

Vokno (Window),[62] which – somewhat curiously, considering the non-conformist and non-commercial nature of modern underground – was paid for by state funds in the post-1989 period, with the ceased operation of the club, which was started without state subsidies and intended to publish books in line with samizdat tradition: *"Times change, there is no money, and mainly, surprisingly (or inevitably?) interest has been lost in those circles which the Liberated Samizdat Club appealed to primarily. Maybe it really is outdated: non-commercial prose and poetry is now published by prestigious publishers (Atlantis, Paseka, TORST, Argo, etc.), which have now jointly established the Literary Club."*[63] It was no longer possible to rely on enthusiasm and DIY methods in 1995. The transition period, in which the LSC wished to fill a gap in the book market, had passed.[64]

A failed experiment

During discussions about the composition of the club's editorial board in autumn 1990, the prosaist and theoretician of exile literature Sylvie Richterová declared that *"the publishing plan should be highly representative, the point is not to publish some kind of 'leftovers', but good things. After all, that is the samizdat tradition."*[65] The initial intentions of František Kautman as the founder of the club were also quite ambitious. The DIY venture was to provide opportunities to authors who could not break into the book market and to "serious"[66] works of literature. However, the authors were expected to show solidarity: *"It is certainly not easy to convince authors, especially those who have not received any remuneration for their books for twenty years, to again offer their books to readers for free. But they have a choice: they can either accommodate themselves to the market or to the demanding reader and the laws of their own self-realisation. (As has always been the case in the history of literature, in our country certainly since the days of the national revival.)"*[67]

At the same time, the club also counted on the threat of its newly established independent publishing operation to be inundated by all kinds of scribblers. In a private letter to Jan Vladislav, František Kautman anticipated the situation: *"The unpleasant thing is that we will probably get flooded by a large amount of less valuable or utterly valueless manuscripts, which we will have to reject and thus generate ill will – but there is no getting round that."*[68] The express formulation of the "Appeal" shows that they attempted to avoid this problem at least partially and in advance. With no success, of course. Numerous people hoped to publish

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62 A year earlier, another alternative samizdat magazine, the Hořice-based *Sklepník* (Cellarite), terminated its operation. The first two post-1989 issues were printed in runs of 2,000 copies, but the publishers only sold half of them, resulting in a net loss. The print-run later stabilised at 150 copies. The magazine was not dissolved for financial reasons, but due to a lack of contributors and readers. Likewise in the case of *Vokno*, its demise was not caused by financial problems but by a dearth of editorial staff.
63 NOVOTNÝ, Vladimír. Literární úbytě. In *Práce*, Vol. 51, No. 178, 2 August 1995, p. 13.
64 A kind of swan song of the LSC was the compendium *Návrat Egona Hostovského* (The Return of Egon Hostovský; 1996), compiled from the proceedings of the international scientific symposium on the life and works of Egon Hostovský (Hronov, 21–23 May 1993).
65 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Sylvie Richterová to František Kautman, 14 November 1990.
66 This was no doubt partly in defiance to the contemporary boom of popular literature.
67 KAUTMAN 1991, Návrat k samizdatu, p. 91.
68 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from František Kautman to Jan Vladislav, 11 September 1990.

their writings and so sent the club their "humble first work". Already in April 1991 the club's secretary Alena Sobotková reported the situation to Jan Vladislav thus: *"There is a large offer of manuscripts as well, but a lot of slush."*[69] In an interview in early 1992, Kautman admitted they were bombarded with manuscripts, especially poetry, where the assessment had to be all the more strict to ensure that the LSC maintained a stable, balanced catalogue.[70] Reviewers' reports were thus given considerable weight, and this was seen as one of the differences between old and new samizdat, namely, that in the pre-1989 period it was not possible to maintain a corps of reviewers and to convene meetings and editorial boards; there was no opportunity to rely on second opinions, all of which was permissible in the new era.[71] Some people reckoned that the review process and the quality of the editorial board members would allow for a certain "rehabilitation" of old samizdat, as far as professionalism was concerned.[72] However, this was not completely true (cf. the "admiralty" editorial board of the samizdat Edice Expedice or the mode of operation for the Brno imprint Prameny). In fact, the club actually retained some of the shortcomings of old samizdat – for example, when they gave up on doing any editing work on the texts.

The constant struggles to secure print runs, as the low quantities were of little interest to printers, caused books to be released with numerous delays – for example, the manuscript of the prison poems of the Slovak doctor Vojtech Belák, *Zápočet z poníženia* (A Course in Humiliation), was received by the LSC in February 1991 and approved for publication in May of that year, but it was not published until mid-1994. The club dubbed this case a *"lengthily protracted odyssey"*.[73] Regular operations also evinced a considerable lack of flexibility, which was caused, among other reasons, by the unexpectedly demanding administrative responsibilities, further complicated by the initial lack of equipment (computers), and especially by the club's insufficient workforce and the overburdening of all participants – namely the reviewers and proofreaders and those copied the texts on to diskettes – who worked completely for free in accordance with club principles, with the sole exception of the secretary. The authors of submitted manuscripts were frequently asked for lenience with regard to the assessment stage, as the editorial board was flooded with manuscripts to such an extent that it was only able to function with the greatest of efforts.[74] These delays then caused some of the authors to request their manuscript to be returned so they could offer it to a different publisher. Another significant feature can be observed here – just as members of the LSC were recruited from among the supporters of pre-1989 samizdat, the club was also approached with publication requests by the less known samizdat authors of the Communist period. The club gained their sympathies and concurred with their convictions, yet often turned down their submissions. Vladimír Liberda, a former samizdat publisher and normalisation-era political prisoner from Ostrava, wrote to the LSC in August 1993 with palpable frustration: *"Dear friends, some two years ago I submitted to you a typescript of my prison memoirs from*

69 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Alena Sobotková to Jan Vladislav, 17 April 1991.
70 KAUTMAN 1992, Zpíval KOS kosici fistulí..., p. 3.
71 LUKEŠ 1991, p. 4.
72 GOSMAN, Svatoslav, quoted in FILIPOVÁ 1991, p. 4.
73 LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from František Kautman to Vojtech Belák, 10 May 1994.
74 LA CML, LSC, box 1, Vážení přátelé... (Dear Friends...).

the years 1982–84, titled 'Příběh orwellovských let' [A Story from the Orwellian Years], which was 'published' in my Ostrava samizdat, in Edice Petlice and Česká expedice. I just received a larger sum of money from the Min. of Justice as compensation for that and my previous incarceration in Bory. I therefore ask you to please inform me how much it would cost for you publish this title at my own expense with a run of one thousand copies."[75] In response, the club merely returned the manuscript and suggested that he should contact a publisher in his neighbourhood or attempt to self-publish the work, as the LSC required the necessary number of subscribers to apply, which was out of the question in the near future.[76]

Many authors were rejected for various reasons – some almost immediately, others on the basis of negative reviews. Some positively reviewed manuscripts were merely kept in reserve, while others were entered into the subscription programme but ended up not being published all the same, probably due to insufficient interest from subscribers. The number of cancelled titles in the catalogue offer could be interpreted in several ways. The offered works featured a diversity of genres but lacked attractiveness compared to the competition in the book market. The unfocused scope of the LSC's publishing programme, ranging from fiction to scholarly works, may have caused anxiety among the readers, who simply could not know what to expect next and whether it was worth the membership. In the case of "samizdat classics", there was a certain chance to succeed and gain support from erudite readers and from participants in "old" samizdat. However, the club's selection of less known authors yielded far worse results. Last but not least, it appears that the LSC's production appealed only to a limited group of readers and certainly not to the youngest generation. The older generation of reviewers were not always favourably inclined towards the poetics of beginning authors. The publishing schedule was thus largely filled by "tried and tested" authors – be it veterans of "old samizdat" with direct links to the LSC,[77] or works known from clandestine pre-1989 editions, or both. Although the club proclaimed its openness to young authors and debutants, this was only partly implemented in practice, as in this sense the people within the LSC had a more retrospective tendency (generationally, poetically, ideologically).

