
Despite its ominous-sounding title, this book is not another sensationalist Western approach to Soviet rock music. Historian Sergei Zhuk's scope is far wider and more ambitious. For twenty years he has collected a truly impressive amount of material on what he terms 'cultural consumption' in the closed military-industrial city of Dnepropetrovsk in Soviet Ukraine. Working from various diaries, interviews, and archival sources, he examines the popularity and impact of cultural products from the West on the population of a closed city of the USSR during the 25 years leading up to Perestroika. This includes not only Western rock music, but also movies and literature. The emergence of the various cultural forms is contrasted by the reactions and counteractions of the local security apparatus. The account spans from the jazz stiliagi of the early 60s, via Beatlemania, foreign box office successes in the local cinema theatres and popular translated fiction, to hard rock and discotheques in the 1970s and 80s. Zhuk also finds place to include in his picture the attempted revival of Ukrainian nationalist literature in the 1960s and the wave of popular religiousness in the 1970s.

In his introduction, the author rightfully notes how the Brezhnev era has fallen in the shadow of perestroika when it comes to academic research. While seeking to contribute serious historical analysis of this often-ignored era, he also breaks with the focus of previous research on Moscow, Leningrad and the major cities of Soviet Russia. His change of attention not only towards the provinces, but also to a closed city of the military-industrial complex, is both welcome and refreshing. All, it would appear, is set for an original, well-informed, thought-provoking and analytic take on the study of late Soviet history, culture, and society. Unfortunately, and in spite of all good reading will invested, it soon becomes apparent that the work at hand comes nowhere near the lofty heights of such expectations. The remaining part of this review must thus respond to a question the author could have posed a lot more often: Why?

Strictly formally, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City* is unfinished. If purged of all unnecessary repetitions, the 317 pages of main text could easily be reduced by a third. To mention but the most obvious example: Of the eighteen times in the book Yulia Grigian (Tymoshenko) is presented, the reader is painstakingly reminded of her subsequent political career on at least half of the occasions. The continuous repetitions add to the impression of being at the receiving end of a Discovery Channel documentary. The same main arguments are summarised time and time again. Each new chapter and subchapter re-introduces previously given information as if the text were ever returning from another commercial break.

On the technical side, the reader is not provided with information on translation and transliteration. References and footnotes are given as endnotes, which occupy pages 321-414 in tightly-spaced 10pt. In a work that makes extensive use of diaries, qualitative interviews, and archive material not available to the reader, such a layout comes conspicuously close to rendering source references invisible. It would be problematic enough were said references correctly and consistently applied. As it is, the reader is left with the quite laborious task of sorting out the clutter, separating the author's frequent postulates from his applied sources, and judging the validity of the presented information. By simply introducing cross references, setting source references in the main text and footnotes on the corresponding pages, most of this could have been put right. As a bonus, it would have provided much-needed space for analysis and discussion.
The account of approach and methodology is less than the absolute minimal for a work that involves qualitative interview material. The introduction lists several sources that are not covered by the bibliography. It mentions a hundred collected questionnaires (their questions supplied in an appendix), but fails to account for how the information from these has been applied. The interviews and diaries that do appear in the bibliography (five diaries of fundamental importance have been left out) are from 23 men and 4 women. As a meagre compensation for the lacking gender balance, the reader is introduced to extensive quotes from Popov and Mil'shtein's Tymoshenko biography and an interview with one of her (male) former classmates. The author arrests previous sociological approaches for 'taking their informants at face value' (i.e. interpreting their responses outside of social and temporal contexts), yet he gives no account of his practical approach to similar problems, or indeed their opposite. If anything, he himself shows tendencies towards a selective adaptation of interview quotes to his own pre-established contexts. Furthermore, the reader is only provided with quotes in what must be assumed to be the author's translations. Originals are not provided.

Had the text been shorter, more concise and to the point, its virtues would have been more apparent. The subchapter Popular Religiosity and Western Rock Music in particular shows the author's true potential. The main reason why such sparks of fresh insight and budding analysis do not come to their right is the book's grossly reductionist understanding of culture. Key terms such as 'cultural consumption' or 'identity building' are not problematised, nor are they related in any way to their use in previous research. Thus, the concept of 'cultural consumption' is applied in its most basic form, according to which the making of 'cultural products' is beyond the influence of audiences. Culture exists only in the form of commodities, sold to consumers as readily packed products (records, books, movies, even religious texts and regalia). The only agency allowed the 'consumer' in such a scheme is the choice of object to purchase. The concept—about as flexible as Brezhnev's corresponding 'socialist consumption'—severs the analytic potential of the book by effectively ruling out the dimension of cultural practice. Left with concept such as 'rock music consumption', 'book consumption', even 'consumers of religious information' (p. 200), the reader learns very little about the cultural practices and activities inspired by the widespread indulgence in cultural products from the West. The consumption of rock music leads to black marked activities and various profit-making enterprises, but apparently inspires no-one to start their own band or write their own songs. Likewise, the 'consumption' of a book may serve to pass on the ideas it contains, but does not inspire new ideas. As a result, the author involuntarily paints a picture of Dnepropetrovsk citizens as passive victims of an oppressive regime. They worship all things Western to the point of risking involvement with black market activities and getting in trouble with the authorities, but show practically no cultural initiatives or creativity of their own.

Rather than applying his rich material to explain how people got by, how they created spaces for indulging in cultural practices denounced by the authorities, how they defended such practices, and how they negotiated ideological pressure, Zhuk comes close to adopting and confirming Soviet ideologist views of the passive masses and their vulnerability to capitalist indoctrination. Pinpointed, his argument goes that Western cultural products via the black market and the development of a discotheque mafia made the foundation of post-Soviet Ukrainian capitalism. The sub-plot is that the onslaught of Western mass culture paradoxically contributed to a russification of the closed city's population, but simultaneously led to dissatisfaction with the ideological pressure from Moscow and therefore ultimately contributed to Ukrainian independence. In both cases, the driving force behind these developments was the population's obsession with