ROCK AROUND THE BLOC

TIMOTHY W. RYBACK

A HISTORY OF ROCK MUSIC IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION

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As Timothy Ryback demonstrates in this lively and revealing book, Western music, particularly rock & roll, is far from new to the Soviet bloc. Indeed, since 1964, when Beatlemania swept Central Europe, spawning millions of fans, rock music has fueled one of the most significant transformations ever in Soviet bloc society. Today, rock music—including pop, punk, funk, reggae, and heavy metal—represents the most pervasive form of mass culture from the Berlin Wall to the dockyards of Vladivostok. It is, in a very real sense, the soundtrack of the Gorbachev Revolution.

Rock Around the Bloc presents an in-depth history of rock music in communist Europe from the mid-1950s to the present, touching on such highlights as the Elvis craze in the late 1950s, Beatlemania in the 1960s and 1970s, and punk and heavy metal music of the 1980s. The reader comes to realize that in some ways, life in the Soviet bloc was surprisingly similar to life in the West. But there are striking differences as well, most notably, the thirty-year war between rock fans and party officials. In charting this struggle, Ryback takes the reader into the Kremlin for special Central Committee meetings devoted to the "evil" of rock music; into the streets of beleaguered 1968 Prague and 1981 Poland where rock bands and their fans helped spearhead political reforms; and into the bedrooms of young people secretly tuning into rock broadcasts from the BBC and Radio

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A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

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Dedicated to
Marie-Louise, Katrina, and Brendan

Acknowledgments

In the fall of 1984, while teaching a course in American culture at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig, I met a prominent Soviet-bloc rock critic. Fascinated by the thriving rock culture I had encountered in the Soviet Union and East Europe, I urged him to write a history of Soviet-bloc rock and suggested the title, *Rock Around the Bloc*. In those sullen, pre-*glasnost* days, he declined the suggestion, pointing out that the most interesting material could not be mentioned.

Upon my return to the United States, feeling the story was worth telling, I undertook the project myself. In the course of the next four years, numerous individuals and institutions supplied information without which this book could never have been written. As with other projects of this nature, many people who provided materials and information indispensible to this book have asked to remain anonymous. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

I am also indebted to the research divisions at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, whose archives provided thousands of pages of information and whose researchers have chronicled over two decades of major developments in the East European and Soviet rock scenes. Acknowledgment is also due to the editors and translators of various resource publications, in particular, *East Europe, Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Osteuopa-Archiv, Gegenstimmen,* and *Across Frontiers*.

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The scope of this book precludes a comprehensive treatment of the rock scene in each country of the Soviet bloc. In my work, I have attempted to present a variety of issues and problems that socialist societies confront in absorbing Western rock culture; the sources from which I drew material range from publications of the Kennan Institute to issues of *Kerrang!*, a British heavy-metal magazine. As cultural terra incognita, each of the countries treated warrants a book-length history, in particular Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Olaf Leitner has already produced an exhaustive and excellent history of the East German rock scene. The Soviet Union, a vast nation consisting of fifteen distinct republics, could supply enough material for several books. Moscow rock critic Artemy Troitsky in his recent book, *Back in the USSR*, has already provided an engaging first-person overview of the Soviet rock scene. It is my hope that as attitudes toward popular music and toward the Soviet bloc in general become more differentiated, academic institutions will be willing to provide support for research in this area.

Cambridge, Massachusetts
April 1989

T. W. R.

A Note on Translations and Transliterations

Wherever possible in the text, I have retained band names in the original language, providing the English translation in parentheses. Groups such as Shturtsite (the Crickets) and Mashina vremeni (Time Machine) or titles such as *Pravda, Rudé právo,* and *Neues Deutschland* should pose little difficulty to the reader. However, in cases in which the original name or title appears difficult to pronounce or seems cumbersome, as in the case of Poiushchie gitary (Singing Guitars) and *Klub i khudozhestvennaia samodeyatelnost* (the *Club and Amateur Arts*), I have provided the original and the English translation and then used the translation in subsequent cases. My intention is to convey as much of the original languages as possible without burdening the reader with unwieldly or excessive foreign vocabulary.

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Rock Around the Bloc

Introduction: The Sounds of Socialism

On a blustery February day in 1987, Soviet party head Mikhail Gorbachev broke briefly from his work at the Kremlin to receive an unlikely visitor: Yoko Ono, the widow of former Beatle John Lennon who had come to Moscow to attend an international peace conference. In a moment of gentle candor, Gorbachev, his wife, Raisa, and Yoko Ono shared their thoughts on peace, understanding, and rock and roll.

While Gorbachev invoked the memory of Lennon as a fighter for world peace, his wife surprisingly revealed that she and Misha were admirers of the former Beatle, quoting a line from the Lennon song "Woman" and, for good measure, singing the lyrics, "I love you, I love you." With solemn affirmation, the Soviet leader offered the doleful bon mot: "John should have been here."

In a country rich with innuendo and political iconography, Gorbachev's espousal of "Lennonist" doctrine should have sent an unsettling message to party ideologues and cultural functionaries: the premier political figure in the Soviet Union had symbolically allied himself with the forces of rock and roll.

Since 1985, rock music has provided, in both a figurative and literal sense, the sound track of the Gorbachev revolution. Just months after Gorbachev assumed power, a Soviet rock band participated in the Live Aid concert for African relief. In the spring of 1986, Moscow rock groups hosted their own fundraising concert for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. At the present, leading Western rock bands move through the wreckage of Soviet cultural policy like marauding cultural barbarians.

Gorbachev's endorsement of rock music has ended three decades of official anti-rock policy in the Soviet Union. Ever since the late 1940s, when Soviet and East European youths turned to American jazz, fashion, and chewing gum as a means of overcoming the cultural isolation imposed by the cold war, Soviet-bloc governments have condemned Western youth culture as a form of

"spiritual poison." In the mid-1950s, when Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" first infected the repertoires of local jazz ensembles, cultural officials added rock and roll to their list of subversive dangers. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the ponderous state apparatus worked to eradicate rock music through a series of denunciations, ordinances, and police actions.

Then came the Beatles. In the spring of 1964, Beatlemania smashed through the Iron Curtain, battering back official resistance to rock music and sweeping a whole generation of Soviet-bloc youths into ecstasy. The official press compared the youths' infatuation with the Beatles to tornados, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. In Poland, the Communist youth paper registered the impact of Beatlemania on young people when the film, *A Hard Days Night,* opened in Warsaw. "The Beatles have overpowered 400,000 Warsaw youth faster than the Asian flu," the paper gasped. "The cinemas are besieged, and absenteeism in schools is rampant."

Rock and roll gushed through the fissures in the state bureaucracy. In 1965, Amiga, an East German record company released an album of Beatles hits. Czech radio introduced Western-style rock and roll programming. In Poland, the state concert agency brought the Rolling Stones to Warsaw, and Moscow's minister of culture said the Soviets would consider bringing the Beatles to the U.S.S.R.

Young people's hunger for rock and roll proved to be insatiable. An official study released in Hungary in 1969 came to the astonishing conclusion that 92 percent of Budapest's young people had attended at least one rock concert. By the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union's Communist youth league found that young people were spending as much time on the dance floor as they were on the athletic field. Unsettled by the explosive popularity of this Western "ape culture," ideological watchdogs blamed rock and roll for a myriad of social ills: juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, vandalism and sexual assaults. Standing before the Central Committee of the East German Communist party, the paunchy, seventy-four-year-old head of state Walter Ulbricht availed himself of McCartney-Lennon lyrics to express a sentiment prevalent among Soviet-bloc leaders: "The incessant monotony of this 'yeah, yeah, yeah' is not only ridiculous, it is spiritually deadening."

Soviet-bloc officials turned on rock and roll with vengeance. Police and military units smashed rock concerts. Long-haired teenagers were pulled off the streets and had their heads shorn in state-run barbershops. Rock musicians were imprisoned on charges ranging from public disturbance to political subversion to tax evasion.

In the fall of 1977, the cancellation of a rock concert ignited a bloody confrontation between rock fans and military units in the Czechoslovak town of Kdyně. Hundreds of enraged young people smashed windows, set cars ablaze, and assailed police with bottles and stones. When army units arrived, the violence escalated. Fearing a bloodbath, the military commander called a truce, but not before young people had overturned three armored cars, demolished the local train station, and torched one railroad car.

Two months later, an equally violent confrontation erupted in East Berlin

when police units forced their way into a crowd of two thousand rock-and-roll fans. In an unexpected burst of anger, the young people turned on the security forces, beating them, stripping them, and setting their uniforms on fire. One officer was stabbed to death; another had his head split open by a case of beer. In all, four policemen and nine rock fans allegedly perished in the melee. The Communist daily blamed the violence on the "heated rhythms" of the rock music.

The cathartic explosions of rage have unsettled Communist leaders, but much more insidious to the socialist systems have been the private acts of rebellion. Shattered windows could be replaced, railroad stations rebuilt, demonstrators clubbed and imprisoned. But what could Soviet-bloc authorities do about young people who, in the privacy of their bedrooms, tuned into the rock broadcasts of Radio Luxemburg and Radio Free Europe? About young workers who willingly paid black marketeers a half month's income for two Beatles albums or a pair of blue jeans? About students who simulated Western "highs" by mixing vodka and domestic analgesics? These countless acts of private rebellion, as unperceived as they were uncontrollable, have gnawed relentlessly at the fabric of socialist society.

Western rock culture has debunked Marxist-Leninist assumptions about the state's ability to control its citizens. Across more than eight thousand miles of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, from the cusp of the Berlin Wall to the dockyards of Vladivostok, three generations of young socialists, who should have been bonded by the liturgy of Marx and Lenin, have instead found common ground in the music of the Rolling Stones and the Beatles.

Today, rock music blasts from apartments in Moscow and Leningrad, it thunders in the sports stadiums of Poland and Hungary, it rattles the ancient windows of Prague, and shakes the concrete apartment blocks of East Berlin. With 50 percent of the Soviet-bloc population under the age of thirty and with official polls confirming that listening or dancing to music is the primary leisure activity of young people, rock and roll is unquestionably the single most pervasive form of mass culture in the Soviet bloc.

Rock music has not only transformed the sights and sounds of Communist society but has also altered the very policies and structures of Soviet-bloc governments. Despite incessant condemnations of Western rock music, state agencies sponsor rock bands, rock recordings, and rock programming on radio and television. In East Berlin, the Ministry of Culture established a department responsible specifically for overseeing rock and roll, the "Sektion Rockmusik."

The following account of Soviet-bloc rock should dispel the Western impression that rock music is new to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Further, it should challenge assumptions about everyday life under socialism, about the relationship between the state and the individual, and, ultimately, about the nature of change in these societies.

In recent years, rock music has seen the end of its three-decade struggle for acceptance in the Soviet Union. Although Gorbachev certainly understood the political-cultural significance of his February 1987 meeting with Yoko Ono, it is unlikely that he himself fully comprehended the symbolic implications of the

moment. Since 1954, when East European jazz ensembles first picked the "crazy rhythms" of Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock," the Soviets and their East European allies have waged a relentless war on rock and roll. It has been a conflict with weaponry measured in watts and decibels rather than megatons, with ideological, not human, casualties. It has been a conflict in which the Soviet Union and its East European allies have played out a classic scenario: they have succeeded in winning nearly every battle but have ultimately lost the war.

Were a monument to be erected in grand Stalinist style to the heroes of socialist rock and roll, the statue would have to depict a young man in blue jeans, head thrust defiantly upward. In his hand, where the Stalinist war hero once gripped his Kalashnikov assault gun, this long-haired warrior would clutch an electric guitar. The triumph of rock and roll in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is, in the final analysis, his victory. This is his story.

1

Onslaught of the Coca-Cola Barbarians, 1946–1953

Suppose a dog were trained to react to the words "capitalism" and "socialism." You say: capitalism—the dog's throat goes dry. You say: socialism—saliva rushes into the dog's mouth.

MARCIA CZERWINSKI, *The Transit,* 1956

Those are disciples. Those are my disciples. Guns and nothin' else couldn't keep them boys from comin' over to hear hot.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, 1955

On the evening of May 17, 1988, millions of Soviet citizens gathered before hulkish Temp and Zenit television sets for their first taste of prime-time Western advertising. In an unprecedented move, Moscow sold commercial airtime to a Western company for the purpose of promoting its product to Soviet audiences. From May 17 to May 21, 1988, the American soft-drink giant, the Pepsi-Cola Corporation, dazzled Soviet viewers with a series of commercials that included pop superstar Michael Jackson belting out songs from his 1987 hit album *Bad.* Jackson, sporting a metal-studded, black leather jacket, riveted viewers with an electrifying display of virtuoso dancing and singing.

It was a scene unthinkable forty years earlier. In 1946, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, ravaged by six years of warfare, were crumbling wastelands of human and material devastation. The three-year siege of Leningrad severely damaged much of the city. Stalingrad was in ruins. Warsaw, after five years of Nazi occupation, was virtually obliterated. In Budapest, nine out of ten factories were destroyed, 85 percent of all city dwellings uninhabitable, all forms of public transportation demolished. The Allied bombing of Dresden claimed more victims than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima and left the city a smoldering ash heap.

The Engineers of the Human Soul

Upon this vast landscape of human misery, Stalin charted the future of the socialist state. Stalin envisioned a centrally planned society directed from Moscow in which all industry was nationalized, all agriculture collectivized. Each country would be assigned specific tasks in the centrally directed economy. East Germany was to produce chemicals and precision equipment, Hungary to supply steel, Czechoslovakia to manufacture trams and railroad cars. Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria were to supply foodstuffs and oil.

Populating this utopian society would be the "new socialist man," an individual free of bourgeois vices who voluntarily subordinated self-interest to the needs of the community. In Soviet-occupied East Germany, this realignment of values transformed the demonic cry *Deutschland über alles* into the altruistic slogan *Alles zum Wohl des Volkes!* (Everything for the good of the people!).

It was one thing to restructure the material basis of a society, but quite another to reform human attitudes. The government could force farmers to relinquish their land, it could nationalize factories and businesses, it could demand excessive production quotas. But the government could not necessarily change the way people thought. Dr. Nejedlý, the Czechoslovak minister of education, emphasized the difficulty of reeducating the people of Eastern Europe in a speech before the Czechoslovak parliament in March 1952. "We are building a new world, a new republic," Nejedlý lectured, "and for this purpose we need new people. This is not easy. It is far easier to supply new techniques or new weapons than new brains."

But the leaders of Eastern Europe tried. Merging the theories of Pavlov with the dictates of Lenin, Stalin assigned cultural functionaries the task of forging a new socialist man from the corrupted rabble left behind by centuries of capitalist exploitation. Prolonged exposure to socialist art, it was argued, could transform a selfish capitalist into a selfless socialist man. The artist became, in Stalin's words, "the engineer of the human soul."

Stalin's chief architect of the new socialist personality, Andrei A. Zhdanov, was an orthodox Stalinist who had served as secretary of the Central Committee and as chairman of the Supreme Soviet. As a lieutenant general during the Second World War, Zhdanov oversaw the defense of Leningrad from 1941 until the spring of 1944. In the fall of 1946, the fifty-year-old Zhdanov prepared for a new siege—against the onslaught of Western influences. Seeking to overcome the Soviet people's cultural "servility to the West" and to batter back the forces of "cosmopolitanism" that threatened to "poison the consciousness of the masses," Zhdanov launched a fierce offensive against "American influences."

The alleged dangers of American subversion seemed to lurk everywhere in those dark days of postwar Stalinist rule. In Bulgaria, a physician found a direct link between insomnia and American propaganda. Poland blamed mining disasters on American sabotage and warned about the physical and ideological risks of drinking Coca-Cola. In Czechoslovakia, the media held the United

States accountable for evils ranging from potato blights to overeating. East German ideologue Kurt Hager maintained that the bouffant hairstyle was a subliminal inducement to war hysteria. "The hair is styled in such a manner," explained Hager in June 1950 in the party monthly *Einheit,* "that it rises from the base of the neck like the mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb."

The campaign against "Americanism" peaked in January 1953 when *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* announced the "Doctors' Plot." Nine Moscow physicians, who oversaw the health care of leading Soviet officials, were accused of collaborating with American and British intelligence services. They allegedly plotted the sudden death of Zhdanov in 1948 as well as the death of another leading Soviet official, Alexander S. Shcherbakov, in 1945. Although the physicians were eventually acquitted, the accusations indicated the intense anti-American sentiment during the early 1950s.

The physical damage wrought by alleged American sabotage could be undone: mines repaired, factories rebuilt, potatoes replanted. But what about the impact of American cultural influences? What could be done about Soviet-bloc youths who aped the latest American fashion, listened to American music, and tried to lead the decadent "American way of life" in the midst of an emerging socialist society?

By the early 1950s, Stalin's engineers of the human soul faced major structural problems. Soviet-bloc teenagers, instead of fashioning themselves after the new socialist man, were imitating American film heroes like James Dean, James Cagney, and Johnny Weismueller. A poll conducted by *Komsomolskaia pravda* of three thousand young people indicated that the imitation of Western lifestyles and fashion represented the most common trait among Soviet youths.

The fallout from American film, fashion, and music caused panic throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, the Komsomol campaigned against *stiliagi*—the "style hunters." In Poland, the press assaulted the *bikiniarze,* who derived their name from the American hydrogen bomb test site in the South Pacific. Hungary was overrun with *jampec,* Czechoslovakia with *pásek.*

The Soviet *stiliagi* gave themselves American names like Peter and Bob, held cocktail hours, and listened to American jazz. In Moscow they "hung out" in restaurants and along Moscow's fashionable Gorky Prospekt, which they referred to whimsically as "Broadway." For men, fashion demanded narrow ties and dark, tight-fitting suits to contrast the loose-fitting egalitarian garments promoted by the government. Female *stiliagi* sported, according to the newspaper *Sovetskaia kultura* on January 19, 1955, "dresses stretched tightly over their figures to the point of indecency. Their skirts are slit and their lips are highly painted."

During the mid-1950s, the Soviet media launched a public campaign against the *stiliagi* in the hope of humiliating the young people back into socialist orthodoxy. The satirical weekly *Krokodil* commissioned the Russian songwriter Lev Oshanin to compose a song mocking the *stiliagi.* The youth daily *Komsomolskaia pravda* reported extensively on these errant socialist youth. One arti-

cle depicted these "fashion hunters" as spoiled children who wasted their time and money attempting to imitate teenagers in the West. "If he is Boris, he calls himself Bob, and if he is Ivan, he calls himself John," complained *Komsomolskaia pravda* on August 11, 1956. "He lives off his parents, and 'burns money' in restaurants. . . . He 'adores' everything foreign and is ready to sell his right arm for a fashionable phonograph record."

In Prague, the *pásek* wore wide-cuffed trousers, striped socks, and safari-styled jackets. The youth purchased dull ties in government-run stores and painted them with bright colors or pinned American cigarette labels on them. During the mid-1950s, *pásek* imitations of James Dean stood around on Wenceslaus Square in central Prague, chewing gum and staring disparagingly at passers-by. Those who could not afford or find Western gum on the black market made do by chewing parafin wax.

In Bulgaria, the press upbraided these "apostles of the hostile ideology," for loafing, swearing, wearing straight-legged pants, and disseminating pornography and crime literature. Like their counterparts in Moscow, these Bulgarian "hooligans," prided themselves on their mastery of English and their familiarity with the latest American fads. They sported thick-soled shoes, nylon stockings, sweaters, and neckties from abroad. On October 29, 1953, the Sofia newspaper *Literaturen front* detailed the dissolute life of a typical Bulgarian hooligan. "Petur changed the spelling of his name to the American 'Peter,' " observed the paper. "He is twenty-six years old, with a bored, expressionless face, languid gestures and downcast eyes." *Literaturen front* accused Petur and his friends of indulging in decadent American pleasures, passing their time telling jokes, playing bridge, and discussing the latest car models. When they tired of these pastimes, they cranked up the victrola and danced to the latest American swing. "These arrogant monkeys, dropped into our midst as if from a foreign zoo," charged the paper, "live as Americans and think as Americans." Waxing sarcastic, *Literaturen front* suggested that these youth aspired "to convert our country into a giant night club under the American flag."

In those grey years of Stalinist rule, when political ideology supplanted human emotion, when the cement plant and steel factory dominated literature and film, when human and material resources were consumed in the "building of socialism," America, a refuge for East European émigrés since the nineteenth century, seemed a distant utopia. America's sleek, bright cars, its beautiful actresses, its suave young men provided a vicarious escape for the youth of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A pack of Marlboro cigarettes or a jazz recording purchased on the black market brought them a little closer to the sounds and smells of America and helped them, if only briefly, escape the sulfuric odor of brown coal and the incessant drone of socialist polemic.

Imperialism, Communism, and All That Jazz

Jazz, swing, bebop, boogie-woogie and other forms of popular American music came under particularly harsh attack from Soviet-bloc ideologues. The youths'

obsession with jazz music and its rhythmic derivatives seemed to cause cultural officials the greatest consternation. A wailing saxophone or a thumping bass could elevate and transport the youth in a way that other decadent imports from the West could not.

The assault on jazz commenced in late summer 1946, just as the United States and the Soviet Union began hurling intercontinental accusations and provocations at one another. In August 1946, articles appeared in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* denouncing jazz concerts. Throughout 1946 and 1947, the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party issued decrees restricting various forms of musical entertainment. In 1947, the Central Committee called a conference of leading Soviet musicians. Andrei Zhdanov held an extended diatribe against signs of decadence and Western influence in Soviet music. Zhdanov condemned what he called the Soviet "predeliction for and even a certain orientation toward modern, western bourgeois music, toward decadent music."

Actions followed words. In November 1946, Eddie Rosner, a Polish jazz musician whose music had helped buoy the spirits of the Red Army forces throughout the Second World War, was arrested and shipped off to Siberia. Leonid Piatigorsky, brother of cellist Igor Piatigorsky and a popular band leader from the 1930s, was arrested. A. G. Alekseev, a prominent figure on the Moscow jazz scene was imprisoned. By the end of the decade, hundreds of Soviet jazz musicians had been forced to exchange the dance halls for Soviet labor camps.

Thousands of other jazz musicians lost their jobs. By 1950, the Radio Committee Orchestra had fired all its saxophone players. In Moscow, the State Variety Music Agency ordered musicians to bring their saxophones to its office where the instruments were confiscated. Throughout the Soviet Union, squads of Komsomol youth were dispatched to restaurants, theaters, and dance halls to ensure that only songs from approved lists were being performed.

By the early 1950s, the polemics against jazz had intensified. Jazz, no longer considered just an American cultural abberation having no place in socialist society, was being decried as a tool of American imperialism. On February 16, 1952, the Soviet publication *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* maintained that the U.S. government was exploiting "the scrunch and squeal and roar of the senseless, stupefying jazz 'music' to deafen, to kill the man in men, to turn them into cannon fodder." Another publication claimed that jazz music affected the nervous system of listeners, thus preparing them to fight the wars allegedly planned by Wall Street.

Two books fleshed out the Soviet position on jazz, the *Music of Spiritual Poverty* by V. Gorodinsky and *Dollar Cacophony* by I. Nestiev. The two works condensed and summarized all the official vituperations against jazz that echoed from Tallinn to Turkestan: "perverted," "decadent," "base," "lying," "degenerate." It was further maintained that jazz had been created by capitalists "to deafen the ears of the marshallized world by means of epileptic loudmouthed compositions."

The Soviets also imposed the new policy on jazz among their socialist neighbors. In 1949, Tikhon Khrennikov, an accordion player by avocation and the

secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers by profession, visited Eastern European countries to assess their compliance with Soviet dictates. In a studio at Radio Budapest, Khrennikov reviewed new compositions by Hungarian musicians, passing judgment on their suitability for socialist audiences. In Prague, a trio of stonefaced Soviets, led by the composer Aram Khachaturian, attended a performance of representative Czechoslovak jazz. At the end of the performance, Khachaturian rose to his feet and condemned the trumpet playing as "despicable, whining, like a jungle cry!" In June 1952, Khachaturian arrived in Sofia, where he found Bulgarian popular music "still on a low level." In an interview in *Otechestven front* on June 22, 1952, Khachaturian recommended Bulgarian composers "study the principles of Soviet musical art."

East European cultural officials heeded Khachaturian's recommendations, harmonizing their diatribes against jazz and Western music with the vituperous polemics that spewed from Moscow. On September 19, 1952, the Bucharest paper *Contemporanul* asserted that jazz was a "means of spiritual poisoning and stultification of the masses." The paper urged cultural officials to "rid our music of the influence of hysterical and cacaphonous American jazz."

Jazz, which flourished in Germany during the Weimar Republic only to be banned by the Nazis after 1933, returned to central Europe on the coattails of the Allied armies in the spring of 1945. Even as the Germans dug themselves out of the rubble of Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, jazz ensembles reappeared in clubs and cabarets. Jazz flourished briefly in the Soviet zone of occupation, but by the spring of 1946, Communist ideologues expressed disfavor toward this allegedly primitive *Negermusik*.

In May 1946, music critic Paul Höffer attempted to force German jazz critics into a defensive position by equating their anti-jazz polemics with those of the Nazis. "Even today, in 1946," wrote Höffer in the May issue of the cultural monthly *Aufbau*, "there still exists in our society, those who, still believing firmly in German superiority, dismiss jazz as 'Negermusik'." In a political system committed to eradicating all vestiges of German fascism, Höffer's observation struck a sensitive nerve.

But in the fall of 1946, Zhdanov's campaign against Western musical influences was launched in Moscow, and East German critics of jazz again took the offensive. In East Berlin, Professor Ernst Mayer, publisher of the journal *Musik und Gesellschaft*, spoke of the veritable "mudslide of boogie-woogie" that the United States had dumped upon the German people. Mayer maintained that Western music was the means through which "the poison of Americanism" was being forced upon the Germans. Echoing *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, Mayer warned: "It would be wrong not to recognize the dangerous role played by American music in preparing the people for war."

Between 1949 and 1953, Hungarian officials also played Moscow's anti-American tune, banishing American films and books. Light-entertainment orchestras purged their repertories of American swing and jazz numbers. In 1952, a directive circulated among the heads of district youth leagues across Hungary, proposing that orchestras occasionally include American dance numbers during weekly gatherings. Young people who did not leave the dance floor when

American songs played were to be brought before the DISZ secretary and warned they were becoming "spiritual agents of the imperialists." For youth clubs without their own ensembles, the directive recommended playing recordings of American swing tunes and cited "In the Mood" and "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" as particularly suitable for this purpose.

In Czechoslovakia, jazz musicians and their adherents initially resisted Soviet musical hegemony. Following Khachaturian's criticisms of the performance in Prague, the band leader, Karel Vlach, a pioneer of Czech swing music, defended his ensemble's concert. Criticized for his inclusion of Stan Kenton numbers, Vlach replied that he would gladly eliminate Kenton from his repertoire if the Soviets could provide him with something better. Vlach and his band shortly thereafter lost their positions in Prague and were attached to a traveling circus.

The Czechoslovaks tenaciously protected their jazz heritage. In May 1951, Josef Buriánek published an article in the once famous daily *Lidové noviny,* defending jazz against the attacks from Moscow. Buriánek admitted that much of the jazz coming from America had "deteriorated to routine tastelessness," but he upheld the jazz tradition in Czechoslovakia. "We still cannot deny the strong, residual influence of dance music, usually called jazz, and we must come to terms with it."

Jazz had flourished in Czechoslovakia before the Second World War. During the 1930s, Jaroslav Ježek, considered the father of Czechoslovak jazz, introduced the music of the jazz greats to audiences in Prague. When the Nazis invaded in 1938 and banned this "non-Aryan" form of entertainment, Ježek emigrated to America. Ježek left, but jazz remained. Josef Škvorecký in his novella *The Bass Saxophone* depicts how jazz provided many Czechoslovaks with spiritual and moral sustenance in those grim years of German rule. Škvorecký rhapsodizes about the sensual beauty of the saxophone, about "how the curtain went up, how the fortissimo of the brasses shook the hall in syncopated rhythm, how the saxophones blazed honey-sweet."

In 1945, Czech jazz reemerged from the underground. Despite the polemics coming from Moscow, the fledgling Communist party in Czechoslovakia embraced jazz. Following Gottwald's seizure of power in 1948, the Communist government even formed an official light-entertainment orchestra named after the great Jaroslav Ježek, who in 1942 died an exile in New York City.

When the Soviets applied pressure on the Czechoslovaks to abandon jazz music, Buriánek availed himself of jazz's long heritage in Czechoslovakia. While saxophones were being confiscated in Moscow, Buriánek insisted that in Czechoslovakia it was not "necessary to get excited about saxophones or to discard them in deep waters." Buriánek defiantly insisted that the Czechoslovaks would not renounce their jazz heritage. "We shall therefore continue to sing the songs of the American negro slaves and of Jaroslav Ježek."

But the pro-Stalinist government continued to exert pressure. In the state sponsored youth musical ensembles, cultural officials tried to replace wherever possible the saxophone with the violin cello. The Czechoslovak Music and Artistic Center drew up a list of dance pieces barred from public performance.

The ban included all Dixieland and jazz numbers. However, the jazz works of Ježek and those of the Soviet tunesmith Isaac Dunaevsky were spared official censure. In order to enforce the new restrictions, inspectors toured public establishments, while members of the Communist youth organization reported any couples who were seen dancing "in an individualistic manner."

Jazz Is Liberated

At ten minutes to ten on the evening of March 5, 1953, Soviet leader Josef Stalin died. On the night of March 1, the seventy-four-year-old man had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage that had paralyzed his right arm and right leg and had severely impaired his cardiovascular and respiratory functions. For four days, a team of physicians struggled to keep the Soviet leader alive. On Friday March 6, 1953, Radio Moscow began its morning broadcast with the solemn rolling of drums followed by the Soviet national anthem. An announcer came on the air and reported to the world that on Thursday, March 5, 1953, at 9:50 p.m. Stalin, the Soviet people's "comrade-in-arms and brilliant continuer of Lenin's cause" had passed away.

In Moscow and Leningrad, people were stunned and bewildered. "We had long since forgotten that Stalin was mortal," recalled the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg, "He had been transformed into an omnipotent and mysterious deity. And now the god had died of a hemorrhage. It seemed incredible." In an outpouring of grief, people wept openly in the streets. On the radio, in palaces of culture, and in committee chambers, somber eulogies were held.

Throughout Eastern Europe, there were similar displays of grief, some sincere, some perfunctory. In central Budapest tens of thousands of Hungarians gathered at the foot of an immense statue of Stalin to listen to Ernő Gerő, deputy chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers, pay tribute to the man who had "done more than any other to free the peoples of the world." In East Germany, the March 7, 1953, edition of the party paper *Neues Deutschland* was edged in black and bore the headline: "The Heart of the Greatest Man of Our Epoch, Comrade J. V. Stalin, Has Stopped Beating." Fritz Schenk, a minor East German bureaucrat, recalled that even the "highest officials" sat "quietly in their offices and cut mourning bands out of carbon paper."

While East European officials solemnized in their chambers and the Russian people wept in the streets, jazz musicians in Hungary, East Germany, and Poland began to clean the valves of their saxophones and look for new reeds. Within weeks after Stalin's death, jazz, which had simmered in the underground since 1946, began boiling over into public life.

Stalin was dead for less than a month when the Hungarian musicians' union abandoned the Stalinist position on the performance of Western music in public places. The reversal of policy transformed Budapest, a city which in 1953 boasted an estimated twenty-two nightclubs, fifteen first-class restaurants, fifty ordinary establishments, and countless coffeehouses and tearooms. By December 1953, the Corvin Department Store was featuring a continuous floorshow.

An all-female orchestra would play throughout the afternoon. In the evening, entertainers did sketches and played song and dance numbers. It was reported that by late evening the entertainment would deteriorate from "bad taste to the obscene," as listening gave way to wild dancing.

Stalinist officials observed with horror the music that began to consume Budapest's night scene. The Paradiso Cafe offered a rollicking musical fare, which on June 9, 1954, the paper *Béke es Szabadság* decried as "mud music" and comparable to "sounds as if frogs were heaving and gurgling in the mud of swamps." Even the orchestra at the plush Moscow Restaurant was rebuked for performing "pots and pans music." On February 5, 1955, *Magyar Nemzet* lamented, "How long are we going to tolerate it—that bad taste, which we have tried to liquidate with so much effort should again return?" For Hungary, there would be no going back.

In the summer of 1953, East Germany also liberalized its policy on jazz. The decision was motivated more by domestic unrest than by Stalin's death. On June 17, 1953, worker demonstrations and work stoppages crippled East Germany. The actions followed demands for increased work quotas and wage reductions. Calls for free elections and freedom of the press accompanied the public outcry over the new policies. Soviet tanks resolved the standoff between the East German government and its people when they intervened and began machine-gunning the demonstrating workers. By the day's end, order had been restored, and an estimated three hundred East Germans had died.

The Ulbricht regime was traumatized. Seeking to avert further unrest, the government abandoned the quota increases and permitted freer public expression. The liberalization provided a revised policy on Western music, including jazz. That same summer, West German jazz ensembles were invited to perform in East Berlin. Squealing saxophones and thumping basses resonated into the Stalin Allee, which just weeks earlier had echoed with the grating of tank treads and rattle of machine-gun fire.

The revised position on East German jazz was championed by a young professor of social science named Reginald Rudorf. Drawing from a personal library of two thousand books on jazz and a collection of over one thousand recordings, Rudorf provided the ideological muscle to wrench jazz from the hands of pro-Stalinists who continued to insist that jazz was a tool of American imperialism. Rudorf emphasized the proletarian origins of jazz, insisting that it was music for the masses. East German radio was soon providing Rudorf with airtime for his own jazz program, and DEFA, the state film agency, provided resources to produce a movie on jazz. By 1956, Rudorf, lecturing extensively throughout East Germany, had brought the gospel of jazz to over fifty thousand East Germans and had reached hundreds of thousands more through his radio program.

Jazz clubs quickly sprang up in Berlin, Leipzig, Rostock, Dresden, and Halle. In 1956, the Jazz Club of Halle sent the Hans Buchmann Quintet to participate in a jazz competition in Düsseldorf, West Germany. Despite rigorous competition from Western ensembles, Buchmann and his fellow musicians returned to the East with the competition's first prize.

In the spring of 1954, Polish resistance to jazz also collapsed. In May 1954, Polish composers gathered at a conference to discuss new developments in music. "It is a fact that the jazz manner of rendition has been accepted," the final report conceded, "that people have accepted it and now demand jazz." While the musicians admitted that jazz could be adapted to national tastes, citing Italian jazz as a positive example, they found the thought of "wild American jazz" sweeping Poland "truly frightening."

In February 1955, the cultural magazine *Świat* published a history of jazz music, commenting, "We are at last witnessing the full rehabilitation of jazz." The Festival of Youth held in Warsaw in the summer of 1955 brought jazz music into the streets of the Polish capital. "Warsaw changed its appearance from being a grey, post-Stalinist town," recalled one Pole, "to a place of lively songs that filled the streets. The Festival of Youth dealt the final death blow to the anti-jazz campaign in Poland."

In September 1955, Polish radio broadcast its first program devoted to jazz and dance music. On September 11, the Warsaw paper *Dziś i Jutro* lauded the new radio program for introducing Polish listeners not just to Polish but also to Western jazz and dance ensembles. The article also observed that the restrictions imposed on jazz from 1947 to 1954 had apparently not affected Polish jazz fans' familiarity with the major currents of American jazz music. "Every lover of dance music today," observed the Warsaw paper, "knows the famous bands of Andre Kostelanetz or Mantovani, Ray Anthony, Bill [sic] May, Coleman Hawkins, Benny Goodman, or Duke Ellington."

Two months after the first jazz program aired on Polish radio, the first state jazz orchestra debuted in Warsaw. The forty-piece ensemble offered not only dance music by European and Soviet musicians but also works by George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, and Harry James. On November 12, Radio Warsaw praised the tremendous success of the orchestra's premiere concert, noting that the performance was enthusiastically received "by the many who are hungry for good jazz." In the port city of Gdansk, the Club of Cultural Workers began publication of a magazine that was to become an internationally recognized monthly periodical for jazz aficionados, *Jazz*. The first issue of five thousand copies sold out immediately.

In 1955, jazz conquered most of Eastern Europe and was battering down the bastions of Soviet musical orthodoxy. Despite government measures against Western-style ensembles, jazz, boogie-woogie, and bebop had flourished in the underground. Western hits circulated by the thousands on smuggled record albums or pirated recordings etched into the emulsion of discarded X-ray plates. Tens of thousands of Soviet jazz fans tuned in daily to Willis Canover's radio show *Music USA*, beamed through the Iron Curtain by Voice of America.

The Kremlin's growing inability to enforce its ban on jazz was becoming evident. Light-entertainment ensembles offered officially approved repertoires to cultural inspectors, only to break into renditions of the latest Western hits once the officials left. By 1954, jazz and bebop were spilling over onto the streets of Soviet cities. On September 28, 1954, *Komsomolskaia pravda* de-

scribed the presence of jazz, swing, and boogie-woogie in Kuibyshev, a city three hundred miles southeast of Gorky.

Komsomolskaia pravda related the following incident. In the summer of 1954, a young man named Fyodor Semyonov was walking down a Kuibyshev street when he came across a number of young people dancing convulsively, right in the street. Overhead on a balcony, a record player "blared forth the tortuous sounds of American jazz." Each time a song was played, the crowd on the street "began reeling about in an indecent dance called boogie-woogie." It was hardly a scene one would expect to see on the street of a Soviet town. Semyonov recalled thinking: "Why are zootsuiters dancing to boogie-woogie on the main street of a Soviet town?" He watched the balcony to see who was inciting these young people to this indecent and unsocialist pastime. When a young man appeared on the balcony with more records, Semyonov realized the culprit was not a *stiliaga,* but a second-year student from the university.

The local party secretary was dispatched to the student's apartment. Among the student's belongings, the party official found piles of records with innocuous titles like "Folk Verses" and "Sormovo Romantic Sound." But when the records were placed on the record player, instead of folk verses, the "grating sound of jazz filled the room."

By the mid-1950s, it was not simply the iconoclastic *stiliagi* who were indulging in decadent Western music. Loyal and industrious socialist men and women, the models of the socialist upbringing, not only danced to but also publicly defended the "ape culture" coming from the West. On May 31, 1957, a twenty-seven-year-old factory worker from the town of Melitopol wrote to *Komsomolskaia pravda,* complaining about the government's unrealistic expectations of Soviet youths. "In my 27 years I have managed to 'master' a great deal," the young man wrote. "I have driven cattle from the Dnieper to Piatigorsk, I have crossed the Dnieper, I have rebuilt mines in the Donets Basin and have rounded up waifs for orphanages." At the time of writing, he worked in the Vorosky Factory in Melitopol, cleaning industrial castings. He insisted that he was a dutiful worker and a stalwart Communist, but confessed that he liked to dance to swing. In fact, he claimed, everyone he knew liked to dance to jazz and swing.

The young man rejected the notion that classical music and the pas de quatre promoted in the palaces of culture offered attractive alternatives to Western music. "This was done so as to 'block the way' to the fox-trot, tango, etc. in our country," he noted. "But no matter how these dances were criticized, everyone danced them. And of course, each person danced them as best he knew from scenes recalled from foreign films, from lessons from persons who had 'been around' or simply from reliance on imagination."

During 1955, articles appeared in *Pravda, Izvestiia,* and leading Soviet cultural journals, debating the possible revision of the official position on jazz. In December 1955, *Pravda* challenged remaining restrictions on jazz music. It claimed that official inflexibility had precipitated a "repertoire crisis" in Soviet dance music. The lack of innovation had resulted in the stagnation of the Soviet

music scene, which, in turn, had led to an "unhealthy reliance" on Western music.

Hundreds of unofficial bands sprang up throughout the Soviet Union. The Moscow ensemble Vosmyorka (the Eight) was typical of these upstart ensembles. Initially billing themselves as a group of accordionists, the jazz musicians offered Moscow audiences the latest and greatest in Western jazz. Their repertoire consisted almost entirely of pieces they had heard on Conover's *Music USA:* Dizzy Gillespie, Clifford Brown, Max Roach, Miles Davis, and Gerry Mulligan.

The complete rehabilitation of jazz occurred in the summer of 1957 at the Sixth World Youth Festival held in Moscow. Under the aegis of Khrushchev, who decreed the policy of de-Stalinization at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, the Soviet Union attempted to break its self-imposed isolation and take its place in the mainstream of international culture. The Sixth World Youth Festival was a major step in realizing this goal. In July and August 1957, thirty thousand young people from around the world converged on Moscow. Jazz ensembles from the United States, Great Britain, France, West Germany, and even Poland and Czechoslovakia arrived to provide the youth with the latest in international musical fare. After a full decade of battling the influences of Western "dance music," having attempted to drive it from dance halls, to ferret it out of record collections, to eradicate it from ensembles' repertoires, the arbiters of Soviet culture were finally willing to include jazz, swing, and boogie-woogie in their blueprints for the soul of the new socialist man.

But in the mid-1950s, as the Kremlin cautiously accommodated jazz into its cultural policy, a new musical force was stirring in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, a force which for the next thirty years was to shake both the youth and the governments of the Soviet bloc: rock and roll.

2

Rock and Rollback, 1954–1960

Whenever a rock and roll or calypso tune imbeds itself in a communist mind, it tends to erode other things, and this ultimately has an impact upon one's ideology.

Revue militaire générale
(NATO journal), 1958

It is a fact that when ideologically and morally unfortified young men and women are fanned by the foul wind wafting from enemy shores, an amoral infection penetrates us.

Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil
(Soviet military journal), 1962

In the spring of 1954, while East European governments tested the social impact of officially sanctioned jazz, an American country-western singer named Bill Haley was recording a new song at the Decca studios in New York. Haley enjoyed a modest reputation as a country-western singer, but he hoped with this single to crossover into a broader market. The song he recorded, designated a "fox-trot," was two minutes and eight seconds long and bore the title, "Rock Around the Clock."

Initially, "Rock Around the Clock" sold fairly well, but Haley's cover of Joe Turner's "Shake, Rattle and Roll" released later that year catapulted Haley into the Top 10 and transformed rock and roll into an international phenomenon. By the end of 1955, rock and roll was setting off tremors around the world.

Two Minutes and Eight Seconds That Shook the World

On April 20, 1958, the *New York Times* featured a report on the international fallout from the rock and roll explosion. In London, correspondent Kennett Love found British youth rocking and rolling from the working-class Elephant and Castle district to the upper-crust West End. Even Princess Margaret reportedly expressed "delight in rock 'n' roll." A half continent away, rock and roll represented the "liveliest youth movement in Berlin and surrounding central Germany—even allowing for the Communist, Socialist and Christian young peoples' organizations." In the Far East, the Tokyo correspondent for the *New York Times* reported on Masaaki Hirao, Japan's Elvis Presley, who "gyrates and writhes to a bedlam of squealing, swaying teenagers." In Egypt, where an official ban drove the rock scene underground, young people retreated into the desert with the latest Western hits and performed "some of the most energetic rock 'n' roll dancing to be found anywhere."

In 1956, *Blackboard Jungle,* a film whose sound track featured Bill Haley and the Comets singing "Rock Around the Clock," debuted internationally. The film's release in Europe ignited clashes between police and thousands of young rock fans. In September 1956, the film brought an Oslo audience to its feet and sent them dancing wildly into the streets. Six hundred baton-swinging policemen were required to restrain the crowd. A year later, on September 23, 1957, Danish police in Copenhagen reached for their billy clubs after a showing of the film *Rock Around the Clock.*

In February 1957, Bill Haley, touring Europe with his Comets, rolled into London's Waterloo Station. The train was met by several thousand hysterical fans hoping to catch a glimpse of this chubby-faced, thirty-year-old, rock-and-roll hero. George Gale of London's *Daily Express,* observing the frenzied crowd, was reminded of the "faces in the panic scenes of Russian films."

Observing the international hysteria unleashed by the wild rhythms and pounding beats of this "bestial music," Soviet-bloc officials peered through the Iron Curtain at the tumult among their capitalist neighbors with a mixture of disdain and trepidation. Decadent Western jazz that perverted one's aesthetic senses may have evoked a sense of disgust in the older generation, but there was something ominous, deeply unsettling, about music that sent masses of teenagers storming wildly through the streets. Whatever fears may have haunted Soviet-bloc leaders in the early days of rock and roll, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union registered no rock-and-roll riots in the 1950s. Rock music, instead, filtered slowly through the Iron Curtain, surfacing sporadically but with growing frequency in Soviet-bloc cities.

Official statements appearing on rock and roll during the mid-1950s rarely distinguished between jazz and rock music. Rock and roll was considered little more than an aberrant form of jazz. In these early years, musicians also treated rock-and-roll numbers as just another musical style from the West. By 1956, with dance music flourishing throughout the Soviet bloc, a jazz band was as likely to adopt a rock-and-roll number as it was the latest calypso, fox-trot,

boogie-woogie, or tango. Equipped with a saxophone, a bass, and drums, any jazz ensemble could add a guitar, step up its beat, and make that short but significant stylistic jump from Glenn Miller's "In the Mood" to Little Richard's frenetic "Tutti Frutti."

Ironically, rock and roll, which was considered "lower-class" entertainment in the United States, first took hold among the social elite in the Soviet bloc. Jazz clubs in city centers and student clubs attached to universities provided the first forums, while young people with relatives abroad or with family members privileged enough to travel to the West, obtained recordings of the latest Western hits. These albums drew small fortunes on the black market. Young people living in working-class suburbs or, worse yet, in provincial cities and towns found access to Western rock and roll much more difficult.

Rock or Revolt: The Hungaro-Polish Alternative

In the fall of 1956, as Western Europeans rocked and rioted to the sounds of Bill Haley and his Comets, the young people of Hungary were also taking to the streets. In the wake of Khrushchev's call for de-Stalinization in February 1956, Hungarians began to demand more autonomy from the Soviet Union. In July 1956, the Stalinist leader Mátyás Rákosi was deposed. A spontaneous, nationwide revolt, supported by elements of the country's armed forces, erupted on October 23, 1956. Imre Nagy, who as premier from 1953 to 1955 led Hungary toward reform before being forced out of office by pressure from Moscow, was reappointed prime minister. Nagy introduced a radical program, abolishing the one-party system, forming a new coalition cabinet, and undertaking extensive political, economic, and social reforms. Nagy also pressed for the withdrawal of Soviet military forces from Hungary. When Moscow refused, Nagy broke from the Warsaw Pact and appealed to the United Nations to guarantee his country's neutrality.

The Soviets responded with military action. On November 4, 1956, Soviet armed forces invaded Hungary. For the next two weeks, Nagy's government battled the superior Soviet military forces in the bloodiest fighting Eastern Europe had experienced since the Second World War. By the middle of November 1956, the "counterrevolution" was crushed, "order" restored. Thousands of Hungarians died in the two weeks of fighting; tens of thousands of others were wounded. Nagy fled Hungary but was eventually captured and in 1958 executed for "betraying his homeland."

János Kádár, the Communist leader who succeeded Nagy in November 1956, gradually neutralized the seething frustration. Instead of reasserting party control over young Hungarians with demands for increased ideological vigilance, Kádár indulged the youths' passion for Western culture. Hungary imported hundreds of Wurlitzer jukeboxes and installed them in restaurants and dance halls across the country. Directors of clubs and managers of restaurants stocked these Wurlitzers, as jukeboxes came to be known, with the latest Western hits. A shop in the arcade at Budapest's Eastern Railroad Station called Czeglédi

rented recordings by Tommy Steele, the Platters, and Elvis Presley for ten forints an hour. Young people would rent the albums and record them on their Hungarian-made Terta and Red Spark tape recorders.

Budapest's elite high schools became the centers for Hungary's nascent rock culture. Young people came together to listen to rock and roll, to dance, and to buy and sell recordings, cigarettes, and other items from the West. The high schools in Budapest with the best amateur bands were Toldi, Petőfi, Vőrősmarty, Radnóti, Kőlcsey, Bercsényi, and Árpád. Aunt Mici's dance school on the Gerlóczy Street and the Horizont located on Budapest's Grand Boulevard were also early gathering places for Hungary's *tinédzser* (teenagers).

For the most part, the dances were carefully orchestrated affairs, beginning early in the evening with traditional dance steps and only gradually evolving toward rock-and-roll numbers. "After the mandatory waltz and slow fox-trot came more exciting dances like the cha-cha-cha and the tango," recalls Hungarian rock historian János Sebők, "but the great majority of people waited for the moment when there was heard the cry 'boogiiiiiiiiiie!' " Young people packed the floor, dancing frenetically to the latest hits by Cliff Richard, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley.

In contrast to other Soviet-bloc governments that vituperated against this alleged form of imperialist subversion, Hungarian newspapers simply chided the youth for their foolish indulgence in American rock culture. A photograph in the Budapest women's magazine *Nők Lapja* from September 1957 showed a young man sweeping a girl off her feet while dancing a "Rock and Roll." The caption read: "You see, honey, how cute some of these steps are! Rock and Roll is less boring than an English waltz. And see how respectfully I handle you, how tenderly!" Another cartoon in the satirical weekly *Ludas Matyi* from April 1959 showed a Wurlitzer blasting rock-and-roll music. Young people dance wildly on a crowded dance floor, where a monkey has joined them. The cartoon bears the caption: "A monkey has escaped from the zoo." Two zookeepers are shown standing in the foreground with a net. A waiter holding drinks asks them, "Are you sure, gentlemen, that he is the one you are looking for?"

The vitality of the Hungarian rock-and-roll scene in the years after the 1956 revolt is vividly captured in the movie *Time Stands Still* by Hungarian director Péter Gothár. The 1982 film provides a portrait of a generation of Hungarian youth embittered and disillusioned by the failed revolution, a generation that sought and found refuge at private parties and high-school dances. They listened to American rock and roll, smoked American cigarettes, and paid small fortunes for Western rock albums and American blue jeans. The film, set in the early 1960s, shows how pervasive rock culture had become in Hungary in the years following the failed revolution of 1956.

In Poland, young people's infatuation with rock music was as intense but not as traumatic as in Hungary. The Polish government, which jettisoned restrictions on jazz shortly after Stalin's death, did little to hinder the spread of rock and roll. On April 20, 1958, Sidney Gruson, the *New York Times* correspondent in Warsaw reported that Polish youth were taking to rock and roll

"in a frenetic effort to be as Western" as possible. Even away from large urban centers, the Bill Haley explosion resonated. At a club in the resort town of Zakopane, Gruson watched as "an exhilarated blonde in a vivid pink sack dress pranced about a cellar cabaret to the beat of what a blue-jeaned singer called 'Ruck en Rullye.' "

In 1956, Poland, like Hungary, experienced violent protests. A demonstration by workers in the city of Poznan ended in a bloodbath in which seventy people died. Władysław Gomułka, the Polish leader who had been deposed and imprisoned for resisting collectivization of Polish farms, returned to power as the Polish government attempted to neutralize public discontent. Upon learning of Gomulka's return to power, Khrushchev flew to Warsaw and confronted Gomulka, threatening to send in Soviet tanks if the Polish leader did not relinquish his position. Gomulka told Khrushchev he would order the Polish army to resist. Khrushchev returned to Moscow; Gomulka remained in power.

Although Gomulka proved less "liberal" than many had hoped, the Polish rock scene flourished with little interference from the government. In Warsaw, two brothers took out a classified advertisement in a city newspaper offering "mass instruction in a new Polish, Socialist way to rock and roll." Western rock hits even appeared in music programs on the state radio. Radio announcers, defining jazz in the broadest terms, would discuss the current developments in popular music tastes in Poland and then announce: "We will now play a few jazz records currently popular in Poland, starting with a 'rock 'n' roll.' " In the early 1960s, the state recording company released albums with Polish bands performing covers to Western rock-and-roll hits. As in Hungary, rock fans in Poland could rely on the large Polish émigré community to supply them with the latest albums by Western rock and pop stars.

Poland's Baltic coast cities, whose international shipping and tourist industries kept young residents attuned to the latest Western fads, provided a cultural lifeline for the emerging Polish rock scene. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the student clubs and cabarets in Gdansk featured some of the best rock acts in Poland. Another musical hot spot was the Non-Stop Club in the coastal town of Sopot. An enterprising journalist, Franciszek Walicki, brought to the stage at the Non-Stop Club some of the best musical talents in Poland. During the late 1950s, while Sam Phillips collected talent like Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis for his Sun Record Studios in Memphis, Walicki scoured Gdansk and the neighboring Baltic coast resort towns for vocal talents to put on stage in Sopot.

Walicki packed the Non-Stop Club with rock-and-roll fans who came to hear covers to current hits by Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, Bill Haley, and Johnny and the Hurricanes. Walicki placed little importance on individual vocalists; he simply wanted to provide Polish youth with the best imitations of American and British rock-and-roll hits. It was not unusual for Walicki to parade twelve singers and a band onto the stage. The MC introduced a singer who performed his or her number and then stepped back to let the next vocalist take the spotlight.

Walicki created the first Polish rock band around 1958, calling it Rhythm

and Blues, soon changing its name to ABC Rock and Roll and eventually settling on Czerwono-Czarni (The Reds and Blacks). "By 1961," recalled one observer of the Polish rock scene, "the Reds and Blacks had had two or three LP's on the market with such gems as: "Trrit mee luck-eh foool, trrit mee mean-end kroool."

In 1961, Walicki formed a second band, Niebiesko-Czarni (The Blues and Blacks). Walicki brought to Niebiesko-Czarni a twenty-three-year-old singer named Czesław Niemen. Niemen, who studied bassoon at Gdansk's music school, performed in his spare time songs by Ray Charles, Elvis Presley, and Frank Sinatra at the popular student cabaret ZAK. "From Ray Charles," Niemen recalled years later, "I learned how to use my own voice to reproduce something different from what people usually sang in Poland. Two of my favorite numbers were the Ray Charles songs 'What I Say' and 'I Can't Stop Loving You.' " In 1962, Niemen, who distinguished himself at a national song competition, came to Walicki's attention. "Walicki contacted me," Niemen noted, "after he heard me at the Youth Song Festival in Szczecin." Walicki installed Niemen in the band Niebiesko-Czarni, where Niemen wrote and performed his own material. Two of Niemen's first songs, "That You Won't Be Back, I Know" and "Do You Still Remember Me," both written in 1963, became the first original rock hits in Poland.

Niemen's reputation as a singer soon resonated beyond the borders of his country. In December 1963, the owner of the Olympia in Paris brought Niebiesko-Czarni to France, where the group appeared in a revue that included the American singer Dionne Warwick. On November 27, 1963, the Polish youth daily *Sztandar Młodych* proudly announced Niemen's Paris engagement: "The group called Niebiesko-Czarni along with its soloists Czesław Niemen and Michaj Burano will present its program which was prepared for the group's appearance at the Paris Olympia where Niebiesko-Czarni will be making appearances from December 11th to December 25th." In 1965, Niemen negotiated a recording contract with AZ Records in France and eventually moved to the European division of CBS Records, with whom he released several English covers to his songs, including, "Strange Is This World" and "Ode to Venus." CBS Records eventually brought Niemen to the United States, where the Polish singer released an LP entitled *Mourner's Rhapsody*. Niemen toured extensively in Western Europe during the late 1960s and early 1970s, drawing enthusiastic praise from critics and fans alike.

During the early 1960s, rock and roll, relatively unhindered by ideological constraints, prospered in Poland and Hungary as nowhere else in the Soviet bloc. The governments preferred that the young people vent their frustrations in cafes and clubs with "wild dancing" rather than in the streets with rocks and guns. The liberal policies also benefitted the long-term development of rock music in Poland and Hungary. By the mid-1960s, when many other East European bands were still honing their musical skills by playing covers to Anglo-American songs, Polish and Hungarian rock bands were already developing distinct national styles of rock and roll.

The 1958 Rock 'n' Roll Crackdown

During the mid-1950s the governments of Eastern Europe did little to stem the tide of rock-and-roll music sweeping their countries. Articles appeared in the press warning young people about the dangerous effects of rock music, but, as in Poland and Hungary, no serious action was taken to control the spread of rock. In Czechoslovakia, Pavel Sedláček, a talented young singer who in the 1960s would sing with two of Czechoslovakia's top rock bands, Olympic and Mefisto, first experienced American rock through the songs of Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, and Conway Twitty. In 1956, Sedláček participated in a singing competition for the young. While other young vocalists took the stage and offered songs about steel production and paeons to the achievements of Communism, Sedláček, to the dismay of the jury, belted out a heavily accented but heart-felt rendition of "Rock Around the Clock." Petr Kaplan, an engineering student in Ostrava who was also to sing for a time with Olympic, became the prime interpreter of Chuck Berry's music in Czechoslovakia.

The Reduta Club, a popular jazz venue near Wenceslaus Square in central Prague, emerged as one of Czechoslovakia's first forums for rock and roll. After the mid-1950s, rock numbers increasingly found their way into the repertoires of the Reduta's performers. Jiří Suchý, a singer at the Reduta who eventually joined Jiří Šlitr to form Prague's most renowned songwriting team, provided Czech lyrics for several rock-and-roll hits. "We were flirting with rock and roll from the beginning," recalled Suchý years later. "From the Bill Haley repertoire I translated the Knight and Freedman song 'Rock Around the Clock' into 'Tak jak plyne řeky proud' ["How the River Flows"]. The older Viktor Sodoma was the first to sing it. 'Don't Be Cruel' from the repertoire of Elvis Presley was sung by Vlasta Sodoma as 'Co je to láska' ["What Is Love?"], and I sang 'Hlubokou vrásku' ["Deep Wrinkles,"] which is nothing more than 'Goin' to the River' by Fats Domino." A Western journalist watching Suchý perform at the Reduta dubbed him the "Czech Elvis," a title which Suchý disputed. "Accompanying his article," observed Suchý, "was a picture in which I am supposed to look like Elvis, but to me, I look very, very Czech."

Dozens of ensembles sprang up throughout Czechoslovakia, playing the latest Western rock and roll. In the late 1950s, as officials expressed concern over the proliferation of rock groups in Czechoslovakia, the Communist party decided to crack down. Josef Škvorecký, a veteran chronicler of the Czechoslovak music scene, recalls that in the late 1950s jazz music in Czechoslovakia had become diversified, resembling "the Mississippi, with countless rivulets fanning out from its delta." Cultural officials, needing a well-defined target for their diatribes against Western influences, focused their attacks on rock and roll. The new targets became, as Škvorecký noted, "Elvis Presley, little rock 'n' roll groups with guitars electrified and amplified on home workbenches, with a new crop of names, recalling faraway places—Hell's Devils, Backside Slappers, Rocking Horses." Škvorecký also noted that by "the end of the

1950s a group of young people had been arrested and some sentenced to prison for playing tapes of 'decadent American music' and devoting themselves to the 'eccentric dancing' of rock and roll.''

In Bucharest, Romanian officials railed against the youths' leisure-time activities. On July 15, 1955, the cultural-political newspaper *Contemporanul* unleashed an ideological broadside against Western influences among young Romanians. *Contemporanul* alleged that at gatherings of young people, the entertainment often degenerated ''into so-called modern dances, in which barbarism is pitched to the height of hysteria.'' The music that accompanied these dances was said to arouse ''animal instincts'' and develop ''cruelty, contempt, all their destructive urges.'' *Contemporanul* claimed further that ''the dances and their savage music are a hidden inducement to the growth of war psychosis and to the perversion and animalization of the youth.''

At the same time, NATO strategists, recognizing the volatile nature of this new music, speculated on the military potential of rock and roll. In October 1958, the NATO journal *Revue militaire générale,* advanced the theory that jazz, rock, and other modern dance music could be employed in the war against Communism. The journal suggested that Soviet-bloc youths' obsession with Western rock and pop could be exploited to erode the ideological commitment of young people. The more time a young person spent listening to Little Richard, the less time this same person had to read Marx and Lenin. ''Soviet leaders understand this danger so well,'' observed *Revue militaire générale,* ''that they have banned all forms of this barbaric music from their territory.''

Soviet-bloc concern over the military exploitation of rock and roll in cold-war strategy intensified in 1958 when the twenty-three-year-old singer Elvis Presley was inducted into the U.S. army and transferred to an American military installation in West Germany. ''Presley's induction into the military and his transfer to the Federal Republic,'' noted East German music critic Heinz Hofmann years later, ''forced the misuse of rock and roll by NATO forces as a weapon in its 'Cold War' that was being waged against the socialist nations.'' The Soviets could outnumber the United States on the battlefield in men and tanks; having developed their own atomic bomb in 1949, they could counter American threats of nuclear retaliation. But in 1958, the Soviet Union and its East European allies had nothing to match the explosive power of Elvis Presley.

Amidst the panicked warnings that arose over rock and roll in much of Eastern Europe, the young Bulgarian writer Luben Dilov attempted to assess soberly the actual impact of rock music on the new socialist man. Dilov argued that by dismissing rock and roll as primitive and decadent and by identifying rock music specifically with American youth culture, governments made rock music attractive to Soviet-bloc youth. Dilov observed: ''we alone have made 'rock and roll' a weapon in the hands of the western imperialists.'' Dilov compared the youth's passion for Western rock and roll with a viral infection. ''Immunity against sickness is achieved,'' Dilov argued, ''not by trying to keep a person from becoming ill, but by injecting harmless bacilli into the blood in order to form antibodies.'' Dilov proposed that cultural officials promote do-

mestic rock and roll as a means of neutralizing the impact of Western rock music.

In Bulgaria in 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist party was not about to consider using Bulgarian variations to Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" or Chuck Berry's "Rock and Roll Music" as a means of nurturing a "socialist consciousness" in Bulgaria's young generation. In the press, Dilov was depicted as a confused young man, unable to comprehend the real dangers of Western culture. He was both chided and pitied for his "helpless perplexity" regarding Western rock music.

At the Ninth Komsomol Congress in 1958, Bulgaria's party head Todor Zhivkov railed against the pervasiveness of Western influences in his country. Lamenting the state of Bulgarian youth, Zhivkov observed that "their necks have been twisted from looking toward the West. For them the world has not changed. America is still the mightiest and strongest country, the American way of life remains the best example to follow."

In 1958, Bulgaria launched an ambitious campaign to eradicate rock and roll from all public establishments. Inspectors visited clubs and cafes to assess local compliance with official guidelines regarding musical entertainment. It was determined that most bars, clubs, and restaurants in Bulgaria indeed played only music from approved repertoires—until twelve o'clock. After midnight, however, bands and disc jockeys abandoned officially approved lists and unleashed a flurry of jazz, boogie-woogie, bebop, and rock and roll. The head of one establishment, who was brought to account for these transgressions, observed that it was only "natural for bands to play jazz music after midnight." After all, the manager maintained, it was what the public really wanted to hear.

A government commission toured Sofia's night spots after midnight on January 30, 1959, to determine the extent of these abuses of government guidelines. The commission issued the following report: The orchestra in the Opera Restaurant played the following: Mambo, Charleston, Columbia Boogie, Chachacha, B-47 Waltz, If I Had My Way Boogie, Boston Fox-Trot Boogie, Rock-Rock Rock and Roll, Mambo Rhapsody, Gypsy Mambo, and others.

The bar at the Central Universal Store offered a similar selection of decadent Western dance. Party officials were outraged. "Nobody is for a ban on entertaining and dance," the party paper *Trud* insisted on March 20, 1959. "But jazz music, which teases man's lowest passions, tickles his primitive instincts, is not for our country." In the following year, efforts intensified to align public establishments with party policy. But as Bulgarian officials learned in the coming decades, all efforts to purge the youth of the decadent Western music would be in vain.

In East Germany, where officials made concessions to Western music following the worker unrest of 1953, the rock scene flourished. By the summer of 1957, the Pavilion, an outdoor stage in the Klara Zetkin Park in Leipzig, which usually hosted string quartets, accordion music, and recitals by Communist youth groups, provided a forum for fledgling East German rock-and-roll ensembles. Fifteen and sixteen year olds arrived with a bass, an accordion, and an old set of drums to hammer out tunes by Little Richard, Fats Domino,

and Bill Haley. At the same time, the Communist youth organization's Club House for Culture in North Leipzig became famous as one of the city's leading rock-and-roll venues. On weekends, young people flocked to the club to hear local Leipzig talent play rock and roll, while the fans practiced the latest Western dances.

In January 1958, the East German government declared war on rock and roll. On January 2, 1958, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance issued the "Ordinance for the Programming of Entertainment and Dance Music." The ordinance established for East Germany the notorious 60/40 clause that was to become the bane of Soviet-bloc rock and roll. Paragraph one of the ordinance stated that 60 percent of any music performed in public had to come from "the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union or the Peoples Democracies," that is, from other socialist states. The remaining 40 percent could come from capitalist countries, as long as the pieces had been previously approved by the proper censoring authorities.

The ordinance intended to "raise the level of entertainment and dance music, to combat signs of decadence and decay" in East German entertainment, and "to prevent having to pay excessive amounts of hard currency" for Western music. Club and restaurant managers who violated the ordinance were subject to a fine of five hundred marks, the equivalent of one month's income. Professional musicians who repeatedly violated the 60/40 clause would have their professional status revoked.

Three months after the ordinance went into effect, on April 23, 1958, the East German Communist party convened a special cultural conference to consider further means for bringing the music scene under control. At the conference, Alexander Abusch, a Stalin-trained cultural functionary who had championed East Germany's fight against "American cultural barbarism" since the 1940s, announced: "We have begun to battle the influences of American *Unkultur* and of bourgeois decadence with particular vigilance in the area of entertainment and dance music." Abusch praised the 60/40 clause, stating that with its institution, East German officials had achieved their first *Kampfziel* (military target). Abusch's choice of words was not arbitrary. East Germany was waging war on rock and roll.

During 1958, officials launched a massive offensive to eradicate jitterbug and boogie-woogie dancing from the East German parquette. Signs were posted banning couples from "dancing apart." Dancers bending at the knee were pulled up by their hair. People caught "dancing apart" were beaten up and thrown out of the bar. A song by the East German balladeer Wolf Biermann recalls the physical abuse endured by young people who dared "dance apart" in East Germany after the January 1958 crackdown. Freddie, a common ditch digger, relaxes one Friday night in a bar in the small town of Buckow. When Freddie begins to "dance apart," which as Biermann notes, "was not allowed," the management throttles the young man:

> And so they cuffed
> Poor Freddie

And they beat poor Freddie
And they threw him out the door
Just because he danced apart.

Despite the frequent abuses that resulted from "dancing apart," young East Germans continued to imitate Western jitterbug and boogie-woogie steps. Cultural officials quickly realized that neither official ordinances nor physical violence could dissuade teenagers from listening to and dancing to rock and roll. In April 1959, at a conference in the industrial town of Bitterfeld, head of state Walter Ulbricht conceded the failure of East Germany's campaign "against 'Hotmusik' and the ecstatic so-called songs of Presley. In order to combat "capitalist decadence" and "bourgeois habits," East Germany needed to offer *etwas Besseres* (something better). "We already have some advances to show," Ulbricht boasted. "There are already several new songs and even dances, as, for example, the 'Lipsi.' "

The Lipsi emerged as one of the most curious cultural innovations to arise in the Soviet bloc. In 1958, René Dubianski, a thirty-five-year-old Leipzig composer, combined two waltz steps to create a dance in a 6/4 beat that assured continuous body contact, but gave the dancer a sensation reminiscent of the jitterbug. Dubianski patented the dance and christened it the Lipsi, derived from Lipsia, the Latin name for Dubianski's home town of Leipzig. Early in 1959, the East German town Lauchhammer hosted a conference devoted to the problems of *Tanzmusik* (dance music). At the meeting, Dubianski's Lipsi was unveiled before the assembled cultural functionaries as East Germany's antidote to Western dance steps.

The Lipsi seemed like a simple solution to a complex ideological problem. With a dance that was at once "modern" in form and "socialist" in content, the youth of East Germany might willingly forego the grotesque contortions of the boogie-woogie and other Western dances. In the next months, the weekly meetings of the Communist youth organization introduced the Lipsi to tens of thousands of East German teenagers. The dance earned high marks in the East German press, as well as praise from party leader Walter Ulbricht.

Moscow, as well, applauded Dubianski's socialist alternative to the Western jitterbug. On March 5, 1961, *Komsomolskaia pravda,* in an article entitled "New Times, New Dances," praised the East Germans for developing a dance "that is lively and interesting in its movements." The article also noted: "This dance has spread with extraordinary swiftness, and not only in its own homeland; it is danced with enthusiasm in our country as well."

Visions of the Lipsi as the socialist alternative to the Western jitterbug may have danced through the minds of functionaries in East Berlin and Moscow, but despite official claims, the dance stirred little enthusiasm beyond the clubhouses of the Communist youth leagues. East German teenagers continued to "dance apart," continued to be cuffed, and continued to be thrown out of dance halls until the end of the decade.

Ironically, Walter Ulbricht, who publicly endorsed the Lipsi at the Bitterfeld conference in April 1959, became the man to liberate the twist in East Germany. In the early 1960s, *Augenzeuge (Eye Witness),* the movie theaters' weekly

newsreel, showed the paunchy, balding Communist leader at a dance. As Ulbricht pranced to a lively tune, he released his partner's hands, "dancing apart" from her, his arms at his sides. From that moment on, East German youth were allowed to "dance apart," and the Lipsi, that ill-fated birthchild of the socialist imagination, was destined to oblivion.

The Soviet Union: Rocking the Kremlin

Rock and roll made its public debut in the Soviet Union in July 1957 before an assembled audience of thirty thousand teenagers. The Kremlin, in an attempt to demonstrate to the world that the Soviet Union had emerged from the ethno- and xenophobia of the immediate postwar years, had invited tens of thousands of teenagers to Moscow for the Sixth World Youth Festival. The Kremlin had further invited jazz ensembles from both sides of the Iron Curtain, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Iceland. Jazz music was the musical staple of most groups, but some bands from the West arrived with unexpected instruments in their baggage and unanticipated songs in their repertoires.

For their performances, British ensembles reportedly brought "every possible household article—from a washboard to a funnel." They also brought guitars. The music that British groups hammered out on this unusual collection of instruments "fell far short not only of the requirements of good taste but in general of art, of music." A horrified observer from Kiev noted in more explicit terms: " 'Stiliagi' in loose shirts, 'stylish' jackets and trousers and fancy haircuts went wild over the 'crazy rhythm' and 'rock 'n' roll' numbers." A guest from Bulgaria soberly noted that the rock-and-roll numbers "aroused great interest among the youth of the socialist camp."

The government's inability to regulate the musical fare at the Sixth World Youth Festival in the summer of 1957 highlighted the cultural dilemma that plagued Soviet officials for the next decade. With jazz ensembles thriving in every city, from Tallinn to Odessa, from Moscow to Vladivostok, officials found it impossible to control the deluge of Western music sweeping the Soviet republics.

In January 1956, the music journal *Sovetskaia muzyka*, commenting on the recent liberation of jazz, cautioned cultural officials "not to let rubbish instead of pure water come through the sluices that have been opened." The premier Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich warned against the "alien primitivism" of rock and roll. In April 1957, the former Soviet foreign minister Dmitri T. Shepilov, speaking before the Congress of Soviet Composers in Moscow, denounced rock music as an "explosion of the basest instincts and sexual urges."

A disturbance at a performance in Moscow in the winter of 1958 underscored Shepilov's claims regarding the volatile nature of rock and roll. During the concert, a Moscow jazz band led by the son of a police-force major whipped its audience into a frenzy with rock-and-roll numbers. When the dancers began "executing the outrageous movements of boogie-woogie and rock 'n' roll,"

the manager of the hall demanded the band stop playing. In the subsequent confrontation, a violent free-for-all erupted. "These orchestras," warned a local Moscow paper in reporting on the incident, "have a bad influence on our young people."

As in other socialist countries, rock and roll gradually worked its way onto the cultural scene, first infecting the repertoires of approved jazz ensembles, and only much later spawning the first generation of unofficial rock-and-roll groups. Despite the official liberalization of jazz, rock music remained suspect, and the early purveyors of rock and roll often sought to conceal the inclusion of this music in their repertoires.

On September 17, 1958, *Pravda* assailed approved jazz ensembles that "disguised" rock and roll in the form of satires. "The following trick has been employed rather often on stage," reported *Pravda*. "In the guise of 'parodies' of rock and roll and similar music, ugly examples of the very music supposedly being parodied by the performers are sometimes presented."

As early as 1955, the Moscow hit revival of Mayakovsky's satire, *Mysteria Buff*, featured Western-style, rock-and-roll dancing in a scene from the play depicting life in hell. The director's eccentric vision of a tortured afterlife included a rollicking moment in which "winsome young girls gyrated to Rodion Shchedrin's seismic rhythms."

By the end of the decade, rock and roll, again couched in the "trick" of a stage director, conquered one of the most sacred bastions of Soviet culture, the stage of the Tchaikovsky Theater in central Moscow. The Moiseev Folk Dance Ensemble, a state dance company that offered renditions of ethnic dances, topped a performance of folk dances in the Tchaikovsky Hall with a number called "Back to Monkeys." Shedding their brightly decorated peasant garb, the dancers appeared on stage in tight-fitting pants and sporting Elvis Presley–style sideburns. The piece opened with the stage darkened. A spotlight suddenly fell on a piano surrounded by beatniks lazing around. A dance orchestra then appeared on stage and the group exploded into wild dancing.

The Soviet record industry also succumbed to the decadent influences of Western music. Early in 1958, the press launched attacks on the Soviet record industry, accusing it of poisoning the Soviet cultural scene. "The organizations in charge of releasing phonograph records are particularly responsible for corrupting musical taste," charged an article in *Pravda* on September 17, 1958. As production of classical pressings declined, the country was "flooded by an ocean of musical banality." *Pravda* further asserted that the record industry exposed the public to "boisterous, convulsive 'music' " slavishly imitated from the "worst foreign examples."

A record-pressing plant in Shevchenko, a suburb of the Ukranian city of Lvov, typified the dissolute state of Soviet record production. In 1957, the Shevchenko plant produced 500,000 records, of which not more than 6 or 7 percent consisted of nationalist folk music, a musical form promoted by the state. The vast majority of the records pressed in the Shevchenko facility featured dance music. The records sported labels picturing a ballet theater but carrying titles like "Rhythm is the Main Thing."

Local citizens protested the production of this "assorted musical trash." The factory officials defended their product, claiming that the matrices for the pressings came from Kiev. The matter was taken to Kiev, where in early 1957 the matter came to the attention of Kiev's party secretary, Comrade Pashchenko. Pashchenko agreed that Soviet record production should be aimed at true "music lovers" and not at "stiliagi who hang around in restaurants" but took no action to rectify the situation. "A year has passed," complained a group of writers in *Pravda Ukrainy* on February 26, 1958, "and nothing has changed."

It is unlikely that the "musical trash" produced by the Shevchenko industrial combine or other Soviet record factories contained much real rock and roll; most of the objectionable music that appeared on these labels was probably jazz and swing numbers. Millions of rock-and-roll recordings, however, were in circulation throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the late 1950s. Within months after an album's release in the United States or Great Britain, Soviet-bloc youths possessed pirated recordings, cut into discarded X-ray plates and plastic covered postcards.

The emulsion on the surface of X-ray plates provided an adequate surface for sound reproduction. In underground studios, enterprising Soviets and East Europeans recorded Western hits into the emulsion of the discarded X-ray plates. The records produced by this process, known as *Roentgenizdat,* circulated on seven-inch discs recorded at 78 rpm. Produced by the millions and facetiously referred to as "recordings on bones," these records became the common currency of the Soviet-bloc rock scene in the late 1950s.

The ebullient rhythms of Bill Haley originally pressed into the vinyl of Decca records, eventually turned up on an X-ray of a fractured skull in Moscow; the immortal voice of Elvis Presley lived for a few months atop a broken ankle or elbow in Yerevan; the rollicking rhythms of Little Richard were captured on a shattered rib cage in Riga or Tallinn.

By the late 1950s, *Roentgenizdat* was so pervasive that Soviet officials felt compelled to take action. This underground industry and the music it disseminated were blamed for a rising number of assaults, robberies, and even murders. In 1958, in a move to curtail *Roentgenizdat,* it was declared illegal "to produce home-made records of a criminally hooligan trend."

In September 1958, the Soviet legal journal *Sovetskaia yustitiia* justified the banning of underground record production by linking violent criminal acts with underground recordings of Western rock and roll. *Sovetskaia yustitiia* cited one case in which a man allegedly resorted to murder in order to obtain illegally produced X-ray–plate recordings of "the latest rock and roll, gypsy songs, scurrilous ditties from the criminal world and drums solos by American jazz kings."

In 1959, Moscow police broke up one of the Soviet Union's largest *Roentgenizdat* networks. The underground recording ring had been established in 1958, when a Soviet teenager named Dmitri Pavlov came to Moscow from the village of Krukovo to study at Moscow University. When Pavlov failed his entrance exams, he decided to go into the underground recording business. With capital advanced by a Moscow speculator, Yevgeni Golopuzenko, Pavlov

organized recording facilities and a network of distributors. Pavlov did a brisk trade in Moscow, even selling his illegal recordings at the state record shop in GUM. For regular customers, Pavlov was willing to take orders by mail. One girl from the southern Soviet city of Astrakhan ordered fifty recordings at twenty rubles each. Pavlov was soon joined in his business venture by a young man from the city of Novosibirsk, Viktor Krupin. Krupin established contacts and opened distribution for Pavlov in Siberia. The Siberian branch of the underground *Roentgenizdat* operation did so well that Krupin soon commanded a corps of salesmen in several cities. By 1959, Pavlov and Krupin were also shipping products to distributors in Zaparozhe in the Urkraine and Vorkuta in the Far North.

In 1959, the militia caught up with Pavlov and Krupin, arresting the two ringleaders and a number of their distributors. Pavlov and Krupin each received two-year prison sentences; Golopuzenko, who initially financed the operation and who had seven previous convictions for speculation, was sentenced to one year of hard labor. The remaining individuals received "other" punishment.

The Komsomol youth organization assisted the official effort to curtail the spread of Western rock music by organizing "music patrols." Communist youth-league members reconnoitered dance halls and restaurants, taking an accounting of the musical fare being offered. Band leaders or restaurant managers found promoting unauthorized Western music were confronted by the Komsomol members or were reported to local authorities.

In Kiev, the impetus for the *muzykalnyi patrul* came from Vladimir Tulik, a student at the music conservatory. Responding to complaints that the music of Soviet composers had become "an insignificant part of the musical program" of most dance bands in Kiev, Tulik set up a workshop to train Komsomol members to distinguish acceptable socialist music from forms of Western *bugi-wugi*. Young people who completed the course received certificates and were assigned to a patrol unit.

Bearing these certificates, the vigilant Communist youth members of Kiev moved to purge their city of Western musical influences. On July 1, 1960, *Komsomolskaia pravda,* lauding the "initiative" of Kiev's young people, reported on the first "raids" carried out early in 1960. Before undertaking their first raid, the young people gathered before the city district committee of the Komsomol. Viktor Dubel, the first party secretary of the city district committee, briefed the young people on their mission and dispatched them with *Ni pukha, ni pera!* (Good luck, boys!).

The patrols fanned out through the streets of Kiev, infiltrating the city's restaurants, clubs, and dance halls. High on their list of targets: the restaurants Urkraine, Leipzig, Abkhazia and Intourist. The patrols entered the restaurants inconspicuously and carefully noted the songs played by the house band, occasionally dancing to boogie-woogie numbers so as not to raise suspicion. When the patrol had collected sufficient "evidence," the Komsomol members approached the band leader, presented their certificates, and asked why one had heard "the strains of 'bugi-wugi' in a particular melody or why the work of a composer like Khatchaturian had ended up sounding like a jazz number?"

This frontal assault on the bans of Kiev proved so successful that music patrols were soon besieging factories and industrial combines in Kiev's outlying suburbs. Before long, *Komsomolskaia pravda* noted with pride, boogie-woogie and jazz bands had been replaced by folk-instrument ensembles and folk-song choirs.

