

BANNED IN THE USSR: COUNTERCULTURE, STATE MEDIA, AND PUBLIC
OPINION DURING THE SOVIET UNION'S FINAL DECADE

by

BORIS VON FAUST

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Dr. Richard B. Sher

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Union's Final Decade

By BORIS VON FAUST

Dissertation Director:

Dr. Richard B. Sher

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the connection between social and cultural aspects of history, specifically concentrating on the phenomenon of counterculture as a measure of civic reaction to the political climate and its impact on social institutions. With the totalitarian Soviet regime during the decade of its disintegration as its subject, this study intends to show that a degree of cultural pluralism and public dissent can exist even in the outwardly culturally withdrawn, ideologically dogmatic, and politically repressive societies. The central focus of the examination rests on the relationship between the state-controlled printed media and the public sentiment of the Soviet youth, and the ways in which the official press and the dissident counterculture interacted in the years surrounding the era of Mikhail Gorbachev's democratic reforms and the subsequent demise of the Soviet state.

The investigation is conducted mainly through the analysis of the primary sources, represented by a cross-section of the printed media of the period, as well as memoirs and interviews of the participants of the events, the author's personal

experience, and secondary sources, devoted to the phenomenon of the sub-cultural “underground” in the USSR.

The examination displays the eminent role of mass information as both a tool of propaganda and a measure of public opinion, and accentuates the part that cultural deviations played in the political process. The evidence shows the conflicting reactions towards the ongoing social changes and increasing cultural diversity, and highlights the divergent approaches to the information management that existed within the seemingly uniformed institution as the government-controlled Soviet media apparatus.

As this study considers the significance of the interests, leanings, and sympathies of the youth on the overall historical development, it ascertains that even the presumably marginalized and maligned social and cultural movements can emerge as powerful factors in the discourse between the state, the media, and the public within the milieu of political restructuring.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary study of history recognizes cultural factors as vital elements in the formation of overall social and political structures. Careful examination of cultural movements and events can provide valuable insight in understanding of the period and locale in question, shedding additional light on issues and circumstances of particular historical eras and settings. By understanding the specific aspects of a given culture in the context of the existing socio-political conditions, historians can reconstruct a more accurate picture of historic developments, potentially re-evaluating or dismantling pre-conceived notions and persistent stereotypes along the way.

In order to assess social conditions and cultural issues on a wider scale, historians must consider the technologies, conduits, and structures that enabled the diffusion, dispersion, and absorption of information. A closer consideration of communications mediums and networks is essential for a comprehensive and thorough excursion into cultural history. Study of communications systems provides an opportunity for the analysis of technological and cultural undercurrents that propelled the course of socio-political and economic developments. Pioneered by theoretical works of scholars like Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, the discipline of communications history illuminates the spread of knowledge and information over space and time, offering important clues for a more comprehensive understanding of the social, technological, and political development of human civilization.

Issues of cultural evolution and communications networks are especially intriguing when considered against the background of politically, economically, and

socially oppressive environments. Themes of individual liberty and unobstructed access to information in domineering and repressive society remain compelling and relevant for contemporary historians. The cultural suppression and mass communications monopoly in Stalin's USSR, Hitler's Germany, and Mao's China resonates today in the restrictions and bans on freedom of information exchange in contemporary totalitarian states, such as Iran and North Korea, the recent hardline Islamic governments of Afghanistan and Somali, and the increasingly despotic regime of Vladimir Putin in Russia.

Several factors stimulated me to conduct my excursion in the area of cultural and informational exchange under hostile conditions. Growing up in the Soviet Union during the country's last decades, I witnessed and experienced first-hand the budding discourse between the official state propaganda agencies and the cultural and social interests and desires of the general public, and long believed that the details of this confrontation would make for a compelling historical narrative. My determination to examine this conflict was further reinforced by two of the books that I encountered in the Cultural History of Communications class that I took in the spring of 2012 at Rutgers-Newark/NJIT: Robert Darnton's *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, and Aristotle A. Kallis' *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World*.¹

Equally inspired by the subjects and the line of investigation, chosen by these writers to defend their arguments, I found that both volumes conveyed similar themes of the relationship between a segment of public opinion and the officially regulated communications media, and thus related to the issues that I had set out to explore in my research.

In order to evaluate the extent and impact of the circulation of the illegal literature in pre-revolutionary France, Robert Darnton explored the vast archives of an eminent Swiss publishing house and book trading firm. Investigating the causes for the rise of clandestine book trade in eighteenth-century France, Darnton showed that the growing popular resentment against the privileged ruling classes of the French monarchical society served as a partial catalyst for the increase of public interest in illegal literature. Attempting to discern the effects of various publications on the formation of public opinion, Darnton's opus investigated the characteristics and motifs,--which made those literary works threatening to the foundations of the French monarchy, -- and rendered them forbidden under Bourbon rule.

Aristotle Kallis' discussion of propaganda in the Third Reich offers a unique prospective on the information industry in Nazi Germany. As he exposed the power struggle between the different competing government agencies within the Reich information infrastructure, Kallis convincingly expounded that the communications networks and the information flow under the Nazi regime was far from the conventional view of strictly centralized, unidirectional coordinated organization. In his study, Kallis dispelled the myth of the internal consolidated, collective propaganda effort, exposing instead the polycratic erosion, duplication, and jurisdictional elasticity that characterized the Reich's public information apparatus, and indicated that, despite the conventionally perceived government control over mass communications, the German social sphere was not completely immune to the influence of public opinion.

These themes of emerging defiance of official propaganda and censorship, and the ensuing power struggle for control of the information exchange in a closed totalitarian

society, were just as prominent in the history of communications of the Soviet Union as they were in Bourbon France or Hitler's Germany. Soviet media, particularly in the 1980s were far from the centralized, homogenous institution that they are commonly perceived to be in the West, and public opinion played a far more active role in the function of the Soviet communications networks than is usually thought.

In the final decade of the USSR's existence, the younger generation's unwillingness to follow the Communist Party's moral, ideological, and cultural models became increasingly apparent, gaining attention from the highest echelons of the Soviet government and establishment, and receiving prominent coverage in state-regulated media. The increasingly intense interest in progressively more radical forms of foreign rock music among the Soviet youngsters presented one of the particularly fervent points of contention in relation to the dominant Communist ideology. Although the official reaction to the upsurge of the nation's youth fascination with the most "decadent," "unpatriotic," and "ideologically harmful" forms of Western counterculture was prodigiously condemning and unflattering, a fraction of daring Soviet journalists would gradually attempt to engage in a constructive dialogue with their young audience in hopes of meeting the rising public demand for objective, unbiased information. This thesis focuses on the interaction between the official information organs and the emerging underground rock subculture in order to illustrate some of the inherent issues that accompanied the era of socio-political, economic, and cultural transformations of the Soviet state in the 1980s, which ultimately contributed to the decline of the USSR in December 1991.

¹ Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-revolutionary France*, (HarperCollins, 1996); Aristotle A. Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

CHAPTER 1

THE STATE, MEDIA, AND CULTURAL DISSENT

1.1 The Soviet Establishment and Western Cultural Influence

In the year 1980, few could predict that the Soviet Union, one of the world's two superpowers at the time, would cease to exist as a political entity merely a decade later. On the surface, the Soviet system appeared solid and indissoluble, yet the society was on the verge of an era of profound and irreversible changes that would come to affect the very future of the Communist system of government. Many of these changes involved the cultural aspirations and needs of the Soviet people, and the interests and agendas of the young citizens played an important role in the ensuing process of the country's social transformation.

The phenomenal popularity of Western and domestic rock music among Soviet youth was continuously addressed by Soviet officials on the highest level. Beginning with Nikita Khrushchev, whose disdain and contempt for modern fashions, avant-garde art, and Western popular music have well documented, the majority of the Soviet ruling elite had tried to suppress, control, and eradicate the budding alternative culture for several decades. Yet their most earnest efforts to that effect were to no avail.¹ As British writer and journalist Martin Walker wrote,

For decades the Soviet government tried to seal off its people inside a cultural iron curtain. Western radio broadcasts were jammed. Western rock music was banned, and records were confiscated at the border. But the music and the message always seeped through.²

The history of the Soviet youth's deviations from the dogmas of the Communist ideology and the norms of social behavior and cultural orientation prescribed by the presiding regime was in several ways connected to a number of measures and initiatives that directly involved the Kremlin leadership. From the periods of thaw in international relations during the early years of Khrushchev's and the later period of Brezhnev's administrations, to the anti-Western campaign of the Andropov and Chernenko regimes, and into the reform era of Gorbachev's democratization process, the cultural developments in the country were closely connected to the political decisions of the Red Square elite.

Several scholars of the countercultural revolution in Eastern Europe, such as Dr. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Dr. Timothy W. Ryback, cite the Sixth World Youth Festival, held in Moscow in July 1957, as the starting point of a wide-scale diffusion of Western popular culture among Soviet youth.³ The Festival, which included artists and participants from several Western countries, presented Soviet youth with alternative cultural trends in dress in music and, most significantly, introduced them to rock n' roll music and style. The explosion of the popularity of Western music and fashion among the Soviet youth prompted the Party officials and youth organizations to call for raids and patrols, aimed at apprehending the "immoral" behavior and curtailing the spread of "bourgeois" trends.⁴ The Soviet press was actively engaged in the negative campaign against Western influence and stern condemnation of the elements of the Soviet youth that showed interest in the foreign popular culture.

The signing of the Helsinki Accord in August 1975 represented another development in the increase of the Soviet Union cultural interaction with the West. The

diplomatic agreement, designed to improve relationships between the Communist East and the capitalist West, allowed for mending of cultural ties across the Iron Curtain. In the spirit of the accord, *Melodia*, the Soviet Union's only music recording label, was able to secure licenses for a number of Western rock n' roll and pop albums during the years of détente, bringing previously unavailable music to Soviet consumers, although *Melodia*'s roster of licensed products remained decidedly remote from appealing to the youth counterculture.⁵ In the late 1970s, the country's official concert promotion agency, *Goskoncert*, took similar steps towards a degree of cultural openness, arranging for several Party-approved Western performers, such as the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Boney M, Cliff Richard, and Elton John, to appear in the USSR.⁶ Yet these artists did not satisfy the needs of Soviet countercultural youth, and it would not be until the middle of the next decade that popular Western artists that appealed to young audiences would be allowed to perform in the Soviet Union.

Despite these apparent improvements, the USSR's young music lovers did not appear content with the releases of a handful of dated recordings, and continued to take measures into their own hands. As Soviet state-monopolized record industry failed to meet the current needs of music fans, vibrant black market networks of exchange and commerce emerged in all major cities. Local youth organizations and local law enforcement structures routinely raided the suspected record swap meets, punishing the apprehended speculators with penalties that ranged from administrative fines to jail sentences.⁷ Alexander Kushnir recounts one Moscow record collector's recollections regarding a standard police tactic for apprehension of illegal record collectors' meetings:

Another favorite police pastime became raids on the so-called "crowd" ("clouds" or "beam"), where collectors shared vinyl records and recordings of domestic and Western rock music. Such exchanges occurred usually in the suburbs, close to the railway platforms, in the wooded areas, or in the open field. 'The venue was constantly changing, but it would not save anyone - says Ivanov. - Several times militia with dogs tried to surround us. Seeing the yellow-and-blue "gazik" jeeps, music lovers threw records on the ground and tried to flee. I still keep the envelope of an imported disc with an imprint of a militiaman's boot.⁸

Despite the most earnest efforts of numerous Soviet official organizations, the country's youth continuously developed a countercultural heritage that contradicted the dogmas of the dominant Communist social structure. Bypassing the official avenues, Western recordings and periodicals found their way to the eager consumers through elaborate contraband networks, swap-meet exchanges, and clandestine transactions. Over the course of the Cold War, the influence of Western counterculture on the Soviet youth grew throughout the nation, with even the underground forms of Western music gaining mass popularity on a scale that the official Kremlin often found threatening to the very foundations of "proletarian" culture and ideology.

1.2 Soviet Press Structure and Youth Media Organs

The Soviet mass media, specifically organized with intent to perform as an instrument of government's control and influence over the flow of information, played an integral part in creating an information network for the countercultural youth and acting as a mouthpiece for the cultural desires and aspirations of the young people of the Soviet state. As television in the USSR was rather underdeveloped, offering limited programming on only two nation-wide channels, the national press played a crucial role in relating the official policy and reflecting the mass public opinion.

The Soviet press catered to a wide variety of patrons, with various periodicals accommodating different social and demographic groups. Specialized media organs appeared under the supervision and authority of the appropriate governmental organizations, state departments and ministries, and professional unions.⁹ Under this structure of management, the Union of Writers might supervise literary almanacs, the Union of Composers curated publications dedicated to musical arts, and magazines devoted to cinematography were issued under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture. As we will see later, this system of official media patronage played an important role in the development of the Soviet media according to the agenda of particular factions and functionaries with the parent organizations, and with relation to changing social and economic conditions.

Youth magazines and newspapers abided by the same standard. Supervising the publication of periodical literature aimed at children and young adults was the All-Union Lenin's Communist Union of Youth, abbreviated in Russian as VLKSM, or Komsomol (from the first syllables of the last three words.) Although the core members of Komsomol proper included young people ages fourteen and up, the organization was overseeing the issue of literature for Soviet youth of all ages.

