

Building the Ukrainian Identity through Cultural Consumption in the ‘Closed’ City of Soviet Ukraine: Dnipropetrovsk KGB Files and ‘Transgressions’ of Everyday Life during Late Socialism, 1959–1985

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In January 1969 A. Vatchenko, the first secretary of the regional committee of the CPSU in Dniproptetrovsk, explained to Komsomol activists, that the main point of socialist cultural consumption was the ability of Soviet young consumers to give a ‘correct class evaluation of the pieces of bourgeois arts and music and to avoid non-critical attitudes toward a eulogy of the capitalist way of life’. He emphasized that Marxist ideological approach would help Dniproptetrovsk consumers to make good choices in their cultural consumption. In contrast to the Western degenerate culture, Vatchenko noted, Komsomol members had to promote the best forms of their own socialist national culture. They should use the most progressive patterns of their Ukrainian culture in the struggle with the Western influences¹. In April 1970, Z. Soumina, a representative of the city administration in Dniproptetrovsk, further elaborated on this theme:

We are not against consumption. But this should be a *cultural* consumption. Take a look at our city offices of music recording and what our youth is consuming there as ‘music’. They are recording the tapes with songs of Vysotsky, music by the Beatles (*Bitlov*). Where is the real cultural consumption here? You can’t see that our young people are recording classical music by Tchaikovsky or Glinka. They still prefer the dances with their boogie-woogie to the concerts of classical music. In search for the

¹ *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovskoi oblasti* (hereafter – DADO), f. 22, op. 15, d. 252, l. 62.

recordings of their Western idols, young people forget their national roots, their own national culture².

The Soviet apparatchiks, who experienced real problems with new consuming post-Stalinist society, tried to make a difference between cultural (good) and non-cultural (bad) forms of consumption. The most serious problem for the Soviet ideologists was to sort out such forms of consumption and protect 'socialist national culture' from 'ideological pollution of cosmopolitan bourgeois influences'. Soviet ideologists clearly understood links between cultural consumption and identity formation. To some extent they tried to protect the ideal of Soviet cultural identity from the polluting influences of new forms of consumption. It was especially important in the Ukrainian city of Dniepropetrovsk. This big industrial city had a growing young multinational, predominantly Russian-speaking population, which increased from 917,074 inhabitants in 1970 to 1,191,971 in 1989³.

New forms of cultural consumption among the youth of this city created problems for Soviet ideologists and the KGB because Dniepropetrovsk had a special strategic importance for the entire Soviet regime. This city was officially closed by the KGB to visits of foreigners in 1959 because Dniepropetrovsk became a location for Yuzhmash, one of the biggest missile factories in the Soviet Union. The most powerful rocket engines made for the Soviet military industrial complex were manufactured in Dniepropetrovsk, which was called by inhabitants 'the rocket closed city'⁴. At the same time, this city became a launching ground for a politi-

cal career of many Soviet politicians in Moscow because Dniepropetrovsk was always associated with 'the Brezhnev clan'. In Ukraine, this city played also an important role in political life. Before perestroika more than 53 per cent of all political leaders in Kiev came from Dniepropetrovsk. By 1996 80 per cent of the post-Soviet Ukrainian politicians began their career in the rocket city⁵.

This paper is an attempt to explore connections between cultural consumption, ideology and identity formation in one particular city of the Soviet Ukraine during the late socialist period before the Gorbachev reforms. Given its 'closed' sheltered existence Dniepropetrovsk became a

² DADO, f. 416, op. 2, d. 1565, ll. 306–307.

³ *Naselenie Dnepropetrovskoi oblasti po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1989 g.* Dnepropetrovsk, 1991, p. 4.

⁴ By the 1980s the Dniepropetrovsk missile plant had manufactured sixty-seven different types of space ships, twelve space research complexes and four defense space rocket systems. These systems were used not only for purely military purposes by the Ministry of Defense, but also for astronomic research, for global radio and television networking and for ecological monitoring. Yuzhmash initiated and sponsored the international space program of the socialist countries, called 'Interkosmos'. Twenty-two of the twenty-five automatic space Sputniks of this program were designed, manufactured and launched by engineers and workers from Dniepropetrovsk. The

Soviet Ministry of Defense included Yuzhmash in its strategic plans. The military rocket systems manufactured in Dniepropetrovsk created a real material base for a newly launched Soviet Missile Forces of Strategic Purpose. On the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yuzhmash had nine regular and corresponding members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, thirty-three full professors and 290 scientists holding PhDs. They had the privilege to confer scientific degrees and had a prestigious graduate school at Yuzhmash, which attracted talented students of physics from all over the USSR. *Dnepropetrovskii raketno-kosmicheskii tsentr: Kratkii ocherk stanoveniya I razvitiia. DAZ-YuMZ-KBYu: Kchronika dat i sobytiy*, Dniepropetrovsk, 1994; *Dnipropetrov'sk: vikhy istorii*, pp. 209–211, 229. See also: Y. Lukanov, *Tretii president: Politychnyi portret Leonida Kuchmy*, Kyiv, 1996, p. 13. Many specialists consider the unique rocket complex SS-18 manufactured by Yuzhmash as an important material factor that pushed Soviet and American administration in the direction of détente. *Zemni shliakhy i zpriani orbity. Shtrykhyy do portreta Leonida Kuchmy*, V. P. Gorbulin et al., eds, Kyiv, 1998, pp. 6, 24–31.

⁵ Brezhnev himself began his career in the region of Dniepropetrovsk and he brought his former comrades to the Kremlin as well. Even after the 'downfall of the Brezhnev clan' in Moscow in 1983 when Yurii Andropov began his struggle 'with corruption and nepotism' among Soviet nomenclature, members of this clan played a prominent role in the political life of Soviet Ukraine. In 1990 Mikhail Gorbachev sent a special committee to check a political situation in Ukraine. This committee represented the department of Ukrainian party organizations at the organizational sector of the CPSU Central Committee. The report of the committee proved that 53 per cent of the Ukrainian executive officials came from Dniepropetrovsk. *Dnepropetrovsk vs. Security Service*, V. Pkhovshek et al., eds, Kyiv 1996, p. 8; *Ukrains'kyi Nezalezhnyi Tsentr Politychnykh Doslidzhen*. '*Dnipropetrov'ska sim'iia: Informatsia stanom na 25 lystopada 1996 roku*', V. Pkhovshek et al., eds, Kyiv, 1996, p. 15.

unique Soviet social and cultural laboratory in which various patterns of late socialism collided with the new Western cultural influences. Using archival documents, periodicals, and personal interviews as its historical sources, this paper focuses on how different moments of cultural consumption among the youth of the Soviet 'closed city' contributed to various forms of cultural identification, which eventually became the elements of post-Soviet Ukrainian national identity. Drawing on the British cultural studies about cultural consumption⁶ I explore how the Soviet consumption of Western popular culture, ideology and practices of late socialism contributed to 'the unmaking of the Soviet civilization' before *perestroika*. The recent studies about the late (post-Stalinist) socialism in the Soviet Union explored various forms of cultural production and consumption and their interaction with ideology. Yet, an overwhelming majority of these studies are based on material from the most Westernized cities of the USSR (Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev or L'viv)⁷. As a result, a story of typical

⁶ J. Storey, *Cultural Consumption and Everyday Life*, London: Arnold, 1998, pp. 135, 136. Because human identities are formed out of people's everyday actions and interaction in different forms of consumption, it is important to include cultural consumption in a discussion of identities. As Madan Sarup observes, 'cultural consumption is [now] a mode of being, a way of gaining identity. Our identities are in part constructed out of the things we consume – what we listen to, what we watch, what we read, what we wear, etc. In this way, the market [...] offers tools of identity-making. Our identities are in part a result of what we consume. Or to put it another way, what we consume and how we consume it says a great deal about who we are, who we want to be, and how others see us. Cultural consumption is perhaps one of the most significant ways we perform our sense of self. This does not mean that we are what we consume, that our cultural consumption practices determine our social being; but it does mean that what we consume provides us with a script with which we can stage and perform in a variety of ways the drama of who we are'. M. Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996, pp. 105, 125.