An overall view shows that from October 1990 to March 1995, members of the managing board reviewed a total of 126 manuscripts, of which nine were published and another 16 were approved and recommended for publication. The remaining 101 manuscripts were returned to their authors.[78] Over the course of 1991–1996, only eleven books were actually published.[79]

75　LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter from Vladimír Liberda to the LSC, 15 August 1993.
76　LA CML, LSC, box 2, letter to Vladimír Liberda, unsigned, 4 October 1993.
77　The LSC understandably featured a "mesh" of personal ties and a system of friendships and motives that may have been decisive in the selection and approval of works.
78　LA CML, LSC, box 1, Zpráva o činnosti Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu (KOS) v době od ustavující valné hromady z r. 1991 do 20. března 1995 (Report on the operations of the Liberated Samizdat Club [LSC] in the period from the founding meeting in 1991 to 20 March 1995).
79　Jan Vladislav: *Kniha poezie* (1991, 350 copies); Jan Kameníček: *Vznik románu v sonátové formě* (1992, 260 copies); Bedřich Placák: *Partyzáni bez legend: Život a boje partyzánské brigády na západním Slovensku* (1992, 260 copies); Miroslav Petrusek: *Alternativní sociologie: Úvahy o smyslu sociologie v nealternativní společnosti* (1992, 320 copies); Zdeněk Rotrekl: *Němé holubice dálek* (1994, 250 copies); Vojtech Belák:

Conclusion

The bold idea of "liberated sa-
mizdat" was conceived at a time
which the organisers themselves
characterised as *"an economic si-
tuation temporarily adverse to
the muses"*,[80] although this was
a relatively natural adaptation to
free market conditions in the pub-
lishing industry after decades of re-
gulated existence. *"However, what
is most unsustainable is not the old
order as such, but precisely the idea
of the very existence of immutable
orders"*,[81] Jiřina Šmejkalová wrote
in connection to the period; and
LSC representatives surely reali-
sed that. Even so, they – as many
others – saw the consequences of
publishing freedom after 1989 as
catastrophic. This led to the con-
cept of the Liberated Samizdat
Club – a self-defence response to
the "laws of the market" as a result
of failed expectations of the outco-
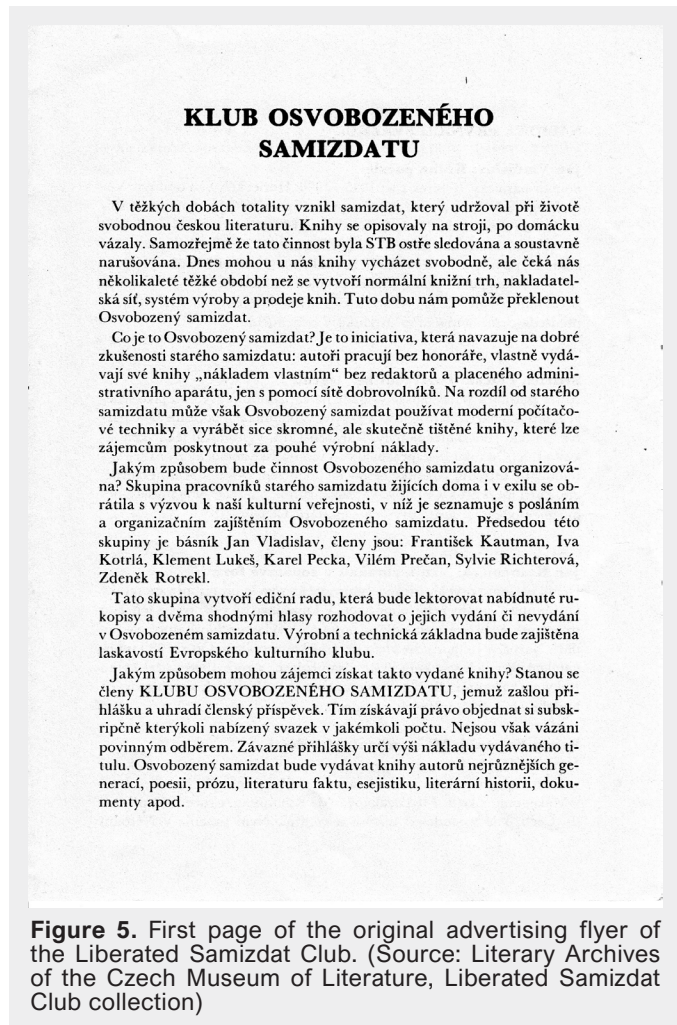me of the "book revolution".

Figure 5. First page of the original advertising flyer of the Liberated Samizdat Club. (Source: Literary Archives of the Czech Museum of Literature, Liberated Samizdat Club collection)

The club wanted to maintain continuity, and it founded its premises and argumenta-
tion firmly on the social function and heritage of Czech books. Its evocation of the tra-
dition of voluntary service to Czech books and the recent history of typewritten cul-
ture, heroism, sacrifice, altruism, and related ethical aspects basically represented
the one extreme of the contemporary conflict of *"enthusiasm and liberalism, that is,
of an almost revivalist-Krameriesque determination and the cold rationality of eco-
nomic principles"*.[82] This dramatic interpretation, the call to *"save good books throu-
gh self-sustaining action"*,[83] resonated in certain parts of society, and the founding
of the club was regarded as a praiseworthy endeavour that was *"no doubt highly me-
ritorious, it is a certain type of self-help in a difficult economic situation"*.[84]

Zápočet z ponížení: Básne (1994, 250 copies); Erik Kolár: *Vila Humbold: Kronika zašlé generace* (1994, 300 copies), Šimona Löwensteinová: *Filosof a moralista Emanuel Rádl 1873–1942* (1994); Zdena Bratršovská – František Hrdlička: *Cesta k močálu a jiné prózy* (1994), Marek Hofman: *Hra na divergenci* (1995); František Kautman (ed.): *Návrat Egona Hostovského* (compendium; 1996).

80 KAUTMAN – SOBOTKOVÁ 1991, p. 5.
81 ŠMEJKALOVÁ 2000, p. 150.
82 ŠIMEČEK – TRÁVNÍČEK 2015, p. 443.
83 KAUTMAN 1991, Návrat k samizdatu, p. 91.
84 NYKLOVÁ, Milena. Staňte se členy KOS! In *Lidová demokracie*, Vol. 47, No. 268, 16 November 1991, p. 4.

Activists of the club were members of the samizdat "elite" before 1989, and by self--publishing based on volunteering and good intentions free of political or commercial aspirations they wanted to conduct a new resistance after 1989. They worked on the assumption that there was a certain number of authors who were unable to publish due to the situation in the book market, and the LSC was basically meant to be the institutionalised mediator between these authors and the "deprived" readers. References to "old" samizdat mainly hoped to activate the attribute of solidarity – both by the authors, who would provide their works for free, and by the readers, who would support the production of the works even at a higher cost (while enabling the whole project with their annual membership fee). Solidarity and a shared enthusiasm were to motivate people to participate in the running of this "parallel" literary institution without any remuneration. The brunt of this burden was then borne by women in the club, who volunteered as secretaries and proofreaders but also included an artist and a graphic designer.

The LSC's first step – to raise the alarm, to warn and subsequently recreate the "parallel polis", a platform of people who shared a similar "world view" and were willing to support the alternative symbolically, financially, as readers, and as authors – was actually successful. The club was undoubtedly aided in this by the social capital accumulated by its representatives under the Communist regime, which bolstered the project's overall credibility. But the actual implementation of the altruistic samizdat vision was hampered by numerous problems (high prices, lack of flexibility, limited aesthetic appeal, and partly also lacklustre content). It gradually became apparent that this was an ideal that was insupportable in the given circumstances and the chosen form. The community of samizdat "conspirators" did not receive what they had expected from the club; the post-revolutionary fighting ethos abated, and with it came a loss of interest by the literary community, whose needs were saturated elsewhere in the market.

The first half of the 1990s is a period in which *"books, and their price,* [...] *became a scene in which aspects of cultural traditions and stereotypes intersected with aspects of politics and psychology".*[85] The closing down of the Liberated Samizdat Club was not just the failure of one gesture of author-reader defiance towards the market in the era of liberalisation and transformation. It also symbolises the destruction of one myth and the sober awakening of one generation from its pre-revolutionary ideas of the prestigious role of literature, literary works, and authors, which was to be rewritten in the post-Communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe.[86]

Translation: Adam Prentis

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85 ŠMEJKALOVÁ 2000, p. 155.
86 See WACHTEL, Andrew Baruch. *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe.* Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Appendix

Appeal of the Liberated Samizdat Club[87]

Appeal

We call on you, our literary public, authors, readers, and distributors of books with the following appeal:

The situation in our book market is dire. The old structures of book publishing and distribution are dying; the new are arising but slowly and painfully. The situation in the printing industry is catastrophic. The monopoly of the printers allows them to push up prices. Small printers are almost non-existent, and private publishers, dependent on large printing houses, are in a precarious position, and many of them are fighting for survival. The old system of wholesale book distribution has collapsed. Its warehouses and bookshop stores are overfilled both with actual pulp fiction and with literature that is not without quality but which is currently almost unsellable. It very rarely happens now that a book would be completely sold out upon publication. The rising costs of goods and services are decreasing the purchasing power of readers of books.

It will take some time for a normally functioning book market to be established in our country which would also enable the publishing of long-lasting, short-run editions that generally constitute the majority of new high-quality book productions.

We believe that it is pointless to bombard our central authorities and other administrative institutions with memorandums demanding remedial action. There is no choice but for culture to help overcome this difficult period, caused by the developments of the past forty years, under its own power.