The composer Yuri Miliutin, a Russian Republic Honored Artist, praised the engagement of Kiev's youth: "I welcome with satisfaction the initiative of young people interested in making music beautify our everyday life." Some young people felt differently. Letters poured into *Komsomolskaia pravda* protesting the musical purge. "Let the Komsomol watch out for order in the streets of cities," urged one young man, "and stop interfering in music and giving their stupid advice." The letter insisted that young people did not care about politics in music: "people come to dine, to relax, to listen to music they like."

Since 1945, the Kremlin had worked to forge a common cultural and ideological identity among the youth of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Young people had been required to learn Russian, to read the work of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, to sing the praises of the Communist future. But a decade of socialist education had been shaken by two minutes and eight seconds of rock 'n' roll pressed into a 45 rpm single in the spring of 1954. The unifying force among the youth of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did not emerge from a carefully engineered socialist education; it came through the speaker of a gramophone, blaring the latest boogie-woogie or rock and roll from a discarded X-ray plate.

Rock music, despite the claims of Communist leaders, was, for Soviet and East European youths, a visceral rather than political experience. The "heated rhythms" of rock and roll elevated them above the mundane; it allowed them to escape, not engage in, political activity. And if rock music initially possessed a political edge, it was only in its ability to penetrate the Iron Curtain, to transcend the division forged by the postwar prejudices and fears of the older generation.

In contrast, the folk-music movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s presented an overtly political message. At the same time that Joan Baez and Bob Dylan were condemning racism and injustice in coffeehouses across the United States, Soviet-bloc folknics were singing about the crimes of Stalin, the abuses of the Communist leadership, and the shortcomings of the socialist system.

Although these bards drew from indigenous music traditions and addressed issues relevant to their own societies, they seemed to share a disillusionment with the establishment, a concern for the future, and a belief that somehow with a guitar and a song they might make a difference.

3

Bards of Discontent, 1956–1965

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
Deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome some day.

PETE SEEGER

But wait—let's have a smoke,
better yet, let's drink,
drink to a time
when there'll be no jails in Russia,
when there'll be no camps in Russia.

VLADIMIR VYSOTSKY

In the fall of 1963, as American folk and protest singer Pete Seeger prepared to embark on a world concert tour, he mused with his agent, Harold Leventhal, about the possibility of performing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Previously, only Paul Robeson, the black American singer/actor, had toured extensively in the Soviet bloc. Leventhal looked into the matter. He found the Soviet and East European governments not only willing to host Pete, "but in fact quite eager."

It was no wonder. Seeger, a veteran of the American Left from the 1930s and a victim of McCarthy blacklisting during the 1950s, reemerged in the 1960s to champion issues such as civil rights and free speech. In conjunction with an extended international tour, Leventhal booked Seeger for a series of concerts in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union. The month-long Soviet leg of Seeger's tour included twenty-eight appearances in Moscow, Leningrad, the Crimea, and Tbilisi.

Seeger's Iron Curtain tour, denounced in the United States as unpatriotic,

earned the singer effusive laudations in the Soviet-bloc press. "He's not only an artist," wrote the Czechoslovak party daily *Rudé právo* on March 19, 1964, "he is also an unwavering fighter for peace and for the rights of the working class." On April 3, 1964, Poland's youth daily *Sztandar Młodych* hailed Seeger a "modern troubador" who in his music championed the cause of workers, black Americans, and world peace.

Seeger enthused socialist ideologues with his message of peace and understanding; he charmed audiences with his sincerity and easy stage manner. During his eleven-day tour of Czechoslovakia, Seeger not only held concerts but also explored the local folk-music culture. In Brno, Seeger watched a rehearsal by a folk orchestra which massed thirty musicians on stage. In Prague, Seeger spoke at a symposium on folk music. "In a big hall," the singer recalled, "were seated about a thousand people with tables in front of them taking notes. Looked like a convention. People were taking notes." Seeger disarmed the assembly of studious socialists by performing a Czech folk melody on his five-string banjo. There was a look of surprise, then embarassed laughter, followed by warm applause. "It was the best thing you could have done," a Czech friend told Seeger after the concert. "They've forgotten how good their own music is."

In Poland, where Seeger performed nine concerts, the party daily *Trybuna Ludu* praised Seeger as the working-man's singer. "On this occasion, he did not appear in a big auditorium with lots of stage lights," *Trybuna Ludu* wrote on April 8, 1964, about Seeger's performance at the Ludwik Warynski earth-moving equipment plant, "but he appeared in a factory, not on a stage but on the back of a railroad car." The one thousand workers who packed the large hall to watch Seeger perform accompanied Seeger's singing with rhythmic clapping and foot stomping. "We do not know how to sing as well as you do," one worker allegedly called out to Seeger, "but we are fighting for the same thing—that there will be no more war." The comment brought thunderous applause and a rousing verse of "Sto lat," ("May you live a hundred years"). As a gesture of goodwill, the factory workers presented Seeger with a model of a steam shovel in a small case.

In Moscow, over one thousand Russians packed the Tchaikovsky Hall on the evening of April 10, 1964, for the debut concert of Seeger's Soviet tour. Police barricades held back the large crowd that gathered outside the hall hoping to catch a glimpse of the American folksinger. Inside, Seeger enamored the Muscovites with his easy manner. Speaking in snatches of Russian scribbled on a sheet of paper, Seeger coaxed the audience to join in singing the gospel hymn "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore," the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome," and the popular antiwar "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" Following the concert, a mob of young people pressed toward the stage, clapping for over ten minutes until Seeger returned and took a final bow.

During his two-month stay in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Seeger visited the countryside, met with workers, farmers, and musicians, and eagerly collected local folk songs and folk melodies. "I'm willing to bet," Seeger noted in his diary on April 26, 1964, while still in Prague, "that a few years

from now young Czechs will realize that they have a helluva lot of fine tunes and rhythms and poetry that they can use to make their lives more musical, to understand where they came from and where they want to go.''

In reality, the self-discovery Seeger predicted was already taking place. The cultural thaw initiated by Khrushchev's attack on the *kult lichnosti* (cult of the personality) at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 prompted Soviet-bloc writers, artists, and musicians to look critically at socialist society. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, singers throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, strumming guitars, drew on local music traditions to document in song the injustices of the past, the disillusionment with the present, the ambivalent feelings toward the future.

Czechoslovakia: "The Statue of Liberty is not in Moscow."

In Czechoslovakia, the Novotný regime, whose rigorous Stalin-styled purges peaked in December 1952 with the trial and subsequent execution of the party's general secretary, Rudolf Slánský, turned a deaf ear to Khrushchev's 1956 call for a ''truthful'' assessment of past mistakes. ''In 1956 in Czechoslovakia,'' recalled Heda Margolius Kovaly, whose husband was a victim of Novotný's purge, ''the truth was still whatever served the needs of the Party and the Party meant Comrade Novotný and his allies, inseparably bound together by their crimes.''

While Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria ''confronted'' their pasts with varying degrees of candidness, Czechoslovakia smothered the call for de-Stalinization beneath a blanket of official silence. ''No revelations were forthcoming,'' Kovaly observed, ''and the country, which had just begun to recover from the paralysis of fear, sank into a morass of unspoken guilt and shame.'' It was not until 1963 that the Novotný regime began to confront the dark years of Stalinist rule.

Although Khrushchev's message found little resonance in the chambers of Czechoslovakia's Central Committee or in the official media, the spirit of Khrushchev's reforms infected Prague's numerous clubs and cabarets. Thousands of Czechs gathered nightly to watch comedians gently ridicule government officials and to hear singers enumerate the failings of socialist society. At Prague's Viola Club, a popular actor, Antonín Pokorný, adopted the patronymic Novotný as his stage name. On its marquee, the Viola Club delighted in prominently announcing Pokorny appearances with the billing: ''Novotný plays comic part.''

By the early 1960s, Czechoslovakia boasted nearly six hundred cabarets and night clubs. In Prague, where political cabarets dated back to the First World War, there were over fifty establishments offering music, comedy, and theater. The Semafor Theater, a 350-seat club just off the Wenceslaus Square, provided a vaudeville-style forum for many of Czechoslovakia's most talented performers. The Semafor Theater, wildly popular among Prague's young people, re-

portedly registered in its first five years nearly a million visitors, a number equal to the population of Prague.

Jiří Suchý and Jiří Šlitr, two young men with exuberant spirits and cunning wit, fueled Semafor's reputation. Suchý, who authored Czech lyrics for American rock-and-roll hits during the 1950s, and Šlitr, who played piano in various jazz ensembles, combined talents in the late 1950s to form East Europe's most brilliant songwriting and stage team. With Šlitr at the keyboard in a vest and bowler hat, and Suchý crooning into the microphone, the pair delighted audiences with songs that sparkled with whimsy and good-natured political satire.

On October 31, 1959, the Semafor Theater opened its first production, *The Man From the Attic,* a Suchý and Šlitr play that lampooned "self-criticism," the practice of public self-chastizement common during the Stalin era. The play also assaulted political functionaries who resisted social and political reforms. "We'll keep it a secret just between us," went the lyrics to one song from *The Man from the Attic,* "that your life in a rut is a very nice life, and its all very pleasant for you." In another scene, the protagonist mocks the Stalinist leader Antonín Novotný. Staring into a mirror, he confides to his reflected image: "And we, Tony, we trust each other. Don't we?"

Young Czechs packed the Semafor Theater nightly to laugh at these politically brazen attacks couched in puckish cabaret tunes. Toward the end of each month when tickets went on sale for the upcoming four weeks, young people stormed the Semafor box office. "They talk the language of the youth," one weekly paper explained the popularity of Suchý and Šlitr, "they have found the road to the soul of the young, which—it must regretably be admitted—the official poets have never managed to do." Supraphon, the state recording label, which in 1963 issued an album of Suchý and Šlitr hits, observed in the recording's liner notes that Suchý and Šlitr expressed through their songs young people's "opposition to formality, hypocrisy and pretense."

One song from the Suchý and Šlitr musical revue *Susan's At Home Alone* derided the officially promoted image of the Soviet Union as a positive model for Czechoslovakia. "Everyone knows," the song exclaimed, "that the Statue of Liberty is not the Kremlin, and that Armstrong is no Russian." The Suchý and Šlitr play *Jonah and Tingletangle* trivialized one of socialism's most sacred historical moments, the October Revolution of 1917. In the play, Little Ivan, the representative Russian Communist, is depicted as a hapless and inept revolutionary:

> Little Ivan took up his gun,
> He didn't even know it was loaded.
> On his way, he lost his gunsight,
> But then he met a bear!
> Ilich told him on the spot,
> Never lose your sights;
> Soon you'll have to shoot and fight,
> In the Winter Palace . . .

The Semafor not only offered a forum for political criticism, it also provided a stage for some of Czechoslovakia's best young talent. Waldemar Matuška, a

young singer who came to Prague hoping to launch a singing career, was cast in the Suchý and Šlitr production *Such a Loss of Blood.* In the musical, Matuška, a bearded man in his mid-twenties, played a young hooligan who sang American-styled cowboy songs and confronts an orthodox Communist youth leader. In the course of the play, it becomes evident that Matuška is, in fact, the more honest and upstanding of the two men. In one scene, the youth leader admits that he simply moves with the political current: "I swim along without knowing how," he confesses, "I can't do a breaststroke or a backstroke." Another song, entitled, "All This Time Has Swept Away," satirizes the Communist regime's attempt to justify its Stalinist past. With his appearance in *Such a Loss of Blood,* Matuška, who used to sleep backstage at the Semafor for want of accommodations, became an overnight sensation. Waldemar Matuška emerged as a leading figure on the popular music scene during the 1960s. He appeared with the *bigbít* group Mefisto, recorded many hits on the Supraphon label, and eventually traveled abroad to take part in country-and-western music festivals around the world.

Hana Hegerová was another favorite of the Semafor stage. The dark-haired, Slovak singer originally intended to study economics, but her "bourgeois" background prevented her from attending the university. Hegerová turned to acting and for five years worked in a provincial theater company in the Slovak town of Žilina. In 1961, Suchý and Šlitr "discovered" Hegerová, and she became a regular performer at the Semafor. Suchý and Šlitr featured Hegerová on their first tour of West Germany. By July 1967, Hegerová's career as a soloist brought her to the stage of the Olympia in Paris.

In a musical style reminiscent of the French chanson tradition, Hegerová alternated morose love songs with sullen evocations of life in a socialist state. In songs like "I Want to Laugh, I Want to Cry" and "Searching for You Everywhere," Hegerová explored the tortured emotions of youthful love. In other songs, she chronicled the tribulations of everyday life in Czechoslovakia. In one song, Hegerová appealed for moral support from the fifteenth-century Czech martyr Jan Hus. "In this great age of the petty functionary," Hegerová sang, "he should speak to us again and shatter our fear with words of strength."

East Germany: Wolf Biermann

In East Germany as in Czechoslovakia, de-Stalinization came belatedly and haltingly. Threatened with economic collapse by the flood of emigration to the West, East Germany forestalled domestic liberalization. By the summer of 1961, with twenty thousand people a month fleeing to the West, East Germany was, in the words of Dean Rusk, U.S. secretary of state, "hemorrhaging to death." In the early morning hours of August 13, 1961, twenty thousand East German soldiers bolstered by four Soviet divisions under the command of General Ivan S. Konev, known as the Conquerer of Dresden and Prague, descended on the city of Berlin and sealed the border to the western half of the city.

With the physical perimeter closed, the cultural borders gradually opened.

From 1962 to 1965, East Germany experienced a cultural thaw as novelists, poets, and songwriters were allowed to explore the injustices of the past and the inadequacies of the present. Wolf Biermann emerged as the most controversial figure during this brief cultural thaw. Biermann's skirmishes with East German officials between 1962 and 1965 highlighted the difficulties faced by socialist societies undertaking the painful process of de-Stalinization.

In 1953, Wolf Biermann, age seventeen, emigrated from Hamburg, West Germany to East Berlin in order to take part in building "the first socialist state on German soil." Biermann found work at the Berliner Ensemble, a theater directed by the renowned German playwright Bertolt Brecht who died in 1956. In the early 1960s, as de-Stalinization came to East Germany, Biermann penned his first songs. With terse lyrics, simple melodies, and sparse guitar accompaniment, Biermann criticized the failings of the socialist state, while continually affirming his commitment to building a Communist future.

In the song "Seven Reasons for the Renaming of the Stalin Allee," Biermann ridiculed orthodox East German ideologues who blindly obeyed Soviet dictates in the early 1950s. The song recalled June 17, 1953, when Soviet and East German security forces fired on demonstrating workers in the Stalin Allee. In the song Biermann also noted the discomfort that Khrushchev's 1956 speech caused among the political leaders of the Soviet bloc:

> After the big party congress
> Many a person shit in his shirt.

In other songs, Biermann berated East Germany's political leaders, lamented the Berlin Wall, and criticized the intransigent bureaucracy. During 1962, Biermann, with guitar in hand, performed before small audiences throughout East Berlin. His reputation as a talented young bard brought him to the attention of East German poet Stefan Hermlin. Hermlin, who was organizing a poetry evening at the prestigious Academy of Arts, invited Biermann to participate in the event.

On the evening of December 11, 1962, the twenty-six-year-old Biermann appeared at the Academy of Arts before prominent members of the East German Communist party and leading figures on the artistic scene. Biermann's sullen brown eyes and modest stature belied the caustic cynicism and fiery iconoclasm of his songs. What followed on that evening was to become one of the rare moments in Soviet-bloc cultural history, when leading party officials were subjected to a relentless public castigation.

In his distinct, doleful tone, half speaking, half singing, Biermann performed his song "To the Old Comrades," an unflattering plea for old-guard Communists to withdraw into retirement. Standing before the party functionaries, Biermann strummed his guitar and sang:

> Look at me, Comrades,
> With your tired eyes
> With your hardened eyes

Biermann insisted that the time had come for the old Communists to step aside and let the young people lead the socialist state into the Communist fu-

ture. Biermann rejected the official notion that the transition from socialism to communism required a slow and gradual process. This official appeal for patience, declared Biermann, was nothing more than "the whore of cowardice" who prepared the "bed for crime."

On March 25, 1963, Central Committee members met with several East German writers to discuss the troubling events of that evening. Stefan Hermlin, organizer of the presentation, was confronted by Kurt Hager, the Central Committee's chief spokesman on ideological matters. "What is your relationship to Wolf Biermann?" Hager flatly asked Hermlin. Although Hermlin assured Hager that he had first met Biermann at the performance on the evening of December 11, Hermlin did not conceal his esteem for the young poet. "I consider him a great talent," Hermlin told Hager, "and I would like to ask you keep your eye on him and that the Party continue to watch out for him." Hermlin said he himself would take charge of Biermann, if, of course, the party so wished.

The party did not. Instead, Biermann was prohibited from performing in public. The ban was lifted in June 1963, but East German cultural functionaries continued to view Biermann with caution. In September 1963, the literary monthly *Neue deutsche Literatur* observed that although Biermann was a poet of obvious talent, there remained "some political and ideological problems" to overcome.

At a concert three months later, on December 5, 1963, in East Berlin, Biermann demonstrated that the disciplinary action the previous spring did little to dull his musical barbs. Performing before a crowd of four hundred in the university chemistry lecture hall in the Hessestrasse in East Berlin, Biermann offered his audience provocative and biting songs. "Between these sung lines," noted one member of the audience, "truths were spoken which in the GDR today have found no equivalent form of expression."

By the end of 1963, the East German liberalization was, in fact, allowing many "truths" to surface. In 1963, Christa Wolf published *The Divided Heaven,* a novel that probed the psychological stress caused by the construction of the Berlin Wall. Hermann Kant's novel, *The Auditorium,* attacked the ruthless careerism of party officials during the Stalinist years. In 1965, Manfred Bieler released *I Am the Guinea Pig,* the story of a girl who provides sexual favors to an East German judge in order to free her brother of alleged political crimes.

In the liberal atmosphere of 1964 and 1965, Biermann's career prospered. Several of Biermann's poems, including "Rangsdorf in August," a piece about the Berlin Wall, appeared in poetry anthologies. Six Biermann songs were recorded and prepared for release on the state record label. Biermann was granted a travel visa to perform a concert in West Germany. In the spring of 1964, he appeared before a crowd of 120,000 youths at an outdoor concert in East Berlin.

Despite official tolerance, Biermann continued to experience official harassment. In 1964, Die Distel, a prominent East Berlin cabaret, contracted him to appear in a program called *Between Hamlet and Tokyo.* Before his first performance, Biermann learned that censors had banned all but four of the songs he intended to perform. The only song with political content was "The Ballad of

Postman William L. Moore from Baltimore," a song about a white civil-rights activist, shot to death during a march from Washington D.C. to Alabama.

"Every time before going out on stage," Biermann recalled, "the light man would say to me: 'Herr Biermann, you are aware of the fact: only these four songs, otherwise I will have to turn off the lights.' " Biermann complied, but eventually cancelled his contract out of frustration. "At the time," he later mused, "it simply did not occur to me that one can just as easily sing in the dark."

In 1965, concert organizers cancelled an increasing number of Biermann engagements. When the singer inquired about the cancellations, he was informed that the instructions came from "higher authorities." A song which Biermann wrote and performed for the motion picture *Traces of the Stones* was spliced from the film. The album containing six songs that he recorded was withdrawn just before its scheduled release. In June 1965, Biermann received an invitation to perform at a large festival in the East German city of Frankfurt an der Oder. The organizers paid Biermann a generous 1,500-mark honorarium but cancelled his appearance at the last minute.

In the fall of 1965, it became clear that Biermann's days as a public performer were numbered. On the evening of October 31, 1965, Biermann arrived to participate in a "Jazz and Lyric" evening at the Congress Hall in central East Berlin. As he approached the hall, police intercepted the singer and escorted him to a waiting police car. At the police station, an officer informed him that an official ban prevented him from performing on the Congress Hall stage. Any violations of the prohibition, the officer threatened, could have "consequences." Following his brief detainment, Biermann rushed back to the Congress Hall to take part in the concert.

In the foyer of the building, the theater director met Biermann and hastily informed the singer that he had been banned from the Congress Hall for the past year. Biermann assured the director he had known nothing of the ban, upon which the director confessed: "I just learned of it myself today."

Within a month, the campaign against Biermann went public. On December 5, 1965, *Neues Deutschland* featured a letter by Klaus Höpke, accusing Biermann of being "politically perverse," of promoting "anticommunist" sentiment, and embracing an "anarchistic philosophy." "Skepticism," continued Höpke, "prevents Biermann from comprehending the humanity in our country." On December 15, 1965, *Neues Deutschland* printed a statement by the Stalin-trained cultural functionary Alfred Kurella, who claimed that in a socialist state, Wolf Biermann had absolutely no *Daseinsberechtigung* (justification for existence).

The following morning, on December 16, 1965, the Central Committee convened its eleventh plenary session. At this notorious plenum, leading party functionaries assailed Biermann, denouncing his lyrics as "pornography" and "toilet-stall poetry." Within days after the meeting, Bierman received notice that he was banned from all public performances in East Germany. That same month, when asked by the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* about the cam-

paign being launched against him, Biermann replied: "I will continue exactly as I have in the past."

Soviet Union: Singing the Post-Stalin Blues

In the Soviet Union, bards of discontent appeared in the mid-1950s as the first wave of prisoners returned from the Siberian labor camps. "It was a time when songs from the camps were becoming popular," recalls the Soviet writer Yuli Markovich Daniel of the immediate post-Stalin era, "They were gradually seeping through from Siberia and the Far North and you kept hearing snatches of them in refreshment rooms at railway junctions." As thousands of Soviet citizens, bitter from years of internment in the desolate interior of the country, returned to the cities of western Russia, their grim ballads accompanied them. The songs gradually penetrated into the cities where they, writes Daniel, "wound their way round the suburbs like the vanguard of an oncoming army. Suburban trains pounded out their rhythm. At last they marched into towns on the backs of the 'rehabilitated' offenders. Here they were picked up by the intelligentsia."

Alexander Arkadevich Ginzburg, a grim, bald-headed man, known simply as Alexander Galich, emerged as one of the most eloquent critics of the Stalin era. Galich himself never served in a labor camp, and in fact led a career as a successful dramatist and screenwriter, but his songs of the Siberian gulag and of the Stalinist terror evoked the pain and suffering experienced by millions of Soviet citizens during the Stalin era.

Born in 1918, Galich witnessed as a young man Stalin's purges of the 1930s and the mass arrests following the Second World War. After the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, Galich exalted in the promise of freedom from terror. "Once more we started believing," Galich rhapsodized. "Once more like sheep we bleated with joy and rushed into the nice green grass—which turned out to be a stinking bog!" Galich's songs, which first appeared in 1962, the same year as Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* challenged the Stalin legacy. In the "Song of the Bluebird," Galich mourned for "our crippled lives," and conjured the haunting names of the Siberian labor camps:

> Not as soldiers, but as numbers
> We died, yes, we died,
> From Karaganda to Narym,
> All the earth like one abscess,
> Vorkuta, Inta, Magadan.

Galich held not just Stalin but also the Soviet people responsible for the atrocities of these years. "The Prospectors' Little Waltz" bitterly rebuked those, who watched in silence while millions of people were slaughtered.

> Where today are the shouters and the gripers?
> They have vanished before they grew old—

But the silent ones are now the bosses,
And the reason is—silence is gold.

Galich also railed against unrepentant Stalinists, who reflected with nostalgia on the orderly life under Stalin's rule. In the song "Dance Tune," Galich describes Stalin's "executioners" and "hangmen" who eat caviar and drink cognac and "quietly, but soulfully sing about Stalin the wise." They await the day when Stalin will return and restore order to Soviet life. They urge the former ruler: "Arise, Father, and bring us reason and sense."

In the song "Night Watch," the appeal for Stalin's return is answered in a fantastic vision. From the depths of a Moscow night, a bronze statue of Stalin comes to life and stalks the streets of the Soviet capital, his boots pounding out a march tempo on the vacant avenues. As dawn approaches, the bronze statue returns to its pedestal, where it stands in silence and "hungers to eat human flesh."

The first underground songs, performed in private gatherings and typed on carbon copies, circulated primarily among the Russian intelligentsia. The increased production of reel-to-reel tape recorders made the songs of these underground bards accessible to broader audiences. The Soviet-made tape recorders available in the 1950s were unwieldly, primitive devices. The first tape recorders, the El'fa-6, the Dnepr-3, and the Spalis appeared during the second half of the 1950s, but their production was limited to a few thousand units.

In 1960, the Soviet Union released the first significant quantity of recorders. The 128,000 machines that appeared on the market in 1960 sold out immediately. Responding to the public demand, production increased throughout the decade. In 1965, the annual output reached 453,000, and by the end of the decade, the number exceeded one million units per year. The quality of the machines also improved as new models, including the Astra, the Yauza-5, the Yauza-6, the Chaika, and the Nota, were introduced. One of the top-of-the-line models, the Yauza-10, sold for three hundred rubles.

"Soviet ideological organs, busy in the field of radio production," recalls Soviet émigré novelist Anatoli Kuznetsov, "completely failed to pay attention to such a seemingly innocent technical branch as the production of tape recorders. A demand existed and it was satisfied, and when at last the ideological firemen discovered the catastrophic breakthrough, it was too late."

Tape-recorder production gave underground singers access to increasing numbers of listeners. No longer was the music of the bards restricted to small groups of ten or twenty people who gathered in private apartments. Tapes with underground songs soon circulated by the millions. *Magnizidat,* the electronic sister to underground publication *samizdat,* was born.

A vast underground culture developed around *magnizidat.* Tapes were collected, recorded, and passed on. Although sound quality dissipated with each retaping, the recordings evoked what one observer called the "romance of the forbidden." Through the hiss of surface noise, one heard not only the voice of the singer but also the presence of the audience: chairs scraping across the floor, a bottle knocking against glasses, muted laughter or quiet applause, the

rattle of a tram on the street below. From these underground recordings, legends emerged, faceless legends, recognizable only by their voices, their music, and their lyrics.

The Russian bard Bulat Okudzhava became the first hero of the *magnizidat.* Although Okudzhava, like Galich, spent no time in labor camps, his father was "liquidated" by Stalin in 1937 and his mother banished to Siberia. Okudzhava served in the Red Army and, after the Second World War, studied at the university in Tbilisi before assuming a teaching post in a village near the city of Kaluga, southwest of Moscow. Following the "rehabilitation" of his parents after the Twentieth Party Congress, Okudzhava moved to Moscow, where he worked as an editor, and in 1961 joined the writers' union.

After 1956, Okudzhava began to write and perform his songs. "But I didn't take the activity seriously then," Okudzhava recalled years later, "and even in '57, having begun to write songs systematically, I still considered it nothing more than an amusement for friends."

Magnizidat transformed Okudzhava's leisure-time activity into a national phenomenon. In his recalling the first years of de-Stalinization, the Soviet poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko reported that Okudzhava "sat with two or three friends, some vodka, and a guitar, singing his lyrics, without suspecting that in a few years they were to be taken down and heard on thousands of tape recorders."

During the early 1960s, Okudzhava developed a following among university students and intellectuals. Vladimir Frumkin, a graduate of the Leningrad Conservatory of music, a member of the Soviet composers' union and a historian of Soviet music, emphasizes the significance of Bulat Okudzhava during the early 1960s. "Before Okudzhava, the Soviet song industry had virtually no competition from within the country," Frumkin observed. "The state monopoly on songs seemed unshakable. Suddenly it was discovered that one person could compose a song and make it famous, without the Union of Soviet Composers, with its creative sections and department of propaganda, without help of popular singers, choirs and orchestras, without publishing houses, radio and television, film and record companies, editors and censors."

Okudzhava sang unabashedly about love, shattering the prudish barriers of official culture. In contrast to the glorious depictions of the Second World War promoted by the state, Okudzhava presented war as a senseless and painful experience. Okudzhava also criticized the Stalinist terror, but unlike Galich, he avoided explicit reference to the Soviet leader. In the song "The Black Tomcat," Okudzhava describes a household, cast in darkness and terrorized by a large, black cat which has devoured all the mice and now stalks the inhabitants. Okudzhava became best known for his antiwar songs, the most famous of which, "The Paper Soldier," laments the expendability of the common man in war:

> And off into the fire went he
> And burnt to cinders for a song.
> He was a paper soldier, see.

In the early 1960s, as restrictions on cultural expression eased, Okudzhava performed many of his songs in public. Okudzhava's first public concert, how-

ever, did not bode well for the upstart singer. "In 1960," Okudzhava recalled, "I suddenly had my first public appearance. It was in Leningrad, at a House of Workers in the Arts, in a little hall." Okudzhava was invited to perform as part of a Saturday-night entertainment program, which included a showing of a film entitled *Watch Out—Banality!* After the film showing, Okudzhava appeared on stage. "No one then knew me or was especially interested in me," Okudzhava recounted, "So I went out on the huge stage terribly timid; I stood before a damaged microphone and began to sing one of my songs. And because I was so nervous, apparently the words were lost." The audience grew restless. "Suddenly someone in the hall yelled 'Banality!' and a group of people sitting near this person began to applaud. I took my guitar and left the stage . . . Such was my first public appearance." Despite his inauspicious debut, by 1962 Okudzhava attracted crowds wherever he performed.

In December 1962, at the same time Wolf Biermann provoked East German officials with his appearance at East Berlin's Academy of Arts, Okudzhava came under attack by Leonid Illichev, Khrushchev's spokesman on ideological matters. At a meeting with 140 writers and artists in December 1962, Illichev accused Okudzhava of vulgarity and ideological inconstancy. "In particular, the verses and songs of the gifted poet B. Okudzhava are out of keeping with the entire structure of our life," Illichev fumed. "Their whole intonation—everything about them—does not come from the purity of the soul but from spiritual breakdown. They say these songs are loved by our youth. But what youth? Whose tastes are they intended for?"

Like Biermann in East Germany, Okudzhava skirmished with government officials for the next three years. Censors demanded he delete provocative songs from his repertoire. Material from his radio broadcasts was occasionally edited. Official pressure prevented the release of his recordings. In 1965, a Yugoslav scholar, Mihajlo Mihajlov, published a book in the West under the title *Moscow Nights*. The nonfiction account of life in the Soviet capital included a chapter about Okudzhava's ongoing battle with Soviet censors. Okudzhava was called before the Central Committee and asked to disclaim publicly Mihajlov's book. Okudzhava refused, insisting that Mihajlov's claims were true. Despite official harassment, Okudzhava continued to perform during the 1960s and by the end of the decade also traveled to the West to read his poetry and perform his songs.

In the mid-1960s, the burgeoning *magnizidat* culture attracted the growing criticism of the Soviet press. In 1965, the conservative Soviet literary journal *October* published an article entitled "What Are They Actually Singing?" *October* rebuffed more than twenty underground bards, the most prominent of whom were Bulat Okudzhava and Alexander Galich. On June 9, 1968, the newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossia* reported: "The epidemic of bawdy and vulgar songs copied from tape recorders is spreading faster than a flu virus." In particular, *Sovetskaia Rossia* attacked the thirty-year-old bard Vladimir Vysotsky, who, the paper alleged, "sings in the name of and on the behalf of alcoholics, soldiers in disciplinary units and criminals, people who are depraved and have

something wrong with them.'' Vysotsky, added *Sovetskaia Rossia,* also disfigured ''his native language beyond recognition.''

By the end of the 1960s, this bard of ''philistinism, vulgarity, and immorality'' was the best known and best loved of the underground singers. In January 1971, V. Maslov in an article in *Posev,* reviewing the vast number of Vysotsky songs about the daily tribulations of the average Soviet citizen, concluded that Vysotsky's opus provided ''an encyclopedia of Soviet life today.'' The Soviet novelist and playwright Yuri Trifonov expressed a sentiment shared by millions of Russians when he observed that Vysotsky had touched ''the very soul of our people.''

Vysotsky wrote songs about emotions, events, and individuals—themes the average Russian could understand: the frustrations of standing in lines, the resentment toward Russians who frequented hard-currency shops, the difficulty of finding an apartment. Vysotsky sang about soldiers, athletes, construction workers, prostitutes, thieves, and intellectuals. In one song about the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, Vysotsky alluded to the government's restrictions on foreign travel. ''Aeroflot,'' he chided, ''will take you anywhere except where you really want to go.''

Vysotsky, like Okudzhava, maintained a dual career. He first studied civil engineering, but soon transferred to the Moscow Arts Theater, where he studied acting. Vysotsky held several acting positions in Moscow before joining at age twenty-six the progressive Taganka Theater in 1964. During a decade and a half at the Taganka, Vysotsky distinguished himself in numerous dramatic roles, achieving international acclaim for his Hamlet interpretation, which he first performed in 1971. Vysotsky, who once claimed Charles Bronson as his favorite film star, also established himself in the Soviet movie industry, starring in more than twenty-five Mosfilm productions.

Officials tolerated the dual lives of Galich, Okudzhava, and Vysotsky during the 1960s, but in the early 1970s, they reined in these troublesome bards by applying pressure on their public careers. On December 29, 1971, Alexander Galich was expelled from the writers' union and accused of promoting Zionism in the Soviet Union. Galich's films disappeared from theaters; his name was removed from the credits in other films. Unable to tolerate the imposed ''silence'' on his work, Galich emigrated in 1974, moving to Paris, where he died in 1977.

In June 1972, Bulat Okudzhava was expelled from the Communist party. A book of his verse with music to be published by the Moscow publishing house Muzyka did not go to press. Not wishing to antagonize the cultural establishment, Okudzhava withdrew from public performance for several years and even refrained from holding private concerts. In the late 1970s, Okudzhava resumed public performances and again toured abroad.

Vysotsky also suffered disciplinary measures during the early 1970s. In 1973, officials used a series of Vysotsky concerts in the industrial city of Novokuznetsk as a pretext for chastisement. During four days, Vysotsky held sixteen concerts in a consistently packed house. On March 30, 1973, the cultural paper

Sovetskaia kultura accused Vysotsky of "profiteering." The paper noted that the Ministry of Culture expressly forbade a performer to give more than one concert a day. It also claimed that Vysotsky did not have permission to perform in public as a solo artist. "The program for these concerts," the paper further charged, "was not accepted or approved by anyone." Vysotsky was urged to desist from this "illegal entrepreneurial activity," immediately. As punishment, he was temporarily banned from foreign travel.

By the early 1970s, Vysotsky's songs, coupled with his colorful personal life, elevated the singer to legendary proportions. Rumors circulated about Vysotsky's alleged addiction to morphine, about his extravagant Mercedes-Benz, about his two spectacular car wrecks. After one accident, Vysotsky was declared clinically dead for three minutes, inspiring Soviet writer Andrei Voznesensky to pen his "optimistic requiem" for the injured bard. Vysotsky's involvement with the French actress Marina Vlady further enhanced the singer's mystique. Vysotsky, already married and with two children, met Vlady when she came to Moscow to make a film in 1969. Vysotsky and Vlady fell in love. Their relationship and subsequent marriage fed the prolific Soviet rumor mill as well as the Western media. For Soviet citizens, Vysotsky's marriage to a French movie star was the stuff of fairytales. For the Western media, the liaison made good copy. On May 16, 1980, *Paris Match* delighted in reporting on this Russian husband and French wife who would rendezvous several times each year at Vysotsky's apartment in Moscow or at Vlady's large house at Maisons-Lafitte.

Of equal renown was Vysotsky's addiction to alcohol, which one observer compared to "the relations between a long drought and a tropical storm." Vysotsky drank fiendishly and during the 1970s was periodically institutionalized for alcohol abuse. On one occasion, Soviet doctors reportedly subjected Vysotsky to their most extreme treatment for alcoholism: the insertion of a suppository in the rectum which released toxic chemicals into the body, causing severe pain whenever alcohol entered the blood. Vysotsky's excessive drinking ultimately led to his premature death at age forty-two.

On Friday morning, July 25, 1980, a blistering ninety-degree day in Moscow, Vladimir Vysotsky died of heart failure. The official Soviet media made no mention of the singer's death. In the daily newspaper *Vechernaia Moskva (Moscow Evening),* a brief notice about Vysotsky's death appeared between the obituaries of a technician and a secretary for the satirical paper *Krokodil.*

Despite the official silence surrounding Vysotsky's fate, nearly thirty thousand Russians assembled before the Taganka Theater on July 27, the day of Vysotsky's funeral. Hundreds of security forces, in the city for the Summer Olympic Games, were dispatched to Taganka Square. As mounted police attempted to disperse the throngs, the crowd, with fists clenched, screamed in rage, "Shame! Shame! Shame!" Thousands more mobbed the gates to the Vagankovskoe Cemetery where Vysotsky was laid to rest.

In the years that followed, mourners pilgrimaged to Vagankovskoe Cemetery to place flowers on Vysotsky's grave, to hold silent vigils, to recite aloud his lyrics. In July 1984, four years after Vysotsky's death, the state television

tacitly acknowledged the anniversary by broadcasting five films in which Vysotsky appeared. Under Gorbachev, who came to power in March 1985, Vysotsky achieved full recognition. In January 1988, Soviet television, in acknowledgment of what would have been the singer's fiftieth birthday, began broadcasting four one-hour specials on Vysotsky's life and career. Melodiya, the state record company that sporadically issued recordings of Vysotsky's less controversial songs, announced plans to release a seventeen-record series entitled *At Vysotsky's Concerts*. Plans were also made to place a plaque at Vysotsky's former Moscow apartment.

Countless actors, singers, writers, and poets have reflected on Vladimir Vysotsky since his death in July 1980. They remember him as a troubled poet, as a proud actor, as a heavy drinker, and, foremost among these, as a man who expressed the Russian soul in song. According to Soviet author and playwright Yuri Trifonov, Vysotsky's lyrics "reflected virtually everything our people have lived through." The poet Bella Akhmadulina remembered Vysotsky as a man who drank heavily, who lived intensely. "Volodya," she insisted, was, like so many other Russian poets, "an utterly tragic figure." The Soviet émigré writer Vassily Aksyonov remembered Vysotsky as a self-indulgent and privileged man. "He had his great Mercedes car," Aksyonov recalled, "and driving the Mercedes he crossed the Soviet sacred border many times within one year."

The Russian actress Alla Demidova, a longtime associate of Vysotsky, remembered him the way most Russians would want him remembered. "I remember Volodya when he first joined the Taganka Theater," recalled Demidova a year after Vysotsky's death. "He was standing on the staircase after a performance of *Ten Days That Shook the World* with his inevitable guitar, singing his recently composed song 'In the Neutral Zone.' "

Vladimir Vysotsky was twenty-six years old when he met Demidova at the Taganka Theater in 1964. He was an ambitious, talented actor with a handsome face, a resonant voice, and a promising future. Although Vysotsky was employed as an actor, between rehearsals he strummed his guitar and practiced his songs. In 1964, as the deep, melancholy voice of the young Vysotsky wafted through the corridors of the Taganka Theater, a half continent to the west, four young rock musicians from Great Britain were perfecting a sound that was already reverberating around the world.

4

Beatlemania: Leninism Versus Lennonism, 1960–1966

The music we dance to, the tunes we hum to ourselves or sing with friends in our free time, at home or at holiday demonstrations, the music we hear over the radio on entertainment programs—this music like any other art, shapes a person's character and instills certain attitudes in him; in other words, it propagandizes a certain ideology.

Sovetskaia kultura, December 27, 1963

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LENNON / MCCARTNEY, 1963

Beatlemania rolled across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the spring of 1964. Within the year, young fans throughout the Soviet bloc were collecting Beatles albums, sporting Beatles haircuts, and hanging pictures of John, Paul, George, and Ringo on their bedroom walls. Hundreds of Beatles-look-alike bands appeared in cities and towns across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Young fans packed concert halls. They danced, they sang, and on numerous occasions, in a state of heightened euphoria, they ransacked concert facilities, smashing windows and chairs.

Erich Loest, an émigré East German writer, was living in the industrial city of Leipzig when Beatlemania arrived with the vernal thaw of 1964. "And then there were the Beatles," Loest recollected. "Suddenly they were heard everywhere and were in every hit parade, everyone talked about them and knew them, every week they produced a fresh hit, it was like fever, it grabbed us

and shook us and threw us about and made us different from what we had once been.''

For millions of other young people, the Beatles and their music provided the backdrop for everyday living under socialism. ''The Beatles were there while I repaired my bicycle,'' recalled Loest, ''they provided 'background' while I wrote my essay about Superman Korchagin or pulled up beets in the garden; I had their sound in my ears while I dried dishes and scooped macaroni and naturally every evening in bed.'' Indeed, by 1965 Superman Korchagin, the hero of the monumental Soviet novel, *How the Steel Was Tempered,* faced growing competition for the attention of impressionable young socialists.

The Twist Arrives in the Soviet Bloc

In retrospect, the twist craze that seized Soviet-bloc youth in the early 1960s was little more than a calisthenic exercise in preparation for the arrival of Beatlemania, a four-year workout that limbered up an entire generation for the frenzy that followed 1964.

During the late 1950s, young people in the Soviet bloc danced to an eclectic repertoire of steps: fox-trots and waltzes when demanded, tangos when the music required, ''boogies'' and ''rock and rolls'' whenever they could. The twist changed all that. In 1960, the black American rocker Chubby Checker appeared on the television program *The American Bandstand* and demonstrated the twist. The dance was soon taken up by the chic crowd that frequented New York clubs and within a year became an international rage.

Polish officials, who appeased their restless youth with rock and roll in the 1950s, seemed little troubled when the twist craze swept across the Polish plain in 1960. By 1963, an experimental school in Warsaw was teaching the twist in conjunction with a program called Education Through Play. On July 22, 1963, as part of the celebrations for the nineteenth anniversary of the Communist regime in Poland, Polish youths danced the twist to the music of a live rock band in the streets of Warsaw.

In Czechoslovakia, the songwriting team Suchý and Šlitr ignited a national explosion of the twist. The two men had long nurtured domestic rock music in Czechoslovakia, writing such rock-and-roll songs as ''Mr. Rock, Mr. Roll,'' ''Vain Cousin,'' and ''Life is a Dog.'' With their musical show *Susan's at Home Alone,* Suchý and Šlitr brought the twist to the stage of the Semafor. Ota Richter, an émigré Czech journalist, noted that ''the show's success gave considerable impetus to other theater groups and to the 200-odd twist ensembles'' in Prague.

The twist numbers in *Susan's at Home Alone* became so popular that Supraphon, the Czech state recording label, released a sound-track album for the play. The album became a smash hit. A 1963 Supraphon album of Suchý and Šlitr songs intended for export featured songs from *Susan's at Home Alone,* as well as the Šlitr composition ''The Semafor Twist.'' Initially, local authorities

tried to suppress the twist craze by raiding twist parties and rounding up young offenders. Local legend has it that during one raid in a Prague suburb, the nephew of head of state Antonín Novotný was mistakenly taken into custody. Word went out. Police raids ceased.

East Germany confronted the twist craze with a barrage of diatribes aimed at the alleged ideological threat of the dance. On February 2, 1961, the Communist party sponsored a dance-music forum for school officials in the southern town of Annaberg. At the conference, party officials not only enumerated the dangerous effects of the twist on the youth but also presented examples so that school officials could better recognize the danger in its various manifestations. "With the help of musical examples," reported the *Sächsische Zeitung* on February 16, 1961, "Comrade Vogt demonstrated that dance music was being used as an instrument of the imperialists in West Germany in order to prepare young people for war." Despite the warnings offered by party ideologues, liberation for the twist came, as in Czechoslovakia, from the highest level of the Communist party. Even though some club and restaurant managers continued to fight a rear-guard action at the local level, by the end of 1961, it was clear that the state had lost another battle in its ongoing war against Western influences.

Bulgarian measures to combat the twist proved futile as well. Despite a ban on the dance, by 1963 clubs and dance establishments throughout Bulgaria were, according to the Sofia newspaper *Zemedelsko zname,* dancing "mainly western music and perverted dances." The situation was the same in Romania, causing the Bucharest paper *Luceafarul* on March 16, 1963, to despair: "How can we feel happy about the crazy jitterbugs and modern dances of today that make our young people look like victims of palsy?"

At the same time, the Soviet press also warned of the dangers of Western dances. On April 6, 1962, *Komsomolskaia pravda* reported on the dance's destructive impact on the West: "Dozens of cases are known in which possessed dancers of rock 'n' roll and the 'twist,' the new dance that has come to dominate the variety stages and dance halls of the West, obsessed and infuriated, have demolished the building where they were gathered, have broken windows and chairs, and, out in the streets, have staged riots."

In the fall of 1962, as part of a general crackdown on the arts, Khrushchev assailed the proliferation of Western dances among Soviet youths. "A feeling of distaste," Khrushchev told the Central Committee in December 1962, "is aroused by some of the so-called modern dances brought into our country from the West." In his extensive travels throughout the Soviet Union, the Soviet leader discovered many beautiful national dances that could be promoted among young people. "But the so-called fashionable modern dances," Khrushchev insisted, "are something unseemly, mad, and the devil knows that!"

Khrushchev's speech mandated change. But Soviet cultural officials knew from experience that a ban on "modern dances" would prove futile. The campaigns against jazz and boogie-woogie in the 1950s had taught them that much. As one young man observed in a letter to *Literaturnaia gazeta* on August 4, 1964: "One cannot dance the polonaise in the age of sputniks and computers.

We either have to take over western 'rocks' and 'twists' or think up our own dances. After all, we have to dance to something."

Igor Moiseev, a leading Soviet choreographer, blamed the youth's obsession with the twist on the failure of Soviet cultural workers to address the needs of young people. "We the choreographers," confessed Moiseev in *Izvestiia* in April 29, 1962, "bear full responsibility for the young people's fascination with the vulgarity and with the ugly dynamism of the 'rock' and the 'twist.' " At the same time, Moiseev insisted that were Soviet choreographers to apply themselves to the task of developing an acceptable alternative to the twist, they could create dances that would be "simple, attractive and accessible to an enormous audience."

Soviet efforts to provide socialist alternatives to Western dances dated back to 1961. In the spring of 1961, the Soviet Union had launched a campaign to promote ballroom dances as a means of countering Western dances. On April 9, 1961, the Soviet cultural paper *Sovetskaia kultura* introduced eleven ballroom dances approved by the All-Union Conference of Ballroom Dancing. *Sovetskaia kultura* described the new dances, which included the progulka, a shuffle step, and the druzhba, which reportedly had "swift, dynamic movements." These dances, according to *Sovetskaia kultura,* were "certain to attract the attention of the youth."

Moiseev intensified the effort to promote Soviet dances in the spring of 1962, calling for the mobilization of the Soviet Union's vast technical and creative resources to develop an acceptable alternative to the twist. According to Moiseev's plan, choreographers would develop dance steps that were modern and exciting but also rooted in Soviet traditions. The country's best dancers would tour the Soviet Union, demonstrating the new dances in youth clubs. Television would broadcast dance hours similar to those already being aired for calisthenic exercises. Mosfilm would include these dances in motion pictures as examples for the youth. Moiseev foresaw the day when there would be "not one, but dozens of new Soviet dances that will defeat and 'knock out' the western dances."

Moiseev's vision was inspiring. Russia's dance tradition commanded international respect. Many of the world's finest dancers and most respected choreographers had developed their talents in Russian dance schools. With a well-coordinated, nationwide campaign, the Soviets could bring the full force of Soviet creativity and media resources to eradicate the twist from Soviet society. In a few years, the dance floors would be cleared of what Moiseev termed this "wriggling and eroticism," replaced by legions of Soviet youths engaging in healthful and spirited dances.

The Moiseev plan received massive support. The next two years saw a flood of new socialist dances: the Moskvichka, Russian patterns, the Terrikon, the herringbone, the Infiz. In keeping with Moiseev's plan, the dances were lauded in the press, presented in youth clubs, demonstrated on television. There was just one problem. No one danced them. Reports indicated that while many clubs catalogued up to fifty Soviet dances in their repertoires, at best, 10 to 15 percent ever made it onto the dance floor. Moiseev himself soon saw why.

Two years after declaring war on the twist, Moiseev recalled watching a sample dance lesson on television. Moiseev and his colleagues observed a young man and a woman standing across from one another on stage "playing 'patty-cake' " and moving about the stage with great composure and refinement. Moiseev confessed that he and his colleagues "literally wept with laughter." Moiseev speculated that the average Soviet youth after viewing such a spectacle would most likely "wring his hands and go get himself an X-ray plate record with a twist number on it."

Al. Azarov, an instructor for a dance group from the Agricultural Engineering Institute, published a letter in *Komsomolskaia pravda* on April 29, 1964, criticizing official attempts to "design" new dances for Soviet youths. "Let us be straightforward," Azarov stated. "To inject rollicking Russian heel-stamping into American rock 'n' roll, dedicate it to the Donets Basin and christen it the 'Terrikon' does not mean to perform a choreographic miracle." Azarov denounced official attempts to offer an antidote to the twist, maintaining that Soviet choreographers had led their people "down the road of imitation and hypocrisy." According to Azarov, the Soviets needed only to show good taste and Soviet dance would prevail.

Azarov's advice came too late to save Soviet youths from Western dances. In the early months of 1964, nine hundred students at the P. Lumumba University gathered to watch, with riveted attention, as two students demonstrated the twist to the beat of Western-styled rock and roll. In his novel, *A Starry Ticket,* Soviet novelist Vassily Aksyonov relates how the children of Soviet elite allow themselves to be entertained by "two waistrels with a tape recorder. Poisoning young minds with decadent music." Aksyonov describes the young Soviets as they dance themselves into a euphoria in which "there was nothing else in the world that mattered to them." The Soviet poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko captured in verse the ecstasy into which young Russians plunged when dancing the twist:

> When you throw your dancing shoes out, back over your shoulder,
> And lose yourself, you find yourself twisting on the stage,
> dancing,
> dancing,
> dancing

By the mid-1960s, the twist had shattered Moiseev's grand strategy for the triumph of Soviet dance. Gyrating Soviet youths could be found in cafes and dance halls, at youth clubs and universities. The twist even found its way into those most sacred of Russian realms, poetry and prose.

The twist endured in the Soviet Union. Long after the frug and the boogaloo became the new fashion in the West, Soviet youths continued to perform the twist. On May 1, 1967, the twist made a sensational appearance in Red Square at the foot of the Kremlin, when Soviet youths, gathered for the May Day celebrations, broke into wild dancing before the red brick Historical Museum.

The *New York Times* was on hand for the event. "Inside the circle," re-

ported the paper on May 7, 1967, "half a dozen neatly dressed youths about 18 years of age were dancing the twist as two guitarists plucked swiftly at the strings, their eyes half closed in rapturous concentration." As other twisters joined in, police arrived and scattered the crowd. The police were kept busy late into the night dispersing other spontaneous groups of twisters in Red Square and in the surrounding streets.

Moiseev's failed campaign against the twist underscored Soviet inability to battle Western rock and roll and its accompanying phenomena. The combined forces of Soviet dance talent and Soviet media were roundly defeated on the Soviet dance floor. But even if Moiseev and his forces had succeeded in supplanting the twist with the Terrikon or Moskvichka, the victory would have been short-lived. In the spring of 1964, Beatlemania arrived in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The Beatles Generation

In the early 1960s, Soviet-bloc officials expressed concern over the growing indifference, cynicism, and violence among the young generation. Membership in the various Communist youth organizations declined, while juvenile crime increased alarmingly. In November 1963, the Polish courts handed down five death sentences against "hooligans" accused of murdering Polish militia. *Newsweek,* in a gruesome account, related the circumstances of the murder that compelled Polish courts to institute capital punishment. "A few weeks ago," reported the magazine on December 2, 1963, "the swaggering 21-year-old leader of a self-styled murder gang was sentenced to death for his part in lynching a policeman in front of a Warsaw movie house while queued-up cinemagoers looked on, too terrorized to intervene." Polish military leader Marshal Marian Spychalski declared that if necessary, he would mobilize military units to combat hooliganism in Poland. In 1964, Bulgaria instituted the death penalty for minors. Two underaged "hooligans" were promptly executed. Surveying the disaffection among young East Germans in 1965, youth leader Horst Schumann confessed: "We know that a new generation is growing among us that will cause us great trouble once these youngsters are 16 or 18 years old." Clearly, something was wrong.

A commentary in the May 1962 issue of the Hungarian literary monthly *Kortárs* speculated on the cause for the disaffection among socialist youth. "We erased the image of god from the skies," the commentary noted. "We abolished the idea of heaven, and consequently did away with ethical norms which saw the ultimate of life as salvation. And we did so rightly." But, the author observed, Communist polemics and twenty-year plans were hardly substitutes for centuries-old ethical codes. The youth needed more than official calls for socialist unity and enjoinders for increased productivity. "What have we built," *Kortárs* wondered, "to replace the heaven we have destroyed?"

The answer was obviously not to be found in the chambers of the central committees or in the programs of the various Soviet-bloc Communist youth

organizations. For millions of youths the answer arrived in the spring of 1964 in the form of four, young beat musicians from Liverpool, England.

The East European and Soviet youths who embraced the Beatles after 1964 differed from those that had danced to the music of Bill Haley and Elvis Presley in 1956. By the end of the 1950s, the Russian *stiliagi* no longer hung out along Gorky Prospekt in Moscow. The Czech *pásek*, who once pinned American cigarette labels to their ties and chewed parafin wax, had disappeared from Wenceslaus Square. The *bikiniarze* in Poland and the *jampec* in Hungary had also quietly joined the socialist establishment.

For the Soviet *stiliagi* and their East European counterparts, Western music, be it a tango, a fox-trot or a "rock 'n' roll," represented just one aspect of an eclectic fascination with Western culture. They drew from the diverse cultural flotsam that washed in from the West and incorporated the bits and pieces into their distinct interpretation of a "Western look."

In the mid-1960s, Beatlemania swept away many of the social and national distinctions. The Beatle-look became de rigueur. In the Soviet Union, Beatle fans wore jackets without lapels called *bitlovka*. In Poland, *bitels*, as Beatles fans became known, sported Beatles buttons sent by relatives living in the West. In Budapest, Hungarian Beatles fans cut their hair into Beatles-frizura, tailored their coats into Beatles-kabát, and proudly pounded the streets in boots they dubbed Beatles-cipő.

The Hungarian sociologist Iván Vitányi speculated on the Beatles' infectious popularity among Soviet-bloc youths. Young people, Vitányi explained, identified with the four young musicians, they "roar and scream together with them, somehow become their equals and the Beatles even make a special point of the fact that fans and audiences are their equals." According to Vitányi, the Beatles provided the socialist youth with their first attractive role models. The party leaders were stodgy, middle-aged men; Marx and Engels dusty relics of the nineteenth century. The Beatles, in contrast, were impulsive, iconoclastic, and exuberant.

The Beatles provided inspiration for hundreds of upstart Soviet-bloc rock musicians. With their straight, dark hair, their average stature, and their simple collarless blazers, the Beatles could be imitated by central European youths with little difficulty. The Beatles provided a tangible model for the modern rock ensemble: Paul, John, and George stood at the front of the stage with their guitars, while Ringo sat behind them with his set of drums.

Many of the Soviet bloc's oldest and most-acclaimed rock groups began their careers imitating the Fab Four. In Hungary, the group Illés, formed as a jazz ensemble in 1957, switched to beat music around 1960, and adopted the Beatle sound and image by the middle of the decade. Two band members, Levente Szörényi and János Bródy, emerged as the McCartney and Lennon of Hungarian rock. In 1967, just months after the release of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's* album, Illés outfitted themselves in nearly identical psychedelic uniforms.

In January 1965, Poland's Jerzy Kossela, formerly of Niebiesko-Czarni (the Blues and Blacks), completed his military service and decided to form a new band. Kossela brought together three other members of Niebiesko-Czarni and

a new drummer. The musicians grew their hair into mop-tops, dressed in Beatles-style suits, and called themselves Czerwone Gitary (the Red Guitars). Kossela did not choose the name for ideological reasons—the only electric guitars available in Warsaw at the time were red guitars from Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet Union's legendary rock group, Mashina vremeni (Time Machine) formed as a Beatles band in 1968. Bandleader Andrei Makarevich, the son of a well-to-do Moscow architect, organized the band at the 19th Moscow Secondary School after his father returned from a business trip to the West with a copy of *A Hard Day's Night*. After hearing the album once, Makarevich's life, like those of so many thousands of other socialist youths, was never again the same.

Bulgaria's leading Beatles band formed in 1963, when two brothers, Dimitur and Ivan Milev, came across two Italian-made Ecco guitars. With their friend Kiril Marichkov, who managed to obtain a Framos bass guitar, and with a drummer named Panayot Mihilov, they formed the group Bundaratsite. Although the aspiring rockers possessed professional musical instruments, they had difficulty assembling a compatible sound system and initially, Bundaratsite's covers to Western songs crackled out of two eight-watt Simfonia radio sets.

The four musicians rehearsed songs by the Beatles, the Shadows, the Searchers, and the Rolling Stones in Marichkov's kitchen or in the Milev flat. Before long, neighbors, disturbed by the noise, filed a complaint with the police. Bundaratsite was forced to relocate, finding rehearsal space in the basement of Sofia's Aleko Konstantinov reading club. Despite these initial difficulties, Bundaratsite soon performed regularly in Sofia, appearing annually at the spring ball sponsored by the Art Academy. In the mid-1960s, the band re-formed under the name Shturtsite (the Crickets). Shturtsite went on to become Bulgaria's most popular and most enduring rock ensemble.

In Prague, the band Olympic, formed by Petr Janda in 1963, emerged as Czechoslovakia's premier Beatle band. Petr Janda, the son of a prominent Prague attorney who had lost much of his fortune following the Communist takeover in 1948, had little hope of attending the university because of his "bourgeois" roots. Janda's father, not just an attorney but also an accomplished concert violinist, urged his children to pursue music as a profession. Petr Janda studied violin, but when he learned that the nineteenth-century violin virtuoso Paganini had also played guitar, Janda used the information to justify his own conversion to the guitar.

As a teenager, Petr Janda watched a rock-and-roll band, the Sputniks, rehearsing in a schoolyard near the Janda home in the Prague district of Vinohrady. Soon Janda was playing guitar for the Sputniks. With its flamboyant stage act, the Sputniks became one of Prague's leading *bigbít* ensembles. In January 1963, Janda, who tired of the stage antics, left the Sputniks to form his own group, the Big Beat Quintet. The quintet eventually changed its name to Olympic, after Prague's Olympik Klub, where the band performed. Olympic's covers to Lennon and McCartney songs soon earned it the sobriquet Pražský Beatles (Prague Beatles). Olympic cultivated their Beatles image. The band's first

release on the state recording label was a cover to the Beatles' 1962 hit "From Me to You." The 45-rpm single, called "Adresát Neznámý" ("Return to Sender") and released in 1964, featured Olympic playing backup for the Czechoslovak pop vocalist Karel Gott.

Like the Beatles of Britain, Olympic's reputation resonated beyond the borders of its homeland. Early in 1966, Olympic toured northern Poland with the British band the Animals. The band also appeared twice on French television with the British bands the Troggs and Fleetwood Mac. The American television network CBS "discovered" Olympic and asked to feature the group on *The Ed Sullivan Show,* the program which introduced the Beatles to American television audiences. However, after six months of procrastination on the part of Czech concert officials, CBS finally abandoned the project.

In the mid-1960s, tens of thousands of East European and Soviet youths, in the grip of Beatlemania, gathered to hear these groups perform. For the most part, the heavily accented English lyrics were indecipherable, the instruments were often improvised, the performances amateurish. But standing in packed youth clubs, hearing the strains of "She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah," blazing through the screams of wild fans, Soviet-bloc youths felt themselves, if only briefly, part of an international phenomenon.

Beatlemania in Eastern Europe

In the official Soviet-bloc press of the mid-1960s, the arrival of Beatlemania in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was often equated with tornadoes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. The outbreak of Beatlemania in Prague in the spring of 1964 demonstrated the intensity with which the phenomenon seized young Czechs. On May 19, 1964, the Prague paper *Svobodné slovo* registered the tremors set off by the "fans of the long-haired Beatles." A reporter who attended a concert by a local rock band was horrified by the fans' behavior. "They wriggled, they fell off the platform and crawled back onto it, they gasped for air hysterically," the reporter informed his readers. "I expected them to bite each other any minute. And then the destruction began." The fans, in a frenzied state, rushed the stage, smashing windows and demolishing chairs.

Svobodné slovo went on to report that on Ječná Street the delirious crowds had "demolished five rows of seats. The same thing happened in Kotva Hall. In the Park of Culture and Repose they used long bars holding the seats together to break up sixty-four chairs. Many hurt themselves. The police had to come to disperse them." Similar outbursts were reported from the Prague district of Vinohrady, in Lucerna Hall, and in other concert facilities throughout Prague.

Rock music flourished in Czechoslovakia during the early 1960s. In the spring of 1962, Komety, one of Prague's pioneering rock groups, performed the first major rock concert in Prague's spacious Lucerna Hall. The following year, *Melodie,* Czechoslovakia's first magazine for rock and pop music, went to press. By 1964, Prague boasted 115 registered big-beat ensembles, including Hells'

Devils, Crazy Boys, Juventus, Karkulka, Fontana, Crystal, Strangers, Buttons, Shakers, and Beatmen. Even the Czechoslovak army had its own rock band, Big Beat VOJ, whose lead singer Karel Černoch took the stage in uniform sporting his military haircut. By 1965, estimates suggested that Czechoslovakia had over one thousand big-beat ensembles.

Czechoslovakia offered little resistance to the onslaught of Beatlemania. On October 15, 1964, the satirical weekly *Dikobraz,* reviewing the premier of the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night* in Stockholm, gave the boys from Liverpool high marks. "Some reports tell us," *Dikobraz* related, "that they do have a good heart after all and that under the wild hair, their heads are not exactly empty." The headmaster of one Prague school expressed in a radio interview the perplexity felt by many Czech officials. The headmaster explained that it was "really not so easy to face a fifteen year old wearing a checked jacket and a big red badge inscribed THE BEATLES and talk to him about Communist ethics." Educational resistance to rock music quickly collapsed.

In the fall of 1964, Czechoslovak schools introduced a six-part series on modern music that included songs by the Beatles, the Shadows, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley. The justification for the new program sounded less like a pedagogical manifesto than it did an admission of unconditional surrender to Western rock and roll: the instructional course in popular music was intended to make "school and other youth orchestras more ambitious in their renditions of the currently popular kinds of music." In 1966, Panton, a newly created recording and publishing house intended to address the needs of the youth, released two books on the Beatles. *Poplach kolem Beatles (Uproar Around the Beatles)* by Jiří and Mirka Černý appeared in an edition of 26,000 copies. *Beatles v písních a obrazech (Beatles in Song and Picture)* was a Czech translation of a Western publication bought on license.

In Poland, as in Czechoslovakia, Beatlemania encountered little official resistance. The Polish government, responding to the youths' infatuation with the Beatles, imported the film *A Hard Day's Night* within a year of its release in the West. The film opened in Warsaw in the spring of 1965 and was warmly received in the press. One critic expressed surprise at finding that the Beatles sang "quite well" and that their lyrics were not as "idiotic" as some suggested. Another critic found the film possessed an "hysterical mystery" that unsettled the entire population of Warsaw's young people. "The Beatles have overpowered 400,000 Warsaw youth faster than the epidemic of the Asian flu." reported the youth daily *Sztandar Młodych* on April 15, 1965. "The cinemas are besieged and absenteeism in schools is rampant."

Polish adults proved less willing to indulge the excesses of the youths. Letters from distraught parents appeared in the press expressing outrage over young people's long hair and frenzied music. "Working parents are driven wild by all the noisy activities of their teenager in a small apartment," reported the Warsaw daily *Życie Warszawy* in its April 3–4, 1966, weekend edition. A front-page article by Jerzy Lovell in the Warsaw weekly *Kultura* in May 1966 rebuked Polish youths for their obsession with Western rock culture. Lovell denounced the "jerking motion" of the twist, referring to the recent fad as a

"dance on the edge of an abyss." Mr. Lovell also vituperated against the long-haired youths who wasted themselves on modern music, denouncing them as "hermaphrodites with female Beatle-manes, a demi-mond of demi-brains who have traded philosophical treatises and social ideas, moral armament and a code of ideas for a poor trumpet solo with drum accompaniment." These were not the diatribes of a Marxist-Leninist ideologue; they were the recriminations of a distressed parent trying to protect his children from the perverting impact of "virtuosi of still unknown electric instruments."

On April 14, 1966, a letter by a Polish teenager in the youth daily *Sztandar Młodych* defended young people's obsession with the Beatles. "I have many friends with whom I discuss rock music," the teenager declared proudly. "All of us can name the songs on the singles by the Beatles from the first, 'Love Me Do,' to the last, 'The Day Tripper' and 'We Can Work It Out.' We also can give in detail all the titles of the LPs by the group, and we know all the song titles on these LPs. We do not memorize or study the melodies, but we like them and therefore we remember them, whether they were played three months or three years ago." A socialist ideologue could only shudder at such a confession.

In Poland, the debate over *bitels,* the Beatles' fans, raged as intensely in households as it did in the press. Parents' visions of neatly groomed teenagers trotting off to school with caps and bookbags collided with their children's infatuation with Western rock culture. Sitting in Warsaw, over a cup of Hills Brothers coffee sent by relatives in Chicago, parents sparred with sons about hair length, with daughters about skirt length, with sons and daughters about rock and roll.

The popular Polish singer, Czesław Niemen, satirized the battle between the *bitels* and their parents in his song "Nie bądź taki 'bitels' " ("Don't Be Such A Bitels"). Borrowing riffs from "Ticket To Ride" and other Beatles hits, Niemen recounted the travails of Polish Beatles fans in the mid-1960s:

"Don't be such a 'bitels,' "
My papa tells me.
My mama, like a mama says:
"To the barber go!
'cause the barber's running
after you with scissors.
Cut off your shaggy hair!
Shame on you son, shame."

Beatlemania caught East Germany in the midst of a cultural thaw and found little resistance from authorities. Beatles-style bands flourished where equipment and talent were available. In East Germany, as elsewhere throughout the Soviet bloc, bands desperately lacked guitars, keyboards, and sound systems. In the classified section of the popular music magazine *Melodie und Rhythmus,* aspiring rock musicians advertised their equipment as prominently as they did their talents. In a March 1967 issue of the bimonthly periodical, a bass player from the city of Görlitz boasted his own *Mikro-Anlage* (sound system). A key-

board player from the industrial city of Halle, looking for work as of April 1, 1967, offered a Matador electric piano and a *Mikro-Anlage* as well. A twenty-nine-year-old violinist from the port city of Schwerin hoping to perform *Tanzmusik,* the most cautious public euphemism for rock and roll, advertised his proficiency with "bass, saxophone, drums, and vocals."

The Beatles converted countless East German musicians to rock music. Horst Krüger, a keyboard player with some of East Germany's leading jazz ensembles since 1960, switched exclusively to rock and roll when he discovered the Beatles in the mid-1960s. Stefan Trepte, who had been studying classical piano since the age of seven, first heard the Beatles in the mid-1960s. Trepte suddenly realized "that the Beatles were not only good musicians, but also excellent vocalists, and that they could do both at the same time." By 1966, Trepte had abandoned classical music and had joined an amateur rock band. Jürgen Kerth, another veteran of the East German rock scene, recalls that the Beatles' songs dominated the repertoires of East Germany's first big beat bands, as the individual musicians "attempted to place themselves in the role of the original performers." East German youths packed concerts by these ersatz Beatles bands, and fierce loyalties developed.

In the fall of 1965, the banning of a popular East German beat group ignited one of the Soviet bloc's first public confrontations between rock fans and the state. In the industrial city of Leipzig, city officials, unsettled by the popularity of a local band, the Butlers, charged that the group stood "in contradiction to our moral and ethical principles." On October 21, 1965, the Butlers, accused of "damaging the amateur art movement" and evading income tax on ten thousand marks in concert receipts, was forcefully disbanded.

News of the Butlers' forced breakup swept Leipzig high schools. When rumors circulated that a public demonstration in support of the band was to take place at the Leuschner Square in central Leipzig, teachers and school officials warned pupils to avoid the illegal protest under threat of severe disciplinary action. Despite the warnings, on the morning of the last Sunday in October, an estimated three hundred rock fans assembled in Leuschner Square. The youths stood about chanting slogans, calling for the Butlers and the Beatles, and waiting for something to happen.

Something did. At eleven o'clock, a police vehicle approached, and the group was ordered to disperse. Shortly thereafter, a column of military vehicles rolled down the broad avenue: a jeep with police officers and two truckloads of policemen preceded a large panzer mounted with a water cannon. Behind the panzer followed two more truckloads of riot police and another jeep.

"The police advanced from the Ring Cafe on a wide front with billy clubs drawn," related one account of the incident. "Many police had dogs on leashes, big, beautiful German shepards without muzzles." The police set on the Butler fans with clubs, dogs, and the water cannon, driving them through the center of town toward the train station, beating and arresting over one hundred youngsters. On November 1, 1965, the daily paper *Abendzeitung* reported on the incident, explaining that a group of rowdys and bums had attempted to disturb the "tranquility in central Leipzig." According to the paper, police units, with

the help of local citizens, restored order, arresting several protesters. "They will be delegated work" concluded the *Abendzeitung*, "by which they can learn how one is to act and conduct oneself in our republic." According to Western sources, the one hundred demonstrators were sentenced to three months' forced labor in nearby coal pits.

Beatlemania Back in the U.S.S.R.

Word of the Beatles rolled across the Russian steppe as the winter chill withdrew in the late spring of 1964. Unlike the fevered excitement that shook the young people of Poland and Czechoslovakia, Beatlemania gradually but steadily took hold of the Soviet youths. "I first began to hear rumors in the spring of '64," recalled Kolya Vasin, leader of the underground Beatles fan movement in the 1960s. "And the rumors were a result of the Beatles' visit to the States that year. The visit was so successful, such a sensation that even our press began to write about it. Let me just add, our press did not write about those other, earlier rock and roll heroes. Nothing about Chubby Checker, nothing about Elvis. But as soon as the Beatles showed up, our press was flooded with a ton of venomous reports—'hooligans,' horrible hairdos, screaming fans, wild behavior and so on and so forth."

Less than a month after Beatlemania hit the United States, the Soviet press unleashed its first attacks against the British band. On March 20, 1964, the satirical weekly *Krokodil* derided the Beatles' American debut as a media sensation, manipulated by legions of music critics, photo correspondents, and television crews. "Night and day on the radio, one could hear the wailing of the titles 'Ya hochu derzhat tvoio ruku' and 'Tolka Menia' " ("I Want to hold your Hand" and "Only Me"). "One need not doubt that had even Christ himself visited the United States," *Krokodil* observed, "he would not have had a tenth of the publicity."

Krokodil cited the Beatles' train ride from New York to Washington D.C. as an example of the sensationalism surrounding the British band. "The train moved and the journalists reached for their notebooks," *Krokodil* reported. "Suddenly, one of the artists, Ringo Starr, gave a Tarzan cry and started jumping like a monkey across the seat. John Lennon and George Harrison changed in public the trousers they were wearing."

According to *Krokodil*, the Beatles staged similar antics during their concerts. In Glasgow, authorities reportedly cancelled a scheduled concert when one performance ended with fans "overturning chairs and smashing the walls of the auditorium." The Beatles, *Krokodil* charged, "know how to ignite the darkest and most primitive passions in their audience." Despite the electrifying effect the Beatles had upon audiences, the magazine assured its readers Beatlemania would be a short-lived phenomenon. "Experts predict," *Krokodil* concluded, "that the Beatles will not be able to remain at the peak of their success for very long: they are not the right caliber."

Two years later, in February 1966, the Soviet cultural journal *Sovetskaia*

kultura published a scathing attack on the Beatles by Alexander Naumovich. Naumovich, widely known as Tsafsmann, was the famous Soviet jazz musician who resolutely defended jazz against Stalinist ideologues in the 1950s. In an article in *Sovetskaia kultura,* Naumovich recounted a tour he undertook with his jazz ensemble to Poland, where he had occasion to hear the Beatles' music "in the raw."

During the international Polish jazz festival, a Beatles-style Polish rock band, most likely Czerwone Gitary, took the stage and played several Beatles songs. "Imagine," Tsafsmann wrote, "it began with a very simple, extremely simple song motif, the ensemble of electric guitars played calmly, all was respectable. And suddenly—a violent scream, a squeal, and the audience as well as the performers went into a wild ecstasy. The extremely loud ensemble, magnified by amplifiers at full volume, and drums to boot." Tsafsmann said he could not bear to listen to "such artistic violence." In addition, Tsafmann observed "The Beatles are already out of date."

Two years later, when *Sovetskaia kultura* found the Beatles' popularity undiminished, the paper assailed the Liverpool band for playing into the hands of Western capitalists. In an article in *Sovetskaia kultura* on December 3, 1968, A. Martinova asserted that the Beatles, whose music was rooted in English folk songs, had been exploited by big business and transformed into the idols of "philistines." Despite their fabulous wealth, the Beatles had grown desperately unhappy in Western consumer society and vainly sought refuge in drugs and Eastern religion. Beatlemania itself reflected the "illnesses" of a society void of ideals. Martinova conceded that Lennon and McCartney had written "some good songs," but insisted that because of the Beatles' political indifference "progressive youth does not sing them."

Stalwart "progressive youth" did not sing Beatles songs, but millions of less-vigilant young Soviets did. They taped Beatles songs from foreign broadcasts, purchased precious Beatles albums on the black market, and attended concerts by Soviet Beatles bands that proliferated across the country: Sokol (Falcon), Rebiata (Guys), Krasnye diavoliata (Little Red Devils), Skify (Scythians), Melomany (Melomanes), Vilniaus Bokstai (Vilnius Towers), Vetri peremen (Winds of Change).

The Beatles converted Soviet musicians as they had so many East German musicians. Alexander Gradsky, the "Old Man of Moscow rock," was fourteen years old and learning to sing Bach and Schubert when he first heard the Beatles in 1963. "I went into a state of shock," Gradsky remembers, "total hysteria. Everything except the Beatles became pointless." In early 1965, Gradsky met Mikhail Turkov, grandson of Mikhail Sholokhov, the Soviet Nobel prize–winning novelist. Gradsky and Turkov found two other musicians and formed a Beatles band—the Slavs, with three twenty-five-watt electric guitars, a one-hundred-watt PA system and a set of drums. The Slavs emerged as Moscow's premier Beatles band of the mid-1960s.

Dances and concerts provided an opportunity for amateur bands to hone their skills and for rock fans to reenact the hysteria-filled events taking place in the West. In addition, the dances provided a network for the collection, distribu-

tion, and exchange of Beatles memorabilia. The Soviet rock critic Artemy Troitsky recalls: "The dances also gave rise to an extremely popular pastime—exchanging Beatles photos and memorabilia, swapping John for Paul, or a photo for a newspaper clipping about a Beatles press conference. Photos were even 'rented' so someone could enjoy them for a few days."

As in neighboring socialist countries, the official response to Beatlemania in Russia was ambivalent. Local cultural and school officials, without any specific instructions from higher authorities, responded as they saw fit. At Special English School Number 165 in Leningrad, several tenth graders requested permission to set up a Beatles-style rock band as a way to practice their English. School officials granted the request, even allowing the band to participate in an official citywide music competition in the Palace of Pioneers. At a competition sponsored by the Leningrad Komsomol, five of the city's leading bands appeared before a panel of Komsomol judges. Four of the five bands devoted most of their repertoires to songs by the Beatles; the fifth band, whose lead singer had become known as the Elvis of Leningrad, performed songs by Bobby Darin and Spencer Davis.

In Moscow, the city Komsomol hosted rock-and-roll dances at the Evening Restaurant on Kropotkin Square in the downtown area. While amateur rock bands took to the stage to pound out covers to Beatles songs, the standing-room-only audiences went wild. "They would scream as if someone were being killed," one fan recalled. "It was a terrible racket. Furniture got bashed in and windows smashed." The concerts grew so unruly, that the Komsomol was forced to cancel them. The club relocated at the Blue Bird Cafe and guards were posted at the doors. Special tickets were issued to restrict attendance. But these events, too, were soon banned.

In the Baltic city of Riga, where fan loyalty was intense, hundreds of young people gathered outside Riga's planetarium to protest the cancellation of a Melody Makers' concert in April 1965. For six hours, the protesters held vigil in downtown Riga, displaying banners that read "Free the Guitars." The militia looked on but did not interfere. As night set in, the crowd dispersed peacefully.

Not all events ended in so orderly a fashion. On numerous occasions, the militia intervened, breaking up the crowds and arresting fans. The young people were loaded into buses and transported to the local militia station. "Once they arrested us all before one concert," Kolya Vasin recalls. "They rounded us up, put us into a bus and carried us off to the militia station, where they questioned us for a long time." The militia tried to build a case against the rock fans, alleging that they were hooligans attempting to disturb the public order. Fans peacefully endured the interrogations and were usually released. Although the militia hoped to frighten youngsters away from the Western rock music, the harassment generally had the opposite effect. "When I'd be there at the militia station," Vasin reminisces, "there would always be the hope that I could get home, that I could get out of that office full of uniforms and go home and listen to the Beatles and relax." The Beatles offered more than music to dance to; they provided sustenance for the young socialist soul.

The Beatles injected new life and dynamism into the Soviet-bloc rock scene and established rock music as a social force that Soviet-bloc governments could no longer ignore. In the second half of the 1960s, as rock and roll found secure footing in socialist society, the music assumed political dimensions.

5

You Say You Want a Revolution, 1965–1969

You tell me its the institution.
You'd better change your mind instead.
LENNON / MCCARTNEY

The Beatles single "Revolution," released in August 1968, summarized the anger and violence that scarred America in the heated summer of that year. Assassins gunned down Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy; race riots devastated Detroit and Los Angeles; an army of demonstrators battled police outside the convention center in downtown Chicago where the Democratic party was selecting a presidential candidate. Screaming into the microphone, with guitars searing behind them, Lennon and McCartney expressed the frustration and bitterness of a generation battering itself bloody against an intransigent establishment.

In August 1968, as the Beatles' high-decibel panegyric to rebellion jolted American airwaves, four thousand miles away in Czechoslovakia, the ancient streets of Prague echoed with the clatter of Soviet tanks on cobblestones. In the early morning hours of August 21, 1968, an estimated 175,000 Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia as the Kremlin's final response to the liberalization known as the "Prague Spring."

Since January 1968, when Alexander Dubček replaced the Stalinist leader Novotný as head of the Communist party, Czechoslovakia jettisoned one by one the conventions of Soviet-style rule. Dubček, the energetic forty-six-year-old party head, oversaw the elimination of censorship in the press, radio, and television, the institution of fairer elections, and the development of closer

economic ties with the West. Dubček's new brand of rule earned the epithet "socialism with a human face."

On the cultural scene, where reforms had been underway since the spring of 1967, Prague youth exalted in the sights and sounds of Western youth culture. On Wenceslaus Square, lanky girls sported miniskirts, and scruffy hippies strummed guitars. At the Charles University, students marched in demonstrations and staged "happenings." By the summer of 1968, Dubček's unique "road to socialism" seemed to be leading Czechoslovak youth straight into the midst of Western rock culture.

A Guru of Free Love Comes to Prague

The seeds of artistic freedom that blossomed during the Prague Spring had been sowed years earlier. One of the most important impetuses for the Czechoslovak rock culture was a two-month visit to Prague by the bearded bard of the free-love generation, Allen Ginsberg. In the winter of 1965, Ginsberg, having visited the Soviet Union the previous year, accepted the invitation from students at the Charles University in Prague to hold a series of readings throughout Czechoslovakia.