⁷ The pioneering study in English on the Soviet cultural consumption concentrates mainly on Leningrad and Moscow. See S. Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994. The very good anthropological study of late socialism by Alexei Yurchak focuses mainly on Leningrad. See A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet*

provincial cities or villages is missing from their analysis. It is difficult to generalize about social and cultural history of the Soviet Union with a focus on Moscow and Leningrad only, which were quite atypical Soviet cities. Therefore by bringing such forgotten cities as Dniepropetrovsk to a historical analysis of late socialism this essay aspires to add new material and give new directions to the study of Soviet cultural consumption during late socialism.

KGB officers especially worried about new forms of cultural consumption that could breach the system of secrecy around Yuzhmash. Each month a KGB representative reported about ideological situation in the 'closed' city to the regional Communist Party committee. The main ideological crimes recorded by KGB officers were related to the new level of cultural consumption among the regional population, whose standards of living had improved since the beginning of Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization and liberalization of Soviet society. An emphasis on technical progress and technical-scientific education was a main theme in Communist Party propaganda from the very first days of Soviet history. All the Soviet leaders, from Lenin and Stalin to Khrushchev and Brezhnev, emphasized this in their reports, and all the Congresses of the CPSU included this theme in their documents. But this interest in new technology brought unwelcome results among the Soviet youth. In Dniepropetrovsk during the late 1950s and early 1960s thousands of students from high schools and the local colleges became enthusiastic designers of amateur radio sets and other radio devices. Some of them even tried to broadcast their own improvised radio shows without any sanction from the state authorities. The KGB tried to prevent these activities, which were called 'radio hooliganism'. According to the Dniepropetrovsk police, the local radio hooligans still recorded and then broadcast foreign music on a regular basis for a local audience during

Generation, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. Another good study about Soviet hippies concentrates on L'viv: William Jay Risch, 'Soviet "Flower Children": Hippies and the Youth Counter-Culture in 1970s L'viv', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40.3 (July 2005), pp. 565–584. See for a more balanced approach in: C. Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.

the 1970s and 1980s. A number of such radio hooligans increased in the span of a single year from 475 in 1970 to 685 in 1971, and kept growing. The KGB recorded annually 3000 cases of illegal radio broadcasting, perpetrated by almost 700 local amateur radio stations. More than 90 per cent of these 'radio music criminals' were very young people (aged 25 and less)⁸.

In January 1968, KGB officials analyzed data about how inhabitants of the Dniepropetrovsk region consumed information broadcast by foreign radio stations. The police checked at least 1000 letters sent to different radio stations throughout the world by the listeners from the region in 1967. According to their analysis, 36 per cent of all letters were sent to radio stations in Canada, 31 per cent to stations in the USA, 29 per cent to stations in England. The overwhelming majority of correspondents were young people: 38.8 per cent of listeners were younger than eighteen years old, 28 per cent were aged eighteen to twenty-eight, and 32.2 per cent were older than twenty-eight⁹. As KGB analyzers noted in 1968, 37 per cent of the listeners in their letters asked to send them music records, albums, manuals of fashionable dances, radio guides with time-tables of different Western radio stations; 25.5 per cent asked to 'fulfill their musical requests' by broadcasting their favorite songs; 13.7 per cent asked to help them to establish 'friendship with citizens of other countries'; and 23.5 per cent of these letters contained answers to 'various contests and quizzes organized by the radio stations'¹⁰.

This analysis is indicative of the main content of cultural consumption among the listeners of the Western radio in the Dniepropetrovsk region. An overwhelming majority of people who listened to Western radio stations were mainly interested in new music and popular culture or fashion, *not* in politics. It is noteworthy that that KGB censors could not find any critical anti-Soviet comments or ironical/skeptical attitudes

toward the Soviet values in these letters. The majority of Soviet listeners were interested in Western music¹¹.

A spread in the popularity of Western pop music became a major problem for both the local police and communist ideologists. Annual reports of KGB officials to the regional committee of the CPSU made a clear connection between anti-Soviet behavior and the youth's 'unhealthy enthusiasm' about Western mass culture¹². Only for the first six months of 1972 the Komsomol activists and police organized more than 100 raids against hippies and people who traded foreign music records in downtown Dniepropetrovsk. More than 200 music *fartsovshchiks* (black marketers) were arrested during those raids. The police confiscated hundreds of foreign music records, thousands of audio tapes with Western popular music, and '264 copies of illegal printed material, called samizdat'. But even after this Dniepropetrovsk leaders still complained about a rapid increase in rock music consumption. At the beginning of 1980 KGB reports had to admit a failure of all ideological efforts to stop the spread of Western pop music in the region and city of Dniepropetrovsk¹³.

On 4 July 1968, a head of the Dniepropetrovsk Department of the KGB, N. Mazhara, sent to the First Secretary of the Dniepropetrovsk

¹¹ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 25–26. Evgenii Chaika, a sixteen-year-old student from the Dniepropetrovsk high school No. 42, wrote numerous letters to BBC radio station about his love of rock'n'roll. 'It is impossible not to love the Beatles' he wrote in one of his letters, 'I have listened to their music since 1963. I want to listen to their song "19th Nervous Breakdown" again'. (Apparently, he confused the Beatles with the Rolling Stones.)

¹² See for example the KGB report in: DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 21–27. Compare the obvious similarities of KGB complaints with the German ideologists' reaction toward American rock'n'roll in: U. G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, especially pp. 184–197.

¹³ DADO, f. 19, op. 60, d. 85, l. 7, 17. See complaints of the party leaders in DADO, f. 22, op. 19, d. 2, l. 142–143. Author's interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dniepropetrovsk, 15 May 1991. See on Soviet illegal black marketers of Western goods called *fartsovshchiks* in: A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 138, 142, 201–202.

⁸ DADO, f. 19, op. 60, d. 92, l. 3, 4, 8–9, 14–15. During one year, 1971, in Dnieprodzerzhinsk, in the second industrial city of the region, the local police organized more than 150 raids, arrested 120 radio hooligans, and confiscated their radio and sound recording equipment, which cost more than 3,500 rubles on average.

⁹ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 25.

¹⁰ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 25.

Regional Committee of the CPSU ‘a secret information’ about the ideological situation in the region¹⁴. In this information, a KGB officer noted that during the first six months of 1968 a police discovered 183 printed documents with ‘anti-Soviet content’ that widely circulated among the regional population. Ninety-five of these documents stemmed from Ukrainian nationalist organizations, fourteen from Russian anti-communist organization, sixty-one from various religious organizations, fourteen from ‘socialist revisionist international organizations’ (mainly from Albania). The KGB detected an increase in anti-Soviet and ‘politically harmful’ activity in the region. Sixty cases of such activities were recorded in entire 1967, but already 194 during the first five months of 1968¹⁵. This document aptly illustrates a growth in the new kind of cultural consumption among the regional population in 1967–1968. The most popular ‘forbidden literature’ was pamphlets by Ukrainian nationalists (ninety-five cases) and religious publications (sixty-one cases). From the 194 cases of anti-Soviet activity detected during the first five months of 1968, the most typical were ‘dissemination of foreign anti-Soviet literature’ (183), ‘spread of ideologically and politically harmful notions, slanderous about Soviet reality’ (sixty-two), ‘manifestations of nationalist character’ (forty-seven), ‘antisocial acts of religious tendency’ (twenty), ‘circulation and keeping at home hand written and printed material of an anti-Soviet and politically harmful character’ (twelve)¹⁶. An overwhelming majority of ‘anti-Soviet criminals’ (109 from 194) were intellectuals (thirty-one students, twenty-seven college teachers, thirty representatives of ‘creative intelligentsia’, and twenty-one of ‘technical intelligentsia’). As we can see those who were the most active in processes of cultural production and consumption in the region became the main violators of the Soviet rules of cultural consumption in Dniepropetrovsk. Other KGB reports during the 1970s emphasized and repeated the same trends in ideological crimes connected to cultural consumption among the

¹⁴ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 1–18. Mazhara noted that a significant part of religious and ‘revisionist’ literature arrived from socialist countries, such as Poland and Romania, and some nationalistic literature from Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 2.