We see the founding of a samizdat publishing venture, which would draw on all of the benefits of the experience of classic samizdat: minimal production and distribution costs and maximally flexible reactivity to readers' interests, to be one of the possible paths. This opportunity has been brought to us in technical cooperation with the European Literary Club, a transnational non-governmental organisation for the collaboration of European artists and friends of European culture, which was established last year in Prague. The ELC is willing to give "Liberated Samizdat" access to its short-run printing press, which is the main prerequisite for executing the plan to publish original books of value, which cannot be mass produced in the current situation, and there is thus the danger that they might have to wait a very long time to get to readers. Modern, short-run printing methods allow for the flexible production of a book in a very short time in runs of just a few hundred copies in a decent paperback format, and for its delivery to the reader for the production costs. This is, of course, possible only if any kind of profit is forgone by both the publisher and the distributor and also by the author himself, who would receive no royalties for such a publication (though he would retain full copyright for any eventual later edition). In fact, this is precisely how samizdat functioned in the previous years.

The literary treatment of a book published in this way would be the sole responsibility of the author, and not the publisher's editors. The editorial board would merely decide on merit, after reading the manuscript, whether to recommend it for publication.

Therefore, we turn to all authors who have good quality manuscripts of prose, poetry, drama, film scripts, literary studies, criticism, history, philosophical essays, or commentary, etc., as-yet unpublished or published solely in old samizdat, to offer them to us. We also appeal to successful samizdat and exile authors: may they offer their manuscripts with the same altruism as they did in the past, to allow them to reach readers as soon as possible. We welcome young, still unpublished authors and their more mature works. However, we do not wish to be an imprint for beginning authors, which might help discover new talents under the patronage of "older" writers. That is not our task.

We turn to the readers' community, to the subscribers and readers of old samizdat, and to all lovers of demanding literature, who did not hesitate to wait long hours in queues for a good book, and who spent considerable funds to procure badly legible samizdat copies:

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87 Source: LA CML, LSC, box 1, Výzva (Appeal), also *MY* No. 9/1990 and *Studentské listy* No. 4/1991. Translation: Adam Prentis.

You have the opportunity to acquire, at the shortest notice, the books you anticipate, while at the same time helping our book culture overcome hard times. We call on you to become members of the "Liberated Samizdat Club"; this membership entitles you to order samizdat literature, whose publishing programme will be provided to you in advance so that you may commit to the purchase of titles that you are interested in (this interest will also determine the print run). The requested books will be sent cash-on-delivery to those interested immediately upon publication.

We repeat that this is a self-sustaining cultural enterprise, in which all participants work for free. The price of the published books will be set exclusively according to the actual production costs. Even so, these will not be low: but readers of good books here have traditionally brought financial sacrifices to Czech books – in times of danger, in the crisis years of the First Republic, during the war, under the totalitarian regime of the past forty years. They will no doubt be ready to bring such a sacrifice now as well.

And so we call on all creators and readers of good Czech books: help us overcome the difficult situation of the current book market by supporting this self-sustaining initiative.

The editorial board of the "Liberated Samizdat Club":

Jan Vladislav, chairman

František Kautman, Iva Kotrlá, Klement Lukeš, Karel Pecka, Vilém Prečan, Sylvie Richterová, Zdeněk Rotrekl

Prague, 16 October 1990

* * *

Výzva Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu

Výzva

Obracíme se k naší literární veřejnosti, spisovatelům i čtenářům a distributorům knih s následující výzvou:

Situace na našem knižním trhu je vážná. Staré struktury vydávání i distribuce knih odumírají, nové se rodí pomalu a těžce. Katastrofální je situace v polygrafickém průmyslu. Monopolní postavení umožňuje tiskárnám cenový nátlak. Malé tiskárny téměř neexistují a soukromí nakladatelé, odkázáni na velké tiskárny, mají pozici velmi obtížnou a mnozí z nich bojují za pouhé přežití. Zhroutil se starý systém knižního velkoobchodu. Jeho sklady stejně jako sklady knihkupectví jsou přeplněny vedle skutečného braku ne špatnou, ale v dané situaci těžko prodejnou literaturou. Dnes už jen zcela výjimečně je některá kniha po vydání okamžitě rozebrána. Se stoupajícími cenami zboží a služeb klesá také kupní síla čtenářů knih.

Potrvá nějaký čas, než u nás vznikne normálně fungující knižní trh, který umožní vydávat i dlouhodobě prodejnou a malotirážní literaturu, z níž se obvykle skládá většina nové hodnotné knižní produkce.

Domníváme se, že je zbytečné bombardovat ústřední orgány a jiné správní instituce memorandy, žádajícími, aby zjednaly nápravy. Nezbývá, než aby kultura i tuto těžkou dobu, zaviněnou vývojem uplynulých čtyřiceti let, svými vlastními silami pomáhala překonat.

Jednu z cest k tomu vidíme v založení samizdatového nakladatelství, které by využilo všech výhod zkušenosti klasického samizdatu: minimální náklady na výrobu a distribuci a maximálně pružné reagování na čtenářské zájmy. Taková možnost se nám naskytla v technické spolupráci s Evropským literárním klubem, nadnárodní nevládní organizací pro spolupráci evropských umělců a přátel evropské kultury, která vznikla loňského roku v Praze. EKK je ochoten dát „Osvobozenému samizdatu" k dispozici svou polygrafickou malotirážní základnu, což je hlavní předpoklad realizace plánu vydávání původních hodnotných knih, které v nynější situaci nesnesou masový náklad, a proto je nebezpečí, že by musely čekat velmi dlouho, než by se dostaly ke čtenáři. Moderní malotirážní tiskárenské metody umožňují operativně, ve velmi krátké době vyrobit knihu v nákladu několika set výtisků, v paperbackové, slušné úpravě, a dát ji do rukou čtenáře za výrobní náklady. Samozřejmě, že je to možné jen za předpokladu rezignování na jakýkoli zisk jak ze strany vydavatele, tak ze strany distributora a ovšem i autora, který by nedostal za toto vydání honorář, (pro eventuelní další vydání by si však zachoval všechna autorská práva). Ostatně právě tak tomu bylo v samizdatu minulých let.

Za literární podobu takto vydané knihy by odpovídal výlučně autor, nikoli redakce nakladatelství. Redakční rada by po přečtení rukopisů jen meritorně rozhodovala, zda rukopis doporučuje či nedoporučuje k vydání.

Obracíme se tedy na autory, kteří mají kvalitní rukopisy prózy, poezie, dramatu, filmových scénářů, literární vědy, kritiky a historie, filozofické esejistiky či publicistiky apod., dosud nepublikované nebo publikované jen v starém samizdatu, aby nám je nabídli. Apelujeme i na úspěšné samizdatové a exilové autory: ať nabídnou své rukopisy právě tak nezištně, jako to dělali v minulosti s tím, aby se dostali ke čtenáři co nejdříve. Vítáme mladé, dosud nepublikující autory a jejich zralejší díla. Nechceme však být edicí začínajících autorů, která by pod patronací „starších" spisovatelů pomáhala objevovat nové talenty. To není naším úkolem.

Obracíme se na čtenářskou obec, na odběratele a čtenáře starého samizdatu i na všechny milovníky náročné literatury, kteří neváhali stát dlouhé hodiny ve frontách na dobrý knižní titul, a vynakládali značné finanční prostředky na zakoupení špatně čitelných kopií samizdatu:

Máte příležitost získat co nejdříve vámi očekávané knihy a na druhé straně pomůžete naší knižní kultuře překonat těžké údobí. Vyzýváme vás, abyste se stali členy „Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu", toto členství vás opravňuje k odběru samizdatové literatury, jejíž vydavatelský program vám bude předem nabídnut s tím, abyste se přihlásili k závaznému odběru titulů, které vás budou zajímat (podle tohoto zájmu bude stanoven i náklad). Vyžádané knihy budou ihned po vydání zasílány zájemcům na dobírku.

Upozorňujeme znovu, že jde o svépomocný kulturní podnik, na němž všichni zúčastnění pracují bezplatně. Ceny vydaných knih budou určeny výhradně reálnými výrobními náklady. I tak nebudou nízké: ale čtenář dobré knihy u nás tradičně přinášel české knize finanční oběti – v dobách obrození, v letech krize za první republiky, za války, za totalitního režimu uplynulých čtyřiceti let. Jistě je bude připraven přinášet i nyní.

Vyzýváme tedy všechny tvůrce i čtenáře dobrých českých knih: pomozte podporou této svépomocné akce překonat těžkou situaci současného knižního trhu.

Ediční rada „Klubu osvobozeného samizdatu":

Jan Vladislav, předseda

František Kautman, Iva Kotrlá, Klement Lukeš, Karel Pecka, Vilém Prečan, Sylvie Richterová, Zdeněk Rotrekl

V Praze, dne 16. října 1990

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Abstract

KOPECKÁ, Mahulena: The anarcho-feminist zine "Bloody Mary" and the influence of the Internet: The problem with the hierarchy of the collective creative process.