The primary function of the Komsomol organization was to “educate young people on the great ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the heroic traditions of the revolutionary struggle, the examples of selfless labor of workers, farmers, intelligentsia; develop and strengthen the young generation class approach to all the phenomena of social life, to prepare persistent, highly educated, loving labor of young builders communism.”¹⁰ In essence, Komsomol was responsible for the ideological work among the young people of

the USSR on behalf of the Communist Party. As such, it performed an important function of communicating the Kremlin's political agenda to the mass audience of Soviet youth, and enlisted multiple organs of mass information and propaganda in its arsenal to that effect. Yet even its stable of media publications displayed considerable variations in ideological approach, ways of interaction with the reading audience, and journalistic delivery.

Beginning in the late 1970s, a divide between two opposing tendencies in covering the budding rock counterculture began to emerge. In an attempt to respond to their audience's inquiries and requests, several publications began to offer more factual and unbiased coverage of the Western music. Popular youth magazines that would gradually allow rock music onto their pages without a tone of overbearing criticism included *Smena* [*The Next Shift*], *Yunost* [*Youth*], *Moskovski Komsomolets*, and *Rovesnik* [*Peer*], the last of which assumed a dominant position in the coverage of Western rock in the closing years of the 1980s, all operating under theegis of VLKSM.¹¹ In many instances, the above-mentioned publications transitioned from starkly radical and hostile positions to a markedly more liberal stance: for instance, in 1979, *Smena* published a harshly negative editorial article that vehemently condemned punk, but by the mid-80s it changed to offering much more sympathetic and open-minded coverage of Western rock music.¹²

On the opposing end of the spectrum were leading press organs of the CPSU, *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Sovetskaya Rossia*, along with such periodicals as the Ministry of Culture's newspaper *Sovetskaya Cultura* [*Soviet Culture*], the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy media outlet *Krasnaya Zvezda* [*Red Star*],

Nash Sovremennik [*Our Contemporary*], curated by the Writers' Union, and the organs of the conservative Union of Composers, *Sovetskaya Musica* [*Soviet Music*] and *Muzikalnaya Zhizn'* [*Musical Life*]. The latter publication, although enlisted by counterculture historian S. P. Ramet into the ranks of the more liberally inclined media, had in fact published a number of firmly unsympathetic articles on some aspects of the Western and Soviet rock music. The firmly orthodox *Molodaya Gvardia* [*Young Guard*], and the largest circulated youth organ in the country, the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a youth organ with the largest circulation and distribution nationwide, represented the conservative wing of the Komsomol press.¹³ In March 1984, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*'s started to issue a weekly companion, *Sobesednik* [*The Conversationalist*], another youth organ with an ultra-conservative orientation that would factor greatly in the anti-rock and anti-Western counterculture campaign of the 1980s.

Although theoretically the official affiliation of a particular organ of the press dictated the totality of that media outlet's outlook, conduct, and style, in reality the paramount factors in matters of presentation and content rested with the heads of the editorial staff. Nominally, governmental control over the printed media institutions manifested in the state not only owning the means of production, advertisement, and distribution of the material, but also possessing absolute control over the official system of censorship. Throughout the years of the Soviet Union's existence, the Main Administration of Literary and Publishing Affairs (abbreviated in Russian as Glavlit) supervised all matters related to printed media. Glavlit's authority included issuing publishing permits, control over press materials entering and leaving the state, and the monitoring and approving of textual material in all forms of media, which included print,

radio, television, and live performances. Nevertheless, according to American historian Joseph Gibbs' study of Soviet media, editors-in-chief of media organs enjoyed a considerable amount of discretion and leverage in matters of selection and publishing of materials, which contributed to a degree of ideological diversity and thematic variety even between publications that were operating under the same supervising agency.¹⁴

1.3 Images of Western Counterculture in the Soviet Press

Since the early days of rock n' roll, the official media's reaction to the growing popularity of Western musical styles among Soviet youth was predominately hostile. The Warsaw Bloc ideologists interpreted Elvis Presley's 1958 draft and deployment to Germany as part of an imperialist plot to launch a cultural attack against the morality of the Eastern Bloc youth.¹⁵ In the early 1960s, the Soviet media ridiculed the Beatles, portraying the group as show business puppets that were designed to distract the young people from important political issues, and commonly dismissed them as a superficial trend, whose days as fashion icons were numbered.¹⁶ Nevertheless, as the end of the Brezhnev era marked a period of a relative leniency in governmental attitude towards Western popular culture, an increasing number of youth publications were more open to report on Western media news and rock music. The young Soviet reading audience demanded a new approach to music journalism that would report on risqué and controversial artists without condemning them for not following the orthodox standards of the Soviet ideological agenda. Yet by the early 1980s, the majority of the official press was still either reluctant or strictly opposed to embrace the counterculture.

Personal preferences of the music journalists and their reflection in the context of the regulated press presented another facet of the Soviet media. Individual tastes and opinions are nothing remarkable when considered in the context of music reporting in the West, but in Soviet culture, personal views were closely connected to the current political situation in the country. Even those critics and writers who appeared “progressive” at certain times would occasionally succumb to embracing reactionary positions concerning the rising popularity of recent Western trends among the Soviet youth. Aiming to earn the support of the official administration, or completing mandatory editorial propaganda assignments, several Soviet music experts would participate in attacks on Western fashion in order to divert attention from their preferred field, and to create distance between the purportedly truly decadent culture and the performers and genres that these writers typically promoted in press. In one such example, *Rovesnik*’s rock critics Sergei Kastalskyi, who would later play a key role in the magazine’s increasingly positive coverage of hard rock music, arbitrarily altered the text of a 1985 *Rolling Stone* article by Tim Holmes in order to reflect his personal attitudes regarding certain aspects of heavy metal sub-culture. Since *Rolling Stone* and other Western music periodicals were not readily available to the Soviet reading audience, Kastalskyi took liberties with his supposedly accurate translation of the English text by adding sharp personal attacks against the infantilism of bearers of “I Love Heavy Metal” badges and Swedish guitar virtuoso Yngwie J. Malmsteen, although neither sentiment was present in Holmes’ original piece.¹⁷

In some instances, the journalists would publish their critical pieces anonymously or under pseudonyms, but the reading public would inevitably recognize the scribes’

identities from their characteristic writing styles. The tradition dates back to 1966, when famous jazz advocate Alexander Tsafsmann appeared under a pseudonym in *Sovetskaya Cultura* with a scathing attack on the Beatles, and continued into the 1980s.¹⁸ In 1982, in an answer to a reader's inquiry, *Rovesnik* published an anonymous article that ridiculed the supposed infantilism and narrow-mindedness of the new generation of British heavy metal bands. The piece, which relied heavily on translated foreign material and quotes by Western rock musicians, bore all the stylistic traits and mannerisms of Artemy Troitsky, one of the most notable figures of the embryonic Soviet rock press. A freelance journalist, who began his writing career in 1973, Troitsky became one of most important Russian rock critics of the 1980s, gaining notoriety for his knowledge of foreign and domestic popular music, and attaining recognition both in the USSR and abroad as the country's premier rock critic. Known for his penchant for classic British rock and the avant-garde, Troitsky earned recognition in both Soviet and foreign press, not only as a music writer, but also as a vocal promoter of the emerging Soviet rock scene, aiding domestic bands with publicity, promotion, concert organization, and media contacts. Thanks to his foreign connections, Troitsky's book *Back in the USSR*, first published by London's Omnibus Press in 1987, became the first book about the evolution of the rock underground in the Soviet Union written by a Soviet author to be issued abroad. Perhaps weary of alienating the radical portion of the Soviet underground audience, Troitsky opted to withhold his name from publication.¹⁹ Troitsky would use this approach in the future, when in September 1986 *Rovesnik* published a venomous feature on Kiss, which was nominally credited to the magazine's editor, Andrei Nodia.²⁰ However, Troitsky blew his

cover when he submitted the same article, with minute alterations, under his real name to the bastion of the conservative Composer's Union, *Musicalnaya Zjizn* ', a month later.²¹

Several youth publications notwithstanding, the bulk of the Soviet media of the early 1980s was extremely negative in its assessment of the effects of Western rock music on the Soviet listeners, and used an array of propaganda stratagems to appeal to the patriotic nature of the Soviet youngsters. Embodying textbook examples of propaganda, as described in the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, the conservative elements within the Soviet press used tactics like name-calling and card-stacking devices, appealing to the fears and patriotic emotions of the Soviet people, in order to deter the masses from Western rock.²² In the article "Barbarossa of Rock N' Roll," *Komsomolskaya Pravda* insisted that Western capital and NATO initiated the spread of rock in the USSR as an elaborate ideological diversion that utilized Western music, radio, recording industry, and press as tools of anti-Communist propaganda, and chastised Soviet youth for falling victim to the ideologically poisonous musical trends.²³ "A Poisonous Kiss," *Komsomolskaya Pravda*'s extremely negative article on Kiss, featured a 1977 image of American masked shock rock group with a categorically damning caption: "Originality? No--ugliness!"²⁴ Using the virtual inaccessibility of original sources to the overwhelming majority of Soviet youngsters, conservative journalists arbitrarily misquoted and falsified rock lyrics and misrepresented the bands' political agendas, depicting Western hard rock musicians as decadent and immoral anti-Soviet hirelings of the international imperialist right wing. In one of the most baffling cases, the Leningrad newspaper *Leningradskiy Universitet* [Leningrad University] inexplicably attributed AC/DC (whom they

erroneously described as a punk rock band) with a song about killing babies, citing the following verse as an example:

I kill children
I love to see them die.
I kill children
And makes their mothers cry,
I want to hear them scream,
I feed them poisoned candy.²⁵

A closer examination reveals that these lyrics do not belong to any of the group's songs; in fact, they appear to be a frivolous and arbitrarily augmented composite of the songs "Dead Babies" and "I Love the Dead" by American shock rock pioneer, Alice Cooper, although the actual lyrics cited do not match either.

In a similar case of deliberate misinformation, *Sobesednik* writer and noted media anti-rock crusader Alexander Naloev attempted to present Metallica's 1984 anti-death penalty song, "Ride the Lightning," as merely an anthem to alcohol over-indulgence, going as far as fabricating a supposedly confirming public statement from the members of the group.²⁶ Naturally, Naloev's forgery would only work with non-English speaking readers, as the lyrics explicitly and unambiguously describe the mental anguish of a man, condemned to an electric chair. In the same article, Naloev also falsified the words to the song "Blood of My Enemies" by American metal band Manowar. Naloev insisted that the song, which in reality deals with Viking mythology and a fallen warrior's ascent to Asgard, contains the appeal to "kill the Russians by dozens, by hundreds, by thousands"—although that line does not appear anywhere in the song's actual lyrics.²⁷

The smear campaign was not without its paradoxes. In a rare instance of solidarity between official Soviet propaganda and conservative America, *Sobesednik* correspondent

Alexander Lutyi sided with the United States Congress and parental watchdog group PMRC (Parental Music Resource Center) in the case of the 1985 Congressional hearings. The hearings, instigated by the PMRC, aimed to regulate sales of “questionable” recordings to minors and advocated censorship of rock lyrics and videos, and eventually succeeded in instituting warning labels for the albums.²⁸

Despite the earnest efforts of the Communist propagandists to dissuade Soviet youth from interest in foreign rock music, these countermeasures had precisely the opposite effect. The magazines and newspapers that contained any, however critical and disapproving, information regarding Western hard rock and heavy metal, would instantly disappear from the newsstands and enjoyed high demand in public libraries. The young fans of the underground music would find ways to get around the inaccessibility of photocopy technology to ordinary citizens by finding alternative ways of information circulation. Whenever an article featured a photograph of the group, said photograph would be widely duplicated by means of photographing the printed image, with the resulting faux simile black and white photos subsequently sold for a ruble each in school hallways and collectors swap meets. To the official’s dismay, even the negative press seemed to have fueled Soviet youngsters’ insatiable appetite for rock counterculture.

¹ Sabrina Petra Ramet, Sergei Zamascikov, Robert Bird, “The Soviet Rock Scene,” in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 182.

² Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia*, (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1988), 10.

³ Ibid; Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 30.

⁴ Ryback, 33.

⁵ Ibid, 161.

⁶ Ibid, 161-2.

⁷ Ibid, 159.

⁸ Alexander Kushnir, *100 Magnitoalbomov Sovetskogo Roka. 1977-1991: 25 Let Podpol'noi Zvukozapisi* [100 Magnetic Tape Albums of Soviet Rock. 1977-1991: 25 Years of Underground Recording,] (Moscow: Lean/Agraft/Kraft+, 1999), 42.

⁹ Joseph Gibbs, *Gorbachev's Glasnost: The Soviet Media in the First Phase of Perestroika* (College Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 8.

¹⁰ *Ustav Vsesouzdnogo Leninskogo Communisticheskogo Souza Molodezji* [The Charter of the All-Union Leninist Soviet Union of Youth], (Moscow: Molodaya Gravdia, 1966), 1.

¹¹ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, "The Soviet Rock Scene," 186.

¹² "Karnaval Bezumiya" ["Carnival of Madness"], *Smena* 1247 (May, 1979.)

¹³ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, "The Soviet Rock Scene," 186.

¹⁴ Ibid, 8-9.

¹⁵ Ryback, 26.

¹⁶ Ryback, 62-3.

¹⁷ Holmes, Tim. "I'll Never Grow Up, Now!" *Rolling Stone* 456 (September 12, 1985); Holmes, Tim. "Ya Nikogda Ne Stanu Vzosl'im!" ["I'll Never Grow Up, Now!"] transl. Sergei Kastalskyi; Kris Kelmi. "Khvalitsa Tut Nechem" ["Nothing to Brag About"], *Rovesnik* 8 (August, 1986).

¹⁸ Ryback, 63.