¹⁶ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 3.

Dniepropetrovsk youth. The first trend was the ‘overzealous’ rock music consumption and the other the consumption of Ukrainian nationalist literature. Given the strategic importance of Dniepropetrovsk for the Soviet military industrial complex, this increase in anti-Soviet cultural production and consumption required a special attention from all the branches of local administration, not only from the political police, but also from the ideological and educational organs of the authorities.

A dangerous problem, related to the ‘Khrushchev thaw’ was a rising interest in Ukrainian national history and national traditions among loyal Soviet intellectuals, members of the Communist party and Komsomol. KGB operatives interpreted this as Ukrainian nationalism. For them the main center of Ukrainian nationalism in the city of Dniepropetrovsk was its university (hereafter, DGU) and its historical-philological department (which later was divided in two different departments of history and philology)¹⁷. The first KGB case, directly related to cultural consumption, was that of A. Ovcharenko, a student from the historical-philological department. In 1960 he prepared a master’s thesis (*diplomnaia rabota*) about one controversial poem written by Taras Shevchenko, a 19th-century Ukrainian poet, the ‘father’ of the Ukrainian literary tradition. Shevchenko wrote a poem entitled ‘A Great Cellar’ (*Velykyi Liokh*) in 1845. He used to call it ‘A Poem-Fantasy’ (*Mysteria*). It is about the tragedy of Ukrainian history which was portrayed through laments of ‘three souls, three crows and three *kobza* [bag pipe] players’. According to Shevchenko, these images symbolized all the Ukrainians who had died following the Russian Empire’s annexation of Ukraine. The main idea of the poem is that the Ukrainian Hetman, Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, made a dangerous mistake when he signed the 1654 Pereieslav Agreement with the Russian delegation on Ukraine’s joining Russia. Afterward the Ukrainians became slaves of the Russian tsars. The two Russian monarchs, Peter I and Catherine II, ‘the worst enemies of Ukraine’, annihilated freedoms and privileges of the Ukrainian Cossacks and destroyed Zaporizhs’ka Sich, Baturin and other centers of Cossack power in Ukraine. After this, Russian rulers (referred

¹⁷ What follows is based on documents from: DADO, f. 9870, op. 1, d. 48, l. 9–11.

to as '*moskali*' [Muscovites] and '*katsapy*' ['long goat beards', a pejorative nickname for Muscovian boyars] in the poem) exploited and humiliated the Ukrainians. Thousands of Ukrainian peasants and Cossacks died while building St. Petersburg, rail roads and other construction projects for the Russian crown. That is why the souls of dead Ukrainians still meet in the farmstead Subbotov (a residence of Khmel'nyts'kyi near Chigirin) to lament and denounce Khmel'nyts'kyi's decision to betray an independence of Ukraine and join Russia. Shevchenko used a metaphor of 'the Great Cellar' or 'the Great Coffin' to portray a contemporary status of Ukraine. After the Pereieslav Agreement of 1654 the Russians were digging a 'huge cellar (liokh) of slavery' for Ukrainians. The entire Russian empire was portrayed as a 'cold and oppressive underground prison for people'. And Khmel'nyts'kyi's church in Subbotov in Shevchenko's poetic imagination was transformed into the symbol of slavery and death ('a burial place') for entire Ukraine which suffered oppression at the hands of Russian tsars. According to Shevchenko, Khmel'nyts'kyi, a friend of the Russian Tsar Alexis, betrayed and humiliated Ukraine: 'All nations of the world now are laughing at Ukraine and making fun of Ukrainians who, by their own will, have traded their freedoms for slavery in Russia'. But the ending of Shevchenko's poem was optimistic and prophetic: 'Do not laugh, strangers, at poor orphan Ukraine, because this Church-Coffin will fall apart and from its ruins a free Ukraine will arise! And Ukraine will remove the darkness of slavery, and then the light of Truth will shine on, and the Ukraine's oppressed children will pray, free at last'¹⁸.

This poem offered a historical concept which differed from the traditional interpretations of Soviet historiography. In contrast to the official positive portrayal of Pereieslav Agreement as a symbol of friendship of the two fraternal Slavic nations, Shevchenko described it as a tragic act of betrayal and humiliation for Ukraine. Great reformers of imperial Russia, Peter I and Catherine II, were presented by Shevchenko as the worst and

brutal executioners and torturers of the Ukrainians. The Russian rulers 'killed' the Cossack freedoms and hopes for an independent Ukraine. Of course, the very fact that Ovcharenko chose this poem for his research work raised some suspicions among Ovcharenko's classmates who denounced him to KGB officers. As a result, they accused his thesis of 'a nationalistic deviation', and complained about this to Ovcharenko's professors. But despite the KGB pressure, these professors tried not only to avoid any ideological criticism of Ovcharenko's work, but also supported his thesis by all the means available to them. Moreover, Ovcharenko's supervisor, an associate professor Dmukhovsky suggested he just need to remove some sentences 'that looked too nationalistic' in the thesis, and eventually insisted on giving Ovcharenko grade 'B' ('good' [dobre]) for his research.

The KGB officials who were outraged by the studious indifference of university's professors to such nationalistic transgressions organized their special investigation about Ovcharenko. They discovered that in 1960, Ovcharenko with his classmates Zavgorodnii and Trush from the philological department, and a student from the Dnipropetrovsk Medical Institute Leliukh, were members of the student group 'Dnipro' at the university. The members of this group read books on Ukrainian history and culture, recited Ukrainian poetry, studied Taras Shevchenko's works. As it turned out, Leliukh organized this group and composed a program and rules for this group. According to KGB records, among his classmates Leliukh was notorious for his anti-Soviet remarks and nationalistic ideas. In 1959, during the seminar on political economy at his institute, Leliukh used his own interpretation of Marxist theory to prove the necessity of economic autonomy for Ukraine in the USSR. In 1960 he used the same ideas for his text of a program for the group 'Dnipro'. As the KGB described it, Leliukh 'included in it an idea of separating Ukraine from the Soviet Union'. It was fortunate for other members of this group that they had no time to discuss this document. In 1962 after graduating from the university they left Dnipropetrovsk for their job assignments. It spared them inevitable arrest. But the main organizer of the group, Leliukh, was eventually arrested and sent to jail in November 1962 for 'nationalistic propaganda'.

It is noteworthy that Leliukh's group attracted loyal Komsomol members, whose interest in the Ukrainian past and traditions was stimulated by

¹⁸ T. Shevchenko, 'Velykyi liokh' in: T. Shevchenko, *Povne zibrannia tvoriv u dvanadsiatyi tomakh*, Kyiv: 'Naukova dumka', 1989, Vol. 1, pp. 221–233, see also comments about the poem: *ibid.*, 494–497.

two moments of cultural production and consumption in Soviet Ukraine during 1959 and 1961, which were connected to the official discourse of post-Stalinist socialism. First of all, the new educational requirements for the students' assigned readings at the philological department included more books in Ukrainian written by Ukrainian classical writers, such as Taras Shevchenko. On the other, the Communist Party's cultural program under Khrushchev stressed the need to create a new Soviet humanistic culture, 'socialist in essence' and 'national in form'. This led to official state ideological campaigns celebrating national poets (mainly Shevchenko), who were 'opposed the oppressive tsarist regime'. Shevchenko's anniversaries (in 1954 and 1961) were marked with the publication of his multi-volume collected works in Ukrainian. As a result of this new cultural mass consumption of Shevchenko's controversial (both anti-Russian and pro-Ukrainian patriotic) poetry in the Ukrainian schools by millions of students, an interest in the Ukrainian historical past took forms which differed from the ideology of the 'Soviet internationalism'. Some of these forms were qualified as 'nationalistic deviations' by the KGB.

