# 5 Boundaries of the Permissible

State control has been one of the defining elements in relations between Soviet people and the outside world. Frederick Barghoorn regarded Soviet-American cultural exchanges in the 1960s as "limited cultural contact", and Anne Gorsuch characterized Soviet tourism to Eastern Europe as "experiencing controlled difference".[1] Control exercised by state and Party institutions alike constituted a crucial part of the staged openness and the performance of peace and friendship at the Moscow festival. Because of their endeavour to demonstrate the open post-Stalin atmosphere, Soviet authorities had decided to tolerate many such aspects of encounters that were deemed unusual or which stretched the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The risk that the authorities had decided to take left some latitude for Soviet and foreign people to extend the boundaries of what was permissible. The burning question for authorities, locals and foreign participants was: where did these new, interim boundaries lay? How much were the authorities prepared to tolerate in the name of promoting the new image of the USSR?

## Social Control and Socialist Rituals

Displaying the USSR as open, accessible and tolerant did not mean everything was allowed in the summer of 1957. Numerous legal, social and cultural norms set limits to what local people and foreigners could do. Based on the reports from the previous World Youth Festivals, Soviet authorities had estimated the potential problems that might arise when thousands of young foreigners came to mingle with local people and explore Moscow, so they were well prepared to face possible social and legal deviance. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Komsomol collected special forces for taking care of social control during the festival days.[2] These included around 60,000 police officers, soldiers, firefighters and militia school students as well as 16,500 Komsomol volunteers who controlled the

**1** Barghoorn, Frederick, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive. The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 336; Gorsuch, Anne E., "Time Travellers. Soviet Tourists to Eastern Europe", in *Turizm. The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, edited by Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 207, 226.

**2** Social control is understood here as a method of managing behaviour that breaks social norms. For definitions and discussion of social control see Deflem, Mathieu, "Social Control and Communicative Action", *International Journal of Sociology of Law*, 22, 1994, 355–373; Meier, Robert F., "Perspectives on the Concept of Social Control", *Annual Review of Sociology*,


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legal and moral aspects of youth behaviour.[3] Oral history accounts have tended to mention the special Komsomol morality brigades, which patrolled Moscow during the festival and apprehended young couples for "inappropriate" intimate contact.[4] Otherwise, strong public social control did not seem to contradict the open and joyous atmosphere among the visitors. An East German visitor paid attention to the great number of policemen but noted that Moscow was "still a city not fully under police control".[5]

The massive size of the Moscow festival made exercising control much more complicated than usual. Previously, foreign visitors had come to the Soviet Union in groups of 20 to 50 people, a size that authorities could easily supervise; but how could they follow 30,000 foreigners and millions of locals? The control could not operate as usual during the festivities, since this would have ruined the idea of an open festival, not to mention reinforcing the Soviet image of an authoritarian dictatorship. Oleg Tumanov, a KGB spy in West Germany in the 1960s, comments on the task of taking care of public control in such circumstances in his memoirs:

> I can only imagine the horror of officials who were ordered to involve themselves directly with the organization of the festival, and above all that of the employees of the state security organization. Previously every single (!) foreign citizen had been kept under close observation, but now Moscow was expecting several thousand guests, from around the world, at once. How could they all be kept under observation? How could they be prevented from making undesirable contacts with Muscovites?[6]

According to the report by the Ministry of Interior, approximately 2,300 people were arrested for violating public order during the two-week festival. Among them were 293 beggars, 1,718 drunks, 158 vagrants and 107 women "of loose behaviour". Furthermore, 54 crimes were conducted against foreigners (almost all thefts), for which 38 people were arrested.[7] These figures were rather modest given that Moscow was a metropolis with a population around five million;

8, 1982, 35–55 and LaPierre, Brian, *Hooligans in Khrushchev's Russia: Defining, Policing, and Producing Deviance during the Thaw* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

**3** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 427. Ministervnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

**4** Plyushch, Leonid, *History's Carnival. A Dissident's autobiography* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1979), 15; Fürst, Juliane, *Stalin's Last Generation. Soviet Post-war Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 106.

**5** Corlais, Juergen, *Always on the Other Side. A Journalist's Journey from Hitler to Howard's End* (Lulu.com, 2008), 67.

**6** Tumanov, Oleg, *Tumanov. Confessions of a KGB Agent* (Chicago: Edition q., 1993), 13–14.

**7** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 430. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

however, they showed that the measures taken by the authorities had not managed to clean the city completely of the anti-social elements that did not belong to the public face of socialist society.[8]

The overall statistics do not specify the nationality of law-breakers. The daily reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs indicated that both the limits of the permissible and the likely consequences of illegal behaviour were different for locals and foreigners. While dozens of misbehaving foreign visitors were fined and arrested for drunkenness and hooliganism,[9] Soviet citizens faced far more serious consequences. Those Soviet citizens who crossed the line in the eyes of the authorities received everything from informal reprimands to ten-year labour camp sentences for anti-Soviet acts. Reports informed in a very detailed manner about the law-breakers, giving their names, years of birth, professions and party-affiliations. They, for example, listed Soviet citizens who had discussions with foreign guests in their homes or who had wandered around the hotels where foreigners stayed attempting to acquire rare goods, festival passes or food tickets, or printed materials.[10]

Besides legal and social deviance, authorities noted the different cultural practices of foreign visitors. Crossing cultural boundaries was a far more complicated subject than breaking legal or social norms. Here crossing cultural boundaries meant the failure to follow the norms and rituals that the Komsomol and Party regarded as the ideal and right ways to encounter foreigners. These rituals and norms were an important part of the organizers' version of the performance of peace and friendship. In Soviet authorities' view, an ideal meeting with foreigners was supposed to be warm in spirit and friendly ties were to be expressed in countless speeches repeating the same old peace slogans everyone had heard dozens of times, ending with toasts to mutual understanding. For example, a secretary of the Komsomol's Moscow City Committee (MGK) named M. Davydov reported that "[the] meeting of the Yugoslav delegation with young people from the Kranopresnenskii district went accordingly, though the meeting could have been even warmer and more cordial".[11] In another report, Aleksandr Shelepin

**8** Colton, Timothy J., *Moscow. Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 758.

**9** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 221–222, 393, 432. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

**10** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 57. Informatsiia 10, 30.7.1957. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi; GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 289–291, 312, 391.

**11** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 32. Sekretariu MGK tov. Furtsevoi. Informatsiia o vstrechakh moskovskoi molodezhi s delegatami festivalia i provedennykh ekskursiiakh na predpriiatiia Moskvy 29–30 iiulia s.g.

complained that the US delegation had appeared very reserved and distant, noting that they "did not propose any toasts". Similarly, Uruguayans who did not smile evoked the interest of Soviet reporters.[12]

The importance of certain formalities in youth festival activities can be explained by the fact that rituals and performative elements were at the core of Soviet public culture. Even though the de-Stalinization and Thaw had swept away the leader cult, allowed more freedoms and eased censorship, a certain degree of performativity remained in Soviet public life. Being part of predetermined rituals, fulfilling one's role in a performance, and stating dogmatic phrases continued to mean more than the actual contents of those rituals.[13] Komsomol reporting on intra-delegation meetings reflects the influence of the performative culture, which made Komsomol officials expect foreign delegates to perform their friendship towards their Soviet hosts by raising toasts, giving speeches in Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, and offering gifts. In the time of Stalin, the performance of peace and friendship had included celebration of the Soviet omnipotent leader, but in the Thaw it was centred around the celebration of youth. Even so, the Soviet expectation of what an ideal encounter should consist of still had much in common with the earlier ritualistic culture. The difficulty, however, was that foreign participants, especially if they came from outside of communist organizations, were not always familiar with these cultural practices.

From the participants' perspective, the festival meant a break from everyday life and its routines. This was especially true for foreign participants who were mentally and physically far away from their ordinary habitats. To employ a concept developed by anthropologists Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner in their studies on rituals and rites, festival guests were in a liminal state. Liminality indicates a transition from the start to the end of a ritual, in which participants are no longer in the same state as they were before the ritual but have not yet transformed into the next state, which they will hold once the ritual is completed. Typical for a liminal state in regard to festivals and carnivals is "the notion of separation, loss of identity and social status, and role reversals. In

**12** RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 233, ll. 121–122. A. Shelepin v TsK KPSS, 9.8.1957; RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 15, d. 205, l. 79. Otchet o rabote s delegatsiei Urugvaia.

**13** Brooks, Jeffrey, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvi–xviii, 78, 241–244; Yurchak, Alexei, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2006), 21–22, 58–59, 93.

this state people are more relaxed, uninhibited, and open to new ideas".[14] At the festival, the liminal state, in addition to loosened official control, formed auspicious conditions for extending the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Many foreign guests travelled to Moscow without any political agenda, wanting simply to become familiar with a country that had been closed for several years. The extraordinary free and open invitation nonetheless also attracted many of those of whom the Soviet authorities were most afraid – especially people who aspired to test the moral and legal boundaries of Soviet society in order to challenge the legal order or simply to fight against the "communist other". The problem was that not everything Soviet bureaucrats categorized as anti-Soviet or inappropriate behaviour was motivated by an intention to act against the authorities. Social and legal boundaries were crossed by many who did not realize they were doing anything unacceptable, or at least anything anti-Soviet. Drinking and premarital sex, mentioned in reports, tested the limits of local norms, but often also those of the delegates' own cultural world. Once abroad, young people were away from the normal daily surveillance of parents, teachers, employers, older workmates, and other elders, which made it easier for them to break away from their expected behavioural patterns.