Ginsberg arrived in Novotný's Stalinist-styled socialist state in the winter of 1965 with visions of a romantic central European country still slumbering in preindustrial tranquility. "Nostalgia for the 19th century," Ginsberg wrote as he set off for Prague, "rides through my heart like the music of Die Moldau." Instead of the sweet Slavonic melodies of Smetana, Ginsberg encountered the latest rock-and-roll hits from the West. Beneath the dreary exterior of public life pounded a vibrant rock culture. In clubs and inconspicuous public establishments throughout Prague, thousands of Czechoslovak youths indulged in the euphoric rituals of *bigbít* music.

In Prague's bars, cafes, and clubs, Ginsberg reveled amidst "this new generation of buttocks and eyes and tender nipples." Ginsberg found that rock and roll had shaken loose the oppressive shackles of Stalinism, had brought an entire generation to its feet, dancing. In the poem "Big Beat," he writes:

> Because the body moves again, the
> body dances again, the body
> sings again.

In the basement of the Centrum department store in central Prague, Ginsberg attended a concert by Olympic, Czechoslovakia's premier beat band. Hundreds of rock fans packed into the basement theater on that evening, and Ginsberg watched as the four Czech rock musicians stepped onto the stage before the roaring crowd:

> The Olympics have descended into
> red velvet basement

theaters of Centrum
long long hair over skeleton boys
thin black ties, pale handsome
cheeks—and screams and screams.

As Petr Janda and his band drove the audience into delirious ecstasy, Ginsberg felt the atmosphere charge and release like "the secret rhythm of the belly in Orgasm."

Ginsberg loved Prague. And Prague loved Ginsberg. During March and April, Ginsberg held poetry readings in most of the famous "small theaters" in Prague and Bratislava. In the course of his "performances," he would read selections from "Howl," advise Czechoslovak poets on their work, and conduct lectures on yoga. The Czechoslovak press followed Ginsberg closely in these weeks. Alexej Kusák, a critic for *Kulturní tvorba,* enthusiastically reviewed Ginsberg's poetry readings and related his encounters in Prague night spots. Kusák reported that on one occasion a Czech poetess in a Prague cabaret remarked disparagingly about the youths' fascination with the American poet. "Every bum," the Czech noted, "looks like Ginsberg." The bearded man toward whom the remark was directed turned to the woman and replied, "Yes, I am Ginsberg."

On May 1, 1965, the students at the Charles University in Prague honored Ginsberg at their traditional May Festival. Selecting Ginsberg as King of the Majáles, the students crowned the American poet with flowers and elevated him onto a throne. Looking more like a Roman Bacchus than a Slavic ruler, Ginsberg was transported through central Prague upon a sea of exultant students.

Ginsberg proved less popular with Czechoslovak leaders and their security forces. The American iconoclast spoke openly and critically of the Novotný regime. The "communists," Ginsberg maintained, "have nothing to offer but fat cheeks, eye glasses and lying policemen." On three separate occasions during his two-month stay, Ginsberg was arrested. Ginsberg chronicled these encounters with the "establishment" in verse:

For I was arrested thrice in Prague, once for singing drunk on Narodni street,
once knocked down on the midnight pavement by a mustached agent who
screamed out BOUZERANT* [sic]
once for losing my notebooks of unusual sex politics dream opinions.

The government used these "notebooks" as an excuse to expel Ginsberg from Czechoslovakia. Early in May, the secret police entered Ginsberg's room, ransacked his belongings, and found his writings. In all probability, Prague officials, disturbed by Ginsberg's participation in the unofficial student May Festival, were seeking justification for deporting Ginsberg. On May 7, 1965, less than a week after being elected King of May, Ginsberg was escorted to the airport by two plainclothes policemen and placed on a plane. Just hours out

**Buzerant* is a derogatory term for homosexual.

of Prague, aloft over the Atlantic, Ginsberg summarized his two months in the socialist paradise:

> And *tho* I am the King of May, the Marxists have beat me upon the street, kept me up all night in Police Station, followed me thru Springtime Prague, detained me in secret and deported me from our kingdom by plane.

Novotný justified Ginsberg's expulsion in a speech condemning "Western guests" who corrupted socialist youth with "bourgeois ideas". On May 17, 1965, *Rudé právo* stated that Czechoslovakia could not "tolerate someone who brings habits that make a normal person shudder with disgust." The paper expressed resentment that Ginsberg, whom Prague welcomed with open arms in February, had allegedly seduced young men and staged "homosexual orgies." *Rudé právo* continued by citing a letter to the youth paper *Mladá fronta* in which a physician from a psychiatric clinic warned of the "destructive influence of the poet Allen Ginsberg who suffers from narcomania and homosexuality."

The Battle Against Underground Rock Clubs

Ginsberg's enthusiastic reception by the young people of Prague highlighted the malaise among Czechoslovak youth in 1965. Since the early 1960s, membership in the country's Communist youth organization had declined significantly. In December 1965, students at the Charles University, complaining that the youth organization no longer represented the real interests of the young people, demanded the right to create their own youth group.

In some instances, student demands represented basic needs, like heat and light in dormitories. "The largest student dormitories had repeated blackouts during exam periods," recalls one Prague student. "The students from these dorms rallied and marched to the presidential castle, about a 15 minute walk, with candles and bearing the slogan 'WE WANT LIGHT!' These were the first riots since the 1948 communist takeover. The government was shocked by the public demonstration." President Novotný objected to the demands, publicly reprimanding "certain students who want to isolate themselves and create a special student organization."

Students and young people did, in fact, "isolate" themselves from the government in growing numbers. Shirking the official youth clubs, thousands of teenagers formed illegal underground clubs throughout Czechoslovakia. They gathered in beer gardens, basements, attics, abandoned buildings, and former bomb shelters to hold what they called "parties." "Some of these so-called illegal clubs," noted one official source, "became hotbeds of smokers, boys who drank, and sometimes even of girls who had taken the downward path."

During the mid-1960s, these illegal clubs flourished. In the fall of 1967, security forces in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia's second largest city, staged a series of raids throughout the city. The police units uncovered sixteen illegal

clubs. One clandestine organization, The Club of the Bald-Headed, was found to be a gathering place for social outcasts who shared a common obsession with Western rock and roll. "The very name of the club indicates its character," one newspaper reported. "To have their heads shaved was a sign of rebellion by these boys—bald-headed people often being the object of derision." It was further charged that the club members used to meet in secret to listen to recordings of beat music, the official euphemism for rock and roll, that was played by "well-known orchestras," standard circumlocution for Western rock-and-roll bands.

The James Bond Club in Bratislava, led by a young man who called himself George L. Every, was composed of twenty-year-old university dropouts. The members grew their hair long and wore *texasky,* the Czech term for blue jeans. The club members, known as bonders, gathered secretly to "listen to beat music from Vienna and London radio stations and also tune in to Radio Free Europe."

By 1967, however, it was not just social outcasts who indulged in these deviant fashions and pleasures. Paul Wilson, a Canadian teaching in Prague in the late 1960s, recalls the pervasiveness of rock and roll. "One of the many signs of change in the air was rock 'n' roll, or Big Beat, as the Czechs called it at the time," Wilson noted. "In 1967 and 1968 there were beat groups, beat clubs and beat festivals everywhere. In Prague alone there were hundreds of groups, ranging from neighborhood garage bands to professional groups with names like the Matadors, the Rebels, Juventus, Olympic, Flamengo, Vulkán or Stop the Gods."

Hippies, Happenings, and *Fetování*

During the mid-1960s, Czechoslovakia, having opened its cultural doors to Western rock culture, experienced an increasing number of Ginsberg-style hippies, Ginsberg-style "happenings," and an alarming rise in Ginsberg-style drug abuse.

This imported rock culture spawned the first generation of Czechoslovak hippies. These *máničky* (little Marys), a pejorative term suggesting male homosexuality, styled themselves after Western hippies, growing their hair long, wearing blue jeans, and toting guitars. Local officials waged a relentless but futile battle against the *máničky.* The identification card required to be carried by all citizens provided a legal basis for harassment and arrest of *máničky.* The identification cards bore photographs of the young people taken in public schools where short hair was mandatory. Militia, charging that the photograph of the clean-cut pupil did not correspond to the scruffy appearance of its long-haired bearer, would apprehend the *máničky,* take them to the local police station, and cut their hair.

Despite police harassment, Czechoslovak cities found themselves infested with hippies in the second half of the 1960s. In Prague, hundreds of hippies

congregated around the National Museum at the top of Wenceslaus Square. "I remember seeing as many as 200 sitting on the ramp of the National Museum," recalled one Prague student. "It was quite frightening because they looked so disturbed and savage." Bratislava, renowned for its hospitality, attracted *Máničky* from all over Czechoslovakia. They slept on park benches, in beer halls, and in civil-defense bunkers. Most of them, between the ages of eighteen and twenty wore long, unkempt hair, and some, who were more "Beatle-like," reportedly did not even bother to bathe.

In the summer of 1966, a group of long-haired *máničky* outraged local residents by setting up camp in front of the National Theater in central Bratislava. They cooked their meals over open fires, washed their feet in the Ganymede Fountain, and splashed passers-by with water. "Because of the Slovaks' notorious hospitality," *Práca,* the local daily complained on July 9, 1966, "the Prague 'Máničky' easily got along with their slogan: 'We don't work, yet we eat.' The girl beatniks from Bratislava were only too anxious to feed them."

During the second week in July, Bratislava officials, plagued by complaints from local citizens, took action against the *máničky.* When the militia moved in and began checking the identification cards of the long-haired youths, trouble started. The police used the ensuing disturbance as a pretext for rounding up and arresting the errant socialist youth. Of the *máničky* detained by the police, eight were found to have had criminal records, and several more were found to be without employment.

In 1966, Prague security forces began dispersing an increasing number of Western-style "happenings." The Czech artist Milan Knížák, the pioneer of the "Czech happening," particularly troubled Prague's militia. Knížák, an artistic visionary who created an organization called Actual Art, sponsored events inspired by the "happenings" and "be-ins" of the Western hippie movement. Unlike the wild drug-induced orgies staged by Leary and Ginsberg in the United States, Knížák's happenings were meditative, artistic experiences, involving the arrangement of individuals and sculpture in an outdoor environment. Knížák's low-key happenings became so well known that by 1967 San Francisco had its own affiliate organization of Knížák's Actual Art.

Despite the unpolitical nature of these happenings, militia arrested Knížák several times in 1966. Transported to Prague's notorious Ruzyně Prison, which in the 1950s housed political prisoners, Knížák was routinely interrogated by police officials. Each time Knížák emerged from Ruzyně Prison a free man but with his head shaved. Weary of the harassment by Prague militia, Knížák relocated a hundred kilometers west to Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), a chic spa town of seventeen thousand not far from the West German border. Knížák, however, could not escape official surveillance. Following a happening in Mariánské Lázně, Knížák was arrested in June 1967 and sentenced to ten months in prison.

Despite Knížák's absence from Prague, happenings continued to abound. In the winter of 1967, the students at Prague's Charles University held a number of spontaneous happenings, many of which degenerated into bouts of heavy

drinking and food fights. At one happening in the spring semester of 1967, students brought armloads of Russian textbooks, heaped them onto a pyre, and set them ablaze.

The police regularly banned or broke up these gatherings throughout the spring and fall of that year. One of Prague's largest happenings occurred on the night of June 21, 1967, when between eighty and one hundred students gathered in central Prague. The police raided the event, arresting seventy-eight men and women. The participants were detained in jail overnight and then released. Unshaven participants received fines of one hundred koruna; clean-shaven men and ten women were given half-rate fines. The twenty-five-year-old organizer of the happening, Eugen Brikcius, was held on charges of hooliganism. The happening, the focus of which had been seventy loaves of brightly painted bread and a girl atop a pedestal representing a goddess, was denounced as "a serious disturbance of the public order."

Accompanying the youths' fascination with Western rock culture, with its fashions and fads, came a more troubling problem—drug abuse. In the second half of the 1960s, increasing *fetování* (drug taking) posed a serious social problem. Although the drug scene in Czechoslovakia in 1966 in no way compared with the pervasive drug use in the West, the common currencies of the Western drug scene, LSD, morphine, and cocaine, were not unknown nor unavailable among the Czechoslovak youth.

"Here and there you'll find a lucky person who can treat himself to a bit of better stuff," recalled one observer in Bratislava in 1966, "some LSD that had been smuggled in, an ampule of morphine, or a hit of coke." For the most part, these drugs were rare, and young Czechoslovaks interested in psychedelic stimulation made do with local imitations of Western originals. Just as home-grown groups like Olympic, the Rebels, and the Matadors provided substitutes for Western rock music, so domestic medicinal products provided an ersatz to real hallucinogenic drugs.

The most widespread drug among Czechoslovak students in the mid-1960s was a stimulant called Fenmetrazin. Fenmetrazin, used by generations of Czech students during exam-period stress, could induce aural and visual hallucinations when taken in large doses. Fenmetrazin was also addictive. One Fenmetrazin addict, who committed herself to a drug clinic in 1968, retraced her path to addiction. "I took my first dose two years ago. It was a few tablets—just for curiosity. In our study group of fifteen, there were about five or six who took Fenmetrazin." At first the drug seemed to have no effect at all upon her. Within a year, however, she was hooked. "I had to take two to four tablets every two hours and I kept it up until I was taking fifteen pills a day. I started having hallucinations that lasted for six or seven hours."

By 1968, hospitals and drug clinics throughout Czechoslovakia noted an alarming rise in cases of drug addiction. At that time, Fenmetrazin accounted for 40 percent of all drug-abuse cases in Czechoslovakia. Some addicts reportedly ingested as many as forty tablets a day. Fenmetrazin addicts typically experienced hallucinations, depression, schizophrenia, erratic behavior, and suicidal tendencies. A segment of *Crime Archive,* a popular television program

delving into social problems, depicted in graphic detail the tragedy of one female Fenmetrazin addict who committed suicide by throwing herself from a building.

The government tried to curtail Fenmetrazin abuse by declaring the stimulant a prescription drug. Break-ins into pharmacies increased, and, on the black market, Fenmetrazin, whose retail price was 7 koruna, the price of movie ticket, began selling for 50 to 120 koruna. At the same time, Czechoslovakia's resourceful youth turned to an asthma drug called Yastyl. Taken with alcohol or other drugs, Yastyl caused hallucinations, confusion, and aggressive behavior. By the end of the decade, Yastyl was being called Czechoslovakia's "number one drug." The sale of another analgesic, Analgon, quadrupled as young people scrambled for the perfect high.

Drug abuse in Czechoslovakia escalated following the Warsaw Pact invasion in August 1968. One Czech expert, Miroslav Postler, attributed the rise to the political disappointment that followed the failure of Dubček's reforms. By the early 1970s, the press was expressing alarm at the spread of drug abuse among young people. On January 7, 1972, *Práca* reported that in Bratislava alone there were at least 120 "klubs" where people engaged in deviant activities, including the consumption of narcotics.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, hard drugs like hashish, morphine, and heroin, smuggled into the country by visitors from West Germany and Austria, became increasingly available on the black market. Czechoslovakia also provided a major transit route for the drug trade between Afghanistan and Western Europe. By 1970, Czech customs officials at the Prague airport Ruzyně, and at the West German border crossing at Cheb were reportedly confiscating hashish by the kilo. The volume of drug trafficking at the Cheb border crossing caused customs officials to quip at the arrival of foreign trains, *jdeme na hašiš* (Let's go hashing). Individuals caught smuggling drugs into Czechoslovakia would be prosecuted under paragraph 187 of the Czechoslovak criminal code, which provided two- to eight-year prison sentences for individuals engaging in illegal drug trade.

Paragraph 187 of the Czechoslovak criminal code provided legal recourse against the production, importation and distribution of illegal narcotics, but it made no mention of drug consumption. Since drug abuse was not listed as a criminal offense, it was not punishable by law. At home, in a bar, on the street, drug users consumed narcotics with impunity. Police could only intervene when a criminal activity, such as a break-in was involved. In fact, it was not an uncommon practice for police to allow addicts, arrested for a theft or break-in, to take narcotics in order to avoid disturbances at the police station.

Writing in the Slovak magazine *Smena* on December 12, 1969, Julo Kokavec expressed outrage at the government's inability to deal with drug addicts. "There is nothing in our laws which provides legal recourse against 'narcomania,' which makes it impossible to fight drug addiction through legal means. Our law acts as if the problem does not exist here." Kokavec observed that police could intervene when an addict broke into a state-run apothecary, but could do nothing against the public consumption of drugs like Fenmetrazin or

Dexfenmetrazin. "A break-in into an apothecary? Certainly—that is a crime. But what about offering someone a tablet of Dex? Or a hit of Toluen? Against this, the society and its organs are powerless." The frustration of dealing with narcomania was just one example of the government's growing inability to control social and political unrest during the late 1960s.

Rock and Roll in the Prague Spring

In 1967, Novotný's control over his party and his people began to disintegrate. The first open challenge to Novotný occurred at the Fourth Congress of the writers' union in the spring of 1967. In a dramatic public gesture, the writer Pavel Kohout read aloud Alexander Solzhenitsyn's famous letter criticizing state censorship. The Czechoslovak publishing house Československý Spisovatel released Milan Kundera's novel, *The Joke,* a biting satire of the Stalinist years in Czechoslovakia. Socially critical works by Bohumil Hrabal, Josef Škvorecký, Václav Havel, Ludvík Vaculík, and other writers also appeared.

Novotný responded to the cultural assault by purging the party of reform-minded individuals. Jan Procházka was dismissed from the Central Committee; Ludvík Vaculík, Antonín J. Liehm, and Ivan Klíma were expelled from the party. Jan Beneš was imprisoned for promoting antistate propaganda. Novotný's heavy-handed response aroused protest among students and doubts among party officials. Students at the Charles University took to the streets demanding reforms in higher education. Members of the Central Committee, unsettled by Novotný's hard-line tactics, expressed reservations about the party leader. By October 1967, it was clear that Novotný's days were numbered.

Following an upheaval in the Central Committee, several stormy meetings, and a desperate attempt by Novotný to use the army to stay in power, the party selected Alexander Dubček as the new party head. Dubček, who had spent years in the Soviet Union, was thought to possess the knowledge and contacts to guide Czechoslovakia along a path of reform that would not unsettle Soviet leaders. On January 5, 1968, Alexander Dubček replaced Novotný as head of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia. The Prague Spring had begun.

In March 1968, Dubček began clearing party and government positions of Stalinist officials. On April 4, 1968, Dubček announced a program to create a "socialist democracy" in Czechoslovakia. Censorship was lifted in the press, radio, and television. Dubček publicly denounced the past atrocities of the Communist government and called for closer contact with the West. Jails were cleared of political prisoners and artists.

During the mid-1960s, the turmoil in party leadership permitted rock and roll to flourish virtually unimpeded by government intervention. The ideological fallout from rock music seemed a minor concern compared with the social and political problems of the time. As early as the fall of 1965, Pragokoncert booked the British rock musician Manfred Mann for two concerts in Prague on October 11 and 12, 1965. The Manfred Mann appearance followed a successful concert by Louis Armstrong earlier that year.

Anticipating another jazz ensemble, Pragokoncert officials decided to use the Czech jazz musician Jiří Jelínek to open for Manfred Mann. The thousands of rock fans who came to the concert nearly rioted in protest to the Jelínek appearance. Manfred Mann, impressed with the quality of Czech rock, invited the band the Beatmen to open his concert four months later in Munich, West Germany. The Beatmen also negotiated a recording contract with Decca Records. Less than a year after Manfred Mann's concerts, Paul Anka came to Prague, where he performed before an enthusiastic crowd on August 29, 1966.

The appearance of Western performers in Prague accelerated the already burgeoning rock scene. Rock clubs abounded in central Prague. By 1966, the Sluníčko Club, located at 20 Národní Street, featured rock concerts every night of the week except Sundays and Mondays. The Sluníčko Club's headlining band, the Matadors, achieved renown throughout Prague for their covers of "I'm a Man" by the Yardbirds, "My Generation" by the Who, and "It's Too Late" by the Kinks. The Music-F-Club, which opened at 7 Zborovská Street in December 1966 featured two leading Prague bands, Donald and Flamengo. During 1966, Flamengo included in its repertoire "Pretty Flamingo" by Manfred Mann and "Don't Bring Me Down" by the Animals. Another popular Prague band, Karkulka, performed regularly at the youth club in the suburb of Karlin. Karkulka, which sounded very much like the Czech name for Little Red Riding Hood, was actually an acronym for Karlínský Kulturní Kabaret.

Prague's leading rock venue during the mid- and late 1960s was the Olympik Klub located in a drab basement in Spálená Street, just two blocks from Wenceslaus Square. Operated by two enterprising men in their late twenties, Miloslav Šimek and Jiří Grossman, the Olympik Klub provided a stage to the leading Czech bands, hosted rock competitions, and published a monthly rock-and-roll magazine. Every night, up to two hundred miniskirted girls and long-haired young men packed the smokey, 150-seat theater. Sipping raspberry drink or Kofola, the Czech alternative to Coca-Cola, or joining the crush on the dance floor, young fans enjoyed the best rock bands in Prague, including Petr Janda and his legendary group, Olympic.

On March 23, 1967, Šimek and Grossman hosted Top Show, a competition to determine the best rock bands and best rock musicians of the previous year. Anticipating a large crowd, Šimek and Grossman staged Top Show at the Kiev Cinema in the Prague suburb of Dejvice. Local authorities, intent on averting a rock riot, placed burly guards at the theater entrance and dispatched militia to patrol the aisles. In the course of the evening, members of Olympic, the Matadors, Donald, Mefisto, and Flamengo competed for first prize in solo guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, vocal, and other categories. At the end of the evening, Petr Janda, declared Beatman roku 1966 (Beatman of the Year), was ceremoniously decorated with a large medallion on a chain. "The Czechs have always been musical and these youngsters do credit to their grandfather's tradition," observed one enthusiastic reviewer of Šimek's and Grossman's Top Show, "though of course they do not take as their model the old Czech village band but Liverpool."

In the mid-1960s, Petr Janda's band Olympic reigned as the leading big-beat

group in Prague. By the end of 1966, however, Olympic, which established its reputation as a Beatles band, began to outgrow its image as a mere imitator of the Fab Four. When the group arrived in Bratislava for a concert, band members objected to the posters that billed them as the Pražský Beatles. Over 50 percent of the repertoire, it was argued, consisted of original material. Also, Olympic had begun experimenting with the psychedelic sounds of Pink Floyd and Soft Machine. Despite attempts to break with its Beatles heritage, Olympic continued to borrow heavily from the British band. In 1967, after the release of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, Olympic appeared in Prague's Olympik Klub, dressed in colorful uniforms almost identical to those worn by the Beatles. The following spring, at the Bratislava Lyra song festival, Olympic beefed up their instrumentation with horns in order to emulate the orchestral passages on the Beatles' *Revolver* album.

In December 1967, Czechoslovakia held its first national beat music festival. Between December 20 and December 22, 1967, Czechoslovakia's leading rock groups, including the Rebels, Flamengo, Juventus, Komety, and George and Beatovens, took the stage in Lucerna, the largest concert facility in central Prague. In the course of the festival, which included five separate concerts, the bands performed covers to Anglo-American hits as well as original material. At the end of the three-day rock marathon, which was attended by an estimated twelve thousand people, the Soulmen, a band from Bratislava, won first prize for singing original songs for which English lyrics had been written. "It became necessary for an activity of this kind to take place," explained festival manager Míla Langer with satisfaction shortly after the concert, "because beat music had a right to be introduced on a broader platform, equivalent to the accepted forms of expression in our cultural life. We want to show that beat is not just peripheral, as some people think."

After January 1968, when Dubček replaced Novotný as head of the Communist party, rock music made further inroads into official culture. In Prague, the neighborhood propaganda centers, known as Agitační středisko, began to provide space for countless upstart rock groups. "A garage band would go to the local Agitační středisko," recalls Ivan Sever, keyboardist with the Leaders, an amateur band at Prague's Pražačka High School. "You would plead with the shop manager to use the space. You'd remind him how much he liked to dance when he was young. You'd promise not to play too loud. And he would eventually let you use the space." By the spring of 1968, Prague's Agitační středisko, where functionaries were supposed to peddle Marx and Lenin, were providing venues for the city's upstart big-beat bands.

One of the most sensational Prague groups of the Dubček era was the psychedelic band the Primitives. At the December 1967 rock festival, the Primitives reaped wild applause for their performance, which included lights, masks, and fire. Injecting rock music into mystical Knížák-style happenings, the band members appeared on stage with shoulder-length hair, their faces painted with makeup, their eyes outlined with thick black rings. They complemented their extravagant stage appearance with covers of songs by Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, and the Fugs.

At one Primitive rock event in a popular Prague theater called the F-Club,

the band staged a Fish Fest, which featured a large fishing net draped across the ceiling of the theater. "The musicians had special costumes and makeup, and played in a big set, with blue and green flames burning all night," recalled band member Karel Voják. "We always tried to get the basic elements of earth, air, water and fire all in there." The concert eventually degenerated into a free-for-all, as the band started hurling water into the audience. Fans ran to the bathrooms and returned to throw water onto the stage. The concert climaxed with the band members pelting the audience with fish. The Fish Fest proved to be such a success that the Primitives followed the event with a Bird Fest. "Everybody was knee deep in feathers," Voják recalls, "and more feathers were glued to the walls and ceiling, and the lead singer appeared in the nude."

The liberal spirit of the Prague Spring also infected Pragokoncert, which began booking larger numbers of Western acts. But Czechoslovakia's "hip" youth were proving to be difficult to please. In July 1968, the Swingin' Blue Jeans, a British 1950s rock-and-roll revival band that was formed in 1963, arrived to play a series of concerts in Slovakia and Bohemia. Concert authorities in Prague, unimpressed with a second-rate nostalgia band, made no effort to book a hall for the group. The Swingin' Blue Jeans were subsequently dispatched to the Bohemian city of Plzeň.

Even beyond the frenetic Prague rock scene, the Swingin' Blue Jeans aroused little enthusiasm among Czechoslovak rock fans. On Wednesday July 12, 1968, when the band performed in Plzeň, only two thousand people appeared in the 12,000-seat outdoor amphitheater. Pavel Spiroch, reviewing the concert in *Rudé právo* on July 23, found the performance uninspired, the audience bored, and the MC so absurd that Spiroch recommended he see a psychiatrist. "Ten years ago," wrote Spiroch, "people would have been excited about such music and smashed chairs. At this concert, however, they were more interested in their beer than they were in the music." Spiroch blamed the fiasco on the state concert agency, suggesting that concert-booking officials should better acquaint themselves with the musical tastes of Czechoslovak rock fans.

Supraphon, the state recording label, had more luck marketing its product to Czechoslovak rock fans. In 1968, Supraphon released *Želva,* the first long-playing album by Olympic. *Želva* attested to the diverse musical influences as well as the skill of Petr Janda and his fellow musicians. The final cut on the album, "Psychiatrický prášek" ("Psychiatric Pill") was a ten-minute psychedelic tour de force that contained a stinging Hendrix-style guitar solo.

Another Supraphon release in 1968, *Beat-Line,* featured several of Prague's leading big-beat groups. On the album, the Rebels, the Cardinals, and the Framus 5 performed covers of contemporary American hits including "Creeque Allee" by the Mamas and the Papas, "Even the Bad Times are Good" by the Tremeloes, and "Never My Love" by the Association. The most moving title on the album was a cover to the Bee Gee's hit song "Words." Although the vocalists' pronunciation of the Gibbs' lyrics was middling, the performance conveyed the heartfelt devotion Czech musicians felt toward Western rock and roll.

The song also conveyed the mixture of elated hope and gnawing anxiety that

hung in the vernal air of Prague in 1968. The Prague Spring was a season of words and demonstrations in the streets. On April 15, Dubček issued his "27,000 word Action Program" outlining the additional reforms he had planned for Czechoslovakia. On June 27, a group of intellectuals and writers led by Ludvík Vaculík issued the manifesto of "Two Thousand Words," which called for changes more radical than those proffered by Dubček. Words seemed to dominate the politics of the day. And in the spring of 1968, with the Soviet threat of intervention seeming to escalate with each new reform, with each new act of public freedom, Dubček maintained a continuous dialogue with his own people and his socialist neighbors, allaying Soviet-bloc suspicions in one breath, encouraging his country to reforms in the next. They were only words, but in the spring of 1968, words were all Dubček had to keep the Soviets at bay.

At the end of July, three words did, in fact, seem to put Czechoslovak apprehensions to rest: *Eto vashe delo*. They were spoken by the Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev in a meeting with Dubček at Čierna on the Soviet-Czechoslovak border between July 29 and August 1. In reference to reforms taking place in Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev allegedly stated flatly to Dubček: *Eto vashe delo* (It is your affair). Optimistic Czechoslovaks embraced Brezhnev's words as a mandate for further reform. Cynics understood Brezhnev's statement as a warning: *Eto vashe delo*—You are responsible.

When the Warsaw Pact Came Marching In

Prague sparkled with music on Tuesday night, August 20, 1968. A packed house was laughing to the song and satire of Suchý and Šlitr in the Semafor Theater. The Reduta Club and the Rokoko Club were featuring some of Prague's top musical entertainment. Dozens of rock-and-roll bands were performing in less well-known clubs, restaurants, and bars throughout Prague. Long-haired hippies, well-dressed concert goers, and couples arm in arm strolled across Wenceslaus Square and along the Charles Bridge.

At ten thirty that evening, while Czech youths still danced in the cafes along the Národní Street, crack Soviet military units were securing Prague's two airports. Within two hours, thousands of Soviet troops had arrived and columns of tanks rumbled toward Prague to seize the bridges along the Vltava. At the same time, an estimated 175,000 Warsaw Pact troops from Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and East Germany were preparing to penetrate the Czechoslovak frontier. In the early morning hours of August 21, 1968, Warsaw Pact military units launched a massive invasion of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

In Prague, Bratislava, and other major cities, young people took to the streets in massive protests. The journalist Ladislav Mňačko, whom the *New York Times*'s correspondent Harry Schwartz once praised as the Walter Lippman of Czechoslovakia, claimed that the country's young people, the students, the "long-haired hooligans," and the "hippies" were "in the forefront of the passive resistance to the flood of steel."

In the first hours and days following the invasion, Czechoslovak youth con-

fronted the enemy, swarming around military vehicles to block their passage, pelting tanks and soldiers with bricks and cobblestones. The first outbreak of violence was reported at five o'clock in the morning on August 21. In front of the looming, stone Central Committee building on the east bank of the Vltava River, hundreds of Prague students began taunting Soviet paratroopers. As two students shouting "Alexander Dubček" bolted toward the building, they were cut down by machine-gun fire. A Soviet tank crushed a third student beneath its treads.

At seven o'clock, Soviet forces opened fire on a crowd of young people throwing stones at Soviet tanks on Wenceslaus Square. By mid-morning, the streets of Prague were transformed into a battlefield. Machine-gun fire echoed through the medieval streets; the smell of sulfur and diesel exhaust tainted the air.

Resistance was also fierce as Warsaw Pact tanks rolled into Bratislava. Journalist Mňačko reported that young people "darted in and out amid the tanks and troop lorries, smashing headlights with stones, wrenching open doors, and filching oil drums." The cannisters of oil were dumped in the streets and set ablaze to impede the advance of the invading army.

In downtown Bratislava, Mňačko observed thirty "hippies" assaulting a crippled tank along the bank of the Danube. "They were throwing cobblestones at the thick shot-proof steel sides, trying to break it up with park benches. The gunners had not closed the turret but were standing there helplessly with their fingers on their triggers, or using the butts of their rifles to keep the invading youngsters off the tank." When students at the university in Bratislava began showering Soviet tanks with chunks of bricks, Soviet soldiers responded with a salvo of machine-gun fire. One girl sitting on the steps of a university building was caught in the gunfire and killed. Four other students also died in the ensuing battle.

One of the most curious confrontations between young people and Warsaw Pact forces occurred at the border between West Germany and Czechoslovakia. Shortly after the Soviet invasion, members of the American group the Fugs attempted to cross the West German–Czechoslovak border in order to hold a scheduled concert in Prague. The band, whose iconoclastic and often perverse songs had caused scandals in the United States, intended to perform obscene acts in front of Soviet tanks. Czechoslovak border guards prevented the band from entering the country. Much to the consternation of the machine-gun-toting guards, members of the band, standing safely in the West, allegedly protested the interdiction by stripping at the border and committing the sexual acts they had planned to perform before the Soviet tanks.

On August 24, 1968, as the fighting abated and workers throughout the country gradually returned to their jobs, little seemed to have changed in Czechoslovakia, except for the presence of Warsaw Pact tanks and soldiers. Dubček and three other leaders of the reform movement shuttled off to Moscow and, forced to approve the presence of Warsaw Pact forces on Czechoslovak soil, returned after several days looking haggard but insisting that the Prague Spring was not over. On Monday evening, August 26, Dubček spoke over the radio and, his

voice quaking with emotion, assured his people that he would not abandon his reforms. "The time is gone and far behind us," Dubček told his people, "and not only this party but this nation will not permit a return to pre-January conditions under any guise."

1969: A Year of Living Desperately

Dubček and his officials tried to keep their promise. In the fall of 1968, Dr. Zbyněk Vokrouhlický, who earlier in the year had become the new head of the Communist youth league, traveled throughout Czechoslovakia, assuring groups of young people that the Soviet presence in no way impinged on their freedoms. In Lužná, a small town in Moravia, Vokrouhlický attended Czechoslovakia's first Hippie Congress. Addressing the gathering of hundreds of long-haired, blue-jeaned youth, Vokrouhlický not only reiterated Dubček's message but also stated that the government would do all it could to accommodate the wishes of the nation's young people.

"Our discussions lasted until two a.m." Vokrouhlický recalled about his meeting with Czechoslovak hippies. "They know what they reject, but outside of Make Love Not War, they are hazy about what they want." Vokrouhlický disagreed with the hippies' attitudes toward society, but in the spirit of the Dubček reforms, he promised them that the Communist youth organization would do all in its power to support the hippies and their activities. Vokrouhlický noted: "ČSM has offered them support in obtaining exhibition rooms for their talented painters and facilities for their protest song writers and musicians." With Warsaw Pact soldiers marching in the streets and Soviet-made tanks moving like portents of evil across the Czechoslovak countryside, there was no shortage of *protestní songy* (protest songs).

Waldemar Matuška provided one of the most popular protest songs of the post-August 1968 period. Matuška, who began his career at the Semafor Theater and who occasionally performed with the beat group Mefisto, wrote the song "Krysař" ("The Pied Piper") as a condemnation of the Soviet action. According to Matuška, Krysař was a man, who "radiates fear" for thousands of miles:

> He sings words like "we" and "our
> country," "peace and honor."
> But he means you and your blood,
> war and a mailed fist.

Marta Kubišová, an attractive, twenty-six-year-old vocalist with the popular Prague group the Golden Kids, emerged as a symbol of the post-August protest movement with her song "Modlibat pro Martu" ("Prayer For Marta"). The lyrics to the song, based on a poem by a seventeenth-century Moravian theologian, pleaded for the return of peace and restoration of sovereignty to the Czechoslovakian people:

May there be peace in this land.
  May anger, enmity, fear and conflict flee.
May the government of your affairs be
  returned to your hands, O people.

The "Prayer For Marta" became the regular signature of Czechoslovak television and the unofficial anthem of the resistance until the spring of 1969 when it was banned. In February 1969, Kubišová appeared on Czechoslovak television with pop star Karel Gott to sing "Prayer For Marta." The following day, newspapers printed photographs of Alexander Dubček, who attended the performance, giving Kubišová a kiss of gratitude and raising his glass to her in a toast.

The most dramatic symbol of protest against the Warsaw Pact invasion was the suicide of a twenty-one-year-old philosophy student at Prague's Charles University. On January 16, 1969, Jan Palach walked to Wenceslaus Square toward the fountain in front of the National Museum. Palach removed his coat, drenched himself with kerosene, and touched a match to his clothing. Severely burned over 85 percent of his body, Palach was rushed to a hospital, where he died three days later. A note found in Palach's pocket called for the "immediate abolition of censorship" and for other liberal reforms. If these demands were not met by January 21, 1969, Palach's note threatened, "further torches will go up in flames." On January 17, 1969, one day after Palach's immolation, Jaroslav Seifert, acting chairman of the Czechoslovak writers' union, read an appeal to "you boys who have decided to die," imploring young people not to resort to suicide. By January 23, at least four other youths had set themselves aflame. In schools, teachers attempted to avert further deaths by openly discussing student feelings about the Warsaw Pact occupation. A massive rash of suicides was averted, but Palach's remained a painful symbol of the despair felt by millions of Czechoslovaks.

One voice of comfort for many young people in the first grim months of occupation came from the twenty-eight-year-old singer Karel Kryl. In melancholy songs about deceit, violence, and despair, Kryl captured better than anyone the mood in Czechoslovakia after August 1968. Early in 1968, Kryl, already a popular performer in Moravia, came to Prague hoping to establish himself on the music scene. Kryl, an outsider to Prague's music establishment dominated by the likes of Karel Gott and Waldemar Matuška, earned money by designing and constructing stage sets for Czechoslovak television.

During the third week in August, Kryl returned to Ostrava for a vacation. In the early hours of August 21, while listening to his Phillips transistor radio, Kryl heard that the Soviets were invading Czechoslovakia. That same night, Kryl wrote the song "Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka" ("Close the Gate, Little Brother"). In the song, a little boy standing at an entrance to a playhouse is urged to close the door before "the wolf gets into the theater."

On the morning of August 21, 1968, Kryl, with his song in hand, went to the Ostrava Škoda auto plant where he recorded "Close the Gate." Ostrava Radio broadcast the song on the same day; Radio Prague also picked up the song and included it in its programming. The image of the innocent "little

brother'' victimized by the ruthless wolf captured the imagination of the Czechoslovak people.

Soviet roadblocks prevented Kryl from returning to Prague until early September. When Kryl arrived in Prague, he found the city just as it had been before the invasion. The theaters still featured the satirical works of Václav Havel. Suchý and Šlitr continued to pack audiences into the Semafor Theater. The Olympik Klub still featured Prague's top rock-and-roll bands.

Kryl's Prague debut came early in October 1969. He recalls visiting the Semafor Theater to watch a show by Suchý and Šlitr and their featured artists. During the performance, a power failure plunged the Semafor into darkness. Kryl borrowed a guitar and mounted the stage. Although he was unknown on the Prague night scene, he suggested that he and the audience sing a few songs together. As he began singing ''Close the Gate, Little Brother,'' the audience joined in. Kryl became an overnight sensation.

In the months following his October debut, Kryl toured Czechoslovakia, performing two to three concerts a day. He appeared on television, made the charts three times, and released an album on the Supraphon label. The album, which contained his songs written between 1965 and 1968, was released in March 1969. The 125,000 copies sold out immediately. Unlike established stars like Karel Gott, Kryl worked completely alone. ''I had no agent, no manager,'' Kryl recalled, ''I traveled by myself from one concert to the next with nothing but my guitar.''

The first nine months of 1969 were heady days for Karel Kryl. He toured the country nonstop, performing in student clubs, workers clubs, factories, restaurants, concert halls, and outdoor theaters. At the height of his touring, Kryl was earning up to fifteen hundred koruna a day. In a country where the monthly salary was two thousand koruna, Kryl was soon a wealthy man. By the fall of 1969, he had earned from concerts, record sales, and book sales an estimated 1,250,000 koruna.

In June 1969, when Kryl returned from a twenty-day tour in Norway, he sensed a growing caution eroding the spirit of the Prague Spring. As a warning against apathy, Kryl penned the song ''Cancer.'' A cancer, Kryl sang, was eating away at the unity of the Czechoslovak people, a cancer that was killing the soul of spring. Overhead the carrion birds wait to devour the remains:

> In this spring the leaves begin to yellow
> Snow falls upon the flowers
> A faceless beast
> A carrion bird's claw

The final line of the song expressed the forboding that Kryl sensed. ''There will be no golden age,'' the song concluded, ''there will come an age of stone.''

In September, Kryl was invited to perform at a large concert in West Germany. After his appearance, Kryl learned that Czechoslovakia had closed the border to the West. Refusing to walk willingly into ''a cage,'' Kryl moved to Munich, where he continued to broadcast his songs and political commentary over the facilities at Radio Free Europe.

While Soviet tanks rumbled across the pastoral Bohemian countryside and somber columns of Warsaw Pact troops tramped through city streets, young Czechoslovaks continued to rock and roll. In December 1968, Prague hosted a second *bigbít* festival. British rock musician Keith Emerson and his band Nice headlined the festival. Although the Nice were unquestionably the highlight of the festival Radim Hladík, the lead guitarist for the band Blue Effekt, reportedly drove the Lucerna Hall audience wild when he began playing his guitar behind his head.

Even in the spring of 1969, after Husák replaced Dubček and normalization strangled the news media, the rock scene prospered. On June 14, 1969, the weekend supplement to *Rudé právo* announced that the American group the Beach Boys were to participate in the annual music festival in Bratislava. The British band the Tremeloes were also to join the festival to perform with the homegrown pop and rock stars Karel Kryl, Waldemar Matuška, Karel Gott, and Victor Sodoma.

For the Beach Boys, the Czechoslovak tour, which also included an appearance in Prague, represented an attempt to revive their slumping musical careers. By the late 1960s, the California band, who topped song charts in the mid-1960s with the hits "Help Me, Rhonda" and "Surfin' USA," could draw no more than two hundred fans to some engagements. In an attempt to revitalize their careers and their spirits, the Beach Boys undertook a series of concerts in Europe. "We traveled all through Europe on that tour and were greeted by enthusiastic audiences everywhere," recalled former Beach Boy guitarist Bruce Johnson, "but without question, the highlight for us was Czechoslovakia. When we arrived in Prague it was only a few months after the Russian invasion. We didn't know what to expect. The city was still occupied, but to our amazement kids were out in the streets asking for our autographs. We had never seen anything like it. They wanted to know all about America, the latest records and rock 'n' roll."

The Beach Boys received a hero's welcome in Prague. Black and white posters emblazoned with the red letters "Beach Boys—USA" announced their concert in Lucerna Hall. On the streets of Prague, young people mobbed the band members, holding out photographs and pieces of paper for autographs. Fans who had neither paper nor photos thrust out their bare arms for a signature.

On Tuesday, June 17, 1969, over four thousand people filed into Lucerna Hall. Thousands more surrounded the hall hoping to catch a glimpse of the Beach Boys as they arrived for the performance. The concert began with the Prague bands Atlantis and Blue Effekt, which played the first half of the evening. By the time the Beach Boys took the stage, the air in Lucerna was thick with heat and cigarette smoke. As the band members came onto the stage, their arms extended in the peace sign, the crowd broke into wild applause and cheering. The Beach Boys rocked Lucerna with spirited renditions of some of the their best-known songs, including "Sloop John B.," "Do It Again," and "Barbara Ann."

The Beach Boys received a thunderous ovation for their song "Break Away."

Early in the concert, Mike Love, with a full beard and dressed in white robes, let the audience know that the band understood the tense political situation in Czechoslovakia. "We are very happy to be here, all the way from the West coast of the United States of America," Love said, leaning toward the microphone. "We'll dedicate this next number, which is called 'Break Away,' to Mr. Dubček who is also here tonight." As the crowd cheered, the Beach Boys intoned lyrics, to which Alexander Dubček and his countrymen could well relate: "Can't do what I want to do . . . Why change the part of me that has to be free?"

Three days after the concert, Pavel Spiroch, reviewing the concert for the party paper *Rudé právo,* faulted both the Beach Boys and their audience for the Lucerna Hall concert. Spiroch found the audience too boisterous, the Beach Boys, whose name he translated in Czech as *Chlapci z pobřeží* (The boys from the seashore), inadequate to the challenge of a live performance. Spiroch also found Lucerna unpleasant. "After the long intermission, the stage was prepared for the vocally demanding guests, but the smoke was so bad you couldn't see the stage." Spiroch devoted a full third of the review to discussing the quality of the air in Lucerna Hall. "I'm not sure if our guests succeded or not," Spiroch concluded, "but it became apparent that no matter how good the stage performance is, the show cannot substitute for the high standards of their records."

The audience's enthusiastic reaction at the concert, documented on live footage of the performance, suggests that most Czech fans' reactions to the concert contradicted *Rudé právo*'s review. The Beach Boys themselves considered their Prague appearance an unqualified success. "When we returned to the U.S.," recalled Mike Love, "the response we'd had in Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, had really inspired us and renewed our confidence." As the Beach Boys reestablished themselves among their American fans, the flourishing rock scene they left behind in Eastern Europe was coming under attack.

6

The Crackdown, 1965–1970

These "pearls" of western culture are part of an imperialist state policy, corrupting the masses, promoting low animal instincts, dulling the mind.
Komjuanimo Tiesa (Lithuanian Komsomol paper), November 20, 1962

In the summer of 1964, American President Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking in Lexington, Virginia, announced a campaign for "building bridges" between East and West Europe. The "bridges" were a political metaphor for increased cultural and economic contact between the East and West blocs. Increased contact, Johnson proposed, would erode ideological differences and help stabilize the international environment. Cooperation was to supercede confrontation and result in a convergence of the two ideological systems. Harvard trained Sovietologist Zbigniew Brzezinski, a major architect of this strategy, saw Johnson's policy as a means of "dismantling the Iron Curtain," effacing socialism, and reuniting Europe as a single community.

In the Soviet mind, "building bridges" was no more than an extension of 1950s cold-war policy, a form of ideological rollback. "Ideological subversion" became the new buzzword in Soviet polemics. "The authors of these theories," charged the Soviet military paper *Krasnaia zvezda* on May 24, 1968, "hope they will be able to blunt the people's concern with questions of ideology, of heightening socialist consciousness, and thereby create conditions for Imperialism's ideological offensive." In the "war of ideas" that followed, the Soviets found themselves on the defensive, attempting to battle back the "dangerous influences" of the West.

Radio Wars: The Battle for the Youth

Radio broadcasting played a major role in this new war, as the West intensified its transmissions behind the Iron Curtain. Soviet-bloc nations responded either by intensified jamming of Western broadcasts or by countering with improved domestic programming.

Rock and pop music became a potent form of ammunition in this long-range, shortwave war. The Voice of America introduced a rock and pop program called *Music Today*. The British Broadcasting Corporation promised to send listeners recordings of popular music and descriptions of new dances if they mailed in their addresses.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc. (RFE), the broadcast facility based in Munich, West Germany, became especially ambitious in developing rock music programs. RFE brought Italian pop ensembles to Munich to record Western hits in the languages of the target countries. RFE's pop music program *Altogether,* taped in English, was broadcast to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

In the Polish programming section at Radio Free Europe, Jan Tyszkiewicz developed the rock music program *Rendez-vous at 6:10*. The fifty-minute show ran Monday through Saturday and included a hit parade and news from the pop music scene. Tyszkiewicz traveled throughout Europe, interviewing rock stars on tour and then broadcasting these interviews on *Rendez-vous at 6:10*. Tyszkiewicz's most-memorable meetings included discussions with the Rolling Stones and the Beatles. During the filming of *A Hard Days Night,* the Fab Four took time out to chat with Tyszkiewicz and to send their regards to millions of fans in Eastern Europe.

Soviet-bloc nations responded to the Western rock-and-roll offensive by increasing their domestic broadcast of big-beat music. Programmers both east and west of the Iron Curtain carefully monitored each other's broadcasts to analyze the musical fare offered by the competition. When Soviet broadcasters began describing popular dance steps on their musical programs, Voice of America (VOA) and the BBC announced they, too, would begin broadcasting their own "dance lessons." The Soviet campaign to meet the needs of the youth became so aggressive that on May 7, 1966, *Izvestiia* complained that Soviet radio was "permeated with blatantly vulgar song counterfeits of every kind, oriented toward 'foreign fashions.' "

Young people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union exalted amidst the musical fallout from this stratospheric confrontation. At the BBC, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Luxembourg, bags of mail arrived from the Soviet bloc with letters requesting favorite groups and songs. In 1966, Radio Free Europe conducted a study of East European listener requests. "A flood of letters from all five countries of Eastern Europe," the study determined, "revealed an astonishing identity of tastes among teen-agers in this area and their contemporaries in Britain and America: the same idols, the same songs, the same bands.

The writers showed little difficulty in spelling English names like 'Beatles,' 'Animals,' 'Kinks,' 'Rolling Stones,' 'Beach Boys,' or 'Supremes.' ''

In Poland, the state radio, which occasionally broadcast Western rock music since the 1950s, introduced a regular rock show, *Scout Broadcast,* on the shortwave band next to the RFE frequency. Polish radio also hosted special programs uninterrupted by commentary so that Polish listeners could record entire albums off the air. One of the most popular youth shows, *Good Voices and Good Songs,* intended to present the best in popular music from East and West, was criticized for the dominance of British and American music in its programming. Even Polish big-beat aficionados felt the program was ''overexposing Anglo-American bubble-gum music while neglecting their own rock and roll.''

In Hungary, young people enjoyed abundant rock music programming through foreign broadcasters and through the state-run radio. Young Hungarians gathered on Sunday afternoons from two to five p.m. to listen to a RFE rock broadcast called *Teenager Party.* Throughout the week, Radio Luxembourg played almost exclusively pop and rock music after seven p.m. By the mid-1960s, the state-run broadcasters Rádió Kossuth and Rádió Petőfi had doubled their music programming from the 1950s, offering thirteen hours of music daily. A forty-five-minute program, *Tánczenei-Koktél* was broadcast every day at noon. (*Tánczene* (dance music) was the official euphemism for rock and roll.) Although *Dance Music Cocktail* played everything from Italian pop to light, Anglo-American rock and roll, official guidelines required that at least 50 percent of the music be of Hungarian origin.

One of the most popular music shows in Hungary during the 1960s was *Csak Fiataloknak (For Youth Only),* hosted by György Komjáthy, one of Hungary's pioneers of rock programming. The thirty-year-old Komjáthy imitated the style of Radio Free Europe's programming. Komjáthy played singles without interrupting them with commentary and later played entire albums for listeners to record. Komjáthy offered young Hungarians the best of Western rock, including heavier rock acts like Cream and Jimi Hendrix. Twenty years later, Komjáthy, in his mid-fifties, was still on the air.

East German radio faced a pop music blitzkrieg from the West. While Radio Luxembourg and West German radio penetrated the borders from the west, Radio in the American Sector (RIAS), located in West Berlin, broadcast from the very heart of East Germany. In 1964, East German radio introduced *DT-64,* a youth show that imitated the same ''hip'' style of Western disc jockeys and played abundant rock and roll. Another program designed to compete with Western radio was *Treffs mit Perry (Get Togethers with Perry).* The show featured Perry Friedman, a paunchy Canadian expatriot with a thin voice, who had made a career for himself staging ''hootenanies'' throughout East Germany. Friedman had moved to East Berlin in the 1950s, claiming to be a protégé of folksinger Pete Seeger. He gained a wide following among East German youth as he offered them the ''real thing,'' a real American singing real American folk and protest music.

In 1965, the Czechoslovak radio also adapted its programming to address the

youths' infatuation with rock and roll. A survey taken in 1964 indicated that among young people in Czechoslovakia "90 percent of those tuning in to Radio Free Europe and other foreign stations want to listen to dance music and nothing else." In January 1965, Czech radio introduced a youth program called *Mikroforum*. The show debuted just weeks after Radio Free Europe had begun broadcasting a youth show called *Compass*. *Mikroforum* imitated the Radio Free Europe broadcast, employing the same easy style of *Compass* and combining rock music with youth information. Czech listeners were skeptical. "When we first heard about the planned program for youth, we laughed heartily," noted a writer for *MY 65*, the official publication of the Communist youth organization. "This was because we had no faith in so-called youth programs. We said to ourselves: 'A new competition for Radio Free Europe, and a Czech competition at that.' We could presume what that would be like. However, after we listened to the first *Mikroforum* programs we were happy to conclude that we were wrong this time." The announcers on *Mikroforum* abandoned the stiff, formal language of official broadcasters and adopted the congenial, easy manner of Western disc jockeys. The success of *Mikroforum* inspired a second youth music program, *Kolotoč (Whirligig)*.

Big-beat music in the mid-1960s dominated some Czechoslovak radio programming from three to six p.m. daily. In 1966, the Czech composers' journal *Hudební rozhledy* commented on the changes in domestic radio programming. *Hudební rozhledy* noted that in the past, music programs had been rigidly organized into "half-hour blocks of dance music with the announcer only giving the name of the composer and the title." The new programs, more relaxed in tone and oriented toward young listeners, were styled "on the pattern of the foreign, mainly western, stations."

The inclusion of rock music in East European radio programming reflected the official confusion regarding beat music in the mid-1960s. While party ideologues railed against Western cultural imports, state-run radio stations broadcast the latest hits from America and Britain. In the second half of the decade, however, the continued proliferation of rock music in Eastern Europe forced officials to develop defined policies toward beat music. East Germany was the first Soviet bloc nation to acknowledge the extent to which rock music had permeated socialist society. In December 1965, the Central Committee of East Germany's Communist party launched an extensive campaign to combat the impact of Western rock and roll.

The East German Rock 'n' Roll Plenum

From December 16 to December 18, 1965, the Central Committee of East Germany's Communist party convened in East Berlin for its eleventh plenary session. With growing concern over outbreaks of hooliganism and youth violence, exemplified by the Leipzig rock riot less than a month before, beat music and East Germany's young people were prominent issues on the docket. After

three days of debate, the Central Committee decided to eradicate manifestations of Western pop culture in East Germany.

The songs by folksinger Wolf Biermann, condemned as "toilet-stall poetry" and "American-style pornography," were summarily banned. The radio program *DT-64,* accused of poisoning the minds of East German youths with beat music, had its programs purged of Western songs. And the Free German Youth (FDJ), the Communist youth organization, was held accountable for having led millions of young socialists astray through its promotion of Western pop culture.

An interesting cadre of socialist leaders assembled in the Central Committee chambers in East Berlin in December 1965. Among those present: Walter Ulbricht, the paunchy, seventy-three-year-old Stalinist head of state, Horst Sindermann, East Germany's fifty-year-old director of press and radio, and Erich Honecker, the fifty-three-year-old founder and former leader of the Free German Youth. On a dreary day in December 1965, these men, who usually concerned themselves with steel production and work quotas, sat down with other leading officials to have a serious talk about rock and roll.

Erich Honecker expressed concern over the growing number of criminal acts among the young, including "rapes and manifestations of 'rowdiness,' unruliness at school and in the work place, and drunkenness." Honecker blamed the youth organization for the growing belligerence among young East Germans. "An incorrect assessment of beat music," according to Honecker, had compelled the organization to promote rock and roll among its members. "In doing this, it was overlooked that the enemy exploits this type of music to drive young people to excesses through the use of exaggerated beat rhythms." Declared Honecker: "The pernicious influences of such music upon the thoughts and actions of young people is being grossly underestimated."

Horst Sindermann wondered how one could even speak of a *Bildungsideal* when considering the present state of East German youth. "We all know that recently there have been many so-called beat groups, that have demonstrated an impressive amount of primitiveness. For example, in Halle, there was a beat group that called itself 'Colorados' because no one in the group spoke English."

The Central Committee members bantered back and forth over the proper pronunciation of the word 'Colorado," and Sindermann then cited a disturbing example of East German youths' obsession with rock music. "A 15-year-old," noted Sindermann, "who had not learned a single word of English and who had had to leave school in the fifth grade because he could not even speak German properly, sang popular songs in English evening after evening. How did he do this? He listened to tapes forty times and learned by his own phonetic method to give off sounds that he perceived as being English. There is no doubt that with these methods, you could teach beat music to a parakeet."

For the members of the Central Committee, Sindermann's vision of an East German youth sitting before a tape recorder listening incessantly to the pounding rhythms of Western rock and roll was deeply unsettling. By the end of the meeting, the Central Committee unanimously condemned beat music. The ag-

ing Walter Ulbricht, who deprecated against Presley in the 1950s, expressed the consternation felt by most Central Committee members when he observed: "The endless monotony of this 'yeah, yeah, yeah' is not just ridiculous, it is spiritually deadening." Ulbricht's pronouncement became state policy. On December 18, 1965, the Central Committee emerged from its chambers determined to drive rock music from East German soil.

The following day, East German bard Wolf Biermann, who was vacationing on the North Sea, received word that his performing license had been revoked. According to the official letter, Biermann's "presence" was determined to have "destructive influences on the youths and culture of the German Democratic Republic." For the next ten years, the muzzled bard continued to perform his songs for friends, fans, and Western record companies in his apartment on East Berlin's Chaussee Street. In 1966, American folksinger Joan Baez appeared in the East German cabaret Die Distel. Baez angered officials when, during her performance, she dedicated a song to Wolf Biermann and publicly stated her objection to the government's restrictions upon the singer.

Early in 1967, American folksinger Pete Seeger performed at the Volksbühne in East Berlin. During the concert, which was broadcast on radio and television, Seeger sang many of his best-known songs, including the civil-rights anthem "We Shall Overcome." Victor Grossman, writing in the music magazine *Melodie und Rhythmus* praised Seeger's commitment to world peace and urged East German youth to adopt Seeger's songs. "I hope," wrote Grossmann, "that in the future more and more listeners will join in and sing whenever they hear 'We Shall Overcome,' 'Guantanamara' and other songs."

East German youth required little encouragement. In the weeks following Seeger's concert, young people adopted as their own anthem Seeger's civil-rights hymn "We Shall Overcome." The song spoke to the young generation of East Germans for whom the Berlin Wall, erected six years earlier, loomed as a symbol of their spiritual and physical captivity. The song became so popular that by March 1967, the party daily *Neues Deutschland* declared that the singing of "We Shall Overcome" was no longer acceptable. On March 3, 1967, *Neues Deutschland* urged young people to write their own songs, citing as examples "The Song of the Red Flag" and "The Youth Greets the SED."

By the spring of 1967, the campaign to eradicate American influences on the music scene was well underway. The Ministry of Culture began to enforce the infamous 60/40 clause, neglected since the 1950s. On the radio, English language songs were announced with German titles or not identified at all. Western records mailed into East Germany or brought in by tourists were confiscated. Amiga, the state recording label, purged its catalogue of Western recordings. Klaus Gysi, the minister of culture, denounced the music of the Beatles, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan for not distinguishing the "class differences between socialism and capitalism."

The ideological campaign against Western pop music also vilified seemingly innocuous ensembles like the Swingle Singers. The Swingle Singers, whose a cappella pop rendition of Bach's fugue in G minor became an international hit, had a release on the East German record label in January 1967. *Neues Deutschland* condemned the recording as "incompatible with socialist cultural policy."

The German Academy of Arts in East Berlin issued a statement warning that the recording could lead to "aesthetic disorientation, to the poisoning of one's musical consciousness."

Amidst official efforts to smother Anglo-American pop and rock music, fans of rock survived in East Germany. Western records, though exorbitant in price, still circulated on the black market. Although squads of FDJ members were dispatched with hacksaws to cut down radio and television antennae aimed westward, East Germans continued to adjust their radio dials to West German broadcasters, Radio Luxembourg, and RIAS in West Berlin.

Rock musicians found the government's new hard-line stance more difficult to endure. East German rock keyboard player and vocalist Horst Krüger recalled that the state record label Amiga, which had released an album of Beatles hits in 1965 and had subsequently added recordings by Ray Charles, Joan Baez, and Pete Seeger, suddenly deemed rock-and-roll rhythms unacceptable for its recordings. "The texts that I was writing at the time were rejected by Amiga," Krüger recalled. "I heard: What did you do? That isn't even a normal beat! 2/4 time, that just isn't done."

Rock bands also came under increasing pressure from local officials. After the crackdown in December 1965, rock guitarist Jürgen Kerth changed his band's name from Spotlights to Rampenlicht, the German word for stage lights. Rampenlicht continued to perform, but was carefully scrutinized by local functionaries. The group had to disband when, following one concert, someone broke a window in the hall in which they had been performing. Kerth sat idle for three months before taking up with another band, Team 65.

Stefan Trepte, one of East Germany's most talented keyboard players, suffered the full wrath of Dresden officials. Trepte, still in high school in 1964, was preparing to study classical piano at the Dresden School of Music when he first heard the Beatles and converted to rock music. Trepte formed a band called Quintanas and began performing in the Dresden area. In the summer of 1967, Quintanas held a concert in the town of Roderau near Dresden. Following the concert, the fans caused a disturbance and Trepte and his band were held accountable for the incident.

"Because of this event," noted Trepte, "our report cards were collected and our grades changed. I was in the eleventh grade at the time. . . . In school, it was also suggested that I not even try to take the placement exam for college." Trepte was indefinitely banned from performing in public and sentenced to six-days punitive labor in Dresden. Trepte continued to pursue a music career. His persistence eventually paid off. In the early 1970s, when Honecker succeeded Ulbricht as head of state and introduced an era of liberal reform, Trepte emerged as a leading figure on the East German rock scene, playing a vital role in three prominent rock bands: electra, LIFT, and Reform.

Poland: Sympathy for the Devil

In April 1967, as East Germany railed against musical ensembles ranging from the Beatles to the Swingle Singers, Poland prepared to stage one of the most

dramatic events in the history of Soviet-bloc rock and roll: a Warsaw appearance by the "bad boys" of rock and roll, the Rolling Stones. In the spring of 1967, rumors of the planned concert circulated throughout the Soviet bloc, even reaching the Ministry of Culture in Moscow. In the days before the concert, Hungarian rock fans "flocked" to Warsaw, hoping to buy black-market tickets to the event. From Moscow, a cultural functionary embarked for Warsaw to see if this "vocal instrumental ensemble" from Britain might be appropriate for Soviet audiences.

During the 1960s, rock and roll flourished in Poland, as it did in Czechoslovakia. The youth daily *Sztandar Młodych* chronicled Polish youths' interest in rock music across the decade, beginning in 1963 with detailed accounts of the Western rock scene. The frequent articles on the Beatles, free of socialist polemic, updated fans on the band's latest hits, films, and concert engagements. By the mid-1960s, the paper was reprinting the music hit charts from America's *Billboard* and Britain's *New Musical Express*. On January 7, 1966, *Sztandar Młodych* published its own list of top Polish hits for 1965. In the poll conducted among *Sztandar Młodych* readers, songs by Czerwone Gitary and by Czesław Niemen with his band Niebiesko-Czarni took the top five positions.

Sztandar Młodych also advanced the cause of rock and roll. On April 17, 1964, the paper printed an editorial suggesting that the incorporation of rock music into school curricula could improve student performance in the classroom. "It is legally not prohibited," the editorial observed, "to speak a few minutes in Latin about Paul Anka." In the spring of 1966, as conservatives deprecated about the music of the Beatles, *Sztandar Młodych* published a letter under the banner "In Defense of the Beatles." The commentary, penned by a teenager, attested not just to the youths' passionate loyalty to the Beatles but also to a variegated interest in Western rock. "Many of us have different tastes," the letter stated, "some of us like the Rolling Stones, others like the Animals and still others the Yardbirds or the Manfred Mann group. Some of us do not like British at all, but none of us would have any doubt that the Beatles have become a classic institution of rock."

The state apparatus attempted to satiate the youths' hunger for rock and roll. Polskie Nagrania, which in 1960 pressed 5,000 records with "guitar music," had increased annual production to 250,000 by 1965. Similarly, guitar sales surged from 20,000 in 1960 to 300,000 by the middle of the decade. Beat ensembles also made inroads into the official pop festivals at Sopot and Opole. In 1966, Poland celebrated The Spring Festival of the Teenagers, a series of events at which "hundreds" of beat groups performed. Among the country's leading ensembles were Czerwone Gitary, Niebiesko-Czarni, Tajfun, Polonia, and Czerwono-Czarni. "There is not a single place in Poland," observed one teenager in 1966, "not even the smallest provincial town without a club of big beat music fans and its own band and local starlets." By 1970, the Polish rock scene boasted over seven thousand beat ensembles.

Rock music obsessed Poland's urban youths, it penetrated Poland's villages, it even infected the liturgy in this most Catholic of countries. Katarzyna Gärtner, who created popular music shows, composed a "Msza Beatowa" ("Beat

Mass''), that Reverend Leon Kantorski, a future activist with KOR and Solidarity, first held at his church in Leśna Podkowa on January 14, 1968. Subsequently, the band Czerwono-Czarni released a recording of the Mass on the Polskie Nagrania label.

Pagart, the state concert agency, nurtured Poland's rock scene by booking Western performers for tours of the country. In the fall of 1963, the Canadian pop star Paul Anka toured Poland, and his appearances attracted mobs of Polish fans with and without tickets. On December 1, 1963, the satirical weekly *Szpilki* featured a cartoon that depicted a throng of Poles pummeling one another before the entrance to a Paul Anka concert. ''At last,'' *Szpilki* chided, ''they are fighting over culture.''

Early in 1966, the popular British band the Animals, along with the Czech band Olympic and the Polish band Tajfun, toured six Baltic coast cities in northern Poland. In March, another popular British band, the Hollies, also toured Poland, igniting a full-scale riot in the streets of Kraków. Following the concert on March 19, 1966, thousands of rock fans paraded along the Vistula, escorting the British stars back to their hotel. On the promenade, just below the historic Wawel Castle, the revelers encountered students bearing signs that read ''Long Live Chopin! Hollies Go Home!'' Violence erupted and an all-out battle ensued. Police joined the fray, breaking up the crowd with billy clubs. Dozens of people were taken to the police station. During their detention, the anti-rock nationalists continued to chant ''Vivat Chopin and the Polish poets!'' as well as ''Down with noise!''

Polish nationalists found even better reason to protest Western influences when in April 1967 Pagart booked the Rolling Stones for a Warsaw appearance. Within the context of the East European rock scene, the Warsaw concert by the Rolling Stones on April 13, 1967, was almost incomprehensible. To the east, the Soviet Union had yet to release a single rock recording. To the west, East Germany had just launched a campaign to eradicate Western influences from socialist society. Rock music was denounced as ''imperlialist,'' the Beatles as ''bourgeois,'' the Rolling Stones as ''fascist.''

In the fall of 1965, even before Walter Ulbricht declared war on Western influences, the East German press had assailed the Rolling Stones. On October 13, 1965, the Leipzig daily paper, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* reviewed the havoc caused by a Rolling Stones' tour in West Germany. According to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* in their wake, the Rolling Stones left behind ''chairs hacked to kindling wood, concert halls that looked like battlefields, young men fit for mental institutions, young girls without panties—they threw their underwear at the stage—and, in West Berlin, demolished street cars.'' The paper maintained that East Germany had nothing against ''youthful exuberance,'' but one could not help overhearing in the Rolling Stones' ''appeal to base instincts'' the voice of a ''new Führer.''

If Pagart officials were not deterred by the warnings of their socialist neighbor, reports in the Western press should have given them cause for concern. In January 1967, Mick Jagger scandalized American television during an appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* by singing his hit song ''Let's Spend the Night

Together.'' A month later, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards made headlines when police raided a Rolling Stones' party in England and found, along with a naked woman wrapped in a bear rug, quantities of illegal drugs. Jagger and Richards were arrested but eventually released so they could fulfill concert commitments, which included a major tour of continental Europe.

The Rolling Stones' European tour in the spring of 1967 began with a bang. At the opening performance in Copenhagen, hysterical fans smashed chairs and windows, causing an estimated $50,000 in damage. The scene was repeated at subsequent concerts in Stockholm and Oslo.

Warsaw braced itself for the Rolling Stones' appearance on April 13, 1967. The government dispatched military units to Warsaw's international airport to bolster security. Police units were beefed up around the Rolling Stones' hotel and outside Warsaw's Congressional Hall, where the band was to perform. ''We get there, behind the Iron Curtain, do the whole bit, very uptight,'' Keith Richards observed in an August 1971 interview with *Rolling Stone*. ''There's army at the airport. Get to the hotel which is very jail-like. Lot's of security people about.'' A front-page photograph in *Sztandar Młodych* on April 13, 1967, showed the long-haired Mick Jagger and the other scruffy Rolling Stones escorted by two prim Communist youths with neatly trimmed hair and standard-issue neckties. The prudish reception belied the excitement among Polish rock fans. On the black market, tickets to the Warsaw performance commanded up to ten times their face value. The high black-market prices for the three thousand available tickets brought a flood of forged tickets into circulation. On April 13, 1967, as three thousand ticket-holding fans filed into Warsaw's Congressional Hall, an estimated eight thousand fans remained outside, many of them also holding tickets.

Several hundred frustrated fans, insisting they had legitimate tickets for the concert, began scuffling with security forces and after an hour of heated confrontation, violence erupted. The eight thousand fans rampaged through central Warsaw, throwing rocks and bricks, smashing windows and street lamps, pulverizing windshields on nearby cars. Militia units, armed with clubs and tear gas, moved against the crowd and resorted to what the Warsaw daily *Życie Warszawy* called ''an energetic counteraction.''

Meanwhile, inside the hall, the atmosphere grew equally explosive. Following a warm-up performance by Czerwono-Czarni, the Rolling Stones took the stage, where Britain's ''bad boys'' found the best seats in the concert hall occupied by the children of Communist party officials. ''They're sitting there with their diamonds and their pearls and their fingers in their ears,'' Keith Richards recalled. ''About three numbers, and I say, 'Fuckin' stop playing Charlie. You fuckin' lot, get out and let those bahstads in the back down front.' '' Obediently, the first four rows reportedly left their seats and exited the concert hall.

The Rolling Stones then let loose. According to one reviewer, the ''wokalista Mick Jagger'' had the effect of *dynamit* on the crowd. The audience of three thousand exploded, and militia units had to intervene in order to prevent the fans from demolishing the concert facility. The Rolling Stones completed

their concert while security forces restrained the semi-hysterical crowd. According to Richards, the Rolling Stones' Warsaw appearance was equalled in intensity only by the band's 1965 Long Beach, California, performance, during which the crowds became so unruly that a motorcycle policeman was run over and crushed.

The destruction that accompanied the Rolling Stones' Warsaw concert distressed city officials. Reflecting on the havoc and surveying the damage caused by the visit, city officials unanimously agreed: "The next time such a band comes, we should put them in the Gwardia Hall. The Gwardia Hall is larger and the temperamental youths could not cause as much damage there as they did in the beautiful Congressional Hall." The idea of banning concerts does not even seem to have been an issue.

Party officials proved less willing to indulge the excesses of Polish youths. From May 16 to May 17, 1967, a month after the Warsaw rock riot, the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party convened its eighth plenary session. As their East German counterparts had done two years earlier, the Polish leaders sat down to have a nuts-and-bolts discussion about rock and roll. Józef Majchrzak, first secretary of the party in Bydgoszcz, warned that in Poland socialist ideology was being transformed "into only a margin, a sideline of social life." Another party member, writer Jerzy Putrament spoke of "national nihilism" among the youth. Putrament held that cultural imports from the West were corrupting the young generation in Poland. While big-beat music represented one of the more pernicious aspects of Western culture for many of the Central Committee members, one party official, Władysław Kozdra, cautioned his comrades not to make too much out of big-beat music. Kozdra maintained: "the trumpets of the Beatles are not the trumpets of Jericho which will cause the walls of socialism to come tumbling down."

The walls of socialism may not have been crumbling; but in the spring of 1968 they certainly had a good rattling. The banning of a controversial play by nineteenth-century poet Adam Mickiewicz sparked a series of massive student protests in March 1968. The state skirmished with the young people and finally on October 1, 1968, the party paper *Trybuna Ludu* declared the Polish government would no longer tolerate the "hooligan excesses of the youth." The head of the Polish youth organization stated: "Our political and ideological activity must go on the offensive." Hundreds of students, including political activists Adam Michnik and Jan Lityński, were arrested or expelled from the university; others were drafted into the army as a punitive measure.

At Pagart and Polskie Nagrania, officials relied on the power of concert receipts and record distribution to tame domestic big-beat musicians. Official sponsorship spawned a new generation of bands, Trubadurzy, Skaldowie, and No To Co, that offered songs rooted in folk-music traditions with harmless themes about love and nature. Skaldowie sang a folk-styled rock similar to that of the Byrds. The singer Maryla Rodowicz, a Joni Mitchell look-alike who achieved national popularity with her rendition of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," emerged as a leading pop and folk music star in the 1970s.

The group No To Co, formed early in 1967 by Piotr Janczerski, emerged as

one of the regime's favored ensembles. On December 5, 1967, No To Co, garbed in traditional Polish folk dress, debuted for Polish television on the youth program *After Six*. In 1968, at the song competition in Opole, No To Co took one of three top prizes with their song "For This Red Flower." The song combined traditional Polish romanticism with allusions to contemporary military security. "He will not lie to the girl," the song declared, "but he will not tell her everything." After the March 1968 crackdown, in which hundreds of students went to jail, a parody of the No To Co hit, with a slight turn of phrase, had the amorous soldier incarcerated in the notorious Mokotów prison.

Some domestic bands, like Breakout, whose 1969 album *On the Other Side of the Rainbow* drew heavily on the rhythm-and-blues idiom, broke with the officially promoted folk-rock sound. Polish rock fans relied entirely on foreign groups for psychedelic and hard rock. Although albums by Anglo-American bands commanded top zloty on the black market, recordings by Hungarian groups also attracted large followings among rock fans. "Whenever albums by Illés or Omega arrived at the Hungarian cultural center in downtown Warsaw," recalled one Polish observer, "people began lining up on the street in the early morning hours." By the end of the decade, as the Polish and East German rock scenes stifled, Hungarian rock fans reveled in some of the best rock and roll in continental Europe.

Hungary: Rock 'n' Roll Becomes Political

In 1968, András Kovács, one of Hungary's leading film directors, released *Ecstasy from 7 to 10,* a full-length cinematic exposé that presented interviews with rock stars, rock fans, club directors, and disgruntled parents. *Ecstasy from 7 to 10* documented the vitality and exuberance of the Hungarian rock scene in the mid-1960s. As the film's title suggested, rock music in Hungary provided young people a temporary, euphoric escape from the otherwise dreary life under socialist rule. In the film, the director of the Omega Club in Budapest conveyed both the enthusiasm for and pervasiveness of rock music in Hungary during the late 1960s. "Wherever you go on Saturday or Sunday nights," the director explained, "to student hostels or cultural centers, where young people meet, there are beat groups playing. In Angyaföld, you can find the Apollo, in Csepel the Sakkmatt, in Zugló the Stereo, in Castle Hill the Echo. Beat groups spring up by the hundreds and even at the 1968 national pop song festival, most prizes—among them that of the Communist youth league—were awarded to the beat group Illés."

A second testament to the vitality of Hungary's rock culture appeared in the fall of 1969, when a team of Hungarian sociologists released a study on the impact of rock music on Hungarian society. The book, entitled *Beat,* became the runaway best-seller of the 1969 Christmas season. The authors presented "staggering" statistics about the domestic rock scene. *Beat* revealed that 92 percent of Budapest's young people had at one time or another attended rock

concerts. Further, *Beat* found that Hungary was home to approximately four thousand rock bands.

In the book, two sociologists, Ivan Vitányi and Péter Makara, revealed surprising information about the social and occupational background of Hungary's rock musicians. A study of sixty-two bands determined that a large percentage of Hungarian rock musicians came from the privileged segments of society: 48 percent from families whose parents were either political leaders or were involved in intellectual life, 15 percent from families of private craftsmen or tradesmen, 21 percent from families of skilled workers, and a mere 7 percent from families of unskilled laborers. Based on the documentation provided by *Beat,* it appeared that socialist Hungary was going to pass into the hands of a generation whose prime interest lay not in Marxist-Leninist ideology but in Western-style rock and roll.

Rock and roll's secure footing in Hungarian society initially took hold in Budapest's night clubs and coffeehouses, where most upstart beat ensembles made their public debuts. The Dália Coffee House in central Budapest earned the reputation as Hungary's leading rock venue during the early 1960s. Every Tuesday night, the Dália brought to its stage Budapest's leading big-beat bands, including Omega and Scampolo. The bands played four-hour concerts from six to ten p.m., beginning with instrumentals, gradually going over to vocal numbers, and closing with an extended block of nonstop rock and roll. Word spread—the Dália Coffee House was the place to be on Tuesday nights, and before long, lines to get in extended down the street.

One of Dália's hottest acts was the band Scampolo. Scampolo, taking its name from the title of a Romy Schneider film, first formed in 1961 under the auspices of the Communist youth organization attached to the Budapest Agricultural Machinery Combine. The band's performances at the Dália became so popular that on one occasion fans stormed the coffeehouse, tearing off the window shutters.

Scampolo went through several changes of personnel until the summer of 1962, when the band assumed its "legendary" lineup—the guitarist István "Judy" Faragó and the vocalist László Komár. It was reported that Faragó's "devilish hand" on the guitar drove young fans crazy. Komár's covers to Presley's "Jailhouse Rock" and "Heartbreak Hotel" were so convincing that rumors alleged Komár actually played original Presley recordings and lip-synched the lyrics. Komár became affectionately known as the "magyar-Elvis."

During 1961 and 1962, rock bands proliferated in Budapest's clubs and cafes. Illés, famous for its renditions of songs by Chris Montez and Johnny and the Hurricanes, played in Vármegye Street. Metro was at the Eőtvős Club. The band Sanko, which specialized in Dal Shannon numbers, found a home in a cultural facility at the Clothing Combine at 9 Mérleg Street. Scampolo, originally employed by the Dália, relocated to its own club in Ferenc Vigyázó Street, a small, dark, stuffy room that seated an estimated 150 people. These rock clubs provided bands regular audiences and performance space. The clubs also allowed fans to meet and talk with their favorite rock musicians. Sitting in these cramped, dingy clubs, sipping Utas, a popular domestic soft drink, rock

musicians and their fans discussed subjects ranging from the latest hits from the West to the wattage of homemade amplifiers.

Big-beat music, which roared in the cramped quarters of Budapest's clubs and cafes, quickly crashed into public life. In 1963, one concert featuring László Komár at the MÁVAG car factory became so unruly that by the time the concert ended at four o'clock in the morning, over 270 chairs had been smashed. In the summer of 1962, the Ifjusági Park (Youth Park), located in central Budapest on the bank of the Danube, hosted outdoor big-beat concerts on a regular basis. The following summer, the noise from the outdoor concerts was loud enough to compel a government official in the Parliament buildings across the river to call the police and complain that "the screaming, the music and the crowds" were disturbing the peace of "decent citizens." The concerts at the Ifjusági Park became so riotous that the park director Laszló Rajnák occasionally imposed a temporary ban on big-beat performances.

Rock music resounded across the Danube; it also blared from Hungarian television. In 1962, the amateur talent show *Ki Mit Tud? (Show What You Know)* introduced Hungarian viewers to several of Budapest's best big-beat ensembles. The program elicited protest from Hungarian viewers, who considered it "scandalous" that the state-run television exposed the public to such music.

As in Poland, official benevolence toward beat music caused consternation among many adults. Fierce debates over rock music erupted in the Hungarian press. In 1968, in a letter to the Budapest evening newspaper *Esti Hirlap,* a resident of Budapest condemned the youths' obsession with rock music. The letter recalled Hungary's rich musical heritage and its long folk traditions, insisting "the Hungarian people do not need this soul-destroying music." Young people, seeking light entertainment, the writer suggested, could find substitutes for beat music, and proposed in all seriousness that they acquaint themselves with a musical ditty entitled "Girl at the Piano," which had been featured at Budapest's third annual pop-music festival.

The youth paper *Magyar Ifjuság* responded to the attack on beat music by publishing a letter in which a beat fan praised the rock band Illés and belittled the song "Girl at the Piano." The *Magyar Ifjuság*'s assault on "Girl at the Piano" elicited cries of outrage and protest from adults. "I and like-minded individuals really do feel bitter," wrote one individual, "about the fact that the Communist youth league's Central Committee would allow articles like that to be published." An indignant adult defended "Girl at the Piano," claiming that when it came to "educating" young people and to instilling a love for one's country, "tunes like 'Girl at the Piano' are not only more suitable but they are more in harmony with Hungarian traditions."