At the beginning of 1960 another group of the young, patriotically inclined poets attracted the KGB's attention. Most of these poets were students of the local university (DGU) who joined the literary studio at the Palace of Students in Dniepropetrovsk. According to KGB reports these young talented poets refuted 'traditions of socialist realism', insisted on the new 'revolutionary approaches to a changing reality'; and called themselves 'a generation of the 60s' (*shestediasiatniki*). KGB officers discovered that these young poets experimented also with national ideas, reading and disseminating texts written in the 19th and 20th centuries by famous members of the Ukrainian national movement¹⁹. Their ideas of national history expressed in the traditionally accepted Marxist forms (none of 'those experimental poets' refuted the theory of 'class struggle' or the progressive character of socialism), were interpreted by the police

as 'nationalist propaganda'. In 1965 new people joined this group of young poets. One of the new members, A. Vodolazhchenko, told in public: 'We must to fight not only for the preservation of the Ukrainian language because this is not a very important question for this given period of time, but we must struggle for the preservation of the nation, national cadres. It is necessary that the Ukrainians stay and work in Ukraine, that we have fewer ethnically mixed marriages. We must work hard in this direction'²⁰. According to KGB reports, similar ideas were shared by many people not only in the philological department, but also in physical-technical department at the DGU, the DISI (Engineering and Construction Institute of Dniepropetrovsk) and among young artists and men of letters.

On the eve of the new year of 1966 DGU students, such as Vodolazhchenko and Sokul'sky, organized a group of young people who met in class rooms of the agricultural institute (DSKHI) and the DGU for recitals of national Ukrainian Christmas and New Year songs (called *koliadky* and *shchedrivky* in Ukrainian). They had official permissions of the party committee of the DGU and of the regional committee of Komsomol to organize these meetings and recitals of *koliadky*²¹. The students borrowed Ukrainian national costumes from Dniepropetrovsk Palace of Students. Late in the evening on 31 December 1965, they (altogether sixteen people) put these Ukrainian national costumes on and visited apartments of their professors from the DGU, the DISI and the DSKHI, where they staged the

¹⁹ In April 1960, Natalia Televnaya, a head of the literary studio in the Palace of Students in Dniepropetrovsk, was fired 'for voicing anti-Soviet nationalistic remarks' in public. DADO, f. 9870, op. 1, d. 48, l. 16–18.

²⁰ DADO, f. 19, op. 50, d. 56, l. 17–19. Citation is from l. 19. According to the new KGB investigation in September 1965, Yurii Zavgorodnii, a poet who lived now in Kiev, brought a photocopy of the Western German study by I. Koshelivits 'A Modern Literature in the Ukrainian SSR' for his Dniepropetrovsk friends. Through his cousin A. Vodolazhchenko, who was an active member of the group of young poets and a junior student of the evening classes at the historical-philological department of the DGU, copies of this book reached other DGU students such as Ivan Sokul'sky. KGB experts considered Koshelivits' study on the history of Ukrainian literature, which was published in Ukrainian, a book of a dangerous, nationalistic content. By the end of November 1965 KGB had reports about A. Vodolazhchenko's 'nationalistic inclinations'. Once he stated in public that 'the old generation was outdated, it did not know and did not understand the modern youth'.

²¹ DADO, f. 19, op. 50, d. 56, l. 20.

Ukrainian national rituals of the New Year celebrations, singing *koliadky*. Both professors and their students enjoyed performances of these rituals. But when young people tried to visit a special residence building for officials of the regional party committee in downtown Dnepropetrovsk, they were stopped by the police²².

After this event, the administration of the DGU, under the KGB's pressure, tried to accuse one of the main organizers of this group, Ivan Sokul'sky, a fourth year (junior) student in the philological department, of what they called 'Ukrainian nationalism'. It is noteworthy that the cases of so-called anti-Soviet behavior in KGB files were about the idealistic attempts of young people to cleanse socialist reality from 'distortions' and 'deviations' of communist ideals and to make life under socialism better and closer to the Leninist ideal of mature socialism. This kind of discourse existed in Soviet society all the time, but Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and his romantic reformism of the new CPSU program aimed at building communism in the nearest future energized and justified this discourse, especially between 1961 and 1968. All DGU students who were interrogated by the KGB for their presumed anti-Soviet propaganda wanted to 'make Soviet reality fit the classical Leninist model of socialism'. They tried to defend 'the Leninist theory of equality for all nations and national languages under socialism'. Therefore they accused the Dnepropetrovsk Communist leadership of 'ignoring Leninism, in organizing the anti-Marxist campaign of Russification and persecution of the socialist Ukrainian national culture'²³.

²² DADO, f. 19, op. 50, d. 56, l. 20. See on similar events in Kiev: K. C. Farmer, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy*, The Hague, Boston, London: Springer, 1980, pp. 119–120.

²³ See the KGB case of the DGU students, M. Mikhailov and N. Polesia, in 1967. DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 5–6. See also the similar case of Leonid S. Gavro, an engineer in the Dnepropetrovsk Institute of Metallurgy. See also about Soviet dissidents in the recent anthropological studies, especially Sergei Oushakine, 'The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat', *Public Culture*, Vol. 13, No.2 (2001), pp. 191–214, and A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 102–108, 130–131, 143–145.

All cases of so-called Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism were also related to the same discourse of improving 'the Soviet socialist model' and implementing the Communist Party program's objective 'to create Soviet culture, socialist in its content and national in its forms'. Some students who were arrested by the KGB for 'nationalism' explained during an investigation that they believed that their activities were important for awakening national feelings among local Ukrainians, and thus for improving socialist society. In the Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk, they noted, local department stores lacked Ukrainian national dresses and Ukrainian national literature. According to many local Ukrainians, such a situation in the distribution of national goods was a 'distortion' of 'the Leninist national policy' and created 'a Russified version' of 'socialist cultural consumption' that contradicted the main principles of mature socialism, declared by Leonid Brezhnev himself²⁴. All arrested students, though acknowledged that they borrowed their main arguments from foreign radio programs broadcast by BBC, the Voice of America and the Voice of Canada for Ukrainians, they added that they did so because available official information was not convincing to them. As we can see, again, cultural consumption – listening to the radio – contributed to activities which were interpreted by the KGB as nationalistic, therefore as dangerous anti-Soviet crimes²⁵.

As KGB reports noted, a rise of the Ukrainian nationalism in 'the rocket city' was a result of the new demographic and political developments after 1956. Former political prisoners who had been indicted for 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism' and spent their prison terms in GULAG, were released after the 20th Congress of the CPSU. However, due to the KGB's intervention they were not allowed to return to their homes in Western Ukraine. These prisoners, so-called *banderovtsi* in official documents, were either members or supporters of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). They came from

²⁴ It was a typical position held by many Ukrainian Soviet patriots accused of 'bourgeois nationalism'. Author's interview with Professor Yurii Mytsyk, 15 January 1992, Dnepropetrovsk. See the case of Vasiliy Suiarko in 1968. DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 69–73.

²⁵ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 6.

the Transcarpathian and Galician regions of Western Ukraine. When the Soviet Army suppressed the patriotic anti-Soviet movement after 1945, thousands of its members spent their prison terms and then exile far from Ukraine – in Siberia and Kazakhstan. KGB officials tried to prevent any contacts between these former political prisoners and their homeland in Western Ukraine²⁶. By the mid-1960s many of them had settled in eastern, more Russified, regions of Ukraine. KGB officials tried to control these ‘Ukrainian nationalists’ there and isolate them from the ethnically more diverse, and less Ukrainian population of the Dniepropetrovsk and Donetsk regions. By 1967, 1041 former political prisoners qualified as ‘Ukrainian nationalists’ from Western Ukraine, had settled in the region of Dniepropetrovsk alone. This endangered ideological and political control of the region because these people lived not only in the countryside but also in the strategically important cities such as Dniepropetrovsk.²⁷ The Western

²⁶ On 18 December 1967, KGB officers discovered that ex-prisoners established an intensive correspondence link with the members of their families who had migrated abroad after 1945. In one of the letters, which was sent from Canada to Dniepropetrovsk, its author wrote to his relatives in Soviet Ukraine: ‘I suggest you join the Communist Party, Komsomol, and please, get more and better education whenever it’s possible. But do not forget in your soul and your heart that you are Ukrainians. When you get higher offices in government and get higher education, then Ukraine will be free [...]. The more Ukrainians join the Communist Party, the more influence of these Ukrainians will be felt among the ruling elite. Only Ukrainians who will become members of the ruling elite could save our Ukrainian collective farmers (*rabiv-kolgospnykiv*) from the Moscow yoke [...]’. DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 9. Citation is from l. 8.

