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Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried. *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980.* Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006. 424 S. \$75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84545-009-0; \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-84545-333-6.



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It is hard to resist a book whose title references one of Jean-Luc Godard's best-known and most complex movies. Indeed, Schildt and Siegfried's description of the movie and their direct English translation of the German title sent me not only to the library to read a little film history, but also to the media center to rent the newly released DVD.[1] I recommend this brief detour before reading the book; besides finding out that "The Children of Marx and Coca-Cola" is actually an inter-title before a chapter ("This film could be called 'The Children of Marx and Coca-Cola'"), watching the film will put you in the right frame of mind to think about young people, youth rebellion and consumer culture. A daunting mixture to digest, surely, but neither the film nor the book disappoints.

The book goes a bit beyond the fifteen acts of Godard's tale; including the introduction, it includes a total of eighteen chapters, covering the United States, West Germany, France, Great Britain and the Scandinavian states, all peppered with references to other western European countries and parts of the rest of the world. Lest the excess of critical analyses of rebel youth make a reader wary of picking up the book, let me cut to my concluding remarks: undergraduates who purchase this book will not sell it back to the bookstore at the end of the semester. It is thoroughly readable and the transla-

tions and writings of non-native English speakers flow very well. It is also engaging and thought-provoking, with something to offer everyone, from the college student activist to the expert on youth culture and rebellion.

In an impressive display of thematic unity for an edited volume, the authors' contributions are in dialogue with one another. The book originated from a 2002 conference in Copenhagen (p. vii) and the interconnectedness of the chapters points not only to the editors' ability to keep everyone focused on a key topic, but also hints at authors who used the conference and subsequent discussions to work together on a common area of research. The result is interdisciplinary, transnational and proof that humanities scholars can collaborate on larger projects.

What constitutes a revolution, a rebellion, a revolt or even alienation when talking about young people? In order to answer these questions, at the forefront of the authors' tasks was the definition of youth culture as the term applied to national and international contexts. Scholars have generally interpreted youth culture as emerging outside and in opposition to traditional social norms, but this combination of chapters leads to a rethinking of this idea. Berkeley, Kent State, Paris and Berlin have come to stand for years, even decades, of social transformation that young people and their el-

ders worked for and through. As significant and disruptive as the passionate and consuming clash of wills on those campuses were, when we consider those events in a broader historical and geographical context, it becomes painfully clear that an analysis of the evolution of youth and social cultures in the West cannot rest on those iconic battles. Even when scholars are cognizant of the need to look beyond the violent episodes of the late 1960s and 1970s, it is obvious from most treatments of those years that we continue to focus on the episodic and violent events of the era, or rather, those eras. To wit, Rob Kroes, in his chapter on the representations of American and European youth cultures, skillfully challenges accepted western narratives of youth movements, arguing instead that scholars and the public have selectively created a collective memory based more on phantasmata and “semiotic repertoires” than on historical evidence (pp. 88, 95, 102). Certainly, a blend of political, economic, consumer and social changes provided fertile ground for an emergence of changing cultural practices for the baby boomer generation in western nations. Yet as the authors of this volume demonstrate, the ways in which young people expressed themselves from the 1960s through the 1980s cannot be represented by a single event or idea. The context for young people’s activities relied upon specific blends of international, national, class, gender, generational and social milieus that resulted in a multitude of interconnected but unique youth movements. The answers here on how to identify a revolution are surprising and will force historians to discard many accepted historiographical premises.

One intriguing aspect of this reconsideration of youth cultures pivots around the actual extent to which the new, post-World War II consumer culture found in young people a new audience for material goods. The agents in this market shift were not anonymous industry lackeys out to rob teenagers of their newfound pocket money—adults had long recognized the attraction of young people as consumers. Nor did young people passively accept the new dimensions of that consumer culture with which they disagreed. As Uta G. Poiger summarizes her chapter on young leftist radicals and their linking of consumerism to imperialist policies, “the ‘children of Marx and Coca-Cola’ ... tried to give consumption explicit political meaning” (p. 170). This process had been underway before the end of the war. As Peter Wicke reminds us in his chapter on music and rebellion in Western Europe, Talcott Parsons had used the term “youth culture” as early as 1942, long before more recent notions of young people’s habits emerged (p. 109). The