Some cases suggest that foreign participants intentionally ridiculed the Soviet organizers and tested how much they were prepared to tolerate. In one case, reported by a Komsomol official, some Polish delegates "wilfully" replaced the portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin with the Polish coat of arms and its white eagle in a room where a friendship meeting was about to take place. According to the report, this was not the only case when "Polish delegates had disturbed" public events, though it did not offer any further analysis or detail on the activities of the Poles.[15] In another case, Soviet authorities reported on several American delegates who had behaved provocatively during the last days of the festival. The report said that this group of Americans entailed some "reactionary" delegates who had pinned an announcement on one of their hotel room doors, informing fellow participants about the establishment of a counter-revolutionary committee under the leadership of Trotsky and

**14** Getz, Donald, "Event Tourism. Definition, Evolution, and Research", in *Event Tourism. Critical Concepts in Tourism, Volume 1: The Evolution of Event Tourism: Concepts and Approaches*, edited by Joanne Connell and Stephen Page (London: Routledge, 2010), 41.

**15** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 94. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi, Informatsiia 14, 4.8.1957.

Beria. According to the report, the Americans explained the activity with reference to a tradition of American humour.[16]

Evaluating the degree of provocation, mockery or humour that defined these cases is difficult without sources other than the authorities' reports. From the authorities' perspectives, these incidents appeared by no means as humorous but as political provocations: anti-Soviet activity. Reasons for the activity of American participants might have been political provocation; however, it could also be viewed also another way. The authorities' reports included feedback, which showed that some foreigners thought Komsomol officials lacked a sense of humour and did not know how to have fun, and they complained that many of the meetings were too formal. With this information in mind, the tricks played by Poles and Americans could have been motivated by an intention to parody these formalities.

A similar kind of political joke, whose idea was to ridicule the formal nature of political rituals, can be found in the novel *Steps* (1968) by the Polish émigré writer Jerzy Kosinski, who had been a participant in the Warsaw (1955) and Moscow (1957) festivals. In the novel, there is an episode describing the exchange of national and political badges at a reception for local, Party and military people, scientists and foreign delegates. The narrator focuses on a scientist who, like all the other guests, goes around fastening his badges to distinguished guests' chests. The badge, however, looks somehow different than the others, and the narrator decides to take a closer look.

> I [. . .] instantly had to restrain myself: the badge was a foreign-made prophylactic. The condom was wrapped and pressed into a shiny golden foil, and the name of the foreign factory stood out clearly in small letters embossed around its edges. On my way out I saw the results of the scientist's activity: almost all of the high Party and government officials displayed foil-wrapped contraceptives pinned to their lapels.[17]

The story continues with the narrator speculating on what the reaction would be when the guests finally realize that one of their new badges was not what it seemed. The episode in the book does not mention any connection to the youth festival, but according to Kosinski it was based on his own activity at the Moscow gathering. The author of Kosinski's biography, James Park Sloan, mentions

**16** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 110. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi, Informatsiia 15, 5.8.1957.

**17** Kosinski, Jerzy, *Steps* (New York: Grove Press, (1968) 1997), 70–71. Kosinski used the milieu of the Moscow World Youth Festival in a non-fiction book about the Soviet Union and the socialist system. The book was published under the pseudonym Joseph Novak. Novak, Joseph, *No Third Path* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1962).

however that Kosinski had a habit of embellishing his stories and his role at the Warsaw and Moscow youth festivals. It might be that the condom episode was "something he would have liked to have done".[18] This kind of activity would have been very risky and would probably have had consequences, and certainly would have left a mark in the authorities' reports. Much more interesting than whether this really happened is the fact that Kosinski chose to include the episode in his novel. When this practical joke is viewed in its purported historical context, through the lens of performative culture and the little tactics of the habitat, the replacing of political medals with condoms – symbols of Western moral corruption – if only in a semi-fictional novel, can be interpreted as a means of ridiculing the existing political culture and its rituals. Given Kosinski's critical attitude towards the Soviet Union after his emigration to the USA, the idea may well have been simply to ridicule the whole socialist system.

## Face to Face at the Grassroots Level

Given that only a few years earlier Soviet citizens had been arrested and convicted for their contacts with foreigners, the Moscow youth festival provided an unusual chance for personal interactions between people from the capitalist West, the unknown South and East, as well as those from the more familiar "fraternal Eastern Europe". Memoirs, travelogues, interviews, and diaries of foreign visitors and local people suggest that the degree of interaction varied considerably. While some people seized every minute of this uncommon opportunity for international interaction, others preferred to observe it from a distance. For those visitors who had not been abroad before, communication with foreigners might have been a completely new experience. This applied especially to participants from areas with low levels of emigration, such as the Scandinavian countries. In most cases, "international friendship" meant basic discussion about everyday life and the exchange of small gifts, such as post cards, pins, scarves, and flags. For many, simply seeing and being with people from other countries and cultures constituted a new and interesting experience.[19]

The same trend applied to Soviet youth. The average description of contact with foreigners in interviews and memoirs centred upon conversations about everyday life. People who worked as interpreters, tour guides or in the city centre

**18** Sloan, James Park, *Jerzy Kosinski* (New York: A Dutton Book, 1996), 91–92.

**19** Interview with Finnish delegates, 16 March 2006, Interview with an Irish man, 31 January 2008; Interview with a Russian woman, 9 April 2008.

hotels and shops were more likely to encounter foreigners than were ordinary youths. One of those who worked with foreigners was a 20-year-old Muscovite girl, a history student at MGU at the time of the festival, later a history professor. She had been trained to work as a tour guide on city excursions during the festival, and in this capacity she met hundreds of foreign guests. The way she described her experiences with foreigners evokes ordinary meetings between new people. She did not recall, or did not want to share, any anecdotal or particular memory, but mentioned that her perceptions of foreigners were very positive. Foreign visitors were interested in the country and asked her about ordinary issues of daily life: family, studies, professional plans and hobbies.[20] Some people more consciously utilized the space for interaction, like the saxophonist Aleksei Kozlov, who explicitly mentioned in his memoir that he took advantage of the festival for widening his cultural horizon by crossing borders of acceptable behaviour.[21] In addition to mingling with the British jazz band, Kozlov and his local peers gathered in the centre of Moscow during the evenings to talk and have fun. They occupied Gorky Street, near Mossovet (Moscow Soviet), Pushkin square and Karl Marx Prospekt. Kozlov pointed out that it was not only with foreigners that people talked, but also with their fellow Soviet citizens. "Those were the first lessons of democracy, the first experience of release from fear, the first absolutely new experiences of uncontrolled talking", he recalled.[22]

Those who had been involved with the apparatuses of the WFDY and IUS, or other international organizations, were more likely to be in contact with foreigners and to be part of international networks. For example, the Australian communist Charles Bresland, a cosmopolite (and an alleged spy) who had visited the Soviet Union already in 1954, met with several people he knew from his previous trip.[23] Similarly, the IUS workers Denis Hill and Peter Waterman were engaged in international networking. In addition to old contacts, Waterman spent time with a new friend, Renita Grigor'eva (1931–2021), then a film student and the organizer of the film festival at the 1957 gathering, later a film director, screenwriter and public figure.[24] Waterman and Grigor'eva, whose common language was French, first met in the preparatory activities in February 1957 and then again in July-August. Although Waterman was a communist and worked for the IUS paper, Grigor'eva was warned that she should be careful

**20** Interview with a Russian woman, 15 April 2008.

**21** Kozlov, Aleksei, "*Kozel na sakse*" – *i tak vsiu zizhn'* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), 102.

**22** Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*", 105–106.

**23** Bresland, Chas. *Moscow Turned It on! Story of Australians at 6th World Youth Festival* (Sydney: Coronation Press, 1957), 5–6, 17.

**24** Waterman, Peter, autobiography, 2. chapter, 82.

with a foreigner. After the festival it took nearly 50 years for Grigor'eva to find Waterman again via Skype. They kept in contact the rest of their lives.[25] The US participant Robert Cohen was not as successful. He made friends with a Soviet girl, Ideya, a film student like himself. They spent a lot of time together during the festival and exchanged contact details. After the festival, Cohen tried to contact Ideya, but his letter was returned with a Russian note. "At first I assumed that the KGB was preventing us from corresponding. When I found a friend who could read Russian, however, I learned that the note said: 'Stop trying to write to my wife – you bastard.'"[26]

One major obstacle that made interaction difficult was the lack of language skills. Visitors from small language areas were especially dependent on interpreters, as were many locals. Even so, people were creative and used various strategies for overcoming the lack of a common language, ranging from reliance on dictionaries to body language. For Yurii Draichik, the lack of a common language did not seem to be an insurmountable problem when he enjoyed his short friendship with Italian delegate Giovanni. All they needed was friendship, youth, Russian vodka, and the girls, Svetka and Zoika.[27] As the Australian delegate Charles Bresland described it, international communication was more often than not a mixture of the whole spectrum of human signals. "Small groups of foreign delegates with us from Indonesia, Vietnam, New Zealand and China, were soon in huddles with our Russian friends working things out in broken English, a few words of Russian, and much hand work and arm waving."[28] Delegates from large language areas, speaking, for example, English, French or German had more opportunities for conversations with Soviet people and with other foreign guests. Charles Bresland mentions in his travelogue that Australians found a surprising number of people who knew English but had never had the opportunity to use it with native speakers.[29] The Canadian observer Alex Jupp had similar experiences, especially with Soviet students who knew English, describing how "when they spot someone whom they know to be western, they eagerly approach him to try out what they have learned".[30] Similarly, Italian and French delegates to the

**25** Waterman, Peter *Back in the USSR. A Red Internationalist visits a Red, White and Blue Russia* (Self-publication, 2008); Interview with Renita Grigor'eva, 12 June 2008.

**26** Interview with Robert Cohen, 10 April 2010.

**27** Draichik, Iurii, *Zapiski predposlednego arbattsa* (Moscow: Sfera, 1997), 63; Golovanov, Iaroslav, *Zametki vashego sovremennika* (Moscow: "Dobroe slovo", 2001), 74–75.

**28** Bresland, *Moscow Turned It*, 3.

**29** Bresland, *Moscow Turned It*, 14.

**30** Jupp, G. Alex, *A Canadian Looks at the U.S.S.R. A Firsthand View of Russian Life during the World Youth Festival* (New York: Exposition Press, 1958), 33.