Beat music, retorted one rock fan, offered young people an outlet for venting their frustrations with life in a socialist society. Another beat fan claimed that the youth of 1967 had no need to justify their obsession with rock music. He argued that the "ecstasy" into which his generation escaped was far less harmful than a similar "ecstasy" experienced by his parents' generation. "We can picture for ourselves," he noted, "a beat singer in the society of adults called

Adolf Hitler, who sang his own text, and adult society not long ago fell into a similar if not greater ecstasy and it had a far nastier outcome than the beat movement.''

Despite public outcries, the Kádár regime refused to curb Hungary's rampant rock culture. In 1970, György Aczél, Kádár's spokesman on cultural matters, issued a statement that would have been unthinkable in any other Soviet-bloc nation at the time. Aczél insisted that the government would not demand ideological obedience from its youth. ''As regards ideology and culture,'' Aczél explained, ''Marxism is not in a monopoly position in Hungary.'' Lajos Méhes, first secretary of the Hungarian youth organization, rejected the proposition that rock music reflected the influence of Western ideology or that it was used as a form of protest against the political establishment. ''Beat music *per se* is not a political phenomenon,'' Méhes argued, ''and the idolizing of beat music is not a political phenomenon.'' To view rock as a form of political protest, according to Méhes, was ''an arbitrary interpretation which is more harmful than the 'ecstasy' itself.''

The Hungarian government's skirmishes with the rock band Illés in the early 1970s indicated that rock music could, in fact, be used as a ''form of political protest.'' In the mid-1960s, Illés emerged as Hungary's most acclaimed rock band. Although Illés styled itself after the Beatles, imitating the lyricism and vocal harmony of the British band, the group also performed its own material and became the first band to sing rock and roll in Hungarian. But Illés continued to nurture its image as Budapest's Beatles band with the group's songwriting team, Szőrényi and Bródy, playing the role of the ''magyar Lennon-McCartney.'' Following the release of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's* album in 1967, Illés appeared in concert sporting the psychedelic uniforms identical to those depicted on the *Sgt. Pepper's* album cover.

Illés' rock and roll fantasies eventually collided with Hungary's political reality. During late February and early March 1970, Illés held a series of concerts in West Germany and England. While in England, Illés granted three interviews with the foreign broadcasting service of the BBC. The BBC broadcast the Illés interviews in two segments as part of its Hungarian language program. In the interviews, Illés members criticized the state of popular music in Hungary and complained that Hungary provided few venues for rock bands and that the government was too ''rigid'' in its policy toward popular music. ''Under such circumstances,'' one band member voiced, ''bands can very rarely achieve fame, and they are not appreciated financially or otherwise.''

Hungarian officials were furious. When Illés returned to Budapest, the band members were castigated in the official media and accused of playing into the hands of Western propagandists. On June 5, 1970, the youth daily *Magyar Ifjuság* refuted point by point the criticisms contained in Illés' interviews. Two weeks later, on June 19, 1970, *Magyar Ifjuság* printed a reply by Illés in which the band members apologized for the interviews and practiced the ritualistic act of public ''self-criticism.''

The government punished Illés by imposing ''measures limiting their appearances.'' The Illés' club in Budapest was forced to close, and the group was

banned from holding concerts in the Hungarian capital. Radio and television appearances were proscribed; the group could not use studio space; and the band's third album was shelved. The restrictions remained in effect for the remainder of 1970.

In 1971, with penance paid, Illés reemerged into public life. On December 20, 1970, the local paper for Pest county, *Pest Megyei Hirlap* reported that Illés was scheduled to hold its first Budapest concert on Saturday, December 26, 1970, at the Municipal House of Culture. "In the near future," *Pest Megyei Hirlap* continued, "television will present an original show featuring members of this band. In the first quarter of 1971, the group's first three small records will be put on the market." These "small records" were, in fact, singles taken from the album shelved earlier that year.

In March 1971, Illés, true to its roots as a Beatles band, released a white-sleeved album entitled simply *Illés*. The album presented a "beat oratorium" dealing with human-rights abuses and dedicated to the black American activist Angela Davis. Although the "white album" was dedicated to Angela Davis and the songs addressed the issue of human rights, the lyrics avoided specific reference to the United States. Commenting on the "beat oratorium" in 1971, and alluding to Illés' own experiences in Hungary, Szőrény observed: "People should look around in their own backyard, too, when talking about human rights abuses in the United States." Illés' "white album," which was not reissued until 1986, became one of the most coveted records on the secondhand market during the 1970s.

Although the BBC affair demonstrated that the government would move with resoluteness against unruly rock groups, Illés continued to strain government tolerance. In 1973, to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Hungary's poet laureate Sandor Petőfi, Illés released the song "Europa Csendes" ("Europe is Silent"), based on a poem penned by Petőfi in 1848. The poem expressed Petőfi's despair over the failed revolutions of 1848, in particular, Hungary's unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Russian rule in March of that year. "Europe is silent once more," Petőfi lamented in the poem. "Her revolutions have died away. Shame on Europe for being silent without winning freedom." Petőfi's words sung by Illés stung the East European consciousness, still raw from the Hungarian tragedy of 1956 and the Czechoslovak experience of 1968.

A second Illés song, "If I were a Rose," based on a Hungarian folk melody and scored for a single guitar accompaniment, also evoked the memories of Soviet military aggression:

> If I were a street, I'd always be clean.
> I'd bathe every night in streetlights.
> And if ever a tank's tread rolled over me,
> The earth beneath me would collapse, weeping.

Zsusza Koncz, one of Hungary's leading female vocalists, recorded "If I Were a Rose" with Illés on the state recording label in 1973. Just days before the album's release, the entire pressing was confiscated by government censors. Although the song was banned from radio play, it became an anthem for Hun-

gary's youth during the 1970s. The album containing "If I Were a Rose" finally appeared in 1983 but "Europe is Silent" was not played on state radio until 1987, when it was included in a retrospective of Illés' songs from 1962 to 1973.

By the early 1970s, rock and roll, for the most part, had either been battered into submission or seduced into complicity by the socialist state. Radio and television broadcast rock music, state recording companies released rock albums, state concert agencies booked rock-and-roll bands. National rock heroes also emerged. Bands like Czerwone Gitary in Poland, Shturtsite in Bulgaria, and Illés in Hungary no longer aped Western groups. They derived music from their own culture, wrote lyrics in their native language, and addressed issues of concern to socialist youth. Western trends continued to exert an influence, but one could speak, for better or for worse, of distinctly Polish and Hungarian rock and roll.

In the Soviet Union, the situation was different. In a country of 200,000,000 people, with a land mass three times the size of Eastern Europe and a population that included dozens of different nationalities, one could not speak of a homogeneous culture in any sense, let alone rock music.

7

The Soviet Rock Scene, 1965–1972

When young Russians say they want to be "like everybody else," they mean like everybody in the West, and their interest in western music, art and clothes shows that this is so.

Life, November 10, 1967

In November 1967, Moscow celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Communist revolution. During that year, the Soviets invited Western reporters to their country to observe the achievements of Communism five decades after Lenin allegedly drove capitalism and bourgeois values from the streets of St. Petersburg. Western correspondents came in droves and reported what they saw. The American monthly *Look* printed a photograph of young Russians dancing the twist in Red Square with the subtitle: "On holiday nights Soviets twist in Kremlin shadow." *Life* catalogued in pictures the "fads and foibles" of Soviet youth, including miniskirts, blue jeans, long hair, and rock 'n' roll.

Harold Schonberg, reporting on the Soviet music scene for the *New York Times,* heard the latest American hits wafting from "every restaurant and what passed for a nightclub." He also found young Russians adopting many current Western fashions. "Boys wear beards," wrote Schonberg in the *New York Times* on October 12, 1967, "sling guitars on their backs and stroll through Red Square or down Gorky Street in the best Greenwich Village or First Avenue traditions. They dote on Joan Baez, the Beatles and Bob Dylan." Harrison Salisbury, the editor overseeing the *New York Times*'s coverage of the Soviet Union, concluded that Lenin's world revolution and the Communist transformation of man, especially among the youth, had "misfired."

The Soviet press thundered against the Western coverage. On October 18, 1967, *Pravda* assailed the *New York Times* for its series on the Soviet Union,

charging that the American newspaper had spearheaded an international conspiracy to discredit the Soviet Union. *Pravda* accused the *New York Times* of disseminating "undisguised slander" with the help of other Western publications, including *Look* and *US News and World Report*. Western assertions that Soviet youths coveted Western fashion and music were denounced by *Pravda* as "delirious fabrications."

While *Pravda* condemned this "dirty campaign," the satirical weekly *Krokodil* seemed to confirm Western assessments of "hip" Soviet youths. Three weeks after *Pravda*'s heated disclaimer, a November issue of *Krokodil* chided young Soviets for their infatuation with Western fads. In one cartoon, a long-haired young man, guitar slung over his shoulder, stands before a nineteenth-century painting of a burly Russian strumming a guitar. "Look, Zinka," the Soviet hippy comments to his companion. "Our kind of man!" Another cartoon in the same issue of *Krokodil* shows two miniskirted Russian girls before a portrait of a royal matron draped in sumptuous garb. "What do you think," asks one of the girls, "how many miniskirts could you get from that outfit?"

Young people flaunted their passion for Western pop culture in the streets of Soviet cities. Along the Nevsky Prospekt in Leningrad and the Gorky Prospekt in Moscow, where sleak *stiliagi* once stared disparagingly at passers-by, a new generation paraded through the crowds in blue jeans and miniskirts, tossing long manes of unkempt hair over their shoulders. Hippies draped themselves with beads and bells; rock fans purchased *znachki* in state-run stores and pasted pictures of rock idols like Mick Jagger and Jimi Hendrix over party slogans. As with many other aspects of Soviet life, party polemics had little in common with the realities of life among socialist youths.

The Rolling Stones, the Beatles, and Other "Jazz Kings"

Soviet unwillingness to acknowledge the youths' infatuation with Western music and the inability of most officials to comprehend the nature of this music crippled official efforts to deal effectively with the influences of Anglo-American rock and roll. Buffered by geographical distances and shielded by ideological orthodoxy, Soviet society absorbed Western pop culture more slowly than did its socialist neighbors. In contrast to officials in other socialist countries, Soviet leaders displayed relative ignorance of Western pop music. East Germany's party head Walter Ulbricht could single out Elvis Presley's "ecstatic songs" for criticism and rail specifically against the Beatles' incessant "yeah, yeah, yeah." In contrast, Khrushchev, complaining about Western music in the early 1960s, equated Western pop music, be it swing, jazz, or rock, with "static on my radio" and the "sound of trolley cars." Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, lecturing the All-Union Teachers' Congress in July 1969, spoke vaguely of his concern over the musical interests of Soviet youths, and naively urged educators to develop "healthy musical tastes and a sense of melody in our clear voiced young people."

Many Soviet educators and cultural officials shared their leaders' inability to

distinguish jazz from rock and roll. On February 26, 1967, a letter by teachers to *Komsomolskaia pravda* complained of the pervasiveness of Western music in Soviet schools and at pioneer camps. Many young people, *Komsomolskaia pravda* charged, "know nothing at all" about music or else "worship the Beatles or some other current 'jazz king'." On March 13, 1970, *Izvestiia* related a confrontation between a teacher and a student during which reference was made to the British group the Rolling Stones "with their saxophones." The student, exasperated by the inaccurate depiction of the Rolling Stones, wondered how a person could believe anything that the media reported about Western rock culture.

The state's inability to distinguish between jazz and rock music discredited much of the party's antirock propaganda; it also threw official cultural policy into disarray. After 1956, when official restraints on jazz music gradually lifted, rock 'n' roll infiltrated jazz repertoires, blurring distinctions between approved and unapproved music. The confrontation in official policy persisted well into the 1960s. "Because of a confusion in terms," observed L. Gerasimova in *Smena* in January 1967, "various forms of dance music—rock and roll and the twist—have often been declared jazz, though the music of these dances has nothing in common with true jazz."

Soviet naïveté regarding Western music was highlighted in the summer of 1965 during negotiations between the British and the Soviets. In July 1965, the Soviet minister of culture, Yekaterina Furtseva, traveled to London to discuss developing cultural exchanges between Britain and the Soviet Union. During the five-day visit, Furtseva met with Jennie Lee, Britain's joint parliamentary secretary of state for cultural affairs. The Soviets, exploiting the visit for propaganda purposes, hosted a press conference with Furtseva in their London embassy. During the meeting with British correspondents, Furtseva was asked if the Soviet Union would consider bringing the Beatles to Moscow. "We are willing," Furtseva replied, apparently unfamiliar with the proposed ensemble, "to discuss in principle any suggestion." On July 18, 1965, the *New York Times* ran the promising headline: "Official Says Soviet Is Ready to Discuss Visit by the Beatles."

Furtseva did, in fact, make efforts to address the desires of young people for popular Western music. In the spring of 1967, Furtseva learned that Polish concert officials had invited a popular British ensemble to perform in Warsaw. Furtseva dispatched an observer to the Polish capital to see if the group might be appropriate for Soviet audiences. The Moscow emissary attending the Rolling Stones' concert in Warsaw in April 1967 watched in awe as three thousand semi-hysterical Polish youths nearly sacked the concert facility, while outside, battalions of Polish police armed with tear gas and clubs battled another eight thousand rock fans. The Soviet official returned to Moscow, reportedly "speechless, thoroughly outraged by what he had seen and heard."

A year later, in the summer of 1968, Soviet officials hit upon a Western performer they felt appropriate for their young people: the British pop star Donovan. Donovan, whose hits "Sunshine Superman" (1966) and "Mellow Yellow" (1967) won the singer international acclaim, arranged to conclude a

1968 European tour with appearances in Moscow and Leningrad—a first for a major Western pop star. In July 1968, Vic Lewis, Donovan's representative and managing dirctor of the London-based firm News Enterprises, traveled to Moscow to negotiate the Soviet finale for the Donovan tour. The Soviets agreed to host Donovan and his band, but refused to pay hard currency for Donovan's soft pop. After ten days of negotiation, Lewis returned to London with a complex but satisfactory arrangement. In exchange for Donovan concerts in Moscow and Leningrad, the Soviets would send the forty-five-piece National Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. to London. Additionally, Lewis obtained rights to film highlights of Bolshoi Ballet performances scheduled for September and October 1968 at La Scala in Milan.

Within a month, Lewis's fragile arrangements, strung across Moscow, London, and Milan, collapsed. On August 21, 1968, Warsaw Pact forces, spearheaded by Soviet airborne divisions, invaded Czechoslovakia. Western nations, while refusing to intervene militarily, responded to the invasion by breaking off cultural exchanges with most Soviet-bloc governments. Although the cultural embargoes began to ease four months later in December 1968, the thaw came too late for the Donovan tour. Soviet fans would have to wait seven years before a major Western pop star, Cliff Richard, took the stage in Moscow.

While the Ministry of Culture cautiously deliberated on the prudence of importing British pop stars to Moscow, Western-style pop music penetrated official Soviet culture through other channels. The Soviet's Byzantine bureaucracy prevented the party from maintaining a consistent policy toward Western pop music. A youth song festival in 1963 underscored the confusion in administering controls over popular music. Songs written by students were submitted to a contest and reviewed by a panel of judges. "I was on the jury, together with S. Tulikov and the poet M. Lvovsky," recalled one member of the jury, A. Novikov. "Almost all the songs were rejected." The jury disapproved of the student songs because almost all of them proved to be "low grade and vulgar 'novelties' of variety music." However, the editors for youth programming at the state radio thought the songs would appeal to young listeners. "Literally the next day," noted jury member Novikov with vexation, "they were all broadcast with the blessings of the Yunost program editors."

During the late 1960s, Western-style pop music also infiltrated Soviet television and motion-picture production. In 1968, Mosfilm released the motion picture *Once More About Love,* a teenage romance that featured the Moscow rock band Skify (the Scythians). With electric guitars in hand and with hair trimmed well above their ears, these three Moscow rockers added new musical dimensions to the august Soviet cinematic tradition. In the fall of 1968, Soviet television also succumbed to Western influences and broadcast performances from the annual Sochi Song Festival in Soviet Georgia. Many performances, strongly influenced by Western pop culture, elicited a flurry of prudish criticism. One television viewer from Odessa expressed disgust when he found himself watching "singers in short skirts wiggle their hips." A viewer from the city of Izhevsk gasped when he saw how another "singer wiggled and contorted his body as he sang."

In the winter of 1968, Soviet writer Nikolai Gribachev found pop music blaring from a department store in central Moscow. In a letter to *Izvestiia* on March 28, 1968, Gribachev recounted that as he entered a Moscow store, he heard "tapes with recordings of the most cacaphonous American jazz" blaring from a display model of a tape recorder. "Out of the whole world of music," Gribachev asked the young clerk, "is this the only kind suitable for demonstrating the quality of tape recorders?" The young man, who was surrounded by several admiring young girls, told Gribachev that he personally found the music pleasant and "fashionable." The clerk then added glibly, "Surely you don't expect me to put on Tchaikowsky!" Gribachev fled the department, lamenting the fact that this young man was permitted to impose "his immature tastes on the hundreds and thousands of people who pass through the store."

The state's most explicit concession to Western music came in the form of vocal instrumental ensembles (VIAs). In 1966, the Ministry of Culture approved the formation of the first state-supported beat-music ensembles. Musicians willing to cut their hair, moderate their decibel levels, and purge their repertoires of offensive Western songs, could enjoy the benefits of state sponsorship—national concert tours, appearances on radio and television, recording opportunities on the Melodiya label. These VIAs usually consisted of eight to ten musicians positioned on stage with two or three guitars, an organ, a few horns or a saxophone, a percussion set, and several vocalists. An "artistic director" policed the ensemble's appearance and repertoire.

The VIAs featured names that assured officials of their good-natured intent: Poiushchie gitary (Singing Guitars) in Leningrad, Pesniary (Songsters) in Minsk, Golubye gitary (Blue Guitars) and Veselye rebiata (Happy Guys) in Moscow. The Singing Guitars, headed by Anatoli Vasiliev, a thirty-one-year-old saxophone player and a graduate of the Leningrad Musical Conservatory, performed soft rock adaptations of tunes by the Soviet song writers Astrovsky, Kolker, Babadshanian, and Tariverdiev, along with covers to the hits by the Shadows and the Beatles.

Moscow's Happy Guys emerged as the quintessential vocal instrumental ensemble. Deriving their name from a film by the Soviet jazz king Leonid Utesov, the Happy Guys combined a healthy socialist appearance with a tempered but spirited Western sound. The state promoted the Happy Guys, booking them on concert tours and playing their music on radio. Eventually, the Happy Guys even hosted their own show on Soviet television. Among the first recordings released by the Happy Guys on the Melodiya label was a paper-thin, seven-inch, 33⅓-rpm vinyl disc featuring four songs, including a Russian cover of the Beatles hit "Baby You Can Drive My Car" and a heavily accented English language rendition of the Beatles song "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da."

Soviet Youth Clubs: Sunflower Seeds and Rock 'n' Roll

By 1965, Soviet youths spent as much time on the dance floor as they did on the athletic field or in the gymnasium. Dances generally took place beyond the

reach of the Komsomol youth organization, as young Soviets gathered in private apartments, in restaurants and cafes, or in privately rented space. Komsomol youth clubs, even when they did sponsor dancing, often proved inadequate to the needs of the young people. Clubs in large urban centers like Moscow and Leningrad lacked adequate space; clubs in rural towns and villages were often shabby, dirty, and poorly heated. In 1966, the Komsomol decided to upgrade its clubs so that, as *Sovetskaia Rossia* explained on September 22, 1966, "the element of chance in the way young people spend their time was to give way to unobtrusive, subtle organization."

In 1966, the Komsomol, in tandem with the Russian Republic Ministry of Trade, launched an ambitious campaign to refurbish the clubs and cafes under Komsomol control. Any establishment with a hundred seats or more was allocated funds to retain on a permanent basis a "two- or three-piece orchestra." All other facilities were to be equipped with a radio, a tape recorder, or a pianist.

The renovation came none too soon for the village of Leninsk in the Tula district. By 1965, the local club stood virtually empty. On evenings when dances took place, few people showed up because the mud made it almost impossible to get into the building. In another village, young people complained that the poor heating and cigarette smoke made the atmosphere unpleasant. A young soldier who frequented the club found the building so cold in winter that his feet froze "even in felt boots." Furthermore, the young man noted that during the shows "the audience smokes and spits sunflower seeds." To make matters worse, the only available source of music for dancing was an accordion or harmonica. "Would it really be impossible," the young soldier asked *Komsomolskaia pravda* in 1965, "to get a tape recorder, a record player and some records?"

In 1966, as the Komsomol took steps to improve the conditions in the clubs in order to exercise more control over the youths' "leisure-time," officials found they could upgrade facilities, but not necessarily change the attitudes of the management. Many club managers banned all Western dances. Young people caught dancing the twist or the frug were often thrown out of clubs or arrested by the local militia. "In our city they do not let us dance the shake," complained one young man. "As soon as contemporary dance music is played and a few braver couples appear on the floor, the militiamen and people's volunteers appear and at best drive you off, saying, 'That kind of thing is forbidden,' and at worst put you away for a specified number of days."

In Baku, the capital of Azerbaizhan, local officials imposed a city-wide ban on modern dancing. As an alternative to these subversive dances, the local Komsomol sponsored "thematic evenings" that included lectures and reports followed by ballroom dancing. The events proved so boring that guards were employed to keep the young people from fleeing the club before the events ended. "Volunteers have to hold back the crowds from the street exit," reported *Pravda* on January 22, 1966, "so that all the participants in the thematic evenings won't run off."

In Moscow, in the clubs and cafes where jazz ensembles once reigned, local

rock bands began competing for time on stage. By 1968, at Moscow's Molodezhnoe Cafe, a center for the city's jazz scene, rock bands performed as often as jazz groups. The Komsomol renamed its Melodiia Cafe the Melody and Rhythm Cafe to reflect its evolving musical fare. The Vremena Goda (Seasons Cafe), a sterile, two-story structure located in Moscow's Gorky Park, provided a forum for many of Moscow's most popular rock bands, some of which kept fans dancing until two and three in the morning.

Hundreds of unofficial rock clubs also appeared. In rented or borrowed space, enterprising young Muscovites with a tape recorder, a sound system, and a collection of recordings smuggled from abroad or taped off foreign broadcasts could improvise a discotheque. Levying a two or three ruble entrance fee, the organizer packed scores of young people into a small room for an evening of rock 'n' roll. In an atmosphere thick with cigarette smoke, perspiration, and pounding rock 'n' roll, Soviet entrepreneurs recast in a modern idiom the frenetic scenes from Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*. Dancing through the night to the point of exhaustion, the throngs eventually dispersed in the early morning hours. As dawn broke, with the organizer having packed away his equipment and having swept the floor, hardly a trace remained of the nocturnal frenzy.

More ambitious entrepreneurs provided live entertainment by hiring local bands. Typically, an organizer rented a hall for four hundred rubles, paid three hundred rubles to a band and an additional five hundred rubles for food and liquor. Fans willingly paid up to ten rubles cover charge for an evening of live rock. After expenses, a good organizer could earn in one evening as much as eight hundred rubles tax free, the equivalent of several months' wages for an average worker.

The profits were high, but so were the risks. Raucous concerts often attracted the attention of local militia, who raided the events, arresting the organizers and confiscating the musical instruments and sound equipment. The organizer faced charges of tax evasion and engaging in illegal business activity, charges which could carry a heavy fine as well as a prison sentence. For rock musicians, the loss of the precious equipment was punishment enough. But the prospect of large profits for organizers coupled with the insatiable demand for Western music among young people nurtured Moscow's burgeoning underground rock culture. "New beat clubs appeared in Moscow almost every month," recalls Soviet rock critic Artemy Troitsky, "but were constantly closed down again by frightened officials. And in the late 1960s, there was indeed due cause for alarm; the city was shaking with a rock music epidemic. Hundreds of garage bands, thousands of guitars, hundreds of thousands of fervent fans."

The Moscow Rock Scene

Alexander Gradsky, a veteran of the Moscow rock scene, formed one of the first rock bands in the Soviet capital in 1965. As with many other Soviet-bloc youths, Gradsky's encounter with the Beatles changed his life. In 1961, at age

twelve, Gradsky began imitating the songs of Elvis Presley and other Western rock stars. "And that's how things stayed until 1963, when I first heard the Beatles," Gradsky recalls. "I went into a state of shock, total hysteria. They put everything into focus. All the music I'd heard until that time was just a prelude." Early in 1965, Gradsky formed a Beatles band called the Slavs. For the Slavs' first concert, which took place in 1966 in a hall at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the band debuted with three 25-watt "guitar combos" and a 100-watt PA system. Of two other pioneering Moscow rock bands, Sokol (Falcon) and Brati (Brothers), the Falcons, which played Rolling Stones and Monkeys hits, are credited with writing the first truly popular rock song with Russian lyrics, "The Sun Above Us."

Within two years, hundreds of rock bands appeared in Moscow. In the late 1960s, Alexander Gradsky, who hoped to establish his own rock club, assembled a list of bands playing in Moscow. By Gradsky's count, Moscow boasted 263 unofficial groups, whose names in translation suggest the energy and youthful abandon of their members: Hairy Glass, Little Red Demons, Singing Volumes, Soft Suede Corners, Purple Catastrophe, Midnight Carousers, Nasty Dogs, 1000 Audible Winds, Cramps, Symbol of Faith, Glass Cactus, Bald Spot, and the Best Years. These unofficial bands, usually composed of three or four young people who managed to assemble electric guitars, a set of drums, and a modest sound system, provided the backbone to the nascent Soviet rock culture.

In Moscow, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union during the 1960s, electric guitars and sound equipment were in short supply. Soviet central planning, hardly sensitive to the needs or wishes of aspiring Russian rock musicians, produced few instruments that a Beatles band could use. Electric guitars from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, or the West that made it to Soviet cities commanded top ruble. In 1966, a shop opened in Moscow that offered electric guitars manufactured in East Germany. The entire stock of ten guitars sold out within ten minutes after the store opened. The next day, the same guitars were trading hands on the black market for double the price.

The critical shortage of electric guitars was dramatically demonstrated by an outbreak of vandalism in the summer of 1969. An innovative young Muscovite, who discovered that with the pickup from a normal telephone a person could convert an acoustic into an electric guitar, detailed the conversion technique in an article in a Moscow paper. A wave of vandalism swept central Moscow as hundreds of young people dismantled public telephones for the precious electronic parts. By the end of July 1969, a spokesman for the Moscow police publicly denounced the pilfering and noted that, thanks to the hooligans, there was hardly a public telephone still operable in the Soviet capital.

Supplying rock musicians with equipment and providing rock fans with blue jeans and record albums became big business in the Soviet underground. Young hustlers, known as *fartsovshchiki,* staked out Western hotels and worked popular tourist sites, begging or bartering marketable goods from Western tourists. These *fartsovshchiki,* a public embarrassment in the eyes of the Soviet government, provided a lifeline to Western culture for Soviet youth. Enjoying the advantage of a sellers' market, *fartsovshchiki* could earn one hundred rubles,

over one week's salary, for a popular album from the West. Militia waged a relentless war against the *fartsovshchiki,* but for every individual arrested, a countless number continued to ply the trade.

In 1971, one repentant *fartsovshchik,* who identified himself simply as Andrei K., recounted for *Komsomolskaia pravda* his downward path to black-market speculation. On February 12, 1971, the Communist youth paper published Andrei's story. "I am 23 years old. My parents were divorced when I was one," the young man told *Komsomolskaia pravda.* "I was raised by my grandfather, a well-known professor of biology. I left school when I was 15 and took a job as an apprentice machinist." Andrei K. soon found new employment as a laboratory assistant at a research institute where he earned seventy rubles a month. One day, while searching for magnetic recording tape at a secondhand store, he learned of the possibility of making recordings of record albums. "I couldn't resist the temptation of making enough money by speculation to get a beautiful tape recorder, tapes and other illicitly obtained items."

In 1969, Andrei earned enough money to employ a surrogate to stand in for him at his job. At age twenty-one, Andrei was a wealthy man by Soviet standards. "My idea of happiness," he noted, "was a Grundig tape recorder, a stack of Presley and Holiday records, a package of chewing gum and jeans of various colors. I sat amid this splendor smoking Marlboro cigarettes, drinking gin and tonics and looking at the latest issue of *Playboy.*" Eventually, Andrei's "feeling of total spiritual emptiness" compelled him to abandon this lucrative but dissolute existence. "After much soul-searching, I finally broke with this way of life."

Rock musicians also did well for themselves in the grey world of the unofficial rock scene. A good rock band could earn up to three hundred rubles for one evening's performance, nearly three weeks' income for an average worker. Soviet rock musicians also enjoyed the adulation of fans and the company of *grupi.* "Sex outside marriage was illegal," recalled Sasha Lehrman, the bass guitarist for the popular Moscow band Vetri peremen (Winds of Change), "but all the young people did it. We had nude parties just like here, and there were groupies all around the underground musicians."

The Winds of Change, formed in 1967 by five students from Moscow's prestigious Gnesin School of Music, took its name from the hit song by the British band, the Animals. Two band members were protégés of the Soviet cellist Mstilav Rostopovich. During the late 1960s, the Winds of Change emerged as one of Moscow's most popular bands. They performed regularly at the Season's Cafe in Moscow's Gorky Park and also toured to other cities. The Winds of Change, like hundreds of other underground bands, played hard, drank hard, and lived hard. They also endured harassment by the Moscow militia. "They would sometimes break in while we were playing," Lehrman recalled, "sweep us off the stage and take our instruments." Almost immediately, the band would re-form, obtain new equipment, and continue working the underground circuit.

With no access to state media, the rock scenes in Soviet cities evolved independently of one another. While in Poland rock fans clamored unanimously for Czesław Niemen or the Red Guitars, while in Hungary young people swore

their loyalty either to Illés or Omega, in the Soviet Union, rock fans embraced local heroes, whose fame, for the most part, resonated barely into the suburbs of their city.

The first impulse to forge a national rock culture in the Soviet Union came from Yerevan, the capital of the southern Soviet republic of Armenia. A concert organizer, Rafael Mkrtchian, who had made a fortune booking concerts in Yerevan, decided to host a national rock festival to bring together the best rock bands in the Soviet Union. Mkrtchian, a cunning businessman, convinced the Yerevan Komsomol to provide nominal support for the rock festival.

In the winter months of 1969, Mkrtchian scouted talent in Moscow, Leningrad, and the Baltic republics. For several weekends during the summer of 1969, eight to ten thousand rock fans gathered in Yerevan to hear some of the best rock musicians in the Soviet Union, including Moscow's Alexander Gradsky. The festival which earned the sobriquet, the Armenian Woodstock, was repeated during the three subsequent summers. Although Mkrtchian filmed the 1972 festival, intending to produce a documentary of the event; the film was never released. Shortly after the 1972 festival, Mkrtchian, having failed to pay sufficient bribes to local officials, was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison. Mkrtchian's annual festival, however short-lived, remained a landmark in Soviet rock history as the first attempt to create a national rock culture.

The California Coast of the Soviet Union

During the 1960s, the Soviet Baltic republics, in particular Estonia and Latvia, offered what was perhaps the most dynamic rock scene in the Soviet Union. The Baltic republics, forcefully incorporated into the Soviet Union during the Second World War, were linguistically and culturally non-Slavic nations. Under Soviet domination, the Baltic peoples clung tenaciously to their national roots and to their traditionally close ties with Western Europe. After the Second World War, the Baltic republics relied on Scandanavian tourism, Finnish television, which reached Estonian and Latvian shores, and the broadcasts of the BBC, VOA, RFE, and Radio Luxemburg to maintain their contact with the West.

For many Baltic youths, rock music provided more than simple entertainment; as a symbol of Western youth culture, rock and roll linked them with the West and represented a desired affront to official Soviet culture. In 1961, four years before the first Moscow groups appeared, Latvian jazz aficionados formed one of the Soviet Union's first known rock bands, the Revengers. The band, outfitted with electric guitars from Czechoslovakia and a homemade electric bass strung with wire used for piano strings, performed at school dances throughout Riga. The Revengers relied primarily on Latvian covers of hits by Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, and Little Richard.

One of the most popular Baltic bands of the 1960s, the Melody Makers, was formed by Latvian rocker Peteris Andersons. Andersons, sixteen years old in 1961, had worked for the Revengers, helping them decipher the lyrics from

recordings of American rock-and-roll songs. Following the lead singer's induction into the military, Andersons took the opportunity to join the Revengers. "When Valery was called up to serve in the army," Andersons recalls, "I left home and spent a month learning to play the guitar." Andersons, who served as lead singer for the Revengers, also made guest appearances with the Juniors in Tallinn and eventually formed his own band, the Melody Makers. In 1966, several leading Baltic rock bands, the Melody Makers, Atlantic, and Eolika performed before thousands of cheering fans at the Riga Dynamo sports palace. Eolika, renowned for its vocals, reportedly performed Beach Boys hits, including a flawless cover to "Good Vibrations."

Latvia's first semiofficial festival devoted exclusively to rock music took place in 1969 and featured seven or eight leading bands, the best of which were reportedly the Jokers and the Dreamers. The band played a diverse program of rock and roll, blues, and soul, almost exclusively in English. M. Opeskins, a chronicler of Latvian rock and roll, recalled that the concert, staged in Riga's sports palace Daugaua, ended in a riot by the euphoric young Latvians. "What occurred there differed little from the height of Beatlemania in the West," noted Opeskins. "Six doors, eight windows and 156 chairs were smashed to pieces; a vast quantity of beer was drunk and 'tons' of hashish was smoked."

The Baltic republics also became a Mecca for thousands of Soviet hippies. The Soviet hippie movement received its major impetus in 1968 with the appearance of the article "A Voyage to the Country of Hippieland" in the journal *Vokrug sveta (Around the World).* In the article, Soviet journalist Genrikh Borovik presented "hipplandia" as a colorful world in which young people wore colorful clothing, draped themselves in beads, and listened to rock-and-roll music. "This article became the manifesto for many young people," recalled Mark Yoffe, a Russian national living in Riga at the time. "Borovik provided us with a complete description of the music and dress. The appearance of this article was very much the birth of the Soviet hippie movement."

Taking their cue from Borovik's article, thousands of young Soviets grew their hair and jettisoned the canon of socialist values. In Moscow, scores of hippies gathered around the Hippodrome, a building near Moscow University. In Leningrad, hippies littered the bustling Nevsky Prospekt near the Kazan Cathedral. During the summer months, the Soviet's urban hippies set off for distant corners of the country, flocking to Azerbaizhan with its stunning natural beauty and its plentiful harvests of narcotic drugs. In the Crimean city of Yalta, an open market sprang up where young people from all over the Soviet Union bartered clothing, records, and other accoutrements of Western-style youth culture. Thousands of hippies also traveled north to the Baltic sea where the breeze of relative freedom blew refreshingly through Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. "The Hill," located in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, and the ancient city center of Riga became legendary summer gathering places for Soviet hippies.

By the autumn of 1968, the migration of hippies to Latvia was eliciting public protest from the residents of Riga. On October 8, 1968, an article in Latvia's daily paper, *Sovetskaia Latvia,* expressed outrage at the presence of "our half baked imitators of the American and British good-for-nothings" in

the city. "Down a street of Old Riga," *Sovetskaia Latvia* observed, "long-haired creatures are marching, wearing multicolored pants and incredibly bright jackets or blouses and adorned with flowers, beads and bells." The paper charged that attempts by Soviet youths to imitate the Beatles and Western hippies had "led these young fellows into the filthy morass of moral dissipation and alienation from real life." *Sovetskaia Latvia* blamed the Komsomol for neglecting these young people and allowing them to pursue these deviant activities.

The Soviet system, equipped to combat political dissent and ideological deviation, offered few mechanisms for confronting the emerging Soviet hippie culture. "They were expelled from school for their long hair," noted one observer of the Soviet hippie scene, "and taken from the streets to police stations where their hair was cut. Frequently they were either beaten up or sent to psychiatric hospitals." Except in cases involving drug abuse, which drew stiff prison sentences, the state had no long-term means for dealing with hippies. The battle against the *hippi* was fought primarily at the local level by the militia and the *druzhinniki* (the volunteer police). Local authorities, with no legal recourse against a young man who sported long hair and beads, found other means for apprehending an individual—be it for suspected drug possession or for disturbance of public order. Left to the proclivities of local officials, arrest could bring a verbal upbraiding, a forced haircut, and, not uncommonly, a cuffing or beating.

Although most hippies suffered these abuses in silence, bearing their bruises and shorn heads with martyr-like pride, on occasion, victims brought these abuses to public attention. In 1970, a widely publicized case demonstrated the level of official tolerance toward Soviet *hippi*. Andrei Maslakov, a young man with long hair, was apprehended by *druzhinniki* while walking down the street. The youth police escorted Maslakov to the local militia station, where the militia chief demanded that the youth cut his hair. Maslakov, refusing to submit to a haircut, was interrogated, beaten up, and then released.

Angered by the loose-fisted militia, Maslakov protested his treatment to higher authorities. The case came before Mikhail P. Maliarov, first vice chairman of the Soviet Union's Prosecutor's Office. Maliarov reviewed the case and agreed that the young man's appearance "offended aesthetic tastes and codes." In such instances, Maliarov felt that the Komsomol and the media should pressure young people to abandon their deviant ways. "But," the prosecutor stated explicitly, "no one has a right to take a man to a militia station only because his appearance does not please someone."

Thousands of *hippi* continued to litter Soviet society long after their counterparts in the West had disappeared. As late as 1978, Andrea Lee, an American living in Leningrad, reported that hundreds of Soviet *hippi* still gathered to share experiences and wander the length and breadth of the Soviet Union. "It was strange for me," Lee recalled in her book *Russian Journal,* "to see and hear all around me vestiges of the American drug culture of a decade ago—the psychedelic drawings, the fantastic clothes, Grace Slick wailing on a tape player."

For all its color and all its lore, rock music and its accompanying phenomena impacted Soviet society only marginally. The relative isolation from the West

and the residual caution from the Stalin era retarded the development of rock music in most Soviet republics. Occasionally, traces of Western-style pop culture infected television or radio programming or crept into a Mosfilm production, but for the most part, traditional Soviet culture dominated public life. In contrast, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, all bordering on the Soviet Union, had developed visible public rock cultures during the 1960s. Even in Romania and Bulgaria, two bastions of authoritarian rule, rock and roll had by the end of the decade found secure footing in public life.

8

Rocking the Balkans, 1965–1975

Cheap holidays in other
people's misery.
THE SEX PISTOLS

During the 1960's, geography as much as ideology shaped the official policy toward rock music in Bulgaria and Romania. Both countries, enjoying expansive beaches along the Black sea, renovated resort facilities in the hope of attracting hard-currency-laden Western tourists. The plan worked, and millions of British, German, and Scandanavian tourists, lured by inexpensive alternatives to the Mediterranean beaches, flocked to Bulgaria's and Romania's Black sea coast.

Catering to the swelling numbers of Western tourists, the two countries also imported Western products. In the fall of 1965, Bulgaria became the first East European nation to sign a bottling agreement with the Coca-Cola Company. Just across the Danube, Romania contracted with the competition—Pepsi-Cola. A Pepsi-Cola advertisement in the June 2, 1967, issue of *Contemporanul* showed three athletes in the heat of a soccer match. To the right, in classic socialist monumentality, towered a giant bottle of Pepsi-Cola. A banner headline proclaimed: *Pepsi—avînt şi energie* (''Pepsi—upsurge and energy.'')

Western Europe's ''Pepsi generation,''—young people and students—found the promise of inexpensive holidays especially attractive. Along with their bathing suits and limited amounts of hard currency, they came to the Balkans with blue jeans, record albums, and other peripherals of Western pop culture. As a vigorous trade developed between young visitors from the West and Balkan youths, socialist ideologues wrestled with the growing disparity between the dictates of socialist ideology and the demands of the state economy. On the one hand,

cultural officials worked to shield the young from "subversive" Western influences, while on the other, tourism officials attempted to lure increasing numbers of Western tourists to the sparkling beaches of the Black sea.

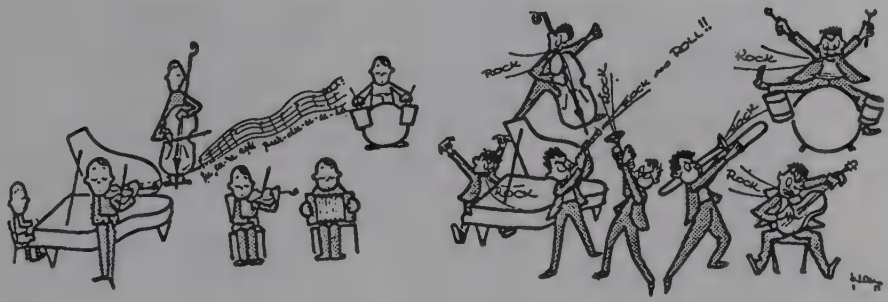
Bulgaria: Distinguishing the Girls From the Boys

Bulgaria, a mountainous land tucked in an obscure corner of Europe and inhabited by a simple, earthy folk, did not escape the rock-music inundation of the late 1950s or the thunderclap of Beatlemania in 1964. A 1965 survey of five hundred Bulgarian youths, published in *Narodna kultura* on January 22, 1966, found among young people between sixteen and twenty-two years of age a complete "disregard for Bulgarian music, dances and traditional entertainment." According to *Narodna kultura,* Sofia was overrun with young people who "wear Western-style clothing and miniskirts, dance to and sing the latest Western hits and wear their hair like the Beatles." One Bulgarian Beatles fan, when asked what fascinated him and his peers with the music and styles of the British rock stars, rhapsodized: "The Beatles stir one's blood."

In 1966, as Moscow urged vigilance against ideological subversion from the West, Bulgaria, a stalwart adherent of Kremlin doctrine, initiated a clamorous campaign against Western influences. "The regime felt the need," noted one observer, "to launch a full-scale counter-offensive against what it considered the dangerous inroads of western bourgeois influence, the increasing aggressiveness of imperialist ideological subversion and the political apathy of large sections of the population, particularly, the youth."

Bulgaria's pop music scene had enjoyed relative freedom from party ideologues during the early 1960s. However, in January 1966, as the Soviet Union battened ideological hatches, Bulgaria's Committee for Culture and the Arts convened a conference devoted solely to pop music. In the spring of 1966, the state's cultural paper, *Narodna kultura,* declared that official tolerance of Western rock and pop music had ended. "Bourgeois influence is almost entirely identified with pop music," wrote *Narodna kultura* on May 5, 1966, "and almost the whole of our fire is aimed against it." Five months later, at the Ninth Party Congress in November 1966, party head Todor Zhivkov charged that Western youth culture promoted a sense of "national nihilism" among young people. Zhivkov declared the situation "insufferable" and swore to eradicate manifestations of Western pop culture from Bulgaria "with a red hot iron."

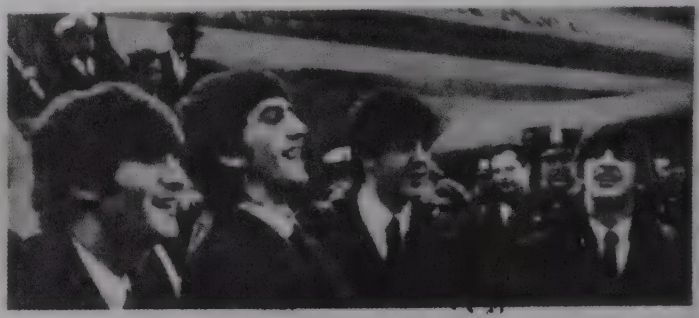
As cultural officials sought to cauterize this ideological wound, their new offensive, rooted in Soviet-style dogmatism, collided with Bulgaria's efforts to cultivate a lucrative tourist trade with the West. On September 25, 1967, the Sofia weekly *Pogled* noted the contradiction in state policies, observing that among the tourists visiting Bulgaria "a considerable number come from the West, bring their own ways of living, thinking and even dressing. What is more, we want their numbers to increase." In order to patch the breach be-



The Soviet bloc shuffle: a Romanian cartoon in *Muzica*, No. 6, 1958, underscores the futility of the official anti-rock campaigns of 1958. *Left:* "While the investigation commission is present." *Right:* "After the investigation commission is gone."

Hungary's László Komár ain't nothing but a "magyar-Elvis." Shown here in the early 1960s, Komár remains the Soviet bloc's foremost interpreter of Presley songs. *(Courtesy of László Komár)*

Cold War Cafe: Soviet bloc ideologues accused NATO of "misusing" rock music in its military strategy. *Left:* West Germany's Konrad Adenauer on machine gun. *Right:* John Foster Dulles on atomic drums. (Dikobraz, *August 23, 1956*)



ЖУЧКИ-УДАРНИКИ И ЖУК-ПРЕТЕНДЕНТ

Английский эстрадный квартет «Битлз», что в переводе значит примерно жучки-ударники, возвращался в Нью-Йорк с гастролей в Ва- с половиной миллиона пластинок «жучков». В Англии, в Глазго, власти запретили выступления квартета после того, как три с половиной ты-

In March 1964, one month after Beatlemania sweeps America, the Soviet paper *Krokodil* denounces the Fab Four as a short-lived media sensation.

Prague's Crazy Boys add a twist to dance night at the Merkur hall in 1961. In the early 1960s, the twist craze swept the Soviet bloc. *(Courtesy of Ondrej Konrad)*

Poland's Czerwone Gitary (Red Guitars) kick up the beat in 1966. *(Courtesy of Marek Karewicz)*

Prague's premier Beatles band, Olympic, tries on the *Sgt. Pepper* image in the summer of 1967. *(Courtesy of Petr Janda)*

Let's Spend the Day Together: Mini-skirted fans greet Mick Jagger following his performance in Warsaw's Palace of Culture. The April 1967 concert sparked a devastating rock riot that left the Polish capital in shambles. *(Courtesy of Marek Karewicz)*

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repertoár: Count Five, Q65, Dave Dee, Defenders, Who, Small Faces, Zipps Barognes, Sabres

Pořad uvádí: OSCAR GOTTLIEB

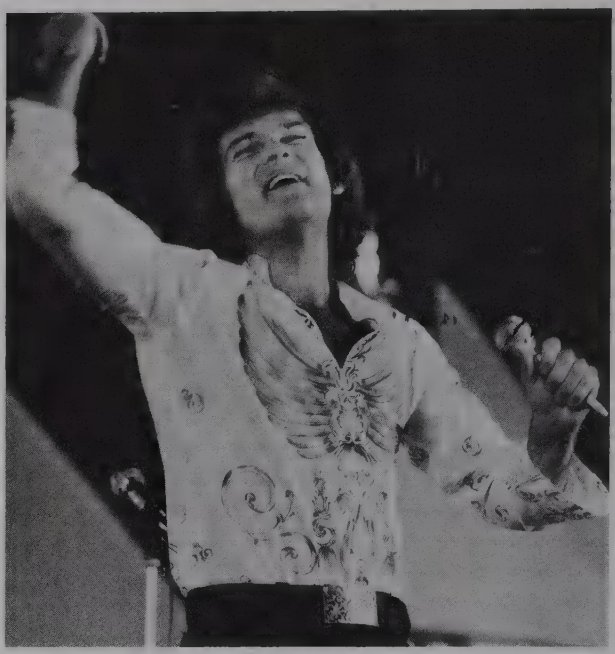
A poster for Prague's leading psychedelic band promises good music and high times. *(Courtesy of Paul Wilson)*

Logo for Prague's first official rock festival.

The Plastic People of the Universe appear at Prague's F-Club in May 1969. In the 1970s, the Plastics emerged as East Europe's most celebrated and persecuted underground rock band. *(Courtesy of Paul Wilson)*

Following the 1968 crackdown, many Polish rock bands were sent to pasture. No To Co became a prime example of the domesticated Soviet-bloc rock band of the late 1960s. *(Courtesy of Marek Karewicz)*

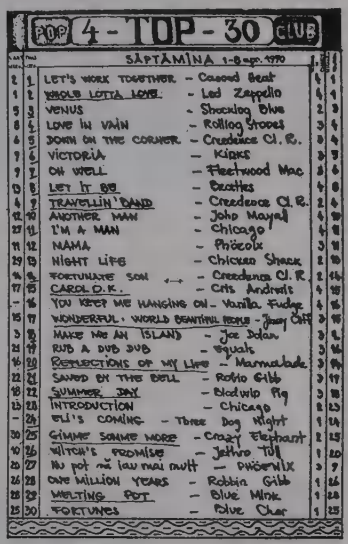
No blood, sweat or tears: Poland's Czesław Niemen declined an offer to join America's B.S.&T. in the early 1970s. *(Courtesy of Marek Karewicz)*



After 1972, American expatriate Dean Reed soared to pop stardom in the Soviet bloc. In June 1986, Reed was found dead in a lake near his East Berlin home. *(Courtesy of Marek Karewicz)*

With bell-bottoms and glitter vests, Budapest's Omega epitomized the Hungarian glam rock of the 1970s. *(Courtesy of Ivan Herskovits)*

Album cover of the first Soviet-bloc rock opera, based on the 1969 Altamont Pop Festival.

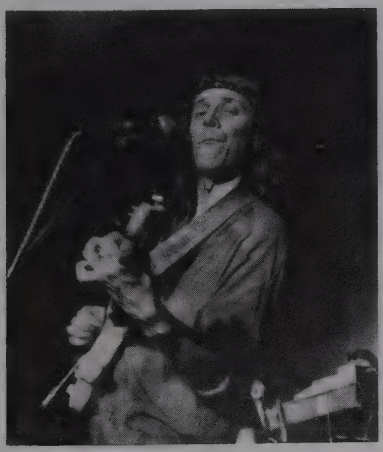


POP 4 - TOP - 30 CLUB

SĂPTĂMÎNA 1-8 apr. 1970

2	1.	LET'S WORK TOGETHER	- Canned Heat	4	1
1	2	WHOLE LOTTA LOVE	- Led Zeppelin	4	1
5	3	VENUS	- Shocking Blue	2	3
8	4.	LOVE IN VAIN	- Rolling Stones	3	4
6	5	DOWN ON THE CORNER	- Creedence Cl. R.	3	4
7	6	VICTORIA	- Kinks	3	7
9	7	OH WELL	- Fleetwood Mac	2	6
13	8.	LET IT BE	- Beatles	4	8
4	9	TRAVELLIN' BAND	- Creedence Cl. R.	2	4
12	10	ANOTHER MAN	- John Mayall	4	10
27	11.	I'M A MAN	- Chicago	4	11
11	12.	MAMA	- Phöcolx	3	11
29	13	NIGHT LIFE	- Chicken Shack	2	13
14	14.	FORTUNATE SON	- Creedence Cl. R.	2	14
17	15	CAROL D.K.	- Cats Andrews	4	15
-	16	YOU KEEP ME HANGING ON	- Vanilla Fudge	4	16
15	17	WONDERFUL WORLD BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE	- Jimmy Cliff	3	15
3	18	MAKE ME AN ISLAND	- Joe Dolan	3	6
21	19	RUB A DUB DUB	- Equals	3	16
16	20	REFLECTIONS OF MY LIFE	- Marmalade	3	14
22	21	SAVED BY THE BELL	- Robin Gibb	3	17
18	22.	SUMMER DAY	- Blodwip Pig	3	18
23	23	INTRODUCTION	- Chicago	2	23
-	24	ELI'S COMING	- Three Dog Night	1	24
30	25	GIMME SOMME MORE	- Crazy Elephant	2	25
10	26	WITCH'S PROMISE	- Jethro Tull	1	20
20	27	NU POT NA LAU MAI MULT	- PHÖENIX	3	7
26	28	ONE MILLION YEARS	- Robbin Gibb	1	26
28	29	MELTING POT	- Blue Mink	1	28
25	30	FORTUNES	- Blue Cher	1	25

In April 1970, Canned Heat and Led Zeppelin top the Pop Club's chart at Bucharest's Academy of Economic Study. *(Courtesy of Andrei Voiculescu)*



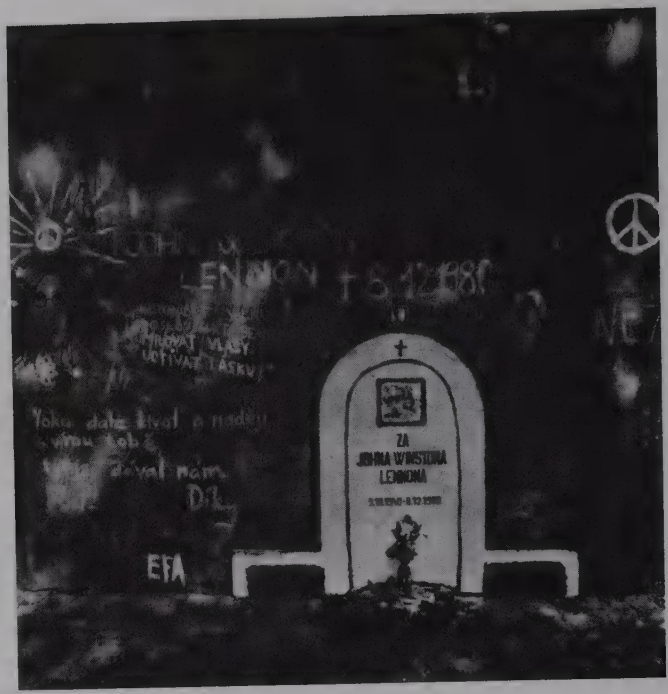
Peter Gläser, East Germany's Mick Jagger, gets back in tune with the state following the disbanding of the legendary Klaus-Renft-Combo in 1975. *(Courtesy of Peter Gläser)*

"When I get older, losing my hair": In the 1980s, rock fans still love Peter Meyer and his Puhdys, East Germany's veteran Beatles band. *(© Klaus Winkler, courtesy of Committee of Entertainment Arts of the German Democratic Republic)*

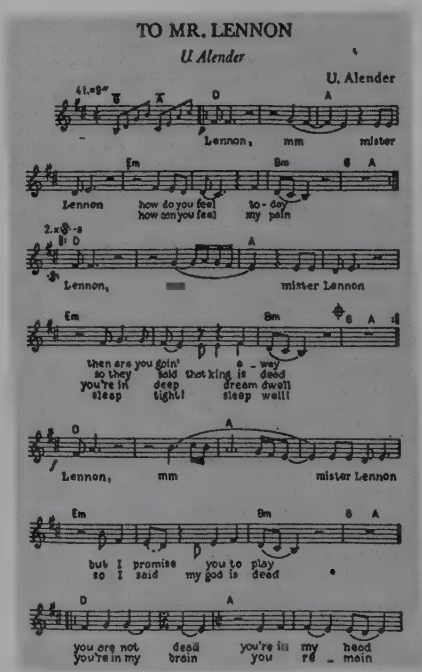
Rehearsing for stardom: Andrei Makarevich and his band Mashina vremeni (Time Machine), shown here in 1972, became the Soviet Union's first rock-and-roll superstars. *(Courtesy of Andrei Makarevich)*

In May 1978, Prague's renegade Jazz Section published one of the Soviet bloc's first accounts of Western punk rock. *(Courtesy of Jazz Section Archive, University of Toronto Library)*

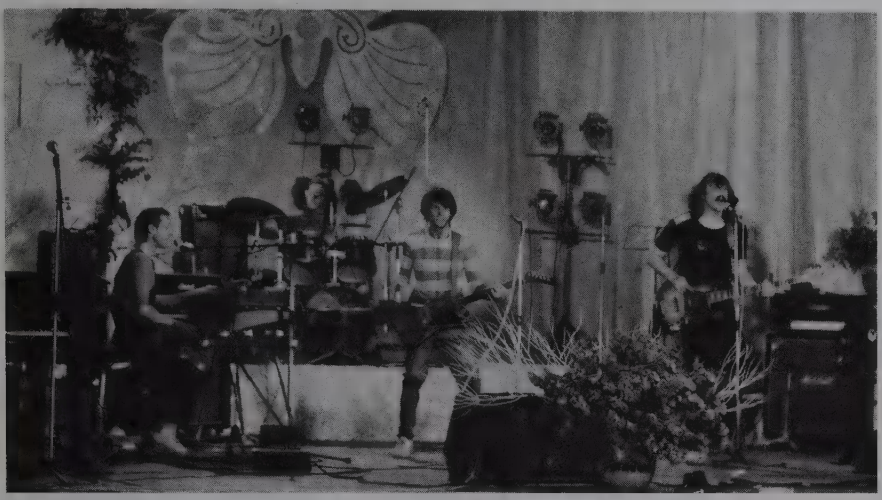
Bohemian blues: Mikoláš Chadima, dividing his time between the underground rock scene and psychiatric hospitals, authored a 700-page history of Czechoslovak rock that appeared in the unofficial press in 1984. *(Courtesy of Jazz Section Archive, University of Toronto Library)*



At Prague's Lennon Wall, Czechoslovak rock fans mourn the death of the former Beatle. *(Courtesy of the Jazz Section Archive, University of Toronto Library)*



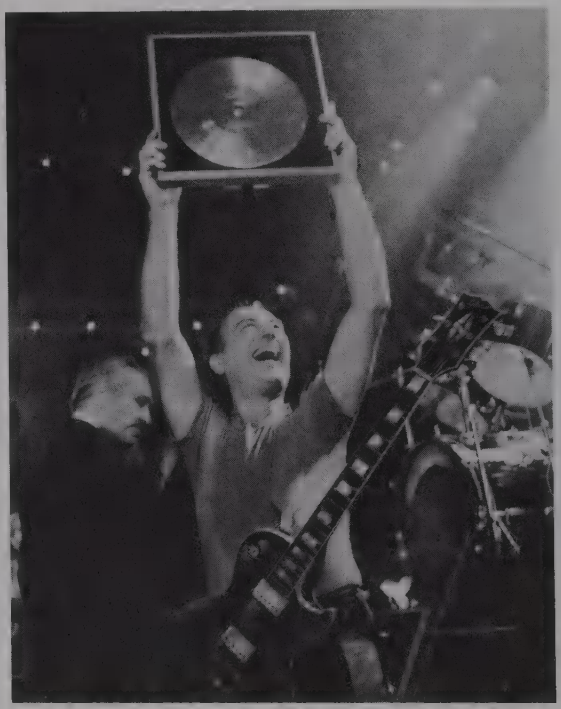
In 1982, the Soviet rock bank Ruja recorded this heartfelt homage, written in English, to John Lennon.



Still rocking after all these years: a 1982 concert by Shturtsite (the Crickets), Bulgaria's original Beatles band. *(Courtesy of the Bulgarian Embassy)*

"Drop Everything," Lady Pank's ill-fated release on MCA Records.

Bulgar New Wave: the veteran Bulgarian rock band, Tangra, adopts the look and sound of the 1980s. *(Courtesy of the Bulgarian Embassy)*



Czech rock legend Petr Janda seizes the gold with his 1982 best-selling album *Rock and Roll*. *(Courtesy of Petr Janda)*

Michael Kocáb, former leader of the banned punk group Pražský Výběr emerges as one of the leading musical talents of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. *(Courtesy of Michael Kocáb)*

Pankow: East Germany's greatest rock-and-roll band ever. *(Courtesy of the Committee of Entertainment Arts of the German Democratic Republic)*

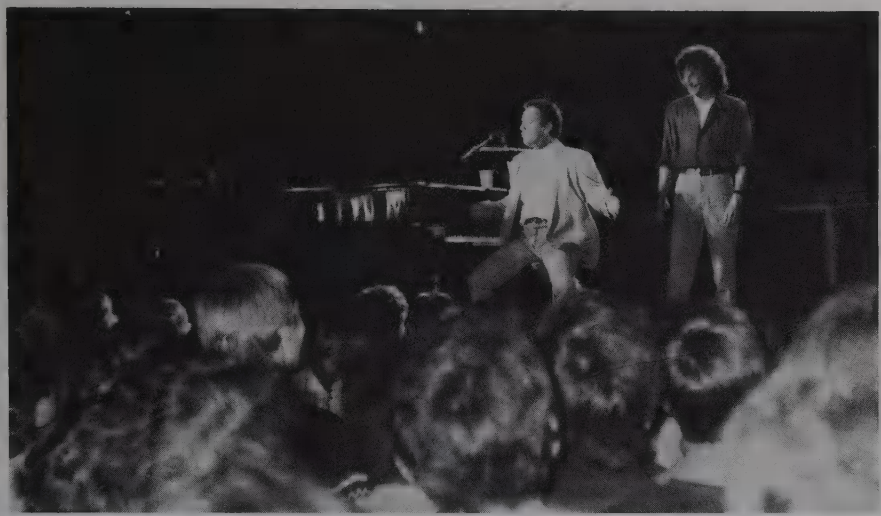
After Nina Hagen's 1977 emigration, Tamara Danz, with her band Silly, became East Germany's leading lady of funk and punk. *(Courtesy of the Committee of Entertainment Arts of the German Democratic Republic)*

"But this is how I perform!" In 1980, *Krokodil* "needles" Soviet rockers for their wild stage antics. In reality, many Soviet rockers got the needle in psychiatric hospitals.

In the early 1980s, Latvia's premier rock band, Pērkons, thundered against Soviet domination of the Baltic republics. *(Courtesy of Dainis Mjartāns)*

Leningrad's Sergei Kuriokhin brings jazz, rock, and poultry to the Soviet stage during the mid-1980s. *(Courtesy of Dimitri Conrad)*

Joanna Stingray's landmark 1986 album first brought Soviet rock to American record stores. (Photo by Joanna Stingray and Judith Fields)



August 1987: American pop star Billy Joel in a Moscow state of mind. *(Courtesy of Stingray Productions)*

In April 1989, the Plastic People, reconstituted as Půlnoc, toured the U.S. *(Courtesy of Paul Wilson)*

Boris Grebenshchikov, spiritual leader of the Leningrad underground and leader of the band Aquarium, surfaces as the "darling of *glasnost*" in 1986. *(Courtesy of Stingray Productions)*

Kino, a leading Leningrad band, came in from the cold during the Gorbachev era. *(Courtesy of Stingray Productions)*

tween the ideological and economic fronts, *Pogled* urged the radio, television, and press to provide "a shield against western ideological expansion."

Responding to the state's demand to purge Bulgarian society of Western pop culture, media programmers agreed to promote aesthetic and moral standards compatible with the ideals of socialism. But with tourism rampant in Bulgaria, the state was hard-pressed to provide adequate protection. In the winter months, foreigners flocked to the Rhodope Mountains at Pamporovo, to the Rila Mountains at Borovets and Kostenets, and to Mount Vitosha just south of Sofia. In the summer, millions of tourists packed the beaches at Varna, Burgas, and other Black sea resort towns.

One evening in the spring of 1968, two years after launching the noisy assault on ideological deviance, Zhivkov observed the results of his campaign. Watching television at home, the fifty-seven-year-old Bulgarian ruler tuned to a program for secondary-school students. Zhivkov, with two children of his own, Vladimir and Lyudmila, was appalled by what he saw. "The long hair of the boys," Zhivkov observed in an open letter to the party daily *Rabotnichesko delo* on April 24, 1968, "made it hard to distinguish them from the girls. Moreover, the girl's preference for short skirts, which were not aesthetically pleasing, had little in common with the sound tastes of their Western counterparts."

Zhivkov chastised the media for abusing their "power to popularize, endorse and promote such sad and pitiable creations." As a responsible father and an orthodox Communist, Zhivkov demanded that the media and the Komsomol purge Bulgarian society of these social "scarecrows." Responding to Zhivkov's outburst, the Committee for Culture and the Arts hurriedly convened a conference devoted to rock and pop music. Television and radio were ordered to excise Western music from their broadcasts; the Komsomol commanded members to shorten their hair and lengthen their skirts. Young people sporting Beatles haircuts were apprehended by the militia and escorted to the local police station, where they underwent a state-administered haircut.

Once again, however, the bellicose offensive accomplished little. On March 20, 1970, the party paper *Rabotnichesko delo* reported that the battle on the "music front" had been lost. According to the paper, Bulgaria's youth, alienated by the "dull and toneless" music of official culture, tuned to the pop music broadcasts of the BBC, VOA, and Radio Free Europe. Young people also adjusted their receivers to the shortwave transmission of radio Luxembourg and to Greek and Yugoslav broadcasts, in particular Radio Nis and Radio Skopje.

On October 23, 1970, in an article in the fortnightly paper *Srednoshkolsko,* Zhecho Atanasov, an eminent Bulgarian sociologist, confirmed that the "prohibition" of beat music had failed. In addition, Professor Atanasov related an alarming discovery. In the course of his research, which involved listening to samples of rock and roll, Atanasov ascertained that the music showed shocking similarities to "a rhythmical performance of activities that are usually associated with the baser biological instincts."

The disheartening news continued to accumulate. In 1971, the Todor Samodumov Research Institute released a study of five thousand young people in

thirty-five Bulgarian cities and towns. The report confirmed the youths' infatuation with rock music; it also provided an insight into musical tastes in Bulgaria. In 1970, most young Bulgarians, according to the institute's findings, identified the Beatles and Tom Jones as their favorite performers. Tom Jones's song "Delilah" topped the list as most Bulgarian youths' favorite song. Professor Venelin Krustev, the secretary of the Bulgarian composers' union, reviewing the situation on the country's popular music scene, conceded ruefully: "we can only be alarmed by the pronounced orientation of our youth toward beat music and the latest Western and American pop music hits."

The final blow came in June 1971. From June 3 to June 7, 1971, Bulgaria hosted the seventh annual Golden Orpheus Song Festival, which provided a forum for Bulgarian composers and pop performers to pit their talents against competitors from around the world. Confident of victory, Sofia dispatched crews from state radio and television to record the event for broadcast and for posterity. The 1971 song festival transformed Bulgarian hopes for gold into leaden despair. The jury found the musical fare so poor that it decided to forego awarding the Golden Orpheus entirely.

The state media unanimously lamented the pop music debacle at Burgas. One critic, commenting on the festival in *Narodna kultura* on June 19, 1971, spoke of "artistic impotence among Bulgarian competitors." "The foreigners' performance was considerably higher in quality than that of the Bulgarian singers," conceded Willy Kasassyan, composer and conductor for Bulgaria's Radio and Television Pop Music Orchestra. "Perhaps it is the truth and not a joke," chided *Otechestven front* acridly on June 13, 1971, "that in this country anybody who has the courage to face the microphone can become a pop singer."

While the official pop music scene languished in artistic mediocrity and public humiliation, Bulgarian rock fans, known as *groupers,* a corrupted form of the English "groupies," cultivated a thriving rock culture beyond the fumbling grasp of cultural officials. Foreign broadcasters provided the latest hits from America and England; Western tourists brought albums and tapes; local rock bands, performing in high schools, youth clubs, and jazz cafes, provided live performances. In Sofia, the public library not only loaned musical equipment, including drum sets and electric guitars, to amateur beat groups but also provided a forum for bands to perform. During off hours, hundreds of rock fans packed Sofia's main library to listen to local rock bands hone their skills.

Sofia's premier band in the late 1960s, Shturtsite (the Crickets), was formed in 1967 by Kiril Marichkov, who began playing bass guitar with Bundaratsite in 1963. Shturtsite quickly gained wide acclaim among Sofia's rock fans for its covers to hits by the Beatles, the Kinks, and the Rolling Stones. Marichkov, also the lead vocalist, reportedly drove audiences into ecstasy with riveting bass solos during which his eyes would glaze over.

Another early hero of the Bulgarian rock scene was Iliya Karayanev. Karayanev converted to rock and roll while still a high-school student in Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest city. In the spring of 1967, Karayanev traveled to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on a school outing. The class happened to arrive in Belgrade just days before the Rolling Stones, who had recently caused havoc

in Olso, Warsaw, and Zürich, were scheduled to appear. When the class returned to Plovdiv, Karayanev was not among his schoolmates. The young rock fan managed to buy a ticket to the Rolling Stones' performance and decided to stay behind in Belgrade to watch the concert. Karayanev was so inspired by the Rolling Stones' concert that he returned to Plovdiv, determined to become Bulgaria's Mick Jagger. During the late 1960s, Karayanev emerged as Bulgaria's leading electric guitar player. His band played Rolling Stones and Beatles hits and provided backup for Lili Ivanova, the country's top pop vocalist. Among Bulgarian rock fans, Iliya Karayanev was affectionately known as Licho Stonsa (Little Rolling Stone).

By the end of the decade, it was clear that Zhivkov's "hot-iron" tactics had done little to cool young people's enthusiasm for Western rock and roll. In the spring of 1971, Pavel Matev, chairman of the Bulgarian Committee on Culture and the Arts, blamed the pervasiveness of Western beat music on systematic inadequacies in the Bulgarian bureaucracy. "The present system is not decisive enough," noted Matev, "it is chaotic and must be completely reorganized." A conference on popular music held in Sofia the following year confirmed Matev's observation. Despite government polemics against Western music, there remained "continuous and very rapid growth of unregulated imports of foreign works" in Bulgaria. The musical fare offered on Bulgarian radio and television was "dominated by the poorest, most aggressive and primitive type of taste."

The failure of the Zhivkov campaign against Western beat was blamed on the "poorly organized or to put it more precisely, the lack of organization whatever" in cultural policy for music. Compared with the careful cultural controls exercised in other socialist states, especially East Germany, Bulgaria seemed to lack any coordinated policy whatsoever. While most socialist countries had been holding conferences to coordinate cultural activity since the 1950s, Bulgaria did not convene its first conference on culture until May 1967.

In the previous September, the Communist party had hoped to improve state control of culture by overhauling the Committee for Culture and Art. The reorganization swelled the ranks of the bureaucratic apparatus—1,254 individuals were elected to the district councils, 3,000 to the city councils, and more than 9,000 to the municipal councils. "Thus, some 14,000 creative and cultural workers, scientists, public workers and cooperative farm members," reported *Narodna kultura* on October 28, 1967, "became directly involved in, and responsible for the fate of, our present culture and the education of the Bulgarian people." The bloated bureaucracy staggered under its own weight. At least eleven separate political, public, educational, artistic, and commercial institutions claimed the right to oversee popular music. One Western study of the Bulgarian music scene found that "organizational chaos has damaged Bulgarian pop music almost irreparably."

In 1974, Bulgaria managed to assert limited control over the popular music scene with the creation of the state-sponsored rock ensembles. These official bands, formed by professionally trained musicians, tempered rock and roll with Bulgarian folk music and politically engaged lyrics. In exchange for moderation, the state supplied bands with Western instruments and top-flight sound

systems. The sophisticated mixing boards and synthesizers dazzled many Bulgarian performers. As Bulgarian rock and pop musicians explored the potential of the electronic equipment, their music became less an expression of their artistic creativity than a means of flaunting the new technical gadgets at their disposal.

Formation Studio Balkanton, a five-member ensemble of professionally trained musicians, epitomized the officially sponsored Bulgarian band of the mid-1970s. In 1974, Balkanton, the state record company, hired three permanent session musicians for its newly created recording studios: two keyboardists, Konstantin Tsekov and Rumen Boyadzhiev, and a bass guitarist, Alexander Baharov, all trained musicians from the Bulgarian State Conservatory. The trio soon added Petur Slavov, the percussionist from the popular group Focus '65. To bolster their establishment image, the group also took on violinist Ivan Lechev, the son of a prominent violin professor. The collection of session musicians, hired as backup for soloists working in the Balkanton studies, soon emerged as a popular ensemble in their own right: Formation Studio Balkanton, known in Bulgaria, as FSB.

Unlike many official purveyors of harmless melody, FSB forged a strikingly Western sound, deriving its style from groups like Gentle Giant, Yes, and Premiata Forneria Marconi (a popular Italian ensemble from Milan). FSB enjoyed popularity not just in Bulgaria but also in Scandanavia, where the band's initials inspired the stage name the Free Sailing Band.

Diana Express, another birthchild of state cultural planning emerged as one of Bulgaria's most popular bands. Early in 1974, Mitko Shterev, a gypsy from Yambol who had been supplying Bulgarian singers, in particular Lili Ivanova, with songs since the 1960s, found the state willing to sponsor his effort to establish a band. Shterev named the group Diana Express in honor of the train that ran between Sofia and his hometown of Yambol. Coupling traditional Balkan folk melodies with a modern, synthesized sound, Diana Express raced into public and official favor. Within months after the band's founding, Bulgarian officials dispatched Diana Express to Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. By June 1975, Shterev and his fellow band members had appeared on Bulgarian television and had released two albums on the Balkanton label.

Bulgaria's 1960s supergroup Shturtsite also reemerged in 1974. Having survived the cultural turmoil of the late 1960s, Shturtsite found itself squeezed by cultural restraints between 1971 and 1973. In 1974, Shturtsite, with a new keyboardist, Borislav Panov, and a new drummer, Georgi Markov, courted official favor by incorporating Bulgarian folklore and socialist polemics into their repertoire. Despite these concessions, Shturtsite retained a distinctly Western sound, drawing liberally on the heavy-metal sound of Deep Purple. Bulgarian officials, satisfied with Shturtsite's new sound and image, allowed the band to record on the Balkanton label and to tour extensively. Shturtsite released its first album in 1976 and traveled throughout the Soviet bloc, holding concerts in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany and undertaking obligatory goodwill tours in the Soviet Union.

Romania: Too Much Blood, Sweat, and Tears

In the mid-1960s, Romania, like Bulgaria, confronted the problem of fostering Western tourism while trying to uphold ideological orthodoxy. However, unlike Bulgaria, which doggedly launched ineffectual campaigns against Western pop culture, Romania, just across the Danube, was able to keep official youth culture locked in an administrative stranglehold.

Romania inherited the totalitarian tenor of its cultural administration from the absolutist nature of its political leadership. Romania's Communist ruler Gheorghiu-Dej, who ignored Khrushchev's calls for de-Stalinization, maintained absolute authority until his death in 1965. Gheorghiu-Dej not only rejected the Kremlin's call for domestic reform but also pursued a foreign policy independent of and often counter to the agenda set by Moscow. While other socialist satellites cowered before Moscow's demands for unity of action within the socialist community, Romania brazenly defied Soviet authority. In 1956, while Soviet tanks rolled across Hungary's border to crush the "counterrevolution," Gheorghiu-Dej demanded and secured the withdrawal of all Soviet military forces stationed in Romania. In 1963, when the Soviets severed diplomatic ties with mainland China, Gheorghiu-Dej defiantly maintained relations with the government in Beijing.

Nicolae Ceauşescu, who succeeded Gheorghiu-Dej as party head in March 1965, continued Romania's renegade foreign policy, refusing to break off relations with Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and publicly condemning the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Shortly after his ascent to power, however, Ceauşescu did loosen the social and cultural restrictions of Gheorghiu-Dej's rule. In an interview with a Western correspondent on June 18, 1966, Ceauşescu declared that artists had the right to "decide how to write, how to paint, and how to compose, and to find the most suitable forms." Though he abandoned the stylistic constraints of socialist realism, Ceauşescu upheld the Leninist doctrine that artists "put their talents to the service of socialist construction and the interests of the people and of peace."

In the spring of 1965, as a cautious cultural thaw warmed Eastern Europe's most oppressive nation, pop and rock music, euphemistically referred to a *muzicii uşoare* (light music), quickly emerged into public view. In July 1965, an English singer, reportedly, the first British performer in Bucharest since World War II, appeared in the Romanian capital rendering songs by the Beatles and other popular Western groups. That same summer, Electrecord, the state record company, released a flood of albums with Anglo-American pop, including music for dancing the twist, the frug, and the buga-loo. In a radio interview on August 5, 1965, the Romanian composer George Grigoriu conceded that state resistance to Western dances had collapsed, but modestly insisted that cultural officials would "not abandon the idea of creating a dance which will eventually be accepted" by Romania's young people.

In the mid-1960s, Romanian youth enjoyed relatively easy access to Western

pop and rock music. When Romania ceased jamming foreign broadcasts in 1964, young people tuned to the increasing number of pop and rock music shows offered by the BBC, the VOA, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Luxemburg. Western tourism, which increased markedly in the second half of the 1960s, fueled the burgeoning rock scene with records, jeans, and other accessories of Anglo-American youth culture.

The Romanian government also contributed to the vitality of Romania's nascent rock culture. In the mid-1960s, a British beat band, the Federals, which held a series of concerts in Bucharest, received such widespread adulation among young people that the band asked to extend their stay in Romania. The Romanian government not only welcomed the band's decision to remain in the country but it also invited them to produce an album of rock music in the state recording studios. The Federals' album was subsequently released on the Electrecord label.

The appearance of a history of rock and pop music in 1967 further attested to the government's lax attitude toward Western pop culture. In December 1967, the Bucharest publishing house Editura Muzicala issued a Romanian translation of a French history of popular music by Jacques Marny. The book, *Light Music: From the Troubadors to the Beatles,* featured photographs of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones and appeared in an edition of sixty thousand copies, which sold out immediately.

Despite its concessions to rock and pop music, the government continued to rule Romanian youth with an iron fist. In contrast to the exuberance among young Hungarians and Czechoslovaks in the late 1960s, Romanian youth remained timid and cautious. Young women rarely risked sporting a miniskirt; few young men dared grow their hair or wear a beard. The violent suppression of a student demonstration in 1968 reminded Bucharest's young that, despite increased contact with Western culture, Romania was a police state. On the evening of December 24, 1968, hundreds of students staged a peaceful public demonstration at University Square in central Bucharest. As police moved in to break up the gathering, the crowd began to chant "police brutality!" and "freedom now!" The police dispersed the crowd, arresting numerous students, who were eventually expelled from the university.

Young Romanians, sensing the tenuous position of rock and roll in their society, reveled sedately during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Student clubs attached to the university and to Bucharest's numerous institutes of higher learning provided space for discotheques and live concerts. The Pop Club at the Academy of Economics in Bucharest typified these havens of rock music. The club featured a diverse program that combined dance music with updates on the latest developments on the Western rock scene. A weekly eight-page program reprinted hit-song lists from Britain's *New Musical Express* and America's *Billboard.* The Pop Club also polled Romanian students and published its own Top 30. During the first week of April 1970, while Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" topped the British list and the Beatles' "Let It Be" topped the American charts, Bucharest students voted "Let's Work Together"

by Canned Heat as their favorite song, followed by Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta of Love," the Rolling Stones' "Love in Vain," and Creedance Clearwater Revival's "Down on the Corner."

As elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, youthful enthusiasm spawned hundreds of rock bands in Romania during the 1960s. Cometele, founded in the early 1960s, derived its name and much of its repertoire from Bill Haley and the Comets. Cometele not only claimed to be one of Romania's first rock bands but also held the distinction of having released the first rock recording on the Electrecord label, a seven-inch disc with covers to four Western rock-and-roll hits.

Olympic 64, born amidst the passion of Beatlemania, rose to national acclaim by rendering Beatles hits in a distinctly Romanian idiom. The popular Olympic 64 cover to "Strawberry Fields" fused the McCartney/Lennon melody with lyrics from traditional Romanian poetry. Another Olympic 64 song praised the *potera,* Romania's medieval warriors, known for their fierceness and ruthlessness. The song became an unofficial hit among Romanian students, who had long used *potera* as a slang term for their country's secret police.

In 1970, Bucharest's Iron Mincu (Institute of Architecture) sponsored Romania's first National Festival of Pop Music. The week-long festival brought Romania's leading pop and rock ensembles to Bucharest to compete before a capacity audience of fifteen hundred. In 1971, Bucharest hosted the second National Festival of Pop Music. From May 10 to May 17, 1971, up to six thousand fans daily packed the Palace Hall of the Socialist Romanian Republic, Bucharest's largest concert facility, to watch groups perform their own material as well as covers of Western hits.