¹⁹ "Nevozmozžno Bit' Vse Vremya v Odnu Tochku" ["It Is Impossible to Always Hit in the Same Spot"], *Rovesnik* 2 (February, 1982).

²⁰ Alexei Nodia "Uteshenie dlya Panikovskogo, ili Oskverniteli Roka" ["Panikovsky's Comfort, or the Defilers of Rock"], *Rovesnik* 9 (September, 1986).

²¹ Artemy Troitsky, "Vokrug Kiss" ["Around Kiss"], *Musikalnaya Zjizn'* 20 (November, 1986).

²² "How to Detect Propaganda: Institute for Propaganda Analysis," in *Propaganda*, ed. Robert Jackall, (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 217-23.

²³ U. Filinov, "Barbarossa Rock N' Rolla" ["Barbarossa of Rock N' Roll"], *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (September 16, 1984).

²⁴ A. Karmen, "Otravlenyi Pozceluyi" ["A Poisonous Kiss"], *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (September 9, 1983).

²⁵ V. Griбанov, "Esche Raz o Golikh Korolyakh" ["Once More on the Naked Kings"], *Leningradskiy Universitet* (November 5, 1986).

²⁶ Alexander Naloyev, “Diavoly ‘Metallichesкого Roka,’ ili Kto Seet Anti-Communism v Dushakh Molodikh” [“Devils of the ‘Metallic Rock,’ or Who Saws Anti-Communism in the Young Souls”], *Sobesednik* 38 (September, 1986).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Alexander Lutyi, “Krysi na Obed, ili Hard Roku Vse Dozvoleno” [“Rats for Dinner, or Hard Rock Free-for-All”], *Sobesednik* 51 (December, 1986).

CHAPTER 2

THE YEARS OF REPRESSION

2.1 Konstantin Chernenko and the New Moral Crusade

The first half of the 1980s ushered in an era of precipitous changes in the Soviet government. Several prominent Kremlin officials and their successors passed away due to illness or old age between 1982 and 1985, resulting in the country going through four heads of state in less than three years.

The series of changes in the country's political leadership began in January 1982, when, following the death of Mikhail Suslov, the seventy-one year old Politburo member Konstantin Chernenko ascended as the ideological head of the CPSU. A hardened conservative, Chernenko viewed rock music as a dangerous and corruptive influence of hostile imperialist ideology, and contended that "through rock, the enemy is trying to exploit youthful psychology."¹ He considered the "Old Guard" of the Communist party the only fitting authority for the overseeing of the proper ideological upbringing of youth.²

Eight months later, Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee and *de facto* ruler of the Soviet Union for eighteen years, passed away after a lengthy illness at the age of seventy-five, his post usurped by a former head of KGB, Yuri Andropov. Despite Andropov's secret police background, his position on the state's role in the censorship of the press was not as overbearing as one might expect from a former chief of the KGB. Although he "cited the need for candor in official reporting but not in the information and cultural media in general," Andropov "never spoke of a general

media liberalization, or of publishing long-suppressed or ideologically suspicious works.”³ Nevertheless, Andropov’s view on the issue of rock music’s pernicious influence on the young Soviet citizens echoed the hardline sentiments of his more traditionalist Party colleagues, as he cautioned against “ideologically harmful” artists with “suspicious repertoires.”⁴

With Andropov’s consent and Chernenko presiding over the Party ideology line, the conservatives in the Politburo set out to tighten their control over ideological issues, which they perceived had grown prohibitively relaxed during the closing stage of Brezhnev’s administration.⁵ Chernenko launched the new Politburo’s most decisive assault against the Soviet youth counterculture and the pro-Western cultural influences with the address at the July 14, 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, entitled “The Pressing Issues of the Party’s Ideological, Mass-Political Work.”⁶ In the speech, Chernenko reiterated his position on foreign music’s influence over the nation’s youth, proclaiming that the Western foes of the USSR had launched “increasingly massive attacks,” purposely infusing anti-Soviet ideology in popular music in order to “poison the minds of the Soviet people.”⁷

A year after Chernenko’s condemnation of “pop music ensembles... with programs of questionable properties” that “cause ideological and aesthetic damage,” the CPSU Central Committee undertook several draconian measures that aimed to decapitate the rock movement in the country. In July 1984, the Committee issued a decree, designed to strengthen the management of the Komsomol organization, which Chernenko had earlier criticized for what he perceived as the increasing formalism of ideological work and the insufficient training of party-ideological and administrative staff.⁸ The official

press seconded Chernenko's accusations, with *Pravda* and several other central newspapers chastising the Communist Youth Union for the lack of disciplinary work and failures in combatting "new temptations of the youth scene," such as "blind imitation of Western fashions" and "lack of interest in politics."⁹ The decree entrusted Komsomol with a greater authority in performing its duties as an ideological watchdog, and charged the Leninist Youth Union leaders with the duty to detect and remove undesirable cultural and political trends and tendencies. Within a week, the forty-one-year-old head of the Komsomol, Victor Mishkin, addressed the assigned task at the organization's leadership assembly, demanding a greater emphasis on the "educational work in the areas of leisure activities," and calling for patrols of music studios, discotheques, and performances in order to overcome the "corruptive" rock influence on the "battleground of fierce ideological conflict."¹⁰

During the same month of July 1984, the Committee, in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture, further addressed the issue of the rising domestic amateur rock scene by issuing Order # 361, ominously titled "On Organizing the Activities of VIAs [Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles] and Improving the Ideological-Artistic Level of their Repertoire."¹¹ The order dictated the formal procedures for mandatory official registration and approval of amateur bands, and stipulated that 80 percent of the repertoire of a professional group must consist of material written by members of the State Union of the Composers, a nation-wide organization that included 3,000 of the officially approved composers, songwriters, critics, and music historians.¹² Aside from its ideological motivation to control the emerging Soviet rock scene, the decree also pursued a purely economic agenda. The Union of Composers actively lobbied for the enactment

of such order in an effort to maintain its continuous monopoly over the recording and broadcasting of all the music in the country, and to ensure that the financial interests of this elite group of composers would not be threatened by outside songwriters.¹³

The concentrated campaign against the “ideologically alien” popular music continued well into the next year, forcing the traditionally more liberal publications to severely curtail their usual reporting on Western popular music, particularly heavy rock and punk, unless those genres were presented in a strictly negative way. In particular, *Rovesnik* had dramatically cut its coverage of such risqué topics as hard rock and heavy metal, completely seizing all reportage on the usually popular subject between August 1984 and June 1985, opting to instead feature only openly left-wing, pro-Communist Western performers, like Manfred Mann and Billy Bragg.¹⁴ An isolated article by Artemy Troitsky, in which the journalist had questioned the necessity of outlawing rock music in the country, appeared in the usually conservative *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and led to a year of official blacklisting of the writer’s further publications.¹⁵ On the other hand, the conservative media organs continued their relentless smear campaign against Western rock music, making the most rambunctious styles, such as heavy rock and punk, their prime targets.

In the absence of accurate and unbiased in-depth information in the national media, Soviet fans turned to the country’s tradition of *samizdat*—unsanctioned independent publishing—to keep the countercultural press communications channels open. Homemade underground magazines like Moscow’s *Ukho*, *Pops*, and *Ulright*, and Leningrad’s *RIO* and *Roxy*, issued with great risks to their staff and publishers, filled the lull in the official press coverage of rock culture, providing reports and analytical pieces

on rock happenings and artists in the USSR and abroad.¹⁶ The underground fanzines managed to establish a dialogue with their audience, answering readers' questions, reporting on the rock scene in different Soviet cities, addressing rumors, and offering readers foreign and Soviet popularity polls and music chart news. Operating without any supervision or censorship by the authorities, the independent press engaged in discussions of controversial topics, such as continuous repressions of undesirable musicians, negative coverage of rock music by the official press, official ignorance of youth, and social reactionary stigmas against counterculture, and frequently engaged in open criticism of the narrow-mindedness and archaism of the Kremlin retrogrades.¹⁷ Although their clandestine status mandated small circulation and long gaps between issues, these fan-made publications rapidly built networks of contributors and distributors across the country.¹⁸ Like several other countercultural channels, the underground press created an independent communications network, which obstinately defied the state's monopoly on information exchange, in the face of the ongoing official persecution and oppression of undesirable ideological influences.

2.2 The Ban Lists

The consequences of Chernenko's doctrine extended beyond the control over the repertoire of the domestic musicians and the approved subjects of the press coverage, and into the realm of public performance and private consumption of pre-recorded material. During the following two years, the ideological decisions of the Central Committee spawned a series of memorandums and directives that aimed at affirming the Party's monopoly over cultural life and entertainment industry. Designed for internal official use,

these directives were dispatched to the regional and local Party authorities, law enforcement agencies, cultural officials, and officers of Soviet fleet and border customs in order to prevent ideologically harmful material from entering the country, and to restrict any public broadcasts, performance, and sales of music they deemed objectionable.

One of the most notorious of such lists was the report produced by the All-Union Ministry of Culture in October 1984.¹⁹ The memorandum, generated by the Ministry's National Scientific and Methodic Center of People's Art and Cultural Enlightenment, demonstrated both the utter cluelessness and the acute paranoia of the Soviet cultural authorities. The document listed seventy-three foreign groups and performers, of which at least a dozen were purely fictitious, and with the names of several of the remaining Western artists' names that actually existed grossly misinterpreted, along with thirty-eight Soviet rock groups, and several émigré singers/songwriters and their domestic counterparts.²⁰ The Ministry urged the Soviet officials in charge of cultural enlightenment to familiarize themselves with Western music publications, in order to maintain vigilance and awareness of emerging new trends in Western popular culture.

In addition, several abridged versions and variations of the document circulated among regional Komsomol organizations, discotheques, and law enforcement agencies, sometimes under the guise of a legitimate supplementary ordinance to the acting Order # 361.²¹ These abridged copies frequently appeared hastily typed, and contained even more misspelling and mistranslations of the artist's names than the original Ministry of Culture memorandum—for example, the American rock group Blue Oyster Cult appeared as “Blue Oyster Colt,” and the British band The Stranglers as “Strigles.” Often ambiguous

in their origins and legal authenticity, such lists enjoyed rapid and wide distribution among Russian cultural authorities.²²

According to Artemy Troitsky, when a number of incensed Moscow disc jockeys, musicians, and journalists contested the validity of the Ministry of Culture's memorandum and similar documents, they were informed that the lists represented merely recommendations of certain departments and individuals in the Ministry, and had no official power of decree. However, this information was not divulged outside the capital, and no official renunciation of the "black lists" was ever made public, compelling some provincial culture executives to use these lists as actual repertoire guidelines for clubs, studios, discotheques, and other forms of public performance and broadcast until 1987.²³

Less extensive, but equally infamous in the underground lore, was the 1985 assessment of foreign groups and performers recommended for exclusion from public broadcast and consumption, compiled and approved by the leadership of the Nikolayev Regional Komsomol Committee of Ukraine. The Ukrainian decree had used the Ministry of Culture list as its template, but featured specific qualifications for the official concern. Along with the names of thirty-eight Western musicians and bands, the compendium featured descriptions of the artists' alleged ideological and cultural deviancies and the reasons for the recommended prohibition of their works. Legendary for its unintentional hilarity, the list advised banning perfectly harmless pop artists like 10CC and Julio Iglesias for their supposed neo-fascism, The Village People for promoting violence, while Tina Turner was deemed objectionable for her propaganda of sex, and American party rock group Van Halen (appearing as "Ban Halen" in the original document) were

inexplicably accused of anti-Soviet propaganda.²⁴ In yet another display of official misunderstanding, the German disco combo Genghis Khan was described as anti-Communist nationalists for writing the song “Moskau,” which they hoped would earn them an invitation to perform at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. These purported justifications made the directive an instant object of ridicule and mockery among Soviet music lovers, who regarded the list as another prominent example of glaring ignorance, obliviousness, and paranoia of the Communist official elite.²⁵

2.3 The Wave of Persecutions

As preposterous and absurd as the Chernenko-era slew of decrees and “ban lists” were, the penalties that faced individuals caught in violation of the aforementioned prohibitive instructions were no laughing matter. Even though, as it has been mentioned earlier, several of the “ban lists” lacked the powers of official orders, the documents were routinely used by local officials as cultural guidelines, as the local Party organizations cooperated with the law enforcement agencies in using the reports of the violations of the stipulations of these lists to investigate other possible offences. Armed with the July 1984 directives, the authorities utilized provisos of the Soviet criminal code to instigate legal proceeding against the perpetrators on underground distribution, duplication, circulation, and public performance of undesirable music. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* warned in its April 7, 1984 articles that the activities of sound engineers involved in the clandestine mass production of the unsanctioned material would be punishable by law under Articles 153 (“illegal entrepreneurial activities”) and 162 (“practice of an illegal trade”) of the Criminal Code. The newspaper advocated the measure as a necessary stipulation that

would allow government officials to act “assuredly and decisively against the spread of this so-called ‘music.’”²⁶

The wave of anti-rock repressions rolled across the country, as Komsomol activists and law enforcement structures inspected suspicious discotheques, raided clandestine sound recording studios and distribution centers, barred the publishing of independent fanzines, shut down unofficial rock concerts, and dispersed underground record swap meets. The apprehended culprits were penalized with all the severity the law allowed, often receiving disproportionately harsh punishments. Expulsion from schools, universities, and work, along with detention, imprisonment, and psychiatric commitment were among the most common measures of punishment.²⁷ Across the country, studio engineers found guilty of circulating forbidden materials that “openly insulted the Soviet people and praised sex maniacs” were convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and unlawful commercial activity and issued stern sentences that ranged from two to five years of imprisonment.²⁸ In Moscow and Leningrad, a number of blacklisted musicians, underground concert organizers, and unauthorized music distributors that managed to avoid lengthy prison terms for their activities were instead relegated to mental hospitals, where they were administered psychotropic medication, used to treat schizophrenics and the violently insane.²⁹

Yet with all the brutality of the Kremlin’s new anti-rock crusade, the Soviet underground had confronted the conservative backlash against rock music with an equally decisive resistance and disregard for the consequences. The discotheques continued to secretly play forbidden music, illegal sound studios and swap meets carried on their operations, smugglers found new ways of getting foreign records and magazines

into the country, prohibited bands played underground shows, and blacklisted journalists appeared under pseudonyms and aliases.³⁰ Homemade magazines compensated for the media inadequacies, and the channels of clandestine recording and distribution of underground music evolved from “a pirate-style re-recording chain—from one consumer to another” into a “distinct communications network, where people and their relationships played a connecting role.”³¹ Despite the atmosphere of overwhelming official persecution, and in the absence of any support or protection from the mass media, the Soviet youth counterculture refused to surrender.