Bucharest 1953 festival ended up in lively conversations with local youths because they all spoke Romance languages.[31] García Marquez found only a few Spanish speakers in Moscow and lamented that because he did not know Russian, his experiences in Moscow remained incomplete.[32]

The lack of foreign language skills was not the only problem. Little or no experience at all of being with foreigners could also complicate the matters. Lily Golden reminisces the difficulties her mate had faced when organizing a meeting between Soviet and Chinese students during the festival. Golden's recollection illustrates not only the verbal gap but also the difficulties in arranging these kinds of occasions oneself.

> One day she invited a group of Chinese students to a tea party in the hostel. The guests sat in our visitors' room, facing a row of Soviet students, watching everything with great interest. There was no communication whatsoever. They spoke no Russian and we spoke no Chinese. They sat, politely and quietly, for an hour or more, then left. Maybe the idea had been good, but we were still unused to participating in events that had not been directly sanctioned by the Communist Party or the KGB. I imagine the same was true for the Chinese Students.[33]

Even when no language barriers existed, communication could be difficult because of different cultural habits. Art historian Mikhail German tellingly described his encounter with an Egyptian girl, to whom he said something inappropriate. German recalls that the experience made him frightened and confused over the situation: "how strange were these discussions with foreigners, how dangerous".[34]

Despite the unusually open atmosphere and the locals' great enthusiasm for foreign youth, many Soviet people remained on the side-lines and watched the celebrations from a distance. Some of them were so deeply involved with organizing and working for the festival that there was no time to use the festival for socializing.[35] One Russian woman spoke in an interview of how she had had no time to associate with foreigners because she was occupied with endless rehearsals for performances in the opening and closing ceremonies before and

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**31** Goretti, Leo, "Snapshots of Real Socialism: Italian Young Communists at the East European World Youth Festival (1947–1957)", a draft paper presented at *the European summer school on Cold War History*, Bertinoro, in September 2010.

**32** García Marquez, Gabriel, *De Viaje por los países socialistas. 90 días en la "Cortina de Hierro"* (Bogota: Ediciones Macondo, 1981), 142.

**33** Golden, Lily, *My Long Journey Home* (Chicago: Third World Press, 2002), 59.

**34** German, Mikhail, *Slozhnoe proshedshee (Passé compose)* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo SPB, 2000), 284.

**35** Interview with Eila Lahti-Argutina, 29 September 2006; Interview with a Russian woman, 23 May 2007.

during the festival.[36] Journalist-writer Olga Kuchkina (1936–), in 1957 a student of journalism, was working for *Komsomol'skaia pravda* during the festivities. She had no time either to hang around with foreigners or to establish contacts with them, since the world of journalism, of which she was getting her first real taste, swept her up completely.[37] Kuchkina recalled that her boss criticized her for writing too positively about the foreign guests. An article entitled "Nashi dveri i serdtsa otkrytyi" (Our doors and hearts are open) was returned to her with a new title "Nashi dveri i serdtsa otkrytyi, no ne dlia vsekh" (Our doors and hearts are open, but not for all).[38] Fear, too, prevented some people from mingling with foreigners. Writer Yuri Draichik reminisced that the Stalin period had made Soviet people so wary that they tried to avoid any contact with foreigners. He recalled how, when walking past the various embassies near the Arbat, people changed which side of the street they were on if a foreign citizen was walking toward them.[39] One of the interviewees, who was 15 years old at the time of the festival and the daughter of an intelligentsia family, recalled that her mother took her away from the city during the festival in order to avoid any negative consequences that meeting with foreigners might have. This wariness was rooted in Stalinist times, when some family members had been sentenced to prison camps. Many of her friends, most of them from intelligentsia families, recalled having followed the youth festival celebrations from a distance.[40] Leaving Moscow during the summer months was not unusual, however. Numerous Muscovites spent their summers in dachas on the outskirts of the city. And despite, or in some cases precisely because of, the festival many did so in the summer of 1957. Irina M. described in an interview how she only recalled the preparations for the festival, since at the time of the spectacle itself she was away from the city. When her cousin spent time with a Czechoslovakian youth during the festival, a panic arose within the family given their earlier experience of Stalinist repression.

> It didn't bother me, but I remember that my grandmother and my grandfather were horrified by this Czech guy, despite the fact that he was very nice. My cousin was very pretty and very sociable, but this relationship was considered a horrible tragedy in our family. Luckily, his parents were Catholics and they prohibited him from seeing my cousin.[41]

**36** Interview with a Russian woman, 9 April 2008.

**37** Interview with Olga Kuchkina, 19 April 2009.

**38** Kuchina, Olga, *Kosoi dozhd' ili peredislokatsiia pigalitsy*, a draft of an unpublished memoir, given to the author in 2009.

**39** Draichik, *Zapiski predposlednego*, 62.

**40** Interview with a Russian woman, 29 September 2007, and email contact, 8 February 2010.

**41** Interview with Irina M., in *Life Stories of Soviet Women*, edited by Melanie Ilic (London: Routledge, 2013), 127.

Similar suspicions about contacting foreigners arose among Bulgarian youth during the Sofia World Youth Festival in 1968. Repression as a part of family history had made people wary of involvement in public activities, and anyway, the Komsomol activists, who "would not be corrupted" by Western visitors, had priority to meet foreign guests.[42] It was not only the Komsomol activists or the KGB but foreign communists who might also inform on Soviet youths who were asking "the wrong questions". Ina Aksel'rod-Rubina recounted a discussion about events in Hungary with a Danish communist. After realizing that the Dane was following the official Soviet line, she quickly began to distance herself from him.[43]

## Visualizing Openness or the Lack Thereof

Negotiating and testing the boundaries of the permissible shines forth particularly well in photography. Foreign visitors desired to document Soviet society and get "hard" evidence to back their eyewitness stories, a desire which came up against the local people's and authorities' attempts to control the image of the USSR accessible to foreigners.

Foreign attendees captured their perceptions and experiences of the festival and of Soviet society in countless snapshots, which ended up in the visitors' private albums. Typical pictures in festival visitors' albums depict fellow delegates and new international friends at the festival events, like in Figure 15, in stadiums, on public squares, in meetings, on the streets. It was common to take pictures with those who came from different cultural backgrounds and looked different. Other typical themes in participants' photos were tourist attractions, street views, as well as vehicles such as cars, locomotives and airplanes. While these photos provided memories for individual participants, they also served as visual testimonies of Soviet society. A report on foreign visitors noted that West German delegates had told their hosts that no one back home would believe what they had seen in the Soviet Union; luckily, they said, photographs of the streets of Moscow would help confirm their experiences.[44]

**42** Taylor, Karin, "Socialist Orchestration of Youth: the Sofia Youth Festival and Encounters on the Fringe", *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 7, 2003, 50, 54. See also Taylor, Karin, *Let's Twist Again: Youth and Leisure in Socialist Bulgaria* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2006).

**43** Aksel'rod-Rubina, Ina, *Zhizn kak zhisn. Vospominania*, kniga 2 (Ierusalim, 2006), 25.

**44** Collection of photographs from private albums; Photo collection of the Finland-Soviet Friendship Society, KansA; TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, ll. 37–41. Informatsiia 8, Ob otkrytii VI Vsemirnogo festivalia molodezhi i studentov. V. Zaluzhnyi, A. Ratanov.

**Fig. 15:** Posing with a new friend at the Lenin Stadium.
Source: The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas.

Some of the visitors had a more professional approach to taking pictures of Soviet people, whom many in the West had only seen in Soviet propaganda imagery. A 22-year old Swiss student, Léonard Gianadda (1935–), travelled to Moscow as a photojournalist for the Swiss French-language paper *L'Illustré*. Gianadda's shots never ended up on public display during the Cold War, since the paper refused to publish the photos, regarding one of them as communist propaganda. Gianadda subsequently left journalism, and his photographs, some of them still undeveloped, eventually found their way to exhibitions displayed in Switzerland and Russia in 2009 and 2010 by a lucky accident.[45] Another photographer with a professional touch was 27-year old American film school graduate Robert Cohen.

**45** Papilloud, Jean-Henry, "Shveitsarskii fotograf v Moskve"/"Un photographe Suisse à Moscou", in *Moscou 1957 Moskva*, edited by Léonard Gionadda (Martigny: Fondation Pierre Gianadda, 2010), 9, 15, 18, 22, 26, 33; *The Moscow News*, 26 February 2010, Alisa Ballard, "Moscow.1957. Photos Go on Show at Pushkin"; *The Moscow News*, 26 February 2010, Nathan Toohey, "A Swiss view of the Soviet '50s"; *Itogi*, 1 February 2010, No. 5, Zhanna Vasil'eva, "Ot litsa sovetskogo".