The 1971 festival included the female vocalist Marcela Saftiuc, whose covers to Dylan and Baez numbers were enthusiastically received by the audience. In its review of the festival, the bimonthly paper *Steaua* praised the nineteen-year-old singer from Cluj. "Marcela likes 'soul' and 'pop' music (Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin)," observed *Steaua* in June 1971. "But she prefers the 'folk' music material by Joan Baez, Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan." The most popular band at the week-long festival was the Cromatic Grup from the city of Cluj. The Cromatic Grup, which played a diverse program of soul, blues, and jazz, took first prize for composition, while the band's lead guitarist, Sorin Tudoran, won first prize as best guitarist. Tudoran, who fashioned himself as a specialist of *blues-ul alb* (white blues), was a self-avowed disciple of the Cream guitarist John Mayall but also admitted to drawing inspiration from Jimi Hendrix and the band Chicago.

The most popular Romanian rock band of the late 1960s and early 1970s was Phoenix, a group that was formed in the town of Timişoara in 1962 by a young musician named Nicolae Covaci. A year after the band's public debut in 1964, Phoenix notched its first hit, a Beatles-inspired love song called "I Know That You Love Me Too." In 1968, at the National Festival of Student Art, Phoenix took the prize for the best rock composition, "Beat 68." And in 1969, Phoenix released its first album on the Electrecord label. Performing with government sanction, Covaci and his fellow band members had access to the

best equipment available, including Fender guitars and Marshall amplifiers. Phoenix appeared on television, on the radio, and provided the music for the Romanian film *The Canary and the Blizzard.*

Although rock fans and rock musicians alike avoided confrontations with the establishment, Romania's thriving rock culture inevitably strained the government's narrowly defined limits of tolerance. In the late 1960s, when rock fans went into a frenzy, smashing benches in an outdoor stadium during the performance by a touring Lebanese band, police punished the crowd with clubs and dogs. The tour was cancelled, and the band expelled from the country. A 1970 tour of Romania by the American band Blood, Sweat and Tears also ended in a bloody confrontation between rock fans and security forces.

In the summer of 1970, Blood, Sweat and Tears, having recently scored number-one hits with "Spinning Wheel" and "When I Die," undertook a tour of Eastern Europe under the auspices of the U.S. State Department. The tour included concert dates in Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. For Polish and Yugoslav rock fans who had experienced the Rolling Stones in 1967, Blood, Sweat and Tears was hardly sensational. But in Romania, the band's appearance sparked a frenzy. During the opening concert in Bucharest, the excitement in the concert hall continued to mount from one song to the next. When, in the midst of one number, vocalist Clayton-Thomas threw his tambourines and maracas across the stage, the crowd exploded. Fans screamed "USA," displayed peace signs, and started dancing on their seats. The local militia, panicked by the outburst, called in police, who restored order with a firm hand, severely beating several fans.

The next day, Romanian officials informed the U.S. embassy in Bucharest that Blood, Sweat and Tears would not be allowed to continue their tour unless they adhered to a number of conditions. The band was to play less rock and more music in "jazz meter." If the audience became boisterous or leaped from their seats, the musicians were to leave the stage. The group was also ordered to reduce sound levels, to dress in more "moderate clothing," to refrain from throwing instruments on stage, and to play no more than two encores. The American musicians dubbed the list of demands "The Bucharest Manifesto."

The following night when Blood, Sweat and Tears took the stage, the band members found every third seat in the auditorium occupied by a militiaman. The presence of heavy security in the hall dampened the crowd's enthusiasm. During the song "Smiling Faces," at the point where Clayton-Thomas was supposed to hurl a gong, a policeman shook his finger at the musician in warning. Clayton-Thomas poised himself like a discus thrower, then hurled the gong offstage. "And the crowd went crazy," Clayton-Thomas recalled. "And then they turned dogs loose on the crowd, they brought in German shepherds. Kids went through plate glass windows. It was a very, very bad scene."

The following day, as the band prepared to play a benefit concert in the Romanian oil city of Ploesti for victims of a flood, they learned that they would not be allowed to hold any more performances in the country. Three days later, Blood, Sweat and Tears left Romania.

The police's brutal response at Blood, Sweat and Tears concert presaged a

general crackdown on the Romanian rock scene. In the summer of 1971, Ceauşescu returned from a visit to the People's Republic of China, where Mao Tse-tung had recently concluded his bloody Cultural revolution, which devastated the party bureaucracy and unleashed a virulent campaign against foreign influences. Ceauşescu, apparently impressed with the intensity and resoluteness with which the Chinese had purged themselves of foreign influences, decided to introduce his own cultural revolution in Romania. Holding governmental agencies responsible for "promoting influences of decadent culture," Ceauşescu resurrected the ghost of Zhdanov and declared it time to restore socialist ideals and to fight the "pollution" coming "from countries with a different social order."

In November 1971, the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist party drafted a "vast ideological program of mass socialist education." Echoing the Stalinist polemics of the 1950s, Romanian officials spoke of "socialist realism" in art and of the "new socialist man." In order to assert party control over the arts, Ceauşescu shuffled Romania's cultural establishment. The State Committee for Culture and Art was placed directly under the auspices of the Central Committee. Television and radio were also brought under party supervision. Further, Ceauşescu replaced the Central Committee spokesman for ideology and the Central Committee secretary in charge of youth affairs. "We are not priests, comrades," Ceauşescu pontificated. "We are communists. We must not let the spirit of moderation guide our actions."

Ceauşescu could purge his party at will, but could he stem the flow of Western pop culture into Romania? The tourist industry, which contributed significantly to the Romanian economy, brought in over 3,800,000 tourists annually, a large percentage of them from the West. In Bulgaria, Zhivkov's cultural directives foundered, in part, on the necessity of accommodating the Western tourist trade.

Romania had to accommodate foreign tourism as well. The West German, Swedish, and British tourists visiting Romania could not be expected to spend their vacations listening to songs calling for higher work norms and praising Nicolai Ceauşescu. During the summer months, the Swedish tourist agencies, well aware of the deficiencies in Romania, began importing their own discotheques, complete with sound systems, records, and disc jockeys. In 1971, the Swedes arrived with only one discotheque, instead of the usual two, for the seaside resort town of Mamaia. Andrei Voiculescu, a twenty-seven-year-old producer for the state television network, approached the office of tourism with a proposal to establish a second discotheque in Mamaia.

Voiculescu promised to supply two tape recorders, a turntable, amplifier, sound system, and all the tapes and records if the office of tourism would issue him the proper papers and provide space. If the venture failed after one week, Voiculescu proposed, the office of tourism could confiscate his entire sound system. The office issued a stamped document permitting Andrei Voiculescu to function in the period of May 15, 1971 until September 24, 1971, as a disc-jochey [sic]." The wording of the document reflected the prevailing liberal atmosphere on Romania's music scene. Foregoing the official euphemism for

disc jockey, *prezentator de discotecă,* the government official extended a gesture of goodwill by employing, though in a corrupted form, the common English designation.

Within five days, Voiculescu had cleared a storage area, installed his sound system and light show, set up tables, and opened the Whisky-A-Go-Go, one of Romania's first privately run discotheques. As an independent establishment, a phenomenal rarity in Romania where even taxis are state-owned, Voiculescu enjoyed autonomy from the government controls exerted over youth clubs and state-run cafes. Voiculescu played only the latest Western hits and to lend a Western ambience introduced songs in broken English, often crafting witty rhymes. Every evening, Voiculescu opened the night of dancing with a self-composed introduction:

> My name is Tom Jame,
> I'm leaving on a jet plane,
> But if I fly, I am not a fly
> And I don't like living in the sky.
> So my music for you begins,
> Me and my music, we are twins.

Voiculescu's discotheque proved a tremendous success, drawing not only Western tourists but also attracting hordes of Romanian youths. Other discotheques sprang up in the tourist areas, luring rock fans with English names intended to evoke images of Western pop culture: Scotch Club, Auto Night Club, Modern Club, and Clubul T4. With lights flashing as the latest Western hits blared through the speakers, it was possible, if only for an evening, to imagine oneself in the mainstream of Western rock culture.

The euphoria was short-lived. In 1973, Ceauşescu's diatribes crystallized into a concrete policy that began to smother Romania's popular music scene. A national competition for "music presenters" working in discotheques and clubs was transformed into a board of review. Voiculescu, who in 1973 was elected Romania's numer-one disc jockey, noted the increasing pressure. "We had to take a written examination and were then reviewed by two language teachers who assessed our proficiency in English." Disc jockeys were forced to trim their hair and adhere to newly established dress codes. Voiculescu and a colleague, Victor Georgescu, published a letter in *Săptămîna* on June 1, 1973, protesting the state's intrusion into Romania's discotheques. The indignant protests of Romania's long-haired, blue-jeaned disc jockeys fell on deaf ears as conservative forces rallied and began purging the country's discotheques and concert halls.

In Bucharest, Amza Saceanu, chairman of the capital's Committee for Socialist Culture and Education, established music patrols like those introduced in Kiev in the early 1960s. The patrols visited bars, restaurants, and nightclubs throughout Bucharest, inspecting the repertoires of orchestras, bands, and solo singers. Under increasing pressure, some of Romania's best rock-and-roll bands broke up. In 1972, the lead guitarist of Olympic 64 emigrated to the West.

Two years later, the lead singer from the band Phoenix married a Dutch woman and emigrated to Holland. The following year, several other members of Phoenix escaped to the West, allegedly smuggled out in the speaker cabinets of a visiting Western band. Other rock ensembles like Sfinx and Cromatic Grup weathered the assault, trimming their hair, reducing decible levels, and purging their repertoires of Anglo-American songs.

The campaign against Western rock culture intensified in the mid-1970s as the oil crisis and economic recession forced Romania to introduce an austerity budget. In a move to reduce energy consumption, discotheques and restaurants were banned from serving food after nine o'clock in the evening. The new restrictions crippled Romania's tourist industry and, in turn, intensified anti-Western sentiment among cultural officials.

In 1975, N. Constantinescu, director of a Bucharest school, verbalized the growing official animosity toward Western pop culture. Constantinescu observed among Bucharest's pupils a "pathological exultation of certain Western popular music shows, which are sung and listened to under the influence of drugs and in a morbid state of mind." Constantinescu further alleged that some Romanian performers, despite the party's efforts to purge Romania of Western influences, continued to promote "conceptions and attitudes on life in general, and social life in particular, which have nothing in common with the spiritual vigor of the Romanian people." On October 17, 1975, the editors of *Contemporanul* urged the composers' and writers' unions to nurture "revolutionary" songs in order to prevent "popular music from reflecting conceptions alien to our spiritual beliefs."

Under the increased pressure from cultural officials, the remnants of the flourishing rock-music culture of the 1960s gradually dissipated. At the same time, Romania's Stalin-era tunesmiths, including Gheorghe Dumitrescu and George Grigoriu, again enjoyed official favor. Between 1972 and 1975, over eight hundred songs appeared whose titles recalled the most fervent days of the personality cult: "The Party, Ceaușescu, Romania," "Communist Years," and "Glory to Our First President."

In 1973, Adrian Păunescu, a popular writer and editor of the weekly *Flacăra,* organized a regular forum where songs and poetry of political or social value could be presented. Former rock musicians who once belted out "Tutti Frutti" and "Roll Over Beethoven" now took the stage with their electric guitars, electronic organs, and moog synthesizers to sing the praises of Marx, Lenin, and Ceaușescu. In 1975, a recording sponsored by the Communist youth league provided a testament to the transformation that had been effected on the popular music scene in Romania. The album was praised in the press as a model for the type of music that clubs were to play, young people were to sing, and musicians were to write. One of these exemplary songs offered praise to the party and to Ceaușescu and reminded the young people of Romania:

> In the days of struggle and hardship,
> As they followed the party, the pathfinder,

Our young heroes dreamed of the spring—
Of the spring that now has come to pass.

In the late 1970s, Ceauşescu sought ruthlessly to smash Romania's servitude to the West by eradicating Western cultural influences and reducing the country's large foreign debt. By the 1980s, many discotheques had closed, television restricted to two hours daily, electricity and hot-water supplies radically reduced. Romania, once the grain basket of Europe, was forced to ration bread. The country's rock scene, pressured by ideological constraints and material deprivation, stifled.

Veteran rock ensembles like Sfinx and Cromatic, having survived the crackdown, produced limp, uninspired recordings. New bands like Medusa and Modul, co-opting contemporary music trends, transformed the dynamic sounds of reggae and funk into banal echoes of the Western originals.

"How can rock 'n' roll survive in a country," mused one observer wryly, "where there is barely enough electricity to power a light bulb, let alone drive an electric guitar?"

9

Bands on the Run, 1972–1976

Bring your kilogram of paranoia into balance!
Throw off the horrible dictatorship!
Quickly! Live, drink, puke! The bottle, the Beat!
Shit in your hand!

PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE, 1973

Our society will not tolerate any forms of hooliganism or public disorder, and quite naturally, will resist any moral filth and efforts to infect our youth with that which every decent man condemns and which harms the spiritual health of the young generation.

Rudé právo, September 25, 1976

The deaths of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison at the turn of the decade and the official disbanding of the Beatles in 1970 transformed the rock scene east and west of the Iron Curtain. As the heroes of the 1960s were devoured by drugs, alcohol, and personal strife, new rock idols emerged. David Bowie, the Who, and Pink Floyd embarked on spectacular, multimillion-dollar road shows that attracted legions of new fans. Led Zeppelin's extravagant 1973 tour of the United States broke concert attendance records set by the Beatles. In the Soviet bloc, pictures of these new idols decorated bedroom walls and appeared in school notebooks. On the black market, albums by groups like Deep Purple and Black Sabbath competed with those of the Beatles and Rolling Stones.

Soviet-bloc rock bands also changed with the times. In the 1960s, young musicians, fired by raw energy, grabbed guitars, dodged police batons, and frenetically pounded out covers to Western hits. In the 1970s, these same musicians, more conscious of themselves and their music, compromised hair length, lowered decibel levels, and sang in their native language, hoping to barter a passion into a profession. At the same time, Soviet-bloc governments, realizing

that ideological diatribes could not exorcise rock music from their societies, selectively accommodated rock and roll into official culture. Beat groups playing the party line found government agencies willing to supply concert equipment, to provide television exposure and recording contracts, to arrange national and international tours.

Poland and Hungary, which had indulged young people's infatuation with rock since the 1950s, found their tolerance paying off in the 1970s. Czesław Niemen, Poland's leading pop/rock vocalist, brought Poland international acclaim when Niemen's band helped open the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. As a feature performer in the Olympics' revue *Rock and Jazz Now,* Niemen shared the stage with jazz great Charlie Mingus and the McLaughlin Orchestra. The power of Niemen's voice compelled CBS Records to bring Niemen to the United States, where he recorded and released "Mourner's Rhapsody." Niemen was also approached as a potential replacement for Blood, Sweat and Tears' vocalist, David Clayton-Thomas, who left the band for a solo career in 1973. Niemen, enjoying a vast following, not only in Poland but also throughout the Soviet bloc, declined the offer. "I was a superstar in Eastern Europe," the singer later mused. "Why should I have left Poland to join some American band?"

In Hungary, rock music came into the service of socialism when in 1972, the Hungarian band Locomotiv GT performed the Soviet bloc's first rock opera: *Fictitious Report on an American Pop Festival.* Based on the 1971 novel by the aging Hungarian writer Tibor Déry, and adapted for the stage by Anna Adamis and rock star Gábor Presser, *Fictitious Report* recreated the tragic 1969 Altamont Pop Festival at which numerous fans died of drug overdoses, and Meredith Hunter, a black man, was beaten to death by drunken Hell's Angels serving as security guards.

Déry's novel depicted the ruinous effects of capitalist society on young people, who sought refuge in drugs, rock music, and sex orgies. "Wherever one went," Déry painted a Boschian landscape of the festival grounds, "large and small groups of people lay in the mud, fevered, with eyes closed or staring senselessly; the people embraced one another in a disgusting euphoria induced by overdoses and bad trips." Déry's account of the Altamont festival focused on József, a Hungarian who fled his country in 1956 and came to America seeking "freedom" and "happiness." He finds only misery and tragedy. As *Fictitious Report* opens, József arrives at the festival looking for his estranged wife, Eszter, who, disoriented by the confusion and temptations of American life, has fallen in with a band of hippies. After a desperate search amidst the frenzied debauchery of the festival, József learns that his wife has died of an overdose of heroin.

When the stage adaptation of Déry's novel premiered at Budapest's Vigszinház Theater in March 1972, it seemed like a Communist ideologue's dream come true—a socialist rock opera condemning the capitalist rock scene. "One becomes aware of the fact," delighted an East German reviewer of *Fictitious Report,* "that socialism in its essence is already a hundred years ahead of cap-

italism.'' Rock and roll, decried as an outgrowth of Western decadence, was serving the cause of socialism.

Dean Reed: The Soviet-Bloc Superstar

No individual performer better exemplified the marriage between pop and politics in the Soviet bloc during the 1970s than the American expatriate Dean Reed. Reed, who began a successful singing career with Warner Brothers in the early 1960s, turned his back on the Western entertainment industry in 1973 and emigrated to the Soviet bloc. ''The principles on which your society are built,'' Reed proclaimed in an open letter in the Soviet press in 1972, ''are sane, pure and just, while the principles on which my country are built are cruel, selfish and unjust.'' In the decade and a half that followed, Reed, courted by Soviet-bloc governments and loved by tens of millions of fans, reigned as the undisputed superstar of Eastern Europe and Soviet pop music.

Reed led a privileged life. Married to the beautiful East German actress Renate Blume, his third wife, Reed settled in a spacious house on a lake outside East Berlin. Reed wrote and recorded songs, acted in and directed major motion pictures, and hobnobbed with Soviet-bloc leaders. He claimed to know personally East German head of state Erich Honecker, the Czechoslovak leader Gustav Husák, and Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko. State honors showered down upon Reed. East Germany's Communist youth organization presented Reed with its gold medal. Czechoslovakia honored Reed with the Julius-Fučík-Medallion. Bulgaria awarded him its Dimitrov-Medallion. In the summer of 1979, the Soviet Union bestowed upon Reed the Komsomol Lenin Prize for Art and Literature. Reed boasted to the West German newspaper *Die Zeit* in 1983, ''I am the only American with a Lenin Prize.''

In a rare consensus of opinion, Reed enjoyed as much popularity among the people of the Soviet bloc as he did among their rulers. Dean Reed, handsome, sandy-haired, blue-eyed, Colorado-born and -bred, was, for the East European, the epitome of the all-American boy. He displayed an American flag in his home; he did fifty push-ups a day; he tore through the neighborhood on his 250-MZ dirt bike. Reed combined good-natured naíveté with relentless political engagement. He also traveled the world, advancing the cause of socialism. In Lebanon, Reed met Yassar Arafat and posed with machine-gun-toting PLO warriors. In October 1978, while promoting one of his films at the University of Minnesota, Reed participated in a demonstration against a U.S. energy company. Police broke up the protest, arresting twenty demonstrators, including Dean Reed. Hundreds of letters and telegrams poured into the U.S. from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union demanding Reed's release. Three weeks later, having survived a hunger strike, Reed was found ''not guilty'' and released. Within days, the ''political prisoner'' returned to East Berlin, where he received a hero's welcome.

During the 1970s, millions of Soviet-bloc fans bought Dean Reed records,

packed Dean Reed concerts, and attended Dean Reed films. Reed's motion picture *Sing, Cowboy, Sing* became a regular feature in Soviet-bloc cinemas. The 150 letters that reportedly arrived daily attested to Reed's popularity in the mid-1970s. Hundreds more poured into the East German DEFA film studios which released Reed's motion pictures. A poll taken in 1976 found that Reed was the best-known American among Soviets, preceded only by President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger.

A decade before Soviet-bloc leaders began exploiting Dean Reed's talent, Hollywood film and record producers had their eye on the young singer. In 1958, Reed hitchhiked to Hollywood, hoping to launch a career as an actor or singer. Before long, Reed signed with Warner Brothers and came under the tutelage of acting instructor Paton Price. In 1961, Dean Reed's first hit, "Our Summer Romance," climbed onto U.S. song charts.

That same year, Reed undertook a concert tour of South America and discovered an entire continent of wildly enthusiastic fans. In December 1961, a poll taken among young South Americans indicated that Reed's popularity outstripped that of Elvis Presley, Paul Anka, and Neil Sedaka. Lured by mass adulation, Reed remained south of the border where he became known as the Magnificent Gringo. Reed also became a proclaimed Marxist, taking up the causes of the oppressed masses.

In 1966, political unrest in South America forced Reed to leave Argentina. Divorced from his first wife, Reed moved to Italy, where he appeared in numerous spaghetti Westerns, including a film with Yul Brynner, as well as in an Italian remake of the Zorro legend. In autumn 1971, while attending a documentary film festival in Leipzig, Reed met an East German schoolteacher named Wiebke. Two years later, in the summer of 1973, he married her and took up residence in East Germany. Although Reed moved to East Germany, he later made it clear that he felt at home throughout the Soviet bloc. "Had Wiebke been a Pole, a Russian or a Bulgarian," he insisted in one interview, "I would have stayed in Warsaw or Moscow, Sofia or Budapest." In any case, Reed retained his U.S. passport and with it, his right to travel in the West whenever he wished.

In the 1970s, Reed toured Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union extensively. His concert repertoire consisted of rock-and-roll numbers, country-and-western hits and American protest songs. Among Reed's most popular numbers was his spirited composition, "We Are the Revolutionaries," which he dedicated to the political struggles in Latin America. He also recast the American anthem "Glory Hallelujah" into a proletarian battle hymn. "Mine eyes," sang Reed, "have seen the glory of the victory of man."

During the 1970s, Dean Reed filled the largest concert venues in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. At a concert in Hungary in June 1979, over seventy thousand fans packed Budapest's Népstadion to watch him perform. Following a Moscow concert in March 1972, Reed was mobbed by hysterical fans. As he emerged from the theater, a crowd of fans broke through a cordon of twenty security officers and set upon the star, screaming wildly and tearing at his clothing. As Reed escaped into a waiting car, fans swarmed around the

vehicle, calling for him and rocking the car. Observing the frenzy, a reporter for *Newsweek* magazine overheard a Russian fan ask an American standing nearby, "Does this happen to him in America?"

"I don't know," the American reportedly answered. "I never heard of him."

Although Dean Reed remained virtually unknown in the United States, accounts of his phenomenal Soviet-bloc popularity surfaced occasionally in the American media. On November 28, 1966, the *New York Times* reported on the twenty-eight-year-old singer's first Soviet-bloc appearance. "Dean Reed, a young singer," the *New York Times* observed, "was cheered and applauded for 25 minutes this afternoon in Moscow's Variety Theater after a spirited performance in which the audience joined in to sing and clap to rock 'n' roll music." Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, newspapers and weekly magazines continued to report on Reed as a bit of international curio.

In 1985, a documentary on Reed, *American Rebel,* premiered in the United States, playing to students at several colleges in the Midwest. Within a year, Mike Wallace of the CBS news magazine *60 Minutes* arrived in East Berlin to interview Reed. The *60 Minutes* segment, which aired on April 20, 1986, presented Reed "living in capitalist-style comfort." Reed asserted his belief in communism, espousing much of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine typical of orthodox party members. Reed alternately praised the benefits of socialism and condemned the foreign policy of the United States. In the course of the interview, he also alluded to his interest in returning to the United States, whimsically suggesting that he might replace Gary Hart as the governor of Colorado.

In fact, by the time the *60 Minutes* segment aired, Reed was seriously considering a return to the United States. An expatriate for nearly a quarter century, the forty-eight-year-old American felt the need to return to his homeland. It is likely that more than homesickness motivated him. In the early 1980s, Reed's Soviet-bloc popularity flagged. The generation that embraced him as a rock-and-roll "superstar" in the early 1970s now viewed the singer as an embarrassing reminder of their musical naïveté. With eighteen motion pictures and fourteen long-playing albums to his credit, Reed seemed to have exhausted his audiences. At the same time, he felt that having commanded an audience of tens of millions in the Soviet bloc, he could duplicate his success in the United States.

In the spring of 1986, with a Colorado high-school friend, Dixie Schnebly acting as his U.S. manager, Reed charted a publicity campaign for the U.S. market. "Let's not put the Country label on me," Reed wrote Schnebly on February 28, 1986. The singer suspected conservative forces in Nashville would not put their heart into making an avowed Marxist into a star. Reed thought American colleges, where he hoped to find "13 million potential fans, friends and fellow progressives," would provide an initial foothold in the American music scene. He planned a tour of American campuses for 1987.

Western media fueled Reed's hopes of breaking into the U.S. market. Following the *60 Minutes* segment, which elicited tremendous viewer response (overwhelmingly negative), Reed found the Western media increasingly fascinated with him. On May 29, 1986, CBS contacted him in East Berlin and

asked if they could send a film crew with him to the Soviet Union, where he was working on his latest film. Encouraged by the CBS inquiry, Reed wrote to Schnebly that he anticipated the coverage would have a snowball effect: "I believe that probably the other networks will also show up for the filming along with the *New York Times, Time* and *Newsweek.*"

In June 1986, Reed snagged the attention of the British media as well. A reporter for the *Times* in London arrived in Berlin for an arranged interview with Reed. When the reporter called him at his home, Renate Blume answered the phone and informed him that Reed was not available. According to Blume, Reed was in the hospital with a lung infection. The reporter was told to call back the following week. The interview never took place. On Tuesday, June 17, 1986, Dean Reed was found dead in a lake ten miles from his home. The police report gave "accidental drowning" as the cause of his death. Reed had never been in the hospital.

Reed's relatives in the United States demanded the U.S. government investigate the suspicious circumstances surrounding his death. Schnebly claimed Reed had called her the week before his drowning, insisting that "something strange was happening." Support for his Soviet film project had been inexplicably withdrawn. According to Schnebly, he had called her two days later and had said that he feared for his life.

Within the week, Dean Reed was dead. According to the East German police report, Reed had left his home around 10:30 on the evening of June 12, 1986, after taking a sleeping tablet. While driving, Reed had lost control of his car and had crashed into a tree. Reconstructing the events, the police claimed that he had left the car and had walked to a nearby lake in order to wash his face. As he leaned over, he had lost his equilibrium, had fallen into the water, and had drowned. He was found five days later. The East German autopsy found the partially dissolved sleeping tablet still in his stomach. Although Reed's body was cremated before a U.S. examiner arrived to corroborate the East German report, the U.S. embassy in East Berlin found no improprieties in the East German procedure and closed the case.

Various rumors regarding Reed's death circulated in East Germany. The most common claimed that, with the marriage between Dean Reed and Renate Blume deteriorating, Reed, though he had survived the breakup of two previous marriages, had killed himself in despair. Another rumor held that the East German government, offended by Reed's desire to return to the United States, had done away with the singer. *Neues Deutschland* offered no explanation. In a prominent obituary in its June 18, 1986, edition, the party paper simply reported Reed's death as "a tragic accident." The obituary praised Reed's contributions to the socialist cause and world peace. "Dean Reed was a friend and comrade who was on our side," the paper eulogized, "and we will always hold him in high esteem."

East Germany: Puhdys, Renft, and "Heated Rhythms"

Dean Reed arrived in East Germany in 1973 amidst a cultural thaw. Erich Honecker, the former Communist youth-league head who had replaced the Stalinist leader Walter Ulbricht as party head in the spring of 1971, aligned cultural policy with the needs of East Germany's young people. The appearance of the novel, *The New Sorrows of Young W . . . ,* by Ulrich Plenzdorf heralded the Honecker era in East German culture. In the story, Edgar Wibeau, a self-styled Holden Caulfield, extolled the virtues of American film, jazz, rock music, and blue jeans. "Jeans are not pants," proclaimed the teenage hero. "They are a way of life." *The New Sorrows,* which created a sensation east and west of the Iron Curtain, brought rock and roll out of East Germany's ideological closet.

In April 1973, East Germany, in good socialist fashion, braced itself for the official rehabilitation of *Beatmusik* by creating a bureaucratic mechanism. The Committee for Entertainment Music, under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and manned by ideologically "sound" individuals, was intended to police the development of official rock music.

As East German officials withdrew from their antirock barricades, many rock musicians met the party halfway. Beat ensembles, allowed to perform rock and roll, agreed to champion state causes, condemning imperialist aggression abroad and praising the achievements of socialism at home. "The political engagement of the groups was very evident at first and expressed itself in their songs," explained East German rock historian Peter Wicke, "most likely in order to ameliorate the prevalent prejudices against the appearance of the musicians, which did not fit at all into the stage acts people were used to seeing." As added ideological insurance, many bands used texts penned by state-acclaimed lyricists like Jens Gerlach, Wolfgang Tilgner, and Kurt Demmler.

In the summer of 1973, on the occasion of the tenth International Youth Festival held in East Berlin, East Germany introduced to the world its "rock bands of the new type." The Berlin band, The Puhdys, performed their song "Ahead is the Light," a paean to the socialist future written by Wolfgang Tilgner. The Klaus-Renft-Combo, Leipzig's most popular ensemble, condemned imperialist oppression in its song "The Chains Grow Tighter." The political engagement of the Puhdys and Renft at the youth festival inspired other East German bands. In September 1974, the Dresden band Lift, featuring vocalist Stefan Trepte, staged "Solitreff" ("Solidarity Get-Together") to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the military putsch in Chile. In January 1978, Lift joined with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra to perform the "Che Guevara Suite" in East Berlin's Palace of the Republic.

During the 1970s, the Puhdys emerged as the quintessential state-sponsored ensemble. The Puhdys, formed as a Beatles band in the town of Oranienburg near Berlin around 1965, adopted in the early 1970s the heavier sounds of bands like Uriah Heep and Deep Purple. In May 1971, just weeks after Honecker's ascent to power, Chris Wallach, moderator for the television program

Basar, approached the Puhdys with a proposition. Were the Puhdys to cut their hair, shave their beards, and forego singing Anglo-American rock numbers, Wallach would feature the band on his television show. The Puhdys complied and within the month appeared before millions of viewers on East German television.

The Puhdys combined rock and roll with a healthy socialist worldview. Not only did they perform ideologically charged songs like "Ahead is the Light" and "A Song for Generations," they also played the role of the model socialist rock band. "We aren't the partying types," bandleader Peter Meyer told *Melodie und Rhythmus* in 1972. "We prefer drinking milk and cola over alcohol." The band's bass player, Harry Jeske, told East German fans that the Puhdys avoided sexual involvement with their fans. Insisted Jeske: "We're above that sort of thing."

With their 1971 television debut, the Puhdys soared to national fame. The following year, their song "Face the Wind" topped the official charts for twelve months. In 1973, the band performed the sound track for the DEFA film *The Legend of Paul and Paula.* The Puhdys also toured the Soviet bloc, appearing in Romania and Poland. In April and May 1977, the Puhdys undertook an exhausting concert tour of the Soviet Union, traveling over fourteen thousand miles and holding thirty-nine concerts in six weeks' time. In the late 1970s, the Puhdys also tore through the Iron Curtain, appearing in West Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and other West European countries. The Puhdys eventually traveled to the Ridgefarm Studios in London, where they recorded *Far From Home,* an album of their greatest hits in English. In 1981, the group reached the shores of the United States where they held a brief promotional tour. Showered with state prizes, courted by the official media, and dispatched on tours throughout the world, the Puhdys became one of the most celebrated ensembles of the Soviet bloc.

The Puhdys reigned as the undisputed favorites of the state but not necessarily of all East German rock fans. By 1974, the Leipzig rock formation, the Klaus-Renft-Combo, competed with Peter Meyer and his clean-cut Puhdys for the favor of East Germany's rock public. The hard rocking, six-man band was led by Klaus "Renft" Jetzch, whose first band, the Butlers, sparked the 1965 Leipzig rock riot. Renft would go on to become one of the most enduring legends in Central European rock history.

Renft, formed in the early 1970s as the cultural climate warmed, initially courted state approval. The band's first big hit, "The Rose," was a pacifist justification for military might. Even the gentle rose, the song argued, needs thorns to protect itself. In a gesture of solidarity with Chile, Renft released a 45 rpm single with lyrics by Kurt Demmler, "Chilean Metal" and "That's How Neruda Died Too." On the cover of the single was a raised red fist with the caption *Solidarität mit Chile.* Renft played the party line, but did not follow its dress code. Despite its political commitment, the band members grew beards, wore shoulder-length hair, and dressed in ragged clothing. Thousands of East German youths, put off by the Puhdys' clean-cut image, turned to the "bad boys" of Renft.

During the mid-1970s, the Puhdys and Renft played out the classic battle

between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. While the Puhdys sang sweet harmonies and sipped milk under the approving eye of the state, the members of the Klaus-Renft-Combo rattled the walls of local Leipzig bars, drinking heavily, smoking, and preying on their female admirers. The group's brashness made them a national sensation. By 1974, Renft had sold over 200,000 LPs and 30,000 singles—big numbers for a small country. Granted "special status" because of their immense popularity, Renft could demand up to 2,400 marks per concert, well over twice the average East German monthly wage.

Much of the band's popularity derived from the excessive sound levels at their concerts and their rollicking stage presence. The press attacked the group for "insulting" audiences with their appearance, but Renft defended their "look," claiming that the scruffy appearance "complemented" their music. Renft concerts were also notoriously loud. Bandleader Jetzch admitted in an interview in *Melodie und Rhythmus* in February 1975 that most of the group's lyrics, written by Gerulf Pannach, were lost in the storm of guitar, keyboard, and drum accompaniment that surged through the amplifiers. But Jetzch saw no problem with the excessive noise. "Without a certain decibel level," he maintained, "people really can't get into the music."

Renft fans, dancing to the boisterous music in a Leipzig bar, may have understood few of the words being sung, but German cultural functionaries heard Renft's message loud and clear. As Renft's popularity grew, the band grew politically belligerent. In 1975, Renft not only denounced crimes in the capitalist world but also challenged injustices in their own country. Two songs in particular strained official tolerance: "Doubts" and the "Rockballad of Little Otto." "Doubts" attacked compulsory military conscription in East Germany's National People's Army, criticizing the government policy of imprisoning draft resisters who "turn their ass to the flag."

The "Rockballad of Little Otto" touched on the most sensitive issue in East Germany—the fortified border between the two German states. Otto is a young East German with an uncle living in Hamburg, West Germany. Feeling his life has been left to the whims of political functionaries, Otto takes fate into his own hands and tries to escape to West Germany in a rowboat. The attempt fails; Otto is arrested. Desperate, Otto returns to the river, throws himself into the rushing current, and drowns. Presumably. "Perhaps," the song concludes, "he'll resurface in Hamburg."

The two songs outraged East German officials, and on September 22, 1975, Renft was summoned to appear before the Leipzig Council of Culture. The six, scruffy band members set up their amplifiers and speakers and awaited the review committee. The head of the commission, Ruth Oelschlegel, mother-in-law to the eminent East German writer Hermann Kant, reportedly entered the auditorium and informed the band members that they did not need to perform. "We are of the opinion," Oelschlegel is alleged to have stated, "that through your texts you have not only insulted the working class of the German Democratic Republic, but have also defamed its security and secret service forces." Oelschlegel then concluded, "This commission has no desire to have its opinion further substantiated by your music. We hereby declare the group 'Renft'

no longer existent.'' When asked if she meant the group had been banned, Oelschlegel responded, ''I did not say you were banned. In our opinion, you no longer exist.''

Within a matter of days, each of the six musicians received a letter informing him that ''as of September 22, 1975, the dance music ensemble 'Klaus-Renft-Combo' is considered disbanded.'' Gerulf Pannach, author of the problematic texts, wrote a letter directly to Erich Honecker, appealing to his promises of liberalization. Honecker did not respond. By the spring of 1976, the keyboard player Christian Kunert and Lyricist Gerulf Pannach had been arrested and imprisoned by the secret police. In May 1977, bass player Klaus Jetzch was forced to emigrate to the West. Vocalist Peter Gläser and drummer Jochen Hohl quietly withdrew and waited for the dust to settle. The two imprisoned musicians eventually were allowed to emigrate to the West; Gläser and Hohl reemerged with a new band bearing the innocuous name 'Karussell.' ''We were too confident,'' Gläser reflected on the debacle. ''We assumed that we were so popular the government couldn't do anything against us. We obviously overestimated our position in society.''

A year after the disbanding of Renft in 1975, the Honecker regime found renewed occasion to demonstrate its intolerance of criticism. The action, instituted in 1976, had its roots over a decade earlier. Following the eleventh plenary session of the Central Committee in December 1965, the brash folksinger, Wolf Biermann, had been banned from public performance in East Germany. However, the muzzled bard continued to write and perform protest songs in his East Berlin apartment located at 131 Chaussee Street. Lyrics to Biermann songs circulated on carbon copies; recordings of his performances were distributed on underground tapes. Sitting in his Chaussee Street apartment, penning morose aspersions against the socialist establishment, Biermann assumed legendary proportions.

In West Germany, Biermann became big business. Beginning in 1965, Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, a West Berlin publisher, began issuing anthologies of Biermann's poetry and albums of Biermann's songs. The recordings, made in ''secrecy'' in Biermann's East Berlin apartment, combined the subversive ambience of the Soviet-bloc underground with the high fidelity of Western recording techniques. Biermann became so popular among West German youths that CBS records signed him as a recording artist. Despite Biermann's status as persona non grata, CBS was permitted to send sound technicians to the bard's East Berlin apartment, where they converted the living room into a make-shift recording studio. In this atmosphere of feigned secrecy—it is inconceivable that the secret police were not aware of the activity—Biermann recorded top-selling albums for CBS Records, including *Don't Wait for Better Times* in 1973 and *Chaussee Street 131* in 1975.

The Honecker government proved remarkably tolerant of its ''officially recognized state enemy,'' as Biermann fancied himself. In 1973, Biermann received a visa to travel incognito to his family in Hamburg, West Germany, for a short visit. In September 1975, Biermann was allowed to hold a concert in a Protestant church in the East Berlin suburb of Prenzlau. The following autumn,

when Biermann received an invitation to perform in Cologne, West Germany, the East German government granted the singer permission to travel to the West. Accompanying the visa, however, was the stipulation that Biermann refrain from singing several songs, including the "Stasi-Lied," a song about the East German secret police.

On November 13, 1976, Biermann stepped onto the stage of Cologne's sports stadium before an audience of seven thousand cheering fans. While West German television broadcast the performance to viewers in both Germanies, CBS records recorded the event for posterity and profit. Equipped with nothing more than his acoustic guitar and a repertoire of songs characterized by their melancholy tone and biting cynicism, Biermann entertained the crowd for nearly three hours. The singer elicited catcalls and protests when he declared East Germany *das bessere Deutschland* (the better Germany); he harvested thunderous applause for his heartfelt songs "Encouragement" and "Don't Wait for Better Times." Despite the warning from East German officials, Biermann also sang the "Stasi-Lied."

Following the Cologne concert, Biermann learned that his East German citizenship had been revoked. The Biermann expatriation was rife with irony. Biermann, a proclaimed Communist, found himself banished to the capitalist West, forcefully exiled from a country that required machine guns and barbed wire to keep millions of citizens from fleeing. One West German cartoon depicted an East German soldier standing atop a wall with a machine gun in each hand. On one side of the wall stood a sea of East Germans with suitcases in hand; on the other, the lone Wolf Biermann clutching his guitar. The caption recalled the impossible situation which many Germans felt had been the reason for the loss in both world wars: *Der Zweifrontenkrieg* ("The Two Front War").

The Biermann incident ruptured the East German cultural community. The day after Biermann's expatriation, leading East German writers, among them Christa Wolf and Volker Braun, publicly demanded that the government restore Biermann's citizenship. East German writer Stefan Heym appeared on West German television to denounce the government's action. By the week's end, seventy leading East German cultural figures, singers, actors, and writers had joined the critics.

The scandal over the Biermann affair ignited a public controversy. On November 22, 1976, *Neues Deutschland* published a full page of commentary in which "loyal" East German writers, poets, and film directors professed their support for the government's action. A banner headline read: "Massive Agreement by GDR Artists for the Policies of Party and State." Biermann was denounced as an "enemy of the state," a "reactionary," and a man undeserving to live in a socialist society. The Honecker government resolutely held to its decision. Protesting the regime's intransigence, well over a hundred prominent East Germans applied to emigrate to the West. East Germany endured the cultural bloodletting, ultimately satisfied that after ten years it had finally dislodged the incorrigible bard from its midst.

In the West, Biermann, despite effusive lamentations of his exile in the capitalist West, did well for himself. Within the year, he had purchased a 350,000

mark villa in Hamburg, and had earned over a half million marks from record sales, book sales, and concert revenues. Biermann continued to champion causes in West Germany, but his days as a domestic critic of the East German regime had ended.

The banning of Renft in 1975 and expatriation of Biermann in 1976 fed growing disillusionment with the Honecker regime, which had supposedly removed artistic "taboos" in the early 1970s. On October 7, 1977, during the twenty-eighth anniversary celebrations of the founding of the East German state, seething tensions among young people erupted in violence.

As part of the founding-day celebration, the rock band Express Berlin was invited to perform on the Alexanderplatz, the expansive square in central East Berlin. During the concert, a young girl accidentally fell into an air-vent shaft. As security units forced their way into the crowd to make way for an ambulance, the police scuffled with young people. Sensing growing resistance, the police unleashed attack dogs on the crowd. The youths responded by pelting the police with beer bottles. The security forces charged the crowd, flailing wildly with their billy clubs. As young people resisted, a full-scale battle developed on the Alexanderplatz.

Hundreds of young people showered the advancing cordon of police with stones, bottles, and chairs, then broke up the formation by pushing trash containers into the advancing units. Jean-Marcel Bouguereau, a reporter for the French paper *Liberation,* chronicled the events like a battlefield correspondent. "Several wounded policemen were carried away," Bouguereau reported, "Others, confronted by the jeering of the crowd, began to withdraw."

As the police fell into retreat, an estimated crowd of two thousand surged forward, overrunning the police lines. Individual policemen, cut off and surrounded by the advancing crowd, were pummeled and beaten. One officer was dragged behind a pavillion near the television tower, where he was stripped and beaten. "Just as we got there," recalled one eyewitness from West Berlin, "we saw a flaming police cap and uniform being thrown into the air from behind a metal wall near the television tower. The crowd cheered wildly. A young man standing beside us said, 'They're finishing off a cop.' "

One officer was reportedly stabbed to death and another killed when a case of beer split open his skull. In all, four policemen died, and sixty-eight others were injured before the battle waned. Rumors maintained that nine young people also perished and that at least two hundred were arrested. The East German media disclaimed reports of deaths and casualties, insisting that some "frivolous" young people had simply "scuffled" with police. *Neues Deutschland,* conceding that acts of violence had occurred, insisted that the young people, "under the influence of the heated rhythms" of the rock music, "did not know what they were doing."

The frenzied battle on the Alexanderplatz traumatized the Honecker regime and scarred a generation of East German youth. Until that moment, East German officials had not fathomed the intensity of youth hatred toward the regime, nor had the young people comprehended the potential ruthlessness of the state. Neither had realized its own potential for violence. In the next few years, East

German officials and rock fans, emotionally bruised by the cultural turmoil of the mid-1970s, sank into a morass of mutual suspicion and maleficence. The limitations of Honecker's cultural policy, like the physical limits of the Berlin Wall, proved both frustratingly impenetrable and brutally restrictive.

Czechoslovakia: The Plastic People of the Universe

In the spring of 1971, as Erich Honecker was first plugging electric guitars into East Germany's state apparatus, Gustav Husák, the Communist leader who replaced Alexander Dubček in the spring of 1969, was just completing the "normalization" of Czechoslovak culture. Extending the metaphor of the Prague Spring, the cultural journal *Tribuna* declared that the government would not "permit all flowers to blossom." Pronounced *Tribuna:* "We will cultivate, water and protect only one flower, the red rose of Marxism."

Normalization strangled the Prague Spring. By the time Dubček was forced from office in April 1969, the media had been compromised and the Czechoslovak people had grown increasingly cautious. Soon after, the effects were felt in the theater and film industry. The first sign of normalization on the Czechoslovak rock scene appeared in January 1970 when Prague officials closed the city's leading rock clubs. "Right after the new year," recalled veteran underground rock musician Mikoláš Chadima, "big beat started to disappear from Prague because the rock clubs were being shut down one by one. It all ended when they closed Arena, Sluníčko, Olympik, Play-Klub, F-Klub, and others." The Orfeus Klub, a popular rock 'n' roll venue, survived by changing its name to the Rubín Klub and by prominently billing folk-music ensembles. As the number of clubs dwindled, rock bands found it increasingly difficult to obtain bookings.

Official pressure on rock bands intensified in the spring of 1970. In May 1970, Collegium Musikum, a Slovak group that emulated the sound of Yes and Nice, held a concert in Prague. The local media gave the concert no advance publicity, and, consequently, Collegium Musikum performed to a half-empty auditorium. The Blue Effekt, Prague's leading blues band, also felt the effects of normalization. In the spring of 1970, posters announcing concerts for Blue Effekt appeared with a hybrid title of Czech and English: "Modrý Blue Effekt." Before long the English word "blue" was removed entirely from the band's name. Eventually, Modrý Effekt further abbreviated its name to M. Effekt.

Official pressure also caused the postponement of Prague's third annual Bigbít Festival. Originally planned for December 1970, the festival was rescheduled for April 1971. Rumors circulated that several Western stars, including the legendary blues guitarist John Mayall, were to appear. Shortly before the festival took place, however, the press launched an offensive against Western performers, publishing pictures of long-haired musicians and alleging they would bring "lice and drugs" into Czechoslovakia. The festival did take place in April 1971, but the only foreign groups permitted to appear were East Euro-

pean performers, including Omega from Hungary and Czesław Niemen from Poland.

In the early 1970s, official dictates outlined a scorched-earth policy for Czechoslovakia's rock and pop scene. Anglo-American lyrics and band names were proscribed; long hair and exotic dress banned. Repertoires had to be approved by government censors. Some bands accommodated the new demands with relative ease. The Rangers simply changed their name to Plavci. Jiří Korn, formerly of the Rebels, turned to pop music. L. Hajnis of the Primitives and J. Erno Šedivý, who had performed with the Primitives, Flamengo, and Energit, refused to compromise and emigrated. Guitarist Otto Bezloja and drummer Tony Black, both of the Matadors, accepted an invitation to perform in the Munich premiere of *Hair* and never returned to Czechoslovakia.

While most of the rock bands of the Prague Spring era were chewed up in the bureaucratic machinery, Olympic, Czechoslovakia's leading rock-and-roll ensemble, survived. Olympic appeared at the second Bigbít Festival in Prague in December 1968 and at the third Bigbít Festival in April 1971. As the pressure of normalization increased, several band members, unwilling to submit to compromise, left the group. Petr Janda, however, assembled new musicians and adopted a pop-oriented sound.

Many Czechoslovak rock fans, feeling Olympic had sold out to the Husák regime, turned from the group. Rumors held that Petr Janda had met with government officials and in exchange for partial artistic immunity had agreed to represent Czechoslovakia at official youth festivals throughout the Soviet bloc. Olympic's compromise allegedly included "friendship" concerts in the Soviet Union, which many Czechoslovak performers, protesting the invasion, refused to do. Janda's flexibility paid off. Olympic appeared on television, released albums on the state label, and toured extensively east and west of the Iron Curtain. Along with an appearance at a youth festival in Cuba, Olympic also toured in France, Italy, and West Germany.

But even musicians willing to compromise their artistic integrity for official acceptance found the situation trying. In 1970, pop singer Karel Gott, who in 1964 recorded a Beatles song on the state label, was criticized for his composition "Hey, Councilman!" The song, a light musical ditty about a befuddled lover petitioning local authorities for a bit of "heaven on earth," was attacked in the press and banned from the radio. Party leader Husák claimed that the song promoted "irresponsible illusion" among the youth.

Resisting the criticism, Gott continued to perform the song. When the singer began finding it difficult to book domestic concerts, Gott inquired as to the reason and was told, "you've been singing that protest song against the bureaucracy again." Gott also crossed authorities with a song in which a troubled lover lamented the fickleness of his paramour. "I may as well flip a coin," Gott sang, "when I ask you if you're sincere when you say you love me." According to Gott, the song was banned from Czechoslovak television and radio because the lyrics were deemed "insulting" to the value of Czechoslovak currency. More disturbing to government officials may have been the fact that the melody derived from the Creedence Clearwater hit "Down on the Corner."

Official scrutiny was meticulous. "The censors demanded," Gott recalled, "to see my song texts three months before I could start recording them. Then, even if I could make the recording, the songs had to pass another board of censors before the radio would be permitted to play them." In preparation for a tour of West Germany, Gott spent an entire day arguing over hair length with state officials. Gott maintained that his hair, which covered half his ear, was important to his "image" in the West. The officials refused to let Gott perform with his hair touching his ears. A compromise was eventually reached, and three centimeters were trimmed from Gott's coiffure. By 1971, the sheer weight of the state bureaucracy had crushed virtually all life from the official rock music scene.

As the official music scene stagnated, a vital alternative rock culture emerged. Small Bohemian villages, like Ledeč and Suchá, beyond the reach of centralized bureaucratic controls, replaced Prague as the focus of the Czechoslovak rock scene. Amateur bands, free from the constraints imposed on professional ensembles, found nominal sponsorship from local youth clubs, women's organizations, and even fire brigades. "The establishment has no power to prevent those who reject all advantages that flow from being professional musicians from performing," noted Ivan Jirouš, the spokesman for Czechoslovakia's "second culture." "The establishment can only put pressure on those who want to be better off."

Amateur bands could receive money for their performances but, unable to negotiate their own concerts, were subject to the approval of their cover organization. Members of those ensembles were also required to hold regular employment; amateur musicians unable to demonstrate proof of a regular job risked imprisonment for "parasitism." Many musicians sought nominal employment as night watchmen and custodians. One member of the leading unofficial band, the Plastic People of the Universe, solved the problem by having himself declared an "invalid," making him officially incapable of holding a job.

The government in Prague was so concerned with regulating the lyrics, decibel levels, and hair length of official bands that it essentially ignored the amateur rock scene, permitting an extensive underground rock culture to flourish in the Czechoslovak countryside during the early 1970s. "It was a good time in Czechoslovakia, 1973," recalled Vratislav Brabenec, a member of the Plastic People, "Many exhibitions, many concerts. It was good for writers, musicians, artists."

By 1974, however, the "second culture" began to feel pressure from Prague. Concerts were cancelled with growing frequency. Fans would arrive in small villages by train, bus, and on foot only to find themselves facing cordons of police units. At concerts that did take place, security forces were often on hand to examine I.D. cards and to interrogate young fans. The militia's increased interference and young people's growing resentment precipitated a series of violent clashes in the mid-1970s.

One of the first major confrontations between security forces and young people occurred on March 30, 1974, in the village of Rudolfov near the town of České Budějovice in southern Bohemia. Before a concert at which several un-

official bands, including the Plastic People of the Universe, were to perform, the police attacked and broke up a crowd of several hundred fans. Batallions of police and soldiers reportedly pressed among the youths, thrashing them with their truncheons. "Masses of young people were herded into the Budějovice train station by cops and soldiers with dogs and riot gear," recalled Canadian observer Paul Wilson. The young people were forced through a passage that led to the railroad tracks. According to Wilson, "The tunnel was lined with truncheon-wielding goons, and a lot of blood was spilled and limbs broken." Police jammed several hundred youths into a waiting railway car and shipped them back to Prague. Six young people were imprisoned and many others expelled from school or not permitted to take their final exams. The incident became known as the Budějovice massacre.

In the months that followed, tensions escalated. Local officials, fearing outbreaks of violence similar to that at Budějovice, began on their own accord to cancel local rock concerts. On August 13, 1977, the cancellation of a concert in the southern Bohemian town of Kdyně resulted in a particularly bloody confrontation.

A concert by the rock band Kaskáda had been scheduled as part of the annual festivities for the city of Chod in Sokol Hall, located in the nearby town of Kdyně. On the evening of the concert, an estimated twelve hundred fans gathered outside the hall. By eight p.m., the crowd, having grown restless, broke the lock to the door and pressed into the hall. As the fans pushed through the door, concert organizers levied a fifteen-koruna cover from each person. As the hall filled, the mood grew increasingly boisterous, and organizers, fearing that "orderly procedure could not be guaranteed," announced that the concert had been called off. The crowd began to jeer. With the help of police, the organizers cleared the hall, but the fans remained outside demanding a return of the fifteen-koruna cover charge.

When the crowd refused to disperse, the police moved in with tear gas, clubs, and attack dogs. Four officers reportedly beat one young man and threw him down a staircase. The enraged crowd began chanting "Gestapo! Gestapo!" They showered the police with stones, driving them back into the hall where the fans blockaded the door. The enraged mob then rampaged through the area, smashing windows and attacking approaching cars, which they mistook for police support units.

In an agitated state, hundreds of young people marched to the Kydně train station, where they halted and occupied an incoming train. Police units arrived, battled their way onto the train with clubs, and began clearing the cars. In the ensuing melee, the fans set one railroad car ablaze. As young people's resistance stiffened, police reinforcements and military units arrived. The youths, driven from the train, reassembled and began pelting the police and soldiers with stones. Smoke mingled with the violent screams of the youths as the tensions heightened. The commander of the operation, fearing that the confrontation would erupt into a bloodbath, used the railway-station loudspeaker system to order his units to refrain from using violence. The youths were eventually appeased, and they dispersed without further incident.

The battle at Kdyně left over one hundred young people injured, twenty-seven of them seriously. It was further rumored that seven policemen had to be hospitalized and that two officers died of injuries sustained in the conflict. Further, three armored cars had been overturned and numerous cars torched. The damage to the railroad station and the surrounding buildings was estimated at three million koruna.

The increasing violence by the police and the growing resistance among the youth caused the Critics Section of the music union to question the prudence of the government's campaign against rock music. In an open letter to the party journal *Tribuna* in August 1977, members of the Critics Section questioned the effectiveness of the official campaign against the rock movement. "It is a major question," the letter pointed out, "whether the present attack on the ideological diversion by rock music is as effective as it is loud." The letter also noted the numbing effect of the "cheap and commercial pop music" that the state had been promoting on television and radio. The Critics Section further warned the government that, through its hard-line policy toward rock music, it was alienating an entire generation of Czechoslovakian youth. "The generations that follow," the letter observed, "identify quite strongly with the music of their youth, and it remains their music throughout their life." The exiled Czech novelist Josef Škvorecký stated the point more poignantly: "If you make enemies of young people by suppressing the music they love, they will hate you until their dying days."

During the 1970s, the single greatest challenge to the Czechoslovak cultural establishment came from the underground band the Plastic People of the Universe. In the fall of 1970, amidst Husák's call for the normalization of Czechoslovak culture, the Plastic People of the Universe lost their professional status. The band members' long hair and extravagant stage presence, as well as their repertoire of songs by the Fugs, the Velvet Underground, and their own compositions, failed to meet the new artistic standards. In forfeiting their professional status, the Plastic People also lost access to the state-owned Fender guitars, Ludwig drums, and Dynacord mikes.

In the fall of 1970, as the Plastic People adjusted to their new status, two band members, Přemysl Stevich and Michal Jernek, left the group, and Paul Wilson, who had befriended the band, was brought in as a vocalist. One band member, Josef Janíček, an electrician by profession, constructed a loudspeaker system, a mixing board, and an amplifier. "The plan," recalled Wilson, "was to regroup, become as self-sufficient as possible and play as amateurs while trying to regain the all-important professional status."

From the fall of 1970 until late 1972, the Plastic People rehearsed constantly and played about fifteen public concerts, many of them in Prague itself. At the F-Club in Prague, the band participated in *An Homage to Andy Warhol,* at which slides were shown and covers of Velvet Underground songs were performed. In June 1972, the Plastic People prepared to perform their largest concert to date at a factory-workers' club in Prague. Before the concert, a drunken auxiliary officer began scuffling with fans in the lobby. When the Plastic People's manager, Ivan Jirouš, tried to clarify the situation for police, he was

sprayed with mace and arrested. As a consequence of the misunderstanding, the Plastic People were banned from performing in Prague.

Despite this setback, the Plastic People continued to seek professional status. Later in 1972, after taking on saxophonist Vratislav Brabenec, the Plastic People purged their repertoire of Western songs and began playing exclusively their own material with Czech lyrics, many of which were authored by the underground poet Egon Bondy. Following a performance before a jury of music critics and professional musicians, the Plastic People finally obtained permission for the all-important professional license. Within two weeks, however, a letter arrived from the state booking agency overturning the jury's decision. The agency considered the music "morbid" and maintained that Plastic People performances would have a "negative social impact."

By the year's end, the Plastic People, having abandoned all hope of gaining professional status, withdrew from official culture. In contrast to other renegade bands of the 1970s, Illés in Hungary or Renft in East Germany, the Plastic People had no intention of challenging the establishment directly. Instead, the band members broke completely with official culture and pursued their own artistic agenda. Around the Plastic People, Czechoslovakia's renowned "second culture" emerged.

On September 1, 1974, the Plastic People sponsored the first Musical Festival of the Second Culture in the small Bohemian village of Postupice near Benešov. The event attracted hundreds of fans from Czechoslovakia and brought together the leading figures of the underground music scene. The Old Teenagers, renowned for renditions of Chuck Berry songs, opened the festival with covers to 1950s rock-and-roll classics. For the next few hours, fans heard Bohemia's leading underground rock bands, including DG-307, Umělá hmota and, naturally, the Plastic People of the Universe.

On February 21, 1976, the Plastic People staged the second Musical Festival of the Second Culture in the town of Bojanovice. The event celebrated the wedding of Ivan Jirouš, who had emerged as the "spiritual leader" of the underground movement. The festival featured new and old bands of the underground scene. Once again the Old Teenagers were on hand to open the festival. The band Umělá hmota III performed a song called "Monstrous Beings," dedicated to police brutality. A group called Sanhedrin performed covers to "Walkin' the Dog" by the Rolling Stones and "Gimme dat Harp," by Captain Beefheart. Further, Charlie Soukup, a singer-songwriter; DG-307, named after a medical designation for a psychological disorder; and the Plastic People also made appearances. The bands began performing at 3:30 in the afternoon and continued until two o'clock in the morning.

Although local officials were aware of the two festivals, no attempt was made to interfere in either event. However, a month later, on March 17, 1976, the police did strike. In a coordinated action, Czechoslovak security forces raided apartments, arresting a reported twenty-two people living in and around Prague. Tape recordings, films, and notebooks were confiscated, and one hundred young people were interrogated. The government announced that it would bring

to trial members of the Plastic People, DG-307, Umělá hmota, and Hever & Vazelína.

International protest over the arrests, including public remonstrances by West German Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll and American playwright Arthur Miller, forced the trial's postponement four times during the summer of 1976. By the time the proceedings commenced in September 1976, all but four musicians had been acquitted of charges and released. Those remaining were Ivan Jirouš and Vratislav Brabenec of the Plastic People, Pavel Zajíček of DG-307, and a singer Svatopluk Karásek. Focusing on the lyrics to several songs, the official indictment read: "The texts contained extreme vulgarity with an anti-socialist and an anti-social impact, most of them extolling nihilism, decadence and clericalism."

During the trial, the defense attorney for the four musicians did not attempt to refute the allegations of vulgarity. Instead, he observed that "vulgarisms" had a long-standing tradition in Czech culture. Even Comenius, the seventeenth-century Czech theologian, the defense asserted, incorporated "vulgarisms" into his writings. The defense attorney also availed himself of Lenin, noting that the father of the Communist revolution had included "vulgarisms" in his writings. In a brash statement that sounded as much like an attack on the government as a defense of his clients, the attorney read for the court from a 1922 letter in which Lenin declared: "Bureaucracy is shit." As further defense, a psychologist testified that the music and lyrics of the Plastic People and DG-307 "express in an authentic way the problems of young people; that is why they appeal to the audience."

The court was not moved. The judge observed that between 1971 and 1976 the four musicians had, through their public appearances, "manifested their disrespect of society and their contempt of the fundamental moral laws." The judge also maintained that the concerts were "highly dangerous" in that they had "an adverse effect" on the young people of Czechoslovakia.

On September 24, 1976, the party paper *Rudé právo* reported the results of the trial:

> Charged with criminal acts of disturbing the peace, sentences were handed down today to Ivan Jirouš (18 months), Pavel Zajíček (12 months), Svatopluk Karásek and Vratislav Brabenec (8 months each). All sentences were unconditional. Those who were condemned were members of the beat groups called the Plastic People of the Universe and DG-307. But not even the most tolerant person could call what they did art. Modesty and law prevents us from publishing examples of their lyrics. If we were to call them vulgar, it would be too weak a word. They are filthy, obscene.

Against a deluge of Western protest, the Czechoslovak media tenaciously defended the court decision. An editorial in *Rudé právo* the following day made clear that of the fourteen hundred beat groups performing publicly in Czechoslovakia, none "was limited in its activity or influenced in its repertoire." The editorial stated, however, that the Czechoslovak government would "resist any

moral filth and efforts to infect our youth with that which every decent man condemns.''

On June 8, 1977, Czechoslovak television, responding to continued ''Western propaganda'' that depicted the imprisoned musicians as ''suppressed bearers of culture,'' stated that the young people of Czechoslovakia would ''never dance'' to the music of these men. The broadcast showed photographs of the long-haired musicians and maintained that they were drug addicts, perverts, and devil worshippers. Pavel Zajíček, it was alleged, encouraged young people to take LSD and to sell their souls to the devil. The musicians had also supposedly urged young people to destroy paintings and books and to demolish public theaters.

Local officials and security forces continued to exert pressure on the remaining members of the Plastic People and their fans. Following a New Year's Eve party on December 31, 1976, at which the Plastic People performed, the house in which the concert took place was reportedly confiscated by the government and used for target practice during a military exercise. Harassment of the Plastic People and their fans persisted for the remainder of the decade. ''In 1979,'' Vratislav Brabenec recalled in 1982, ''the state expropriated a farm where we had played a concert in honor of the philosopher Ladislav Klíma. Last year, they set fire to a house belonging to some friends just because the friends had let us play there.'' In the middle of 1980, a farm in the mountain town of Nová Víska which had served as a sanctuary for Czechoslovakia's second culture since 1978 was confiscated by the state. The residents were relocated, and the buildings boarded up due to an alleged ''threat of epidemic.''

Compared with the bloody rock-and-roll battlefields of East Germany and Czechoslovakia, the topography of the Soviet rock scene in the mid-1970s seemed like a pastoral landscape. But beneath the apparent tranquility thrived a fervent and dynamic rock culture.

10

The Soviet Rock Scene, 1970–1979

Rock music, viewed 15 years ago as devilment or charlantry, has now become a rather stable musical tradition in our country.

Yunost, no. 5, May 1976

Jesus Christ Superstar seemed to be everywhere in the Soviet Union during the 1970s. "In general a sort of cult flared up around the musical," observed one Soviet rock fan. "Young people grew their hair out 'à la Christ'; in the slang of the hippies the word 'Jesus' characterized any long-haired person or hippie. There were music lovers who collected every possible variant recording of the opera: the Broadway one with Ian Gillan; the Australian with Arthur Brown; the English, electric one; the film sound track; and others, eight of them in all." Songs from the rock opera highlighted concerts and disco evenings; and translations of the text circulated on *samizdat,* the Soviet's legendary system of "self publication."

Jesus Christ Superstar also enjoyed surprising popularity among Soviet cultural officials. In 1971, two months before the rock opera's London premier, students in the Baltic city of Vilnius staged the complete English-language version of *Jesus Christ Superstar.* In an astonishingly positive review, the August 1973 issue of *Inostrannaia literatura (Foreign literature)* compared Tim Rice's treatment of the biblical material to the work of Bulgakov and Dostoyevsky. In November 1974, *Rock and Roll at Dawn,* a play about American youth culture written by two *Pravda* editors, featured entire scenes from *Jesus Christ Superstar.* By the decade's end, *Vremya,* the nightly news program, had adopted the theme song from *Jesus Christ Superstar* as its musical signature.

Although rock music was by no means as pervasive in the Soviet Union as it was in Poland to the west or Hungary to the south, the "electric sound" of

Western rock began to brighten the grey edifice of official Soviet culture in the early 1970s. Vocal instrumental ensembles provided sound tracks for Mosfilm productions, appeared on television, and recorded on the Melodiya label. The official acceptance of rock and roll, even in a diluted form, discharged much of the energy from the Soviet rock scene. According to one estimate, by the mid-1970s, only a dozen underground bands remained active in Moscow. The rapid dissolution of Moscow's unofficial rock scene was due in part to the willingness of rock musicians to join the officially sponsored VIAs.

Vocal Instrumental Ensembles: Playing the Party Line

In June 1977, the Soviet magazine *Klub i khudozhestvennaia samodeyatelnost* (the *Club and Amateur Arts*) published the Soviet Union's first popular-music poll. Responding to a request in the magazine, thousands of readers submitted names of their favorite solo artists and vocal instrumental ensembles. The results of the poll appeared in the June 1977 issue of the *Club and Amateur Arts*. Of the leading vocal instrumental ensembles, Pesniary from Minsk took first place; Ariel from Teheliabinsk, second; Moscow's Samotsvety and Veselye rebiata won third and fourth place respectively.

Through their sanitized version of Western rock and roll, tempered with folk music and socialist themes, these groups managed to please cultural officials while cultivating a degree of sincere affection among Soviet youths. State sponsorship afforded national recognition, but it also imposed rigorous constraints. The Ministry of Culture established precise guidelines for vocal instrumental ensembles, regulating hair length, decibel levels, and repertoires.

Sixty-five percent of a VIA's repertoire had to be of Soviet origin, the remaining 35 percent was divided between 15 percent Western and 20 percent East European material. While Anglo-American rock hits rarely met official standards of "good taste," even Soviet material coming out of the state-run songmill often encountered problems with the censors. "The Cosmonauts" provides a case in point. The song anticipated the day when Soviet space technology would enable the Russians to cultivate fruit orchards on the surface of Mars. The original version of the song, which contained the line "Let's have a smoke before the launch," was deemed unacceptable by state censors, as cigarette smoking was not in keeping with the official image of a soviet cosmonaut. The line was changed to "Let's have a seat before the launch."

Despite the restrictions, the state siphoned many musicians from the underground into the official bands by offering generous financial compensation. Yuri Valov of the Moscow band Vetri peremen (Winds of Change) typified this transition from underground to official status. Valov had performed on the Moscow underground scene while studying law at the university. Valov, realizing he could make three times as much money as a member of a vocal instrumental ensemble than he could as a lawyer, abandoned his career in jurisprudence and joined a VIA. Valov was forced to cut his hair and wear a uniform, but he also earned enough money to purchase his own automobile, a rare and

expensive commodity in the Soviet Union. Further, Valov, in his free time, continued to work Moscow's underground rock scene.

Vocal instrumental ensembles depleted the talent and energy on the underground scene; they also accelerated the official acceptance of rock music through their songs about steel production, grain harvests, and antifascist solidarity. One popular song by Moscow's Samotsvety was dedicated to the trans-Siberian pipeline. A song by Poiushchie gitary (the Singing Guitars) recalled the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps for children at Salaspils near Riga.

The Singing Guitars, formed in 1966 by Anatoli Vasiliev, a thirty-one-year-old graduate of the Leningrad Music Conservatory, initially gained popularity among Leningrad rock fans for its covers of Beatles and Cliff Richard hits. During the early 1970s, the Singing Guitars, like other groups, bowed to official pressure and began playing state-approved material. In 1974, the ensemble collaborated with Soviet librettist Yuri Dimitrin and the twenty-nine-year-old composer Alexander Shurbin to create *Orpheus and Eurydice,* the Soviet Union's first official rock opera.

Orpheus and Eurydice's premier in Leningrad in 1975 was greeted enthusiastically by the cultural establishment. Andrei Petrov, chairman of the Leningrad section of the composers' union, praised the work, noting that "the original drama, the brilliant directing, and the masterful singing and acting of the Singing Guitars have been fused into a brilliant production."

The rock opera also delivered the kind of message that cultural officials liked to hear. In the opera, Orpheus appears as a Western-style rock star who falls victim to mass adulation. In one scene the blue-jeaned, bare-chested hero, having just won a song contest, is caught in the crush of hysterical admirers. Orpheus stands immobilized by exhaustion, as the "god of music" places a microphone stand across his shoulders, while two more microphone stands "impale" his chest. "And so," a reviewer for the monthly youth paper *Yunost* noted in May 1976, "the singer is crucified on the cross of mass culture, bound hand and foot by mass worship."

The VIA Pesniary from the city of Minsk also cultivated official favor. In 1973, as part of an effort to woo cultural officials, Pesniary publicly renounced its origins as a Beatles band. "We might as well admit it," Pesniary stated in the Soviet magazine *Ogonyok* in October 1973, "At first we tried to sing like the Beatles. And probably weren't worse than say the Happy Guys or the Blue Guitars. But before long we started to feel this just wasn't us." Guitarist Vladimir Muliavin, who founded the group in 1969, began, along with the group's seven other members, to play White Russian folk tunes on their electric guitars. Pesniary appeared on television, performing spirited songs like "Oh, It's Early for Ivan" and "The Lad is Plowing the Little Field." Pesniary enjoyed the benefits of state approval without sacrificing sincere popularity among millions of Soviet youths. "Pesniary had two faces," recalled one fan. "There was the official band you could see on television, but they also played covers to western hits and wrote great songs like 'Alesa.' At their best they sounded a lot like Jethro Tull."

The state rewarded Pesniary for its efforts. Within three years, Gosconcert,

the state booking agency, sent Muliavin and his fellow musicians on tour to East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and, finally, to the United States. In 1976, Gosconcert entered into negotiation with U.S. promoters to bring Pesniary to America, and in the fall of that year, Pesniary, teamed with the New Christie Minstrels, undertook a two-week tour of the American South. The debut concert in Harrisonburg, Virginia, attracted an audience of fifteen hundred. Displaying its technical virtuosity, Pesniary played a thirty-five-minute set that offered an eclectic pastiche of jazz, rock, folk, and classical music. Americans listened with polite curiosity as the ten-man ensemble combined White Russian folk with touches of J. S. Bach, Jethro Tull, Yes, and Emerson Lake and Palmer. From Harrisonburg, Virginia, Pesniary traveled by Greyhound bus to Beckley, West Virginia, to Gastonia, North Carolina, to Rome, Georgia, to Clarksville, Tennessee, and on to New Iberia, Louisiana.

Pesniary provided American audiences with a model of the Soviet popular music ensemble: a cheerful, carefully groomed, but nevertheless "hip" group of ten young men who combined folk traditions with the best of contemporary music. Pesniary exemplified the purported symbiosis between Soviet cultural policy and rock-and-roll music. "Pesniary is a group that whole-heartedly supports the program of the Communist party of the Soviet Union," Leonid Borovsky, the group's Soviet manager, told the *Washington Post* on November 25, 1976. "Besides, there is no such thing as an underground rock group in the Soviet Union. It is a contradiction in terms."

Mashina vremeni: Moscow's Underground Supergroup

By 1976, for every professional vocal instrumental ensemble performing a state approved repertoire, a thousand amateur rock-and-roll outfits hammered out covers of the latest Western hits. One official estimate from the mid-1970s placed the number of unofficial vocal instrumental ensembles at 100,000, compared with less than 150 professional VIAs. "Amateur status meant you had to hold a regular job and could play only in your spare time," recalled one former musician with a Moscow band. "It was also impossible to play on radio or television. But the advantage was, you could play whatever you wanted as long as you found someone willing to sponsor a concert."

In Moscow, trade schools became centers for the thriving amateur rock scene. Aggressive organizers competed to book leading amateur bands like Rubinovia ataka (Ruby Attack) and Vysokosnoe leto (Leap Year Summer) for evening concerts. Students and affiliates of the institutes purchased blocks of tickets at two rubles each, then passed them on at fifteen rubles apiece. During the mid-1970s, Moscow's Institute for Architecture, Institute for Aviation, and Institute for Civil Engineering provided leading concert venues for the local rock scene. The Department of Urban Development, an imposing structure on the prestigious Gorky Prospekt, also provided a forum for leading Moscow ensembles.

Several amateur rock groups dominated the Moscow scene in the mid-1970s.

Alexei Belov, a self-styled Jimi Hendrix, led the group Udachnoe priobretenie (Good Buy), which played covers of Johnny Winter, Jimi Hendrix, and Robin Trower numbers. Ruby Attack played a mixed repertoire of mainstream hits from the West. Arax, which served as the house band of Moscow's Komsomol Theater, specialized in covers to Beatles and Santana songs. Leap Year Summer, founded in 1972 by guitarist Alexander Sitkovetsky and singer-organist Kris Kelmi, adopted classical pieces to the rock idiom in the style of Yes, though the influences of Deep Purple could also be heard in their music.

The jazz-rock ensemble Arsenal, which introduced Moscow to the first complete stage performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar,* developed a large following with its stunning covers to hits by the American bands Chicago and Blood, Sweat and Tears. Band leader Alexsei Kozlov, an architect by training and a specialist in industrial design by profession, played the meanest saxophone in the Soviet capital. Kozlov, known affectionately as Lyosha among friends and fans, brought together an impressive array of musicians to Arsenal, including Makhurdad Badi. Badi, a Moscow-born Persian youth with kinky, shoulder-length hair, achieved local fame for his Christ portrayal in Arsenal's rendering of *Jesus Christ Superstar.*

Hedrick Smith, the *New York Times*'s Moscow correspondent, experienced firsthand Arsenal's electrifying stage presence. Sitting in a 400-seat meeting hall on a Thursday afternoon in March 1974, Smith watched Arsenal work through flawless covers to "Evil Woman" and "Spinning Wheel" by Blood, Sweat and Tears, and a medley from *Jesus Christ Superstar.* "At the electronic organ, throbbing with rhythm, is a goateed dandy in a flaming red shirt," recalled Smith. "A bank of electric guitarmen in neck-length hair give out with the vacant-eyed look and rolling body motion that go with rock. At center stage Lyosha Kozlov, with stringy beatnik hair and a full Solzhenitsyn beard, works over a wild, rippling alto sax."

Arsenal, Ruby Attack, and other amateur bands, free of the restrictions imposed on the professional VIAs, had little need or desire for official recognition. Private managers supplied equipment and booked concert engagements; young people's insatiable hunger for live Western rock guaranteed full houses; foreign radio broadcasts and black-market recordings invigorated repertoires with fresh material from the West.

Although most amateur bands were content to play local concert venues, one Moscow band, Tsvety (Flowers), succeeded in breeching the Soviet cultural establishment. Without entering into the compromises of the VIAs, Tsvety recorded on the Melodiya label and undertook national concert tours. In the early 1970s, Tsvety released two singles on the Melodiya label, bringing the first real rock and roll to Soviet vinyl.

Tsvety's success in gaining official recognition was due entirely to the efforts of Stas Namin, the band's cunning and ambitious leader. Stas Namin, born Anastas Mikoyan after his grandfather, a leading Soviet official, exploited his family's political stature to advance his musical career. The young Mikoyan first developed his passion for rock and roll while at Suvorov, the prestigious

Soviet academy for military cadets. With the other cadets, Mikoyan practiced military drill, parading annually with his comrades across Moscow's Red Square to commemorate the October Revolution. In the evenings, the young cadet, who also took lessons in classical guitar, taped rock-and-roll songs from foreign broadcasts and practiced them on his guitar. When Beatlemania swept the Soviet Union, Mikoyan requested permission to form a rock band at Suvorov. "The officers and party officials had nothing against it," Stas Namin recalled. "We were even allowed to perform before audiences in uniform."

After seven years, the aspiring rock musician left the military academy, enrolled in American literature at Moscow University, grew his hair, and formed another rock band. After graduation, the young Mikoyan, with the blessings of his grandfather, continued to pursue rock music. By 1973, Stas Namin, mainly through the influence of his family name, had established himself as a full-time rock musician. Mikoyan, who took Tsvety on national concert tours, became the first rock musician inducted into the stuffy Soviet composers' union.

While Soviet cultural officials grudgingly accommodated the brash, well-connected Mikoyan in the cultural establishment, the managers of Moscow's clubs and theaters, more concerned with box-office receipts than with ideological purity, aggressively sought the most clamorous amateur rock bands. "The best bands were always in demand," noted one insider on the Moscow rock scene. "Only the most aggressive club directors were able to land Moscow's best groups. The bands themselves played no part in the arrangements. Managers handled the bookings, young people were hired to carry the equipment." By 1975, the prominence of amateur bands on the Moscow music scene began to unsettle the cultural establishment. On December 13, 1975, *Pravda* reprimanded local officials for permitting amateur ensembles to flourish. "Concert organizations' failure to insist on high standards of performance, the sway of fashion and the desire for box office success," observed *Pravda,* "have helped give rise to a certain stereotype on the concert stage: noisy, deafening groups that all sound alike." *Pravda* held concert-hall and club managers responsible for the proliferation of these offensive amateur groups.

During the 1970s, one unofficial band towered above all others, the Moscow group Mashina vremeni (Time Machine). Mashina vremeni, formed by Andrei Makarevich as a Beatles band in 1968, emerged during the mid-1970s as the Soviet Union's first subgroup. Although the band's sound, drawing initially from the Beatles and later from Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, and Queen, was essentially derivative, the lyrics remained distinctly Soviet. Like Illés in Hungary and Renft in East Germany, Mashina vremeni used the rock idiom to express the disappointments, fears, and frustrations of daily life in a socialist state.

In the early 1960s, Bulat Okudzhava offered young people an alternative to the hollow optimism of official songwriters; in the 1970s, Mashina vremeni recast the same themes in the rock idiom. While vocal instrumental ensembles cheerily recounted the exploits of cosmonauts and the accomplishments of five-year plans, Makarevich chronicled young people's sense of indifference and

passivity, their despair over the conformity and hypocrisy in daily life. The Makarevich song "Cafe Lyra" described the parade of unseemly characters who frequented a popular cafe on Gorky Prospekt. The brooding lyrics to another popular Makarevich song, "Flags on the Bastion," warned young people about "useless victories." Similar to Okudzhava, Makarevich avoided overt attacks on Communist ideology or the political establishment. Instead, he couched his criticism in oblique references, alluding, for example, to state propaganda, when in one song he lamented "there's no point in believing the promises any more." The Makarevich song "Masks" told young people they could be themselves only by living behind a mask.

Makarevich penned simple songs with poignant, sometimes bitterly satiric lyrics. Mashina vremeni's first big song, "Battle with Fools," suggested that if one were to kill all the fools in Soviet society, there would be no one left. "It was a simple song with four chords and about twelve lines," recalled one Mashina vremeni fan. "Anyone could play it on a guitar."

Andrei Makarevich, a student at Moscow Institute of Architecture, was the soul of Mashina vremeni. A sinewy young man with a head of curly hair, Makarevich in the heat of a concert recalled the hard-rocking Carlos Santana. Makarevich dominated Mashina vremeni, combining the brooding nature of a nineteenth-century Russian poet with the impetuousness of a twentieth-century Western rock star. In the summer of 1982, while vacationing in the Crimea, Makarevich sat on a beach for hours, immersed in a recently published volume of Vysotsky lyrics. "Don't be fooled by his sullen songs," one Makarevich acquaintance cautioned. "Makar indulged in the same pleasures as his Western counterparts, dope, booze and women. I remember one evening, at a small gathering he smoked for five hours straight and got incredibly high. He started playing these official Soviet songs so that they sounded absolutely hilarious."

During the late 1970s, cassettes of Mashina vremeni songs circulated by the millions, sometimes commanding the black-market prices usually reserved for Western recordings. In 1975, Makarevich and his band flickered briefly across the screens of Soviet cinemas when Mashina vremeni was asked to provide the theme song for the Mosfilm production *Afonia*. Although the film's director Georgi Danelia spliced only a short segment of the band into the film, devoted Mashina vremeni fans patiently sat through the film time and again to catch a brief glimpse of Makarevich and his fellow musicians.