This article describes the conclusions from my postgraduate thesis, which maps the changes of the anarcho-feminist zine *Bloody Mary* and its transformations under the impact of the Internet, blogging and the computer graphics software used in the production of the zine. The main sources used in this case study were the issues of the zine[1], interviews conducted with the authors and the readers, as well as materials published on the author's blog. I have explored several categories emerging during the analysis in addition to determining the impact of personal computers and the Internet on the changes within these categories. In this sense, one can trace the influence the Internet had in some of the sources used in the zine, in the zine's format and in its ties to anarchist and feminist groups abroad. However, other categories were not entirely influenced by the Internet to such a great extent, partly owing to the authors' approach to feminism, their description of queer topics or by their material surroundings. As such, they were impacted by the environment in which the zine was made, as well as by the lives of the authors.

Keywords: Riot Grrrls, anarchofeminism, subculture, anarchist movement, alternative media, feminism

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In the era of digital communication, zines as physical artifacts connect authors and readers and create a closer communication channel than social media and e-mails. However, this was not the original shape of the zine – its form, role and purpose was transformed with the expansion of the Internet. This is the case of Czech punk feminist zine *Bloody Mary* published between 2000 and 2010, in an age when the computer was becoming a common communication and working tool. This article[2] is based on my postgraduate thesis examining the changes of *Bloody Mary* in connection with the use of the Internet. The article seeks to summarize the answers to the question of how this alternative medium may have changed under the influence of a new technology and to what extent the Internet influenced the form, content and the reader's perception of the zine.

The appearance of zines has transformed with changes in technology used during their production and with the topics they have dealt with. Zines are independent media; the creator publishes them by him or herself, independently, without

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1   The volumes of the *Bloody Mary* zines used in this research are stored in The Czech and Slovak Archive of Subcultures (For more details, see: http://ziny.info/) and the Gender Studies Library (For more details, see: https://genderstudies.cz/gender-studies/knihovna.shtml).
2   The article is based on the diploma thesis *Transformations of the feminist zine Bloody Mary and how it was impacted by internet* which was written as a final MA thesis at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University.

expecting a profit. If they are published periodically, they seldom stick to regularity.[3] The word "zine" is derived from the term "fanzine," referring to the phrase "fan magazine".[4] These amateur publications were originally created in communities of sci-fi literature fandoms. In the 1970s they became a part of the underground media scene and punk subculture.[5] In the 1980s, the use of the term "zine" was established to refer to a broader sphere of publications that were no longer just about a fandom or a cultural object but also about everyday life and lived experience. The medium is rather an expression of self or of a community.[6]

The process of creating zines is free from professionalization and hierarchy; there is no division of editorial roles, and the creators can be active throughout the whole process of creating the publication.[7] Zines manifest the concept of participative culture, which emphasizes diversity, mutual interactions, the ability to freely make decisions, and an opportunity to express oneself through various forms.[8] The important dimension is the materiality; much of the pleasure of reading zines stems from the act of physical possession of the artifact and the act of reading. The existence of zines is reminiscent of the creator's presence. They offer emotional expression, either positive or negative, through physical interaction,[9] which social media and the Internet are not able to fully provide. The materiality of zines makes them rare; it supports the formation of a relationship of the creator and the recipient.[10] Zines intentionally show scratches, errors, crooked clippings, and other gestures serving as evidence of the creative process and the presence of the creator.[11]

Although zines may be perceived as alternative media opposed to the state and the market, Waltz notes that only some of these alternative media are created and disseminated in ways that are radically different from mainstream business practices.[12] As Michael Albert from the activist publication *Z Magazine* said, alternative media are not only characterized by their content or a non-mainstream audience, but being alternative must be related to the organization of the medium.[13] Chris Atton writes that it is essential not only to take into account the content of the media but also the presentation and organizational

3   DODGE, Chris. Pushing the boundaries – Zines and libraries. In *Wilson Library Bulletin,* 1995, Vol. 69, No. 9, pp. 1-2, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ503434.

4   RADWAY, Janice. Zines, Half-Lives, and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change. In *PMLA,* 2011, Vol. 126, No. 1, p. 140, https://www.mlajournals.org/doi/abs/10.1632/pmla.2011.126.1.140.

5   ATTON, Chris. *Alternative media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002, pp. 55-57.

6   ATTON 2002, pp. 54-55.

7   LOVATA, Troy. Zines: individual to community. In KNOWLES, J. Garry – COLE, Ardra L. *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008, p. 2, https://methods.sagepub.com/book/handbook-of-the-arts-in-qualitative--research/n27.xml.

8   JENKINS, Henry – ITO, Mizuko – BOYD, Danah. *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce, and Politics*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016, p. 2.

9   PIEPMEIER, Alison. Why Zines Matter: Materiality and the Creation of Embodied Community. In *American Periodicals: A Journal of History*, 2008, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 230.

10   CLARK-PARSONS, Rosemary. Feminist Ephemera in a Digital World: Theorizing Zines as Networked Feminist Practice. In *Communication, Culture and Critique,* 2017, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 567.

11   PIEPMEIER 2008, p. 222.

12   WALTZ, Mitzi. *Alternative and Activist Media*. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2005, p. 2.

13   WALTZ 2005, p. 2-3.

procedures.[14] Using Michael Traber's notion of alternative media, Atton describes these media as forms whose aim is to *"change towards a more equitable social, cultural and economic whole in which the individual is not reduced to an object (of the media or the political powers), but is able to find fulfillment as a total human being"*.[15] These media forms try to convey subversive messages, disrupt social order and encourage changes in society. Most of these political features emerged in the zines of the feminist movement in the 1990s, but feminists recognized the importance of having their own alternative media a long time ago.[16]

Feminist zines as a type of alternative media

The feminist movement often used its own independent media as a means of resistance. The movement viewed the mass media as the main tool used by society to maintain the values arising from the stereotypical patriarchal hegemonic conception of femininity. The media serve as a tool of social control, spreading a stereotypical conception of femininity.[17] Thus, the movement established its own media – the history of feminism can be read in connection with the history of the development of feminist independent publications.[18] The suffragette movement produced its own press, postcards, and posters,[19] such as British feminist newspaper *Votes for Women*.[20] The second wave of feminism used leaflets and brochures, including the American magazine *Off Our Backs* or the British magazine *Spare Rib*.[21]

In the early 1990s, the underground feminist punk movement Riot Grrrls formed in Olympia, Washington; it is often associated with the emergence of third-wave feminism. Riot Grrrls responded to sexism in mass media, and their approach was based on the do-it-yourself (DIY) culture.[22] The movement emphasized the political role of cultural activism, organized community, and the production of alternative space.[23] Riot Grrrl zines used several strategies to fight against the stereotypical concept of femininity in the mainstream media, such as placing pop-cultural texts into new contexts and giving them new meanings. Even though zines may in some cases reproduce the norms of mainstream society (such is the

14 ATTON 2002, pp. 15-16.
15 TRABER, Michael. *Alternative Journalism, Alternative Media* (Communication Resource, no. 7, October), London: World Association for Christian Communication, 1985, p. 3 in ATTON 2002, p. 16.
16 ZOBL, Elke – DRÜEKE, Ricarda. *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship*. Bielefeld : Transcript Verlag, 2014, p. 11.
17 VAN ZOONEN, Liesbet. Feminist perspectives on the media. In CURRAN, James – Michael GUREVITCH (eds.) *Mass Media and Society*. 4. London : Arnold, 1996, p. 40.
18 CLARK-PARSONS, Rosemary. Feminist Ephemera in a Digital World: Theorizing Zines as Networked Feminist Practice. In *Communication, Culture and Critique,* 2017, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 557.
19 LUMSDEN, Linda J. Historiography: Woman Suffrage and the Media. In *American Journalism*, 2019, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 5.
20 PAYNE, Jenny Gunnarsson. Feminist Media as Alternative Media? Theorising Feminist Media from the Perspective of Alternative Media Studies. In ZOBL, Elke – DRÜEKE, Ricarda (eds.) *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship*. Bielefeld : Transcript Verlag, 2014, p. 56.
21 PAYNE 2014, p. 56.
22 GOULDING, Cathlin. The Spaces in which We Appear to Each Other: The Pedagogy of Resistance Stories in Zines by Asian American Riot Grrrls. In *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education,* 2015, Vol. 32, p. 161-162.
23 CHIDGEY, Red. Hand-Made Memories: Remediating Cultural Memory in DIY Feminist Networks. In ZOBL, Elke – DRÜEKE, Ricarda (eds.). *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship*. Bielefeld : Transcript Verlag, 2014, p. 103.