²⁷ The KGB established a special surveillance over Aleksandr Kuz’menko, a bus driver from Dniepropetrovsk. During the Nazi occupation he was elected as a team leader of the Ukrainian young nationalist organization in the Dniepropetrovsk district, called Lotskamenka. In 1944 when Soviet troops liberated the city, Kuz’menko was sent for eight years to labor camps. In 1956 he came back to Dniepropetrovsk and became a target of a new KGB investigation. Now he was suspected of disseminating ‘anti-Soviet rumors’ and criticizing ‘Soviet reality’. As the KGB discovered, by the beginning of 1968, Kuz’menko had already established in Kiev close relations with different ‘nationalistically disposed’ people. Among these ‘nationalists’, KGB officers included Ukrainian writers such as Ivan Dziuba and Oles’ Honchar, and

Ukrainian city of L’viv was always a source of trouble for KGB operatives in Dniepropetrovsk. The main leaders of the aforementioned young poets’ group had either direct contact with L’viv intellectuals or graduated from the L’viv State University. Ivan Sokul’sky took classes at L’viv University for one year before entering the Dniepropetrovsk State University (DGU). His close friend and supporter who covered Sokul’sky career in his articles in local periodicals, Vladimir Zaremba, also had come to Dniepropetrovsk from L’viv²⁸.

In April 1968 Ivan Sokul’sky proposed to organize ‘an evening of poetry’ in the Pridneprovsk Palace of Culture and invite all Dniepropetrovsk young poets to this event. But the KGB ruined Sokul’sky’s plans. On 16 May 1968, a KGB officer visited a party committee of the energy plant and strongly recommended that local administration stop activities of the new club²⁹. Being afraid of KGB persecution, Sokul’sky quit his job at a newspaper and tried to avoid any contacts with his friends. Thus, a noble patriotic idea of young idealistic Ukrainian poets was destroyed by the police interference.

During the spring of 1968 the local ideologists began a new ideological campaign against Oles’ Honchar’s Ukrainian-language novel *Sobor* (The Cathedral) which was blamed for ‘disseminating Ukrainian nationalistic ideas’³⁰. Despite this *Sobor* became the most popular book among the

descendants of the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko. It is noteworthy, that links to Taras Shevchenko’s relatives were considered in official correspondence as ‘ideologically dangerous’ by KGB operatives. DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 10.

²⁸ See Zaremba’s case in: DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 100–102.

²⁹ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 90–91, 99.

³⁰ Honchar’s novel *Sobor* was published first in January 1968, in the first issue of the literary magazine *Vitchyzna*, then it came out in a paperback edition in the series ‘Novels and Tales’ in March in the same year. Honchar told the story of a small town Zachiplianka on the banks of Dnieper, where workers of the local metallurgical plants tried to preserve an old Cossack cathedral and protect it from a local party official, who wanted to have it demolished. Using the cathedral as a symbol of Ukrainian national and cultural awakening, Honchar addressed a number of important issues for the development of the Dnieper region: industrial pollution, betrayal of national values and ideals, the role of old Cossack traditions, the preservation of Ukrainian

young intellectuals of the Dniepropetrovsk region, and especially among the university students. According to the KGB, students called Honchar's novel 'an epoch-making book' which was 'widely read, even during classes, by everyone'³¹. But then suddenly a local newspaper published 'An Open Letter of the University Freshmen from the Department of History' with a very negative criticism of Honchar's novel. For many students from the same department who loved the novel, it was a shock. They decided to discuss *Sobor* and this negative assessment together, and afterward they

language, culture and natural environment. For his novel, Honchar used the story of a real historical monument, the St. Trinity cathedral in Novomoskovs'k (near Dnipropetrovsk). This cathedral is a unique historical monument. The Ukrainian self-taught Cossack architect, Iakym Pogrebnia, built this cathedral in 1773–1778 with funds donated by Zaporizhian Cossack society. Interestingly not a single iron nail was used to construct the building, only wood was employed. The Soviet government closed this church and Dnipropetrovsk party leaders had plans to demolish it. Honchar was among those patriots of national history who tried to preserve the cathedral. That is why many characters and the location of his novel were reminiscent of real people and places of the Dniepropetrovsk region. The first secretary of the Dniepropetrovsk regional committee of the CPSU, Alexei Vatchenko, recognized himself in the negative character of the novel, Volodymyr Loboda, a careerist apparatchik, who betrayed his father and planned to destroy the cathedral itself. Vatchenko was enraged and in March 1968 began his personal attacks against Honchar who then headed the Union of Writers of Ukraine. During the first three months of 1968, Honchar's novel received only positive official reviews in Ukrainian periodicals. But by the end of March the situation had changed and the novel became a target of the most negative and nasty reviews and criticism. Moreover, Vatchenko organized an attack against Honchar during a Plenum of Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) in Kiev on 29 March 1968. Vatchenko accused Honchar of distorting socialist reality, of idealization of the Cossack past and nationalism. P. Shelest, the First Secretary of the CPU, tried to be cautious with his criticism of Honchar because N. Podgorny, a leader of the Soviet republic, supported Honchar. Later on, the state publishing house stopped the publication of Honchar's novel, and Honchar himself was replaced as the head of the Union of Writers of Ukraine in May 1970. But Honchar was never expelled from the Communist Party or arrested, despite Vatchenko's efforts to punish the writer. See: V. Koval, *Sobor i navkolo 'Soboru'*, Kyiv, 1989; *Vinok pam'iaty Olesia Honchara. Spogady. Khronika*, V. D. Honchar and V. Ia. P'ianov, eds, Kyiv, 1997.

³¹ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 53.

would send their response to the same paper with their rejection of 'the freshmen's letter' which they considered a fake.

On 20 May 1968 two sophomore students from the history department, Yurii Mytsyk and Viktor Lavrishchev, without any consultation with the departmental administration, posted an announcement on the discussion devoted to *Sobor*, which they planned to hold on 22 May³². After reading this announcement the head of this department, Professor F. Pavlov visited a class room where the classmates of Mytsyk and Lavrishchev loudly discussed Honchar's novel. All students were filled with indignation because the local periodicals published only negative reviews of *Sobor*. But the most frustrating for students of history was the fact that the so-called 'Open Letter' of criticism stemmed from their department. Students told Pavlov that 'the whole letter was falsified, that it was a fraud, prepared under the university administration's pressure because some freshmen, whose names were included in this letter, confessed they had never read this novel'. Pavlov, wishing to calm down the students, promised them his personal permission for organizing a discussion. Moreover, a secretary of the department party committee, met Mytsyk and Lavrishchev on 21 May and supported their idea as well. Under a pressure from the KGB, the DGU's administration and party committee interfered and cancelled the students' discussion on Honchar's novel. Meanwhile the KGB established a secret surveillance over Mytsyk, Lavrishchev and other students who were the most active fans of Honchar's novel. Lavrishchev and Mytsyk had unpleasant and long conversations with a chair of department. Eventually, on 22 May, DGU administration threatened to expel them from the school. After these threats, both Mytsyk and Lavrishchev stopped any discussion of Honchar's novel with their classmates. These threats and subsequent pressure from KGB traumatized the students. Yurii Mytsyk, who in the 1970s entered a graduate school at the same department and then became a teacher of Slavic history there, never mentioned this story to his colleagues and students. Moreover, he became ultra-cautious and

³² What follows is based on archival document from: DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 95–96, and my personal conversation with Yurii Mytsyk in April of 1990.

avoided any conversation about politics and Ukrainian patriotism at his department³³.