Like Gianadda, his shots were made available for the wider public only in the 2000s, when Cohen put them up on his website.[46]

Both Gianadda's and Cohen's photographs greatly differed from the official visual presentation and from the average festival participant's pictures, which were largely focused on festival events and depicting international friendship. In addition to shots of the festival itself, Gianadda's and Cohen's collections take an anthropological approach to ordinary people and day-to-day life on the streets and squares of Moscow. Like those who attended the festival primarily as a way to see the USSR, Gianadda and Cohen focused on what happened around the festival. Consequently, they managed to show something that very few Western correspondents could: they depicted the country in ordinary people, giving the Soviet Union a human face. Gianadda's collection included pictures of the changing of the guard in the front of the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, ordinary Muscovites queuing in the metro, soldiers having a smoking break, cleaners on Red Square, outdoor toilets in the backyards of the city. The collection also entailed portraits of the long-distance runner Vladimir Kuts and the clown Oleg Popov with and without his mask, as well as Soviet women watching a fashion show in the GUM department store.[47]

Photography finely illuminated both the freedom granted to foreign visitors and its limits. Taking pictures of Soviet achievements and cheering happy people certainly helped the process of refashioning the Soviet image abroad. Still, there was also a risk that visitors would not confine themselves to depicting only the positive aspects of Soviet life. Reports by the Ministry of International Affairs mentioned a few instances when foreigners were caught photographing rotten houses and untidy gardens. One of the reports told of how a Soviet worker had invited Czechoslovak delegates into his home in order to photograph a broken oven. At the police station, the man explained that he had already asked several times for the oven to be repaired but nothing had happened.[48] Locals seemed to be active in interfering in photographing and advising visitors on where to take pictures. Alex Jupp recalled that "I was usually (not always) interrupted by some well-meaning citizen and directed to a spot where I could photograph a new building under construction." He understood that Soviet

**46** Robert Cohen's photographs at Radical films, [https://www.radfilms.com/] (Accessed January 22, 2022).

**47** Gionadda, Léonard (ed.), *Moscou 1957 Moskva* (Martigny: Fondation Pierre Gianadda, 2010), 10–197.

**48** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 258. Minister vnutrennykh del SSSR, Dudorov, 27.7.1957; GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 315. Minister vnutrennykh del SSSR, Dudorov, 3.8.1957; GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 433. Minister vnutrennykh del SSSR, Dudorov, 16.8.1957.

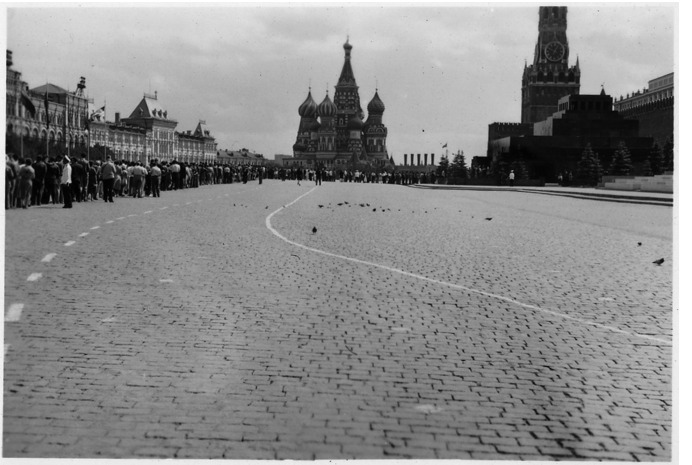

**Fig. 16:** Queueing to the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum at the Red Square.
Photographer: Sinikka Tuominen.
Source: The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas.

people thought showing the worst parts of the society would give foreigners the wrong impression about the Soviet Union and its future. "They consider this an unfriendly act. It struck me that the authorities have actually succeeded in convincing the people that my taking pictures of poor housing conditions was dishonest".[49] Denis Hill recounted similar experiences. While taking pictures of a wooden house in Moscow, Hill was chastised by an old man who asked why he did not take pictures of modern houses instead. Hill replied to him that he had already taken some. "Eventually the chap accepted that I was a comrade, and not some foreign journalist trying to present Russia in a bad light".[50] In the authorities' reports, vigilant locals were praised for their heroic deeds. By guiding foreign visitors to obey the rules of Soviet society, they fulfilled their duty as Soviet people.

The concern about visitors photographing unpleasant scenes related both to efforts at refashioning the Soviet image and to the realistic fear of espionage. *The New York Times* told about a theology student from California, Stanley Mumford, who had been accused of spying in an article published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*. Mumford was twice detained and suspected of photographing a defense installation. He was first caught while climbing into the factory yard, but he

**49** Jupp, *A Canadian Looks*, 30–31.
**50** Hill, Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green. The Life and Times of a Southern Rebel* (Brighton: Iconoclast Press, 1989), 339.

**Fig. 17:** One of the key themes of the festival trips in young men's home albums were vehicles. A young man photographing the locomotive at the Leningrad Station in Moscow.
Source: Finnish Labour Museum Werstas.

explained to have mistaken this for the route to the opening ceremony. The second detention happened at the very same spot, at which time he claimed to have returned to take a souvenir photo of the place where he had been detained the first time. According to *The New York Times*, he was questioned for five hours but apparently avoided any further consequences.[51] In another case, two Australian delegates were accused of spying during a train trip back home through Siberia. In their report, the train staff and a KGB officer noted that the Australians had photographed bridges, railroads and industrial buildings along the way. The pair insisted they had photographed Siberia to show their friends and then said that they would tell Australian newspapers about the lack of individual freedom in the USSR if their films were taken. In the end, they consented to relinquishing their films, and the episode ended in a "friendly spirit".[52] Whether or not it was the same people, CIA records indicate that an anonymous person (or persons) had included observations and technical information about the Trans-Siberian railway in their report on the Moscow festival.[53]

**51** Belfrage, Sally, *A Room in Moscow* (London: Pan Books ltd, 1959), 10–11; *The New York Times*, 11 August 1957, 2, "Soviet Paper Gibes at Student".
**52** RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 15, d. 251, ll. 9–12. Zamestitel' SPK t. Sokolovu E. N., V. Pontaiaev 26.8.1957.
**53** General CIA records, CIA-RDP80T00246A026800320001-9, Information report, 3 February 1958.

The question of what foreign visitors should and should not photograph highlighted cultural differences in the practice of photography. While there certainly were Westerners who wished to capture the worst bits of socialism as proof of the misery that the system had generated, an obsession with photographing everything they could was typical for Western tourists in general, including Western festival visitors. Sensitivity about the content of pictures also worked the other way around at times, as Gianadda's case demonstrated. His mistake was to take a picture of János Kádár, the chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministries, when he was receiving a pin at the Swiss embassy in Moscow. Regarding this picture as communist propaganda, Gianadda's paper *L'Illustre* refused to publish any of his photos.[54] For Western Cold Warriors, disseminating anything that could be understood as Soviet or communist propaganda was out of question. Maintaining the image of the USSR as a poor, isolated and hostile country was just as important to Western opponents as Soviet leaders' attempts to achieve the opposite. On both sides, the cultural Cold War was about managing the images of one's own system and that of one's enemy.

## Encounters with the Material West

The exchange of small gifts, such as postcards and scarves, was a vital element in encounters between festival youth and local people. Besides this, various businesses blossomed during the Moscow festival, with merchandise ranging from clothes and shoes to watches and cheap jewellery. Black market trade, speculation (*spekulatsiia*), was a surprisingly widespread a phenomenon: the authorities reported that foreign delegates traded over two million roubles during the festival.[55] Speculation was against the law; however, Soviet authorities had decided to allow trading among foreigners, for which they designated special areas so as to keep it under control. These trading areas were not open to locals, who found their own ways to get a hold of various goods coming from abroad.

It is not difficult to see why Soviet people were willing to take risks in order to gain foreign items. They regarded Western-made goods (clothes, watches, shoes) as being of better quality than domestic products, and in times of scarcity there was simply not much to buy, which prompted Soviets to use every opportunity to acquire things from foreigners and fellow citizens who had been abroad. A far

**54** *The Moscow News*, 26 February 2010, Alisa Ballard, "Moscow.1957. Photos Go on Show at Pushkin".

**55** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 432. Minister vnutrennykh del SSSR Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

more puzzling question is why the authorities allowed foreign participants to trade. Was it another way to demonstrate the new openness? A realistic explanation might be that authorities had not expected trading to take place at the festival. At least, the preparatory materials do not mention anything of the kind. It was probably too late to begin prohibiting trade once the festival had started, so instead, authorities directed foreign visitors willing to do business to specific trading spots.

Most of the cases reported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs involved individuals or small groups. A typical case involved an individual or a small group of foreign participants with one or two items for sale. For example, one report concerned Danish delegates who had sold women's socks near the hotel Zolotoi golos where they were staying, but vanished once told they were breaking laws. There is also an account of a Swedish delegate who had sold a watch of unspecified foreign brand for 400 roubles.[56] Alongside the rather unsystematic trading, more organized forms of private, unauthorized business were carried out as well. One of the cases was that of an Austrian delegate, Ukrainian on her father's side, who organized the selling of Western goods such as shoes, clothes and accessories in her dormitory, along with her relatives from Kharkiv. Her case came to the knowledge of the authorities when she reported a robbery in her dormitory room, where she had set up shop. When asked to sign a written declaration about the alleged crime, she refused and left the dormitory.[57] Another businesswoman, treasurer of the Finnish Democratic Youth League, Meri Elo, reportedly sold 1,748 wrist watches, earning almost 480,000 roubles.[58] Elo was not doing an individual business but collecting money for the youth league, an activity that the Finnish Democratic Youth League had been practicing at the World Youth Festivals in order to acquire extra funds.[59] The Ministry of Internal Affairs' report noted that Elo was probably part of a larger business and informed the head of the Ministry of Foreign Trade about the matter. He, however, did not see any problem with this activity, which gives cause to consider whether there was a tacit agreement to allow foreign communists to conduct such businesses freely during the festival.[60]

**56** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 284. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 29.7.1957.

**57** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 376. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 10.8.1957.