case of skinhead or metal zines containing racial, gender and sexual stereotypes), feminist zines aim to provide a safe space unaffected by the restrictive norms of commercial media regarding race, gender, and sexuality. Feminist authors make these norms visible by removing the dominant portrayal of women from commercial media and giving them new contexts which criticize these norms and offer an alternative.[24] Pop culture is full of puns with many meanings, offering a space for parodies and subversions.[25] Another strategy is highlighting inequalities in society through women's personal experiences and reflections of the private sphere – by writing about domestic violence, sexual harassment, or the perception of one's own body.[26]

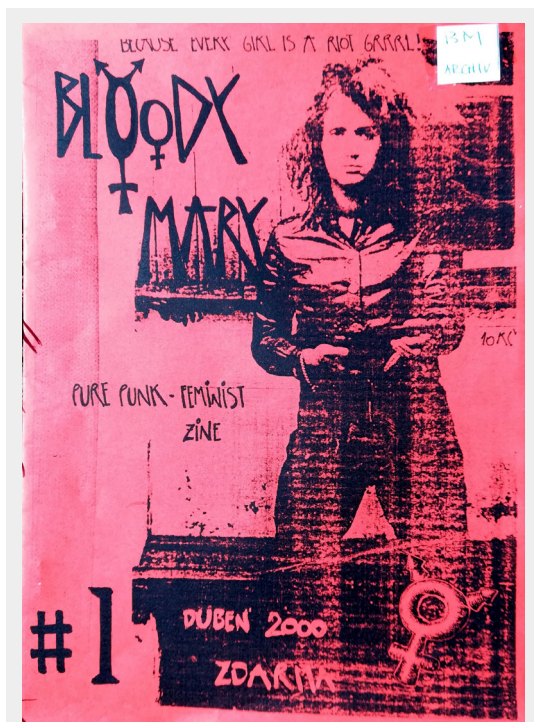## The anarcho-feminist zine *Bloody Mary*: Against sexism in society and subculture

Figure 1. Source: Bloody Mary, 2000, No. 1.

The first issue of *Bloody Mary* was published in April 2000. The zine was highly informal, amateurish, and often extreme in terms of opinions or expressions considering the Czech perception of feminism at the time of its creation.[27] The authors were closely connected to the Gender Studies Library in Prague. One of the original founders was Kamila Remišová Věšínová – she published the first issue with her friends from grammar school, but later she left the collective because she had a job outside of Prague.[28] Afterwards, Jitka Kolářová joined the collective. In addition to *Bloody Mary*, she also published zines *Q Kvér* and *Femidom* and co-organised feminist concerts and the queer Gender Fuck Fest festival.[29]

The creators' motivation was to inform and provide a new perspective, as the author Jitka Kolářová said: *"We want to show that women also have something to say.* […] *We want to spread feminist and Riot Grrrl opinions and thoughts. And we want*

24 ZOBL, Elke. Cultural Production, Transnational Networking, and Critical Reflection in Feminist Zines. In *Signs*, 2009, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 2-10, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599256.

25 FISKE, John. *Reading the Popular*. London – New York : Routledge, 1989, p. 6.

26 ZOBL, Elke. The Power of Pen Publishing: International grrrl zines and distros. In *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources*, 2004, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 20.

27 CHALOUPKOVÁ, Jana. *Současný anarchofeminismus v ČR*. Master Thesis. Praha : Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut politologických studií, 2014, p. 24.

28 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 11. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ, Mahulena. *Proměny feministického zinu Bloody Mary s příchodem internetu*. Master Thesis. Praha : Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky, 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

29 JENKINS, Henry. The Czech Zine Scene (Part 3): Feminism. In Henry Jenkins [online], 27. 2. 2018, http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2017/12/26/the-czech-zine-scene-part-three-feminism.

to have fun and entertain other people as well."[30] The *Bloody Mary* issues were thematic and eventually reached over 50 pages. The authors combined more serious feminist articles with entertaining formats and they did not want to be too academic. Humor was an important tool, because the zine wanted to be entertaining and cover topics in a way that is understandable to as many readers as possible.[31] The reflection of social inequalities in everyday life was also crucial: *"We don't care about big slogans, but about seemingly banal phenomena that we either reproduce or subvert in our everyday life."*[32]

The main motivation of the *Bloody Mary* collective was to reflect sexism and fill a gap in an environment that addresses various topics but does not give a space to women's activism and girls' voices. Their manifesto highlighted the female community and the need to create their own space, which should connect political issues with entertainment: *"If the (public) world is masculine, we want to create our own feminine space, where our voices can be heard."*[33] The reflection of the position of women in the activist movement and the punk subculture was essential. Anarchists rejected criticism of sexism within the movement. *Bloody Mary* wrote about the experiences of sexual harassment at concerts and the anarchists' approach to feminism.[34] The collective was part of other anarchist and ecological activities, and the authors were connected with the alter-globalization movement[35] as well as the Feminist Group of March 8, (later renamed to the Anarchist Feminist Group). The author Kamila Remišová Věšínová said: *"In the beginning we were a part of the Feminist Group; we wrote to Přímá cesta, but then we left because we didn't want to make a political magazine"*.[36]

The passion for DIY activism and cultural creation was characteristic for *Bloody Mary*, with the authors emphasizing DIY ethics. Their perception of DIY culture was associated with political activism directed from below and how it should connect political protest with entertainment – they used the motto *"protest and have fun"*.[37] The DIY approach was reflected in the emphasis on DIY fashion – creating clothes and modifying old clothes worked at the level of everyday life – *"it can slowly break down the barriers of prejudice and the lack of freedom that bind us"*.[38] DIY was an act of returning power over our everyday life to our own hands.[39]

30 KOLÁŘOVÁ in ZOBL, Elke. The Power of Pen Publishing: International grrrl zines and distros. In *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources*, 2004, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 23.
31 KOPECKÁ, Mahulena. *Proměny feministického zinu Bloody Mary s příchodem internetu*. Master Thesis. Praha : Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky, 2020, p. 39, http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11956/121600
32 REVOLUCE EMČA. Tak nějak o BM. In *Bloody Mary* [online], 31. 5. 2006, original link: http://bloodymary. blog.cz/0605/tak-nejak-o-bm (This domain no longer exists; all links to *Bloody Mary* blog come from the archive of the article's author).
33 Editor's page. In *Bloody Mary*, 2003, No. 8, pp. 30-31.
34 KOLÁŘOVÁ, Jitka. Za genderovou rovnost subkultur!: Feminismus v podzemí. In *A2* [online]. Praha, 2009, www.advojka.cz/archiv/2009/18/za-genderovou-rovnost-subkultur.
35 KOLÁŘOVÁ, Marta. Fairies and Fighters: Gendered Tactics of the Alter-Globalization Movement in Prague (2000) and Genoa (2001). In *Feminist Review*, 2009, Vol. 92, No. 1, p. 91, DOI: https://:doi.org/10.1057/fr.2009.8
36 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 11.5.2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484. pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
37 Recirkus. S Evou o jejím workshopu In *Bloody Mary*, 2010, No. 15, p. 29.
38 EMČA. Hmm, takže móda říkáte... Odpor... Kontrakultura... Opravdu? In *Bloody Mary*, 2006, No. 11, p. 11.
39 REVOLUCE EMČA . Politika v éře zábavy. In *Bloody Mary*, 2009, No. 14, pp. 4-6.

Another characteristic was playing with a variety of formats that typically appear in women's magazines, such as psychological quizzes or advice for girls. They reprinted sexist texts from websites and mass media and showed their absurdity through humor and the ridiculing of gender stereotypes.

Methodology of the *Bloody Mary* case study: Zines and the blogging platform

This article summarises the case study of *Bloody Mary* and its changes between 2000 and 2010 in connection with the use of the Internet. The aim of the study was to monitor the changes of the zine after the expansion of Web 2.0 and to formulate how the use of the Internet could have influenced the process of the creation of *Bloody Mary*, its form, content, and creation process, as well as other activities of the collective.

The main source of information was the 15 issues of *Bloody Mary*, which I divided into three periods according to their relationship to computers and the Internet. It was crucial to examine the texts together with the format of the publication and to analyse the visual dimension as well. Data collected from zines were complemented by in-depth interviews[40] with the creators Jitka Kolářová and Kamila Remišová Věšínová, as well as zine readers Tonča who published the zine *Houpačka (The Swing)* and Markéta Štěpánová, who published the magazine *Přímá cesta (The Straight Path)*.[41] Another source of information was the *Bloody Mary* blog.[42]

Through the analysis of these sources, several categories emerged. These categories changed during the existence of this publication and can be divided into three groups – 1) the content, 2) the form, and 3) the editorial practices and readers' reflections. The case study maps changes of the alternative medium after the collective began using graphics software, the Internet and the blog format. It was assumed that the Internet would affect the content and the visual appearance that the content would be more diverse, the authors would use many different and foreign sources, and the visual appearance would change. The Internet was also expected to have an effect on the organization of the zine's creation and the communication of the collective with other creators.