KGB and party ideologists used the anti-Honchar's campaign as a pretext for suppressing any sign of Ukrainian nationalist movement and punishing those who had displayed some enthusiasm and persistence in defending Ukrainian language and culture. In June 1968, Ivan Sokul'sky and his friends wrote 'A Letter of the Creative Youth of Dniproproetrovsk' in which they tried to summarize all the facts of the KGB repressions perpetrated against the Ukrainian patriots. Between September and December 1968, this letter was sent to various offices of the Communist Party, Komsomol and Soviet organizations in Kiev and Dniproproetrovsk. In June 1969 the KGB arrested the authors of this letter and in February 1970, the Dniproproetrovsk court indicted them as the political criminals³⁴.

The very text of 'A Letter of the Creative Youth of Dniproproetrovsk' is a good demonstration of loyal, pro-Soviet intentions of its authors. They called themselves 'a progressive Ukrainian youth, brought up in Soviet schools and colleges, educated with works by Marx and Lenin, Shevchenko and Dobroliubov'. They criticized the 'anti-Ukrainian' campaign in Dniproproetrovsk, which was started by the local administration as a reaction

to the publication of *Sobor*. The letter's authors presented this campaign as 'a wild and stupid persecution of honest Ukrainian citizens, who are devoted builders of communism', a persecution which could be compared only with actions of Maoists in China³⁵. 'If we are Marxists', they wrote 'we need to change this (Dniproproetrovsk) reality to make it fit the Leninist norms and Soviet laws rather than to persecute all progressively thinking Ukrainian citizens, who are loyal to Marxism-Leninism'³⁶. They finished this letter with an appeal to the leaders of the Ukrainian republican government to protect Ukrainian culture from Russification. They also asked to punish those who started this anti-Ukrainian ideological campaign in Dniproproetrovsk. 'Such campaigns' they reminded the Ukrainian leaders 'bring the seeds of animosity and hatred in relations between the two brotherly socialist nations, Russians and Ukrainians'³⁷.

As we can see, this letter is a fascinating demonstration of loyalty to the Soviet state and Marxist ideology. KGB officials and Communist ideologists had problems with the interpretation of the Sokul'sky case as an 'anti-Soviet crime' because they shared the same ideological language of Marxism-Leninism, the same arguments of 'progressive development of mature socialism' with Sokul'sky and his friends. That is why both sides of the conflict had to portray their opponents' behavior as a 'deviation' in the Soviet cultural production and consumption (reading and writing in Ukrainian). One side blamed the other either for 'a betrayal of Leninist nationality polity' or for 'anti-Soviet provocations'³⁸. The ideological cam-

³³ See on the KGB's decision to go on with this secret surveillance in: DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, l. 95–96. See also the publication of this document in: *Ternystym shliakhom do khramu*, 148–149, 256. Only during perestroika he related to us, his former students, the details of this story. See also: Yu. Mytsyk, "Sobor" i navkolo "Soboru", *Kur'er Kryvbasu*, No. 9, 1998, pp. 102–109.

³⁴ DADO, f. 19, op. 54, d. 113, l. 29–31; *Ternystym shliakhom do khramu*, pp. 260, 261. I. Sokul'sky, *Lysty na svitanku*, Dniproproetrovsk, 1 (2001), p. 22; 2 (2001), pp. 489, 491. Sokul'sky was accused not only of writing the letter, but also of disseminating articles by General P. Grigorenko, written in defense of the Crimean Tartars, 'A Current State of the Soviet Economy' by the Soviet academician, A. Aganbegian, and a book by the Czechoslovak scholar, Molnar, *Slovaks–Ukrainians*. All these texts were considered 'anti-Soviet propaganda' by the Dniproproetrovsk KGB. Moreover, the police discovered originals of Sokul'sky's poems 'Freedom', 'Nostalgia' and 'Sviatoslav'. Ideas expressed in these poems were also interpreted as 'anti-Soviet, nationalistic material'. Later on, the KGB removed their accusation of disseminating Aganbegian's article and Molnar's book.

³⁵ 'Lyst tvorchoi molodi', quotations are from *Molod' Dniproproetrov'ska v borot'bi protiv rusyfikatsii*, pp. 9, 17.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 15, 15–16. And they reminded their opponents Lenin's advice how to fight nationalism in the former Russian Empire. First of all, Communists had to resist 'the great Russian chauvinism', and only afterwards they should fight against the oppressed nation's nationalism which was always a reaction to Russian chauvinism.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 18–19.

³⁸ See especially F. Tsukanov, 'Maska i oblychia naklepyiv', *Zoria*, 7 February (1970). The author even asked the question: 'What is criminal in a concern for the Ukrainian language?' See also: L. Vyblaia, 'Tak, tse – zrada', *Prapor iunosti*, 7 February (1970); I. Shylo, 'Otravlenyye per'ia: Pravda o tak nazyvemom "Pis'me tvorcheskoi molodiozhi"', *Dneprovskaiia Pravda*, 8 February 1970. See also: *Derzhavnyi arkhiv*

paign of 1968–1969 in Dnipropetrovsk created a model for suppressing any ‘ideological deviations’ in the region.

During the 1960s and 1970s both Communist ideologists and KGB officers complained about another bad cultural consumption. This was the consumption of Western mass culture products, including rock, disco music, jeans and so on. By the mid-1970s the local police had encountered very unusual forms of this rock music consumption, which, surprisingly, became connected again to Ukrainian national history.

In 1970, Dnipropetrovsk rock bands (officially known as vocal instrumental ensembles) incorporated major international rock music hits in their ‘repertoires’ for dance parties. These hits included ‘Girl’ by the Beatles, ‘As Tears Go By’ by Rolling Stones, ‘Venus’ by Shocking Blue and ‘Suzie Q’ by Creedence Clearwater Revival. Ukrainian musicians supplied these songs with their own lyrics in Ukrainian. Ukrainian versions of ‘Girl’, ‘As Tears Go By’ and ‘Suzie Q’ corresponded to the Soviet tradition of sung romantic poetry about love. But the adaptation of ‘Venus’ in Ukrainian was very different³⁹.

Originally the Dutch band Shocking Blue composed their song ‘Venus’ in 1969 for their single record. In 1970 these Dutch rock musicians included the song in their album *At Home* which became very popular not only in the Great Britain, but also in other European countries. Shocking Blue’s hit ‘Venus’ was on the BBC radio shows throughout entire 1970. Even Aleksandr Tatarskii, a Soviet radio journalist, included this song in his

Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrayny. Fond upravlinnia v Dnipropetrovskii oblasti (hereafter – DASBUDO), Sprava 24613, t. 7, ark. 300–317; Reabilitovani istorieiu V. V. Ivanenko, ed., Vol. 1: Vidrodzhena pam’iat’, Dnipropetrovsk, 1999, pp. 561–568. Savchenko became a famous Ukrainian writer. See also Savchenko’ memoirs: Reabilitovani istorieiu, V. V. Ivanenko, ed., Vol. 2: Svidchennia z mynuvshyny. Movoju dokumentiv, Dnipropetrovsk, 2001, pp. 278–281. See also about Soviet dissidents in the recent anthropological studies, especially S. Oushakine, ‘The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat’, *Public Culture*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2001), pp. 191–214, and A. Yurchak, *Everything*, pp. 102–108, 130–131, 143–145.