With virtually no exposure in the official media, the image of Mashina vremeni, left to the imagination of adoring fans, quickly outstripped reality. One rumor held that Makarevich and his band had gone to England to record with Paul McCartney. Another rumor maintained that Mashina vremeni traveled with a troop of karate experts and a pack of German shepherds to protect the musicians from hysterical fans. Mashina vremeni's swelling popularity soon burst the frayed cover of its amateur status. Surging popularity transformed their concerts into increasingly boisterous affairs. Black marketeers, who had long done a brisk business pirating and selling copies of Mashina vremeni tapes, aggravated the situation by forging tickets to Mashina vremeni concerts. Fans

holding legitimate tickets who found themselves shut out of oversubscribed concerts stormed local box offices, demanding their money back. In Moscow, Mashina vremeni appearances were cancelled because so many forged tickets had come into circulation.

In 1979, increasing problems with local officials as well as a desire for financial compensation compelled Makarevich, the only original member of the band, to seek professional status for his band. While speculators had earned fortunes on black-market ticket and cassette sales, Makarevich had realized little financial benefit from his vast popularity. In the summer of 1979, Mashina vremeni began to work under the auspices of Rosconcert, the Russian concert organization. "Musicians, including rockers, need to work professionally, to earn money for their music," Makarevich defended his decision. Makarevich also maintained he had made no compromises to the state, insisting, "we sing and play what's really important to us."

Mashina vremeni's breakthrough onto the official music scene took place in March 1980 in Tbilisi, Georgia, where the city's Philharmonic sponsored a national rock competition called Spring Rhythms. The competition brought together professional and amateur bands from Moscow, Leningrad, the Baltic republics, the Ukraine, and other Soviet republics. On March 8, 1980, for the first time, official vocal instrumental ensembles like Stas Namin and Ariel faced amateur bands in a public competition. After a decade, Mashina vremeni received the recognition it deserved when the jury awarded Makarevich the festival's first prize.

Makarevich was not wholly comfortable with his new role as an officially recognized superstar. "So you consider us a bourgeois sell-out," Makarevich defended himself in conversation with rock critic Artemy Troitsky shortly after the Tbilisi success. "You think that if the judges have endorsed us and the Philharmonic has invited us to play, that means we've changed and we're not worth paying attention to." Makarevich insisted that Mashina vremeni had not become "any worse or any dumber." Instead, he argued, official attitudes had changed toward Mashina vremeni and rock music in general.

Despite Makarevich's personal reservations, Mashina vremeni had little difficulty adapting to its role as a state-authorized supergroup. The success at Tbilisi brought national media exposure. Makarevich gave television and radio interviews; articles appeared on Mashina vremeni in magazines and newspapers. An offer came to him to star in a Mosfilm production with pop star Alla Pugacheva. Although Pugacheva left the production following personal problems with her husband (the film's director), *Soul* premiered in 1983 with Mashina vremeni and another popular singer Sofia Rotaru.

Makarevich settled into the role of an official superstar. He lived in relative luxury along the Lenin Prospekt on Moscow's southern border in the Kaluga Gate, a building complex that Solzhenitsyn had helped reconstruct almost forty years earlier. Makarevich was also married for a short time to the daughter of a Igor Fisunenko, a prominent Soviet television commentator. Mashina vremeni's manager became a permanent fixture in Makarevich's life. "He accompanied him everywhere," recalled a Makarevich acquaintance, "making sure

he had good accommodations, arranging his travel plans, supplying him with women.''

By 1982, Mashina vremeni was on the road six months out of the year, making appearances before wildly enthusiastic audiences from Leningrad to Vladivostok. When Mashina vremeni held its first official Leningrad concert in the city's 8,500-seat Iubileini Sports Arena, the vans carrying the musicians had to detour around mobs of young people. Scenes of mass hysteria among fans erupted in cities throughout the Soviet Union. In Minsk, Mashina vremeni fans unable to get tickets smashed down the doors to the theater where the band was performing. A correspondent for *Time,* who attended a Mashina vremeni concert in 1982, observed the electrifying effect Mashina vremeni had on its audiences. ''A typical Time Machine concert,'' the reporter wrote on June 28, 1982, ''is like a return to the early days of the Beatles.''

Supplying the Soviet Rock Scene: AC/DC or 0.15 Watts

In the early 1980s, Mashina vremeni toured the Soviet Union with a road crew of fifteen and twenty thousand pounds of rock-and-roll hardware. Although insignificant compared with the mega-tours of Western rock bands, Mashina vremeni's entourage indicated the relative availability of sound equipment on the Soviet rock scene during the early 1980s. Six years earlier, when Pesniary toured the United States, the state-supported vocal instrumental ensemble made do with an eclectic assortment of instruments. The electric guitars and basses, purchased on the black market, were of American origin; the electric organ had come from Italy; the microphones, from West Germany; the band's mixing board, from East Germany. The strings for the bass guitar were purchased secondhand from a Czech rock musician while Pesniary was on tour in Czechoslovakia. Polish and Hungarian rock bands touring the Soviet Union would reportedly sell off their equipment to Soviet groups for top ruble or black-market dollars before returning to Warsaw or Budapest.

In 1977, the Soviet Ministry of Culture, aware of the desperate shortage of equipment for vocal instrumental ensembles as well as for amateur beat groups, acknowledged the state's responsibility to supply the material needs of the Soviet rock culture. In July 1977, B. Sunik, assistant chief of the Supply Administration of the Soviet Ministry of Culture, expressed his concern over the plight of amateur Soviet rock and pop ensembles. Observing the inadequacies of domestic production of music equipment, Sunik speculated that it would require ''at least five years to supply all the band instruments needed.'' Most professional musicians relied extensively on the black market to supply amplifiers, microphones, and guitars. Occasional contact with a Westerner could bring a precious piece of equipment. Stas Namin, for example, gladly accepted a synthesizer offered him by the British pop star Cat Stevens.

Despite persistent shortages and exorbitant prices, Soviet rock fans had relatively easy access to stereo equipment. During the 1970s, as the Soviet audio industry attempted to meet the needs of the rock music fan, combines produced

amplifiers and tape players with wattages commensurate with the demands of high-decibel rock and roll. One tape recorder, the Ilet-101, could reportedly muster up to twelve watts. The Melodia-101 radio-phonograph produced fifteen watts of power, the Estonia-006 radio-phonograph put out twenty-five watts, and the Arktur-101 amplifier, manufactured by the Bersk Radio Plant, had a thirty-five-watt punch. An advertisement for one Soviet stereo system boasted: "The Horizon-107 sound system can amplify sound to 16 watts!"

For many Soviet citizens accustomed to the dim strains that issued from the cable radios in millions of Soviet households, talk of an entire watt of sound, let alone double digit wattages, seemed outrageously excessive. "Do you know what 16 watts means?" wrote one distressed citizen in *Literaturnaia gazeta* on August 3, 1977. "Turn the volume on an ordinary speaker up as far as it will go—that's 0.15 watts." The thought of a Soviet Led Zeppelin or AC/DC fan purchasing a twenty-five-watt Estonia-006 radio-phonograph and setting it up in a cramped two-room apartment could strike terror in the average Soviet citizen.

At the same time, Melodiya issued increasing numbers of pop and rock albums. The 1973 Melodiya release *How Beautiful Is This World* by David Tukhamanov, an official composer in his early thirties, is regarded as the first Soviet rock album. Tukhmanov's second album *In the Waves of My Memory,* envisioned as a concept album, combined the lyrics of nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets with the sounds of Pink Floyd, Niemen, and the art-rock band Renaissance. Tukhmanov, who wove a rich musical tapestry of rock, pop, jazz, and classical elements, tapped the resources of the Moscow underground rock scene, employing the talents of Alexander Gradsky, reputed to be the best guitarist in the Soviet Union, and the Persian vocalist Makhurdad Badi from Kozlov's band Arsenal. Within days after its release in 1976, *How Beautiful Is This World* had gone gold in the U.S.S.R.

During the 1970s, Melodiya also released tens of millions of albums by solo artists and vocal instrumental ensembles. Pesniary, also enjoying the favor of Melodiya officials, had released over ten million records by 1977. The female vocalist Alla Pugacheva, who made a sensational debut in 1976 with her hit song "Harlequin" at Bulgaria's Golden Orpheus Song Festival, became a regular recording artist for the Melodiya label. By 1988, the red-haired singer had sold over 150,000,000 records and tapes, establishing her along with Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, and Michael Jackson as one of the most popular performers in recording history.

While the state tried to fill the shelves of the Melodiya record stores with popular music, the black market continued to meet the needs unfulfilled by government plans. Outside the Melodiya Record shop on the Kalinin Prospekt in central Moscow, rock fans purchased the latest Anglo-American rock albums from black marketeers. On September 14, 1977, *Literaturnaia gazeta* observed that "the blue-jeaned boys, young and not so young, cluster around the corner from the Melodiya music store in Moscow, black-marketing records 'direct from abroad.' "

In Leningrad, the sidewalk outside the Melodiya store on the Nevsky Prospekt also saw a brisk underground trade in foreign albums. Another popular Leningrad location for purchasing Western albums was in front of the Young Technicians Store. During the mid-1970s, between 100 and 150 people gathered on Saturday mornings outside the shop to sell, to buy, and to swap records. Prices ranged from ten to seventy rubles, though the latest Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, or Pink Floyd albums could command as much as one hundred rubles, well over two weeks' earnings.

The Komsomol attempted to curb the black-market trade in foreign albums by dispatching members to patrol these places and report speculators to the authorities. The local Komsomol chapter in the Kuibyshev district of Moscow was particularly vigilant in its battle against black marketeers. During a two month period, *druzhinniki,* the volunteer helpers, apprehended a total of 101 buyers and speculators near the local Melodiya store. Punishment included fines ranging from ten to thirty rubles and jail sentences of three to fifteen days.

Despite these small victories, it proved impossible to stem the flood of Western rock albums pouring into the Soviet Union. Every September, when foreign students arrived at Soviet universities, the black market received a fresh influx of albums. Improved international relations also brought rising numbers of Western tourists into the country, who carried with them jeans, record albums, and other valuables that drew top ruble on the black market.

From *Diskoteki* to Disco Fever

The marriage between official cultural policy and rock and roll proved to be an awkward relationship from the start. Members of vocal instrumental ensembles, many of them former rock musicians who had enjoyed the freedom afforded by the underground scene, suffered under the oppressive scrutiny of the Ministry of Culture. At the same time, the Soviet government, compelled to accept the "electric sound" from the West, could not shake its fundamental distrust of these occasionally clamorous outfits. Despite official concessions to rock and roll, cultural officials continued to sense a sinister, explosive potential in rock-and-roll music.

The Soviets reacted quite differently to Western disco music. The images and sounds of discomania, the international rage following the 1977 debut of the film *Saturday Night Fever,* appealed to Soviet cultural officials. The star of *Saturday Night Fever,* John Travolta, sported leisure suits and wore his hair not just off his shoulders but well above his ears. The "disco sound," with its steady rhythm and innocuous lyrics, lulled rather than provoked audiences. Observing the Soviet receptiveness to disco music, the *Christian Science Monitor,* on August 31, 1978, featured the headline: "Rock, nyet; disco, da."

Discomania could not have hit the Soviet Union at a more fortuitous moment. In the fall of 1976, just months before the release of *Saturday Night Fever,* Riga hosted the first Interrepublic Discotheque Festival and Competi-

tion. Organized by the Latvian Republic Cultural Workers in conjunction with the local Komsomol organization, the festival was the first national effort to assess the effectiveness of the discotheque as a means of ideological indoctrination. Five cities from across the Soviet Union, Riga, Ventspils, Kaunas, Tartu, and Tashkent, dispatched *diskoteki* to the Riga conference.

From October 23 to October 30, 1976, each city presented a discotheque format, combining music, light shows, and Communist propaganda in an attempt to appease ideological watchdogs without alienating youthful audiences. The disco evenings opened with an informational segment, which included discussions about individual rock bands supplemented with transparencies, musical examples, and appropriate ideological commentaries. At one discotheque, the Riga Pantomime Theater entertained the audience by dancing to the music of the British group Renaissance. With the pedagogical requirements fulfilled, the disco evenings gave way to uninterrupted dancing. At the end of the week-long conference, the participants concluded that *diskoteki* could provide an effective means of entertaining young people while indoctrinating them with proper political and ideological guidance.

The disco sound became the motor behind the new drive to rein in the leisure-time activities of Soviet youths. Melodiya, which had yet to issue a single Beatles album, began pressing Western disco albums and promoting domestic disco music. In 1978, Melodiya took an unprecedented step by releasing on license a Western album without requiring a reciprocal release of a Soviet album in the West. The history making album was *Arrival* by the popular Swedish disco band ABBA. Before long, an ABBA film was making its rounds in Soviet cinemas. Melodiya also promoted domestic disco music. *Disko Alliance,* an album of synthesized electronic disco music by the Latvian studio band Zodiak, became one of the most popular albums on the Melodiya label, selling over eight million copies. Although the band members provided the musical talent, the success of *Disko Alliance* was credited to the technical brilliance of the Latvian sound engineer Alexander Griva.

In the summer of 1978, Moscow contracted a British company to provide sound systems and music tracks for four hundred discos across the Soviet Union. The music for the discos consisted of Western hits, including the sound track from the film *Saturday Night Fever.* In the Ukraine, by the end of 1978, Kiev boasted sixteen discotheques; Lvov, sixteen; Odessa, ten. Moscow registered 187 officially sponsored discotheques by the end of the decade. And in Latvia, one of the pioneers of the Soviet-style discotheque, there were reportedly over three hundred *diskoteki.* The Metelitsa discotheque, located on the second floor of a building on the Kalinin Prospekt in central Moscow, became the prototypical Soviet disco of the late 1970s: flashing lights, mirrored walls, and Western disco tunes. Flaunting this discotheque of the new type, Tass released a photo of the handsome disc jockey Vladimir Maltsev seated at the console with microphone in hand. Across the front of the podium, in Roman script was emblazoned the word DISKO.

In the fall of 1978, the Soviets provided their most explicit endorsement of disco music when they invited the West German disco-reggae group Boney M.

to perform in Moscow. The decision to bring Boney M. to the Soviet Union had a certain irony. One of the band's most popular songs was the disco hit called "Rah! Rah! Rasputin!" The song recounted the sexual and political prowess of the tsar's notorious healer who seduced the women and manipulated the men of Nicholas II's court. "Rah! Rah! Rasputin!" the song proclaimed, "Russia's greatest love machine!"

In arranging the tour, the only condition Gosconcert imposed on Boney M. was that the group refrain from performing "Rasputin!" Boney M. more interested in commercial success than artistic integrity, complied. For Soviet pop music fans, seized by the disco fever, the Boney M. concert in Moscow on September 19, 1978, became one of the outstanding musical events of the year. Fans stood in line for as long as twenty hours to get a ticket to the concert. Those unable to obtain tickets through box-office sales or personal connections paid up to one hundred rubles on the black market. The concert went off as scheduled, Boney M. refrained from singing "Rasputin!" and both fans and officials came away satisfied with the performance.

State officials had been able to keep "Rasputin!" off the Soviet concert stage, but not out of Soviet discos. Following the Bonie M. concert, "Rah! Rah! Rasputin!" became the national rage throughout the Soviet Union. Andrea Lee recalled Moscow's infatuation with "Rasputin!" in the fall of 1978. At the Blue Bird Cafe in Moscow, a hangout for the Soviet Union's privileged youth, the strains of "Rah! Rah! Rasputin!" brought hundreds of the Soviet Union's *zolotaya molodyozh,* (the golden youth) to their feet. "Stomping their Italian leather boots, bumping their blue-jeaned backsides," Lee observed, "the spoiled rich kids of Moscow were celebrating this cosmopolitan in-joke: an irreverent song about Russia sung in English by a black group that records in West Germany."

Iron Curtain Calls: Western Stars in the Soviet Union

The 1978 Boney M. concert in Moscow confirmed the Kremlin's approval of disco music; it also reflected the spirit of cooperation that prevailed in international relations during the late 1970s. The signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975, an international agreement calling for improved East-West relations, provided for, among other things, increased cultural interchange. Rock and roll became an important form of cross-cultural dialogue during these years.

In the spirit of the Helsinki Accords, Melodiya entered into negotiations with the British record company EMI and other major record firms for the release of Western rock albums in the Soviet Union. Melodiya's first major purchase, the 1974 album *Band On the Run* by former Beatle Paul McCartney and his group Wings, appeared in the Soviet record shops in 1977. In the years that followed, Melodiya released recordings by various Western "vocal instrumental ensembles," including the Bee Gees and the Rolling Stones. Although it would be almost a decade before the first complete Beatles albums were released on the Melodiya label, Beatles songs appeared sporadically on Soviet

vinyl throughout the 1970s. In 1975, a seven-inch, 33⅓-rpm disc in a plain white sleeve came into circulation in Soviet record shops. The recording bore a pink label emblazoned with the letters БИГЛЗ and contained three songs: "I, Me, Mine," "Across the Universe," and "Let It Be."

Along with an increasing number of Western albums came tours by Western rock and pop performers. In January 1976, Roy Clark, the American country-western performer, provided the Soviets with a test case to assess the prudence of bringing Western pop stars into the country. For eighteen days in January and February 1976, Roy Clark held concerts in Riga, Leningrad, and Moscow.

On February 3, 1976, *Pravda* provided the aesthetic and ideological underpinnings for the government's endorsement of Roy Clark. According to the party paper, Roy Clark presented a healthy appearance and demonstrated real musical talent, characteristics which set him apart from the " 'idols' of the vulgar commercial western variety stage." *Pravda* also saw a correlation between the alleged goals of Soviet policy and the values of country-western music. "Essentially," *Pravda* noted, " 'country music' preaches humane ideals about good and evil, about what must be done so that all people on earth can live under peaceful skies."

Five months later, the Soviet Union hosted the British pop star Cliff Richard. Cliff Richard performed twenty sell-out concerts in Moscow and Leningrad during the summer of 1976. His appearances electrified Russian pop fans, causing the American entertainment paper *Variety* to puzzle over the "hysteria" surrounding Cliff Richard's Soviet debut. "Since he's no superstar," *Variety* speculated on September 15, 1976, "the answer has to be that it isn't every day that pop names from the West troupe into the Soviet capital." In fact, Cliff Richard, after the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, was the most popular "rock star" among Soviet fans during the 1960s. With rollicking hits like "Dynamite" and "A Girl Like You," Richard had played a major roll in popularizing rock music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The same liberal attitude that moved Soviet officials to permit Cliff Richard to appear also prevailed among censors. Cliff Richard arrived in Moscow in the summer of 1976 with a repertoire of his classic rock hits as well as a number of religious songs he wrote after his conversion as a born-again Christian. Soviet censors left Richard's repertoire untouched with the exception of the song "Love Train." "There was one single line from 'Love Train,'—one of the 'Philly sound' pieces—that had to be cut," Richard recalled. "It referred to the reconciliation between Russia, China and Israel, and allegedly that could have been construed as politically colored." The Cliff Richard appearances in Moscow and Leningrad took place without incident. Richard songs were featured on the radio, and one concert was broadcast on Soviet television. Tass hailed the Soviet Union's "first sampling of Western rock and roll" as a great success.

In the spring of 1977, the Soviets allowed, following the Cliff Richard appearance, an extended tour by the American group the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. This seven-man California ensemble had initially launched its career as a country group and eventually moved into rock and roll. In 1970, the band scored

its first hit with a cover to Jerry Jeff Walker's "Mr. Bojangles." The presence of a violinist in the band and the inclusion of Cajun and bluegrass music in the group's repertoire appealed to Gosconcert officials. Billing the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band as a "folk ensemble," Gosconcert arranged for a five-city tour of the Soviet Union from May 2 to May 24, 1977.

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band opened its tour in the Georgian city of Tbilisi. The announcement that an American "folk ensemble" was to perform stirred little enthusiasm among Soviet Georgians, and when the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band took the stage in Tbilisi, it found the 2,500-seat hall only half occupied. Faced with a thousand empty seats, the band played an uninspired set of mild country and bluegrass pieces. At the intermission, a concert official, distraught over the sedate atmosphere in the hall, pleaded with the Americans. "Please have the band play something louder, hotter, something the kids here know." The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band complied. During the second half of the concert, the band rattled the walls with the "Battle of New Orleans" and the "Orange Blossom Special." Word got out.

When the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band opened a series of concerts in the Armenian capital of Yerevan, the band was greeted by four thousand fans who clapped their hands, stamped their feet, and danced in the aisles. On the final night in Yerevan, 5,700 fans packed the 4,000-seat bicycle race track while another 15,000 fans pounded at the gate outside. In the Latvian capital of Riga, all five concerts in the 6,000-seat auditorium were sold out before the band even hit town. By the time the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band arrived in Moscow, a wall of militia was required to escort the musicians to and from the concert hall.

There is no doubt that the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Boney M, Cliff Richard, and Roy Clark left their mark on the Soviet Union, but the musical high point of the decade was the Elton John tour of Leningrad and Moscow in May 1979. In the spring of 1979, posters emblazoned with ЕЛТОН ДЖОН appeared on kiosks in Leningrad and Moscow. In anticipation of the Soviet debut of one of the world's leading musical talents, tickets on the black market moved for as much as two hundred rubles, double the black-market price for tickets to the Boney M concert.

As with Cliff Richard, Soviet censors found little to object to in Elton John's repertoire. On May 22, 1979, with only one number struck from the officially approved song list, the Beatles hit "Back in the USSR," Elton John stepped onto the stage at Leningrad's Oktyabrsky Hall. "Leningrad's Young People Mob Elton John" read a front-page banner in the *New York Times* on May 23, 1979. The surging crowds that greeted Elton John's arrival at Oktyabrsky Hall belied the calm that awaited the performer inside. The Soviets, intent on averting hysteria among the fans, distributed large numbers of tickets to elderly people and party functionaries. Most of Elton John's nine concerts proved uneventful affairs with young fans springing only occasionally from their seats to clap or dance, while the majority of the crowds remained seated and applauded politely.

Elton John's final concert in Moscow on May 30, 1979, seemed to promise much the same. While Elton John pounded the keyboard, sweat beading on his

face, offering the audience his famous bubbling, alliterative stammer "B-B-Benny and the Jets," drummer Ray Cooper, advancing to the edge of the stage, could coax only a faint echo of "Benny" and some half-hearted hand-clapping from the audience. "Rocket Man," "Your Song," and "Daniel" were not able to break the barrier of politeness.

At the end of the concert, warm applause brought Elton John back on stage for an encore. Elton John, whose grandiose stage entrances had become legendary in the West, walked stiffly, almost nervously, to center stage. The singer made a crisp bow and then turned and sat down at the piano. He cocked his head slightly and muttered, "Okay, Moscow, here we go." Elton tickled the keyboard, "In the Merry, Merry Month of May." He paused and then, smiling to himself, crashed full force onto the keyboard, pounding the opening chords to "Pinball Wizard." A bolt of energy shot through the crowd. Elton John moved into "Saturday Night" then into Tchaikovsky's "Warsaw Concerto," and finally, though the number had been expressly forbidden, into "Back in the USSR."

The auditorium erupted as young fans leaped from their seats, screaming, dancing, and clapping. With the hall resounding with cheers and whistles, the crowd surged forward toward the stage, past the stone-faced functionaries and up against a barier of blue-uniformed militia, where they broke into the thundering chant: EL-TON! EL-TON! EL-TON! "It was one of the best gigs of the whole trip," the singer later recalled. "One of the most memorable gigs of my whole life." Despite Elton John's closing act of defiance, the Soviet media praised his appearances, stating that the Soviet Union would welcome his return at a future date.

A Cancelled Concert, a Riot, and an Invasion

But even as the media anticipated future concerts for Soviet rock fans, conservative forces in the cultural establishment were expressing dissatisfaction with the belligerence that rock music seemed to instill in young Soviets. A year before Elton John's appearance, the cancellation of a planned outdoor concert in Leningrad and the resulting rock riot suggested to officials that the time had come to moderate the liberal policy toward Western rock music. During the first months of 1978, rumors circulated that Gosconcert planned, in conjunction with American rock impressario Bill Graham, to host an outdoor July 4 concert in front of the Winter Palace in Leningrad. Allegedly, the concert was to bring the Beach Boys, Carlos Santana, and Joan Baez to central Leningrad to perform for thousands of Soviet rock fans.

Many Soviets viewed the news with skepticism. In the mid-1970s, rumors circulated that the Beatles were planning a reunion and that they had selected Moscow as the location for the historic event. With thousands of inquiries pouring into *Komsomolskaia pravda,* the youth paper was compelled to print a disclaimer stating explicitly that no Beatles reunion was being planned for Moscow. In the spring of 1978, however, Voice of America announced that the

rumored July 4 concert, featuring the Beach Boys, Santana, and Joan Baez, was indeed to take place in Leningrad. A Leningrad paper also confirmed the scheduled event. Around the Soviet Union, rock fans began planning a July visit to Leningrad.

When complications arose between Gosconcert officials and the Western representatives over the filming of the event, the concert arrangements faltered. On July 4, 1978, the Beach Boys, Santana, and Baez did not show up in Leningrad, but their fans did. Early in the afternoon of July 4, young rock fans, some from distant Soviet republics, assembled on the spacious square before the Winter Palace. By early evening, the crowd had swelled to six thousand, at which point the police units reportedly moved in to disperse the crowd.

There are various accounts of what actually ensued. Some reports claimed that the crowd faced the militia for several hours and then peacefully dispersed around midnight. One Western news source reported that "the police used smoke grenades and water trucks to clear the fans from the city's huge palace square. Other accounts reported violent confrontations and arrests. "We were right under the windows of the winter palace," one participant recalled. "We had been chanting 'Santana! Santana! Santana!' Then farther up in the crowd, they started chanting 'Down with the Party!' After that we all started to yell it, and then the militia came with fire hoses." Accounts of the Leningrad rock riot varied, but one fact was indisputable: rock and roll had mobilized thousands of young Soviets and had brought them face-to-face with authorities in a brazen demonstration of public defiance.

The following summer, rock fans again clashed with Leningrad police forces. On August 28, 1979, several popular unofficial rock bands, including Rosianne and Aquarium, held an impromptu concert. According to eyewitness accounts, militia arrived and set upon the rock fans with attack dogs and truncheons, arresting as many as 150 people. Most of the young people were held for more than eighteen hours at district police stations for interrogation. The police attempted to use the incident to implicate members of the rock bands in a recent act of vandalism in which thirty statues in Peter the Great's summer garden were defaced.

The linking of rock musicians with an act of vandalism not only represented an attempt by local officials to harass the flourishing Leningrad underground, it also reflected the growing antirock sentiment among Soviet officials. On November 23, 1979, Tikhon Nikolaevich Khrennikov, head of the Soviet Composers' Union railed against rock music during a congress of Soviet composers. Khrennikov, in language reminiscent of the Stalin era, unleashed a heated diatribe against the musical fare being offered on Soviet concert stages and on Soviet television. "Very often," Khrennikov charged, "the dominant elements are deafening, heavy-beat rhythms and truly unearthly howls into the microphone." Khrennikov also complained of musicians who had become "idols" among the youth and through their "intoxication with glory" had succumbed to "artistic compromises." Khrennikov insisted that the Soviet Union would no longer tolerate this "all-embracing permissiveness that allows for tastelessness, and for vulgarity in repertoires and stage behavior."

The following month, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the frail cultural bridge that détente spanned between East and West collapsed amidst the international furor over the Soviet military action. Responding to criticism from abroad, Moscow reasserted ideological orthodoxy at home. In the early 1980s, conservatives in the Kremlin would rally and begin to smother the domestic rock scene. But even as the Soviets prepared to battle rock and roll, a new and more belligerent musical force had already emerged in the West: punk rock.

11

Punk in Hungary, 1976–1986

Those who hang around in the underground malls are outsiders, just like we are with our music. Many of them drink and take drugs. We want to attract attention, break out of the Hungarian pop music style, which is so openly a money making proposition.

FERENC NAGY, lead singer of Beatrice, in *Elet és Irodalom,* May 12, 1979

On August 19, 1976, Omega, Hungary's premier veteran rock ensemble, staged a concert before sixteen thousand cheering fans in Budapest's Kisstadion. The performance was a visual and acoustic extravaganza. "Pyrotechnical devices from the corners of the stage sent veritable cascades of fireworks and sparks everywhere," reported a reviewer for *Esti Hirlap* on August 23, 1976. "The performers were enveloped by billowing smoke, making them look like mountain peaks emerging from clouds. Colored comet-like lights were lit among the audience and pretty girls sent up multicolored balloons tracked by search lights." As Omega played its closing number, giant letters appeared on a screen proclaiming, "Omega is the best! Omega is the greatest!"

The Omego concert embodied the narcissism and extravagance that superstars like Elton John and David Bowie flaunted on the Western concert stage. The Omega concert also reflected the commercialized state of Hungarian rock and roll.

By the late 1970s, the rock scene in Hungary offered young people virtually every type of popular music available in the West. Edda, Karthago, P. Mobil, and V' Moto-Rock thundered heavy metal in Hungary's sports stadiums. Neoton Familia, plagiarizing the ABBA image, featured two female vocalists with

five backup musicians and played a distinctly Hungarian disco sound. Fonograf, the survivors of the 1960s supergroup Illés, adopted a folk style they dubbed "Country and Eastern." In 1976, the four members of Hungaria, another 1960s band, trimmed their hair, put on black suits, and began touring Hungary and other East European countries as a Beatles band. Meanwhile, László Komár of Scampolo fame continued to draw big audiences appearing as the "magyar-Elvis" with Hungarian covers to Presley hits and Elvis sound-alike tunes. The verso side to his 1984 album of Presley songs showed a picture of Komár proudly displaying an "I Love Elvis" button. The front cover to the album featured a portrait of Presley wearing a button that read, "I Love Laci," the Hungarian nickname for László.

Magyarock: Music, Money, and Corruption

By the late 1970s, all seemed well on the Hungarian rock scene, especially for leading rock and pop stars. While across the border in the Soviet Union musicians were paid a regulated salary like other state employees, seeing virtually no profit from record sales, successful musicians in Hungary could easily earn ten times the average working-man's wage. As in the West, rock bands received a percentage of record sales; they also shared in concert receipts and toured extensively in the West, which allowed them to add hard currency to their bank accounts. In Hungary, those rock stars with business acumen lived a privileged life. They built homes in the prestigious Budapest suburb of Rózsadomb, drove Mercedes cars, and traveled abroad as they wished.

Hungarian cultural officials promoted the privileged life of their rock and pop stars as long as the bands behaved themselves. Péter Erdős, one of the most respected and feared men in the Hungarian music industry, made no pretense about the collusion between rock music and state policy. "You should accept me for what I am," Erdős told a group of leading rock musicians at a conference in 1980. "I like it when you do what I tell you. Obey me and then you can build your houses in Rózsadomb and conquer the European pop music market, the world market if you wish."

Indeed, by the late 1970s, the prospects for world conquest seemed quite good for many Hungarian rock bands. In 1970, Omega won third prize at the Yamaha Music Festival in Tokyo, Japan. The band followed the Tokyo victory with a decade of extensive touring in the Soviet bloc and in Western Europe, appearing in England, West Germany, France, Spain, and other countries. In West Germany, Omego albums could be found in virtually every record shop. Locomotiv GT, which in 1972 won international recognition with the rock opera *Fictitious Report on an American Pop Festival,* toured the United States on a major national tour with Grand Funk Railroad.

Beyond their talents as musicians, members of Omego proved to be astute businessmen. In the early 1980s, Omega had constructed and outfitted their own recording studio in Budapest, which they rented to other rock bands. Many Budapest bands also came to rely on Omega for sound equipment and music

instruments. With an electric guitar easily costing $1,000, an amplifier up to $1,500, and a microphone as much as $500, the initial cost for equipping a band could exceed $3,000, more than a year's income in Hungary. Omega regularly rented equipment to upstart bands lacking the initial capital for their own equipment.

By the end of the 1970s, there was big money to be made in the Hungarian rock and pop music industry; there was also corruption. The state recording company, which issued records on several labels, including Qualiton and Pepita, functioned on a system of favoritism and extortion. For the state-controlled allocations of vinyl, rock-and-pop formations relied on the benevolence or patronage of individuals in the recording industry. "There were basically two or three circles of people in the recording industry," one insider observed. "It ran on a system of favors and pay-offs. People in the music business called it the Hungarian mafia." Rumors circulated that a member of the disco band Neoton Familia, which had no difficulty releasing albums on the Pepita label, maintained a liaison with a highly placed individual in the state record company. It was eventually revealed that the high official was, in fact, Péter Erdős and that he was living with the attractive vocalist of Neoton Familia, Éva Csepreghi.

In 1980, the Hungarian press also exposed extensive corruption in the licensing of Hungarian disc jockeys. Until 1978, disc jockeys, working independently of state control, assembled sound systems and collections of Western records, marketing their services independently to youth clubs and restaurants. On June 14, 1978, the Ministry of Culture issued decree no. 2, which imposed regulations on "music record performances." Under the auspices of the National Popular Music Center, disc jockeys had to be trained, tested, and licensed. Three categories, depending upon a disc jockey's abilities, were established with fixed wages: a disc jockey with a class A license could demand 360 forints. A class B license brought in 300 forints, and a class C license earned 240 forints.

Although most of Hungary's twelve thousand cities, towns, and villages had clubs or cafes requiring a disc jockey, by 1980 the Music Center had issued only 36 class A licenses, 144 class B licenses, and 183 class C licenses. Another 632 licenses had been issued on a temporary basis. While East Germany, for example, registered over five thousand disc jockeys, Hungary licensed fewer than one thousand. In Budapest alone there were 380 registered youth clubs, cafes, and other entertainment establishments.

A system of corruption and extortion at the Music Center contributed to this shortage of licensed disc jockeys in Hungary. Each time an applicant took the qualifying test, he was required to pay a fee. The examiners at the Music Center failed 55 percent of all applicants, requiring them to retake the examination and repay the fees. Often a bribe was also expected before a disc jockey would be issued a license. On February 29, 1980, the youth paper *Magyar Ifjuság* published an interview with a professional disc jockey who explained how examiners regularly extorted money from applicants before issuing a license. "It includes a bribe of 3,000," the disc jockey noted matter-of-factly.

"This is the fee that the comissioned examiner is asking for arranging the program. You could easily do that yourself in two days' time, but then you'd never pass the exam." As the three thousand forints were allegedly paid for the music program compiled by the examiner, the disc jockey had no legal recourse against the extortion.

Once licensed, however, disc jockeys could demand exhorbitant fees for their services. On January 3, 1982, the Budapest daily *Esti Hirlap* reported that there was hardly a disc jockey in Hungary "who would even raise his hat for an offer at the official rate." At Lake Balaton, the center of Hungary's summer tourist industry, a class A disc jockey would receive his allotted 360 forints officially, but on the side could demand as much as 30,000 forints from a club manager desperate for his services. A disc jockey equipped with a sound system and a collection of Western albums could earn a veritable fortune.

The Csőves: Hungary's "No Future" Generation

While the Hungarian press explored the financial improprieties in the popular music industry, party ideologues focused on the corrupting influences of the music itself. Since 1957, when Kádár opened Hungarian society to Western rock and pop music, conservative elements had grumbled over the ideological dangers of rock and roll.

On January 28, 1975, Armbrus Bór, a prominent Hungarian writer and commentator, published an article entitled "Infiltration" in *Magyar Nemzet*. In the article, Bór related the following incident. During a parent-teacher meeting in a Budapest school, a parent opened a student textbook lying on a table. To the parent's astonishment, the first 182 pages of the textbook were scribbled with names of Anglo-American rock bands and soloists. Bór warned that foreign "infiltration" was undermining Hungarian society and urged government officials to be "on guard" against these influences. That same month, on January 26, 1975, the regional paper *Hajdu-Bihari Napló* reported that Hungarian schoolchildren listened to rock music as much as three hours daily.

During the second half of the 1970s, official concern over the ideological state of Hungary's youths seemed justified. Many young Hungarians knew more about the latest Anglo-American rock stars than they did about the fathers of the Communist revolution. In July, 1979, the Communist youth paper, *Ifjú Kommunista* published the results of a poll taken among one thousand members of the Communist youth league. The young Communists, all between the ages of fourteen and thirty, demonstrated grievous deficiencies in their knowledge of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

When asked what they knew about Lenin, 17 percent of the youth-league leaders said they knew nothing about the man. Thirty-one percent confessed complete ignorance of Stalin, and 42 percent knew nothing about Khrushchev. Some youth-league members, claiming knowledge of the Soviet leaders, offered deficient answers. Some maintained that Lenin was a poet; others, that he was a close friend of Marx and Engels. Stalin, one youth-league leader

claimed, was "the governor of Hungary during the Stalinist era." Another person confused Stalin with Hitler, stating that Stalin was "commander and chief of the Germans and finally shot himself in the head." Khrushchev was identified variously as "the first man to go into space" and "the president of the United States in the early 1960s."

The ideological indifference of Hungary's young was unsettling, but far more disturbing to many people was the escalating violence among the youth. Budapest not only registered the highest crime rate among the East European capitals, it also boasted one of the highest rates of suicide in the world. By the end of the decade, one out of every thirty deaths in Hungary was the result of self-inflicted violence, mostly among young people. Further, most young Hungarian couples avoided having children, and teenage abortions had reached alarming proportions.

In order to avert a population decline, the government began subsidizing apartments for couples willing to have children before the age of thirty-five. Many young people, sharing cramped quarters with families or even complete strangers, bore children in order to obtain their own apartment. The children from these marriages, born out of convenience, became known as "OTP children," after the initials of the state savings bank which advanced loans to young parents. Many of the OTP children, unwanted by either parent, were often abandoned when the marriages fell apart. "The aftereffects of a well intended family policy," observed the trade union newspaper *Népszava* on March 6, 1981, "are the OTP children who are often treated as part of the building." Sociologists saw in these "imperiled" children a potentially explosive source of juvenile delinquency.

Joining the ranks of the OTP children were growing numbers of disaffected young people from Hungary's working and middle classes. In the late 1970s, thousands of Hungarian teenagers hung out in train stations, factories, building entrances, telephone booths, and underpasses. Large numbers of these youths also gathered in the underground malls of central Budapest, where they became known as *csőves,* from the Hungarian word for pipe or tube. Budapest's *csőves,* the byproduct of a failed social policy, accounted, in large part, for the increasing juvenile delinquency in the Hungarian capital. Although Budapest's *csőves,* wearing denim jeans, colorful shirts, tennis shoes, and long hair, resembled Western hippies, these disaffected socialist youths adopted the ethics and music of British punk rockers. Hungary's "no future" generation had arrived.

Beatrice: East Europe's Proto-Punkers

By 1981, the Hungarian government needed to take measures to check the infectious malaise among the young generation. Growing numbers of punks appeared on the streets of major cities; participation in the Communist youth organization was negligible. In March 1981, the government, desperate for a solution to the "youth problem" turned to Hungary's rock musicians for advice.

From March 23 to 25, 1981, state officials sat down with leading veterans of the Hungarian rock scene to discuss possibilities for reasserting official control over the younger generation. The directors of the state record labels, the head of the state concert agency, the chairman of television and radio, Communist youth-league functionaries, and the representative minister of culture met with several Hungarian rock stars for a three-day conference in the northern town of Tata.

The same rock musicians who clashed with cultural functionaries a decade earlier now joined party officials to map out a strategy for controlling Hungary's youth. "If I may speak frankly," admitted Ildikó Lendvai, a member of the Communist youth league's Central Committee, "the KISZ and the present adult generation have a difficult time relating to today's teenagers." Lendvai, admitting the youth league's responsibility in alienating young people, appealed to the rock musicians to help find a way to lure Hungary's young back into the ideological fold. "You," Lendvai impressed upon the rock stars, "can have an effect on them."

János Bródy, a former member of Illés and Hungary's preeminent rock lyricist, suggested that officials abide by Kádár's successful "Three T-Principle": *Tiltás, Tűrés, Támogatás* ("Ban" the dangerous, "tolerate" the objectionable, "promote" the acceptable). Bródy spoke from experience. In 1970, Bródy and other members of Illés were banned from performing in Budapest for almost a year after holding an interview with the BBC in which the band criticized Hungary's policy toward rock music. In 1973, Bródy's song "If I Were a Rose," which criticized the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, was censored by cultural officials. Bródy, speaking from experience, advised Hungary's leaders on handling the young generation: *Tiltás, Tűrés, Támogatás.*

Bródy's collaboration with government officials at the Tata conference demonstrated the extent to which Hungary's veteran rock stars had alienated themselves from a large segment of Hungarian youth. While the established pop and rock musicians wrote state-approved hits and built their "villas" in Rózsadomb, thousands of *csőves* loitered on the streets of Budapest. A generation unable to find proper housing, unable to earn enough money for the basic comforts, could not relate to the crafted lyrics and sophisticated musical arrangements of establishment musicians. Instead, Hungary's youth turned to underground bands that addressed issues young Hungarians could understand: alienation, corruption, unemployment, gross materialism, prostitution, and drug abuse.

The first supergroup of Hungarian punk, the Budapest band Beatrice, infused the eccentric sounds of Frank Zappa with the raging vitality of the Sex Pistols. Beatrice, originally an all-female ensemble in the mid-1970s, re-formed around 1977 and began playing disco and funk. In 1979, the band again changed personnel and style. The band's leader, Ferenc Nagy, was an iconoclastic vocalist with a passionate hatred of the establishment. "The musicians of the former first beat generation have become comfortable and satiated," Ferenc Nagy declared in the spring of 1979. "They decide what kind of music and lyrics are

acceptable. They are building unbreakable walls between the generations.'' Nagy saw it as Beatrice's task to tear down these walls.

With three other musicians, bass guitarist Lajos Miklóska, lead guitarist László Lugossy, and drummer Tibor Donászy, Ferenc Nagy transformed Beatrice into one of the Soviet bloc's pioneering punk bands. As their logo, band members wore red scarves with polka dots, a pattern popular among Hungarian peasant women. Emulating the Sex Pistols' notorious state antics, Beatrice band members reportedly tore off their clothing, fought with each other over instruments, and hurled insults and bags of milk at their audiences. Beatrice legend maintains that Ferenc Nagy, known among fans as the ''roach of the nation,'' at one concert bit the head off a live chicken and spat it into the audience.

Beatrice expressed the anger and bitterness felt by thousands of Hungary's disenchanted youth. ''Enough with the music of old stars!'' Nagy would scream into the microphone. ''The professional superstars don't live for their music, they live from it! Down with the fat, bald idols!'' Traditional rock fans, milk-spattered and insulted, jeered the band and scuffled with hard-core Beatrice toughs.

The uproar over Beatrice compelled the government to take action. As Beatrice concerts attracted increasing numbers of fans, the atmosphere grew so explosive that city officials banned the group from performing in the large youth park on the Buda side of the Danube. Realizing that disbanding the group would further alienate young people, cultural officials tried a different tactic. They decided to overexpose Beatrice in the media in the hope of neutralizing the band's image as an underground band. In the spring of 1979, the second program of the state television presented a short documentary on Beatrice and used the occasion to host a discussion about the punk musicians and their ''outrageous'' stage behavior. Newspaper, magazine, and radio interviews followed, and Beatrice reveled in the attention.

In the summer of 1980, Omega and Locomotiv GT invited Beatrice to perform with them on a joint nationwide tour. Omega, realizing the old bands had lost touch with a large segment of the Hungarian youth, hoped Beatrice would attract young fans to the concert tour. Desperately short of money, Beatrice accepted the offer.

On the tour's closing night in August 1980, thirty thousand people packed a Budapest concert facility. Anticipating a potentially explosive audience, hundreds of military and civilian police were brought in. When youth-league officials appeared to make their perfunctory remarks, thousands of Budapest *csőves* booed them off the stage. An Olympic medal winner, recently returned from the Summer Games, was similarly driven from the stage with bottles and catcalls. The crowd then broke into the thunderous chant: ''Reecha! Reecha! Beatreecha!'' The band appeared and launched into its explosive signature song, ''Jericho.'' ''It was not necessary to try to read between the lines or interpret the lyrics,'' a West German observer noted. ''Even the most insensitive western ear comprehends the incredibly harsh tone of the songs.''

The concert tour, though a musical and financial success for Beatrice, alien-

ated the band's hard-core fans. Beatrice, which a year before denounced the "fat, bald idols," was now playing warm-up band for those same "faded-out stars." The state bolstered Beatrice's establishment image by releasing an album of the Omega–Locomotiv GT–Beatrice concert. Beatrice further effaced its underground image by participating in a song contest sponsored by the Hungarian radio.

Unable to sustain its energy and its iconoclasm in the face of growing popularity among mainstream rock fans, Beatrice disbanded. With a new group, Bikini, Ferenc Nagy released an album in 1983 on the Pepita label. Although the recording attested to Nagy's creative and musical skills, brilliantly combining elements of punk, new wave, and rock, the album also confirmed Nagy's break with the underground. The 1983 Bikini album, which pictured Ferenc Nagy leaping from an airplane without a parachute, bore, appropriately, the title . . . *Hová Lett (Where Did It Go!)*. By 1985, Nagy had yet another band, Bicycle. "I don't want to solve problems like I did with Beatrice," Nagy told a Western visitor in 1985. "Leave it to those who are responsible for the problems. Now I want to create a new type of music with strong ties to shaman music." Ferenc Nagy vanished from public view into the avant-garde.

The Punk Rock Explosion

Hungarian cultural officials handled Beatrice masterfully. They tolerated Ferenc Nagy's wild antics and provocative lyrics until the rage simply dissipated. But by the time Beatrice had been neutralized, dozens of upstart punk bands had virtually overrun Budapest's rock scene. Compared with the music of new punk bands like the Cadaver Eaters, the Galloping Coroners, Orgasm, Control, and the Coitus Punk Group, Beatrice's rendering of the punk idiom seemed quaintly innocent.

URH, a leading underground punk band that took its name from the initials of the police radio frequency, butchered covers to Sex Pistols songs and produced its own hard-edged songs. "Punk is not dead," claimed the English lyrics to one URH song, "fuck off rock and roll." Another URH song exclaimed: "This city is a prostitute / I hate her when she satisfies me." "Too many police, too many spies, too many police," screamed the lead singer in one driving URH number, then lamented, "Not enough whores, not enough pimps."

Unlike Beatrice, these bands could not even be considered for co-optation. Local officials, however, let punk rage through the Budapest underground, intervening only when violence or vandalism threatened public order. Punk bands appeared in bars and cafes and even in the clubs run by the Communist youth organization. "The concerts were never officially announced," recalls one frequenter of the Budapest scene in the early 1980s. "You heard about it through word of mouth. But wherever you went, the place was always packed with punkers and punk rock fans."

The clamor from Budapest's punk scene soon began to unsettle officials in

neighboring Yugoslavia, who demanded that Hungary impose order on its rock scene. In August 1983, the Belgrade weekly *Nin* charged Budapest with harboring an estimated five thousand to eight thousand "distorted people" and about thirty punk bands that had a "pernicious effect" on the morals of young Hungarians. "Obscene scenes and words which offend not only individuals but also whole ethnic groups," observed *Nin,* "are part of the repertoires of such groups whose names also show something about them: the Cretins, the Cadaver Eaters, the Cocaine Shock Brigade."

Nin was responding to a scandalous concert that had taken place in a Budapest suburb the previous February. On February 19, 1983, the Mozaik, a Budapest club operated by the Communist youth organization, sponsored a "dance" attended by about 150 young people. The amateur rock bands scheduled to appear, Ensz, the Mumsz, Cocaine Raiders, and the Bakunyin, were to perform songs from repertoires previously approved by censors. Shortly after the concert began, however, the groups departed from the approved list and began including material with "offensive" lyrics. In one song entitled "Péter Erdős, Fuck Your Mother," the band sang, "I would love to gouge out your eyes! I would love to rip off your ears!"

An amateur punk band, Mosoly (Smile), notorious on the underground scene for its biting lyrics, took the stage even though the band had not been approved for the concert. In one song, Mosoly brought the audience into heated excitement when it called for the extermination of the Gypsy minority living in Hungary:

> The flame thrower is the only weapon with which I can win;
> I destroy every Gypsy, adult and child!
> Annihilate them altogether;
> When we have done away with them, we can put up a sign:
> Gypsy-free zone!

According to *Nin,* Mosoly whipped the audience into a state of such fevered excitement, that "a delirium broke out that did not subside for several minutes." The Belgrade magazine further charged that subsequent songs "created tension in an overly hot atmosphere that did not cool down even when, with the deafening noise of the music, the lead vocalist sang about Ceauşescu, about Romania, which had seized Transylvania from Hungary."

In the middle of Mosoly's set, police intervened and forced the band off the stage. But the mood had become so heated that the concert organizers were afraid to restrain the crowd, which continued to carry on in a drunken state. As a result of the concert, the secretary of the Mozaik received a police warning, and authorities at the Budapest police headquarters filed charges against Mosoly for "aggravated sedition." On July 4, 1983, the secretary general's office received the case with a recommendation for an indictment. The band members were set free, only to be put on trial two months later. In September 1983, members of Mosoly were sentenced to prison.

The scandal at the Mozaik and the publicity surrounding the Mosoly trial compelled officials to crack down on the punk scene. After September 1983,

an increasing number of concerts were cancelled, punk rockers harassed and beaten up by police, and numerous punk groups arrested and taken to court. The member of a small punk band in the town of Szeged recalled that harassment of punks began to intensify in October 1983. Officials forbade students to wear buttons or punk haircuts in school. One punk group found itself banned from giving concerts. "We weren't allowed to perform anywhere at that time," a band member recalled. "We were frequently arrested for no particular reason wherever they saw us, on the street or in the department store. After a body search, an interrogation and a bit of knocking around, they kept us until the last bus was leaving, usually around 11 o'clock, and then they let us go." By 1984, this particular punk reported that he was being arrested two or three times a month.

In February 1984, the Coitus Punk Group, a punk band from Szeged, was arrested and put on trial for alleged attacks on the public order, the Hungarian constitution, and the Soviet Union. The Cpg, as the band was known, performed a repertoire of songs, which included references to extermination camps, Soviet nuclear weapons, and Hungary's party leaders. Despite its provocative nature, the Cpg found organizations willing to host the band at official functions, including high-school rock concerts and Communist youth clubs.

At one Hungarian secondary school, the Coitus Punk Group performed their song "Gas Blues." The song alluded to Hungary's complicity in the extermination of the Jews during World War II. "I lived in Auschwitz," the song began, "I smell Jews in the air / Hungary is my home / I have to shut my dot-dot-dot trap." In its song "The Schemer," the Coitus Punk Group allegedly alluded to the deceased Soviet leader Brezhnev. "The Schemer had died," the song began. "The Beast has died / The dictator / can now become an idol." Another Cpg song, "CC-20/SS-20," protested nuclear armament, declaring "The Soviet bomb, is also a bomb."

The Coitus Punk Group provoked, offended, and outraged to the point where local officials could no longer look away. At one concert, the band performed a song called "Standing Youth." During the piece, the lead singer denounced the Hungarian leadership as a "rotten, stinking communist gang," and asked "why had nobody hanged them yet?" As he derided Hungary's rulers, the lead singer took a live chicken in hand, tore it to pieces, and threw the remains into the audience. He then reportedly drew a razor and began slashing his own face and arms. With this concert, the Coitus Punk Group finally found the limits of official tolerance.

Members of the Cpg were arrested and in February 1984 brought to trial. On February 7, 1984, the Budapest court passed down the following decision against members of the group: "The court has determined that the songs presented at the concert fundamentally opposed the police, the communists, the leaders of our country, and in general the constitution." The members of the Coitus Punk Group did not deny the offensive nature of their songs, an admission that helped to win the favor of the judge. Because the "defendants have admitted their guilt," the judge explained, "and further, because the official concert organizers inadequately carried out their duties in the issuing of the

permit, and in the preparation and the reporting of the event,'' the members of the Coitus Punk Group were given relatively light sentences. Three band members were each sentenced to two years in jail, while the fourth member, a minor, received an eighteen-month suspended sentence.

Hungary's Post-Punk Blues

Even before the government began to rein in the punk movement in Hungary, cultural officials, hoping to draw young people to state-sponsored culture, promoted the importation of Western rock music. With the legalization of the second economy in January 1981, private record shops sprang up throughout Hungary. Budapest alone housed over a hundred privately owned record stores, many of them no more than a cramped room stocked with a few thousand records of domestic and Western production. Larger shops with suppliers in the West, stocked the latest albums from the United States and Great Britain within a few weeks after their release. Budapest's record shops, offering the largest selection of Western rock in the Soviet bloc, attracted customers not just from Hungary but also from Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

In 1983, the state also began hosting Western rock tours on an unprecedented scale. Although some disco and pop bands performed in Hungary in the late 1970s and early 1980s, following the construction of the Budapest sports hall in 1982, Hungary experienced a veritable onslaught of Western rock bands. In 1983, as official pressure increased on the underground punk scene, Carlos Santana, the first major Western star to tour Eastern Europe, appeared in Budapest. On the day that tickets went on sale for the Santana concert, an estimated 500,000 people stormed the box office. With the promise of immense profits, speculators brought real and counterfeit tickets into circulation on the black market. The success of Santana's Budapest appearance resonated to East Germany, where in March 1984, the East German monthly *Magazin* noted: ''The Budapest sports hall was filled to the very last seat. Although the majority of people were too young to have known Santana from the 1960s, those were exactly the hits they called for. Everyone was in a splendid mood.''

In the years that followed, Budapest rock fans, known for their enthusiasm, enjoyed ten or twelve major rock concerts annually. Among the performers headlining Budapest concerts after 1983 were Chuck Berry, Johnny Cash, Elton John, Tina Turner, Queen, Genesis, Paul Young, Talking Heads, Dire Straits, Iron Maiden, and Manfred Mann. The steady diet of world-class rock and roll transformed the expectations of many Hungarian rock fans, who came to expect more than just old hits from foreign bands.

The general ''disappointment'' over the July 1986 appearance by the British band Queen was evidence of Hungarian youths' growing sophistication. ''The rock music born 3 decades ago,'' observed the party daily *Népszabadság* on July 19, 1986, ''is emerging from a serious crisis, and the rock veterans are making every effort to revitalize rock 'n' roll. As Queen is one of the pioneers of rock, people concerned about the decline of the domestic pop scene held

great expectations for Sunday." Despite virtuoso performances by the band's members, most fans expressed disappointment with the concert. "We felt we were watching a splendidly staged grand operetta," the *Népszabadság* reviewer concluded, "but that is not what we bought tickets for."

Although *Népszabadság* incorrectly identified Queen as a "pioneer" of rock, it did convey the sense of crisis on the Hungarian rock scene. By the mid-1980s, state pressure had snuffed out many of the country's most explosive punk bands. In the meantime, the established rock bands like Omega and Fonograf continued to produce albums that differed little from their work of a decade earlier. Hungaria broke up, re-formed as Dolly Roll, and began to promote 1950s-style pop that the bend called *rockadili*. The most sensational event of the mid-1980s was the rock spectacular *King Stefan*, a collaborative effort by János Bródy and Levente Szórényi. Although the rock opera fired nationalist spirit, the music provided nothing in the way of innovation.

In the mid-1980s, two bands promised to inject new life into the tired Hungarian rock scene: Európa Kiadó and KFT. Early in 1981, when Peter Múller, lead singer of the punk band URH, joined the underground band Kontroll Csoport (Control Group), URH took on new members and reemerged as Európa Kiadó, releasing a number of underground tapes. After disbanding in 1983, Európa Kiadó re-formed in 1985, eventually landing a recording contract with Profil. In 1987, thanks to the beneficence of Péter Erdős, Európa Kiadó's first album *Popzene (Pop Music)* appeared on the market.

Another band that offered a potential rejuvenation of Hungary's rock scene was the band KFT, the Hungarian abbreviation for Limited Liability Company. KFT formed in February 1981 when two twenty-six-year-old, music-notation copiers, András Laár and Tibor Bornai, decided to form a band. Laár brought in András Márton, a high-school friend, as the drummer. Miklós Lengyelfi, a bass player and the only professionally trained musician, completed the four-man ensemble.

KFT, having practiced intensely during the winter and spring of 1981, debuted at the Budapest Festival competition that summer. KFT's song, "The Puppet," with its transparent political metaphor, became a national hit and immediately established KFT as Hungary's hottest new band. In 1982, KFT released its first album, *Cat on the Road*, which pictured on the cover the four band members sitting in the corner of a vacant apartment, stark naked with faces painted white.

By the middle of the 1980s, KFT was touring regularly in Hungary and the Soviet bloc, including East Germany, Poland, and Romania. KFT also performed in the West. During a tour of Austria in April 1985, the band received high marks. "The four men from Budapest infect one with their musical brilliance, creativity and entertaining stage show," remarked one Austrian reviewer. "They can measure up to Austrian groups anytime."

In April 1986, KFT performed a series of engagements in the United States. The band played to a packed house in Boston and competed in a music festival in Los Angeles. Halfway through their stay, however, KFT unexpectedly left the United States and returned to Hungary. "The Los Angeles rock scene was

just too much for them to handle,'' recalled KFT's U.S. manager Kate Lőrinczi. ''They found the whole American entertainment industry too daunting. And in a way, it's better for them that they didn't stay in America. Hungary needs them more than the United States does.'' Back in Hungary, KFT continued to tour and produce records. By the late 1980s, Hungarian rock, with one of the oldest and most colorful traditions in Eastern Europe, limped toward the next decade with one foot firmly in the past and one foot unsteadily balanced in the present.

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Punk in Poland, 1980–1986

Do you think that for the rest of your life you will be stuck in that black leather jacket imbedded with metal studs?

Not for too long, I will destroy myself, that is the way I will die. My jacket symbolizes rebellion and death.

REPORTER AND PUNK, *Polityka*, 1984

In 1984, as the British heavy-metal band Iron Maiden prepared for its World Slavery Tour, the band's management approached Polish concert officials at Pagart, the state concert agency, with the idea of opening the tour in Poland. Iron Maiden liked the idea of launching its World Slavery Tour in a country locked in the stranglehold of martial law. Pagart concert officials approved the proposed tour.

On the evening of August 9, 1984, Iron Maiden took the stage in the Torwar Sports Hall before six thousand semi-hysterical Polish fans who screamed, whistled, and danced in the aisles, at one point unfurling a banner with SOLIDARNOŚĆ emblazoned in Iron Maiden's distinct Gothic-style script. In the next five days, the band appeared in Łódź, Poznań, Wrocław, and Katowice, where throngs of young people mobbed the heavy-metal musicians on the streets by day and packaged their concerts at night. "Believe it or not," noted Howard Johnson, who chronicled the Iron Maiden tour, "Poland is Maiden crazy, each of the band's five shows in the country proving to be rock 'n' roll at its most happening."

The summer of 1984 marked the two-and-one-half-year anniversary of Poland's martial law. Since the disbanding of Solidarity in December 1981, General Jaruzelski had arrested leading protest figures and had resolutely broken up public demonstrations. The nation rose briefly in angry protest, then, as the economy deteriorated, slipped into sullen despair. By 1984, while millions of

Poles languished under political oppression and personal deprivation, rock and roll raged across Poland.

During the 1980s, as martial law polarized Polish society into pro-government and pro-Solidarity factions, young people, rejecting Jaruzelski's call for order as well as Solidarity's flight into underground opposition, assaulted the Polish leadership and society with rock music unequaled in its energy and venom.

Fighting for Poland's "Lost Generation"

The imposition of martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981, jolted the Polish rock scene from a half decade of lethargy. In the late 1970s, the vitality of earlier Polish rock and roll had dissipated. Czesław Niemen, who in 1972 performed at the Olympics and turned down an offer to join Blood, Sweat and Tears, withdrew from public view to experiment with a heavily synthesized sound. Czerwone Gitary, Poland's premier Beatles band, continued to turn out tired 1960s-style hits. Breakout, a popular band that originally performed protest songs under the name Blackout, adopted a sound styled after the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Weather Report. SBB, the most popular Polish band of the late 1970s, played jazz and orchestral rock that, like Niemen's music, relied heavily on electronic equipment.

The 1977 international disco craze further eroded domestic rock and roll. "Disco music has contributed in great part to the 'dying out' of rock music," noted sociologist Leszek Janik at the University of Warsaw. "Recorded music allows one to dance to the most recent and most attractive hits from around the world. For the majority of young people the disco provides all they need." Club and discotheque managers, able to fulfill quotas by installing a disc jockey and a turntable, gladly dispensed with troublesome rock musicians. By 1979, rock and roll in Poland was virtually nonexistent. Disco's devastating impact upon the Polish music scene and the resentment it fostered among rock fans were captured on the cover of a 1981 album by the new-wave band Lombard. The Lombard album featured a close-up photo of two heads side by side, their ears joined by an oversized safety pin. In bold red letters printed diagonally across the album cover screamed the punk rock dictum: *Śmierć Diskotece!* (Death to Disco!).

As in Hungary, the languor of the rock scene in the late 1970s belied the growing disaffection among the youth. In Warsaw, street gangs calling themselves *git* men contributed to a rise in violent crimes as they carried on gang warfare and assaulted local residents. Like Budapest's *csőves,* Warsaw's *git* men were teenagers who, left to their own resources, turned to each other and to crime.

Martial law was declared in December 1981, and the ensuing social and political unrest, coupled with the collapse of the national economy, transformed Poland's young, in a very real sense, into a "no future" generation. The obstacles for carrying on a normal life were daunting. By 1982, the waiting time for an apartment was fifteen years. Of the two million people applying for a

new residence, half were under the age of thirty. Fifty percent of Poland's young married couples inhabited one-room apartments. In 1982, forty thousand university graduates could find no employment. And while an average worker earned 15,000 zloty per month, the cost of living rose to nearly 30,000 zloty. In neighboring East Germany, socialist brothers spoke cynically of "das polnische Wirtschaftwunder," the economic miracle that permitted Polish workers to spend more money than they earned.

With little hope of acquiring an apartment and with dim prospects for finding employment, an entire generation of Polish youth spiritually and physically collapsed. On June 3, 1982, *Sztandar Młodych,* the organ of the Communist youth organization, revealed the alarming state of Poland's young people. The paper noted a dramatic rise in drug abuse, teenage abortions, and suicide. Drug addiction was, according to *Sztandar Młodych,* "spreading like a plague even among 14 and 15 year olds." In 1982, of the estimated 200,000 drug addicts, many succored themselves on heroin and kompot, a home-brewed form of morphine. Within two years, Poland's Psychoneurological Institute reported that the number of addicts had soared to a half million. In Warsaw, Pasaż, a bustling pedestrian street in the old city, became one of the centers of the Polish drug trade. Amidst the crush of tourists and shoppers, dealers peddled domestic and imported narcotics; addicts slouched in doorways or sought a desperately needed fix.

The June 3, 1982, article in *Sztandar Młodych* related further bad news. According to the paper, one third of all Poles between the ages of fifteen and seventeen no longer attended school, and an estimated 800,000 young Poles suffered from severe mental disorders. The Polish army rejected one third of all nineteen-year-old men, deeming them physically unfit for military service. For a country of 37,000,000, with 60 percent of the population not yet thirty years of age, Poland's future appeared bleak. "Looking at this data," *Sztandar Młodych* concluded, "we can see occurrences so contrary to the socialist model of society that they should not be taking place here."

In July 1982, one month after the *Sztandar Młodych* report, the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party convened its ninth plenary session. For two days, from July 15 to July 16, 1982, the Central Committee deliberated a program drafted by the party for "winning back" the Polish youth and making them, in the words of General Jaruzelski, "an aware and responsible partner in the creation of socialist changes."

As part of Jaruzelski's plan to win "the hearts and minds" of Poland's young people, the government granted Polish rock bands a virtual carte blanche on radio and in concert halls. Professor Mikołaj Kozakiewicz from the University of Warsaw argued that the presence of "thousands of rock bands" in Poland could contribute to healing the injured psyche and to venting anger and frustration. Kozakiewicz expressed sentiments certainly shared by the Jaruzelski regime. "I prefer them to project their frustrations into bitter protest songs," Kozakiewicz declared, "than to go out into the streets with stones." Neither Kozakiewicz nor the Jaruzelski regime could have anticipated the ferocity rock music, in particular punk rock, would unleash.

The Punk-Rock Explosion

Punk bands first appeared in Poland in 1979 and 1980: Kryzys, Tilt, Pershing, Fornit, and Poland in Warsaw; Deadlock in Danzig. Pershing and Fornit played covers to songs by the Ramones and the Clash. Tilt, one of the best-known Polish punk bands, wrote songs with English lyrics, including a number called "Fucktories." Another Tilt song, "Pink Pictures," captured in mangled English the malaise felt by young Poles: "photo is colour / life is all black / I prefer photo it makes me smile / photo is photo."

At the Riviera-Remont Club in Warsaw, Henryk Gajewski, the director of a gallery located in the Remont Club, actively promoted Poland's nascent punk culture. Gajewski helped publish rock fanzines, personally financed studio time for the band Tilt, and produced the first recording of Polish punk-rock bands. The cassette contained cuts by Poland's pioneering punk outfits, including Kryzys, Deadlock, Poland, Tilt, and KSV. By the end of 1980, there were at most twenty punk bands in Poland. Their sound was primitive; their audiences were limited.

After December 1981, the music scene in Poland changed dramatically as punk rock exploded in the pressure cooker of martial law. Between 1982 and 1985, punk bands unleashed a torrent of bitter songs against the Jaruzelski regime. In 1982, Brygada Kryzys released an album bristling with punk, heavy metal, and reggae that critics considered Poland's quintessential punk recording. The punk band Republika derided television propaganda in the song "Talking Heads." The singer Izabella Trojanowska mocked Jaruzelski in a song about people who "hide behind glasses that conceal nothing." Lady Pank evoked images of martial law in the song "December Nights" and derided socialist education in "The Ape Factory." In one song about heroin addiction, the band Oddział zamknięty (Locked Ward) described "punctured veins" that look upon "the collapsed brain of its victim."

As punk-rock bands gave voice to sentiments heard nowhere else in Poland, passionate loyalties once reserved for Anglo-American groups quickly developed for Polish ensembles. In March 1984, when it was announced that an album by the popular new-wave band TSA was to go on sale at three p.m., fans began to line up outside the record shops early in the morning. That same year, the album *Totalski no problemski* by the band Manaam sold its entire pressing of eighty thousand albums within three hours.

On February 29, 1984, when Oddział zamknięty arrived at the state record shop on the corner of Świętokrzyskiej and Nowy Świat streets in downtown Warsaw to autograph their first long-playing album, over three hundred fans jammed the street to greet the five-man band. By one p.m., as the swelling crowd began to block traffic along the Nowy Świat Street, one of Warsaw's main shopping avenues, some young people scaled lampposts and traffic lights; others waved posters bearing the band's provocative logo: a large red "O" scrawled through with a "Z" against a white background—a modified rendering of the universal symbol for anarchy.

Jammed into the narrow street, the rock fans grew feisty. They began smashing the streetlights and bashing display windows. The arrival of the militia heightened the combative atmosphere. Fearing an explosion of violence, the scheduled autograph session was cancelled. "At about 2 p.m.," reported the Polish magazine *Magazyn Muzyczny* in May 1984, "militia formed a guard to permit members of Oddział zamknięty to leave the store to go to their cars. They were greeted by the shouting and screaming of fans." With the band gone, the crowd was cleared off, leaving the street in shambles.

Concerts by Poland's upstart punk bands often provided cathartic release for the seething frustrations of the country's young. The band Dezerter, whose spike-haired lead singer was known simply as Skandal, originally called itself SS-20, after a Soviet nuclear missile. The group changed its name to Dezerter when concert authorities refused to print the band's poster. "No goal, no future, no hope, no joy!" screamed Skandal in one popular song, "That is the picture of our generation." At one Warsaw performance, band members heaved piles of party newspapers and magazines into the audience, screaming "Propaganda!" A Western observer reported: "The teenagers shredded the papers, and lunged at each other with fists, legs, and bodies in a desperate frenzy which resembled a fight more than a dance."

Concerts by the band Perfect also provided occasion for venting passions against the state. Grzegorz Markowski, the band's lead vocalist, who, according to *Newsweek,* strutted "across the stage with the bravado of Mick Jagger," brought fans to their feet with politically charged songs. In one popular song, as Markowski screamed "I want to be myself," the audience, referring to the Polish riot police, responded "I want to beat a Zomo." The Perfect song "Have No Fear," which had passed the state censors, contained the approved line "don't be afraid of anyone." In concert, Markowski altered the lyrics, screaming "don't be afraid of Jaruzelski." The Perfect song "Pepe Come Back," interpreted by fans as a call for the return of Solidarity, inevitably brought crowds to their feet, swaying back and forth with their hands extended in the "V" sign.

In the fall of 1982, during a concert in the town of Wałbrzych, Perfect alluded to people killed in antigovernment protests when they asked rock fans for a moment of silence to remember "those no longer with us." Thousands of fans lit matches and began sitting down on the floor. The police responded to the silent provocation with tear gas and percussion bombs. Perfect's 1982 album *Unu,* a maelstrom of punk and heavy metal, bolstered the band's image as an opposition group, presenting each of the band's five musicians in a series of three, black-and-white mug shots. By the spring of 1983, Perfect had been banned from appearing in Warsaw and other Polish cities.

Poland's punk scene climaxed in August 1984 when nearly twenty thousand punks, hippies, and rock fans overran the provincial town of Jarocin to attend an annual rock festival. The sixty rock outfits appearing at the five-day festival reflected the tenor of the times: Doom, Cyclon, Shock, Crisis, Shortage, Paralysis, Sewage, Toilet, Degeneration, Dead Organism, Delirium Tremens,

Dissecting Room, Formation of the Dead, Plutonium Execution, Pathology of Pregnancy.

These bands transformed the Jarocin festival into an eruption of public despair. "I smash my guitar," sang the group CDN. "I look to tomorrow as into a dirty mirror." The high-school band Toilet dedicated one number to the military, singing, "I am a tank, I am a tank, my only purpose is to destroy." Another amateur band, Moscow, assailed party polemics: "Propaganda horrifies me. Truth is left behind. I prefer the words of the enemy." One song summarized the self-annihilating torment of Poland's young: "I beat my head against the wall. My thoughts are tearing me apart. All my dreams are suddenly ending."

In August 1984, Urszula Biełous, a writer for the weekly newspaper *Polityka* visited the Jarocin festival. "This year there arrived 14,000 youths at Jarocin," Biełous observed. "It was reported that there were thousands of tents in the fields, but it must be presumed that another five thousand were never reported, all of whom were living in a wild state. Their total number was equal to the population of Jarocin."

The *Polityka* article revealed a scene of "punks," "skinheads," "poppers," and "killers" who lived in a world divorced from the rest of socialist society. "It was most difficult to get near the killers," the reporter noted, "with their lips painted black announcing death, cheeks painted in yellow designs symbolizing rebellion and the shit-worth value of this world." The punks, who had spiked their hair using sugar water, sported leather jackets with badges bearing the English sayings "No Future" and "Anarchy and Peace." The poppers were well-to-do Polish teenagers with, according to one punk, "huge heads of hair, pockets full of money, Pewex exchange certificates (hard currency shop) and chicks." *Polityka* also registered the open hostility between punks and poppers. "A week ago, a popper beat me over the head while I was drunk," one young punk explained. "I will find him and he will dance on his teeth."

In the spring of 1984, the animosity between punks and poppers had turned the streets of some Polish cities into battle zones. In the pollution-choked industrial city of Nowa Huta, hundreds of punks, dressed in leather jackets and chains, skirmished regularly on Friday and Saturday nights with equal numbers of poppers, sporting bow ties, shiny shoes, and long, well-groomed hair. Both sides came armed with knives and razor blades. "An atmosphere of civil war prevails in Nowa Huta," reported the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* on May 28, 1984. "The street battle with knives, brass knuckles, clubs, bicycle chains and razor blades claims several seriously wounded victims and ends without a clear victor thanks to the arrival of police units." It was a scene that repeated itself with troubling frequency. In order to reassert control over the streets, military detachments were dispatched to reinforce the Nowa Huta police patrols.

During 1984, the Polish government, confronted with growing alienation and violence among the youth, reversed its liberal policy toward Poland's rock culture. In January, the government issued a letter to school officials in six prov-

inces, requesting them to submit lists of deviant individuals to the police. "Because of the danger posed to the youth by the undersirables," the letter explained, "an attempt will be made to determine the scope of subcultures among the youth." School officials were asked to "prepare lists of youths suspected of being members of sub-cultures such as punks, hippies, fascists, drug addicts and sniffers of narcotics."

Many officials blamed rock music for the rising violence and disaffection among Poland's young. At a conference in Kraków in May 1984, party stalwarts argued that "hippies, hooligans and punkers are not a Polish invention." As outgrowths of capitalist decadence, their values had been transplanted to Poland through Western music, Western films, and Western literature. One psychologist at the Kraków conference identified rock-and-roll music as a major source of youth disaffection, charging that rock music "dominates literally all the radio programs."

In May 1984, *Zdanie,* a monthly publication of Kraków party intellectuals who generally touted themselves as liberals, also held rock and roll accountable for the rampant disaffection among young Poles. *Zdanie* charged that the government's campaign to "win the hearts and minds" of Poland's young people through "filthy music" was no longer serving its intended purpose—to "dissipate young people's energies, limit their interests in other things, and channel their emotions." With drug addiction and street violence on the rise, and with rock bands insulting and provoking the Communist party, *Zdanie* wondered: "Did the people in charge really envision the channel to look like this?"

As official criticism intensified, cultural administrators grew cautious. Rock-music programming was reduced noticeably on state radio. In 1985, the organizer of the Jarocin festival, Walter Chełstowski, a blue-jeaned man in his early thirties, expressed concern over the fate of the annual festival. "People here know we are walking a very thin line," Walter Chełstowski told a Western visitor in 1985. "If this festival is to survive it must avoid politics."

Manaam and Lady Pank: Selling Out—Almost

General Jaruzelski's liberal policy toward rock music during the first half of the 1980s proved to be a moderate success. Jaruzelski failed "to win the hearts and minds" of Poland's youths, but at the same time, he did find an effective vent for pent-up energies and aggressions. Youth unrest, to a large extent, had taken place at rock concerts and on the dance floors, not in the streets. And, by the end of 1984, many of Poland's fiercest punk groups had, like their short-lived Western counterparts, disbanded, exhausted by the frantic rage they embodied.

Zbigniew Hołdys, the songwriter and bass player for the band Perfect, acknowledged in 1985 the futility of punk rock's protest against the establishment. According to Hołdys, the rock bands could not maintain their high-decibel assault on the establishment indefinitely. After two or three years, with their energies spent, the groups broke up. The establishment weathered the

onslaught and continued as it had for decades. "The groups change, but the structure always remains the same," observed Hołdys. "The same sound men, the same technicians, the same bookkeepers, the same directors, the same record presses, and the same old music publishers."

It seemed, indeed, the state had waged a war of attribution with rock bands and ultimately had won. Hołdys noted cynically that while Poland's rock bands thundered in the concert halls and stadiums of Poland, often attacking in song the faults and failings of the system, Polish officials had earned tens of millions of zloty from ticket and record sales. Hołdys calculated that concert receipts for 210,000 fans brought the government a net profit of two million zloty. Hołdys, in comparison, received only four hundred zloty, regardless of the size of the crowd. "I was earning 400 zloty, and later 700 zloty for a concert," Hołdys recalled with bitterness. "And the people think that I am getting something out of this. People, that is shit! In accordance with the regulations, 700 zloty are paid for a concert in category A, and only 400 for a concert in category B." The category payment system was determined by the directors of the individual concert facilities, leaving musicians at the mercy of local directors. "Sometimes," observed Hołdys referring to the proclivities of the two-category system, "it depended on whether I was sober or drunk."

The state record industry also sapped the energy and autonomy of many musicians. Corrupt record-industry officials wrote songs and forced bands to record the material. As only the lyricist and composer received royalties from album sales—musicians were paid a flat fee—many bands made virtually no money from their recordings. At the state radio, disc jockeys extorted money from bands in return for giving their songs airtime; other disc jockeys, writing lyrics under pseudonyms, forced texts upon rock bands. "The husbands of songwriters are the people who produce the hit lists," Hołdys charged, "and the program directors write the texts." Many *teksciarze,* professional writers who glibly and prolifically penned lyrics for rock bands, often had little in common with the bands and audiences for whom they wrote the texts. Bogdan Olewicz, a balding man in his early forties, provided the words for the angry young men of Perfect. Andrzej Mogielnicki, a cautious and calculating *teksciarz* who wrote lyrics for Lady Pank, pressured the band to attend the Twelfth Festival of Youth in Moscow in the summer of 1985. In June 1986, when Lady Pank's bass guitarist, Jan Borysewicz, caused a national scandal, Mogielnicki quickly distanced himself from the band.

By the middle of the decade, making money was as important to some musicians as making music. Manaam, a band that delivered politically charged songs during the martial-law era, by 1986 was more interested in cultivating an audience in Western Europe than effecting political change in Poland. Manaam, formed as an acoustic rock group in 1976, pioneered new-wave music in Poland after switching to electric instruments in 1978 and adding the stunning young vocalist Kora (Olga Jackowska). Manaam's 1980 hit song, "Hamlet," injected the stagnant Polish hit parades with new energy. A second hit, "Buenos Aires," which sold out across Poland within two hours after its release, established Manaam as Poland's premier rock ensemble. Although Ma-

naam played a mixture of funk and pop, Polish critics spoke of the group's music as "punk" and "new wave."

With the imposition of martial law in December 1981, Manaam turned to politics. The title cut from the 1982 album *Night Patrol* cynically praised the benefits of police protection. With sirens wailing in the background and the sound of glass breaking, Kora evoked a haunting image of a cityscape under martial law, where "shadows in the sad city, bleed through the night." Another song from the *Night Patrol* album, "One, Two Three, Girl, Look!" evokes the sense of desperation and fear that seizes a person just before a police raid. Manaam's *Night Patrol* was a hit among fans and critics alike. In 1983, the album earned the Rogot Record Company a prize from the Communist youth paper *Sztandar Młodych.* Kora, the band's vocalist, was also recognized for her talents by the magazine *Jazz Forum,* which selected her as the best female vocalist of 1983. Manaam's second album *Totalski no problemski,* which sold out immediately, contained the song "Stoję, Stoję" ("Stand, Stand"), a frenetic punk-style number that, though it was recorded before December 1981, became a martial-law-era hymn among the youth.

Manaam's success soon resonated beyond Poland's borders. With the release of *Night Patrol* and *Totalski no problemski* and with several television appearances, Kora caused a minor sensation on the West German pop scene. German critics sensed in lead singer Kora an embodiment of the sensuality once flaunted by Marlene Dietrich. "Completely in black, she embodies the sullenness of her songs that contain so many associations and allusions," rhapsodized the West German paper *Die Welt* on December 20, 1984. "And at the same time, she seems to be a tense mass of eroticism as she strokes the microphone stand, lowers herself casually onto a chair or wraps herself in an outstretched banner." By the mid-1980s, Manaam was earning well for itself and bringing in desperately needed hard currency for the Polish government.

Lady Pank, which in the early 1980s gained popularity with antigovernment songs, also achieved superstar status in Poland by the middle of the decade. The band marketed its own line of Lady Pank towels, Lady Pank tennis shoes, Lady Pank perfume. In 1984, an American talent scout, Brian Kee, in Europe on business, came across a Lady Pank cassette. Upon returning to the United States, Kee previewed the tape and was impressed by the music.

Kee traveled to Poland to see Lady Pank perform live. At a concert in Poznań, he watched as ten thousand Polish fans went absolutely wild over the band. "I have never seen a thirst for music like that before in my life," Kee later recalled. The band, it seemed to him, projected enough charisma and stage presence to compete in the West. Back in the United States, he convinced MCA Records to sign the band on to their label. Before the year was out, Lady Pank flew to London and recorded in English the songs from their first album.

Early in 1985, MCA Records released the Lady Pank album under the title *Drop Everything.* A rock video based on the album's first cut, "Minus Zero," was produced by the emigré Polish filmmaker, Zbigniew Rybczyński, who had several successful rock videos to his credit. The video featured band members

rollicking with a large pink military tank and eating Polish sausages. The single, the album, and the rock video flopped.