very hallmark we associate so closely with typical youth behavior, pop music, or more often, rock ‘n’ roll, was only one aspect of young people’s struggle to differentiate themselves from their parents. Even technological and musical changes, such as the invention of portable radios, which allowed individual access to music and the new trend of group singing, which took the burden off of one person to hit every note accurately, did not suddenly unite all young people, since not every social class enjoyed purchasing power and extra leisure time. Detlef Siegfried, writing about the global context of youth movements in the late 1960s, argues that the connection between politics and popular culture became important primarily for students in secondary schools and universities, while working-class young people were left out of that particular segment of youth culture. Wilfried Mausbach, using the example of West Berlin’s protest group Kommune 1 or “K1,” underlines the irony of the music industry as potentially replicating an uneven distribution of labor between cultural producers and consumers, resulting in the “abolition of autonomy” for the listener. Mausbach ultimately concludes that young people in West Germany desired to “outflank and outwit” the very music industry that other scholars have seen as repressive. Music was not the midwife for a new youth culture. Scholars are thus left to consider young people’s own agency in the development of identifiable youth cultures. In a resounding confirmation of Mausbach’s argument, Konrad Dussel observes, in his chapter on West German radio programming, that young people influenced the music industry, rather than the other way around, forcing both state institutions and commercial venues to accommodate their young consumers’ tastes.

Nor did youth cultures across western Europe and the United States always develop as antagonistic to older, established social cultures. Detlef Siegfried notes that “intergenerational relations” were not always marked by antagonism (p. 74). Siegfried provides ample evidence for this statement, and other authors support this viewpoint. By presenting the lesser-studied countries of Denmark and Sweden, Steven L.B. Jensen (Sweden), Thomas Etzemüller (Denmark), Thomas Ekman Ekman Jårgensen (Denmark), and Henrik Kaare Nielsen (West Germany and Denmark) redraw the historiographical topography of student movements and provide new questions and ideas about youth cultures in western Europe. Etzemüller asks rhetorically whether there is “nothing to report” about student protests in the 1960s in Scandinavian countries, subtly chastising most readers, who will not know the answer to that question (p. 239).

Jensen's, Nielsen's, J rgensen's and Etzem ller's chapters fundamentally challenge the notion of young versus old as a necessary component of developments throughout the 1960s and beyond. In Sweden, young people worked largely within established social and political structures for change, and received broad support from adults. Despite media portrayals that Sweden, like elsewhere, faced a physical threat from its younger citizens, "in reality no one really went outside the Swedish framework of appropriate behavior" (p. 251). Etzem ller refines this statement to note that the perception of "violence" was omnipresent in Sweden, even as authorities and students worked together towards compromise. The nature and very definition of violence there differed significantly from that seen in student demonstrations in France or Germany. This point is also brought out in Nielsen's comparison of anti-nuclear movements in West Germany and Denmark. The terrorist group RAF determined 1970s West German political culture and forms of protest, so that the harsh, official reactions to the antinuclear and ecological movements polarized traditional and anti-authoritarian culture there. Klaus Weinbauer's contribution on youth delinquency in West Germany reinforces Nielsen's portrayal of that country as one that felt itself under siege. According to Weinbauer, the larger public, especially the police, felt endangered both by young people's very real consumption of illegal drugs and a perceived new level of juvenile delinquency that sought to undermine the social fabric of a *Rechtsstaat*. Danish antinuclear protesters, in contrast, succeeded in bringing the topic of the environment into a public realm that included a debate about direct democracy, ultimately affecting the very structure of the government itself.

Not all youth movements in Denmark had such far-reaching effects, however. In his case study of the "provos" of Copenhagen, J rgensen adds an essential dimension to Danish youth culture studies: By pointing out that the provos "scene" did not rest upon a cohesive platform, but was rather a mixed set of ideas and practices that rejected the Danish Left's Enlightenment-oriented, rational program, J rgensen offers a multifaceted view of Danish youth culture. Provos, interacting at times with their American peers, chose a mixture of radical ideas from a variety of sources to create "anti-programmatic," vague, and "incoherent" opinions. The movement, with its stance of being against everything and promising everything, ultimately disintegrated under the burden of boundless but agenda-less optimism. Likewise, Jensen offers an intriguing analysis of the politics within student organizations and between young

people and adults. Focusing on a "failed" student retreat in 1968 outside of Copenhagen, he demonstrates how university administrators ultimately passed sweeping and progressive governance laws in the face of an unorganized student movement. Here, too, Danish students never revolted against their elders, not needing, in Jensen's interpretation, to question the older generation's "fascist past" as was the case in Germany (pp. 236-237). Yet in both countries, the student movements played an important role in reshaping political and social cultures, even if the movements there did not resemble the brutal events of neighboring countries. Similar conclusions can be found when such revelations are applied to other national contexts. As Arthur Marwick observes in his comparative chapter on the "long sixties," scholars have ironically overlooked the legislative reforms that resulted from social upheaval (p. 41). The enfranchisement of young people in western and even eastern bloc countries with a lowered voting age of eighteen, new rights for women (such as abortion law reform and more equitable divorce laws) and educational reforms all permanently changed social norms long after the Molotov cocktails, or, depending on the country, civil but tense public discussions had become history. Marwick concludes that, without discounting the devastating effects of those "violent confrontations" where they did take place, parents supported their children's viewpoints and even actions. A revolution, it would seem, is in the eyes of the beholder.