**58** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 375, 432. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

**59** Viitanen, Reijo, *SDNL 50 vuotta* (Helsinki: SDNL, 1994), 265–266.

**60** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 375, 432. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

While foreigners were allowed to carry out their businesses, hundreds of Soviet citizens were arrested for speculation. According to the final report by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, between 22 July and 12 August the militia arrested 601 people for breaking the trading laws and 183 people who had bought consumables from foreigners. 30 of them were convicted, 155 fined and 42 deported from Moscow.[61] This level of control also applied to the participants from socialist countries. For example, the Romanian delegation sent 12 of its delegates home because they had attempted to sell goods to a Soviet commission trade shop.[62]

Soviet citizens' eagerness to buy foreign goods was a frequent topic in both Soviet and foreign memoirs. Yuri Draichik recounted that the black market was used by almost everybody and the militia gave it their silent acceptance, even though it was against law.[63] Vladimir Papernyi regards speculation as a primarily cultural, rather than economic, phenomenon. "They [Soviet people] were motivated less by the desire to get rich through the exchange of foreign goods than by the desire to handle them."[64] The American-British attendee Sally Belfrage describes in her travelogue the ways in which stiliaga youth obtained rare consumer goods and highlights the festival for its unusual opportunities for buying foreign things. One of her friends was upset about missing the youth festival especially because he lost the chance to buy foreign clothes and records.[65] While some people had prepared to sell things at the festival, for less experienced visitors to the socialist countries it came as a surprise that locals were willing to buy things from the West. A Finnish delegate recalled that Russians bought clothes in particular, and paid well for them. Since he had nothing else to trade, he sold trousers that belonged to the uniform of the Finnish delegation.[66] If foreign delegates had nothing to sell, local youths were happy to receive the autographs of foreign visitors – an exchange item specific to the World Youth Festivals.[67] A journalist from *The Manchester Guardian* highlighted this peculiar

**61** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 431. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957.

**62** RGASPI, f. M-3, op.15, d. 193, ll. 16, 29. Nekotorye fakty, soobshchennye otvetstvennymi za delegatsii.

**63** Draichik, Iurii, *Golubaia krov' – mostoviki* (Moscow: Sfera, 2000), 262.

**64** Papernyi, Vladimir, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin. Culture Two* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 63–64.

**65** Belfrage, *A Room*, 27. According to the American journalist Harrison Salisbury, street speculation began at the time of the festival. Salisbury, Harrison E., *And Beyond. A Reporter's Narrative* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 90.

**66** Interview with a Finnish man, 30 March 2009.

**67** Golovanov, *Zametki vashego sovremennika*, 75–76.

item of exchange in one festival report: "One curious feature of the Festival is the autograph-hunting in all the streets and public places. I asked one East German youth what his object was, and he explained that he wanted to get the signature of at least one member of every foreign delegation."[68] Robert Cohen explained the interest in autographs, which many other interviewees also mentioned, as a product of the mystical and exotic presence that foreigners embodied, especially if a name was written in nonfamiliar (Latin, Cyrillic, Arabic etc.) letters. Anything one could get from a foreigner was desired and celebrated – even an autograph.[69]

Since the Moscow shops and boutiques offered relatively little for foreigners, trade at the youth festival mostly meant goods transferred from Westerners to Easterners. Nevertheless, some items did move in the opposite direction. Finns bought vodka, guitars and balalaikas, which, according to the report by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were much cheaper than in Finland. These records also stated that foreign guests bought cameras, vacuum cleaners, radios, televisions and other such things; Romanians even carried fridges back home.[70] Very few memoirists or interviewees subsequently wrote about what they had purchased in Moscow. British communist and IUS worker Denis Hill is an exception. His salary was paid in roubles, which he had to spend in Moscow because it was illegal to export the currency. Besides books and LP records, Hill bought an electric shaver, a record player and a "Raketa" vacuum cleaner.[71]

Informal trading also worked the other way around. When Soviet cultural or sporting ambassadors or tourists travelled abroad they took Soviet goods that would sell well in the West in order to earn money so as to bring back Western goods that were not available at home. The Soviet boxer Grigorii Rogolskii recalls how twenty bottles of Stolichnaya and four tins of black Beluga caviar earned him enough money to buy fifteen pairs of jeans, six Seiko watches and four auto cassette recorders. "The last were strictly *verboten*, particularly in wholesale quantities. But everybody did the same, stuffing their suitcases while our KGB major pretended not to see".[72]

Obtaining foreign goods, however difficult and restricted, was not as rare a phenomenon as many Western observers thought at the time. During periods of scarcity, Soviet people had developed various survival strategies to make ends

**68** *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 August 1951, 5, "East Germans see display of Life in Britain".
**69** Interview with Robert Cohen, 10 April 2010.
**70** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 387, 393, 404.
**71** Hill, *Seeing Red*, 340.
**72** Brokhin, Yuri, *The Big Red Machine. The Rise and Fall of Soviet Olympic Champions* (New York: Random House, 1978), 109.

**Fig. 18:** After some shopping in Moscow.
Source: Private collection.

meet. Black markets, personal networks and other such forms of gaining goods bloomed in the post-war Soviet Union. Although travelling abroad was a rare privilege, some people, like diplomats, athletes and artists were allowed to travel on occasion. Thus, they could acquire Western goods and bring them home for relatives and friends. Another way to procure such things was through foreign tourists: a practice that started emerge in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from the 1960s onwards. The festival differed from everyday life, in that those people who could not obtain Western consumer goods through their usual networks had more opportunities to acquire them. When the city was full of foreign youngsters, it was far more difficult to scrutinize every person's every actions.

## Intimate Encounters

When recalling his festival memories, the poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko framed his intimate moment with a foreign girl in Cold War context. The kiss was not just a kiss, but a touch between the socialist and "the so-called capitalist lips", momentarily bridging the East and West.[73] Intimate encounters are one of the

**73** Intervew with Yevgeni Yevtushenko 17 January 1999, [http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-14/yevtushenko1.html], (Accessed 19 August 2008).

central things that the Moscow 1957 festival came to be known for. As Yevtushenko hints, it was yet another field where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour were controlled, negotiated and redrawn. Mixing thousands of young people from multiple cultural backgrounds, the Moscow youth festival brought the gift of love and the winds of sexual liberation into the Soviet Union, challenging traditional Soviet socialist moral codes.[74]

Besides restrictions on mobility, access to outsider information and freedom of speech, the Soviet state regulated with whom their citizens were allowed to establish romantic and intimate contacts, and even how its citizens used their bodies. Despite the 1920s, when sexual relations between men and women and free love had been widely debated amongst Bolshevik ideologists, attitudes towards sex were conservative and restrictive, characterized by something close to sexophobia.[75] The years of the Thaw brought a temporary change to the ways in which sex and sexuality were discussed. In the culture of the Thaw, e.g. in its films, literature and media, the definition and limits of love and intimate life began to expand and became less a matter for the collective than for individuals. During the decades following the Thaw, "Soviet love transformed from a feeling defined by responsibility and sense, into irrational, inexplicable, perpetual torturous lust".[76]

The Moscow youth festival became a fruitful chance for Soviet youth to explore how far the Soviet state was willing to yield in its traditional values and, given the frequency with which matters of a sexual nature were later discussed in regard to the youth festival, it seems to have been an active testing ground. While some Soviet citizens embraced sexual liberalization, others took it as a sign of moral decadence. Rumours about loose sexual behaviour spread around Moscow at the time of the festival and aroused fears of Western influences, which threatened socialist values and corrupted young people. Talk of loose behaviour focused specifically on "loose girls" and young women, whose behaviour was the more strictly watched and whose maidenly honour needed watching.[77] The conservativeness of Soviet attitudes toward sex and intimacy was perceptible on the streets

**74** Roth-Ey, Kristin, "'Loose Girls' on the Loose?: Sex, Propaganda and the 1957 Youth Festival", in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Melanie Ilic, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 90–91; see also Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*", 106–107.

**75** Kon, Igor, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: from the Age of the Czars to Today* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Naiman, Eric, *Sex in Public. The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

**76** Borisova, Nataliia, "Liubliu – i nechego bol'she. Sovetskaia liubov' 1960–1980-kh godov", in *SSSR territoriia liubvi*, edited by N. Borisova; K. Bogdanov and Iu. Murashov (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2008), 40–60, 46 (quotation).

**77** Roth-Ey, "'Loose Girls'", 90–91; see also Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*", 106–107.

of Moscow. Columbian writer Gabriel García Marquez noted in his travelogue that the Soviet attitude to intimate relations was nothing like the days of "free love" of the 1920s.[78] Indian delegate Pradip Bose described the atmosphere in Moscow as "Victorian", saying that "I saw no public demonstration of affection all the time I was there and I was told that even for a husband to embrace his wife on a railway station was frowned upon".[79]

By the end of the festival, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 107 arrests of women for indecent behaviour.[80] Reports described several cases in which Soviet girls had met with foreigners. In one case, two young women, 22 and 23 years old, were accused of attempting to have intimate contact with Italian men. One of the girls was a secretary working in a factory and the other a cashier at a scientific institution. They were both arrested and taken into custody.[81] While the report gave detailed information of the Soviet girls, their foreign male accomplices were only mentioned by nationality. Soviet men were not recorded at all. The different rules that applied to Soviet men versus Soviet women also came up in Kim Chernin's description of her intimate moment with a Russian man named Tolya. When this American-Russian couple was interrupted by a Komsomol brigade in a park, Tolya explained to Kim that there was no problem because: "You, American girl. I, Soviet boy". Had it been the other way around, serious consequences would have ensued.[82] The fact that Soviet men were freer to jump into occasional relations with foreigners than their female peers can be derived from the authorities' reports, as well as the oral history accounts and memoirs. While official reports did not mention anything about Soviet men's sexual activities during the festival, Soviet women were explicitly identified as bad examples.

The main tool for catching international couples was a special voluntary activity designed to control public order. Known as the Komsomol brigades (sometimes called morality brigades), these groups belonged to a special form of civic control, the Light Cavalry (*legkaia kavaleriia*). The Light Cavalry dated back to

**78** García Marquez, *De Viaje*, 160.

**79** Bose, Pradip, *Growing up in India* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1972), 127–128.

**80** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 430, 433. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 17.8.1957; GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 379. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 9.8.1957; TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 57. Informatsiia 10, 30.7.1957.

**81** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 400–401. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 12.8.1957.