Although several factors contributed to Lady Pank's failure in the United States, the English text to the songs were unquestionably a major cause. "The problem is going to be with the lyrics," predicted the *Washington Post* on March 21, 1985, citing the line "You scratch my itch" and the song title "Do, Do" as problematic examples. "These lyrics," the newspaper mused, "might actually sound better in Polish." Janusz Panasewicz, the band's lead singer who did not speak a word of English, compounded the language problem. In struggling to sing the English lyrics, Panasewicz sacrificed much of the vitality of the Polish originals.

In the spring of 1985, Lady Pank undertook a brief promotional tour of the United States, visiting New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Chicago. The band received extensive media exposure, but reporters appeared more interested in the band members' quaint rendering of English than in their music talent. Lady Pank fled the fiasco and returned to Poland where their superstar status remained intact.

Within a year, however, Lady Pank was back in the international news. On Sunday June 1, 1986, the band performed before fourteen thousand young people at a children's day festival in Wrocław Poland. When Lady Pank appeared on stage at the city's Olympic Stadium, the band's bass player Jan Borysewicz turned a simple concert into a national scandal. Borysewicz, who had been drinking heavily, screamed obscenities at the fourteen thousand Communist youths. The lanky Borysewicz then unzipped his pants, and, as the Polish weekly *Przegląd Tygodniowy,* observed "undisputably proved he is of the male sex." Borysewicz was dragged from the stage.

The following day, Monday, June 2, 1986, the Communist youth organization in Wrocław requested that the Ministry of Culture disband Lady Pank, that Pagart ban the group from performing abroad, and that Borysewicz be tried on obscenity charges. The Borysewicz scandal received extensive exposure in the Polish media. The youth paper *Walka Młodych (Struggle of Youth),* which reprinted a full-length picture of Borysewicz yanking down his trousers, ran the headline: "Mniej niż zero" ("Less Than Zero"). "Are we," wondered *Walka Młodych,* "to entrust the education of our young to people like Jan Borysewicz?"

A week later, on Wednesday, June 11, 1986, the Ministry of Culture, heeding the Wrocław youth organization's suggestion, blacklisted Lady Pank. The Ministry of Culture also issued instructions to provincial authorities instructing them not to grant permission for Lady Pank to perform in their regions. The ministry further instructed Pagart that Lady Pank was banned from performing abroad.

The following day, Thursday, June 12, 1986, Jan Borysewicz appeared in court on misdemeanor charges of "committing obscene excesses" while under the influence of alcohol. In preparation for the trial, Borysewicz proved so uncooperative that at one point his defense attorney asked to be removed from

the case. Ultimately, Borysewicz pleaded guilty to the charges and was sentenced to three months in prison. Although Borysewicz emerged from prison by summer's end, Lady Pank did not re-form until 1988.

In the interim, a new host of bands, provocative but not as heedlessly offensive, stepped into the spotlight: Rok 1984 (Year 1984), Armia (Army), Moskwa, 1 Million Bulgarien, Bielizna Gőringa (Goering's Underwear). The band Aya, whose leader Igor Czerniawaki was a Russian married to a Pole, emerged as a leading band on Poland's post-punk rock scene. KULT, another popular group, which released two LPs, touched on the sensitive issue of religion, depicting the Catholic church as an institution of subjugation.

A Warsaw appearance by the band Perfect, which reemerged in 1987, reflected the prudence that dampened Poland's rock scene in the second half of the 1980s. With vocalist Grzegorz Markowski strutting about the stage while Zbigniew Hołdys, a large, red "S" emblazoned on his shirt, tortured his bass guitar, Perfect seemed to reignite the passions of the martial-law-era rock scene, arousing the 25,000 fans in Warsaw as they had done at Wałbrzych in 1982. For an instant, the raging Phoenix of Polish punk rose its head defiantly, then collapsed.

Following the concert, as the press attacked the band and the audience, the Jaruzelski regime contacted Perfect, demanding an explanation for the provocation. Bass player Hołdys, distancing himself from the political overtones of the concert, submitted a letter of public recantation, which the government spokesman Jerzy Urban promptly read before the media. In a country whose fortunes ceaselessly swayed between ennobling hope and shattering disillusionment, the Hołdys letter provided a humiliating but fitting denouement to punk's half decade of cathartic rage and scandalous glory.

13

The Final Bastions Fall, 1980–1988

Who painted the red door black and asked for sympathy for the devil?
Who lost his teaching position when he joined the native American church?
Who were the two motorcycle heroes shot to death in a small American town?
Who will answer our children when they riddle us with pathetic questions?

THOMAS BÖHME, "*The Nameless*," 1983

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, the declaration of martial law in Poland two years later, and the placement of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe during the early 1980s poisoned the spirit of cooperation between East and West that had been nurtured during the 1970s. As the international climate cooled, official rhetoric fired up. The U.S. president denounced the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" bent on world domination. According to Soviet media, the United States, caught in the death throes of capitalist decay, threatened to plunge the world into nuclear holocaust. While trade agreements were cancelled and cultural exchanges terminated, one legacy of the détente era remained—rock and roll. In the early 1980s, at the nadir of East-West relations, rock music continued to bridge political and ideological differences at official and unofficial levels.

The Death of a Beatle

During the late 1970s, a song no sooner hit the charts in America and England than it was being spun at discos in Moscow, Budapest, and Warsaw. Millions of young socialists were as, if not more, familiar with the exploits of Mick

Jagger, Timothy Leary, and the two motorcycle heroes from *Easy Rider* as they were with the contributions of Communist legends like Ernst Thälmann and Ana Pauker. Soviet-bloc youth shared the exuberance of the international rock scene; they also shared the tragedies.

On the evening of December 8, 1980, former Beatle John Lennon was gunned down outside the Dakota just off Central Park on Manhattan's West Side. Within hours after the shooting, Soviet-bloc rock fans learned of the incident over foreign broadcasts and their own media. As grieving fans in New York, London, and Paris drew together for demonstrations of public despair, Lennon worshippers in Prague, Warsaw, and Leningrad staged their own public commemorations.

Kolya Vasin, who had transformed his Leningrad apartment into an unofficial Beatles museum and who proudly displayed an autographed album that John Lennon had personally sent to him, heard the news just hours after Lennon was shot. "It was around noon, on the ninth of December," recalled Vasin. "I was at work and a friend called me and told me that the Soviet news program had announced that at the age of forty in New York, John Lennon was killed. I told him to stop fucking around and hung up the phone. But right away I fell on my knees and began to pray."

"The bitter irony of this tragedy," mourned *Komsomolskaia pravda* two days later, "is that a person who devoted his songs and music to the struggle against violence has himself become its victim." Around noon, on December 21, 1980, several hundred Soviet students gathered in the Lenin Hills on the southern edge of Moscow near the university. In a display of public mourning, the young people arrived bearing pictures of Lennon and playing Lennon songs on cassette players. When the crowd ignored requests to disperse, forty or fifty additional police were brought in to force the crowd from the Hills.

The sense of loss stung as intensely in Bulgaria as it did in the Soviet Union. On December 9, Radio Sofia announced Lennon's death and in a tribute to the rock star devoted two hours of programming to Beatles music. In the days that followed, Bulgarian Lennon fans hung black-edged unofficial *necrolosi,* public death announcements generally reserved for deceased party members, throughout Sofia. Across the Orlov Bridge in central Sophia, a grief stricken fan scrawled in English "John is not dead."

On the Velkopřevorské Square in central Prague, mourning Czechoslovaks erected a monument to Lennon, adorning it with flowers. The memorial remained standing until city officials had it removed in 1981. An unofficial Lennon shrine also appeared near the Charles Bridge in central Prague. Grieving Lennon fans authored epitaphs to their hero on a large wall, quoting the Beatles' lyrics, professing their continued belief in Lennon's dream of world peace. Local authorities frequently painted the wall, but new grafitti appeared within days. The "Lennon Wall" became a sacred place of pilgrimage for hundreds of Czech rock fans.

On December 10, 1980, the East German party paper *Neues Deutschland* featured the headline: "Ex-Beatle Lennon Murdered in New York." The article recounted the details of Lennon's death and noted that on the same evening over one thousand New Yorkers had gathered before the Dakota to "express

their horror at the murder.'' The article recalled Lennon's opposition to the war in Vietnam. ''He was an active opponent to the Vietnam War and indicated his support of the peace movement with such songs as 'Give Peace a Chance' or 'Power to the People.' '' The following day, *Neues Deutschland,* which had refrained from heavy-handed propaganda in its December 10 report, released an ideological broadside. In an article headlined, ''Singer John Lennon Just One of 21,000 Murder Victims Annually,'' *Neues Deutschland* reported that along with Lennon's death, New York City alone had already registered over sixteen hundred murders that year. ''In these days,'' *Neues Deutschland* observed, ''there are alarming reports from across the entire country about increasing viciousness, brutality and acts of violence.''

In the years following Lennon's death, individuals and governments continued to pay sincere tribute to the former Beatle. Within two years of Lennon's death, many Soviet-bloc recording labels had released his *Double Fantasy* album. The Soviet Union donated river birches to Strawberry Fields, the Lennon memorial in Central Park. In 1981, the Budapest publishing house released a Lennon biography by rock critic Gábor Koltay. *John Lennon, 1940–1980* featured dozens of Lennon photographs and statements about the former Beatle from the Hungarian media and from a dozen leading figures, including the three remaining Beatles, Rolling Stone Mick Jagger, Pete Townsend of the Who, and President Ronald Reagan. ''An era has been irretrievably lost,'' wrote Koltay, ''not only because people have lost their dreams, but now the symbol of the times of those dreams is dead.''

Many rock musicians offered personal tributes to John Lennon through their music. The Moscow band Avtograf wrote a song entitled ''Requiem'' in his memory. A leading Estonian band, Ruja, performed a song in honor of the former Beatle: ''To Mr. Lennon.'' The lyrics, written in awkward but heartfelt English, asked: ''Mr. Lennon, how do you feel today? How can you feel my pain?'' The song was recorded on the Estonian Melodiya label and appeared in 1983 in a book of songs published by Eesti Raamat in Tallinn.

On each anniversary of Lennon's death, thousands of Lennon fans gathered to commemorate the performer either publicly or privately. In Moscow, the gathering at the Lenin Hills became an annual event at which the mourners were dispersed by police units after a brief period of time. The event usually ended without incident; occasionally, there were arrests. In other socialist countries, many local officials, quick to intercede whenever crowds formed without permission, respected the sanctity of these unofficial events. On the fifth anniversary of Lennon's death, over six hundred Czechs gathered in central Prague. The crowd conducted a candlelight vigil and sang Beatles songs, then held a solemn procession through the city. Security forces observed the commemoration but did not attempt to disperse the unofficial gathering.

Bulgaria: 20 Percent of John Lennon

The popular music scene in Bulgaria flourished during the late 1970s and early 1980s thanks to Lyudmila Zhivkova, the daughter of Bulgarian leader Todor

Zhivkov who became head of the Committee of Culture in July 1975. In the tolerant atmosphere fostered by the thirty-three-year-old Zhivkova, Western pop and rock groups toured Bulgaria, Balkanton released increasing numbers of Western albums on license, and books on rock music and rock culture began to appear. Luydmila, who reportedly dabbled in Buddhism, even brought the American best-seller *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* to bookstores in Bulgarian translation.

In May 1977, Zhivkova extended the scope of her liberal reforms when she assumed control of Bulgarian press, radio, and television. As Zhivkova confronted conservative forces in her efforts to relax restraints on popular music, she mustered support from an influential source—her father. "Not a few young people listen to foreign radio stations for their musical programs," Todor Zhivkov conceded in the Komsomol daily *Narodna mladezh* on July 20, 1978. "Let us put aside the question of ideological, political and moral influence exercised by these stations together with the music, and face the purely aesthetic aspect of the problem. Obviously," the balding, sixty-seven-year-old man deduced, "young people listen to these radio stations because they like the music and cannot find it in the stations of Bulgarian radio." The observation fueled Zhivkova's reform efforts as cultural officials gave the party leader's pronouncement an unreservedly liberal interpretation. In the autumn of 1978, Radio Sofia announced that it would improve its music programs, be more discriminating in its broadcast of Bulgarian music, and attempt to address the real interests of young listeners. Within a year, British and American hits dominated two thirds of all pop music broadcasts in Bulgaria. In 1980, when *Musical Scale,* a rock music program of the state radio, polled its listeners, Bulgarian youth voted "Another Brick in the Wall" by the British rock group Pink Floyd as Bulgaria's song of the year.

Western pop and rock forged other inroads into Bulgarian culture. The Balkanton label released a number of popular Western rock and pop recordings, including albums by Michael Jackson, Paul McCartney, and Elton John. Western pop also found increased access to Bulgarian concert venues. In 1980, the black soul singer Precious Wilson backed by the group Eruption toured Bulgaria. Within the year Tina Turner, whose career had taken a downturn in the West, played before a packed house of wildly enthusiastic fans in Sofia. Although the press praised Turner's performance, cynical Bulgarian pop fans observed a curious phenomenon in the constellation of international rock stars: "When it comes to popular music, stars rise in the West and set in the East." Little did they know that a few years later Tina Turner would reemerge as an international superstar.

Lyudmila Zhivkova's benevolence toward rock music also extended to domestic bands. In the early 1980s, Balkanton issued a series of compilation albums, which featured leading domestic rock groups singing Bulgarian covers to songs like "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and "Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones. In 1979, Signal recorded an album of mainstream pop and rock love songs with titles like "Lets Link Our Hearts" and "Distant Eyes." The numerous recordings by Diana Express included an album of covers to heavy-metal hits by Uriah Heep and Deep Purple.

The most popular group of the late 1970s and early 1980s remained Bulgaria's veteran formation Shturtsite. Shturtsite's enduring popularity, due in part to the powerful arena sound the band developed in the 1970s, also lay in the band's provocative lyrics, which bristled with thinly veiled criticisms of the state. The thundering song "20th Century" took an angst-ridden look at the future of the world. Another Shturtsite hit, "SOS," issued a rollicking signal of distress that combined Beatles harmonies with Deep Purple rhythms. The song "Wedding Day," in which Shturtsite lamented the loss of freedom, provided a metaphorical commentary on Soviet dominance in Bulgaria. As the vocalists sang the words "yesterday I was a free man," the band intoned a slightly altered rendition of the Beatles hit "Back in the USSR."

Shturtsite maintained a large and loyal following among Bulgaria's rock fans. In October 1980, while Bulgaria's pop culture flourished under Lyudmila Zhivkova's benevolent hand, Shturtsite played in Sofia's Universiada Hall to an exuberant audience that waved scarves and banners and defied a ban on dancing. When Shturtsite lit into "Wedding Day," the crowd went wild. Panicky officials turned on the auditorium lights, called in the police, and ordered Shturtsite to clear the stage. The band, irritated by the interference, threatened to depart from the approved repertoire if the police did not leave the hall. Shturtsite then launched into a forty-minute set of hits by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. "The crowd," noted one observer, "went into absolute ecstasy." Shturtsite concluded the concert with the Beatles song "All You Need Is Love."

Bulgarian policy toward rock changed radically after 1981 when Lyudmila Zhivkova, age thirty-nine, was fatally injured in a car accident. At the same time, the Kremlin, under the new leadership of Yuri Andropov, launched a clamorous campaign against "ideological influences" from the West. As conservatives in Bulgaria's leadership rallied, the country's rock bands felt the increased pressure of anti-rock forces. In the summer of 1982, Signal was banned from performing in public following a concert in the seaside town of Burgas during which the crowd had responded to the band with "excessive excitement." The Bulgarian soul singer Vasil Naidenov aroused "consternation" among officials when he expressed his ambition to become "the Bulgarian David Bowie," a singer whose music, even in the best of times, had been banned from Bulgaria. By the end of 1982, Shturtsite was telling its fans to remain seated, or the band would be forced to leave the stage. In 1983, under increasing ideological pressure, the beautiful twenty-eight-year-old pop singer Kameliya Todorova defected to the West, where she assumed the stage name Camy Todorow and signed with the British recording label Virgin.

On November 4, 1983, the newspaper *Narodna mladezh* warned that Western music was effacing the national traits of Bulgaria's young. The paper called for increased control over discotheques and radio programs which were accused of disseminating Western rock music among socialist youth. Three months later, on February 17, 1984, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers met in Sofia and drafted a declaration of war against Western pop and rock music. Georgi Dzhagarov, vice president of the State Council and chairman of the Standing Commission on Intellectual Values, complained that "the whole country has been

disquieted by the muddy stream of musical trends sweeping away all the true values of music.'' Dzhagarov, maintaining that rock music ''preached bourgeois amorality and anarchy,'' denounced discotheques as ''jungles'' and ''fleamarkets'' at which ''young people were subjected to a mutilation of the body and soul.'' On February 11, 1984, in an attempt to centralize control of the music scene, the Committee on Culture was given authority to tighten regulations for Bulgarian pop and rock music.

Identifying Bulgaria's 450 discotheques as a major source of subversive infiltration, Bulgarian officials moved to purge these establishments of Western rock and pop music. In order to avoid the bureaucratic confusion that crippled similar attempts in the past, the government established the National Commission for Discotheques to assure that various state organs with discotheques under their control adhered to the new guidelines. Availing itself of language harkening back to the darkest days of Stalinist rule, the commission set out to create the ''discotheque of the new type.'' In the reformed establishments smoking and drinking were to be banned; the music played was to be ''predominantly Bulgarian.'' Western songs required approval by several organizations, including the Committee on Culture, the Association for Tourism and Recreation, and the Central Committee of the Komsomol. Disc jockeys had to be licensed and, like their Soviet counterparts, were expected to combine music with commentaries, lectures, discussions, and interviews.

As with previous Bulgarian efforts to control the music scene, official rhetoric translated poorly into Bulgarian reality. The ''discotheque of the new type'' was doomed to failure. By the end of 1984, only 47 of Bulgaria's 450 discos had adopted the new regulations. Nikolay Dobrev, president of the National Commission for Discotheques, despaired to learn that many discotheque managers sidestepped the commission's jurisdiction by converting their establishments into bars and restaurants. The Association of Tourism and Recreation, concerned more with Western tourism than with socialist ideology, found, of the scores of discotheques under its control, only nine suitable for conversion. The Ministry of Trade, which also oversaw a large number of discotheques, agreed to convert only thirty-eight into ''discotheques of the new type.'' It turned out that many of these discos had, in fact, been functioning as snack bars for children. In an interview in the party paper *Rabotnichesko delo,* the secretary of the District Committee of the Bulgarian Komosol assured Dobrev's commission that he was willing to open twelve ''discotheques of the new type'' as soon as arrangements could be made for the ''delivery of fruit juice.''

In the face of their setbacks, the government desperately issued further ordinances and bans. On January 16, 1986, *Rabotnichesko delo* published a decree prohibiting the use of all American, West European, and Yugoslav rock music in Bulgaria's discotheques, Further, disc jockeys could play only Bulgarian and East European music approved by the appropriate government agencies. As an additional precaution, the state threatened punishment to anyone caught bringing into a discotheque ''decadent music alien to Bulgarian youth.''

During the first months of 1987, Bulgaria's ideological offensive against rock and roll collapsed as the government, responding to Gorbachev's call for greater

openness in socialist society, reversed its hard line on rock music. The arrest of ten John Lennon fans in December 1986 provided one of the first test cases for Bulgarian-style *glasnost.*

On December 8, 1986, ten high-school students from class 8C of the Dimitur Polyanov High School solemnly paraded through the streets of the Bulgarian capital bearing a wreath they intended to place at Sofia's unofficial Lennon Wall, the facade of the city's notary building located in the Ignatiev Street. When the procession arrived at the memorial, one of the youths wrote on the wall in English: "John, you are in our hearts." The police appeared minutes later and apprehended the fourteen year olds. Following an interrogation at the police station, the youths were released and their families each fined two hundred leva.

A letter was subsequently sent to schools and factories in Sofia warning officials to be on the lookout for "spontaneous youth groups under foreign ideological influence." Almost immediately, a response appeared in the city paper *Pogled* defending the students and criticizing officials for having reacted with such harshness to a peaceful tribute to John Lennon. A public debate quickly emerged in the pages of Pogled. Panayot Bonchev, the district's deputy chairman of the People's Council, defended the government actions. He criticized the youths' practice of organizing themselves into unofficial groups and also leveled criticism against the deceased former Beatle. "John Lennon," wrote Bonchev, "was only 20% a fighter for peace and 80% the product of Western democracy."

Bonchev's letter infuriated Lennon fans. *Pogled* received over two hundred letters of protest, mostly from young people defending the actions of the ten students and condemning the "incompetence and insensitivity" of government officials. One protester, responding to Bonchev's assessment of Lennon, suggested the ten students may have avoided arrest had they written: "John, we love only 20% of you."

On January 27, 1987, Todor Zhivkov seemed to tilt the scales against government hard-liners when, in the spirit of *glasnost,* he urged public criticism of inefficient government organizations and ministries. Rock-music supporters rallied. On March 25, 1987, *Uchitelsko delo,* the educators' newspaper, demanded more television and radio exposure for rock music to overcome the air of "stagnation" lingering on the official music scene. In April 1987, Dimitr Spasov, a specialist on youth policy, wrote an article in *Pogled* calling for public tolerance of Bulgaria's punk rockers, heavy-metal fans, and disco fans. Spasov praised punk rockers for their outrageous appearance, for despising duplicity and falsehood in personal relationships, for ridiculing stereotyped behavior. Rather than considering punk and other forms of rock and roll a "disease of socialism," Spasov argued that this music offered an opportunity to purge society of many ills.

The Communist youth daily *Narodna mladezh* and the student paper *Studentska tribuna* began writing prolifically about rock music. In May 1987, Bulgaria sponsored its first official rock festival, Rokfestival '87. By the fall of 1987, Balkanton was preparing to release an album presenting three new heavy-

metal bands: Era, Konkurent (Rival), Ahat (Jet Black). The bands, formed by young workers and students without professional training, played their own material rather than songs written by members of the Bulgarian composors' union. By its own admission, Ahat aspired to become the Iron Maiden of Bulgaria. The Milena Rock Cooperative, led by Milena Slavova, became the flagship band of Bulgarian new wave. Milena Slavova was a stunning twenty-two-year-old singer, who, with striking dark features and with her head partially shaved, looked like a cross between Cyndi Lauper and Siouxsie Sioux of the Banshees. Despite her shocking appearance, Slavova took the stage at Bulgaria's 1988 National Pop Competition and came away with first prize for her song "UFO," a new-wave tune, which *Sofia News* on June 15, 1988, praised "for its unspoken criticism."

In the liberal atmosphere, Bulgaria's punks, heavy-metal fans, break dancers, and new wavers took to the city streets, flaunting their shaved heads, leather jackets, and miniskirts. In Sofia, the Hristo Smirnenski Youth Center became a gathering place for the city's heavy-metal fans, while fans of break dancing flocked to the Lilyana Dimitrova Youth Center. New wavers, who listened to the music of the Bulgarian band Tangra, an older group that had revitalized its sound, hung out in front of the Kravai Cafe. In Varna, Burgas, and other cities, thousands of Bulgarian youth packed Communist youth clubs to watch their favorite bands perform. As eighteen-year-old Elena Ivanova, a heavy-metal fan from Sofia, observed in an interview in the summer of 1987: "People have gotten used to the sight of heavy metal fans hanging out in crowds before their favorite cafes and parks."

By mid-summer 1988, the images of heavy-metal rock had even tarnished the pages of the party daily. On August 8, 1977, *Rabotnichesko delo* published a prominent concert announcement for the British heavy-metal band Uriah Heep. In bold print, the party daily, advertising an August 11 Sofia appearance, praised the ensemble as one of the world's leading heavy-metal bands. As if seeking to justify its promotion of a heavy-metal ensemble, *Rabotnichesko delo* mentioned Uriah Heep's recent Moscow appearance and included a large photograph of the five heavy-metal rockers standing in Red Square with the onion-domed turrets of Saint Basil rising behind them.

Czechoslovakia: "Czechs" and Imbalances

In the early 1980s, as Bulgarian cultural officials launched a final quixotic assault on mainstream rock and roll, Czechoslovak officials were frantically erecting cultural defenses against an onslaught of punk rock. During the 1970s, official rock music, completely divorced from the turbulent underground scene, had stifled. Some ensembles and performers managed to walk the tightrope between official acceptance and artistic integrity. Jazz Q Praha, a popular band in the early 1970s, played jazz-rock fusion, including a cover of Stevie Wonder's "Living Just for the City." A popular songwriter and singer, Vladimír Mišík, borrowed heavily from Bob Dyaln for his 1976 eponymous release on

the state recording label. For the most part, however, the official music scene offered fans little original or interesting material. On January 7, 1983, *Smena* published its annual poll of leading Czechoslovak groups and performers. Olympic, Prague's veteran Beatles band, topped the list with 23,715 votes. Elán, a band formed in 1969, commanded second place with 6,778 votes. The list of top-ten vocalists was similarly dominated by pop veterans from the 1960s: Karel Gott, Václav Neckář, Jiří Korn, and Petr Novák.

By the early 1980s, official pressure had also succeeded in crushing much of the life from the "second culture" that in the 1970s had thrived around the Plastic People of the Universe. In the summer of 1981, Vratislav Brabenec, the Plastic People's renowned saxophonist, was beaten up several times by the police. "They told me if I wanted to be a martyr," Brabenec recalled, "they would happily make me one." In the fall of 1981, Brabenec applied for an exit visa and in March 1982 left Czechoslovakia for Vienna. In July 1982, Ivan Jirouš, accused of possession of marijuana and alleged involvement in the underground paper *Vokno (Window),* was arrested for the fourth time since he joined the Plastic People; he was sentenced to three and a half years at the maximum-security prison in Vladice.

Police harassment also alienated the Plastic People from much of the Bohemian underground. By the early 1980s, the Plastic People were no longer invited to participate in unofficial concerts, because, according to Brabenec, "we carried the police around with us like flies." The state eventually won its war of attrition against the Plastic People. In June 1988, three key members of the underground scene, Hlavsa, Janíček, and Kabeš, insisting it was more important to play music than to sustain the Plastic's legend, courted official favor under a new name, Půlnoc (Midnight). Ivan Jirouš, who had established the philosophical basis for the "second culture" in the 1970s, distanced himself from the group.

For years, government watchdogs, intent on keeping the Plastic People in check, seemed hardly to notice the punk scene exploding around them. Dozens of underground punk newspapers like *Attack* and *Punk maglajz (Punk Mess)* came into circulation. Punk rock bands, among them Jasná paka (You Bet), Letadlo (Airplane), Žába (Frog), Žlutý pes (Yellow Dog), Elektrobus, Extempore, and Pražský výběr (Prague Selection), found sponsorship with the local Communist youth league, trade unions, and other local state organizations.

These Bohemian punk bands, the voice of Czechoslovakia's young generation, sang about conformity, alienation, greed, and materialism. Millions of young Czechoslovaks growing up in the desolate *sídliště,* the faceless, concrete housing blocks on city outskirts, could not relate to the philosophical musings or cosmic imagery of the Plastic People. The generation of underground fans from the early 1970s, who embraced the music of Captain Beefheart and the Fugs, gave way to a new generation with new idols—the Clash, the Sex Pistols, the Ramones. A writer of the British rock weekly *New Musical Express,* who visited the Prague rock scene in the fall of 1980, found the popular Bohemian band Energie G playing almost exclusively covers to British punk songs.

Patent, one of the most popular punk groups of the early 1980s, played both

sides of the ideological fence for three years, serving approved repertoires at state functions, unleashing ear-splitting punk rock in local clubs. Founded in 1980, the seven-man band borrowed heavily from American punk and new-wave groups. "I listen a great deal to American groups," Patent's leader Antonín Coufal explained, "and translate the texts for our needs." Coufal also wrote his own lyrics, occasionally adopting American cultural metaphors into his songs. One Coufal number pleaded: *Bejby, bejby, dej mi Cadillac* (Baby, baby, give me a Cadillac).

Patent concerts, notoriously loud and rowdy affairs, attracted hundreds of young people, who drank heavily, scuffled with one another, and engaged in other "anti-social behavior." Following Patent concerts, fans would allegedly trash concert facilities, vandalize bus and train stations, and leave behind a trail of empty beer bottles.

During the last week in March 1983, an article entitled "New Wave With Old Content" appeared in the party weekly *Tribuna* expressing concern over the "perverse fashion of decadent punk" proliferating in Czechoslovakia. The article's author, Jan Kryzl, claimed that Czech punk bands not only imitated punk music but had "entirely uncritically taken over from western punks also styles of dress and behavior, obscene gestures, with men performing in women's panty hose, colored stripes across their faces, equipped with heavy chains and locks, crosses and other shocking junk." Beyond their offensive appearance, Kryzl charged that the punk bands promoted deviant behavior. "They advertise alcoholism and drugs, vulgarize erotic relations, express opinions utterly foreign to us." Among the offending bands, Kryzl listed Žlutý pes, Letadlo, Parchanti (Bastards), and Devisový příslib (the name of a document required for an exit visa). Kryzl found it especially "regrettable" that these groups and other punk bands were appearing under the auspices of government agencies. On March 30, 1983, the party paper *Rudé právo* reprinted Kryzl's indictment of punk.

In May 1983, the Jazz Section, an independent organization under the auspices of the musicians' union that promoted rock music and alternative culture in Czechoslovakia, attacked Kryzl's article. The Jazz Section defended the punk movement and claimed that through his criticism Kryzl had alienated Czechoslovakia's young people. "With your article in *Tribuna* and *Rudé právo,*" the Jazz Section rebuked, "you have nurtured hate and mistrust in thousands of young people."

Except for the banning of thirty-seven rock groups from Prague and central Bohemia in September 1981, the Czechoslovak rock scene had remained relatively untouched during the early 1980s. The reprinting of Kryzl's article in *Rudé právo* on March 30, 1983, heralded an official crackdown. During 1983, numerous bands lost their licenses. Some groups evaded the bureaucratic scythe by disbanding and re-forming under a different name. The punk band Žlutý pes, for example, adjusted its repertoire, changed its name to The Music Entertainment Group of O. Hejma, and continued to appear in public. Stanislav Teml, a Communist youth leader complained of this practice in *Rudé právo* on June 22, 1983. "What happens is that when the activity is stopped, the musi-

cians for the greater part break up and start to appear in another district or another region and under another name, and they again damage in particular the cultural and aesthetic education of the youth.''

The crackdown hit Patent full force. The press denounced the band as ''double faced,'' performing music that pleased state officials, ''but preferring to play to audiences dressed in torn clothing.'' Patent fans reportedly consisted of ''undisciplined crowds, including punks wearing safety pins in their ears, who packed the dance hall, littering the place with beer bottles.'' Further, Patent allegedly battered its audiences with music, which the state claimed ranged between 180 and 200 decibels. Through this ''intolerable noise level'' officials were said to have heard the ''sounds of songs sung in English coming from the stage.'' Responding to the public attack, local and district authorities, and eventually regional authorities, slammed the door on Patent concerts. Banned from performing in most of Bohemia, Patent sought refuge in the Communist youth club in the town of České Budějovice, where the group continued to rehearse.

As authorities squeezed the rock scene, confrontations between rock fans and local authorities became more frequent. On June 11, 1983, just two months after Kryzl launched his campaign against the punk movement, security forces broke up a planned concert in the town of Zabrice, a few miles from Brno. When more than a thousand fans had arrived in Zabrice on the morning of June 11, to learn that the concert was cancelled, between four and five hundred trudged back to Brno to catch the next scheduled train back to Prague. The disappointed fans congregated in a park in the center of Brno, where they spent the day singing songs, playing soccer, and drinking beer. At six o'clock police arrived and began checking identification cards. When one person challenged the police intervention, he was arrested. The crowd became angered and started to sing, ''We want peace, we want freedom.'' Within minutes, police vehicles arrived. Scores of police hurled tear gas, unleashed attack dogs, and set upon the young people with clubs. Dozens of fans were injured and arrested. Ultimately twenty-two people received jail sentences, some as high as twenty months; one person was dispatched to a psychiatric hospital.

Between 1983 and 1986, rock fans skirmished with local authorities throughout Bohemia. In December 1984, police used a water cannon to break up a crowd in the town of Senov. In March 1986, a confrontation erupted between fans and local security forces following the last minute cancellation of a concert in the southern Bohemian town of Volenice.

Hoping to divert youth interest into approved channels as it clamped down on the punk scene, the state liberalized the official rock scene. Large numbers of Western albums appeared on license in Czechoslovakia, including classic rock by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, as well as contemporary music by the Police and Status Quo. In May 1984, Pragokoncert hosted an appearance by Elton John, who was concluding a concert tour of Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.

Intent on averting an outbreak of youth hysteria over the British star, Pragokoncert girdled the hall with police and demanded that Elton John, renowned

for his flamboyant stage presence, forego extravagant dress and jewelry. On the evening of the concert, Elton John appeared in subdued apparel, lavender tailcoat and a straw hat, but in his left earlobe, the singer sported a diamond stud. "When John stepped onstage with the diamond," a correspondent for the *Washington Post* reported on May 18, 1984, "the Pragokoncert official, Josef Posejpal, threw a fit backstage, threatening to blacklist the band's East European booking agent." Posejpal, who, along with his position at Pragokoncert, also held a high-ranking position with the secret police, possessed the power to carry out his threat. Posejpal found further cause for aggravation when, toward the end of the concert, Elton John brought the crowd to their feet with his song "Crocodile Rock." Authorities demanded that the British singer stop playing until the crowd was seated. Ignoring the order, Elton John continued to play, and the audience continued to dance until concert end.

Despite official efforts to suppress the punk movement through the stick-and-carrot method, punk bands continued to appear. In the summer of 1984, while Prague prepared for Elton John, a new punk band, Plexis PM, prepared to make its public debut. Plexis PM, an anagram derived from "Sex Pistols" and "Exploited," played covers to hard-core Western punk and also wrote its own material. In its song, "Vampires," Plexis PM warned the audience that it was being stalked by a vampire. "He clings to you," the song warned, "and begins to suck your blood, until he sucks the last pulse from your body."

In July 1984, three hours before Plexis PM was to hold its first public concert in the village of Písek, security police intervened and cancelled the performance. On August 11, 1984, Plexis PM received an invitation to perform in a 2,000-seat amphitheater in the town of České Meziříčí, along with other bands, including Rio and Frou Frou. Plexis PM, like the other bands, was told it could play a one-hour set. Before the band took the stage, however, it learned that three songs containing the word "punk" were stricken from their repertoire. Even though Plexis PM adherred to the restrictions, they were ordered off the stage twenty-five minutes into their set. Police harassment intensified during the fall, and finally in 1985, the group was prohibited from making further appearances.

Local officials harassed punk fans as well as punk musicians. Police in the Bohemian city of Plzeň (Pilsen), notorious for their abuse of local punks, often confiscated leather and metal punk regalia, slashed coats, and cut hair. One Plzeň punk, detained by police on his way to a rock concert in the summer of 1986, recalled, "On July 8, 1986, I went to a rock concert. I am a punk fan, so I wore a leather jacket and my hair was dyed and spiked." On his way to the event, he was apprehended by two officers who took him to a local police station. "There they threatened me with a beating and forced me to wash my hair." Another punk, stopped while shopping on Moscow Avenue in downtown Plzeň, was ordered into the police car. "They drove me to a park," the punk recounted. "There they beat me a lot and shaved my head. One cop said that if they ever saw me in Plzeň again they would throw me into the river."

The situation in Plzeň became so dangerous for local punks that in May

1987, forty-six young people submitted a letter of protest to the president of Czechoslovakia. The punks noted that the police "arbitrarily break the law" in their attacks on punks. "They cut our jackets (sometimes very expensive ones, too), they tear our T-shirts, they shave our heads or cut our hair in such a way that there is nothing else to do but shave it. In addition the police often beat us for no apparent reason." They insisted that the harassment caused excessive psychological stress on young people and in one case had resulted in suicide. "It is for this reason that we write you, Mr. President, our highest constitutional office," the letter concluded, "to instruct the relevant agencies to stop this persecution and to investigate the matter in order to provide the necessary remedy."

By the spring of 1986, with Gorbachev's calls for reform shifting the mood in Czechoslovakia, the state's hard line against rock softened. "In the 1980s, club managers, who themselves had grown up with the Beatles and Rolling Stones, saw nothing wrong with letting rock bands perform in their clubs," observed one insider on the official music scene. "These managers, in turn, pressured local party officials, who then put pressure on officials in Prague. Concessions had to be made to the young people." This liberalization process manifested itself in the spring of 1986 with Czechoslovakia's first national rock festival since the 1960s. As proof of official sincerity in this peace offering to rock fans, Josef Vlček, a member of the Jazz Section and co-author of the Jazz Section's two volume dictionary of Western rock music, *Rock 2000,* was invited to help organize Rockfest '86."

For two days, in June 1986, sixty rock bands, some of them previously banned, took the stage in the Palace of Culture, a monolithic marble structure dominating southern Prague. Usually reserved for party congresses, youth meetings, and official functioins, Prague's Palace of Culture epitomized official culture for most Czechs. On June 29, 1986, thousands of Czechoslovak rock fans, many sporting Mohawk haircuts and leather jackets, filed defiantly past uniformed guards into this bastion of officialdom. The sight was more than *Rudé právo* could bear. Distressed by the liberal hand taken by concert organizers, the party paper lamented that "anarchists, hippies and punks" paraded unhindered into Prague's Palace of Culture. Despite *Rudé právo*'s disapproval, Prague's rockfest became an annual event. Rock and roll had stormed the final bastion of official culture in Czechoslovakia.

In the coming years, reform-minded individuals at Panton, the youth recording label, spearheaded further liberalization on the official music scene. In 1987 and 1988, Panton extended recording contracts to several previously proscribed groups, including Stromboli, which consisted of three members of the forcefully disbanded punk group Pražský výběr. Panton also freed itself of Artia, the state office that controlled all foreign trade, and was given autonomy in marketing its product abroad. In the spring of 1988, a leading official at Panton appeared on state television and denounced the censorship of lyrics as "barbaric." It seemed that, after twenty years, Czechoslovakia was finally finding its way back to 1968.

East Germany: Triumph of the Will

In the mid-1980s, while Poland and Hungary endured a plague of punk rock, while Czechoslovakia clubbed and teargassed incorrigible rock fans, and while Bulgaria clumsily grappled with the indomitable presence of Western pop music, East Germany enjoyed a flourishing but obedient rock scene. Since January 1981, East Germany's leading rock bands annually took the stage in East Berlin's Palace of the Republic, demonstrating their solidarity with state policy in an ideological extravaganza called Rock für den Frieden (Rock for Peace). East Germany had the best of both worlds—official bands that commanded sincere popularity among fans and that, at the same time, followed the state's bidding. In the mid-1980s, the East German rock scene, a veritable socialist pop idyll, seemed so enviable that Josef Trnka, Czechoslovakia's director for the Institute for Cultural and Educational Activity, in reviewing the disasterous state of Czechoslovak rock, proposed a policy of *Ostgermanisce*—the "East Germanization" of the Czechoslovak rock scene.

Ten years earlier, East Germany's music scene lay in shambles. In a series of resolute actions in the mid-1970s, East German officials exiled some of the country's most promising talent and alienated a large portion of the East German youth. Among the performers who fled East Germany in that period was the country's leading female rock star, Nina Hagen.

Nina Hagen, the daughter of East German actress Eva Marie Hagen, developed her musical talents under the tutelage of protest singer Wolf Biermann, with whom Nina Hagen's mother maintained a close relationship. In 1974, at age seventeen, Nina Hagen debuted with her band Automobil. The group's first single on the Amiga label, a whimsical pop tune called "You Forgot the Color Film," was an instant success. In 1975, Nina Hagen and Automobil released a second hit, "Let's Dance the Tango." The tango, performed in a rocked-up 4/8 rhythm, proved to be rather provocative for prudish East German standards: "We dance the tango," Hagen said, "and oh so slow. And one command, you hold me tight. Where? You already know."

Nina Hagen electrified audiences. During performances, she leapt from the stage, cajoled astonished fans to their feet, danced with them briefly, then sprang back onto the stage. "Nina sings, stamps, laughs and smoulders in a provocative manner we have never before seen," observed the pop music magazine *Melodie und Rhythmus* in February 1975. By 1976, Nina Hagen was a national sensation. She appeared on television and packed some of East Germany's largest concert venues.

Then came the Biermann affair. In November 1976, the Honecker regime expatriated Biermann following a concert in Cologne, West Germany. Nina Hagen, along with numerous other prominent East Germans, publicly condemned the government action. When Honecker refused to rescind the decision, Hagen wrote a letter to the state, demanding to leave the country. "At this time I was very famous in East Germany," Hagen recalled years later. "I had a couple of hits. And when I wrote this letter to the government, they sent

the secret police to me and they ordered me to appear before the boss of the television station."

When Hagen arrived at the offices of East German television, she learned that the state was willing to provide her with a car, a house with a swimming pool, and her own monthly television show if she would reconsider her decision to leave the country. "Well Nina," the singer was told, "you know, we don't want to let you go because we think you are a great talent and would be good for our people." Hagen, concerned more with her own career than with the welfare of the East German people, insisted on leaving. Within the year she had been granted an exit visa and had reemerged on the West Berlin stage, her hair punked up, her legs bare, screaming into the microphone, *Ich bin nicht deine Fickmaschine!* (I'm not your fuck machine). Offering a frenzied blend of punk, funk, and heavy-metal reggae, Hagen was hailed in the Western press as an epileptic Edith Piaf, a cross between Johnny Rotten, Bette Midler, and Maria Callas. The East German press never mentioned her again.

The artistic bloodletting that followed the Biermann affair—over a hundred prominent figures emigrated to the West—sapped the energy from East Germany's cultural scene. In the late 1970s, bands with music as innocuous as their names, City, Lift, Karussell, Elektra, Karat, dominated the East German music scene. Amiga, the pop-music record label, attempted to supplement the deficient rock diet with releases from the West. In 1979, Amiga issued on license, albums by Pink Floyd, Chicago, the Bee Gees, Fleetwood Mac, Jethro Tull, Stevie Wonder, Simon and Garfunkel, and Bob Dylan. In the coming years, between eight and ten Anglo-American rock albums appeared annually on the Amiga label, including recordings by the new-wave bands Dire Straits, Culture Club, Depeche Mode; and hard-rock outfits Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, and Suzi Quatro.

Punk rock first infected the East German rock scene in 1980. Virtually overnight, bands with provocative names appeared in cities and towns across the country: Itch in Magdeburg, Leftovers and Sewage in Weimar, Shut Up in Gera. Playing at private gatherings, in small apartments, or in the courtyards of old buildings, these bands vented the simmering rage of East Germany's emerging "no-future" generation. As with many punk groups in the West, energy and anger proved adequate substitutes for talent.

The punk band Zebra, typical of these upstart groups, sang of the claustrophobia experienced by many East German youths: "I sit at home / there's not much going on in this hole / I ask myself / what the hell do other people do?" In the early 1980s, East German cabin fever was understandable. The border to the West, bristling with barbed wire, machine-gun towers and tank stops, had long been a fait accompli. After 1980, the border to Poland was closed as East Germany attempted to shield itself from the *polnische Krankheit* (Polish disease). Hungary, a popular vacation place for many East Germans, became unaffordable for the average wage earner following the Hungarian economic reforms. "I can't take much more of this," screamed one angry punk band, "Get me out of this shit."

In the early 1980s, Prenzlauer Berg, a maze of prewar buildings sliced by

tree-lined avenues and long a haven for hippies and counterculture artists, saw a growing number of young East German punks, dressed in leather jackets with heads shaved or hair spiked, hanging out on street corners and in building entrances. The courtyards of the old five-story apartment buildings provided the stage for some of East Germany's best-known punk groups. The concerts were privately arranged; the advertising was by word of mouth.

A typical East German punk concert took place in the Schliemannstrasse in the summer of 1983, where a group from Gera, Vorbildliche Planerfüllung (Perfect Plan Fulfillment), was supposed to appear. While the crowd waited for Fulfillment to arrive, five unknown musicians mounted "the stage" made of rubble and broken boards. The lead singer, with a pair of welder's goggles strapped to his face, wailed above the guitars and drums, "Snow falls from canisters across this desolate land." The four other musicians offered in a ragged chorus: "That is the fault of our fathers! That is the fault of our fathers!" The band screamed the refrain a dozen times until someone accidentally tripped over a power cable and the sound went dead.

East German cultural officials quickly comprehended the danger of punk music to East Germany's relatively tranquil rock scene. Officials also realized that high-level diatribes had little impact on low-level culture. The Communist Youth Organization was given the task of neutralizing the punk movement. In January 1982, *Junge Welt,* the Communist-youth monthly, published an article called "Between Rage and Conformity." The article, which featured a photograph of the Sex Pistols' guitarist Sid Vicious, maintained that punk rock was little more than "an escape route" provided by the imperialist system for "young people without a future." Punk rock, an outgrowth of decaying capitalism, had no place in a socialist society. Wolfgang Scheffler, the lead singer and keyboard player for the popular group Lift, assured readers of the youth magazine *Forum* that punk, funk, and new wave "certainly cannot be the best alternative for our musical development."

In order to contain the punk movement, the youth organization applied massive pressure at the local level. In 1982, when Matthais Lauchus, lead singer for the hard-rock band Setzei appeared on stage with the word PUNK scrawled across his T-shirt, the band was chastized in *Junge Welt* for its "repulsive" appearance. Lauchus defended the band, saying that the criticism was aimed at the band's appearance rather than its music. "When someone from a band has the word PUNK on his shirt," observed *Junge Welt* in September 1982, "that is for us more than just appearances." Lauchus assured the youth paper that Setzei was "anything but a punk band." Lauchus also demonstrated his ideological reliability. "Punk is something which has no place in our society," Lauchus told *Junge Welt,* "because it is an expression of the capitalist way of life and of the youths' disatisfaction with their society." Lauchus rounded off his public recantation of punk with the assurance, "This will never happen again."

The East Germans tempered their hard line on punk with concessions to new wave. After Nina Hagen left East Germany in 1977, the state promoted Tamara Danz, a sleek, attractive women, who strutted across the stage in a skin-tight

leather body suit. Although Danz cultivated official favor and fan popularity with harmless new-wave tunes like "Nobody Dances the Boogie," the singer also wove social criticisms into her repertoire. In one song, Danz attacked the East German press, singing that according to the newspapers "everything is beautiful, everything is wonderful; unfortunately none of it is true."

The rock band Keks gained popularity among East German teenagers with its reggae hit "Come To My Palace" and its hard-rocking song "Nothing's Going to Shock Me." The band explored and occasionally found the limits of official tolerance. For one concert tour, Keks sumbitted a black-and-white poster with the four band members wearing flying caps through which spiked hair protruded. Their jackets were inside out and buttoned up from within. Concert officials, objecting to the band's idiosyncratic appearance, rejected the poster. Keks submitted a new poster, this time in color with the musicians in blazers and trousers. Keks' "new image" pleased officials, who accepted the poster, overlooking lead singer Sebastian Baue, who had pressed his thumb between his middle finger and his index finger, a universal gesture of obscenity.

Pankow, the boldest and most innovative of East Germany's new-wave bands, documented like no band since Renft the frustration and anger of East German youth. Pankow songs delved into subjects generally considered taboo in official East German culture: disillusionment, deviance, crime, sexual frustration.

Formed in January 1981, the five-man ensemble took its name from the Berlin suburb of Pankow, home of East Germany's *nomenklatura* and facetiously known as Volvograd because of party leaders' legendary fondness for the Swedish-made Volvo. In December 1981, Pankow premiered its rock spectacle, *Paule Panke,* in which lead singer André Herzberg played the role of Paule Panke, a young man fed up with the mundane life in East Germany. Songs like "Komm aus'm Arsch" ("Out of the Ass") turned *Paule Panke* into a national sensation and André Herzberg into a teenage idol.

Pankow's first album, *Kille, Kille,* released in 1983, featured nine Pankow songs and fifty-four screaming Pankow fans from Prenzlauer Berg. In 1984, Pankow released *Hans Makes Good,* a concept album that used funk, punk, and rap music to relate the fate of a young East German imprisoned for black marketeering. In the song "Hans Nihilist," Herzberg, availing himself of the punk idiom, screams in rage: "The air is poisoned, the water polluted, the land sucked dry. Everything is shit!" Pankow's subsequent albums, *We Aren't Stars,* (1986) and *Unrest in the Eyes* (1988), though musically more refined, lacked the brashness and vitality of their early work.

In the mid-1980s, the initial belligerence of East Germany's new wave crested and broke. Rock bands released albums, rock fans attended concerts, and the state looked on with relative contentment. At the same time, lines continued to form at state-owned record shops as fans eagerly anticipated new Amiga releases, which included Cream and Kate Bush in 1984, Culture Club in 1985, and the art-rock group Vangelis in 1986. Biographies of Elvis Presley and Janis Joplin and a history of the Woodstock, Monterey, and Altamont rock festivals also appeared. In 1987, Peter Wicke, a leading authority on rock music, published *Anatomie des Rock,* a detailed study of the cultural, social, and eco-

nomic forces in the rock music scene. In the books's final three chapters, Wicke surveyed the history of East German rock and roll, and included the legendary Klaus-Renft-Combo, a band whose name had not appeared in the official press since 1975 when the group was forcefully disbanded.

However, within the year, the idyllic calm shattered. On the first weekend in June 1987, East Berlin erupted in three consecutive nights of rock-and-roll rioting. As part of the celebrations commemorating Berlin's 750th anniversary, West Berlin invited Western rock stars David Bowie, Phil Collins, and the Eurythmics for a series of outdoor concerts at the Reichstag building in West Berlin, a stone's throw from the Berlin Wall. During the week preceding the concerts, RIAS, the American broadcasting facility in West Berlin, announced the concert schedule. In order to assure that East German rock fans could enjoy the outdoor festival, batteries of speakers were aimed toward East Berlin, and sound levels were turned up until the music resonated over the Berlin Wall.

From June 6 to June 8, 1987, several thousand East German rock fans gathered nightly on Unter den Linden near the Berlin Wall to hear the concerts. For the first two nights, East German security forces worked to disperse the crowds. On Monday night, June 8, scuffling erupted into open battle as an estimated four thousand rock fans clashed with police along East Berlin's main avenue, Unter den Linden. Young people, screaming "Police Pigs!" and "Tear down the Wall!" pelted the police with stones, bottles, and firecrackers. West German camera teams, on hand to cover the East German reaction to the concert, captured on film a bloody battle in which police armed with clubs and tear gas confronted mobs of angry fans. Before the confrontation ended, dozens of people were injured. "There is still as yet no precise figure for the number arrested," reported *Umweltblätter*, an East German underground publication, on July 27, 1987. "Cautious estimates start from 160 to 200."

The East Berlin riot headlined evening news programs around the world. Despite the extensive coverage given the event, the East German media flatly denied reports of the confrontation. East Germany accused the Western media of "distorting" the facts. "Police had, as is usual with events near the border to West Berlin," reported *Neues Deutschland* on June 11, 1987, "taken all necessary measures to guarantee the public order and the flow of traffic." The party paper stated categorically that there had been no outbreaks of violence and no arrests. *Neues Deutschland* did, however, confirm the presence of a small group of troublemakers, "who had collaborated with several Western correspondents to shout provocative sayings in front of the cameras."

A second article in the June 11, 1987, edition of *Neues Deutschland* denounced the Reichstag concerts as a provocation on the part of the West Berlin government. "One takes a rock festival, puts it on the GDR border, points several batteries of loudspeakers to the East, and brings a few loud mouths together." Unrest naturally ensues. "And the mass media have their top news stories and headlines: Riots in East Berlin!"

In February 1988, as West Berlin planned a similar series of June concerts that included superstar Michael Jackson, head of state Erich Honecker personally expressed to West Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen his concern over a

recurrence of violence. When it became clear that the June concerts, featuring not only Michael Jackson but also Pink Floyd, would take place, East Berlin prepared a counteroffensive, scheduling their own outdoor concert series with Canadian performer Bryan Adams, the British group Big Country, and the Jamaican reggae band the Wailers. Gold-medal figure skater Katharina Witt completed the lineup as moderator for the concert series.

Despite the East German diversion, on June 16, a Thursday night, between four thousand and five thousand rock fans once again assembled along Unter den Linden to hear the music by Pink Floyd. A cordon of uniformed police, their backs to the Berlin Wall, faced the crowd while police loudspeakers ordered the crowds to disperse. "In contrast to the previous year, when concerts by David Bowie and other pop stars led to bloody clashes between young people and massive police forces," reported the conservative West German daily *Die Welt* on Saturday June 18, 1988, "the security forces at the Brandenburg Gate apparently had instructions to avoid clashes due to the negative effect it had on the East German image." In spite of occasional scuffles with police, the evening passed with relative calm.

However, on Sunday evening, June 19, 1988, when Michael Jackson took the stage in West Berlin, violence erupted across the wall in East Berlin. As a battle developed between security forces and rock fans, East German police, in an effort to protect East Germany's "image" abroad, turned on West German camera teams, reportedly smashing lenses, severing cables to equipment, and jolting the cameramen with electrified cattle prods. The attack on Western reporters elicited diplomatic protests as well as sensational headlines in the Western media.

As in the previous year, while the Western press featured the East Berlin rock riots, East Germany once again denied reports of violence. The East German daily *Berliner Zeitung* claimed that state "security forces" had, contrary to Western accounts, shown great consideration for East Germany's Michael Jackson fans, diverting traffic from the area "so that none of the fans could be hurt." *Neues Deutschland* charged Western reporters with spreading "shameless lies about arrests, fairytales about electric shocks and other fantasies about the street Unter den Linden."

East Germany's inability to maintain order along the Berlin Wall unsettled the Honecker regime. In 1987, young people, ignoring orders to clear the streets, fiercely asserted their right to listen to the West Berlin rock concerts. In 1988, even after the government acquiesced to domestic rock fans, not only providing alternative concerts but also permitting thousands to gather unofficially along the sensitive West Berlin border, the state had been unable to avert outbreaks of violence. Summarizing the failure of East Germany to appease its rock fans, the French paper *Le Monde,* on June 21, 1988, featured the headline: "Berlin-Est perd la 'guerre du rock' " ("East Berlin Loses the Rock War").

One month later, the regime, battered but unbeaten in its war with rock and roll, made a peace offering to its young people. On July 19, 1988, East Germany, whose biggest Western rock star to date had been West Germany's Udo Lindenberg, sponsored an appearance by American rock superstar Bruce

Springsteen. On Tuesday evening, shortly after seven p.m., Springsteen and his E-Street Band, on the European leg of their Tunnel of Love Express tour, took the stage before 160,000 jubilant East Germans at a bicycle racetrack in Berlin-Weissensee. Opening the concert with "Badlands," Springsteen catapulted one hit after another into the exultant crowd. "He allows neither himself nor his audience a moment's rest," gasped *Neues Deutschland* on June 21, "he constantly spins, goes down on his knees with his guitar, jumps back up, runs back and forth across the stage—it leaves one virtually breathless watching this bundle of energy." *Neues Deutschland* lauded Springsteen for his "straightforward, powerful rock and roll," in which he "uncompromisingly points out the inequity and injustices in his country."

Neues Deutschland also mentioned Springsteen's rendering of "Born in the USA" but failed to register the audience reaction to the song. As Springsteen intoned the song's passionate refrain, amidst the blue-shirted ranks of Communist youth members, small hand-painted American flags flashed in the crowd, and tens of thousands of young people raised clenched fists and thundered as one, "Born in the USA! I was born in the USA!"

The East German media also failed to note Springsteen's single most political statement of the evening. Taking a moment's respite from his repertoire, the rock star from New Jersey stood before the 160,000 East German fans and gave a brief speech that had been phonetically transcribed into German. "I would like to tell you," Springsteen declaimed in heavily accented German, "I am not for or against any government. I have come here to play rock and roll for you East Berliners in the hope that one day all barriers can be torn down." Springsteen's carefully worded statement was both a challenge and a concession to the East German government. In a few brief words, delivered in German, perhaps to avoid censorship by the translator, Springsteen related to 160,000 fans his awareness of the restrictions imposed by East Germany's closed border to the West. At the same time, the rock star retrained from offending his hosts by referring to the fortified border as a "barrier" rather than the emotionally charged word *Mauer* (wall). Despite Springsteen's prudence, the East German media censored the declaration. *Neues Deutschland* made no mention of Springsteen's appeal; East German television, which broadcast the concert, also edited the segment from its coverage. Nevertheless, the Springsteen concert was an unequivocal victory for East German rock fans. Three decades of unrelenting interest in Western pop culture and two years of violent skirmishing along the Berlin Wall had finally broken official resistance to Western rock and roll.

Springsteen's July 19 appearance in Berlin-Weissensee, a tactical victory for East German rock fans, was a strategic triumph for all Eastern Europe. For the first time since the Rolling Stones' 1967 Warsaw debut, a Western superstar, at the height of his popularity, had scheduled a Soviet-bloc appearance in conjunction with a major international tour. Though perhaps only symbolically, Springsteen's East Berlin appearance brought the Soviet bloc into the mainstream of the international rock scene.

14

The Soviet Rock Scene, 1980–1988

The welcome side of punk rock is that it is a protest against the cult of the individual, the alienated, imitative, stagnant, and bourgeois way of thinking.

VALTER OJAKAAR, *Popmuusikast,* 1983

Yeah, we wear studded leather jackets, we're dirty, we're ragged, we're punks. But we are your children. You made us this way—with your hypocrisy, your lies.

Soviet punk in, *Is it Easy to be Young?* 1986

In the fall of 1984, the Soviet music journal *Kamerton* hosted a roundtable discussion among Soviet officials, including a Komsomol leader, a member of the composers' union, and I. Kormilzev from the rock band Urfin Dzhius. In the course of the discussion, the editor for *Kamerton* observed the emergence of a "relatively new situation" on the Soviet rock music scene. "The young people are no longer making copies of ABBA on their cassettes," the editor noted. "Instead they are making copies of songs by our groups." Whereas Western tapes and records previously dominated the underground music scene, why, the editor pondered, were Soviet rock bands suddenly so popular? I. Kormilzev suggested that the popularity of domestic rock bands was due to the fact that Soviet bands no longer imitated Western groups. They had developed their own styles; they wrote their own songs. Most importantly, the musician explained, Soviet underground bands had begun "to ask questions that trouble young people, questions that are more biting than issues posed by the professional groups"—questions certainly not addressed by most Western bands.

In the 1980s, Soviet rock and roll came into its own. A new generation of

bands, with new names—Kino, Stranye igri (Strange Games), Zvuki mu, Center, Kruiz—sang to Soviet youth about the realities of Soviet life, availing themselves of a distinctly Soviet sound. In 1984, there were an estimated 160,000 amateur bands registered with local authorities. In Moscow and its environs, officials speculated there were at least fifteen hundred rock groups, one third of which were not registered with any authority.

The Soviet New Wave

The Tbilisi rock festival in Soviet Georgia, held on March 8, 1980, heralded the new era of Soviet rock and roll. The festival, at which Mashina vremeni earned its well-deserved recognition as the most popular band in the Soviet Union, also saw the triumph of Soviet new-wave bands over the veteran vocal instrumental ensembles. Avtograf, a Moscow hard-rock band founded in 1979, took second place after Mashina vremeni. Ariel, the VIA that in 1976 ranked as the Soviet Union's most popular ensemble, and the Stas Namin group, the band that first injected rock and roll into Melodiya vinyl, had expected to sweep the awards at Tbilisi. Both Ariel and Stas Namin came away empty-handed. The jury's voting, an affront to the Soviet music establishment, acknowledged that new musical forces were emerging on the Soviet rock scene.

Aquarium, the premier underground band from Leningrad, provided the most sensational performance at the Tbilisi festival. Band leader Boris Grebenshchikov, availing himself of the punk idiom, appeared on stage in a T-shirt scrawled with obscenities. On stage, Grebenshchikov, who had borrowed a Telecaster guitar, began "stroking" the instrument against the microphone, then slipped to the floor and began playing the guitar across his stomach. Outraged by Grebenshchikov's behavior, the judges rose from their seats and left the hall in a gesture of protest. Aquarium continued to perform, with the band's cellist playing his instrument on top of the still prostrate Grebenshchikov, while the third musician circled around the other two band members playing a bassoon.

Rock critic Artemy Troitsky who helped organize the Tbilisi festival and had personally scouted Aquarium, was confronted in the lobby of the theater by the Philharmonic's directors, who expressed outrage at the "homosexual demonstration."

"Why did you bring those faggots here?" Gayoz Kandelaky, the assistant director of the Philharmonic demanded of Troitsky.

"Why faggots? They're normal guys," Troitsky defended. "That's just their stage show, a bit eccentric."

"Normal guys?!" Kandelaky gasped. "One lies down on the stage, the other gets on top of him, the third joins in too. They're degenerates, not musicians."

Aquarium's performance at the Tbilisi festival reflected the spirit of innovation emerging on the Soviet rock scene. The 1960s had been an age of pure imitation, when upstart Soviet rock bands worked to render identical copies of the latest Beatles or Rolling Stones hits. In the 1970s, Soviet bands emulated Western groups, providing Russian lyrics to music that derived from Western

styles. In the 1980s, Soviet bands, drawing on indigenous traditions of music and theater, forged a distinctly Soviet-style form of rock and roll.

The Leningrad Rock Club, which opened in the spring of 1981, provided the basis for developing original Soviet-style rock music. Initially, the club was intended to offer amateur rock bands the opportunity to rehearse and to hold concerts. "At the beginning of 1981," recalled Nikolai Mikhailov, a president of the Rock Club, "the number of concerts in the city had sharply decreased, since the groups had no permission for official performances, while the city administration had become fairly effective at restraining the informal sessions."

Local musicians, desperate for performance space, approached the Center for Individual Amateur Performance with the idea of holding concerts in their facility at 13 Rubinstein Street, just off Leningrad's fashionable Nevsky Prospekt. According to the proposal, club members would have access to the space for rehearsals and performances when it was not being used for other activities. The Center agreed to sponsor the project, and on March 7, 1981, the Leningrad Rock Club hosted its first concert, a performance by three of the city's most popular underground bands, Rossianye, Mify, and Picnic.

Providing a refreshing alternative to the mundane concerts of the professional vocal instrumental ensembles, Leningrad's Rock Club became the most popular concert venue in the city. On some evenings, as many as twelve hundred rock fans gathered outside the door at 13 Rubinstein Street in the hope of seeing bands like Aquarium, Kino, Televisor, and Zoopark. The newspaper *Trud,* in a deprecating review of a concert by Aquarium, Kino, Zoopark, and Mify, provides some insight into the reasons for the Rock Club's popularity. "The ensembles sang songs with obviously depressing texts, played on wailing guitars, and pounded away on drums," *Trud* reported with obvious distaste on January 31, 1985, "while the young people threw themselves about like wild men." Despite the relatively tolerant atmosphere that prevailed at Leningrad's Rock Club, songs were still subject to censorship, and the concerts were patrolled by hefty babushkas wearing red arm bands.

The stars of the Leningrad Rock Club were Boris Grebenshchikov and his band Aquarium. A charismatic, meditative musician in his early thirties, Grebenshchikov projected the aura of a poet, singer, and musical visionary. The name Aquarium served as a metaphor for the band members' position in Soviet society: like fish in an aquarium, the musicians were visible to the world, but they lived in an environment isolated from official culture. The nucleus of Aquarium consisted of Grebenshchikov and three other musicians, Vsevolod "Seva" Gakkel, the cellist; Andrey "Dyusha" Romanov, who played flute and provided back-up vocals; and Mikhail Vailyev, the band's bass player and percussionist.

Formed in 1975, Aquarium became a regular fixture on the unofficial Leningrad rock scene during the late 1970s, performing free concerts in cafes, parks, factory recreation clubs, palaces of culture, and academic institutes. In 1980, Aquarium's reputation as an innovative rock ensemble earned the band its invitation to the competition in Tbilisi.

Following his scandalous Tbilisi appearance, Grebenshchikov returned to

Leningrad to find he had been expelled from the Komsomol and had lost his job as a computer programmer. "The best thing that ever happened to me was when I lost my job," Grebenshchikov philosophized about the event. "I was free to make music all the time." In order to avoid criminal charges for "parasitism," Grebenshchikov and his fellow band members found part-time work that allowed them to focus their attention almost entirely on their music. "Boris was a night watchman," recalled one Aquarium insider. "Diusha, the flutist, sold watermelons at an outdoor stand. Syeva, the cellist, cut weeds along the railroad tracks. Misha, of the respectable income, was still at the geology institute." Aquarium also diversified its sound, taking on guitarist Alexander Lyapin and drummer Piotr Troschenkov in 1982. Lyapin, a passionate musician who played rivetting Hendrix-style solos, "injected" Aquarium with an electric dynamism.

Another consequence of the Tbilisi festival was that local officials banned Aquarium from performing in Leningrad. Although Grebenshchikov gave occasional concerts in other cities and continued to perform underground for friends and fans in Leningrad, the band turned its efforts to producing recorded material. In the early 1980s, Grebenshchikov, working in improvised studios, released a series of recordings that established the band as the leading underground ensemble in the Soviet Union: *Blue Album* and *Triangle* in 1981; *Acoustics, Electricity,* and *Taboo* in 1982; *MCI* and *Radio Africa* in 1983. These "albums" were, in reality, cassette tapes copied from a master and decorated with photographs, texts, and art work.

Scores of these hand-made "albums" were put into circulation, copied, and passed on. The tapes multiplied into hundreds and thousands of copies, working their way across the Soviet Union through the underground network that had created such legendary music heroes as Vladimir Vysotsky and Andrei Makarevich. Similarly, these cassettes were to transform Grebenshchikov and his band into underground superstars.

Baltic Punks: Rebels with a Cause

Estonia, with one of the most liberal policies toward rock music in the Soviet Union, had long fostered a diverse and sophisticated rock scene. Many of the Soviet Union's most distinguished musicians, including rocker Gunnar Graps whom the *Washington Post* on August 15, 1982, dubbed the "Mick Jagger of Moscow," hailed from Estonia. Estonia also produced some of the Soviet Union's most popular bands, including Apelsin, Ruja, In Spe, Magnetic Band, Rock Hotel, and Totu Kool.

With a national identity strongly linked to West European culture, the small republic actively nurtured its indigenous rock scene. In 1980, students at the university town of Tartu organized a rock festival that became an annual event, consistently bringing together some of the finest musical talent in the Soviet Union. The Estonian branch of the Melodiya label, which functioned autonomously from Melodiya Moscow, released rock albums that would have been

unthinkable in the Soviet capital. A 1983 release by the band Rock Hotel featured Estonian-language covers to songs by Bruce Springsteen, Cliff Richard, and Kris Kristoferson.

Rock music in Estonia was not only "Westernized" but also strongly anti-Russian and anti-Soviet. Estonian performers had long used rock and pop music as a vehicle for expressing animosity toward Russian domination. In the 1970s, the Kuldne Trio (Golden Trio) subtley mocked the Russian people in their music. One song satirized the Russian bard Vladimir Vysotsky, imitating his deep baritone voice and melancholy lyrics. In another song, the Golden Trio sang about "something" that was "repulsive," "dirty," and "rancid" but could not be mentioned by name. "What is this thing that can't be mentioned by name?" the song asked before concluding: "It is a Russian samovar."

One of the most popular Soviet songwriters of the 1970s, Joel Steinfeld, who used the Estonian pseudonym Jaan Kivipõld, wrote "Tiger Club," a popular underground ballad about the partisan war against Soviet occupation during the late 1940s. A young tiger cub is warned not to venture out of the woods and meet people. "They are your enemy," he is told, "They will kill you." Despite the warning, the tiger cub prances out of the woods, at which point the song is interrupted by a blast of machine-gun fire.

In 1983, Rein Rannap, leader of the Estonian band Ruja and one of the most popular performers in the Soviet Union, released an album based on ten poems by Estonia's poet laureate Hando Rünnel. One poem "Tule Tule Mine Mine" ("Come Come Go Go"), a cryptic lyrical piece, was submitted to government censors with the line, *igavene olemine,* (eternal being). The poem was approved, but while preparing the poem for publication, the typesetter added spaces between two syllables in the line forming the sentence, *Iga vene ole mine*. The cryptic reference to eternal being was transformed into the expletive: "Every Russian be gone."

Anti-Russian sentiment, which long simmered in Estonian pop and rock music, spilled into public view when punk rock slammed into the Soviet Union's Baltic coast in the early 1980s. Young Balts inherited the anti-Russian tradition and adapted it to the punk idiom. During the early 1980s, Baltic punks took to the streets, offending, assaulting, and on occasion, killing Russian residents and tourists. Before one group of Russian tourists, Baltic punks unfurled a banner reading, "Latvian Punks Will Finish What the Germans Began," a reference to the Second World War in which an estimated twenty million Soviet nationals died.

The first outbreak of anti-Soviet protest erupted in the summer of 1980, following the cancellation of a concert by Estonia's premier punk band, Propeller. Propeller, formed in the late 1970s by Urmas Alender, a guitarist and vocalist with Rein Rannap's band Ruja, electrified the Estonian underground with its punk-style music and iconoclastic, nihilistic lyrics. One song warned young people that if they tried to change the system, the "wolf of autocracy" would lunge at their throats. In another song, Alender screamed the word "NO" repeatedly into the microphone while the band offered the ragged refrain: "There

were good words to say but we could not find them.'' A popular Propeller song ridiculed Estonia's pop and rock music establishment, including vocalist Rein Rannap and keyboard player Sven Grunberg. Propeller developed a fanatically loyal following among Estonian youths. On bus-station walls in Tallinn, Propeller was scrawled beside the names of Western punk bands like the Sex Pistols and the Ramones.

On September 22, 1980, Propeller was scheduled to perform a concert during halftime at a soccer game between employees of Estonian television and radio. At the last minute, Tallinn officials banned the concert, objecting to Propeller's offensive music. A riot broke out when Propeller fans learned officials had cancelled the concert. In the ensuing melee, police clashed with young Estonians, arresting over 150 people before the crowd could be subdued.

The September 22 confrontation sparked a series of riots throughout Estonia. In the weeks that followed thousands of young people took to the streets, battling police and chanting anti-Soviet slogans. ''The riots that followed the soccer stadium incident,'' noted Toomas Ilves, an Estonian analyst at Radio Free Europe, ''represented an explosion of anti-Soviet sentiment. The rioting hit virtually every city in Estonia, including Tallinn and Tartu.'' When the disturbances, known as the schoolchildren riots, finally subsided, officials forced Propeller to disband.

In Latvia, punks also made their appearance in the early 1980s, transforming the republic's three thousand discotheques into battlefields of drinking and violence. In the summer of 1983, the Allegro Cafe in central Riga, popular among young people since its founding in 1971, attracted growing numbers of hooligans. Young Latvian toughs who hung out in the Allegro allegedly accosted passers-by on the street, harassed other customers, and littered the tables with empty containers for prescription drugs. On October 30, 1981, *Literatūra un Māksla* (Literature and Art), a Latvian cultural newspaper, advised that people ''who care for their own health'' should avoid Latvia's discotheques. In the provincial town of Jēkabpils, every Friday and Saturday night, up to five hundred young people packed the local dance hall. ''The large portion of visitors arrived drunk,'' reported *Literatūra un Māksla*. ''Under one's shoes, blood spurted and broken glass crunched. In almost every corner young people were beating up on each other.'' In January 1980, the monthly youth magazine *Liesma* (the *Flame*) suggested that Latvian discotheques had become ''incubators of violence.''

Discotheques also became hothouses of Latvian patriotism and anti-Russian sentiment. In late summer 1983, the ninth plenum of the Latvian Komsomol expressed particular concern about Riga's Kosmoss discotheque, where the heavy-metal band Dzeltenie pastnieki and other groups performed. ''A portion of the repertoire consists of material that is produced domestically by unofficial groups,'' the Latvian Komsomol noted, ''much of it belonging to the so-called new wave music. Along with this, the influences of punk and similar music are also propagated.'' The Latvian officials further reported that the Kosmoss discotheque featured ''fights, nationalistic slogans and uncensored words.''

Among the new generation of rock bands ''propagating'' this ''tasteless and

immoral'' music were the Latvian groups Sīpoli, Modo, Dālderi, and Pērkons. Modo, originally formed by the popular Soviet songwriter Raimonds Pauls, was disbanded in 1981 for performing the nationalistic song ''There is Still Time,'' which included the passionate refrain, ''Latvijā! Latvijā! Latvijā!'' The band Dalderi, adopting the raw punk idiom, sang of police corruption in the song ''Terror in the Bathhouse.''

During a concert in July 1984, the vocal group Zvaigznite (Small Star) stirred nationalist sentiment with a number of Latvian folk songs. One song in particular, recalling Latvian soldiers killed in World War I, offered oblique criticism of the war in Afghanistan. The inordinately high percentage of Baltic soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and the large number of casualties resulting from the conflict caused consternation among Latvian nationalists, who began distributing pamphlets protesting the war and counting fresh war graves in Latvian cemeteries. ''On account of the ever growing protests,'' reported the German daily *Die Welt* on May 4, 1982, ''the Soviet leadership is ordering that war dead no longer be shipped back to their homes.'' Soldiers, in particular military officers, returned to Latvia, and were, according to one Latvian source, ''quietly buried without the usual military ceremonies, often with threats to the family members that consequences would follow if friends or relatives mentioned that victims died in Afghanistan.'' Within this social context, songs about Latvian victims from World War I took on new meaning. ''Who saw how they brought home,'' Zvaigznite sang the bitter refrain, ''our brother butchered in the war?''

The Latvian band Pērkons (Thunder), Latvia's most popular punk band of the early 1980s, screamed anti-Soviet lyrics through a barrage of punk rock and heavy-metal music. In the song, ''Middle Ages,'' which combined Deep Purple rhythms with fragments from the Beatles song ''Get Back,'' Pērkons condemned the occupation of Latvia by foreign invaders. In the song ''Protest Song against Pollution,'' which condemned environmental pollution, Pērkons lashed out at Soviet officials. ''Nothing in this life is fatter,'' the band screamed, ''than the pigs we must honor.''

In 1984, Pērkons, which performed without official consent, was forced to accept the sponsorship of an agricultural collective. Officials further demanded that Pērkons adopt the name of the sponsoring collective. In July 1984, Pērkons participated in an official concert at the port city of Liepāja under its new official name, Soviet-Latvia, winning an award for its performance of songs with relevant ''political and social themes.''

The following year, on July 6, 1985, Soviet-Latvia appeared in concert in the town of Ogre. Among the thousands of fans that arrived for the concert were punkers and hundreds of young people displaying placards, travel bags, and umbrellas emblazoned with the name Pērkons. The audience, which consisted of a large portion of what the official party newspaper *Cīna* described on July 9, 1985, as ''curiously dressed youths between the ages of 16 and 17,'' proved to be a boisterous crowd that ''moved to the rhythm of the music and behaved in a riotous fashion.''

Following the concert, hundreds of young people boarded the train back to

Riga. The crowd of Pērkons fans, which had been drinking heavily, went out of control and began ransacking the railroad cars in which they were riding. The young people smashed windows, ripped the seats from the floor, and threw them out the windows. By the time the train arrived in Riga, the crowd had demolished two railroad cars. The incident, which resulted in the arrest of 150 young people, was recounted in the 1986 film *Is It Easy to Be Young?* by the Latvian director Juris Podnieks.

In 1985, Latvian punks grew increasingly belligerent toward the Russian residents of Riga. During the spring of 1985, three massive anti-Russian protests broke out in the Latvian capital; on May 9, May 15, and again on July 15, up to five hundred young Latvians clashed with local militia in pitched street battles throughout Riga. Rumors circulated that during the confrontations several Russian nationals who challenged the Latvian youths were beaten to death.

In the years that followed, outbreaks of anti-Soviet sentiment continued to plague the Baltic republics. In August 1987, nationalist demonstrations erupted in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnus. In Latvia, where hundreds of people gathered in central Riga, Latvian punks arrived, prepared to do battle. "There were a good many hooligan elements there," reported *Sovetskaia Latvia* on August 25, 1987, "who had brought along knives, bracelets with sharp spikes, and sticks." The young people scuffled with police, and, according to reports, "a number of individuals had to be detained as an emergency measure."

Chernenko: The Kremlin Crackdown

In 1983, conservatives in the Kremlin, weary of the excesses of rock bands and their fans, decided to clean up the Soviet rock scene, which had run rampant under the lax ideological controls of Brezhnev's waning years. On January 25, 1982, Mikhail Suslov, Brezhnev's ideological spokesmen, died. Eight months later, on November 10, 1982, Brezhnev himself passed away. As Yuri Andropov advanced to party head and Konstantin Chernenko emerged as the moving force on ideological issues, anti-rock forces rallied. At the party plenum on June 14, 1983, the seventy-one-year-old Chernenko warned against laxness on the ideological front. Chernenko observed that the West was "launching increasingly massive attacks" in an attempt to "poison the minds of the Soviet people."

Conservatives in the Soviet establishment had been rumbling discontentedly about the state of Soviet youth and their music since November 1979, when Tikhon Khrennikov complained about the "deafening, heavy-beat rhythms and truly unearthly howls" of Soviet rock bands. In May 1981, V. M. Chebrikov, deputy head of the Soviet secret police, warned of Western "ideological aggression" that was threatening to undermine the commitment of Soviet youth to the Soviet system.

In the early 1980s, Soviet officials, motivated partially by the youth unrest in neighboring Poland, sparred testily with the pop music scene. On January

10, 1982, *Sovetskaia Rossia* assailed disco music as "an attempt to neutralize the social and political thinking of young people." The film *Saturday Night Fever,* whose sound track fueled the sound systems of Soviet discos during the 1970s, allegedly imparted "aesthetics" that were "oriented toward the suppression of social self-consciousness." In February, when the Swedish disco band ABBA, which had been featured on the Melodiya label, came under attack, Soviet theaters quietly removed a popular ABBA film from their programs.

Mashina vremeni, despite its status as a professional band, also became the target of criticism. On April 11, 1982, *Komsomolskaia pravda* printed a letter attacking Makarevich, and his fellow musicians as "advocates of indifference and hopelessness." The article also denounced the band as "un-Russian," and claimed that they could not sing in harmony. Rock fans, infuriated by the attack, flooded the editorial offices with an estimated 250,000 letters, some letters bearing as many as one hundred signatures. Mashina vremeni, bouyed by massive public support, continued to hold performances.

In the fall of 1982, the vocal instrumental ensemble Golubye gitary (Blue Guitars) also came under attack following a concert tour in Afghanistan. While on tour in the war-ravaged country, the band complained incessantly about the food and accommodations on Soviet military bases. They also refused to perform for military units in outlying areas, claiming there would not be enough electricity to power their amplifiers. Although the troops that did hear the Blue Guitars enjoyed the performances, the military was not at all pleased with the tour.

On December 4, 1982, *Krasnaia zvezda (Red Star),* the Soviet military paper rebuked the Blue Guitars for their behavior in Afghanistan. "We can pardon all the roar and rattle from high-powered electronic devices which assaulted listeners and which, for some unknown reason was called music," *Krasnaia zvezda* stated. "We can also close our eyes to their clowning and also to their tactless begging for applause." What *Krasnaia zvezda* could not excuse was the ideological content of the performance. Normally, the paper stated, the Soviet soldiers welcomed "messengers from the motherland," be they actors, vocalists, or bands, but the Blue Guitars had offered "merely a pale copy of far from exemplary western originals."

The five-man band further irritated the military with their constant demands for special treatment and their refusal to perform in dangerous areas "under the pretext of not having enough power for the amplifiers or there weren't any pianos." The article observed sadly, "The troops who wished to hear their music the most were those who didn't have pianos."