³⁹ Author’s interview with Mikhail Suvorov, 1 June 1991; Author’s interview with Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, 20–21 July 2003; Author’s interview with Eduard Svirchar in Vatutino, Cherkassy region, Ukraine, 8 June 2004.

radio show broadcast by Moscow radio station Maiak in December 1970. Local ‘music studios’ all over Ukraine used this hit in their music material for ‘greeting cards’ recordings together with traditionally popular Soviet songs by Muslim Magomaev, Eduard Khil and Edita Piekha. The average Dnipropetrovsk consumer of popular music ordered more music greeting cards with recordings of ‘Venus’ than with recordings of popular Gypsy songs or folk songs by Zykina, or of Vysotsky’s songs. Before 1970 only young customers ordered music greeting cards with foreign popular music (predominantly by the Beatles and Rolling Stones). After 1970 even those aged thirty or forty now ordered the Shocking Blue song⁴⁰.

To some extent the immense popularity of this song was connected to a new Ukrainian version of the song’s lyric. Many local Ukrainian rock bands performed ‘Venus’ using this very unusual lyric in Ukrainian. The Ukrainian ‘Venus’ became a song about the Ukrainian Zaporizhian Cossacks who fought against foreign enemies of the Ukrainian people, trying to defend their native land and religion. The Ukrainian lyric was simple but catchy: ‘The Dnipro flows into the Black Sea, and there will be a disaster for Turks, when the Cossacks arrive and kill all the Turks. Hey Cossacks, glorious Zaporizhian Cossacks etc’⁴¹. This song about Zaporizhian Cossacks with to the ‘Venus’ melody had five to six versions, produced in different localities of Ukraine. This song became very popular not only among young rock music fans, but also among all those who frequented dancing parties and loved to dance. This song was performed in Ukrainian and for the Ukrainian-speaking audience as well. Even Russian native-speakers danced when this song was performed in Ukrainian. It was the beginning of a new phenomenon – an ‘Ukrainization’ of English rock songs. The similar ‘nativization’ of Anglophone rock music took place among Russian

⁴⁰ Author’s interview with Vladimir Demchenko, a former public lecturer of ‘Society of Knowledge’, Dnipropetrovsk, 12 January 1992.

⁴¹ ‘Dnipro vpadae v Chorne more, to turkam bude gore, koly kozaky pryplyvut’ i turkiv vsikh ub’iut’. *Kozaky, zaporizh’ki kozaky [...]’* in Ukrainian. Author’s interview with Mikhail Suvorov, 1 June 1991; Author’s interview with Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, 20–21 July 2003; Author’s interview with Eduard Svirchar in Vatutino, Cherkassy region, Ukraine, 8 June 2004.

rock musicians too⁴². They adopted 'Yellow River' a popular song by New Christie Minstrels, with Russian lyrics about Carlson, a personage from a fairy tale by the Swedish children writer, Astrid Lindgren. The Moscow rock band 'Happy Guys' adopted the Beatles song 'Drive my Car' from the *Rubber Soul* album with the Russian lyric about 'A Small Old Car' and released this song on the 'Melodia' label record⁴³.

It was an interesting example of a new cultural consumption among the young Ukrainian rock music consumers. Even Russian speaking dancing hall visitors in Dnepropetrovsk did not feel offended by the song that idealized the Ukrainian Cossacks. They preferred the Ukrainian version to the English original when they danced. It is worth noting that neither Communist ideologists nor KGB operatives objected to this Ukrainian version of the song on Dnepropetrovsk dancing floors. In the 1970s the DGU rock band from the physical-technical department still sang the Ukrainian song 'Cossacks' using an old melody by the Dutch band Shocking Blue. As one police officer noted, 'it is better to have Soviet young people dance to their national song "Cossacks" than to the American rock and roll'⁴⁴. As we see, ideological priorities to limit the 'dangerous' Western influences on the Soviet youth led to allowing an idealization of the Ukrainian national past as an alternative to an idealization of 'the capitalist present'. It is remarkable because in 1968 the Dnepropetrovsk KGB launched a campaign of persecution of local young poets such as Ivan Sokul'sky. And the main reason for this persecution was the very topic of the popular dancing song 'Cossacks' – an idealization of Ukrainian national history.

⁴² See about a Byelorussian version of the 'nativization' of rock music in: M. P. Survilla, "Ordinary Words": Sound, Symbolism, and Meaning in Belarusian-Language Rock Music', *Global Pop, Local Language*, H. M. Berger and M. Th. Carroll, eds, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003, pp. 187–206.

⁴³ T. W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 106. See also A. Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia*, London: Omnibus Press, 1987.

⁴⁴ Mentioned by Mikhail Suvorov. Author's interview with Mikhail Suvorov, 1 June 1991; Author's interview with Andrei Vadimov, Dnepropetrovsk, 20–21 July 2003. Author's interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dnepropetrovsk, 15 May 1991.

Because of the All-Union Komsomol discotheque campaign which reached Dnepropetrovsk in 1976, both Komsomol leaders and Komsomol activists became involved in the organization and supervision of various forms of popular music consumption. After 1976 the Central Committee of All-Union Komsomol required Dnepropetrovsk Komsomol leaders to participate actively in the new discotheque movement which was triggered by the Komsomol of the Baltic republics in 1974–1975⁴⁵. The rapid spread of this movement made this region exemplary for many Soviet ideologists, who used the success of the Dnepropetrovsk central discotheque as the proof of an ideological efficiency in propaganda of the new forms of socialist leisure for the Soviet youth. The region of Dnepropetrovsk was praised by the republican Komsomol ideologists in Kiev for 'the efficient organization of disco club movement'. Soon, the city of Dnepropetrovsk became a location for the "first All-Ukrainian republican final festival contest of the discotheque programs"⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Yu. Milintseko, 'Pervye shagi diskoteki', *Dnepr vechernii*, 26 February (1977); B. Ivashura, I. Manevich, 'Ruzhane dariat prazdnik', *Dnepr vechernii*, 23 March (1977). See about this All-Union campaign in: A. Troitsky, *Back in the USSR*, p. 25. According to Troitsky, the first 'typical' Soviet discothèque was organized in Moscow in 1972. Artemy Troitsky and his friend, Aleksandr Kostenko, rented special musical equipment from their friends, musicians, and operated this 'dancing enterprise' inside a café at Moscow University. As Troitsky noted, they developed special structure and scenario for this discothèque, which became a norm for other Soviet discothèques. 'The first hour was dedicated to listening; that is, I played music by "serious" groups like Jethro Tull, Pink Floyd, King Crimson and talked about their histories [...]. After the "listening" hour, people spent the next three expressing themselves on the dance floor'. T. W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*. A. White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland and Hungary, 1953–89*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 76–79.

⁴⁶ A. Belich, 'Diskoteka: ot fakta k priznaniu', *Komsomolskoe znamia*, 20 October (1979); A. Belich, 'Pervye – vse: v Dnepropetrovskie podvedeny itogi 1-go respublikanskogo smotra-konkursa diskotechnykh program', *Komsomolskoe znamia*, 24 October (1979).

The city Komsomol organization of Dnepropetrovsk had prepared a special report about the achievements of the city disco club Melodia before this festival and summarized major forms and methods of ‘music entertainment’ in the city. In October 1979 this published report was widely circulated among the participants of the All-Union festival competition. This report praised local disco clubs for propaganda of the ‘Ukrainian national music forms and Ukrainian glorious history’. Many guests of the city used this publication as a guide for their disco club activities⁴⁷. During the first year of its existence, Melodia organized 175 thematic dance parties with special music lectures. More than 60,000 young people became regular attendants of these parties⁴⁸. In 1979 many apparatchiks who were involved in this movement were promoted and awarded for ‘excellent ideological and educational activities among the regional youth’. By the beginning of 1982 more than 560 youth clubs with eighty-three officially registered discotheques existed in the region of Dnepropetrovsk⁴⁹.