**82** Chernin, Kim, *In My Mother's House. A Daughter's Story* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), 277.

the 1930s, when it had focused merely on controlling work efficiency. The revived version for the 1950s concentrated more on catching people breaking societal norms: drunkenness, hooliganism, illegal trading and prostitution.[83] The Komsomol brigades constituted the most common form of control that foreigners faced during their visit. Based on mentions of the brigades in oral histories and memoirs, at the time of the festival they mainly occupied themselves with guarding Soviet women's sexual purity, not hooliganism, overconsumption of alcohol or black-market trading, which were just as present as "free love". The authorities' reports drew heroic portraits of vigilant citizens who confronted their compatriots, as well as foreigners, about their inappropriate behaviour. Personal accounts show this activity in a far less heroic light. Yuri Draichik, who himself patrolled the streets, recalled that working as a Komsomol brigadier was an awkward task, especially because there was always the possibility that in the dark they would catch a girl they knew.[84] The Ukrainian mathematician Leonid Plyushch, who later became a dissident, shared his feelings of embarrassment at catching fellow citizens. Plyushch participated in a special campaign against misbehaving Soviet girls that was held right after the Moscow festival, when some foreign guests visited Odesa. "We'd walk around the park looking for couples in the bushes. It was very embarrassing, but what could we do?" One girl whom they found and reprimanded, preaching to her of the honour of Soviet girls and the Soviet Union's reputation, said that it was none of the Komsomol's business how she used her body. When she was threatened with prison, she finally admitted her "guilt".[85]

Vigilance in supervising women's sexual conduct with foreigners was neither unique to the Soviet Union nor to the Moscow festival. Similar fears were projected at the eighth World Youth Festival held in Helsinki in 1962, where local anti-communist lads violently attacked festival youth. It has been speculated that in addition to their efforts to fight communism, the attacks were motivated by their being threatened by the presence of exotic and attractive foreign men.[86] While in Helsinki the maidenly honour of local girls remained a matter of dispute between men, one which could be resolved by fistfights, in Moscow it was the "fallen girls"

**83** Pilkington, Hilary, *Russia's Youth and Its Culture. A Nation's Constructors and Constructed* (London: Routledge, 1994), 95, 99; Fürst, Juliane, "The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth culture and policy between Stalin and Khrushchev", in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization. Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2006), 145–148; Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 106, 266.

**84** Draichik, *Zapiski predposlednego*, 63.

**85** Plyushch, *History's Carnival*, 15.

**86** Krekola, Joni, *Maailma kylässä 1962. Helsingin nuorisofestivaali* (Helsinki: Like, 2012), 216.

that suffered the consequences. A rumour spread among Muscovites that the heads of those girls who had been caught were shaved for public punishment and humiliation.[87] Sally Belfrage heard about these rumours via her acquaintance Shura, according to whom about 80 girls had been caught, had their heads shaved and were then sent to the Virgin lands.[88] The reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, however, mention only one case related to head shaving. Some local youngsters had found two Soviet girls with Italian festival guests, put the girls into a car and drove them to the countryside, to Babushkin, forced them out of the car and cut their hair. Although the report did not explicitly offer judgement on the girls, it indirectly excused the action taken by the local men by mentioning that one of the women had already been detained once by the police for similar reasons.[89] Another nuisance that haunted international love-birds was venereal disease. Although this might not have anything to do with festival relationships, Soviet authorities reported several instances in which festival participants had been treated in Soviet hospitals because of syphilis and gonorrhea. For a comparison, at the 1985 World Youth Festival in Moscow one of the external fears centred upon the then new and unknown disease AIDS.[90]

Oral history and memoirs tell about troubles that Soviet women mingling with foreign men encountered. Robert Cohen described in an interview how his friendship with a Soviet film student, Ideya, was interrupted by the authorities several times. One of the incidents led to her arrest, even though they had only walked "hand in hand on a public street". Cohen followed Ideya to the militia station, but because he did not speak Russian, he could not understand the reason for the arrest. Later Cohen found out through his journalist acquaintances that the arrests resulted from the authorities' wish to guard Soviet girls from unwanted pregnancies. Cohen's journalist friends explained that Polish women had been seduced into sex for nylon stockings during the Warsaw Festival in 1955. As a result, some of these women had apparently given birth to dual heritage children and this had prompted the Komsomol to plan pre-emptive methods to prevent the same thing from happening in Moscow. After returning

**87** Roth-Ey, 2004, 83–87; Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*", 107–108.

**88** Belfrage, *A Room*, 42–43. The Virgin Lands Campaign was Khrushchev's initiative to widen the land under agriculture in the Kazakh and Altai regions.

**89** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 378. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 10.8.1957.

**90** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, ll. 258, 263. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 27.7.1957; *The Washington Post*, 28 July 1985, A18, Celetine Bohlen, "Soviets, With Care, Hail World Youth. A More Blase Moscow Recalls Festival After Stalin Era".

home, Cohen found out that Ideya's troubles had continued. Besides being arrested after walking hand in hand with a foreigner during the festival, the stigma of "being too friendly with foreigners" left an ineradicable mark on her file. After graduation, she could not find a job in Moscow or in Leningrad, and had to move to more peripheral regions.[91] Pradip Bose wrote about a similar instance. Bose met a Russian girl who wished to know about yoga. While waiting for him at the hotel, the girl was picked up by the authorities and Bose saw her being questioned in the hotel control office. After she was released, Bose went to talk to her. "I still remember her expression of terror, finding it more eloquent than all the books I had read about the horrors of the Stalin period".[92] The love affair of a 23-year old Finnish teacher also ended sadly. He had fallen in love with a Russian girl at the festival, stayed in contact with her through letters and planned a marriage. Their plans were never realized because Soviet authorities did not let her even visit Finland.[93]

The story of the Finnish teacher was not unique, though it is difficult to evaluate the number of foreigners who developed the desire to marry a Soviet citizen at the festival; the Ministry of Internal Affairs' reports mention only a few cases. Marrying a foreigner had been illegal during the late Stalin period, and even though it was legally possible in 1957, it was still practically difficult in the Thaw years, as the foreign festival guests came to experience.[94] According to one report, two Libyans wanted to marry local girls, one a Russian and the other a Georgian. However, they were turned down on the spurious grounds that, because the registrar did not know foreign languages, she could not read the men's passports and therefore was unable to carry out registration.[95] In another case, an American delegate wanted to marry a student from Kyiv. The subsequent report complained that after the Soviet girl had accepted the proposal, the American had been constantly asking whether they could register their marriage in the Soviet Union

**91** Interview with Robert Cohen, 10 April 2010.

**92** Bose, 1972, 128.

**93** Interview with a Finnish man, 30 March 2009.

**94** Hopf, Ted, *Reconstructing the Cold War. The Early Years, 1945–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61, 156; Applebaum, Rachel, "The Friendship Project: Socialist Internationalism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s", *Slavic Review*, 74, No. 3, 489. According to American journalist John Gunther, marrying foreigners had ceased to be illegal already in November 1953. Gunther, John, *Inside Russia Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 230.

**95** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 378. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 10.8.1957.

and then move to the United States.[96] The fact remains that people did find life companions with the help of the World Youth Festivals, but it happened more often among one's compatriots.[97] Lily Golden was exceptional in that she as a Soviet citizen married a foreigner, yet in her case her African-American roots certainly played a role in the outcome. Golden met her husband through a Zanzibari festival delegate. This "matchmaker" had paid attention to Golden as she was taking care of the affairs of all African participants and suggested her as a partner to a Zanzibar national and activist named Abdulla Hanga, whom Lily Golden eventually married in 1961.[98]

The most widely known myth regarding loose behaviour and the Moscow youth festival was that of the so-called festival children. *Deti festivalia* (sometimes also *festival'nye deti*) refers to babies who were apparently born to Soviet girls outside of wedlock, approximately nine months after the festival. While the festival children were almost completely absent in contemporary accounts, their existence has been well preserved in oral tradition within Russia.[99] It was emblematic that a popular yearbook of Soviet history, *Vash god rozhdeniia*, picked a black baby doll for the cover of the book for the year 1957 – a clear reference to *deti festivalia*.[100] The theme of festival children has also been used in fiction. M. Stolianskii played with the term in his short story "Deti festivalei" (Children of Festivals), and in a novel by a Russian born American writer Anya Ulinich, *Petropolis* (2007), the father of the protagonist Sasha Goldberg was a festival child.[101] In her memoir, Lily Golden recounted that there was a public joke during those days that the next World Youth Festival in the Soviet Union "would only include our own people, for by then, we would have enough locally born Africans".[102]

**96** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 151. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi, Informatsiia 19, 9.8.1957.

**97** Krekola, Joni, "Kuumia tunteita ja kylmää sotaa nuorisofestivaaleilla", in *Työväki ja tunteet*, edited by E. Katainen and P. Kotila (Turku: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 2002), 271; Bresland, 1957, 17; Myrdal, Jan, *Maj. En Kärlek* (Stockholm: En Bok för alla, 1999), 82, 306–307, 323–324 and passim.

**98** Golden, 2002, 92–112; Garew, Gleason, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

**99** Interview with Eila Lahti-Argutina, 29 September 2006; Roth-Ey, 2004, 75, 86, 94 (n. 47).

**100** Barengolts, Juliia and Karatov, Sergei, *Vash 1957. Vremia, fakty, podrobnosti* (Moscow: Anagramma, 2008).

**101** Stolianskii, M. "Deti festivalei", in *Antologiia sovremennogo rasskaza ili istorii kontsa veka* (Moscow: Izadatel'stvo ACT, 2000), 109–139; Ulinich, Anya, *Petropolis* (New York: Viking Books, 2007).

**102** Golden, 2002, 63.


**Fig. 19:** Festival love? A Finnish man with a local girl.
Source: The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas.