Transformations of *Bloody Mary* and the Internet

The subcategories described below map how *Bloody Mary* changed over time. These subcategories were grouped into three main categories. The issues were divided into three periods according to their relationship to the Internet. The first period (1st – 4th issue) consisted of issues created by copying, printing, and

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40 The transcripts and recordings of the interviews are stored in the archive of the article's author.
41 Přímá cesta (The Straight Path) was an anarcho-feminist zine published by The Anarchofeminist group. For more details, see: http://followers.thcnet.cz/CyberNet/Punk-Rock%20Rebels%20Library/2.%20 Anarchist%20Newspapers/Anarxofeminizmus/anarchofeminismus.org/default.htm.
42 At the time of the research, the blog was still available online. Since August 2020, the blogging platform no longer exists.

the cut-and-paste technique. The second period (5th –10th issue) consisted of issues created using the Internet. The third period (11th –15th issue) consisted of issues published after the *Bloody Mary* blogging platform was founded.

Content

Thematic diversity

In the first period, the zine described general topics the authors experienced every day – the subcultural scene and the experience with sexism in the anarchist movement and society. The Internet was not a main source of information – the creators often used literature from the Gender Studies Library.[43] In the

Figure 2. Source: Bloody Mary, 2006, No. 11, p. 13.

second period, the creators focused on specific current events, and the diversity and number of topics grew. The influence of the Internet is represented in the greater thematic diversity, in the number of sources of information, and in the frequency of references to web sources. The author Kamila Remišová Věšínová said: *"It was possible to gain access to more information and we got to know various Riot Grrrl websites around the world.* [...] *Sometimes we translated something directly from those pages."*[44] The influence of the Internet is milder in the third period. The main change is the emergence of controversial topics that would not have appeared in the Czech mainstream media – such as pornography, prostitution, or queer and transgender issues. The Internet was a great influence in finding new topics that the authors would not have learned about from the common Czech context. *"We always discovered a topic, something that was not there before. I found it important to do this, to bring new ideas to this environment.* [...] *That would not be possible without the Internet. I had most of my resources from the Internet,"* said one of the authors, Jitka Kolářová.[45]
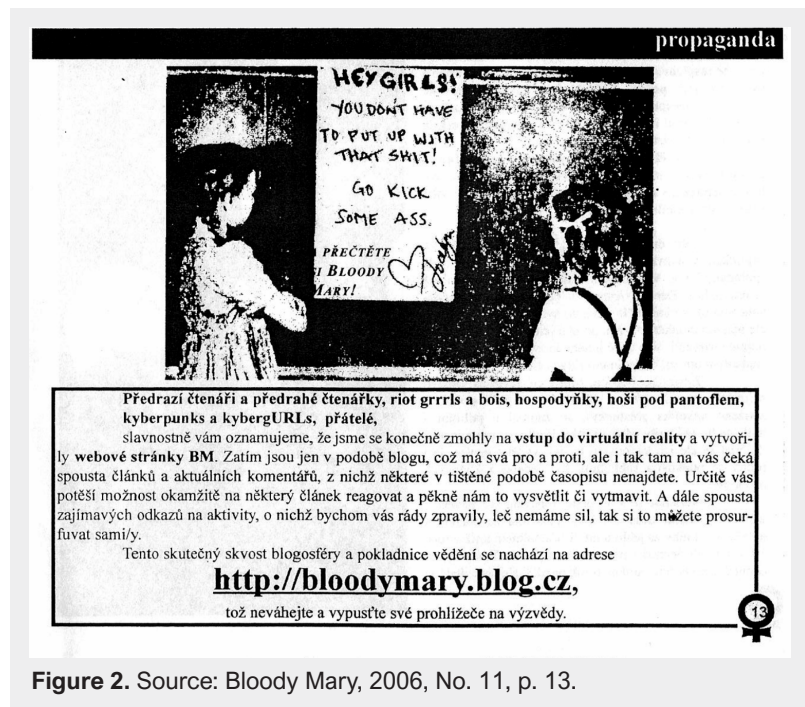
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43 KOPECKÁ 2020, p. 72.
44 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 11. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
45 KOPECKÁ 2020, pp. 52-53.

Feminism

The zine creators admit that the development of their feminist thinking was stimulated by influences other than the Internet (age, environment, university). In the first period, the authors wrote about their first-hand experience; the concept of feminism was based on their personal experience of inequality, and the zine focused on basic feminist topics, gender stereotypes, and sexism. According to Jitka Kolářová: *"A personal reflection of sexism, sexual harassment on the street and that I feel sick of it.* [...] *From the beginning, there were more aggressive texts, the need to vent anger."*[46] In the second period the Internet served as a source of new theoretical information; the author Kamila Remišová Věšínová said that the concept of feminism shifted from

Figure 3. Source: Bloody Mary, 2010, No. 15, p. 46.

everyday problems to more serious issues: *"As our knowledge deepened and we became more involved in various topics, the view on various problems and our awareness of them certainly changed."*[47] The zine started to reflect other factors affecting the position of women in society (age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class background), and the authors perceived feminism as a more complex, multi-layered movement. The third period was characterized by the inclusion of queer and LGBTQ+ topics that did not appear in the mainstream media. The zine included transgender issues, as the editorial staff wrote in one of their texts: *"We are not women and men; we are humans. And that is why we don't care about gender!"*[48] *Bloody Mary* tried to bring these topics to the Czech context, where they had barely emerged before, according to the readers. However, the influence of the Internet is not absolute; the reflection of these topics was also impacted by the fact that the collective knew people who had their own queer experience.[49]
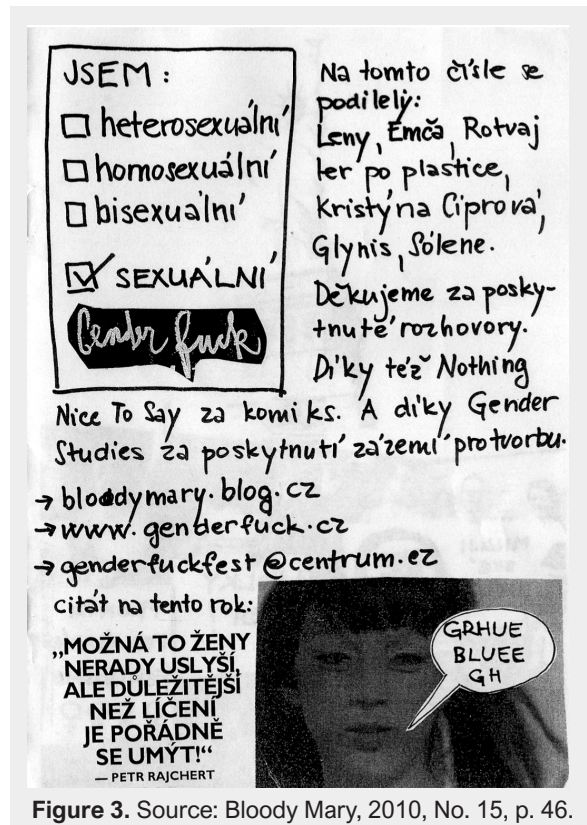
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46 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

47 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 11.5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

48 Gender Fuck Fest. In *Bloody Mary*, 2009, No. 14, p. 54.

49 KOPECKÁ 2020, p. 58.

Subculture and the anarchist movement

In the first period, the authors wrote about their own immediate experience with sexism in the punk scene – the absurdity of fighting for the poor, the weak, and the unequal and then laughing at feminists.[50] The main change in the second period was the growing number of interviews with women from many different subcultures. The Internet connected the authors with activist from abroad, as Jitka Kolářová described: *"In the Riot Grrrl movement there was one big group, Riot Grrrls Europe, which had its own smaller groups that had their own sites.* […] *It had become more common for people to use the Internet, even in the context of other feminist groups across Europe."*[51] In the third period, the Internet served as a source of theoretical information for longer articles reflecting the broader social context, for example the commodification of punk fashion: *"This is why the fashion of fishnet tights and miniskirts could have been created."*[52] In connection with exploring LGBTQ+ issues, they also criticized the lack of queer themes in the anarchist scene: *"Why is it not connected with LGBTQ+ activism at all? Why is there practically no queer community that would subscribe to the principles of DIY and autonomy?"*[53]

Activism

The first period was characterized by describing basic left-wing issues, such as criticism of capitalism and globalization and their impact on the unequal position of women. A great example was the fourth issue, which focused completely on globalization.[54] In the second period, the Internet influenced the critique of globalization, which became more specific; the authors used more complex terms to describe some of the social phenomena – such as neoliberalism and market economy: *"The logic of neoliberal globalization is based on the economy of the market and production, not on the economy of the household, which is the centre of women's lives."*[55] The Internet served as a source of theoretical information as well as news about world events. The last period focused on the position of unprivileged people. However, the respondents mentioned that changes in this category could be impacted by the fact that some of them had started studying at university,[56] so the influence of the Internet was not very strong.