Komsomol ideologists and their KGB supervisors faced a very serious problem. Young pop music consumers apparently preferred Western music hits to Soviet ones. The majority of rock music enthusiasts rejected completely what they called Soviet *estrada* (pop music). Therefore Komsomol ideologists began a promotion of such form of a discotheque that presented mainly Soviet music forms, including songs from national republics. Apparatchiks responsible for the discotheque movement supported themes performed the Western Ukrainian band ‘Vodograi’ or the Byelorussian band ‘Pesniary’ because these bands represented Soviet tradition in contrast to alien forms of Western pop culture. To show their ideological loyalty and local patriotism many DJs in Dnepropetrovsk included comments about ‘glorious Ukrainian history’ and criticized ‘capitalist exploitation in the Western countries’⁵⁰. Even in their comments about Ukrainian history

they always emphasized class struggle. But still these stories were about Ukrainian Cossacks or melodious Ukrainian poetry which was not a very popular subject matter among the local KGB operatives. Eventually, KGB supervisors of the discotheque movement had to accept these stories and national Ukrainian music on the local dance floors. For them it was lesser evil, in comparison to capitalist music culture from the West⁵¹.

This was a part of the ambiguity in the Soviet ideology of mature socialism which had to address the problems of leisure and entertainment among the youth of national republic such as Ukraine. On the one hand, Communist ideologists had to resist the Western cultural influences on the dance floor, using any available Soviet music forms, including the Ukrainian national ones. At the same time they encountered a growing enthusiasm for Ukrainian culture which they always associated with Ukrainian nationalism. According to the prevalent interpretations of Dnepropetrovsk apparatchiks, such nationalism was a part of ‘bourgeois ideology’. Such a contradiction confused local ideologists. Especially when they dealt with popular music consumers who combined their favorite Western music forms with the Ukrainian language and national ideas.

Eventually, Komsomol ideologists and KGB officers who controlled cultural consumption in Dnepropetrovsk created a confusing and disorienting ideological situation for the local youth. On the one hand, they promoted Western forms of entertainment such as discotheque. On the other, local ideologists tried to limit the influence of capitalist culture by popularizing Soviet national forms of music and entertainment, including Ukrainian music and history. At the same time, the KGB was afraid of the rise of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism and tried to suppress any ‘extreme’ enthusiasm for Ukrainian poetry and history. On the other hand, the entire system of Soviet education and Communist ideology was built

⁴⁷ *Zdes' mozhnno uznat' mnogo pouchitel'nogo: Iz opyta raboty Denpropetrovskogo molodezhnogo diskokluba 'Melodia'*, Dnepropetrovsk, 1979, pp. 1–4.

⁴⁸ DADO, f. 17, op. 11, d. 1, l. 28.

⁴⁹ DADO, f. 22, op. 32, d. 1, l. 44.

⁵⁰ See about national Ukrainian and Byelorussian theme in the city disco clubs in: DADO, f. 17, op. 10, d. 1, ll. 87, 98; op. 11, d. 25, l. 88; op. 12, d. 18, l. 15; f. 22, op. 36,

d. 1, ll. 36–37. See also the local periodicals: Cheno's'ko, ‘Disko-klubu – zelioniu ulitsu’, *Dnepr vechernii*, 1 July (1978); L. Titarenko, ‘Tsikavi tsentry vidpochynku’, *Zoria*, 15 August (1978); I. Rodionov, ‘Vecher v diskoklube’, *Dneprovskaiia pravda*, 14 January (1979); A. Belkina, ‘Vechir u dyskotetsi’, *Prapor iunosti*, 11 December (1979).

⁵¹ Author's interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dnepropetrovsk, 15 May 1991.

on a promotion of 'progressive' national cultural models of the socialist nations, as contrasting with 'degenerate capitalist culture' of the imperialist nations. As a result, besides the forms of Western mass culture, the controversial ideas of Shevchenko and images of Zaporizhian Cossacks became part and parcel of cultural identification among the young members of 'mature socialist society in the 'closed' city.

A constant migration of non-Ukrainian ethnic groups to the region and the ideological pressure during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s made Russification the main trend in cultural development of the region and especially in the city of Dniepropetrovsk. Yuzhmash, a rocket manufacturing factory, a priority number one for KGB officials, also became a major factor in the growing Russification of this city⁵². The Ukrainian language steadily lost ground to Russian during the 1970s and 1980s. An overwhelming majority of non-Ukrainian ethnic groups preferred Russian to Ukrainian. Increasingly more Ukrainians chose Russian as their first language. In 1979, 12.6 per cent Ukrainians in the region claimed that Russian was their first language. By 1989 this number had grown to 15.2 per cent. In the cities this number increased from 16.4 per cent to almost 18.9 per cent⁵³.

Reading books, listening to the radio, watching movies, recording music became elements of intensive cultural consumption among the Soviet youth. Young people in Dniepropetrovsk not only consumed but also produced new cultural forms which challenged traditional notions and ideological discourses as preserved and encouraged by local apparatchiks. Moreover, local ideologists tried to use different forms of entertainment, such as discotheque, for Communist propaganda. But the very use of West-

ern music forms for this propaganda made these forms legitimate for everyday ideological activities and justified the immense popularity of the forms among the local youth. As a result, KGB and party ideologists tried to neutralize these Western forms with propaganda of the Soviet national cultural models, including the Ukrainian national ones.

Young people who lived in Dniepropetrovsk were confused and disoriented by the local ideologists. The prevailing ideological discourse and cultural situation emphasized the leading cultural role of a single language, Russian. But at the same time, Ukrainian Soviet ideologists inculcated among the young generation a respect for some selected figures of national Ukrainian history, such as Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky or Taras Shevchenko, and for some forms of Ukrainian culture as well. After many years of this indoctrination, in the post-Soviet period of Ukrainian independence this generation was ready to consume already familiar forms of Ukrainian culture as legitimate symbols which connected their former Soviet ideological discourse to the new, post-Soviet one. But because of the ideological confusion of late Soviet socialism, these symbols became intermixed with various forms of both Soviet and Western popular culture. Such a situation created a very peculiar regional form of identity formation among the local youth. The Dniepropetrovsk version of cultural identification differed significantly from the forms of Ukrainian national identity associated with less Russified regions of Ukraine. Young people of the Brezhnev era, the last generation of late socialism in Dniepropetrovsk, developed their national identity through a dual process. First, by seeing themselves as cultural descendants of the late Soviet civilization with some elements of Western mass culture and Ukrainian national forms, and second, as opponents of extreme Westernization and Ukrainization.

The oppressive atmosphere of Dniepropetrovsk as a 'closed' city contributed not only to an ideological and cultural confusion, but also to a moral one, an ideological cynicism. Dniepropetrovsk and to some extent other Russified regions of eastern Ukraine, had to face with such a situa-

⁵² In 1959, 70 per cent of 2,705,000 people, who lived in the region of Dniepropetrovsk, resided in towns and cities. In 1970, this urbanization ratio grew to 76 per cent of 3,343,000 people. L. I. Poliakova, 'Zminy v etnonational'nomu skladni naselennia pvidniai Ukrayiny v 60–80-ti roky XX st.', *Pivdennaia Ukraina XX stolittia: Zapiski naukovo-doslidnoi laboratoriï Pividennoi Ukrayiny Zaporiz'kogo Derzhavnogo Universytetu*, A. V. Boiko, ed., Zaporizhzhia, 1998, pp. 227–237.

⁵³ Goskomstat USSR. Dniepropetrovskoe oblatnoe upravlenie statistiki, *Naselenie Dniepropetrovskoi oblasti po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1989 goda*, Dniepropetrovsk, 1991, pp. 100, 102, 106, 116, 117.

tion of confusion and cynicism all the time⁵⁴. As a result, the new, post-Soviet, Ukrainian politicians, who grew up in the region, brought this ideological/cultural confusion and cynicism into their new post-Soviet politics in Ukraine.

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⁵⁴ As an example see the biography of Yulia Timoshenko, a ‘heroine’ of the Orange Revolution: See: D. Popov, I. Mil’shtein, *Oranzhevaia printseessa. Zagadka Yulii Timoshenko*, Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Ol’gi Morozovoi, 2006, pp. 52–89. For Timoshenko’s biography in English see: A. Wilson, *Ukraine’s Orange Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, pp. 18–22.