What is nowadays a part of the romanticized past was then considered a tragedy for inexperienced and unfortunate Soviet girls, said to be "seduced" by exotic foreigners. The journalist Yuri Draichik reminisced that militiamen were ordered to protect Soviet girls from male festival guests, especially "black people". When an officer asked why it was particularly "black people", the militia leaders answered that it was because of the future of these girls. "They make a cohort of chocolate children with our girls, and it is not only a shame for our Soviet moral system, but also for the girl. She will hardly ever find any normal fellow to marry her with a chocolate baby".[103] This candid comment aptly reflected the unfamiliarity of Soviet society with ethnic diversity. Although the Soviet Union was a country with thousands of different ethnic groups, this variety only covered a part of the global spectrum. In the 1950s, there were so few African immigrants in the USSR that a black child would likely have been read as directly symbolizing a girl's promiscuity and would thus mark her out for her apparent sexual looseness.[104] The above quotation also points to the way that some Soviet people thought about otherness in the late 1950s. In the festival's rhetoric, all nations and all people, irrespective of ethnicity, were to be embraced. This, however, applied only to the festival. After the celebration, it was time to return to everyday life and, as the above comment indicates,

**103** Draichik, Iurii, *Golubaia krov' – mostoviki* (Moscow: Sfera, 2000), 260–261.
**104** Roth-Ey, 2004, 86.

standing out in this environment could make life difficult. Rumours that spread around Moscow after the festival spoke of a large group of offspring from festival romances. Instead of an army of the *deti festivalia*, however, these international relationships produced perhaps a dozen festival children.[105] Rather than being the offspring of festival participants, dual heritage children in the USSR during the 1960s were more often the children of African student fathers and Russian mothers.[106] The sources used for this study provide information about two "festival children". The only reference to an existing Soviet festival child was mentioned by Khrushchev's daughter Rada Adzhubei, whose female colleague had a child with a foreign festival participant. A song about curly haired black babies born to Finnish girls and filled with wild stories did the rounds after the Helsinki 1962 festival, yet only one festival child is known to have born to a Finnish girl and a Cuban man in 1963.[107]

## Finding Ways to Debate Politics

In terms of controlling and testing the boundaries of the acceptable, topics related to recent political events and questions aimed at exposing the "truth" about the socialist system were what frightened the authorities the most. While the organizers had managed to arrange the festival so that its public events provided little chance for genuinely free discussions, the policy of openness guaranteed that those who wanted to could find ways to engage in political discussions with Soviet people. It is difficult to gain a clear picture of how widely political topics were discussed and what the reactions of authorities, Komsomol officials, ordinary youth and Soviet people in general were. Most of the sources, reports of the ministries, the Komsomol and local authorities, as well as oral histories, travelogues and memoirs, suggest that Soviet people avoided, rather than eagerly engaged in, political debates with foreigners.

Komsomol officials who worked with foreign delegations diligently recorded any political commentary and listed the questions posed by foreign youth. However, the report writing convention neither included elaborating on observations made nor allowed the addressing of systemic taboos such as the

**105** The scope of the phenomenon is discussed earlier in Roth-Ey, 2004, 94 (n. 47); see also *Trud*, 14 July 2007, Vadim Karpov, "A byl li chernyi mal'chik?".

**106** Quist-Adade, Charles, "The African Russians: Children of the Cold War", in *Africa in Russia. Russia in Africa. Three Centuries of Encounters*, edited by Maxim Matusevich (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007), 153–155.

**107** Interview with Rada Nikitichna Adzhubei, in Ilic, 2013, 68; Krekola, 2012, 216–217.

socialist system or the official narratives of Soviet military actions abroad. Reports identified the British, US, and Polish delegates as particularly active in initiating political conversations, and their questions typically related to the events in Hungary in 1956, the party plenum in July 1957 and the expulsion of the anti-party group, as well as numerous dimensions of the socialist system itself, for example its living standards, freedoms and the rights of Soviet citizens. The recent Stalinist past and its treatment in Western media served as the main source of knowledge of the USSR for some of the Western visitors. The conception of the USSR as a dictatorship prompted questions, like the one posed by a British delegate who wanted to know if the political leaders accused in the attempted coup against Khrushchev had been shot, as one might have expected to happen based on recent conventions in the country.[108]

Foreign festival participants' memoirs, interviews and travelogues indicate, too, that only a few Soviet people were willing to talk about the Soviet system or to discuss political events, which made it difficult for them to draw a general picture of public opinion regarding the regime and its policies. Gabriel García Marquez marked that people were careful on what they talked about with foreigners. Many kept saying that times had changed, yet they did not elaborate upon the matter any further. García Marquez puts forth an elderly woman of 60 as a rare example of a Soviet citizen who openly and critically talked about Stalinist times. Without naming Stalin, the woman regarded "the one with the moustache" (*Le moustachu/El bigotudo*) as a criminal. Under his rule, she said, the festival would have never taken place, since people were so afraid of contacting foreigners that they would not have dared step foot out of their homes. She stated that times had changed but that the new leaders were occupied with correcting Stalin's mistakes. In spite of the criticism, she did not consider herself anti-Soviet and mentioned that she could only live in the Soviet Union.[109]

Peter Waterman, as a worker in a communist-run organization, looked forward to gaining new information on what was happening inside the communist world, especially the 20th party congress. He was disappointed to find that true debates were practically impossible, since Soviet students seemed well-prepared to answer "difficult questions" following the official Soviet line. Waterman was, for example, keen to know more about the student riots he had read of in the Western press, but in response was told that the Western papers were lying and

**108** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 5. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi, A. Sukharev, Informatsiia 4, 25.7.1957; RGASPI, f. M-3, op. 15, d. 197, l. 73. Spravka o rabote delegatsii Velikobritanii na VI Vsemirnom festivale molodezhi i studentov, 22.8.1957.

**109** García Marquez, *De viaje*, 152–159.

that no riots whatsoever had taken place.[110] When Waterman asked for a copy of Vladimir Dudintsev's novel *Not by Bread Alone* in a meeting, he received a paradoxical answer, according to which the book was both "sold out and of no possible interest".[111]

Alex Jupp's and Denis Hill's accounts allow one to draw similar conclusions. The Canadian visitor Alex Jupp found it difficult to evaluate the scale of anti-regime views, but rejoiced that he could find people who were not fully pro-regime. "The fact that there are in the Soviet Union people who can think in the language we in the West can understand is a healthy thing – not just for Russia or the West but for the future of civilization itself."[112] Denis Hill likewise noted that it was difficult to grasp what people really thought about politics, adding that average citizens whether in the USSR or in the US would similarly conform to the policies of their leaders. "You are not going to hear original thought, or critical views, by talking to the man-in-the-street in Pittsburgh or in Omsk. So it is very hard to know to what extent the mass of the population genuinely subscribes to the notions of socialism."[113] Sally Belfrage, who had the chance to spend five months in Moscow after the festival, seemed to have met with wider spectrum of systemic criticism than other travel-writers and memoirists. Belfrage spent time with three *stiliaga* youth, Sergei, Shura and Kolia. According to them, people had been and were still so afraid that no one would criticize the system to a stranger. Yet people were shedding their fear and had started to criticize the regime more than before. They also held that the festival had been a big failure for the political leaders because it had increased dissatisfaction with the regime and had "been a living proof to the Russians that people from the capitalist countries not only were not oppressed but in fact were happy and lively and were materially better off."[114]

Amidst the crowd of multinational festival youth and locals wandered also foreign groups with a special mission. They were sent to Moscow in order to control or provoke discussions on current political events. One such group was the Hungarian delegation, whose goal at the festival was to spread the official Soviet version of what had happened in 1956. The Hungarian delegation consisted of 1,100 members, selected by the Communist youth association (KISZ) – a brand new youth league established after the rising in March 1957, only a few months before the Moscow festival. The delegates were equipped with three

**110** Peter Waterman's diary, February 1957, Moscow.
**111** Waterman, autobiography, chapter 2, 83; Peter Waterman's diary.
**112** Jupp, *A Canadian Looks*, 34–36.
**113** Hill, *Seeing Red*, 335.
**114** Belfrage, *A Room*, 42.

documents supporting the official Soviet and Hungarian version of events, entitled "Hungary after counter-revolution", "The truth about Hungary in pictures" and "Help them return home", which sought to promote the repatriation of those Hungarians who had left the country during the uprising.[115] Soviet authorities recorded a few heated moments when Hungarians ended up arguing about the interpretations of the 1956 rising. Hungarian delegates, for example, were reported to have clashed with the British delegation on a boat trip where the focus of discussion had been freedoms in the socialist countries.[116] Another similar incident had taken place at a meeting of Polish and Hungarian delegations, where Poles shouted that what had happened in Hungary was a revolution and not, as the Soviets would have it, an imperialist attack.[117] Apparently, nothing more scandalous had happened and the Soviet authorities could later applaud the Hungarians for a job well done.

Another such group consisted of a few US students covertly financed by the CIA through the National Student Association (NSA). Given the location of the Moscow festival, any massive counter-propaganda campaign was not possible, and therefore anti-Soviet activities were much milder than a few years later in Vienna (1959) and Helsinki (1962). The National Student Association trained some young people to attend the festival and to influence local people with the ideas of the free world. Before the festival, the CIA contacted around 25–30 members of the National Student Association who were attending the Moscow event. Among them were Richard Medalie, 28-year old former National Student Association officer and a student of Harvard Law school, and George Abrams, a 25-year old Harvard graduate. Before their trip to Moscow, Medalie and Abrams were given financial assistance for their travels and some moderate briefing on what to expect and what to talk about with local people, including a short course on espionage techniques. Medalie and Abrams travelled to Moscow with false names as part of the Polish delegation, with a copy of the United Nations' report on the Hungarian rising in

**115** Pósfai, Orsolya, "The 1957 Moscow Youth Festival and the Hungarian Delegation. Propaganda, Youth Organizations and the Cultural Cold War", in *Students on the Cold War. New Findings and Interpretations*, edited by Csaba Békés and Melinda Kálmar (Budapest: Cold War research Centre, 2017), 336–341; HU OSA, 300-8-3-6054, 13 August 1957, The Hungarian delegation and the Moscow festival. [http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:8b78c9f8-23e7-411d-8760-ece32a3e6ae8] (Accessed 19 February 2008); *Courtship of young minds*, 1959, 22–23.