On December 14, 1982, Igor Granov, the director of the Blue Guitars, was called before a committee at Mosconcert, the organization responsible for the Afghanistan booking. Granov, responding to the military's criticism of the Blue Guitars, conceded that the band members' behavior in Afghanistan was deplorable. Justice was served. On January 14, 1983, *Krasnaia zvezda* reported: "The Blue Guitars have been scratched from the planned tours abroad and their schedules performances in Moscow have been cancelled. Administrative action has also been taken against the director of the ensemble."

The disciplinary action against the Blue Guitars heralded a general crackdown on the popular music scene. Following Chernenko's call for increased vigilance against Western influences at the June 14, 1983, party plenum, cultural officials scrambled desperately to align themselves with the new party position. Immediately after Chernenko's attack, Moscow concert officials panicked, cancelling a series of concerts by a popular French ensemble. On June 17, 1983, *Moskovskaia pravda* announced that concerts by Paris France Transit scheduled from June 21 to June 28 would not take place, and fans could reclaim money for their tickets at the booking office. However, even as Moscow pop fans opened *Moskovskaia pravda* and read the bad news, Paris France Transit had already arrived in Moscow with seventeen tons of equipment that included lasers, smoke devices, and computerized synthesizers. The Soviets, perplexed by the band's untimely arrival, reversed their decision, declared the cancellation an error, and let the concerts proceed as scheduled.

In August, the drive against the rock scene gained momentum when the weekly magazine *Ogonyok* condemned clubs and discotheques as "sleazy dives." An article in *Pravda* by Moscow publicist Nikolai Marshovets criticized the Soviet youths' "mean subservience toward foreign labels, rags, fetishes and idols of bourgeois pop art." Marshovets asserted that in pursuing Western fashions, Soviet youths "bruise and morally cripple themselves." *Sovetskaia kultura* warned that the veteran vocal instrumental ensemble the Happy Guys had been performing songs of "dubious ideological content" and warned that they would be disbanded by October 1, 1983, if they did not clean up their repertoire.

Eight months later, in February 1984, Yuri Andropov, suffering from poor health, passed away, and Chernenko assumed control of the Communist party. Chernenko drew in the ideological reins still tighter. On July 7, 1984, following the July plenum of the Central Committee, *Pravda* reproved the Komsomol leadership for "serious shortcomings" in youth policy. The Komsomol, charged *Pravda,* had done virtually nothing to combat "new temptations on the youth scene," in particular the "blind imitation of Western fashions" and "lack of interest in politics."

Victor Mishkin, the forty-one-year-old head of the Komsomol, responding to the criticism, quickly assembled the Komsomol leadership on July 12, 1984. "We must significantly improve our educational work in the sphere of leisure activities," Mishkin told his comrades, observing that leisure-time activity, much of which was spent listening to pop music, had become "the battleground for fierce ideological conflict." Mishkin called for a mobilization of Komsomol forces to patrol the performances of vocal instrumental ensembles and the repertoires of Soviet discotheques.

On July 25, 1984, with the issuance of order 361, officials received a potent weapon in combating deviant music groups. The order bore the sinister title: "For Organizing the Activities of Vocal Instrumental Ensembles and Improving the Ideological-Artistic Level of their Repertoires in Persuance of the Requirements of the June Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU."

The Komsomol found further legal means for bringing the rock scene under

control. Articles from the criminal code, though not relating specifically to music, could be utilized to persecute individuals involved in the distribution of unauthorized music. "The activities of sound engineers involved in the mass production of low quality recordings," reported *Komsomolskaia pravda* on April 7, 1984, "come under articles in the Criminal Code regarding entrepreneurial activities (Article 153) or the practicing of an illegal trade (Article 162)." Armed with these two articles, *Komsomolskaia pravda* noted, it was possible to move "assuredly and decisively against the spread of this so-called 'music.' "

To assist the cultural bloodhounds in distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable music, the Ministry of Culture issued on October 1, 1984, a list of sixty-eight Western groups and thirty-eight Soviet bands that were deemed inappropriate for Soviet audiences. Although the document had no official approval, it was distributed to hundreds of discotheques as a general guideline for their repertoires. Along with Sex Pistols, Alice Cooper, and Kiss, groups that could understandably offend official sensibilities, the list also proscribed some mainstream bands that had become a staple of the Soviet musical diet, including the Who and Pink Floyd. The document also listed thirteen bands from Moscow and seven from Leningrad.

Recalling the raids staged by the *muzykalnyi patrul* in the early 1960s, groups of Komsomol members moved against recording studios, discotheques, and underground record networks. In one sound studio in Krasnodar, a Komsomol patrol uncovered 162 albums, only fourteen of which were of Soviet origin. Among 536 records confiscated by a Komsomol patrol during another raid, only twelve were produced in the Soviet Union. According to one Komsomol source, the vast majority of these records contained songs that promoted "the glorification of violence, brutality and religious-reactionary ideas."

In the city of Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad, one illegal studio was found to have turned an annual profit of 250,000 rubles from the production of recordings by Kiss and other Western groups. In the central Asian Soviet republic of Kirghizia, a police raid uncovered seven thousand dollars' worth of Japanese tape recorders, as well as tapes, which according to *Sovetskaia Kirghizia,* "openly insulted the Soviet people and praised sex maniacs." The studio owner was sentenced to two years in prison.

The Soviet Union's seven thousand discotheques also felt the repercussions of the 1984 crackdown. By 1982, about 90 percent of the music played in Soviet discotheques was of Western origin, primarily hits by the Bee Gees, Donna Summer, and other disco music groups. The 1984 crackdown banned the playing of all Western groups, including officially promoted bands like ABBA and Boney M. Disc jockeys caught spinning Western albums received fines. Some discotheques, deemed to be of a "low artistic level," were simply closed down. Many establishments, anxious to appease officials, introduced political and cultural instruction. Chiding discotheque managers for zealous efforts to appease cultural officials, *Krokodil,* in January 1985, proposed introducing disco evenings dedicated to such topics as "the role of the production collective, traffic laws and the perspectives for the development of truck production."

Official Soviet musicians also experienced increasing ideological pressure. Song lyrics, subject to official scrutiny even in the most liberal times, were checked by editors for ideological or aesthetically objectionable lines and then stamped it with "Glavlit," the official abbreviation for the Central Literary Department. An approved song was said to have its *litovka*. As Chernenko clamped down on the popular scene, censors became sparing in the issuance of *litovki*. One lyricist for a Moscow rock group complained that he had been unable to get a particular song accepted for over a year. The song concerned an attractive, intelligent girl who felt she was an outsider. The censors rejected the song on the grounds that it presented a warped picture of Soviet society. "A good person," the censors argued, "cannot be lonely in Soviet society."

In 1984, the Ministry of Culture declared that 80 percent of an ensemble's repertoire had to come from works written by members of the composers' union. The Ministry of Culture also established a commission to review professional ensembles. The decree struck terror among Soviet rock musicians. "Mashina vremeni scraped together a few numbers," recalled Artemy Troitsky, "and nervously awaited their fate, sitting in Moscow without the right to tour. Avtograf rehearsed a program of instrumental quasi-chamber music . . . (and said) 'We hope they'll make an exception for us.' Vladimir Kuzmin found a cynical but clever solution—he declared himself a solo artist, and Speaker became his nameless backup group. In this way everything remained as it was, and the Ministry of Culture's draconian resolution didn't apply to him as a 'soloist.' " Mashina vremeni passed its review before the commission but within the year was forcefully disbanded when three band members were charged with "violating financial regulations."

Chernenko's crusade devastated the official rock scene. In the Ukraine, the number of rock groups fell from eighty to forty bands. In the Asian republic of Uzbekistan, fewer than half of the 115 discos in the republic passed or dared to take an officially administered test. In Vladivostok, one out of every three bands failed its review by the state commission. In White Russia, of the 156 groups auditioned, only 56 were deemed worthy of approval.

But the official attempt to purge the Soviet music scene of Western rock and roll was too radical to have ever completely succeeded. Sidestepping the clamorous public campaign against rock music, young people indulged their passion for Western music at private gatherings. Many discotheques simply ignored official guidelines and risked fines or punishment. In the Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia, the diatribes from Moscow went almost completely unheeded. Most Soviet rock fans and rock musicians hunkered down and waited for the furor to pass. On March 10, 1985, Konstantin Chernenko died, and within months, the noose gradually slipped off the neck of Soviet rock and roll.

The Gorbachev Era: Russia's Golden Age of Rock and Roll

Rock and roll in a literal and figurative sense, provided the sound track for the Gorbachev era. The Soviet Union, desirous to "restructure" not only its do-

mestic economy but also its image abroad, exploited the Western media's fascination with the Soviet rock scene, allowing Soviet rock bands unprecedented latitude. Unlike the sanitized vocal instrumental ensembles, which the Soviet Union promoted in the 1970s, the rock bands of the early Gorbachev years, particularly after 1986, appeared publicly with little interference from the state.

During the second half of the 1980s, while the media learned to speak the language of *glasnost,* while industry managers spoke haltingly of *perestroika,* the Soviet rock scene buzzed with talk of *tusovka,* a slang term equivalent to the English phrase "what's happening?" Rock concerts or rock events became known as *tusovka,* the people who frequented them *tusovchiki.*

Three months after Gorbachev introduced *glasnost* and *perestroika* into political discourse during the party plenum in April 1985, the first *tusovka* of the Gorbachev era took place when the Moscow band Avtograf participated in the international famine-relief concert Live Aid. On July 13, 1985, the five-man rock ensemble appeared before an audience of two hundred in a Moscow television studio where the Live Aid concert was being broadcast by television satellite from England and America. Although only two hundred Russians saw Avtograf perform, 72,000 rock fans at Wembley Stadium in London and 90,000 at John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia, as well as an estimated 1.5 billion television viewers around the world, watched for fifteen minutes as the Soviet band performed its songs "Dizziness" and "Let There Be Peace." "This is our biggest show to date," lead guitarist Alexander Sitkovetsky told his Moscow studio audience and quipped, as British rock star Sting appeared on the studio's television screen, "We're playing in such good company."

Avtograf's appearance on the immense screens in London's Wembley Stadium and Philadelphia's John F. Kennedy Stadium initially elicited waves of laughter from the American and British crowds when a technical mix-up caused the wrong video signal to be transmitted from Moscow. While Avtograf's music resonated through the London and Philadelphia stadiums, American and British rock fans watched scenes of Soviet harvesters cheerfully picking cherries. Once the technical hitch was overcome, the five Russian rockers flashed onto the screen, offering a performance that demonstrated to the world that rock and roll was alive and well, even if a bit dull, back in the U.S.S.R.

The limited Soviet participation in Live Aid and their refusal to carry the broadcast on state television—segments were broadcast in August 1985—did not prevent the official media from capitalizing on the event. On July 22, 1985, the youth newspaper *Moskovskii komsomolets* claimed that Live Aid, in fact organized by Western musicians to raise money for famine ravaged Africa, was a "tele-cosmic concert organized by Soviet, American and British television" as a "global event in defense of peace and against nuclear war."

Moscow's sponsorship of the Twelfth World Youth Festival in late July and early August 1985 also seeemd as much a move to improve the Soviet's international image as a concession to the domestic rock scene. As did the Sixth World Youth Festival in 1957, which unwittingly provided the first public exposure of Western rock music to Soviet audiences, the 1985 festival also brought an unexpected onslaught of rock and roll. Although Komsomol head Victor Mishkin envisioned the event as a forum for nurturing "anti-imperialist soli-

darity,'' the hundred rock bands that arrived for the festival transformed the Soviet capital into a dizzying aural pastiche of pop, punk, reggae, heavy metal, and folk music. Finland alone sent ten rock bands; Poland dispatched Lady Pank; even Mongolia contributed a rock group. From West Germany came Udo Lindenberg; from the United States, Bob Dylan. The Soviet contribution was headlined by Mashina vremeni, Stas Namin, and Avtograf.

As the Soviets intended, the festival attracted Western media attention. ''The Soviet Union is currently playing host to an International Youth Festival in Moscow,'' reported Britain's *Observer* magazine on August 4, 1985. ''Russian pop groups have been appearing, playing alongside British bands like Misty In Roots and Everything But the Girl.'' However, the *Observer* also noted, ''there are many Russian groups which the Ministry of culture would never invite to appear.'' The *Observer* cited the underground bands Kino, Strange Games, Bravo, and Zoopark, which, according to the British paper, played ''punk, heavy metal, Bowie, the Beatles—mixed with surrealism, traditional folk music and an essentially Russian vision of a better life to come.''

For all its clamor, Moscow's Twelfth World Youth Festival in the summer of 1985 confirmed the Soviet's fundamental distrust of its domestic rock scene—as the *Observer* noted, only safe, established Soviet rock bands appeared at the festival. Nevertheless, sporadic signs of cultural reform suggested that official attitudes were changing. In the fall of 1985, the Ministry of Culture in conjunction with the Moscow Komsomol opened the Rock Laboratory in the Soviet capital. The facility, intended to promote new talent, provided rehearsal space and recording facilities for Moscow's upstart rock bands. On January 5, 1986, *Komsomolskaia pravda* reported that approximately forty bands had registered to use the center. In March, Melodiya, in a gesture of goodwill to Soviet rock fans, released the first complete Beatles albums bought on license from EMI. On the last weekend in March, thousands of Soviet rock fans stood in line outside Melodiya record shops to purchase a copy of *A Hard Day's Night*.

Soviet musicians and rock fans received these official efforts with mixed elation and skepticism. The Beatles' album was, after all, not only two decades old, but issued in a quantity of 300,000, which, though large for Soviet standards, could not even begin to meet the demand. Also, Moscow's Rock Laboratory, supported by funding from the Ministry of Culture, smacked strongly of the same official sponsorship that had drained off talent from the underground scene and compromised many bands during the early 1970s. Cultural officials and rock musicians eyed one another warily in the first uncertain months of Gorbachev's rule.

The Chernobyl disaster in April 1986, the first major challenge to Gorbachev's call for *glasnost* in Soviet society, provided an opportunity for rock music to prove its utility to the Gorbachev regime. In those ominous days of late April and early May 1986, as the Soviets struggled to minimize Chernobyl's impact on its citizens as well as on its international image, rock critic Artemy Troitsky, vocalist Alla Pugacheva, and several leading Moscow bands prepared a fund-raising concert for displaced Ukrainian families. The henna-

haired Pugacheva, the Soviet Union's leading lady of rock and pop, commanded the official stature required to implement the plan, despite resistance from Moscow officials. On Friday May 29, 1986, one month after the Chernobyl disaster, thirty thousand people packed Moscow's Olympic stadium to watch seven leading Soviet bands and soloists, including Alla Pugacheva, Alexander Gradsky, Avtograf, Kruiz, and Bravo, perform a two-and-one-half-hour benefit concert for displaced Ukrainian families. The concert, inspired by Live Aid of the previous year, included a live television linkup with survivors of the Chernobyl power plant. The fund-raiser, called Account 904 after the relief fund established for Chernobyl victims, added nearly 100,000 rubles to the disaster relief. Two months later, on the evening of July 11, 1987, Soviet television finally broadcast highlights of the event.

The Chernobyl aid concert demonstrated the potential for individual initiative in the age of Gorbachev. In a country renowed for its unwieldly bureaucracy, a major public event had been conceived, planned, and carried out within one month's time. Moreover, the Chernobyl concert resulted from the initiative of individual citizens rather than from a state organization. Despite its success, the concert did not allay the suspicions of many musicians, especially those on the unofficial rock scene. "Everyone who took part in the Chernobyl concert," observes one insider of the Soviet rock scene, "belonged in one way or another to Moscow's musical establishment." Rock musicians on the underground scene, especially in Leningrad, remained distrustful of official efforts during most of 1985 and 1986. The first sign that things had really changed came with the UB40 concerts in October 1986.

From Monday, October 6, through Sunday, October 19, 1986, the British reggae band UB40 held six concerts in Leningrad's 8,500-seat Iubileini Sports Arena and six concerts in Moscow's 12,000-seat Luzhniki Arena. UB40, six working-class musicians from the industrial city of Birmingham who meted out harsh words for Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, seemed like the perfect cross between pop and politics. What Soviet officials did not expect was that UB40 would be as outspoken and uncompromising in Moscow as they were in England and America. In contrast to previous Western performers, including Cliff Richard in 1976, Boney M. in 1978, and Elton John in 1979, UB40 refused to enter into any compromises with their music or their performance.

The Soviets did their best to temper the music and words issuing from the UB40 stage. When guitarist Robin Campbell expressed dismay that "such a big, strong country as this one is so afraid of a few people having a good time," the Soviet MC told his audience: "Robin would like you to know that in this big country of ours we're having a good time." Following a performance of the UB40 song "Watchdogs," Campbell told the audience: "That was a song called 'Watchdogs.' It's about the perils of censorship and the people who think they are watching over us for our own good." Rendering Campbell's commentary for the Soviet audience, the MC explained: "That was a song about censorship in capitalist countries." When Campbell tried to bring the crowd to their feet, telling them "We'd love to see you dancing," the MC told the audience, "The band likes movement."

Dancing, not lyrics, became the major point of contention during the UB40 tour. Gosconcert, which forbade dancing at concerts, packed the arenas with security forces to keep fans under control. "We have a four hour argument before every show," Campbell complained, "just to keep the security at a reasonable level of ruthlessness." On Thursday, October 16, 1987, Campbell, tired of the harassment of fans trying to dance, stopped the band. "You with the red armband," he yelled, gesturing toward a security man in the crowd, "People are allowed to dance. Stop forcing them to sit down!" As a spotlight from the stage singled out the security man, who timidly withdrew, the audience began to cheer. Despite the frustrations of the band and the harassment of the audiences, Soviet rock fans viewed the UB40 concert tour as a victory. A Western band, singing about censorship, decrying police brutality, and demanding the right for rock fans to dance, had delivered their message before tens of thousands of fans in Leningrad and Moscow. The change of mood in the Soviet establishment seemed confirmed when shortly after the UB40 concerts, Boris Grebenshchikov, who performed an increasing number of engagements, was allowed to hold six sellout concerts in Leningrad's Iubileini Sports Arena.

Indeed, the Soviet cultural establishment had changed. In August 1986, Gorbachev replaced the sixty-eight-year-old minister of culture, Piotr Demichev, with the fifty-two-year-old Vasily Zakharov. Demichev, a former chemical engineer who replaced Furtseva in October 1974 and led campaigns against Solzhenitsyn and other prominent Soviet artists, was rumored to be a "secret Stalinist." Zakharov, in contrast, belonged to the young reformers in the Soviet leadership. In 1983, following the Soviet's inept handling of public information in response to the Korean Airline debacle, Andropov placed Zakharov in charge of propaganda within the Central Committee. In 1985, Zakharov helped spearhead Gorbachev's call for *glasnost* in the Soviet media. Zakharov brought the same reformist fervor to the Ministry of Culture.

By early 1987, signs of change were everywhere on the Soviet rock and pop scene. Heavy-metal bands like Black Coffee and Kruiz played to arena-size audiences in Moscow. Michael Jackson, two years earlier decried by *Sovetskaia kultura* as the embodiment of Western decadence, "moonwalked" across Soviet television screens in his 1982 video to the song "Billy Jean." At concerts, small groups of rock fans testily took to the aisles to dance for a few minutes and then return to their seats.

The new line on rock music was publicly promoted during a conference on rock music held at the Soviet Foreign Ministry in January 1987. On January 8, 1987, Alexsei Kozlov, composer for the leading Moscow jazz-rock ensemble Arsenal and a spokesman for the "official" Soviet music community, urged conservative Soviet officials to reconsider their attitudes towards rock and roll, in particular heavy metal. Kozlov, speaking to the conference, argued that rock music and dancing provided an outlet for people frustrated with the inequities of the Soviet system. "They just like to wave their hands and then calm down," Kozlov declared. "If we forbid this music, they will display their aggressiveness in other forms.

In March 1987, Melodiya released an album by Aquarium purchased from Grebenshchikov for three hundred rubles. The album, consisting primarily of soft rock and issued in a pressing of 200,000 copies, sold out immediately. The release of the Grebenshchikov album signaled a major shift in policy at Melodiya. The Melodiya label, previously the domain of vocal instrumental ensembles like the Happy Guys and the Blue Guitars or professional soloists like Alla Pugacheva, promoted a band which six months earlier had been untouchable.

The early months of 1987 were heady times for Grebenshchikov. Having spent the last decade as an underground cult figure, the musician suddenly found himself in the glare of Soviet and foreign publicity. In January 1987, the popular television show *The Music Ring* invited Grebenshchikov as a feature performer. Over two hundred requests for interviews by Soviet newspapers and broadcasters followed. The flurry of public attention, which in the Western media earned Aquarium's leader the title, "the darling of *glasnost,*" unsettled both Grebenshchikov and his fans. In an interview with the *New York Times* on April 9, 1987, Grebenshchikov expressed concern that official recognition would neutralize Aquarium as it had the 1970s supergroup Mashina vremeni. "Somewhere he switched from writing painful songs," Grebenshchikov commented on Mashina vremeni songwriter Andrei Makarevich. "From year to year, he became more and more polite, and now he's so polite nobody wants to listen to him. One small step and I'll be like Makarevich. I'm mortally afraid of being like him. It's the biggest terror of my life."

Based on the experiences of previous bands, Grebenshchikov's fears seemed justified. State sponsorship smothered the energy of the vocal instrumental ensembles during the 1970s. After 1980, when official recognition severed Mashina vremeni's roots with the underground music scene, the band's vitality gradually whithered. But under Gorbachev, the situation reversed itself, as the state discovered it needed the underground bands more than the bands needed the state's concert and recording facilities. After two decades of underground tape distribution, unofficial rock bands had access to a network more extensive and more efficient than that of Melodiya. Bands created their own cassette "albums" complete with cover designs, photographs of musicians, and song titles. These recordings circulated by the tens of millions across the length of the Soviet Union.

As *perestroika* moved ahead, compelling Soviet industry to become more efficient and more sensitive to consumer needs, Melodiya was forced to reassess the demands of its public. By admission of Valeri Sokolov, the deputy director of Soviskusstvo, distributor for Melodiya's product, the Soviet record industry was "20 to 30 years" behind that of the West. Competition from the West also pressured Melodiya as Western record producers began to market Soviet bands abroad. In 1986, Stingray Productions, a Los Angeles–based company, released *Red Wave* in the United States, an album of four Leningrad bands—Aquarium, Alisa, Kino, and Strange Games. In 1987, Zafiro Records negotiated with Melodiya for the release of Soviet heavy-metal bands in Spain. Early in 1988, Capitol Records issued in Canada *Glasnost,* a compilation al-

bum of leading Soviet bands. "It looks like we could lose out in our field," Sokolov told *Billboard,* the entertainment industry weekly, on January 16, 1988. "To avoid this, we must be constantly aware of the direction in which our music is moving."

The Soviet recording industry aggressively sought to meet the needs of the Soviet consumer and to catch up with Western competition. In 1986, Melodiya issued only ten albums with rock music. In 1987, the state record company released an album by Moscow's heavy-metal band Kruiz, followed by another heavy-metal release by the band Chernyi Kofe (Black Coffee). Through a sound engineer at Leningrad's Rock Club who had recorded many of the city's leading groups, Melodiya officials obtained tapes of some of the best rock and roll in the Soviet Union. Melodiya even released one Kino single without the band's knowledge. In June 1988, Melodiya issued eight albums by Leningrad bands, including Aquarium, Kino, Alisa, and Strange Games. *Radio Africa,* the Aquarium release, was one of the most popular underground cassette "albums" produced by Grebenshchikov during the early 1980s. Melodiya also expanded its catalogue of foreign bands, including licensed albums by Whitney Houston, Alan Parsons Project, and Deep Purple. In the spring of 1988, Melodiya closed a deal with EMI Records and Paul McCartney for the exclusive release of a new Paul McCartney album. The album, consisting of McCartney covers to classic rock-and-roll hits like "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" and "Midnight Special," appeared exclusively in the Soviet Union in January 1989. "The new spirit of friendship opening up in Russia," commented the former Beatle, "has enabled me to make this gesture to my Russian fans and let them hear one of my records first for a change."

Gorbachev's reforms also effected policy changes at Gosconcert. In 1987, Gosconcert finalized arrangements for the July 4 superstar concert that California promoter Bill Graham had originally planned for July 1978. Nine years later, with the location shifted from Leningrad to Moscow and the Concert used to climax a Soviet-American "peace walk" from Leningrad to Moscow, Bill Graham realized his plan, bringing Bonnie Raitt, James Taylor, the Doobie Brothers, and Carlos Santana, along with Soviet acts, to the stage in Moscow's 40,000-seat Olympic stadium. However, wary Soviet officials, intent on averting a disturbance, issued only 25,000 tickets to the 40,000-seat stadium. For over five hours, the Western performers played to a sedate audience in the half-filled venue. Only Santana's performance, which closed the concert, brought the audience to its feet dancing.

Three weeks after the July 4 concert, American pop star Billy Joel arrived in the Soviet Union for an extended tour that opened with three concerts at Moscow's Olympic sports complex. During his first concert on Sunday night, July 26, 1987, thousands of fans rose to their feet to dance. The following morning, Soviet officials expressed the need for tighter security, increased crowd control, and lower volume. Joel compromised on audience response, agreeing to let only the first eight rows rush the stage, but he refused to reduce sound levels. "The music is going to be played very, very loudly," Joel told the crowd the next night. "If you don't want to stay, when you leave, please give someone else outside your ticket."

In the coming days, Billy Joel played rock star, tourist, and television guest. On the Soviet TV show *The Music Ring,* Joel chatted with the Soviet audience about his thoughts on America and the Soviet Union. "I have a feeling that what's going on in your country right now," Joel told his audience, "is very much like the '60s." Joel waited for the enthusiastic applause to fade, before adding, "This song has been going around and around in my head since I got here." As Joel began strumming his guitar and as members of the audience broke into sporadic applause, the American singer intoned Bob Dylan's anthem of the 1960s, "The Times They Are A Changin'."

On Tuesday night, July 28, 1987, while Billy Joel took a night off between his scheduled appearances at Moscow's Olympic Sports complex, four hundred miles to the north it was heavy-metal night in Leningrad's Neva Star discotheque. By the summer of 1987, the Neva Star discotheque had become a gathering place for hundreds of Leningrad *metallisti* (heavy-metal fans), who, fully regaled in leather jackets, studded wristbands, and chokers, packed the Neva Star every Tuesday to dance to the music of Soviet heavy-metal groups like Master or to hear recordings by the Western heavy-metal bands Judas Priest and Mötley Crüe.

In Moscow, the Rock Laboratory, cautiously established in 1985, was by 1987 sponsoring some of the city's most provocative bands. At one concert sponsored by the Rock Laboratory, the six-man band Zvuki mu rattled the windows of the Metelitsa, once the pride of the official Soviet disco scene, with "shrill bursts of air-raid feedback." "At another concert sponsored by the Moscow's year-old Rock Laboratory," reported Michael Benson in *Rolling Stone* on March 26, 1987, "a crowd of heavy-metallurgists decked out in leather, chains, black T-shirts emblazoned with names like IRON MAIDEN, LED ZEPPELIN, AC/DC and JUDAS PRIEST tries to scalp tickets in front of the offices of Pravda."

In north-central Moscow, neighborhood *metallisti* formed an official organization for heavy-metal fans, Klub Vytyazi (the Warriors Club). With access to the stage at the Maxim Gorky House of Culture, the Klub Vytyazi invited heavy-metal bands to perform for hundreds of Moscow *metallisti.* Bill Keller, the *New York Times*'s Moscow correspondent, visited a concert at the Klub Vytyazi in the summer of 1987. Keller found the lead singer of the heavy-metal band Black Obelisk, Anatoly Krupnov, belting out the song "Disease." "Bare-chested, except for a guitar and chain, he struts through a cloud of artificial smoke," wrote Keller on July 26, 1987. "Below him, crowding the stage, ecstatic teenagers punch the air. Gloved fists and spiked haircuts twitch in the strobe lights as Krupnov bellows:

> People are burning, their souls on fire!
> A march of empty faces.

While *metallisti* feigned violence in the Klub Vytyazi, young Muscovites staged real battles along Gorky Prospekt, Moscow's most fashionable avenue. During the winter months from 1986 to 1987, Moscow's *metallisti,* punks, and hippies clashed with bands of suburban toughs called *Lyuberi.* Coming from the working-class Moscow district Lyubertsi, twelve miles southwest of the city

center, *Lyuberi* had taken it upon themselves to clear Moscow streets of social "deviants" who aped Western fads. In the evening after school or work, the *Lyuberi* traveled to central Moscow, where they roamed the capital's main avenues, assaulting young people sporting Western fashions. "We go into Moscow in order to beat up punks, hippies, heavy-metal fans and also break-dancers," a *Lyuberi* told the Soviet magazine *Ogonyok*. "Hippies, punks and heavy metal fans are a disgrace to the Soviet way of life," declared another *Lyuberi*. "We want to clear them out of the capital." In the early months of 1987, the battles between *Lyuberi* and Moscow's rock fans had reportedly escalated into pitched battles involving hundreds of young people.

By the spring of 1987, Gorbachev's reforms seemed to some orthodox party members to have been the cause of the transformation of the youth clubs into dens of *metallisti*, filled with earsplitting rock music, and the turning of Soviet streets into freak shows and battlefields. Conservative factions in the Soviet regime began to express concern. In May 1987, Sergei Mikhalkov, author of the Soviet national anthem and vice president of the Academy of Pedagogical Science of the U.S.S.R., compared rock music with a viral disease. "This is a plague which unfortunately cannot be cured at this time," lamented Mikhalkov in *Literaturnaia gazeta* on May 6, 1987. "This is the moral equivalent of AIDS and we cannot find any remedies for it. This is not just music. This is the turf on which everything can grow, starting with drug addiction and prostitution, and finishing with high treason and criminal offenses."

Two months later, in June 1987, Aminev, a doctor of psychology at the Bashkir University, offered medical evidence to support Mikhalkov's claim about the dangers of Western music. On June 5, 1987, Aminev released the results of an extensive study in the daily *Sovetskaia Rossiia*. "It seems that rock music has not only a psychological influence, but a biochemical one as well," Aminev reported, "for it seems connected with the appearance of morphine-like substances which induce 'pleasure.' " Alleged symptoms of rock addiction included trembling hands, increased irritability, and an unsteady pulse. Aminev's study concluded that young people who attended heavy-metal discotheques demonstrated "a worsening of memory loss, loss of attention, a decrease in reading speeds, and an increase in aggressiveness and stubbornness."

In the summer of 1987, Yegor Ligachev, the Kremlin's leading spokesman on ideological issues and an opponent to many of Gorbachev's cultural reforms, began lobbying for a reversal of policy toward rock music. In August, Ligachev circulated a letter among Soviet leaders, expressing his concern over the excesses of rock music. On November 9, 1987, *Pravda* joined Ligachev's crusade against rock music, publishing a letter by three well-known writers, Valentin G. Rasputin, Yuri V. Bondarev, and Vasily I. Belov. The men, claiming that the music was "mentally and morally damaging," denounced rock and roll as "the scourge and poison of our lives."

In November 1987, Ligachev met with Soviet officials to discuss introducing new restrictions on the Soviet rock scene. Among the officials Ligachev brought together were the minister of culture Vasily G. Zakharov and the head of television and radio Alexander N. Axionov. The concerns over the negative impact

of rock music on Soviet youths were well founded. Rock and roll indeed distracted young Soviets from more pressing matters; rock music had also provided many youths with a vehicle for expressing political and social discontent. And on numerous occasions, rock music had brought young people into the streets in violent confrontation with the authorities. As the Kremlin's anxious antirock lobby gathered in Moscow on that November day in 1987, did they realize that they were reenacting a scene that had been played out countless times in countless plenary sessions over the previous three decades? The efforts of Mr. Ligachev and his comrades to eradicate rock and roll from Soviet society would, ultimately, like the efforts of all those before them, be destined to failure. After thirty years, rock and roll had taken firm hold of the sinewy Russian soul.

Conclusion: Shattering the Iron Curtain

In an eerie echo of America in the 1960s, rock-and-roll is rolling across Eastern Europe, shaking up societies that once prided themselves on the behavior of their young.

Christian Science Monitor, March 10, 1987

On February 14, 1988, East German figure skater Katharina Witt won the 1988 Winter Olympics' most coveted prize: the gold medal for women's figure skating. Witt, by her own admission, considered the gold medal as much a political as an athletic victory. "I do play a political role," Witt told the Western press. "If we, as a tiny socialist country, do well in sports, it's a mark of distinction internationally." The following night, when Witt took the ice for the closing exhibition set, she appeared on the ice sporting a black leather jacket bristling with metal studs and wearing one black glove. To the delight of spectators and millions of television viewers, Witt half-skated, half-danced to Michael Jackson's 1987 hit song "Bad." On Saturday night, Katharina Witt had demonstrated that East Germany possessed the best amateur female skater in the world; on Sunday night, Witt showed the world something else, that socialist youths knew how to boogie.

Witt's spirited rendering of Michael Jackson's "Bad" confirmed the Western media's observation, that in the age of *glasnost*, the Soviet bloc was finally "discovering" rock and roll. During the mid-1980s, increased media attention on the Soviet-bloc rock scene made it appear to many in the West that young people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had finally joined the mainstream of Western pop culture.

In 1983, the Soviet rock opera *Avos and Yunos*, with the support of designer Pierre Cardin, opened for a brief run in Paris. The ill-fated MCA release of the

Lady Pank album was in 1985. The following year, Joanna Stingray, a California record producer, released a double album set of underground music from Leningrad. The album, titled *Red Wave,* presented the music of the four Leningrad bands, Aquarium, Kino, Alisa, and Strange Games. Stingray laudably upheld the artistic integrity of the Leningrad rockers, presenting the music in the Russian originals. Further, the album did not pander to popular clichés, avoiding platitudes about political and social oppression. "I have brought their music to the West," wrote Stingray on the album, "in hope of creating better understanding between people. MUSIC HAS NO BORDERS!"

But it does have reviewers. *Red Wave* received extensive media coverage, enjoying praise as a noble effort at cross-cultural dialogue, enduring a fusillade of criticism by reviewers who found much of the music derivative and dated. "Ostensibly offered as proof that all around the world, rock 'n' roll will never die, etc.," carped *High Fidelity* in its review of *Red Wave* in October 1986, "this double album proves instead that it's still waiting to be born in most places."

These is no small irony in such an observation when one considers the Soviet bloc's contributions to the American rock scene during the 1960s and 1970s. John Kay of the supergroup Steppenwolf lived as Joachim Krauledat in the Soviet city of Tilsit before escaping to the West and starting one of the classic hard-rock bands of the 1960s. James Pankow, trombonist for the ensemble Chicago, reportedly still holds his Bulgarian passport and visits Sofia regularly to jam with fellow musicians. Nina Hagen, the idiosyncratic nymph of funk and punk, was East Germany's leading lady of rock before emigrating to the West in 1977. And Jan Hammer, the former keyboardist for Weather Report who revolutionized American television with his sound tracks to the *Miami Vice* series, cultivated his musical sensibilities in Prague listening to foreign radio broadcasts during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The days are long past when East European rock fans huddled together around portable radio to listen to Elvis Presley's voice cracking through the static of jamming stations, when in Sofia a young man was arrested for wearing a Beatles-style haircut, when aspiring Moscow rock guitarists pilfered public pay phones in order to construct pickups for their electric guitars. But the sounds of socialism in 1989 would have been unthinkable without these innumerable gestures of petty defiance and self-realization. Individually, such acts provided a momentary sense of elation; collectively, they transformed the sights and sounds of everyday life in the Soviet bloc.

In a very real sense, the triumph of rock and roll in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has been the realization of a democratic process. Three generations of Soviet-bloc youths have compelled governments to accept step by step a cultural phenomenon long decried as an outgrowth of Western capitalism. In the course of thirty years, rock bands have stormed every bastion of official resistance and forced both party and government to accept rock-and-roll music as part of life in the Marxist-Leninist state.

In the coming years, Soviet-bloc rock faces one final obstacle, perhaps the most difficult one it has yet faced: to make itself heard in the West. Ironically,

the Iron Curtain, which descended in 1946 to shield Eastern Europe from Western influences, has in recent years performed a reverse function: it has prevented many of the realities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from reaching the West. As the sounds of rock and roll begin to resonate from East to West, this music which shaped the perceptions and lives of countless millions in the Soviet bloc will hopefully transform the way we in the West view the past and present of our counterparts in the East.

Chronology

1953

March Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, under whose regime jazz and other aspects of Western culture are banned, dies of a cerebral hemorrhage.

April Hungary's union of musicians lifts ban on performance of Western music in public places.

June Violent antigovernment demonstrations in East Berlin compel the government to rescind increased work norms and to introduce cultural liberalization.

1954

April Bill Haley records for Decca Records his version of the Freedman-Knight composition "Rock Around the Clock."

May A conference of Polish composers concedes that the "jazz manner of rendition has been accepted" in Poland. However, the musicians warn against the proliferation of "wild American jazz."

December Voice of America begins broadcasting the jazz program *Music USA* with Willis Canover at the microphone. During the four decades, *Music USA* became the single most important source for Soviet-bloc jazz fans and jazz musicians.

1955

January A revival of Mayakovski's play *Mysteria Buff,* the hit of the Moscow theater season, uses rock and roll to depict a scene from hell. "Winsome girls" reportedly "gyrated to Rodyon Shedrin's seismic rhythms."

September Polish radio broadcasts its first program dedicated to jazz and dance music.

December Following an extended debate in the Soviet press, *Pravda* challenges the remaining restrictions on jazz music in the Soviet Union.

1956

February At the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev attacks the "cult of the personality," introducing the gradual process of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

October Following bloody rioting in Poland, Gomulka comes to power. Although Gomulka proves less progressive than many had hoped, his liberal hand in cultural policy allows rock and roll to flourish.

November In response to Hungarian reforms instituted by Imre Nagy, the Soviets invade Hungary. An estimated 25,000 Hungarians die before the Soviets crush the "counterrevolution." As a means of appeasing the youth, János Kádár, Hungary's new leader, opens Hungary to Western rock and roll, which includes the importation of four hundred Wurlitzer jukeboxes.

1957

April Former Soviet Foreign Minister Dimitri Shepilov denounces rock as an "explosion of the basest instincts and sexual urges."

July At the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow, rock and roll makes its first public debut in the Soviet Union as bands from England drive thirty thousand young people wild with " 'crazy rhythm' and 'rock 'n' roll' numbers."

1958

January East Germany institutes the 60/40 clause, limiting ensembles' repertoires to 40 percent Western music. The ordinance is intended "to combat signs of decadence and decay" on the East German music scene. Similar clauses are adopted by other Soviet-bloc nations.

March Elvis Presley's induction into the military and transfer to West Germany is viewed in the Soviet bloc as "a misuse of rock and roll" in NATO military strategy.

September A Soviet legal journal justifies banning of underground recordings, citing cases in which individuals resort to murder for "the latest rock and roll, gypsy songs, scurrilous ditties from the criminal world and drum solos by American jazz kings."

1959

January Bulgarian study finds it is "natural" for bands to play jazz, boogie-woogie, and rock-and-roll numbers after midnight.

April East German leader Walter Ulbricht praises the Lipsi, a modified waltz step, as an acceptable socialist alternative to Western dances.

October Czech songwriting team Suchý and Šlitr open the Semafor Theater in Prague. By 1964, the 350-seat Semafor will have had one million visitors, an audience equal to the entire population of Prague.

December Soviet police break up the country's largest underground distribution network for illegal recordings. Based in Moscow, the organization had provided mail order and direct distribution throughout the country.

1960

September Chubby Checker's song "The Twist" hits number one on the U.S. charts. The song will reappear at the number one spot early in 1962. The twist craze will become one of the banes of Soviet-bloc cultural officials during the early 1960s.

1961

February At a Dance Music Forum in the East German town of Annaberg, officials determine that Western music is being exploited "as an instrument of the imperialists in West Germany in order to prepare young people for war." Party leader Walter Ulbricht inadvertently sanctions the twist when he appears "dancing apart" from his partner on a weekly newsreel.

April The Soviet press announces eleven new ballroom dances that are "swift" and "dynamic" and are "certain to attract the attention of the youth."

August East Germany constructs the Berlin Wall in order to stem the mass exodus of citizens to the West. As the physical borders close, officials relax restraints on cultural expression.

1962

April A Soviet youth paper fearfully reports on the dance craze sweeping the world: "Dozens of cases are known in which possessed dancers of rock 'n' roll and the 'twist'. . . , obsessed and infuriated, have demolished the building where they were gathered, have broken windows and chairs, and, out in the streets, have staged riots."

October The Beatles' first single "Love Me Do" is released on the EMI Parlophone label in the West.

December Following a visit to a modern art exhibition, Khrushchev calls for a crackdown on the arts. The Soviet leader expresses "distaste" for modern dances, calling them "something unseemly, mad and the devil knows what." Soviet bard Bulat Okudzhava is accused of "vulgarity" and "inconstancy."

East German bard Wolf Biermann, during a performance at the East Berlin Academy of Arts, urges old party members to step aside, telling them that "patience" is "the whore of cowardice" who prepares the "bed for crime." Biermann is expelled from the party and banned from making public appearances.

1963

January Petr Janda, the son of a prestigious but "bourgeois" Prague lawyer, forms the Big Beat Quintet, which eventually becomes Olympic. Olympic emerges as Czechoslovakia's premier Beatles band, even landing an invitation to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

July Rock bands perform before groups of "twisting" young Poles in the streets of Warsaw to help celebrate the nineteenth anniversary of Communist rule in Poland. At a school in Warsaw, pupils practice the twist as part of a program called Education Through Play.

1964

February The Beatles arrive at New York's Idlewild Airport, marking the onset of Beatlemania in America. Within three months, the Soviet-bloc press will report outbreaks of Beatlemania-style rioting in Eastern Europe.

Nine hundred students at the P. Lumumba University watch in rapture as two young people demonstrate the twist to Western-style music.

March Pete Seeger embarks on his first tour of the Soviet bloc, which includes dates in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union.

Soviet press publishes its first article on the Beatles, calling them a media rather than a musical sensation.

May Prague paper reports rash of riots by "fans of the long-haired Beatles" at Lucerna Hall, Kotva Hall, and the city's Park of Culture and Repose. Concert facilities are sacked by hysterical fans.

East Berlin radio introduces *DT-64*, a youth show that plays a key role in promoting rock music in East Germany.

September Czechoslovak schools introduce a six-part series on modern music that includes songs by the Beatles, the Shadows, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley to help make "school and other youth orchestras more ambitious in their renditions of the currently popular kinds of music."

1965

March Allen Ginsberg, having visited the Soviet Union the previous year, arrives in Prague. (In May, Ginsberg is expelled from Czechoslovakia for alleged drug abuse and sexual perversion.)

April Hundreds of Soviet rock fans demonstrate in central Riga following the cancellation of a concert by three leading Latvian rock bands, the Melody Makers, Atlantic, and Eolika.

Poland's premier of the Beatles film *A Hard's Day's Night* causes mass absenteeism in Warsaw schools. The film impact is compared to an outbreak of the Asian flu.

The East German record label Amiga releases a compilation of Beatles songs. Amiga will not release another Western rock album until 1974, when a recording of Jimi Hendrix songs appears.

July Soviet minister of culture Yekaterina Furtseva on a visit to London, says she is "willing to discuss" an appearance by the Beatles in the Soviet Union.

August Romania admits that official resistance to rock music has collapsed, but that the country will "not abandon the idea of creating a dance which will eventually be accepted." Recordings of twist and rock numbers are released on the Electrecord label.

October Manfred Mann holds two "thundering" rock-and-roll concerts in Prague. Manfred Mann visits Prague's Beatman of the Year, Petr Janda, at his home.

Hundreds of East Germans demonstrate in central Leipzig to protest official banning of the group the Butlers. Police and military units set upon the youths with truncheons, attack dogs, and water cannons.

December At the infamous eleventh party plenum, East Germany bans rock and roll. Walter Ulbricht denounces "this incessant 'yeah, yeah, yeah' " as "spiritually deadening" and "boring."

1966

January Early in this year, the Soviet Ministry of Culture sponsors the first vocal instrumental ensembles, the official euphemism for rock-and-roll bands. Among the first VIAs are Moscow's Happy Guys and Leningrad's Singing Guitars.

February A leading Soviet jazz musician, Tsafsman, after seeing a Polish Beatles band "in the raw," says he cannot bear "such artistic violence." Besides, notes Tsafsman, "The Beatles are already out of date."

November American expatriate singer Dean Reed holds his first concert in Moscow. In 1973, Reed emigrates to East Germany and quickly emerges as the Soviet bloc's first superstar, selling millions of albums and starring in numerous films.

Bulgaria's head of state Todor Zhivkov vows to stamp out signs of Western culture "with a red hot iron."

1967

April Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones, on a European tour, perform a concert in central Warsaw. While three thousand fans nearly destroy the interior of Warsaw's Palace of Culture, police armed with tear gas and water cannons battle another eight thousand fans outside the hall. Following the incident, Warsaw city officials suggest holding similar events outside the city where the fans "can do less damage."

May During May Day celebrations, young Muscovites dance the twist before the red brick Historical Museum at the foot of the Kremlin in Red Square. Police work late into the night dispersing groups of spontaneous twisters.

June The release of the Beatles' album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* inspires Soviet-bloc Beatles bands. Within the year Olympic in Prague and Illés in Budapest don psychedelic uniforms nearly identical to those of the Beatles.

December Prague hosts Czechoslovakia's first national Big Beat Festival, which features appearances by the Rebels, Juventus, the Primitives, and George and Beatovens. The Soulmen from Bratislava take first prize.

Romania publishes a history of popular music that includes photographs of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones.

The Polish band No To Co, which promotes the state-approved combination of folk music and rock 'n' roll, debuts on Polish television.

1968

March Student protests erupt at Warsaw University following the banning of a nationalistic play. The party will no longer tolerate "hooligan excesses" and will "go on the offensive" against ideological deviance.

August Warsaw Pact forces, estimated at 175,000 soldiers, invade Czechoslovakia as the Kremlin's final response to the liberalization that has become known as the Prague Spring. Another year will pass before the rock scene feels the pressure of "normalization."

January In protest to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, Jan Palach, a student of philosophy in Prague, douses himself with kerosene and sets himself ablaze. By March at least thirty young people follow Palach's example and attempt suicide.

May In the midst of growing political tension, the Beach Boys appear at Lucerna Hall in Prague. Mike Love dedicates the song "Breaking Away" to Prague Spring reformer Alexander Dubček who attends the concert.

July Moscow police report that nearly every public telephone in the Soviet capital has been rendered inoperable by aspiring rock musicians who have pilfered the electronic parts to convert acoustic guitars into electric guitars.

December The Hungarian book *Beat,* an analysis of the Hungarian rock scene by several sociologists, becomes the runaway best-seller of the 1969 Christmas season. According to *Beat,* over 90 percent of all Budapest's young people have attended rock concerts.

1970

January As "normalization" intensifies in Czechoslovakia, many of Prague's leading rock venues are forced to close, including Olympik, F-Klub, Play Klub and Arena.

March The Budapest Beatles band Illés, on a tour of West Germany and England, claims in an interview with the British BBC that Hungarian officials stifle rock music. Upon its return to Budapest, Illés is banned for one year.

Bulgaria's party paper declares that the war on "the music front" has been lost.

May Bucharest hosts Romania's first National Festival of Pop Music at the Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture. That same summer, the group Blood, Sweat and Tears performs in Romania. When fans begin to dance and cheer, militia set upon them with dogs and truncheons. Recalls group leader Clayton-Thomas: "It was a very, very bad scene."

December By year's end, police estimate Bratislava has at least 120 illegal clubs where people take drugs and engage in other deviant activity. As Czechoslovakia becomes a major East-West transit route in drug trade, border police joke when trains arrive: "Let's go hashing."

1971

March Illés, true to its roots as a Beatles band, releases a "white album." The album contains a human rights oratoric dedicated to Angela Davis. Group lyricist observes: "People should look in their own backyard too, when talking about human rights abuses in the United States."

October *Jesus Christ Superstar,* the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, opens in New York City. *Jesus Christ Superstar* is an official and unofficial hit in the Soviet Union. A Russian-language recording comes into black-market circulation; the evening news program adopts the theme song as its musical signature.

November Romanian leader Nicolae Ceauşescu, inspired by Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution in China, introduces a "vast ideological program, which by the mid-1970s devastates Romania's flourishing rock scene.

1972

March The rock opera *Fictitious Report on an American Pop Festival,* based on the murder of Meredith Hunter at the 1969 Altamont Pop Festival, opens in Budapest.

June In Czechoslovakia, the Plastic People of the Universe, one of the country's most popular bands, has a concert cancelled after drunken militia scuffle with fans. The Plastic People, banned from playing in Prague, retire into the underground.

July Poland's leading vocalist, Czesław Niemen, opens the 1972 World Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. Niemen subsequently records on the CBS label in the United States and is offered the lead vocalist position with Blood, Sweat and Tears.

1973

May Led Zeppelin launches the "biggest" concert tour in the history of the United States. Many Soviet-bloc bands adopt the heavy-metal sound of bands like Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple.

July East Berlin hosts the Tenth World Youth Festical. The festival serves as a testing ground for East Germany's state-sponsored bands. The rival bands, the Puhdys and Renft, viewed respectively by fans as the East German Beatles and Rolling Stones, appear at the festival.

October The Soviet vocal instrumental ensemble Pesniary publicly renounces its roots as a Beatles band: "At first we tried to sing like the Beatles. And probably weren't worse than say the Happy Guys or the Blue Guitars. But before long we started to feel this just wasn't us." That same year, Melodiya, the Soviet recording label, releases *How Beautiful is this World* by David Tukhmanov. The album is regarded as the first Soviet rock album.

1974

January Bulgaria promotes the creation of state-sponsored ensembles like FSB (Studio Formation Balkanton) and Diana Express. Bands appear on radio and televsion and tour abroad. In Western Europe, FSB becomes known as the Free Sailing Band.

March The "Budějovice massacre" takes place in a small town in Czechoslovakia when police batter hundreds of fans before a concert.

Amiga, East Germany's state record label for youth music, releases the first album by East Germany's popular band, the Puhdys.

September First Music Festival of the Second Culture takes place in village of Postupice near Benesov in Czechoslovakia. Hundreds of fans gather to see the Plastic People perform.

November *Rock and Roll at Dawn,* a play about youth disaffection in the United States, opens in Moscow. The play, written by two *Pravda* editors, borrows entire scenes from *Jesus Christ Superstar.*

1975

July Lyudmila Zhivkova, the thirty-four-year-old daughter of Bulgaria's ruler, is appointed minister of culture. Lyudmila Zhivkova opens Bulgaria to increased Western pop culture. Her interest in Buddhism leads to Bulgarian publication of the novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.*

August The signing of the Helsinki Accords, the pinnacle of détente, provides for, among other things, closer cultural ties between East and West. In the spirit of the Helsinki Accords, Western rock music finds increasing access to Soviet society.

September East Germany's Klaus-Renft-Combo is forcefully disbanded. Through their songs they have allegedly "not only insulted the working class of the German Democratic Republic, but have also defamed its security and secret service forces." Band members are imprisoned and exiled.

December *Pravda* complains about "noisy, deafening groups that all sound alike." Mashina vremeni, Moscow's unofficial Beatles band and the first Soviet supergroup, is cited as a primary offender of public taste.

1976

January The Roy Clark Band becomes the first American group to undertake an extended tour of the Soviet Union. The Soviet press finds the values of "country music" compatible with those of Communist ideology.

February Czechoslovakia's second Music Festival of the Second Culture takes place in town of Bojanovice. Within a month, police arrest twenty-two musicians and interrogate one hundred fans. In September, four musicians are tried and given prison sentences ranging from eight to eighteen months.

British pop superstar Cliff Richard performs twenty sold-out concerts in Moscow and Leningrad.

November East German protest singer is expatriated following a concert in Cologne, West Germany. A veritable bloodletting of artistic talent follows as over one hundred leading musicians, writers, and actors leave East Germany in protest.

The Soviet vocal instrumental ensemble Pesniary becomes the first Soviet band to tour the United States.

1977

May The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band tours the Soviet Union. Billed as an "American folk group," the band finds its first concerts half empty.

June The Soviet Union publishes its first music listeners' poll. The vocal instrumental ensembles Pesniary, Ariel, and the Happy Guys top the list.

August Twelve hundred rock fans battle police in the town of Kydně after a concert is cancelled. As the enraged youths destroy cars and set trains on fire, the military is called in. The commander calls for a truce in order to avert a bloodbath. One hundred people are injured, twenty-seven seriously; two policemen die.

October A riot erupts during an outdoor concert in East Berlin. In the ensuing conflict, two thousand rock fans overrun police units, pummeling four officers to death and burning their uniforms. Nine rock fans die in the battle.

1978

January At East Berlin's Palace of the Republic, the Dresden rock bank Lift performs the "Che Guevara Suite" with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

June Hungary's Ministry of Culture institutes decree no. 2, establishing licensing and fixed wages for disc jockeys. The policy contributes to rampant corruption in the Hungarian music industry.

July Hundreds of young people demonstrate in Leningrad following the cancellation of a July 4 concert that was to have included the Beach Boys, Santana, and Joan Baez.

August The Soviets negotiate with a British company to equip four hundred discotheques with sound systems and sound tracks. Soviets promote disco music, issuing recordings by ABBA, the Bee Gees, and Boney M.

September West German disco band Boney M performs in Moscow. Although their hit "Rah! Rah! Rasputin!" is censored from the performance, the song becomes the national rage in the fall of 1978.

1979

May Elton John holds concerts in Moscow and Leningrad. Following his closing engagement in Moscow, John calls it "one of the most memorable gigs of my whole life."

July A poll taken of one thousand Hungarian youths finds an alarming disregard for ideology and politics. Khrushchev is variously identified as "the first man in space" and "president of the United States during the early 1960s."

August One hundred fifty rock fans are arrested following an unofficial concert in a Leningrad park. Among the bands is Aquarium, one of the most important Soviet bands of the 1980s.

November Head of the Soviet composers' union denounces rock music for its "deafening, heavy-beat rhythms and truly unearthly howls." After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in October, cultural ties with the West suffer.

1980

January A Latvian paper denounces discos as "incubators of violence," warning young people who care for their health to avoid them. Latvia's three hundred discotheques have become havens for the republic's punks.

February A Hungarian paper exposes extensive corruption and extortion in the Hungarian music industry.

March At the Tbilisi rock music competition, Spring Rhythms, official and unofficial Soviet bands compete for prizes. The concert features Mashina vremeni, Stas Namin, and Aquarium.

August Pioneering Hungarian punk band Beatrice tours with veteran rock groups Omega and Locomotiv GT. Many Hungarian punks feel Beatrice has betrayed its fans by appearing with officially accepted groups.

September Estonia is shaken by weeks of anti-Soviet riots by young people following the cancellation of a concert by the premier Estonian punk band Propeller.

December Former Beatle John Lennon is shot to death in New York City. Lennon's death is mourned at official and unofficial levels. State radios broadcast retrospectives, newspapers and magazines publish commemorations, thousands of fans gather to publicly mourn Lennon's death.

1981

January East Germany sponsors the first annual Rock for Peace concert at which the country's leading rock bands demonstrate their solidarity with government policy.

March Leading cultural officials meet with Hungary's established rock musicians to discuss methods of overcoming youth disaffection.

The Leningrad Rock Club, the first official organization for amateur rock bands, holds its first concert at 13 Rubinstein Street.

July When Bulgarian minister of culture Lyudmila Zhivkova, who has promoted a liberal cultural policy, dies in a car accident, conservative forces rally.

December The imposition of martial law in Poland sparks an explosion of punk rock music. The proliferation of punk bands shakes the Polish rock scene from a half decade of lethargy.

1982

April An attack in the press on Soviet supergroup Mashina vremeni elicits a flood of 250,000 letters of protest, some bearing as many as one hundred signatures. A *Time* correspondent in the Soviet Union compares a Mashina vremeni concert with "a return to the days of the Beatles."

June A Polish paper reports that drug abuse is "spreading like a plague." Approximately 800,000 Polish youths reportedly suffer severe mental disorders. One-third of all nineteen year olds are rejected from the military due to poor health. "We can see occurrences so contrary to the socialist model that they should not be taking place here."

July As Bulgaria cracks down on its rock scene, Signal, a popular heavy-metal band, is banned from performing following a concert in the town of Burgas where fans demonstrated "excessive excitement."

December Following a tour of Afghanistan, the Soviet band the Blue Guitars is criticized by the military. The band allegedly complained about the food and accommodations and refused to perform at dangerous outposts, claiming there was not enough electricity to power their sound equipment.

1983

February At a punk concert in Budapest's Moziak Club, bands express fascist and racist sentiments. The public outrage over the concert leads to the arrest and imprisonment of several punk musicians.

March The Czechoslovak press rails against the "perverse fashions of decadent punk," asserting that male musicians appear in women's underwear and play their music in excess of 180 decibles. A general crackdown on the flourishing punk scene ensues.

June At a party plenum, the Soviets launch an offensive against Western influences. By August, the Soviet press attacks young people's "mean subservience toward foreign labels, rags, fetishes and idols of bourgeois pop art."

1984

January Polish school officials are ordered to draw up lists of "punks, hippies, fascists, drug addicts and sniffers of narcotics."

February The Coitus Punk Group, whose repertoire includes "Gas Blues" a song about Auschwitz, is arrested for disturbing the public order and insulting the Soviet Union.

July Soviets issue order 361: "For Organizing the Activities of Vocal Instrumental Ensembles and Improving the Ideological-Artistic Level of their Repertoires." Order 361 strikes terror among Soviet rock bands and leads to the disbanding of numerous groups.

August Elton John's appearance in Prague enrages cultural officials when the musician appears on stage wearing a diamond earring.

August Nineteen thousand young Poles arrive at the week-long Jarocin rock festival where nearly sixty bands take the stage. Band names reflect the tenor of the times: Sewage, Toilet, Destruction, Plutonium Death, Pathology of Pregnancy.

1985

March Mikhail Gorbachev comes to power. His call for *glasnost* and *perestroika* will liberate rock and roll and compels the state record and entertainment industry to become more responsive to the needs of rock fans.

Polish supergroup Lady Pank undertakes a promotion tour of the United States in support of its MCA Records release, *Drop Everything*. Song titles and lyrics like "Do Do" and "you can scratch my itch," compels the *Washington Post* to muse "these lyrics might actually sound better in Polish."

July The Soviet band Avtograf participates in Live Aid for famine relief in Africa. Avtograf performs two songs for a total fifteen minutes before a television audience estimated at 1.5 billion viewers.

August Moscow hosts the Twelfth World Youth Festival which brings over one hundred rock bands from around the world to perform in the Soviet capital.

1986

January Bulgaria bans all American, West European, and Yugoslavian rock music from its discotheques.

February The Soviet press reports on extensive corruption in the entertainment industry in the Soviet Russian Republic. Between 1979 and 1983, a Russian "mafia" reportedly earned nineteen million rubles by booking major Soviet pop stars through private organizers.

March Melodiya releases its first complete Beatles album, *A Hard Day's Night*. The 300,000 copies sell out as soon as they reach the record stores.

May Soviet rock bands stage Account 904, a fundraising concert for victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Thirty thousand attend the concert, segments of which are broadcast on Soviet television in July.

June Czechoslovakia hosts its first national rock festival, Rockfest '86. The appearance of previously banned groups suggests a growing liberalization on the rock scene.

Jan Borysewicz, bass player for Polish supergroup Lady Pank, screams obscenities and performs a striptease before fourteen thousand Communist youths. Lady Pank is disbanded and Borysewicz is sentenced to three months in prison.

October Moscow and Leningrad appearances by British reggae band UB40 presage a significant shift in official attitude toward rock music.

1987

January Following a public debate over the arrest of ten Sofia high-school students who publicly honored John Lennon, Bulgaria eases restraints on rock and roll.

A leading Moscow musician and spokesman for the official music community urges the use of rock and roll, especially heavy metal, to allow young Soviets to vent their frustrations.

March Melodiya releases an album by the previously underground band Aquarium.

May Bulgaria holds its first national rock festival, Rockfest '87.

June One day after a Soviet study warns that rock music causes "aggressiveness" in young people, three days of rioting erupt in East Berlin as thousands of East German rock fans gather near the Berlin Wall to hear outdoor performances by Phil Collins, the Eurythmics, and David Bowie in West Berlin.

July After a nine-year delay, a July 4 concert is held in the Soviet Union. The Doobie Brothers, Santana, James Taylor, and Bonnie Raitt appear before 23,000 fans in Moscow.

Billy Joel embarks on an extended tour of the Soviet Union, playing the role of temperamental rock star, TV talk-show guest, and American tourist.

1988

April An official at Czechoslovakia's Panton record label decries censorship of song lyrics as "barbaric."

June East Berlin is shaken by riots resulting from an outdoor concert in West Berlin that features Pink Floyd and Michael Jackson.

Melodiya releases albums by eight underground Leningrad bands, including Kino, Strange Games, Alisa, and Aquarium. Melodiya also announces an exclusive recording deal with former Beatle Paul McCartney.

July Bruce Springsteen appears before 160,000 jubilant East German fans, marking the first East German appearance by a major Western rock star. Springsteen's appeal to tear down "barriers," read by the rock star in German, is censored from the television broadcast of the concert.

August John Lydon, formerly Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols, headlines a rock festival in Tallinn, Estonia, that draws 220,000 Soviet youths.

The veteran British heavy-metal band Uriah Heep is lauded in the party daily when it arrives for a concert in Sofia, Bulgaria.

September Soviet pop superstar Alla Pugacheva performs to a full house at New York's Carnegie Hall during her debut tour of the United States.

1989

January Paul McCartney releases an album of rock-and-roll oldies exclusively on the Soviet recording label Melodiya. In the United States, collectors reportedly pay up to two hundred dollars for the album.

April The Czech bank Půlnoc, formed in 1988 by members of the legendary underground ensemble the Plastic People of the Universe, undertakes a national tour of the United States.

June CBS Records releases *Radio Silence* by Boris Grebenshchikov. The album is the first release ever by a Soviet rock star on a major U.S. label.

August Rock superstar Bon Jovi headlines a major international concert in Moscow. Bon Jovi commits himself to what is described as "the first regular working relationship set up between the USSR and a Western pop star."

Notes

As some sources wish to remain anonymous, they are indicated only with initials.

1. Onslaught of the Coca-Cola Barbarians, 1946–1953

p. 8, "We are building a new world": *News from Behind the Iron Curtain,* vol. I, no. 6, June 1952, p. 27.

p. 8, "the engineer of the human soul": The phrase is attributed to Stalin by Maxim Gorky.

p. 9, A poll conducted: statistic in Peter J. Babris, *Baltic Youth Under Communism* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1967), 61.

p. 11, In August 1946, articles appeared: cited from S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (New York, 1983), 213.

p. 11, "predeliction for and even a certain orientation": Andrei A. Zhdanov, *Essays on Literature, Philosophy and Music* (New York, 1950), 8.

p. 11, For a detailed discussion of Piatigorsky and Alekseev see Starr, *Red and Hot,* pp. 214–15.

p. 11, Thousands of other jazz musicians lost their jobs: Starr, *Red and Hot,* p. 216.

p. 11, "the scrunch and squeal": "The Satellite Arabesque" in *News From Behind the Iron Curtain,* May 1953, p. 41.

p. 11, "to deafen the ears of the marshallized world": Josef Škvorecký, *The Bass Saxophone* (Toronto, 1977), 21.

p. 12, Khrennikov reviewed new compositions: Tamás Aczél and Tibor Meray, *The Revolt of the Mind* (New York, 1959), 131.

p. 12, "despicable, whining, like a jungle cry": Škvorecký, *The Bass Saxophone,* p. 22.

p. 12, "the poison of Americanism": *Neues Deutschland,* April 5, 1951, p. 3.

p. 13, "spiritual agents of the imperialists": "Warning to Jitterbugs" in *News From Behind the Iron Curtain,* March 12, 1952, p. 39.

p. 13, Vlach . . . would gladly eliminate Kenton: Starr, *Red and Hot,* p. 217.

p. 13, "how the curtain went up": Škvorecký, *The Bass Saxophone,* p. 177.

p. 13, "necessary to get excited about saxophones": Quoted in an interview with Prague musicians in "The Satellite Arabesque" in *News From Behind the Iron Curtain,*

May 1953, p. 41. The 1983 film *Byl jazz (There Was Jazz)* by the Polish director Feliksa Falk provides a brilliant insight into the lives of jazz musicians and fans in Poland during the Stalin era.

p. 14, "We had long since forgotten that Stalin": Wolfgang Leonard, "The Day Stalin Died" in *Problems of Communism,* July/Aug. 1967, p. 77.

p. 14, "highest officials": ibid., p. 79.

p. 15, "bad taste to the obscene": "Night Life in the Soviet Bloc" in *News From Behind the Iron Curtain,* May 1956, p. 34.

p. 15, The revised position on East German jazz: Richard Hanser, "Okay, Comrades, Let's Jazz it Up; Russia Finds the Beat" in *Saturday Review,* June 16, 1956, pp. 37–38.

p. 16, "It is a fact that the jazz manner": "The New Line on Jazz" in *News From Behind the Iron Curtain,* June 1956, p. 28.

p. 16, "Warsaw changed its appearance": ibid.

p. 16, "by the many who are hungry for good jazz": Hanser, "Okay Comrades, Let's Jazz it Up," p. 38.

p. 16, The first issue of five thousand copies: *Saturday Review,* June 16, 1956, p. 38.

p. 18, The Moscow ensemble Vosmyorka: Starr, *Red and Hot,* p. 246.

2. Rock and Rollback, 1954–1960

p. 20, Danish police in Copenhagen reached for their billy clubs. The Western press reported extensively on these outbreaks of rock-and-roll rioting. In September 1956 alone, the *New York Times* registered London rock riots on September 5, 11, and 13.

p. 22, Young people would rent the albums: interview with Ivan Herskovits, April 6, 1988.

p. 22, Aunt Mici's dance school: János Sebők, *Magyarock 1958–1973* (Budapest, 1983), 47.

p. 22, "After the mandatory waltz": ibid.

p. 23, "We will now play a few jazz records": "You Got to Rock" in *East Europe,* April 1957, p. 30.

p. 24, "By 1961, the Reds and Blacks had had two": Thomas Wielski, "Would You Believe . . . Polish Rock and Roll" in *Rolling Stone,* Sept. 17, 1970, p. 35.

p. 24, "From Ray Charles I learned": Interview with Czesław Niemen, Oct. 2, 1984. Niemen was born Czesław Wydrzycki on Feb. 19, 1939, in the town of Vasilisski in White Russia. His parents moved to Poland in 1958. In 1963, in anticipation of his Paris debut, Wydrzycki changed his name to Niemen, after a river near his birthplace.

p. 25, In Czechoslovakia, Pavel Sedláček: Sleeve notes from the album *Rock and Roll Olympic,* released by Supraphon, Prague, 1981.

p. 25, "We were flirting with rock": Jiří Suchý, *Knižka aneb co mne jen tak napadlo* (Prague, 1986), 21.

p. 25, "the Mississippi, with countless rivulets": Škvorecký, *The Bass Saxophone* (Toronto, 1977), 28.

p. 26, At the same time, NATO strategists: It is interesting that at the same time in the United States rock and roll was being banned from radio stations and heavily criticized by religious leaders. For example, in March 1957, Cardinal Strich, head of the Catholic archdiocese in Chicago, prohibited rock and roll from Catholic schools, condemning the "tribal rhythms" as an "encouragement to behave in a hedonistic manner."

p. 26, "Presley's induction into the military": H. P. Hofmann, *Rock: Interpreten, Autoren, Sachbegriffe* (Berlin, 1983), 181.

p. 26, "we alone have made 'rock and roll' a weapon": *East Europe,* March 1958, p. 46.

p. 27, "helpless perplexity": ibid.

p. 27, "their necks have been twisted": *East Europe,* Nov. 1962, p. 4.

p. 27, "natural for bands to play jazz": *East Europe,* July 1959, p. 48.

p. 27, By the summer of 1957, the Pavilion: Olaf Leitner, *Rockszene DDR: Aspekte einer Massenkultur im Sozialismus* (Hamburg, 1983), 46.

p. 28, "raise the level of entertainment": "Anordnung über die Programmgestaltung bei Unterhaltungs- und Tanzmusik" in Elimar Schubbe (ed.), *Dokumente zur Kunst-, Literatur- und Kulturpolitik der SED* (Stuttgart, 1972), 515.

p. 28, "We have begun to battle the influences": "Mit der Schöpferkraft des Volkes zu einem sozialistischen Kulturleben" in Schubbe, *Dokumente,* p. 521.

p. 28–29, "And so they cuffed": "Die Ballade von dem Drainage-Leger Fredi Rohsmeisl aus Buckow" in Wolf Biermann, *Nachlaß 1* (Cologne, 1977), 27.

p. 29, "against 'Hotmusik' and the ecstatic": Peter Wicke, *Anatomie des Rock* (Leipzig, 1987), 157.

p. 29–30, In the early 1960s, *Augenzeuge:* Leitner, *Rockszene DDR,* p. 47.

p. 30, "every possible household article": *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* vol. IX, no. 46, p. 18.

p. 30, " 'Stiliagi' in loose shirts": ibid.

p. 30, "aroused great interest among the youth": *East Europe,* March 1958, p. 46.

p. 30, "explosion of the basest instincts": "Shepilov Assails Music of the U.S." in the *New York Times,* April 4, 1957.

p. 30–31, "executing the outrageous"; "These orchestras have a bad influence": "Moscow Halts a Riot" in the *New York Times,* March 9, 1958.

p. 31, "winsome young girls gyrated to Rodion": the *New York Times Sunday Magazine,* April 20, 1958, p. 56.

p. 31, "Back to Monkeys": "Moiseyev Spoofs Rock 'n' Rollers" in the *New York Times,* March 7, 1961.

p. 32, "to produce home-made records": Babris, *Baltic Youth Under Communism* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1967), 30.

p. 33, Pavlov and Krupin each received two-year: "Russia Jails 2 for Bootleg Rock 'n' Roll" in *New York Herald Tribune,* Jan. 13, 1960.

p. 33, *Ni pukha, ni pera!:* There is no exact translation, but is the Russian equivalent of the English, "Break a leg!", when wishing someone luck with an undertaking.

p. 34, "Let the Komsomol watch out for order": *Komsomolskaia pravda,* Sept. 22, 1960, p. 4.

3. Bards of Discontent, 1956–1965

p. 35, "but in fact quite eager": interview with Harold Leventhal, April 1986; interview with Pete Seeger, April 1986.

p. 36, "In a big hall"; "It was the best thing"; Pete Seeger, *The Incompleat Folksinger* (New York, 1972), 512–13.

p. 36, In Moscow, over one thousand Russians packed the Tchaikovsky Hall: "Muscovites Hail U.S. Folksinger" in the *New York Times,* April 11, 1964.

p. 36–37, "I'm willing to bet": Seeger, *Folksinger,* p. 513.

p. 37, "In 1956 in Czechoslovakia, the truth was still": Heda Margolis Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941–1968* (Cambridge, 1986), 165.

p. 37, "No revelations were forthcoming": ibid.

p. 37, "Novotný plays comic part": "Off-Broadway on Prague" in *East Europe,* Dec. 1964, pp. 8–11.

p. 38, "They talk the language of the youth": ibid., p. 9. The film *Konkurs (Audition)* by Miloš Forman portrays Jiří Suchý searching for young talent for the Semafor Theater.

p. 38, "Little Ivan took up his gun": ibid., p. 10.

p. 39, In 1961, Suchý and Šlitr "discovered" Hegerova: *Der Spiegel,* June 9, 1967, pp. 114–15.

p. 40, "After the big party congress": Wolf Biermann, *Nachlaß 1* (Cologne, 1977), 417–19. All subsequent Biermann poems are taken from this collection.

p. 41, "What is your relationship"; "I consider him a great talent": Heinz Ludwig Arnold (ed.), *Wolf Biermann* (Munich, 1975), 99.

p. 41, "Between these sung lines"; ibid., p. 101.

p. 42, "Every time before going out on stage"; "At the time, it simply": ibid., p. 106.

p. 42, "I just learned of it myself today": ibid., p. 137.

p. 43, "It was a time when"; "They were gradually seeping": Gerry Smith, "Whispered Cry: The Songs of Alexander Galich" in *Index on Censorship,* autumn 1974, p. 12.

p. 43, "Once more we started believing": Gerald Stanton Smith, *Songs to Seven Strings* (Bloomington, 1984), 183.

p. 44, The 128,000 machines: this and other statistics cited are in Gene Sosin, "Magnitizdat: Uncensored Songs of Dissent" in Rudolf L. Tőkés (ed.), *Dissent in the USSR* (Baltimore, 1975) 277.

p. 44, "Soviet ideological organs": ibid., p. 278.

p. 45, "But I didn't take the activity": Vladimir Frumkin, *Bulat Okudzhava* (Ann Arbor, 1980), 44.

p. 45, "sat with two or three friends": Yevgeni Yevtushenko, *A Precocious Autobiography* (New York, 1963), 103.

p. 45, "Before Okudzhava": Frumkin, *Okudzhava,* p. 15.

p. 46, "In 1960, I suddenly had my first"; "No one then knew me" and "Suddenly someone in the hall": ibid., p. 26.

p. 46, "In particular, the verses and songs": Sosin, *Dissent,* p. 282.

p. 46, *Oktober* rebuffed more than twenty: *Der Spiegel,* Aug. 4, 1980, p. 126.

p. 47, "an encyclopedia of Soviet": Sosin, *Dissent,* p. 308.

p. 47, "the very soul of our people": *A Voice from Russia: The World of Vysotsky,* a PBS television production broadcast on Sept. 7, 1983.

p. 48, "the relations between a long drought": Smith, *Songs to Seven Strings,* p. 150.

p. 49, "reflected virtually everything"; "Volodya . . . an utterly tragic figure"; "He had his great Mercedes": *A Voice from Russia.*

p. 49, "I remember Volodya when he first": Alla Demidova, "The Way We Remember Him" in *Sputnik,* Dec. 11, 1981, p. 110. Vysotsky's popularity and influence extended beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. Vysotsky's underground songs appeared on several LPs in France. In Poland, the pro-Solidarity protest singer Jacek Kaczmarski, wrote a song honoring the Russian singer, "Epitafium na smierc Wysockiego." Vysotsky enjoyed his greatest popularity, outside Russia, among Bulgarians. On

June 3, 1973, the daily paper *Narodna Armia* published "Common Graves," the first of Vysotsky's poems to appear in Bulgarian. "It was the first time I saw a poem of mine in print," Vysotsky reportedly commented. In 1975, Vysotsky toured Bulgaria with the Taganka Theater; it was Vysotsky's first performance abroad. In the 1970s, Bulgaria also released a Vystosky album, broadcast a television special, and included Vysotsky songs in several stage productions. Vysotsky's impact also inspired Bulgaria's first generation of poet-bards, which included Nedialko Yordanov, Victor Samuilov, and Vassil Sotirov.

4. Beatlemania: Leninism versus Lennonism, 1960–1966

p. 50, "And then there were the Beatles": Erich Loest, *Es geht seinen Gang* (Halle, 1977), 18.

p. 51, "The Beatles were there while I repaired": ibid., p. 18.

p. 51, "the show's success gave considerable": Ota Richter, "Off-Broadway in Prague" in *East Europe,* Dec. 1964, p. 10. Despite his success with the twist, Jiří Šlitr distanced himself from rock-and-roll music during the 1960s. "When it became clear that the young generation was bringing new music," Suchý recalled of Šlitr, "he decided not to try to compete." As rock music surged in Czechoslovakia, Šlitr brought Ferdinand Hlavik and his jazz band back to the Semafor Theater and continued to produce Broadway-style musicals and revues. Šlitr came twice to New York and met with Robert Loewe to discuss bringing his shows to Broadway. Although Loewe expressed interest in the idea, the plan was never realized. In 1969, Jiří Šlitr died in a bizarre murder-suicide, in which a young woman killed Šlitr and herself. The 1986 documentary *Jonas Say, For Instance, On Wednesday,* directed by Vladimir Sis, captures the exuberance and brilliance of the Semafor Theater.

p. 52, "A feeling of distaste"; "But the so-called fashionable": Priscilla Johnson and Leopold Labedz, (eds.), *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962–1964* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 175.

p. 54, "literally wept with laughter"; "wring his hands": "What Are We Dancing" in *Literaturnaia gazeta,* Aug. 4, 1964.

p. 54, nine hundred students at the P. Lumumba University": "Does the Charleston Belong in the Soviet Ballroom?" in *Komsomolskaia pravda,* March 5, 1964.

p. 54, "two waistrels with a tape recorder"; "there was nothing else in the world": Vassily Aksyonov, *A Starry Ticket* (London, 1962), 24.

p. 54, "When you throw your dancing shoes out": Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "Doing the Twist on Nails" in *Stolen Apples: Poetry by Yevgeny Yevtushenko* (Garden City, N.Y., 1971), 39.

p. 55, Polish military leader Marshal Marian Spychalski: *East Europe,* March 1964, p. 28.

p. 55, Two under-aged "hooligans" were promptly executed: ibid.

p. 55, "We know that a new generation": *East Europe,* Jan. 1966, p. 44.

p. 56, "roar and scream together with them": Extracts from the András Kovács film *Ecstasy from 7 to 10* in *The New Hungarian Quarterly,* vol. X, no. 36, 1969, p. 99.

p. 57, Shturtsite went on to become Bulgaria's most popular: Vladimir Gadjev, "When Rock 'n' Roll Was Young" in *Bulgaria,* June 1987, pp. 21–28.

p. 58, The American television network CBS "discovered" Olympic: Jaromír Tůma, *Čtyři hrají rock: jasná zpráva o skupině Olympic* (Prague, 1986), 102.

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Free Europe. All together, it is a history informed by a deep love of the music as well as a solid background in the politics of the region.

Engagingly written and filled with vivid details, *Rock Around the Bloc* offers a fascinating survey of the surprisingly rich variety of rock & roll in Eastern Europe, a music that keeps its kinship to the West while forging a unique identity of its own.

Marie-Louise Ryback

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ROCK AROUND THE BLOC

TIMOTHY W. RYBACK

Highlights from the history of bloc-rock

1954. Bill Haley records "Rock Around the Clock" in the spring this year. By summer's end, Soviet bloc jazz ensembles include the song in their repertoires. Many of them write lyrics in their native tongue to hide the song's American origin.

1958. Elvis Presley became the rage in Eastern Europe in the late '50s. In 1958, when Private Presley is stationed in West Germany, Soviet bloc ideologues charge that NATO is "exploiting rock & roll in its cold war strategy against the socialist people." Nevertheless, Elvis clones appear in cities throughout the USSR.

1964. Less than a month after Beatlemania hits the United States, the Soviet press unleashes its first attacks. The satirical weekly *Krokodil* assures readers that the Beatles will not remain popular for long: "they are not the right caliber." But millions of Soviet youth tape Beatles songs from foreign broadcasts and purchase precious Beatles albums on the black market.

1976. A Moscow poll finds that Colorado-born expatriate Dean Reed is the best known American in the Soviet Union after President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger. Reed is a Soviet bloc superstar, selling tens of millions of records and holding sell-out concerts in huge stadiums throughout the Soviet bloc.

1982. Following the imposition of martial law in Poland, Jaruzelski allows the rock scene to flourish in an attempt to vent social dissatisfaction. The plan explodes in his face, as a wave of controversial punk bands—Plutonium Death, Shock, Toilet, and Destruction—sweep the country, castigating the government.

1987. In February, Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev personally receive Yoko Ono in Moscow. Raisa declares that she and her husband were fans of John Lennon and she even sings lyrics from a Lennon song. Gorbachev solemnly observes, "John should have been here."

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