Form: From an amateur zine to a magazine (and back)

The zine format

Changes in the production technique influenced the form of the *Bloody Mary* zine. In the first period, it was an amateur, chaotic publication, created using scissors,

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50 Proč Bloody Mary? In *Bloody Mary*, 2000, No. 1, p. 2.
51 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
52 REVOLUCE EMČA. Ach jo, sexy punk. In *Bloody Mary*, 2006, No. 11, p. 6.
53 REVOLUCE EMČA. Ladyfest Leipzig Report. In *Bloody Mary*, 2008, No. 13, p. 49.
54 Úvodem… In *Bloody Mary*, 2000, No. 4, p. 1.
55 WICHTERICH, Christa. Globalizovaná žena. Zprávy o budoucí nerovnosti. In *Bloody Mary*, 2001, No. 5, p. 31.
56 KOPECKÁ 2020, p. 91.

glue, and a copy machine. The articles contained themes mostly from the personal sphere of the authors. The creators experimented with the format and genres and tried different ways of expressing their opinions. They did not include the sources of their information, and it was typical to present broader structural problems through specific experiences. The texts on the pages were sometimes lacking headlines, and the authors didn't pay attention to the regularity of the section markings. *"I didn't come to the zine until about the fifth issue. The girls used to copy it in kind of a 'punk' way; they used glue and a collage* […]*. They didn't use the Internet much at the beginning"*,[57] said Jitka Kolářová.

In the second period, the zine was prepared on a computer by Kolářová. The creators used the Internet as a source of information and inspiration. These changes were strongly reflected in the format – the zine looked more like a magazine now. Personal, intimate, and funny texts were on the decline and longer, theoretical in-depth articles appeared. The collective started using a large number of web sources. The format of the zine was clean and regular. The author Kamila Remišová Věšínová said that thanks to the Internet, it was easier to gain access to different sources of information: *"We visited various Riot Grrrl sites.* […] *Sometimes we translated something directly from those pages. Because we were decent college students, we all wrote the sources carefully*[…] *But definitely not everything was from the Internet."*[58]

After creating the blog, the collective returned to the original zine format. The number of personal articles increased, and the format was looser, funnier and more experimental: *"It was already 'retro', because the possibilities (to make the zine on a computer) were there, but we decided that it would probably be better to do it the 'old way."*[59] The creators stopped mentioning the sources of information. The paper medium and the blog had different roles – the zine was funny and personal, while the blog was informational. The authors returned to the original format of the zine, because the preparation on the computer was too difficult for one person, and some members of the collective were dissatisfied with the result. They also perceived this method as a hierarchization of the editorial process.[60]

Visual dimension

In the beginning, *Bloody Mary* was a punk amateur zine, unedited and created with glue and copy machines.[61] Direct evidence of the creative process can be found in the first issues – the title page is not completely copied and therefore the visual

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57 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
58 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 11.5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
59 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
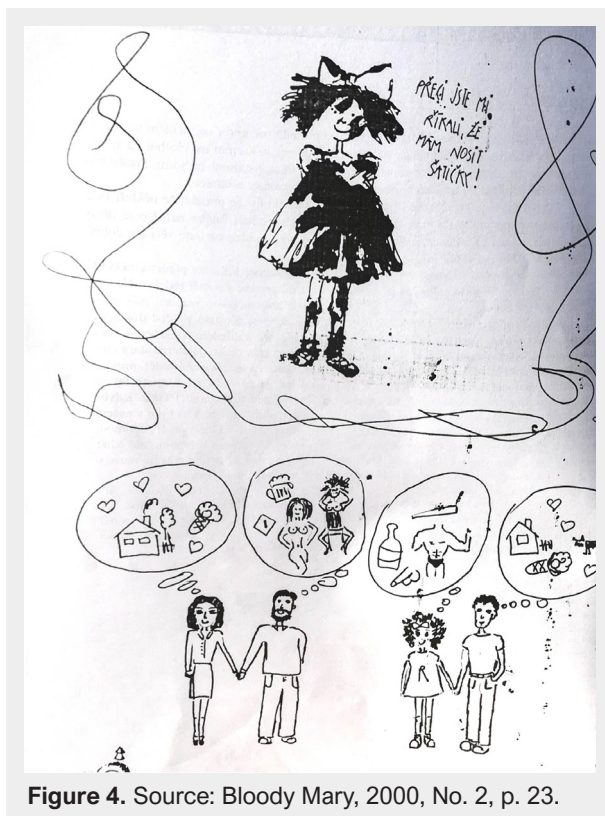60 KOPECKÁ 2020, p. 120.
61 KOPECKÁ 2020, p. 75.

Figure 4. Source: Bloody Mary, 2000, No. 2, p. 23.

is distorted; we can find pages with crooked edges and with traces of scissors. Hand-drawn illustrations and rewritten activist inscriptions are chaotically scattered on the pages. The authors also experimented with many visual elements, trying to fill every empty space on the pages.

The zine became a more modified, cleaner publication with fewer visual elements after Kolářová joined the collective and started using a computer. It looked almost like a magazine, with fewer visual elements and in which text predominated, accompanied by illustrative photographs downloaded from the Internet: *"We thank all the images on the web for letting us steal them without resistance."*[62]

In the third period, the authors stopped using the graphics program and returned to the original method of creating the zine. They used many visual elements scattered on the pages and experimented with photographs, illustrations and drawn elements. The pictures were often modified, especially pop culture symbols. Disney princesses had chains drawn over them;[63] the Statue of Liberty wore a veil and held a grenade in her hand.[64] The printed texts were cut out and glued to various backgrounds and completed with handwritten inscriptions: *"One weekend, we created this thing that lies in front of you – the result of working with paper, glue, scissors, and remnants of creativity. Leny fought with*

Figure 5. Source: Bloody Mary, 2010, No. 15, p. 7.

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62   Editor's page. In *Bloody Mary,* 2003, No. 8, p. 51.
63   Bezprecedent LTM, radikální queer akce. In *Bloody Mary,* 2010, No. 15, p. 36.
64   Zamyšlení jedné queer. In *Bloody Mary,* 2010, No. 15, p. 2.

the matter by millimeters, while Emča sometimes got lost in the dark corners of glued graphics. [...] *But it was fun!"*[65]

Editorial practice and readers' reception

Editorial practice

The year 2001 was crucial for the editorial practice; two new members joined, one of whom remained – Jitka Kolářová.[66] Until the fifth issue, the zine was created using a copier and the cut-and-paste method. Kolářová initiated the preparation of the further issues on the computer using the graphics program Quark. The introduction of the computer graphics program was influenced by the activist movement in 2001: *"We met many people during the activist meetings, and they described the benefits of using a computer."*[67] The zine looked more professional when it was professionally printed by a printing house: *"The print could be paid with the money earned earlier. It looked better."*[68] According to the reader and editor of zine *Přímá cesta (The Straight Path)* Markéta Štěpánová, with the arrival of Kolářová, the publication changed for the better: *"There was more content than before. Before that, it was just about the form of the zine for me, and I didn't enjoy the form that much. By the time the content and the thematic articles appeared, I started to buy it."*[69]

The final form was created by Kolářová when she gathered most of the materials from the rest of the collective; it was up to her what the zine would look like: *"I spent the morning by the Xerox machine and the afternoon at home among stacks of paper. My room turned into a small manufactory.* [...] *My room is covered with white and red papers in several layers, broken staples and pyramids of folded Bloody Mary. My hands are cut a little bit from the staples and edges of the paper, my knees are hurting from few hours sitting on the floor."*[70]

Later, both techniques were combined: first, the materials were printed and then arranged and copied. In the last two issues, the collective returned to the original method of cutting, gluing and copying the pages of the zine: *"The graphics was very difficult to make for me.* [...] *Sometimes people were dissatisfied with the appearance of their article or I received an article without a title. Such moments were annoying for both sides, so we decided to make it with the original method again."* Jitka Kolářová remembers that one of the authors also thought Kolářová's

65 EMČA – LENY. Editor's page. In *Bloody Mary*, 2010, No. 15, p. 1.
66 EMČA REVOLUCE. Tak nějak o BM. In *Bloody Mary* [online], 31. 5. 2006, original link: http://bloodymary. blog.cz/0605/tak-nejak-o-bm (This domain no longer exists).
67 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484. pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
68 Interview with Kamila Remišová Věšínová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 11. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 2, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/hand-le/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
69 Interview with Markéta Štěpánová, the reader of *Bloody Mary* zine and the author of anarcho-femi-nist zine *Přímá cesta* (The Straight Path). Praha, 25. 6. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 3, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAl-lowed=y.
70 REVOLUCE EMČA. Emča v kopírce – takže BM#1-4 jsou na světě! In: *Bloody Mary* [online], 6. 3. 2008, original link: http://bloodymary.blog.cz/0803/emca-v-kopirce-takze-bm-1-4-jsou-na-svete (This do-main no longer exists).

role in designing the zine resulted in a certain hierarchy: *"Leny said it bothered her, because it was a kind of power. It was quite non-consensual."*[71] It was possible to make *Bloody Mary* as a print magazine, but the authors, including Jitka Kolářová and Kamila Remišová Věšínová, decided to create it in the DIY ethos. They made the last two issues together — Jitka Kolářová described it as a positive experience: *"The collective creation was great; the whole group decided on the layout of the zine, the pictures and everything else."*[72]

Readers' reception and the authors' perception of the audience

Over the time, the zine's number of copies reached one thousand;[73] however its circulation fluctuated as the readers asked the authors to send them copies of volumes from the previous years.[74] The zine's relationship with readers is an important element of *Bloody Mary* as a type of participatory medium. This element changed over time, although not as much as other categories. At the beginning, readers were perceived as critics of feminism, who do not know much about it. In the second period, the collective tried to involve the audience in the content of the zine – through interviews and polls. The collective communicated with readers through their newly established e-mail account. In the third period, the authors wanted to publish readers' texts on their new blog, because they did not have the capacity to involve them all in the zine,[75] and this is one of the main impacts of the Internet on the last five issues.