¹ Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Rock Counterculture in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union," *Survey*, 29, no. 2 (Summer 1985), 155.

² K. U. Chernenko, Speech at the Army Conference of Secretaries of Komsomol organizations, *Rovesnik* 7 (July 1984), 4.

³ Joseph Gibbs, *Gorbachev's Glasnost: The Soviet Media in the First Phase of Perestroika*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991,) 10.

⁴ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, 190.

⁵ Ryback, 220.

⁶ Konstantin Chernenko, "Aktualnyie Voprosi Ideologicheskoi, Massovo-Politicheskoi Raboty Partii ["The Pressing Issues of the Party's Ideological, Mass-Political Work,"] in *Materialy Plenuma CK KPSS. 14-15 Iunya 1983 g.* [*Materials of the CC CPSU Plenum. 14-15 June 1983*] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1983), 27-66.

⁷ Ibid; Ryback, 220

⁸ Chernenko, *Materialy Plenuma*, 32; "Postanovlenie CK KPSS 'O Dalneishem Uluchshenii Partiyogo Rukovodstva Komsomolom i Povysheniya ego Roli v Kommunisticheskom Vospitanii Molodezhi'" ["Decree of the CPSU Central Committee 'On the Further Improvement of Party Leadership of Komsomol and the Elevation of Its Role in the Communist Upbringing of the Youth'"] *Pravda* (July 7, 1984), 1-2.

⁹ Ryback, 220.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ryback, 222; Troitsky, 95.

¹³ Troitsky, 95-96.

¹⁴ *Rovesnik*, issues 8/1984 through 6/1985

¹⁵ Troitsky, 99.

¹⁶ Alexander Kushnir, *Zolotoye Podpol'ye: Polnaya Illustrirovannaya Encyclopedia Rok-Samizdata, 1967-1994* [*The Golden Underground: The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock-Samizdat, 1976—1994*,] (Nizhniy Novgorod: Dekom, 1994); *Soviet Rock: 25 Years in the Underground + 5 Years of Freedom*, ed. Igor Zaitsev (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990), 74-182.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Kushnir, *Zolotoye Podpol'ye*.

¹⁹ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, 221; see Appendix B for the author's translation of the document.

²⁰ To this day, the inexplicable inclusion of the fictional ensembles remains a perplexing mystery.

²¹ Ryback, 221; see Appendix A.

²² Troitsky, 98.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Appendix C.

²⁵ The specific mention of Pink Floyd circa 1983 in the Soviet ban lists may also appear surprising, but at least in that case the Communist functionaries had specific political objections to the band's anti-war concept album *The Final Cut*, which makes references to Leonid Brezhnev and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

²⁶ Ryback, 221.

²⁷ Vladimir Polupanov, "Russkyi Rok Oblomoslya" ["Russian Rock Breakdown"], *Argumenti I Fakty* 28 (July 9, 2003), 19.

²⁸ Kushnir, *100 Magnitoalbomov*, 43; Polupanov, 19; Ryback, 219.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Troitsky, 99.

³¹ Kushnir, *100 Magnitoalbomov*, 56.

CHAPTER 3

THE ADVENT OF CHANGE

3.1 The Democratization Reforms under Mikhail Gorbachev

By 1985, the Soviet state showed strong signs of stagnation and decline. The unpopular involvement in Afghanistan, the deteriorating state-sanctioned economy, the restrictions in civil liberties, the threat of a fragmentation of the Warsaw Bloc, and the ailing, aging, and steadily dying Soviet leadership spelled an impending disaster for the country's future. No ideological feat could divert attention from the growing problems of the Soviet political, social, and economic reality. The Soviet system urgently needed changes.

The first sign of changes arrived on March 10, 1985, when the gravely ill Konstantin Chernenko passed away, giving way to a relatively young, by the CPSU standards, energetic Party functionary, fifty-four year old Mikhail Gorbachev, a man who was destined to usher the country into the era of dramatic and irreversible transformations. A convinced reformist, Gorbachev first announced his new political program in the March 1985 Party plenum, and continued to develop his concept of reforms during the February 1986 XXVII Party Congress and the January 1987 plenum of the CPSU.¹ The new Central Committee Chairman spoke of a need for democratization of the Soviet society and the remodeling of the Soviet economic structure, urged re-evaluation of obsolete and debilitating aspects of orthodox ideology, and advocated greater openness in domestic affairs and new thinking in the international political arena.²

One of the main developments in the evolution of the Soviet press that stemmed directly from Gorbachev's new political direction was the relaxation of censorship. Although, as previously mentioned, the editors enjoyed relative freedom of discretion, the official institutions of information control still held the ultimate authority in releasing materials for publication or broadcast. In late 1985, Glavlit received official directives to cede more authority to the executive officers of the publications. With the easing of the official censorship's restrictions, the editorial staff received greater freedom and control over the content and the manner of coverage than ever before.³

The changes in the head echelons of the Ministry of Culture heralded another important advancement towards liberalization of Soviet media, as the sixty-eight year old Piotr Demichev, the department's minister since 1974, was replaced in 1986 with the former Central Committee chief of propaganda, fifty-two year old reformist Vasily Zakharov. Zakharov actively aided Gorbachev's advocacy of "glasnost" in the Soviet media, and brought the sentiments of new cultural tolerance and social openness to his post as the Minister of Culture.⁴ The Central Committee Department of Culture underwent leadership changes as well, as the notoriously conservative Vasily Shauro was replaced with journalist, poet, and former newspaper correspondent and editor Yuri Voronov.⁵ The replacement of the Party's head culture functionaries symbolized a decisive disassociation from the rigidity of the past and foreshadowed a new course undertaken by the Gorbachev's administration.

3.2 "New Thinking" and the "Old Guard"

The reorganization of the Soviet government apparatus put the first nail in the coffin of rigid ideological treatment of youth culture by the official authorities. With many conservative functionaries and executives replaced or being phased out, the majority of the youth press had taken a road towards a more objective reporting that catered more to the requests and needs of its young audience, instead of abiding by the pre-assigned sets of official instructions. Reflecting on the ongoing changes in the social and cultural environment, British reporter Martin Walker remarked,

[The] successive cultural revolutions have at last produced a leadership in the Kremlin which is not tarred by the old evils of Stalinism, and which is educated, reform-minded and not frightened by the future as represented by its own increasingly assertive young people. And with the men in the Kremlin giving their approval, the rest of the vast state machine slowly starts to move and learn to tolerate.⁶

However, the conservative elements of society were not going to give up their positions without a fight. The inertia of Chernenko's anti-rock legacy continued well into the *perestroika* era, as in many cases local functionaries and law enforcement officials were resistant to the spirit of openness and democratization of Soviet social and cultural life propagated by Gorbachev's administration. In particular, the Soviet authorities still relentlessly persecuted the operators of unofficial recording studios and clandestine music distribution networks for the next several years. In one of the most extreme cases on record, an underground Moscow recording engineer and distributor, Valentin Sherbina, faced the possibility of a fifteen-year prison sentence or capital punishment under Article 193--"grand larceny on a major scale"--but for lack of evidence was "only" committed to a psychiatric hospital and the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry for medical experiments.⁷

Still, the Soviet political climate was steadily changing, and one of the telling signs of the gradual social transformation was the emerging role of the press as a social

advocate. In 1987, a year after Scherbina's case, an article in *Moskovskaya Pravda* newspaper, which defended another recording engineer, Mikhail Bayukansyi, against false accusations of criminal activity, had largely contributed to the dismissal of all charges, the return of all confiscated equipment and materials to their owner, and even an alleged scandal in the commanding ranks of local militia.⁸

The media transition towards liberalization was not an overnight process, as many elements of the Soviet society and press resisted the changes in established norms ideology and social behavior in favor of continuous adherence to the traditional Leninist values. With their influence in the government apparatus rapidly waning, the conservatives were not only losing all means of control over the cultural and ideological orientation of the younger generation, but also their positions in the media establishment.

As more Soviet youth press organs, including such reliable past moral watchdog as *Kosmomolskaya Pravda*, were turning progressively more liberal in welcoming the new social and cultural mentality, and consequently began to relinquish their attacks against Western culture, the Soviet reactionaries had to mobilize the remnants of the conservative media to continue propagating their orthodox ideology. Along with the rest of the Soviet society, the press grew increasingly polarized on the political, social, and cultural issues, and pitched arguments between the liberal youth-oriented media and the Communist hardliners became a common occurrence in Soviet journalism.

One notoriously controversial and widely discussed publication that reflected the existing gaps in the ideological and cultural outlook between the conflicting sides of the Soviet press was the exchange that occurred between *Nash Sovremennik* and *Rovenski* in late 1988. In October of that year, *Nash Sovremennik*, a press organ of the traditionalist

Writer's Union, published a lengthy article by composer V. Chistyakov and music historian I. Sanachev, in which the authors condemned rock music as an anti-social decadent instrument of the Western capitalism, intended to depoliticize and corrupt the consciousness of the young people.⁹ The article explicitly branded several Soviet publications, among them *Smena*, *Yunost'*, and *Rovesnik*, as irresponsible collaborators of immoral Western propaganda. In December *Rovesnik* retaliated, publishing a large excerpt from the article, and responding to several of its notions with editorial comments.¹⁰ *Rovesnik's* commentary exposed the affirmations of *Nash Sovremennik* as baseless and factually erroneous demagoguery that was projecting the archaic, biased, and deliberately inaccurate postulates of outdated Soviet orthodox ideology. The staggering difference between the sizes of the reading audiences involved further augmented the uneven nature of this journalistic debate between the old thinking and the new mentality, for as *Rovesnik's* circulation at the time boasted a sizeable advantage of 2,400,000 copies against *Nash Sovremennik's* 240,000, the youth magazine's audience outnumbered the literary almanac's reader base tenfold.¹¹

Psychological and psychiatric aspects of rock's influence on the youngsters presented another point of contention. To affirm the harmful effects of hard rock music on the psyche, productivity, and social behavior of the young people, *Sovetskaya Rossia* conducted an interview with a chair of the Psychiatry Department of Bashkirian State University, who authoritatively contended that heavy metal's influence on the human organism is equivalent to the effects of drug addiction and psychological trauma.¹² In its next issue, *Rovesnik* published its own excursion into the psychiatric components of rock and their influence, inviting two specialists from the USSR Academy of Medical Science

All-Union Center of Psychiatric Health to comment on the subject. To the dismay of rock's conservative opponents, the experts, emphasizing individual psychological and social circumstances as crucial, insisted that no direct correlations between mental and neurological disorders and interest in countercultural youth music exist. The experts particularly declared the notions of underlying pathological, socially dangerous, psychologically harmful nature of rock music as "deeply unscientific and far-fetched."¹³

Due to the growing cultural and social openness of the *perestroika* era, Soviet youth steadily gained access to more objective, truthful information, and thus became increasingly distrustful of the old indoctrination tactics of the old propaganda machine. Yet the Old Guard still tried to discourage youngsters' fondness for Western rock with archaic methods. The level of crude disinformation that the young people of the USSR were still subjected to, even in the later part of the decade, is shown by a translation of a fascinating letter to *Rovesnik*'s "Sharing the Impressions" column, written in 1988 by A. S. Kozerin, a vocational school student from Pavlovgrad:

Never in my life have I heard anything like what I have heard at the lecture, entitled "Music and Narcotics." This lecture was given in our school by lecturer Kuznetsov from Kiev. I will briefly summarize the content of this "lecture."

Comrade Kuznetsov started from afar: in 1953, immediately after Stalin's death, heads of intelligence agencies of NATO have gathered in New York. Concluding that an open aggression against Soviet Union would be doomed to failure, they decided to undermine the Soviet Union from within. They put their best bet on rock music, in order to embroil the older and younger generations in the USSR. The lecturer then offered us some translations of the music-related terminology. According to him, "rock and roll" means "body movement in the act of love" (his exact words, although he warned us that this should not be spoken aloud, but it is true!) The word "punk" means, "prostitute both sexes." And the word "disco" originated in ancient Rome to describe metallic discs, used for the destruction of enemy fortifications. Today this word can be translated as "disc throw, aimed the brain" that is, our enemies hurl discs with dirty music to destroy our morality. Next, the speaker paused on the question of origin of rock. In any rock music, said Comrade Kuznetsov, there are so-called "beat-rhythms." Atlantic record company, in exchange for payment, recorded the first "beat-rhythms" during performances by the tribe of African cannibals. Those, by the way, according to him, were also the origins of

breakdancing. During the devouring of their victims, they (that is, savages) emitted short pulses on the tambourine--“beat-rhythms,” as passions ran high. From an early age, humans begin to understand and remember what one can and cannot do. From an early age, they sense a belonging to the national culture, which remains recorded in the brain’s identity. “Beat-rhythms” are precisely responsible for the erasure of that record. Thus a person, dancing to, or listening to rock, turns into a wild beast, forgets who he is, and is capable of doing anything.