While Etzem ller and Jensen do much for the advancement of including "neglected" countries in research about youth culture, numerous other authors reassess well-researched countries such as France, Great Britain and West Germany. By examining the phenomenon of increased youth travel from West Germany to other countries in the 1960s, Axel Schildt presents the ambiguous effect that interaction with foreign peers had on young West Germans. Far from promoting global understanding, trips to other parts of Europe often reinforced West Germans' stereotypes of those cultures. Still, contact with other peoples did allow for a transmission of attitudes and consumer practices that contributed to the global flow of ideas among young people. Clearly, any belief in a homogenous global youth movement is untenable when individual countries are examined and compared, but even the national context was extremely heterogeneous.

Barry Doyle presents a fascinating account of class and regional difference with his case study of working-class young men and the Northern Soul dance and music movement of northern Britain and central Scotland.

Rejecting previous arguments popularized by the Birmingham School, which idealized British metropolitan working-class youth culture as the only “authentic culture” among young people, Doyle uses the history and evolution of Northern Soul to differentiate this movement from contemporary middle-class revolts. With its attention to hard work (mastery of dance moves), reappropriated music (obscure records from African-American soul music), unique consumer habits (distinctive dress wear such as “granddaddy” flat leather shoes and amphetamine use instead of marijuana or LSD) and a decidedly welcoming, but male, sense of community, Northern Soul was less a desire for social transformation as an embrace of the working-class values of the parent generation. These young men wanted to work hard and play hard, and the only group they wished to distance themselves from was that of the revolutionary young Londoners who did not need “speed” to keep themselves going in their leisure time.

Finally, several authors explore the gender and sexual aspects of student and young people’s movements, offering up not only new arguments but also new areas for research. First, Franz-Werner Kersting focuses on two women of the “red decade” of 1967 to 1977, Ulrike Meinhof, co-founder of the RAF, and Margrit Schiller, a member of the anti-psychiatry movement. His implicit assertion that women were overrepresented in terrorist groups of the era, or at least were active in larger numbers than generally believed, is not convincing based only on these two rather unique individuals. Still, his linking of left-wing radicals’ dismissal of psychiatry as a false panacea for fundamental social ills with the emerging feminist consciousness of the era is one that deserves further study. Dagmar Herzog addresses the question of new roles for women in her impressive study of the birth-control pill and the politicization of sexuality (p. 264). Although today’s young women often view “the Pill” as a near-mythical impetus for post-World War II women to take charge of their own sexuality, Herzog dispels such easy interpretations. Rather, it was part of a complicated and even angry discourse in West Germany about sexual mores. Churches were key actors in this discussion, suggesting that premarital sex had been a tenet of a Nazi ideology that linked sexual decadence to the Holocaust. Readers familiar with U.S. sexual practices will find fascinating Herzog’s discussion of liberal West Germans’

incredulity at young Americans’ desire to “pet,” or engage in non-coital play that might end in orgasm, rather than have “real sex,” with West German experts pathologizing petting as unnatural and perverse. “The Pill,” in Herzog’s narrative, became a site of decades-long contestation about gender roles, sexual norms and the country’s self-image. This discourse about sexual liberation appeared in another, largely unstudied social movement in France: the fight to decriminalize “intergenerational sex,” or pedophilia. The topic is a minefield that Julian Bourg negotiates with dexterity and objectivity, demonstrating the very broad support that respected French intellectuals offered to the cause. Bourg exposes the pedophilic discourse as part and parcel of the general myopia of male French leftists as regarded their definitions of masculinity. Bourg’s chapter is the most shocking for its subject matter, but it is also the one that pushes this book to the stature of a truly revolutionary collection of studies on youth culture.

Having already asserted at the beginning of this review that the volume is one of the year’s best books, I will offer here only a few comments about the volume’s contribution to the field of social and cultural history. Few scholars will disagree that transnational histories are essential for a comprehensive understanding of any historical era. Yet comparative and transnational scholarship is expensive and time-consuming, making such undertakings impossible for many authors. The international conference that initiated the first discussions for this book provides a framework for transnational narratives, particularly when the authors have the opportunity to continue their findings beyond the scope of the conference. By demonstrating the varying aspects of youth movements in different national settings, this volume takes the reader far beyond the parts of its whole.

Notes

[1]. Its “international” and English title was actually *Masculine, Feminine: In 15 Acts*, while its French title was *Masculin f eminin: 15 faits pr cis*. Schildt and Siegfried called the movie *Masculin-F eminin or: The Children of Marx and Coca-Cola*. The film’s title has seen multiple mutations; the most common German title used was *Masculin-F eminin oder: Die Kinder von Marx und Coca-Cola*.

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