The readers of *Bloody Mary* were mainly from the anarchist movement – both women and men. The author Jitka Kolářová said that due to her experience, the readers' perception of the zine was mostly positive: *"One of my friends told me, that when she was fifteen, she used to read Bloody Mary. She lived in a village and this zine was very helpful to her – many things bothered her at that time and the zine was important to her."* Due to Kolářová, many readers appreciated that their zine was partly humorous and the feminist subjects were not approached in an overly serious manner.[76] Some of the readers also welcomed that women in the anarchist movement were more active. *"I am glad there is finally a feminist-punk magazine, and I hope that it won't be the only one existing.* […] *There are millions of music zines, so this is a welcome change for me,"* one of the male readers wrote to the zine's authors.[77]

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71 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

72 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

73 PARUS, Ondřej. Lepidla a frustrace zbylo dost: Knižní pocta českým fanzinům. In *A2* [online]. Praha, 14. 3. 2018, https://www.advojka.cz/archiv/2018/6/lepidla-a-frustrace-zbylo-dost

74 REVOLUCE EMČA. Starší čísla BM k mání. In: *Bloody Mary* [online], 18. 1. 2008, original link: http://bloodymary.blog.cz/0801/starsi-cisla-bm-k-mani (This domain no longer exists).

75 EMČA. Editorial's page. In *Bloody Mary*, 2008, No. 13, p. 67.

76 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

77 Letters from readers. In *Bloody Mary*, 2000, No. 4, p. 49.

However, the readers perceived the format of the zine very differently and some of them did not like the zine's approach to feminism. One of them, Markéta Štěpánová, was very critical: *"I didn't like the punk image of the zine. It seemed unnecessary to copy it and glue it all together at a time when it was possible to prepare it in a graphics program."* Štěpánová thought the alternative magazines should be tidy and clean in order to reach the widest possible audience. At the same time, however, she perceived *Bloody Mary* as a positive part of the activist scene: *"The benefits of Bloody Mary are indisputable. Even though I didn't like the zine format at the time that it was torn and glued, now it seems great to me."*[78]

In contrast, reader Tonča liked the punk audacity of the zine: *"I especially liked that it was so cheeky. When I compare it to Přímá cesta* […]*, the audacity and openness of Bloody Mary's style was such a reflection of me at the time. What the anarcho-feminists from Prague criticized, paradoxically, I liked – it was easier to read."* Tonča thinks that the *Bloody Mary* collective was a bit spontaneous rather than thinking deeply about the zine's topics, but due to her opinion, this is exactly what is sometimes needed for a zine to be more accessible for people. On the other hand, Tonča was critical of the way the zine became modified with the introduction of graphics software to the process of its creation: *"I like classic paper zines; otherwise I think it is useless; it costs money (to print the zine in the printing house). The content was important to me."* She also appreciated the playfulness of the zine format: *"When it is just about the text, I don't like it so much."*[79]

Conclusion

It is important to highlight that some categories evolved under several different influences – the Internet and the environment in which the collective operated influenced the development of their approach to feminism and queer issues. The influence of the Internet was strongest in the transformation of the zine's format and in the number of web sources of information used by the authors. *Bloody Mary* changed from an amateur, punk, personal publication into a medium reminiscent of a magazine. The visual dimension evolved similarly: the punk crooked visual changed into modified, clean publication prepared on a computer and printed in a printing house. Because of a hierarchy that emerged from the process, when only one person was preparing the final form of the zine, the collective returned to the original approach.

The content of the zine also changed; the number of web resources grew, and in-depth theoretical articles replaced the intimate, personal texts. A more theoretical approach caused a change in the perception of the feminist issues in a broader social context. The Internet allowed the authors to connect with the foreign subcultural and activist scene and to communicate with readers. *Bloody*

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78   Interview with Markéta Štěpánová, the reader of *Bloody Mary* zine and the author of anarcho-feminist zine *Přímá cesta*. Praha, 25. 6. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 3, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
79   Interview with Tonča, one of the readers of *Bloody Mary* zine and the author of zine *Houpačka*. Praha, 8. 7. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 4, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Mary brought many important topics into the Czech activist context — the zine drew attention to sexism and the unequal position of women in the movement and highlighted queer and LGBTQ+ issues and topics, which had not appeared in the Czech context before.

If we look at the development of *Bloody Mary* in the context of digital communication and the Internet, we see that both media exist in a symbiosis and complement each other. The Internet serves as a tool for creating an alternative medium; the creators used it in a specific way in terms of translating foreign texts and "stealing" images. Thanks to the Internet, the zine's content is more diverse. After the creation of the blogging platform, the function of the publication changed — at the beginning, *Bloody Mary* informed about current events, but as the interval of publishing the issues increased, the informational function was no longer relevant. At this moment, the *Bloody Mary* blog took over this function and informed readers with the most up-to-date information about the Prague activist scene. It was a space for the contributions of the audience and virtual discussions between the creators and the readers in the comments section. Funny formats and personal, intimate texts that were not suitable for the blog were added to the zine. There was a certain division of roles between these two different but complementary media. As Jitka Kolářová said, the physical dimension of the zine was important to the authors: *"There was this certain feeling of it: 'Look, I made this!' A piece of something you can take with you. It occurs to me that in a sense it can support relationships.* […] *The fact that you exchange a zine with someone or write to them, even if you write them an e-mail, it still somehow fosters relationships."*[80] Although the collective founded the blog, they still wanted to publish the material zine and never completely switched to the digital format.

The return to the collective creation of the zine was an important moment, caused by the fact that one of the members felt that Kolářová, who prepared the entire zine, had disproportionate power, and therefore, a certain kind of hierarchy emerged in the process of making the zine. The medium, which by its nature was supposed to be democratic, became partly hierarchical due to the new technology. Lévy describes the optimistic concept of "collective intelligence", where the Internet helps to establish a collective creative cooperation in an environment of heterogeneous sources of information. It is a dimension of power sharing and prosperity guaranteed by a vast amount of information – and this should lead to a certain cyber-democracy, where everyone can participate.[81] Despite these optimistic assumptions, the *Bloody Mary* collective achieved the opposite result after using computers – a greater hierarchizing. Consequently, the authors returned to the collective zine-making.

80 Interview with Jitka Kolářová, the author of *Bloody Mary* zine. Praha, 29. 5. 2020. In KOPECKÁ 2020, Příloha (Appendix) 1, https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/121600/120371484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
81 LÉVY, Pierre. Collective Intelligence, A Civilisation: Towards a Method of Positive Interpretation. In *International Journal of Politics, Culture*, 2005, Vol. 18, No. 3/4, pp. 191-193, DOI: 10.1007/s10767-006-9003-z.

The case study summarized in this article describes the effects of the Internet on alternative media publishing. Zines survived the digital era because the technology used during zine production brought a hierarchy into the process of zine-making, which was initially based on democratic, DIY principles. In contrast, a key factor in this increased hierarchizing was centered on some of the authors not having access to computers or the skills in using graphics programs. As such, collective zine-making persisted, since it was perceived as a democratic process where everyone could participate, and the *Bloody Mary* team emphasized the fact that making the zine together was a fun, pleasant process filled with friendship and freedom of expression. In this sense, these elements could not be substituted by digital communication at the time, since not many people owned a computer with an Internet connection. The zine served as a unique medium, informing about both events of the Czech activist scene and themes not included in the Czech mainstream media, such as LGBTQ+ issues. Finally, after returning to the original cut-and-paste form, *Bloody Mary* ceased to exist after two more issues, as the creators started working full-time and had their own families. The question is what a similar process would look like today, in an environment where we create cultural texts almost always in a virtual space and almost never with a printer, scissors, or glue.

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