Comrade Kuznetsov continued: once researchers in Canada played the recordings of The Beatles’ song, “Revolution No.9,” and another record, Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven,” in reverse. It turns out that these records contained appeals to racism, such as: “Guys, today we came across five niggers; let’s grab some chairs and smash their heads in!” At one of the concerts of these artists, the audience did just that. At the end of the lecture, Comrade Kuznetsov once again warned us, the youth, that now, in the time of *perestroika*, some people, while hiding behind *glasnost*, are seeking to draw us into the swamp of musical drug addiction.

This lecture ignited numerous disputes. After all, if all things contended by Comrade Kuznetsov are true, we should immediately close all the “windows” and cover up all the “gaps,” so that the rock infection would not spread to us in the Soviet Union. But if they are not, it would be interesting to know, who pays him (Kuznetsov,) and what for. I firmly believe in competence of your magazine in helping us resolve this complex situation.¹⁴

The magazine printed the letter without the usual editorial reply. This may have been the only time when *Rovesnik*’s editors, who were usually quick to comment were left speechless.

3.3 The Media/Reader Relationship

The interaction between the official press and readers, most prominently displayed in the media’s coverage of the readers’ mail, presents a vivid illustration of the moods and desires of Soviet youth of the 1980s. Examination of the ongoing conversation between the media and the reading audience highlights the evolution of the attitudes of Soviet journalism and the public in the context of the changing social and cultural conventions in the country over the years.

The reactions of the reading public to the critical press varied depending on the readers' constituency and age demographics, and manifested themselves most prominently in reader mail. An overview of the cross-section of readers' correspondence with the press can provide clues towards changes in public perception and approximate the popularity of a given genre, artist, or cultural trend at a given time. As evident from the analysis of reader mail to such popular youth periodicals as *Rovesnik* and *Sobesednik*, the young readers demanded more objective coverage of rock music, assiduously requesting more factual information on the Western styles and performers, and persistently urging the editors to institute regular columns to enlighten readers on the popularity ratings and musical news from abroad.

Conservative *Sobesednik* used its responses to the reader's questions to the editor as a platform to further its denigration campaign against the "alien" counterculture, which reached its peak around 1984-86. In an effort to combat the influence of Western underground music on Soviet youth, *Sobesednik*'s preferred tactic was to connect hard rock, punk, and metal acts with the Neo-Nazi, racist, and anti-Soviet movements, and to chastise and shame the "plain, average Soviet youngsters" into patriotic rejection of the "alien" music genres of the "enemy ideology." In 1984, *Sobesednik* lamented the state of the Soviet youth, citing the 353 readers' letters that requested information on heavy metal groups like AC/DC, Motorhead, and Kiss as a sign of the younger generation's moral degradation.¹⁵ Responding to a reader's query on Western hard rock artists, *Sobesednik* charged its staff writer Mikhail Sigalov with the task of "exposing the dangerous face" of the "controversial" Western music. In the time-honored tradition of Soviet anti-rock propaganda, Sigalov infused his narrative with preposterous leaps of defamatory fiction,

insisting that AC/DC's "Back in Black" served as an official anthem of the "Nazi Party of America," claiming that Kiss quoted Goebbels during show-opening announcements, accusing the leftist 60s rockers MC5 of anti-Communism, and attributing Blue Oyster Cult and Judas Priest with displaying swastikas and Third Reich banners on stage.¹⁶

Sobesednik further stuck to its credo of libel in its 1986 answer to a similar letter from a group of Dneprodzerzhinsk students, this time charging a Ukrainian Komsomol Central Committee executive officer Alexander Razumkov with the task. The resulting article bore all traits of propaganda, as defined by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, including name-calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, the card-stacking, and the band-wagon, as he called to the consciousness of the "plain folks" to resist what he described as "mass bourgeois culture" that was "indivisible from ideology."¹⁷ Razumkov injected his response with an overdose of pseudo-patriotic pathos, wondering "why didn't a fifth-grader's hand tremble, when he stuck an AC/DC pin next to his Pioneer's red bonnet, when that band's song "Back in Black" became the USA Nazi Party's anthem in 1980," and charging many of Western artists with "dirty propaganda of anti-communism, cruelty, violence, and perversion."¹⁸ The author shamed the youngsters into rejection of the "openly fascist" Western music and culture by evoking the sacrifices of the Soviet people during the country's heroic struggle against the Third Reich. Keeping up with the hardline propaganda's strategy of exaggerating and perverting the facts, Razumkov resorted to numerous absurd fabrications, as he deciphered Kiss as "Kinder SS," chided The Village People with allegedly asserting American racial superiority, and even charged B-52, U2, and Prince with advocacy of nuclear war and the extermination of the Soviet nation.¹⁹ Most of these and other disparaging examples

Razumkov used to illustrate the “unacceptable and ideologically harmful” nature of the heavy metal music were old propaganda libel standards, simply recycled from Chernenko-era ban lists and other similarly reproachful articles. The hardline faction of Soviet media appeared to be too used to regurgitating timeworn propaganda standards to stay in touch with current countercultural developments abroad.

In their quest for objective information of foreign artists and musical styles, young Soviet readers of the 1980s reached out to the nation’s media in mass numbers. According to the recollections of *Rovesnik*’s writer Sergei Kastalskyi, during the 1980s the magazine received nearly a million letters a year, with virtually every other letter entreating information on hard rock and heavy metal performers.²⁰ The publication was so overwhelmed with the flow of reader mail that it dedicated a series of discussions of reader’s requests, questions, and suggestions, in order to go over some of the predominant motifs of the correspondence and address some of the main concerns and inquires of its audience.

In March 1980 *Rovesnik* engaged in its first major review of readers’ mail in a three-page feature entitled “Music is Our Peer: Meetings and Dialogs,” moderated by staff writer L. Pereverzev.²¹ Editors described the initiative as a transitional step from “a fairly continuous monologue, which manifested in the journal’s publication of materials on various phenomena in the world of contemporary popular music as part of the cultural lives of the youth abroad, to a dialogue with readers, particularly interested in this topic.”²² The experiment offered a valuable insight into the moods and interests of young readers and elicited such a response that six month later the magazine felt compelled to continue the dialogue with a second installment of the mail overview.²³ Although the

magazine attempted to present both sides of the argument, giving space to the opponents and proponents of rock music alike, the editors admitted that the pro-rock sentiment among the readers was disproportionately high. The main theme of the conversation was the young readers' unanimous call for more factual, rather than critical, information concerning foreign musical artists and genres. Many correspondents expressed their fondness for Western rock music, despite the traditionally disapproving coverage of such music by the Soviet official press. A significant cross-section of the readers requested publication of monthly columns devoted to artist's discographies and bands' line-ups, and asked for regular updates on the Western hit parades and popularity polls. "Readers expect information about the singers and performers, rather than educational speeches," suggested one reader. In these discussions, *Rovesnik*'s editorial staff mostly refrained from using a patronizing tone and expressing chastising attitudes, allowing the readers' mail to do most of the talking. No practical steps were taken to address most of the audience's suggestions and requests at that time.

The most heated exchange between the young readers and *Rovesnik* occurred in the December 1986 issue, when the publication addressed the readers' response to Sergei Kastalskyi's translation of Tim Holmes' *Rolling Stone* critique that appeared in the July issue, and the Artemy Troitsky-penned Kiss feature that the magazine ran in September of that year, both mentioned previously in chapter 1. Both articles presented a rather condescending view of heavy metal's validity as a musical style and cultural movement, and questioned the intellectual maturity of the genre's fans and artists. The public's reaction to the magazine's publications was readily evident, as the readership core of *Rovesnik*, historically comprised of mostly counterculture-minded young people, who

wanted their music journalism to contain as little judgmental subjectivism as possible, responded to the negative pieces with overwhelming protests, swamping the editors with a deluge of angry letters.²⁴

By admission of the magazine's three-page editorial overview of the reader's massive response, many of the objectors expressed a firm belief that their letters would not be allowed onto the magazine's pages, since "the truth cannot be printed" in the Soviet press, which the editors cited as the main motivation behind the decision to include even the most confrontational pieces of correspondence.²⁵ The overwhelming majority of the letters published in the review contained some form of threats and insults, which ranged from promises to cancel subscriptions and "never read your dirty rag again," and requests to "respectfully shut the hell up," to threatening intimidations and allusions to physical violence. Although *Rovesnik* tried to lighten up the tone of the conversation by appealing to its audience's sense of humor, which the editors cited as far more effective counter-argument than immature insults and vague threats, the overall theme of outrage and disapproval among the readers' reaction was undeniable. The readers' view of the magazine threatened to change from one of reliable peer to one of untrustworthy foe with a hidden anti-countercultural agenda. "Your nasty attacks on heavy metal did not help you, but on the contrary, made us love hard rock even more," wrote members of a Leningrad hard rock fan club. An anonymous letter from Kerch echoed the sentiment: "I am long-time subscriber, mainly for the articles on rock music, but these latest articles appear to have been written by a mindless drone. ... What interesting and exciting alternatives to rock can you offer, other than songs about the Motherland and all that other crap that everyone is sick of?"²⁶ The regular readers

expressed contempt for the magazine's condescending attitude and showed the kind of mistrust and resentment that was previously reserved for hardline authorities and the conservative press.

The severity of the readers' backlash, along with the ongoing process of liberalization of Soviet society, prompted *Rovesnik* to re-evaluate its coverage of the formerly maligned countercultural musical trends. Yielding to the pressure of public opinion, the magazine updated its editorial outlook and instituted significant changes to its format, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Analysis of readers' letters to the media over the course of the decade indicates that Soviet youth were becoming increasingly vocal in expressing their desires and demands, and expected youth press organs to show greater consideration in addressing young people's cultural needs in their reportage. Public opinion, as expressed by the sentiments of the readers, was emerging as a vital and persistent influence on the Soviet media coverage of cultural movements in the 1980s.

¹ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Izbrannye Rechi I Stat'i* [Selected Speeches and Articles] Vols. I-7, Moscow: Politizdat, 1987-1990.

² Ryback, 196, 223.

³ Gibbs, 9.

⁴ Ryback, 226.

⁵ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, "The Soviet Rock Scene," 204.

⁶ Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, 10.

⁷ Kushnir, *100 Magnitoalbomov*, 46-47.

⁸ Ibid, 45.

⁹ V. Chistyakov, I. Sanachev, "Troyansky Kon'" ["The Trojan Horse"] *Nash Sovremennik* 10 (October, 1988).

¹⁰ "Golyui Korol'" ["The Naked King"] *Rovesnik* 12 (December, 1988).

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- ¹¹ *Nash Sovremennik* 10 (October 1988); *Rovesnik* 12 (December 1988).
- ¹² M. Merzabekov, "Uyazvimi Rok: Mnenie Psychologa" ["Vulnerable Rock: A Psychologist's Opinion"] *Sovetskaya Rossia* (June 4, 1987).
- ¹³ A. N. Bogdan, P. V. Morozov, "Psihiatricheskie Aspekty Rock-Musiki" ["Psychiatric Aspects of Rock Music"] *Rovesnik* 7 (July, 1988).
- ¹⁴ "...Delitsya Vpechatleniami" ["...Sharing the Impressions"] *Rovesnik* 8 (August, 1988).
- ¹⁵ Mikhail Sigalov, "Iznanki Bolshogo Ritma" ["The Inside of the Big Rhythm"] *Sobesednik* 34 (August, 1984).
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ "How to Detect Propaganda: Institute for Propaganda Analysis," in *Propaganda*, ed. Robert Jackall, (New York: New York University Press, 1995) 217; Alexander Razumkov, *Sobesednik* 26 (May, 1986.)
- ¹⁸ Razumkov, *Sobesednik* 26 (May, 1986).
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Igor Sadreev, "Vchera, Sorok Pyat' Let Nazad" ["Yesterday, Forty Five Years Ago"] Interview with Sergei Kastalskiy, Natalya Rudnitskaya, and Igor Chernishkov, *Akzia* 5(April 2007.)
- ²¹ L. Pereversev, "Musica—Nash Rovesnik: Vstrechi I Dialogi" ["Music is Our Peer: Meetings and Dialogues"] *Rovesnik* 3 (March, 1980).
- ²² I Snova: Musica—Nash Rovesnik" ["Once Again: Music is Our Peer"] *Rovesnik* 9 (September, 1980).
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ "Zdravstvui, Rovesnik—I Ne Tol'ko" ["Hello, *Rovesnik*—and More"] *Rovesnik* 12 (December 1986).
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE END OF AN ERA

4.1 Underground Culture Enters the Mainstream

Towards the end of the 1980s, rock music in all its variations was steadfastly entering the Soviet cultural life. With international relations thawing out, and Gorbachev's intentions of social openness transgressing from words to reality, music critics, artists, ensembles, and rock journalists began establishing professional and informational ties with their Western counterparts. The Western media, fascinated by the booming countercultural activity it encountered within the supposedly closed and uniformed society, rushed to explore the Soviet underground scene with the voracious curiosity of a neophyte tourist, riveted by the newfound access to the unknown subversive subculture, and devouring the information provided by their fresh Soviet contacts. In their zeal and desire to advertise the social and cultural changes, Western analysts often misrepresented the Soviet reality, downplaying the long-standing underground traditions as something that owed their very existence only to the flourishing of Gorbachev's democratic reforms. Sabrina Ramet unwittingly provides one example of such exaggeration, when she recounts a *New York Times* 1991 article that gushed at the "AC/DC" wall graffiti the reporter observed on a street building. The authors exclaimed that such graffiti would have been unthinkable even in 1989 and viewed this graphic manifestation as a clear sign of a profound liberation within the Soviet society.¹ In reality, as evident from the reportage of Russian underground fan-issued magazines *Roxy* and *Ulright*, rock wall graffiti, with AC/DC's characteristic

lightning bolt logo being a particular favorite among Soviet “metallists,” had already been a commonplace occurrence by the mid-eighties.² The most popular countercultural graffiti of that decade—“HMR,” which stood for “heavy metal rock”—was by far the most widespread wall adornment of the period in the country long before the process of the democratization and social openness has been initiated. Although its existence or significance has been virtually ignored in the foreign press and specialized historiographical literature on the subject, this omnipresent wall tag still represents an important countercultural reference to the participants in Soviet countercultural reality during the 1980s.

Yet the Western media were not entirely exaggerating the profound and long-reaching effect that Gorbachev’s reforms had on the inclusion of the youth counterculture in the overall landscape of Soviet society. The openness of the country’s high-level political authorities to the idea of social tolerance for the alternative cultural manifestations resulted in the continuous increase in press coverage, broadcast, sale, distribution, and performance of rock music in the USSR.

In 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa received John Lennon’s widow, Yoko Ono, at the Kremlin. The Soviet first couple candidly talked to Mrs. Ono about their deep fondness for Lennon, adding “John should have been here.” In this gesture, the head of the Soviet state “symbolically allied himself with the forces of rock and roll,” and thus sent a message of a new level of acceptance of formerly outlawed music in the new Soviet society.³

Following the lifting of restrictions and ushering of Gorbachev’s policy of “new thinking” and “glasnost” into the Soviet society, many youth periodicals dramatically

increased their coverage of Western and Soviet rock music, hoping to attract a wider young audience. In the summer of 1987 *Rovesnik* published Sergei Kastalskyi's two-part article in defense of the notorious rock n' roll madman Ozzy Osbourne—a man previously described in the Soviet media as a substance-abusing talentless lunatic.⁴ The most spectacular development occurred in July 1987, when *Rovesnik* began its monthly installments of “RER”—*Rovesnik's Rock Encyclopedia*. Published over the course of several years, and edited by the magazine's new resident rock critic Kastalskyi, the Encyclopedia was dedicated exclusively to foreign acts, ranging stylistically from rhythm-and-blues to heavy metal, with entries voted in by the members of several Soviet rock clubs. A first publication of its kind in the Soviet Union, the initiative resulted in a phenomenal popularity of the already popular youth magazine, boosting its circulation by 800,000 copies within a few months since the encyclopedia's first issue of publication.⁵ In addition, *Rovesnik* began printing centerfolds of popular hard rock bands, along with in-depth interviews and articles featuring such long-requested heavy metal artists as Iron Maiden, Metallica, Ritchie Blackmore, and Ronnie James Dio. The articles had none of the ideological propaganda that typified the Soviet music press of the past, and instead concentrated on facts regarding the musicians' careers and discographies. Another milestone for *Rovesnik* came in the summer of 1989, when the magazine began to run installments of “Teenage Survival Guide,” a book for teenagers, written by Twisted Sister's Dee Snider—the same Snider who was only recently lampooned as a degenerate mindless Neanderthal by the scribes of *Sobesednik*.⁶ By admission of *Rovesnik's* then-editor Natalya Rudnitskaya, the publication raised the magazine's circulation by 500,000 copies in three month, and the sales and subscriptions figures continued to climb for the

remainder of the year.⁷ These breakthroughs firmly established *Rovesnik*'s reputation as the premier official press organ of the Soviet countercultural youth in the late 1980s.

The official recording industry quickly adapted to the surge in civil liberties in official and public opinion. Responding to numerous requests from readers, *Rovesnik* conducted an interview with the vice-director of *Melodia*, V. Chechetkin, in which the record executive discussed the difficulties the label faced regarding the licensing process and financial operations, ultimately indicating that the real reasons for the company's repertoire shortcomings and failure to meet consumer demands lay not with ideological but with economic considerations. Chechetkin described the socialist economic model as unpractical and obsolete with regard to the recording industry, advocating instead a self-financing, market-oriented form of management that would put public demand and profitability over mandated government agendas and regulations.⁸ Beginning in 1987, *Melodia* issued its first domestic heavy metal albums by the Soviet groups Cruise, August, and Chyorni Coffee, along with several licensed hard rock albums by Deep Purple, Rainbow, and Yngwie J. Malmsteen the following year.⁹ In addition, the absence of intellectual property stipulations in the Soviet legal code, combined with the greater freedom given to record executives, translated into the state's only record company manufacturing a string of virtually pirate releases of Western music. In 1987, *Melodia* released a series of unauthorized compilations, featuring archival materials of Western rock groups, including Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, and the Doors. In 1989, Leningrad's legendary recording engineer and virtuoso manipulator of the loopholes of the Soviet system, Andrei Tropillo, became a department head of *Melodia*'s Leningrad department. Immediately upon his arrival in the post, the label began releasing unlicensed versions of

classic rock albums, including several by the Beatles and Led Zeppelin, with complete disregard to copyright issues, authorship laws, and packaging authenticity, to which Tropillo proudly attested to a *New York Times* journalist, insisting, “No one can prove me that I’m breaking Russian laws.”¹⁰ Soviet record buyers, who were yearning for years for free access to the coveted foreign music, were entirely indifferent to the notion of an apparent violation of international copyright statutes, and the practice of official bootlegging continued until the decline of the Soviet state.

By the closing years of the decade, the majority of the Soviet press took a firm course towards the liberalization of society, and became increasingly outspoken on issues of civil liberties and self-expression within Soviet countercultural movements. One of the issues that the media actively propagated was the freedom of the concertgoers to stand up, dance, and cheer during rock and pop concerts. Typically, security forces at the events forbade dancing, and forcibly restored the overly excited patrons in their seats, but around 1986 this ban started to gather more and more resistance, not only from spectators and performers, but also from the Soviet press. Scornfully criticizing the scenes of police brutality that accompanied the Moscow performance by the British pop-reggae group UB-40, Moscow radio correspondent Dmitry Linnik pointedly remarked:

We “shut down” rock music—and then we are surprised why it still exists, but doesn’t sing about the things we want it to. ... A ban has never yet given birth to initiative and creativity, which are indeed, our keys to the present and the future.¹¹

The fact that Linnik’s article appeared in the notoriously conservative *Sobesednik* displayed the tremendous changes that the Soviet media and public opinion were undergoing at the time.

The theme of audience participation came up again in December 1987, when British hard rock veterans Uriah Heep became the first Western heavy rock group to perform in the Soviet Union, selling out ten nights in Moscow's Olympic Sports Complex. This was not the first time, that Uriah Heep made Soviet music history, for in an uncharacteristic gesture, *Melodia* had issued one of the group's older albums in 1980, which remained the only hard rock record to be released in the USSR for the next seven years. As at the previous performances of other Western pop artists, like UB-40 and Billy Joel, dancing and standing up at the concerts was strictly forbidden, but this time, the Soviet press was especially vocal in its objection to the enforced practice of audience non-participation.¹² *Smena* magazine bitterly reported that because of the authorities' insistence on the seated, docile audience, the band had to specially set up a day for filming of the concert close-ups and invite an audience of 800 to stand in front of the stage and imitate a lively rock n' roll show. *Smena* reporter Vladimir Fradkin sullenly observed that because of such excessively strict security measures, his article had evolved from a band history overview and a concert review into a conversation of democratization and rebuilding of Soviet society.¹³

In its open criticism of the archaic concert practices in the country, the media coverage of the concert demonstrated the growing role of the youth press as an effective instrument of public sentiment, and not an obedient, scripted organ of official opinions. In the new political climate, the media's disapproval of the restrictive concert security procedures had their effect, and the parties in charge of organizing mass cultural events took notice. In 1988, *Rovesnik* reported on another ten-night sold out engagement, as Scorpions, Germany's premiere hard rock act, entertained a combined audience of

350,000 Leningrad fans. The review of the event presented an entirely different depiction of the audience, as the article described the crowd participation as animated, and lively, noting for the first time the free access of the concertgoers to the front of the stage, and evoking by contrast the police tactics used to pacify Uriah Heep's audience only a year earlier.¹⁴

Perhaps the most resolute official approval of the youth counterculture came in 1989, when Soviet officials approved and endorsed a two-day hard rock festival in Moscow, organized by Stas Namin, grandson of a prominent Soviet statesman, Anastas Mikoyan, and one of the nation's very few legitimate independent music producers and promoters at the time. Billed as the Soviet Woodstock by the Western press, the Moscow Music Pease Festival took place in Moscow's Olympic Arena in August 1989. Intended as an international rock festival against drug and alcohol dependency, and featuring extremely popular Western hard rock and heavy metal bands ("not the faded or down-on-their-luck stars that are so favored by Goskonzert"), the event was the first of such magnitude in the USSR.¹⁵ The Soviet youth press fully embraced the festival as a positive sign of the process of openness and democratization of the Soviet society, and praised the effectiveness of the independent organizers against the ineffectuality, incompetence, and indifference of the official state entertainment agencies.¹⁶ More importantly, although the Soviet press and the foreign stars commented on the disproportionately high number of military security personnel in the audience, the press coverage of the event mentioned no instances of past security practices of policing the concert audience into quiet spectating, noting instead the free and unbridled, sometimes borderline unruly, reaction of the crowd.¹⁷

With Soviet society steadily advancing toward democratization, an increasing number of the official press and establishment institutions evolved to a gradual rejection of the past ideological orthodoxy, and embraced the youth counterculture as a manifestation of healthy engagement in the global cultural movement. The old times of the official suppression and prohibition of rock music were indeed over.

4.2 Rebellion through the Looking Glass: the Demise of the Soviet State and the Metamorphosis of the Underground Counterculture

On September 28, 1991, nearly a million Soviet hard rock fans gathered at the Tushino Airfield outside Moscow for a Monsters of Rock festival, featuring AC/DC and Metallica, two of the world's most successful and popular heavy metal bands. Organized by Time Warner, and directly sanctioned by the Soviet government, the ten-hour long free event was intended as a reward to Soviet youth for making a stand against the failed August 1991 coup d'état attempt.¹⁸ During the failed three-day putsch, which aimed to displace Mikhail Gorbachev from the country's leadership and to revert the Soviet Union to a more hardline, dogmatic version of the Communist state, thousands of young people took to the streets in protests, blockading the armed regiments advances through Moscow with mass demonstrations, roadblocks, and barricades.¹⁹

Before going on stage, AC/DC's vocalist reflected on the significance of rock music in forming of the new mentality of the next generation of Soviet people, saying: "Opera and ballet did not cut the ice in the Cold War years. They used to exchange opera and ballet and circus companies, but it takes rock n' roll to make no more Cold War."²⁰

On December 25, 1991, less than three month after the event, the Soviet Union would cease to exist as a political entity.

Yet, although throughout its history of resistance against official censorship and repression the Soviet rock counterculture appeared to have endorsed the values of personal freedom and cultural plurality as an alternative for the Soviet-style totalitarianism, it would be erroneous to insist that all rock fans of the *perestroika*-era would universally subscribe to the progressive ideals of democratization and mutual tolerance. As previously marginalized forms of underground music finally became socially acceptable in the country's culture and media, the youth of the former Soviet state found themselves in a situation, where their decades-long protest had ultimately succeeded. With the primary target of its angst—the USSR and the domineering Soviet ideology—gone, the countercultural dissent would evolve into other areas, in some instances taking previously unimaginable shapes of extreme right-wing nationalism and racism. As rebellious and anti-establishment as hard rock music appeared to the Party officials of the Soviet era, the changing political moods of the decades that followed the dismantling of the Soviet Union placed the formerly socially unacceptable views into the current mainstream of the contemporary Soviet, and then Russian politics. In a paradoxical turn of events, the movement that once represented freedom and defied tyranny of the Big Brother would also in some instances come to embrace the very values that were once falsely ascribed to it by the old Soviet propaganda. In hindsight of the present alarming political course of the Putin-led Russia, some particularly significant instances of such disturbing transformations deserve a closer look.

Following the Soviet Union's demise the political and social fabric of Russia underwent drastic changes: in present-day Russia, the notions that would have been condemned as right-wing radicalism or fascism in the 1980s Soviet press are now often heralded as patriotic, and fit right along the lines of the official policies of Vladimir Putin's Kremlin current government policy. The tendency has not escaped some of the former underground rebels, who initially began their protest as a countercultural movement against the Soviet regime, yet as the political and social climate of the country changed, have altered their positions along with the changing times. In the most alarming cases, the same young people who rallied against the Communist ideology have since embraced the imperialist revival tendencies of the new Russia, often displaying openly their "brown-shirt" agenda under the guise of patriotic zeal.

The most prominent example of this paradoxical metamorphosis is the scandalously infamous Moscow heavy metal band, Korrozia Metalla (translated as "Corrosion of Metal.") From its inception, the group epitomized the most extreme propensities of the Soviet underground counterculture: their first performances in 1985 were literally conducted "underground"--in basements of youth clubs, with no official permits. Consequentially, those earliest shows were promptly dispersed by the militia patrols merely a few numbers into the set. The band was deliberately anti-establishment from its earliest stages, composing song in the violent, aggressive manner of then-new thrash metal style, with lyrics devoted to such topics as blasphemy, horror, sadism, narcotics, terrorism, and chaos, openly glorifying violence, Satanism, and debauchery. In contrast to the country's other leading hard rock bands, Korrozia Metalla's texts were entirely devoid of any social commentary, and by admission of the band's leader/chief

songwriter, Sergei “Pauk [Spider]” Troitzky (no relation to the aforementioned prominent rock critic Artemy Troisky), deliberately aimed to display the deep hatred and contempt for the entire system of Soviet ideological values.²¹ By the late 1980s, this brazen anti-social agenda and blatant disregard for the conventions of Soviet ideology propelled the group to a massive popularity among the disillusioned Soviet metal fans, who failed to see suitable ideals to replace the archaic values of the crumbling Soviet state.²² In 1988, the group attracted the attention of Moscow promoter and producer Stas Namin--the same man who would go on to organize the 1989 Peace Festival, despite famously contending only a few years earlier that heavy metal music in Soviet Union was not going to get past the first militiaman that may come along.²³ Noting the easing of the country’s cultural restrictions and Korrozia Metalla’s growing popularity in Moscow’s underground circles, Namin took the rambunctious group under his wing, recording first two cassette albums in his own studio and releasing the band’s output via his own syndicate, SNC (the Stas Namin Company). The resulting recordings, “Order of Satan” and “Russian Vodka,” featured rapid-fire brash odes to AIDS, heroin, biker gangs, and Lucifer, all of which was completely outlandish by the Soviet standards of the time. Namin’s far-reaching connections within the Soviet establishment, however, assured that the group would not only avoid any potential legal trouble, but instead gain country-wide distribution and publicity, albeit primarily through underground channels, since the albums did not receive a proper vinyl release until the early 1990s, and mainstream youth media initially refrained from covering the controversial outfit.

The group’s fervently anti-Soviet stance manifested most prominently during the failed hardline coup of August 1991, when the band earned the distinction of playing on

the barricades in Moscow, literally serving as a direct opening act to Boris Yeltzin, who arrived to address the citizens that gathered to defend the Parliament building.²⁴

However, the group's support for the democratic changes proved short-lived, and with the dissolution of the USSR, the band, further fueling their anti-social image, delved deeper towards the scandalous and shocking, both in their shows and their politics. The group began infusing live performances with a mixture of sex show and freak attraction, employing naked strippers and dwarves, along with the more typical for heavy metal horror motifs. Meanwhile, their political tendencies began to lean strongly towards the extreme right. In the following years, Korrozia Metalla began to openly praise the KKK and National-Socialist philosophy, and persistently advocated genocide, race-motivated violence, and pogrom mentality in their lyrics. The combination of pornography and Neo-Nazism earned them publicity in the West, when the American men's magazine *Penthouse* ran a multi-page feature on their antics under the subtitle "The New Russia." The feature quoted teenage Korrozia Metalla fans likening Pauk's command over the band's fanatical following to one of Vladimir Lenin, as Pauk professed that the emerging right wing movement is the only political force that will be able to control and direct the escalating racist tendencies among new Russian youth.²⁵

In 1995, while still signed to Stas Namin's SNC label, the band issued an album "1.966," dedicated to the Russian Black Sea Navy's outpost in Sebastopol, Crimea, which along with several blatantly National Socialist-flavored songs, such as "Nicht Kaputen, Nicht Kapituliren," featured a swastika on the front cover, and employed a Hitler impersonator on stage on the ensuing tours. The next year, the band organized and participated in the "Iron March" tour across Crimea, which proclaimed the "unification of

the Crimean peninsula with Russia” and “the rebirth of the Great Empire” as its agenda. At one of the Crimean shows, the band introduced guest speaker Val Sharigin from the ultra-right political block *Zavtra* [“Tomorrow”], who agitated the audience to welcome the imminent World War III that would bring “the New World Order, which can only be the Russian Order.” Following this introduction, the band launched into a song “Kill Sunarefa” (a racist slang term for residents of Caucasian republics,) which they dedicated to the Federal Russian Army that was fighting the First Chechen War at the time.²⁶ Eighteen years later, Korrozia’s 1996 campaign to “reunite Crimea with Russia” and agitation for the “rebirth of the Great Empire” would shed an ominously threatening light on the recent political course of the Russian government towards the events in the Ukraine, and particularly Russia’s unceremonious annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Given the background of the Kremlin’s persistent accusation of the new Ukrainian government in harboring fascist tendencies, it is ironic that the steps Putin’s government has undertaken regarding Crimea have been lifted directly from the agenda of the Russian National Socialist factions from almost two decades ago.

As the 1990s drew to a close, Korrozia Metalla, albeit shaken by the departure of almost all original members save the bandleader Pauk, continued to affiliate themselves even closer with the extreme right, releasing albums with titles like “Computer Hitler,” “Beat Down the Devils—Save Russia,” (a not-too-thinly veiled variation of the old Russian pogrom motto,) and “White Wolves.” Although in Russia Korrozia Metalla’s products were distributed by mainstream record companies, SNC and Moroz Records, the group’s only American record release has been through a now-defunct strictly Nazi label Winland Winds.

For many of the fans of Korrozia Metalla's early work, the band's excursion into Nazism seemed like a contradiction to everything that metal counterculture represented during the transformative years of the Soviet state: moreover, it grew to validate, at least in part, much of the misguided slander and paranoia of the past hardline Soviet propaganda. As underground music came out from under the scorn of the public officials, its vitality as a socio-political force that it had evolved into during the years of government suppression seems to have dissipated. Whether music can once again achieve the same level of anti-establishment resistance in today's Russia as it did in the USSR remains to be seen. Yet the past role of the counterculture in changing the mindset of Soviet youth during the transitional period of the Soviet state cannot be denied.

¹ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, "The Soviet Rock Scene," 207.

² A. N. Drake, "Moskowslie Smotriny" ["The Moscow Viewing,"] *Roxy* 9 (Summer 1985), 7; "Nas Prosyat Rasskazat': Rok-Chronika" ["We Answer Questions: Rock Chronicle"] *Ulright* 9/10 (April 1986); V. Gribov, "Esche Raz o Golikh Korolyakh" ["Once More on the Naked Kings"] *Leningradskiy Universitet* (November 5, 1986.)

³ Ryback, 3.

⁴ Sergei Kastalskiy. "Sudebnyi Proccess, Kotorogo Ne Bylo (No Kotogyi Mog Byu Bit)" ["Court Process That Never Was (But Could Have Been.)"] *Rovesnik* 6, 7 (June--July, 1987).

⁵ *Rovesnik* 7 (July 1987), *Rovesnik* 1 (January 1988).

⁶ Alexander Lutyi. "Krysi na Obed, ili Hard Roku Vse Dozvoleno" ["Rats for Dinner, or Hard Rock Free-for-All."] *Sobesednik* 51 (December, 1986.)

⁷ Igor Sadreev, "Vchera, Sorok Pyat' Let Nazad" ["Yesterday, Forty Five Years Ago"] Interview with Sergei Kastalskiy, Natalya Rudnitskaya, and Igor Chernishkov, *Akzia* 5 (April 2007).

⁸ A. Chechetkin, "Nuzhny Peremeny..." ["Changes are Necessary..."] *Rovesnik* 8 (August, 1987).

⁹ Ryback, 228.

¹⁰ Kushnir, *100 Magnitoalbmov*, 54.

¹¹ Dmitry Linnik, "Ne Pusschat'!" ["No Allowance!"] *Sobesednik* 44 (October 1986).

¹² Ryback, 225-26, 228-29.

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- ¹³ Vladimir Fradkin, "Uriah Heep: Posle Konzerta..." ["Uriah Heep: After the Concert..."] *Smena* 2 (February, 1988).
- ¹⁴ Sergei Kastalskyi, "Lubov' I Skorpiony" ["Love and Scorpions"] *Rovesnik* 9 (September 1988).
- ¹⁵ Sergei Kastalskyi, "Woodstock na Moskve-Reke" ["Woodstock on the Moscow River"] *Rovesnik* 12 (December, 1989).
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ William E. Schmidt, "Heavy-Metal Groups Shake Moscow," *The New York Times* (September 29, 1991).
- ¹⁹ "Monsters of Rock Hit Moscow," *Associated Press* (September 29, 1991).
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Korrozia Metalla, "Orden Satani" ("Order of Satan"), anniversary re-issue liner notes, KTR, 2006
- ²² *Soviet Rock: 25 Years in the Underground + 5 Years of Freedom*, ed. Igor Zaitsev, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990), 151.
- ²³ *Rock City*, Moscow, No.3, 1992.
- ²⁴ Korrozia Metalla, "Russian Vodka—American Release" DVD, Winland Winds, 2008.
- ²⁵ Peter Klebnikov, "Nazi Heavy Metal: Bizarre Threat to Russia's Future," *Penthouse*, September, 1993.
- ²⁶ Korrozia Metalla, "Железный марш по Крыму '96" ["Iron March Over Crimea'96"] VHS, KTR, 1997.

The liberalization of the Soviet cultural landscape, much like the progression of Gorbachev democratization reforms, did not happen overnight, but rather occurred as a continuous process that spanned several decades and generations. Like the subsequent political unraveling of the USSR, the cultural transformation of the Soviet social construct was a gradual process, which evolved through, as Martin Walker aptly noted, “series of overlapping youth cultures, each of which presented its own challenge to the bewildered, surly and often cruel monolith of the Soviet Communist State.”³

The history of the evolution of the Soviet music underground and its relationship with the official media structures represents more than just a cultural phenomenon. As generations of Soviet youngsters have made a conscious decision to reject the orthodox Communist ideology in favor of deliberately disobeying the socially prescribed political and behavioral dogmas of the ruling regime, the political implications of the process have become equally evident and important. Timothy Ryback, professor of History and Literature at Harvard University, has noted that “Western rock culture has debunked Marxist-Leninist assumptions about the state’s ability to control its citizens,” as “three generations of young socialists, who should have been bonded by the liturgy of Marx and Lenin” have instead effectively rejected the official state-prescribed ideology and found an alternative form of self-expression. He has further asserted that “rock music not only transformed the sights and sounds of Communist society but has also altered the very policies and structures of Soviet-bloc governments.”⁴ Former Czechoslovakian president Vaclav Havel affirms the notion of the revolutionary nature of the underground rock culture behind the Iron Curtain, maintaining that the entire process of the 1989 social and political transformation in Eastern Europe began in the rock scene.⁵

As Professor Ramet subtly observed, the positions and attitudes of the Soviet government structures themselves ultimately politicized the nature of rock counterculture in the USSR, transforming music from a cultural into a socio-political phenomenon.⁶ The official ban and persecution metamorphosed the Soviet rock fans from casual music lovers who mirrored their Western counterparts into underground activists and clandestine revolutionaries, who defied the overbearing state with their conscious cultural and social choices. The authorities' relentless opposition to the subversive countercultural expression produced a generation of resilient young people who would not abandon their cultural preferences and life philosophy even in the context of an oppressive political system. This continuous resistance yielded a generation that was ready and willing to embrace democratic and political changes and accelerate the process of reformation and the subsequent dismantling of the Soviet state.

¹ Troitsky, 10.

² Ian Christe, *Sound of the Beast: The Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003) 261.

³ Troitsky, 10.

⁴ Ryback, 5.

⁵ Ramet, *Rock: The Music of Revolution (and Political Conformity,)* in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994,) 1.

⁶ Ramet, Zamascikov, Bird, "The Soviet Rock Scene," 208.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

An example of an unofficial black list, circulated in the Moscow area in 1984-1985. Combines the 7/25/64 Order # 361 and the 10/1/84 Ministry of Culture memorandum, and contains multiple typographical errors and misspellings:

Указ № 361 от 25.7.64 "Об упорядочении деятельности ВИА", запрет на проигрывание в г. Москва кассет и пластинок:		
1. Немецко-польская агрессия	Клэп	Милл и хан
2. Немецко-американская группа	Стриггера	Черри лэнк
3. Гейнгольд	Крокус	Крейт перк
4. Нейтральный комитет	Айрон мэдэн	Дилсонг луд
5. Отсутствующие цвета	Джудасу приот	Назарет
6. КГБ	АС/ДС	Студии
7. Кремль и хороший народ	Спаркс	Бойл
8. 1948 год	Уфо	Света земиральда
9. Злата Прета	Элис купер	Мэврик мэмикс
10. Белый Кремль	Ху	Ораджинальз
11. Чешско-русские	Блэк саббот	Пассиджера
12. Россия	Скорпионз	Худно Игласнае
13. Кожаные комиссары	Чингиз хан	
14. Петроградское рево	Минк Флоид	
15. Бау ошотер кольт	Токкин хэдз	
16. Револю	Черрон	
17. Диагноз-408	Ив Бионда	
18. Колетер Бигге	Джудиор энглиш	
19. Вероника Финер	Копел хит	
20. Фигура	Ван халлеей	
21. Кисс	Язу	
22. Эрик Лэнс	ЮСС	
23. Гейммед	Блонди и Д. Харри	
24. Ди пресс	Потти Смит	
25. Скифф	Эврис Костелло	
26. Нина Хагген	Майкл Джексон	
27. Е-52	Доран Доран	
28. Стикс	Род Стюарт	
29. Мад кэте	Пропоганда	
30. Сэко питолз	Хот РС	
СССР		
Алэкс, гулливер, брэво, мухомор, приуо, центр, зигзаг, ДК, кросс, теннис, амбле, зона отдыха, неутилус, урфин джус, ДДТ, зимний сад, корд, экваториум, миф, мануфактура, метро, неутилус/свердловск/, фонтей, пикник, кино, диллингс, ексит, Фрий Морозов, хруст ноф, автоматические удовлетворители, парад, уличные канализации, мухи, алло, гонт, юцибер, свинья, рыба.		

Courtesy of Michael Shulman, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

APPENDIX B

The USSR Ministry of Culture's National Scientific and Methodic Center of People's Art and Cultural Enlightenment memo, October 1, 1984 (author's translation):

For the supervision of recording studios and discotheques.

In accordance with the order № 361 of 25.07.84 "On organizing the activities of the VIAs [Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles] and heightening the ideological and artistic levels of their repertoire in light of the June (1983) Plenum of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] Central Committee," for the purposes of enforcement of the struggle against the influences of the bourgeois ideology, elevation of ideological and artistic standards of amateur VIAs, rock groups, and quality of performance of such ensembles, we recommend prohibiting the performance and demonstration of records, compact cassettes, video clips, books, posters and other products that refer to the activities of the following groups in the city of Moscow:

1. German-Polish Aggression
2. German-American Friendship (ed. -- Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft, or D.A.F)
3. Rheingold
4. Central Committee
5. Absence of Color
6. KGB
7. Kremlin and the Good People
8. Year 1948
9. Zlata Praga [Golden Prague]
10. White Kremlin
11. Black Russians
12. Russia (ed. -- most likely, a misinterpretation of Canadian progressive group Rush)
13. Leather Commissars
14. Petrograd Revue
15. Blue Oyster Cult
16. Ramones
17. Diagnose 403

18. Veronica Fischer
19. Holger Biege
20. Figure
21. Kiss
22. Eric Lang
23. Propaganda
24. D Press
25. Scyth
26. Nina Hagen
27. Sticket
29. Madness
30. Sex Pistols
31. Clash
32. Stranglers
33. Krokus
34. Iron Maiden
35. Judas Priest
36. AC/DC
37. Sparks
38. UFO
39. Black Sabbath
40. Alice Cooper
41. The Who
42. Scorpions
43. Dzinghis Khan [Genghis Khan]
44. Pink Floyd (1983)
45. Talking Heads
46. Cerrone
47. La Bjonda
48. Junior English
49. Canned Heat
50. Van Halen
51. Yazoo
52. 10 CC
53. Blondie and Deborah Harry
54. Julio Iglesias
55. Patti Smith
56. Elvis Costello
57. Michael Jackson
58. Duran Duran
59. Rod Stewart
60. Ganymed
61. Hot AC
62. Milk and Honey
63. Cherry Lake
64. Kraftwerk

65. Nazareth
66. Dancing Mod (*sic* -- ed.; British synth pop group Depeche Mode misspelled)
67. Village People
68. The Stooges
69. Boys
70. Santa Esmeralda
71. Music Machine
72. Originals
73. Passengers

Considering the fact that recently the interest of foreign tourists in the creative activity of some Soviet rock groups had significantly increased, and taking into account the instances of radio broadcasts of their compositions in foreign countries, it is considered necessary to prohibit the performance of magnetic tape recordings of the amateur rock groups whose creative outputs allow distortion of the Soviet reality and propagate ideals and attitudes that are alien to our society.

MOSCOW GROUPS:

1. Alliance (Альянс)
2. Gulliver (Гулливвер)
3. Bravo (Браво)
4. Mukhomor [Poison Mushroom](Мухомор)
5. Primus (Примус)
6. Center (Центр)
7. Zigzag (Зигзаг)
8. DK (ДК)
9. Cross (Кросс)
10. Alpha (Альфа)
11. Tennis (Теннис)
12. Zona Otdiha [Relaxation Zone] (Зона отдыха)
13. Nautilus (Наутилус)

LENINGRAD GROUPS:

14. Aquarium (Аквариум)
15. Manufactura (Мануфактура)
16. Mify [Myths] (Мифы)
17. Nick-Nick (Ник-Ник)
18. Kino (Кино)
19. Dilijance (Дилижанс)
20. Accent (Акцент)
21. Ulichnaya Kanlizatzia[Street Sewage] (Уличная канализация)

22. Avtomaticheskie Udovletroriteli [Automatic Satisfiers] (Автоматические удовлетворители)
23. Lucifer (Люцифер)
24. Yuri Morozov (Ю.Морозов)
25. Khrustalnui Shar [Chrystal Ball] (Хрустальный шар)
26. Parade (Парад)
27. Svinya [Swine] (Свинья)
28. Mukhi [Flies] (Мухи)
29. Ryuba [Fish] (Рыба)
30. Alle (Алле)
31. Gong (Гонг)

as well as:

SVERDLOVSK:

32. Nautiluses (Наутилусы)
33. Foliant (Фолиант)
34. Metro (Метро)
35. Urfin Juice (Урфин Джюс)

KIEV:

36. Zimnyi Sad [Winter Garden] (Зимний сад)

UFA :

37. DDT (ДДТ)

CHERNOVTZI:

38. Kord (Корд)

It is necessary to add, that the included information regarding foreign and Soviet rock groups quickly becomes outdated, since the majority of Western outfits constantly depend on political conjuncture, and can radically change their political positions to please market demand and social mandates of Western politicians; therefore, to consider the above list complete does not appear possible, as it would be to compile a similar list for any extended time period. We thus recommend the interested parties to regularly familiarize themselves with publications of *Melody Maker*, *New Musical Express*, *Billbort* (*sic*—ed.,) and other music editions of Western countries, as well as monitor the

promotional materials provided by foreign record labels to UFG (Union-wide Factory of Gramophone records) *Melodia*.

Parties interested in activities of amateur VIAs and rock group should contact the Union-wide Scientific and Methodological Center of People's Art and Cultural Enlightenment for consultation.

Sound recordings of the performers of the "emigrant circles" of Western Europe and USA (Rebrov, Tokarev, etc.), along with the recordings of domestic "singers" and "songwriters" (Rosenbaum, Severnyi, etc.) that have appeared in the imitations of theirs, have been widely distributed as of late. Their "compositions" are marked with particularly vicious anti-Soviet direction, propaganda of emigrant attitudes, indecency and tastelessness. We recommend the interested parties to enact measures to disallow both the importation of such sort of product into the USSR, and the possibility of "free art" of similar "artistic" followers in our country.

Attention must be drawn to another tendency. Lately imported board games have become popular among the ever widening cross-section of the people (including the youth) in our country. Among these games, *Roulette* and *Monopoly*, which propagate principles of profit as the bottom line and free enterprise, received especially wide popularity.

In order to organize the formation of the discotheques' repertoire we recommend VAAP (All-Union Agency of Authorial Rights [Всесоюзное агентство по авторским правам]) to implement a system of registration of compositions, used in disco programs for paid events under specifically developed principle.

Original document is available in the Samizdat section of Radio Liberty, Munich, Germany; see "Materials Samizdata," 34/85, Oct. 18, 1985.

APPENDIX C

Ukrainian Nikolayev Regional Komsomol Committee's Approximate List of Ideologically Harmful Foreign Groups and Artists, January 10, 1985 (taken from Alexei Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton University Press, 2005):

Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь! ВСЕСОЮЗНЫЙ ЛЕНИНСКИЙ КОМУНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ СОЮЗ МОЛОДЕЖИ НИКОЛАЕВСКИЙ ОБЛАСТНОЙ КОМИТЕТ ЛКСМ УКРАИНЫ		Приложение к письму от 10 января 1985 года	
Для служебного пользования Секретарям ГК, РК ЛКСМ Украины		Примерный перечень зарубежных музыкальных групп и исполнителей, в репертуаре которых содержатся идейно вредные произведения	
Направляем примерный перечень зарубежных музыкальных групп и исполнителей, в репертуаре которых содержатся идейно вредные произведения, а также список тарифицированных вокально-инструментальных ансамблей СССР.		Название коллектива	Что пропагандирует
Рекомендуем использовать эти сведения для усиления контроля за деятельностью дискотек.		1. Секс Пистолз	— панк, насилие
Данной информацией необходимо обеспечить все ВИА и молодежные дискотеки района.		2. Б-52	— панк, насилие
Секретарь обкома комсомола		3. Медисс	— панк, насилие
П. Гришин		4. КЛЭШ	— панк, насилие
		5. Стрэнглэрс	— панк, насилие
		6. Кисс	— неофашизм, панк, насилие
		7. Крокус	— насилие, культ сильной личности
		8. Стикс	— насилие, вандализм
		9. Айрон Мейден	— насилие, религиозное мракобесие
		10. Джудас Прист	— антикоммунизм, расизм
		11. Ай Си Ди Си	— неофашизм, насилие
		12. Спаркс Спаркс	— неофашизм, расизм
13. Блек Сабат	— насилие, религиозное мракобесие	23. Оринджинелз	— секс
14. Элис Купер	— насилие, вандализм	24. Донна Саммер	— эротизм
15. Назарет	— насилие, религиозный мистицизм, сатанизм	25. Тина Тернер	— секс
16. Скорпион	— насилие	26. Джаниор Энглиш (Регги)	— секс
17. Чингиз Хан	— антикоммунизм, национализм	27. Кенед Хит	— гомосексуализм
18. Уфо	— насилие	28. Манич Мешин	— эротизм
19. Пинк Флойд (1983)	— извращение внешней политики СССР («Агрессия СССР в Афганистане»)	29. Рамонэ	— панк
20. Толкинхедз	— миф о советской военной угрозе	30. Бан Хейлен	— антисоветская пропаганда
21. Перрон	— эротизм	31. Хулио Иглесиос	— неофашизм
22. Боханнон	— эротизм	32. Язoo	— панк, насилие
		33. Данич Мод	— панк, насилие
		34. Вилидж Пипл	— насилие
		35. Тен Си Си (10cc)	— неофашизм
		36. Стоджис	— насилие
		37. Бойз	— панк, насилие
		38. Блонди	— панк, насилие
		«ВЕРНО»	
		зав. общим отделом обкома комсомола	Е. Пряжинская

TRUE COLORS OF COMMUNISM

APPROVED COPY		Approximate list of foreign music groups and artists whose repertoires contain ideologically harmful compositions	
<p>Workers of the world unite!</p> <p>ALL-UNION LENIN COMMUNIST UNION OF YOUTH NIKOLAYEV REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF KOMSOMOL OF UKRAINE</p> <p>For internal use only</p> <p>To Secretaries of Gorkoms and Raikoms of Komsomol of Ukraine</p> <p>The following is an approximate list of foreign music groups and artists whose repertoires contain ideologically harmful compositions.</p> <p>This information is recommended for the purpose of intensifying control over the activities of discotheques.</p> <p>This information must be also provided to all VIA [vocal instrument ensembles] and youth discotheques in the region.</p> <p>Secretary of the Obkom of Komsomol, P. Grishin</p>		Group Name	Type of Propaganda
		1. Sex Pistols	punk, violence
		2. B-52s	punk, violence
		3. Madness	punk, violence
		4. Clash	punk, violence
		5. Stranglers	punk, violence
		6. Kiss	neofascism, punk, violence
		7. Crocus	violence, cult of strong personality
		8. Styx	violence, vandalism
		9. Iron Maiden	violence, religious obscurantism
		10. Judas Priest	anticommunism, racism
		11. AC/DC	neofascism, violence
		12. Sparks	neofascism, racism
13. Black Sabbath	violence, religious obscurantism	23. Originals	sex
14. Alice Cooper	violence, vandalism	24. Donna Summer	eroticism
15. Nazareth	violence, religious mysticism	25. Tina Turner	sex
16. Scorpions	violence	26. Junior English (reggae)	sex
17. Genghis Khan	anticommunism, nationalism	27. Canned Heat	homosexuality
18. UFO	violence	28. Munich Machine	eroticism
19. Pink Floyd (1983)	distortion of Soviet foreign policy ("Soviet aggression in Afghanistan)	29. Ramones	punk
20. Talking Heads	myth of the Soviet military threat	30. Van Halen	anti-Soviet propaganda
21. Perron	eroticism	31. Julio Iglesias	neofascism
22. Bohannon	eroticism	32. Yazoo	punk, violence
		33. Depeche Mode	punk, violence
		34. Village People	violence
		35. Ten CC (10 cc)	neofascism
		36. Stooges	violence
		37. Boys	punk, violence
		38. Blondie	punk, violence
<p>"APPROVED BY"</p> <p>Head of the General Department of the Obkom of Komsomol E. Priazhinskaia</p>			

FIGURE 6.3. The Approximate List. Author's translation of figure 6.2.

Curriculum Vitae

Boris Von Faust
52 Willow Ave.
Wallington, NJ, 07057
(201) 294-7562
bvf1973@yahoo.com

Date and place of birth:

August 31, 1973, Odessa, Ukraine, USSR

Education:

1980-1990: School # 119, Odessa, Ukraine, USSR
1991-1992: Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, AR
2009-2010: Bergen Community College, Paramus, NJ, Associate in Science degree
2010-2011: Felician College, Lodi, NJ, Bachelor of Art in History degree
2012-2013: Rutgers University-Newark, NJ, Master of Arts program in History

Employment:

2012-present: Archivist/project leader, Passaic Historical Society, Lambert Castle Museum, Paterson, NJ

Publications:

“The Paterson Evening News and Zito Studios Photographic Collection Project,” in *The Historic County, Newsletter of the Passaic Historical Society*, Volume 12, Issue 4, Winter 2012, pp.1, 4-5.