**116** GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 491, l. 374. Minister vnutrennykh del Dudorov, v TsK KPSS, Sovet ministrov, MGK KPSS, TsK VLKSM, KGB, 9.8.1957.

**117** TsAOPIM, f. 4, op. 104, d. 31, l. 161. Sekretariu MGK KPSS, tov. Marchenko I. T., V. Zaluzhnyi, Informatsiia 20, 10.8.1957; HU OSA, 300-8-3-13128, 5 August 1957, Collins, Polish Youth's "Magnetism" in Moscow, [http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:996249dd-8e15-4a23-bb26-cb3e41424f61] (Accessed 19 February 2008).

their pocket. Medalie and Abrams visited various festival events, looking for the opportunity to talk with local youths about freedom and democracy. Against all their expectations, the most efficient place turned out to be Red square, right in front of the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, where the two free-world students started to go and talk with locals evening after evening. Questions varied from average wages and housing to racial discrimination and other social inequalities in the US, but the real hit was when Abrams, reciting the UN report on Hungary, found a way to start discussions on real Cold War issues.[118]

As with so many other Cold War confrontations, both sides tried to take the full advantage of the event. In keeping with their openness policy, Soviet authorities did not disturb the Red Square meetings between Medalie and Abrams and locals, thereby showing the international audience that Moscow had indeed allowed free, spontaneous discussion right next to Kremlin wall. At the same time, however, *Izvestia* and *Sovetskaia Rossiia* told the domestic audience about an American spy who had been sent to Moscow by the US state department, demonstrating how the Cold War enemy had infiltrated the peace festival.[119] Americans, too, thought that Medalie and Abrams had certainly played their part well. Upon their return, American newspapers embraced them as free-world heroes who had managed to make a hole in the iron curtain.[120] Interviewed by *The New York Times*, Medalie told that, besides have been interested "in East-West relations" and "the low cost of the trip", he also had thought to "earn some money writing articles about his experiences".[121] Medalie's and Abram's heroic activities managed to convince the CIA about the effectiveness of face-to-face diplomacy and that anti-festival activities were worth continuing. Medalie and Abrams continued their anti-festival activities as workers of the Independent Service for Information at the Vienna Youth Festival (later renamed as Independent Research Service), an organization created to fight communism at the ninth World Youth Festival in Vienna two years after Moscow.[122]

**118** Stern, Sydney Ladensohn, *Gloria Steinem. Her Passions, Politics, and Mystique* (Secaucus: Carol Publishing Group, 1997), 111–112; Paget, Karen, *Patriotic Betrayal. The Inside Story of the CIA's Secret campaign to Enroll American Students in the Crusade Against Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 186–195.

**119** *Izvestiia*, 1957; *The New York Times*, 9 August 1957, "Soviet Chides U.S. Youth".

**120** *The New York Times*, 1 August 1957, 2, "U.S. Youth Reads Report on Hungary to Russians"; *Life*, 12 August 1957, 26, Flora Lewis, "Youth from 102 Lands Swarms over Moscow"; Belfrage, *A Room*, 10–11; *Courtship of Young Minds*, 1959, 23. On the UN report on the Hungarian rising, see Matthews, John P. C., *Explosion. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (New York: Hippocrene, 2007), 527–550, 604.

**121** *The New York Times*, 11 August 1957, 2, Philip Benjamin, "Festival Participant Back".

**122** Paget, *Patriotic Betrayal*, 214–222.

Another American organization, the New York based East European Student and Youth Service, sent US youths to mingle with locals and to find out about the "true face" of the USSR. Based on eyewitness accounts and a vast collection of festival press coverage from different countries, this organization published a detailed survey on the Moscow festival and its impacts, entitled *Courtship of Young Minds. A Case Study of the Moscow Youth Festival* (1959). The tone of the publication was relatively calm and dispassionate, but the underlying message was that the festival was a propaganda spectacle orchestrated by the Soviet state.[123] The timing of the survey, on the eve of the 1959 Vienna festival, suggested that the publication was probably part of the counter-propaganda campaign conducted by Western non-communist youth and student organizations against the Vienna gathering in particular, and the World Youth Festival in general. In 1958, the East European Student and Youth Service also started publishing a bi-monthly magazine entitled *Youth and Communism*, the aim of which was to provide information to those, "who feel they do not have enough facts on the situation of youth in countries with communist governments".[124]

During the festival, Soviet authorities managed to capture a two-page list of tasks to be accomplished at the festival. According to the records of the Soviet information bureau, the list was compiled by the East European Student and Youth Service and its purpose was to give American attendees the tools to "see through the propaganda" in order to reveal the "true face" of the country.[125] It is not known whether the survey *Courtship of Young Minds* was based upon this information-gathering project or whether this list was really produced by the East European Student and Youth Service. The list, however, contains many of the features of Soviet society and the festival that were emphasized in *Courtship of Young Minds*. The list contained the following tasks:

1. Try to travel somewhere without an escort, e.g. 100 km from Moscow.
2. Try to be in contact with people who are not involved with the festival.
3. Try to get to see a hut in a Kolkhoz and compare it with a dacha that belongs to a Party official.

**123** *Courtship of Young Minds*, 1959, 31, 32–35.

**124** See e.g. *Youth and Communism*, 1, No. 3. The East European Student and Youth Service has not been mentioned in studies of the CIA's campaigns in the cultural Cold War. The name of the organization and the language used in its publication, *Youth and Communism*, suggest that it might have also been on the list of bodies that received resources from the CIA. On CIA funded organizations, see Kotek, Joël, *Students and the Cold War* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 210–211 and passim.

**125** GARF, f. 8581, op. 2, d. 457, ll. 33–34. Pamiatka i nastavleniia inostrannym gostiam na Moskovskom festivalia molodezhi, New York, USA, Vostochno-evropeiskaia studencheskaia i molodezhnaia sluzhba. Perevod iz angliiskogo.

4. Try to buy a leading foreign non-communist newspaper or magazine in a kiosk.
5. Ask for a copy of the Soviet Encyclopaedia, part 40, which should have an official biography of Stalin.
6. Go to the Moscow main library and ask to see a couple of non-Soviet books on the Soviet Union. At the same time, look at how many books in foreign languages you can find even on such topics as philology or geography.
7. Buy a couple of new prints of Picasso's works, his famous "Peace dove".
8. Try to get hold of the whole text of Khrushchev's Secret Speech, which was given in February 1956 on "the cult of personality".
9. Take with you a couple of your favourite novels and try to exchange them for Soviet novels. Novels you may like to try include Dudintsev's last book *Not by Bread alone*.
10. While in Moscow, try to listen to radio broadcasts from your own country and from other countries.[126]

If the list was made by the US organization, it illustrates what the main criteria were by which Westerners might draw conclusions about Soviet society's lack of freedoms and marks certain methods which American youth organizations employed in the cultural Cold War. For the Soviet authorities, the list was particularly beneficial, since it revealed Western tactics and might well have helped them develop methods of showcasing the more open aspects of the Soviet system.

Public opinion and the possibilities for free speech in Moscow were the hottest topics in Western media coverage. The most pressing question that ran around the festival was the possibility of genuinely free contact between Soviet people and foreigners. The observations of Western attendees filled the pages of non-communist papers with anecdotes about chatting with Muscovites. Spontaneous talks were held in the street on "life in the free world" and questions were raised concerning the weak points of the socialist system.[127] In *The New York Times* an American visitor told about his amazement at "ordinary Russians' great hunger for information".[128] *The Manchester Guardian*'s report on the first days of

**126** GAFR, f. 8581, op. 2, d. 457, ll. 49–50. Pamiatka i nastavleniia inostrannym gostiam.

**127** See e.g. *The New York Times*, 4 August 1957, E2, "Youth to Moscow"; *The New York Times*, 11 August 1957, 169, Max Frankel, "Voices of America in Moscow"; *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 August 1957, 1, Victor Zorza, "Leaven of Western youth in Russia. Unforeseen ferment from the Moscow Festival". Similar issues were also the focus of contemporary travelogues. See e.g. Gunther, John, *Inside Russia Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), passim.

**128** *The New York Times*, 11 August 1957, 2, Philip Benjamin, "Festival Participant Back".

the festival focused on telling readers about Muscovites' interest in foreign visitors' views on their country and on some political matters. The article rejoiced that "a 'speaker's corner', somewhat after the style of the Hyde Park one, was probably the most interesting by-product of the World Youth Festival". According to the article, young Westerners could freely walk and talk with local people.[129] Western journalists often denied that the festival had any effects on foreign youth: in fact, they tended to assert that the opposite scenario had transpired. As Max Frankel put it: "the foreign youngsters made a much deeper impression upon Russians than Soviet propaganda could ever make on them".[130]

In his memoir, Raymond Garthoff (1929–), a Soviet specialist working for the Rand Corporation at the time who later became a CIA career officer, provides a somewhat different take on political talks with locals than the recollections of the foreign participants.[131] Garthoff mentions having met with Soviet students and other youths at various occasions during and after the Moscow festival, including a meeting at an agricultural college at Puhskino (near Leningrad), where around 150 Soviet students eagerly asked him and his colleague about life in the United States and the Hungarian uprising. While other visitors had a hard time finding any locals to chat with, Garthoff not only found numerous students to talk with about politics, but also managed to gather enough material to come to the conclusion that the majority of Soviet people did not support their government. Moreover, he recalled that local students were ready to accept his versions of nuclear armament, NATO, as well as the trajectory of the Cold War from the late 1940s through the Berlin blockade to the Hungarian episode. "This general acceptance of the truth, and even the 'conservative' acceptance of half the blame for the Soviets, was a remarkable thing in view of the fact that these Russian youth had had nothing but the official line and their own doubts and scepticism."[132] Garthoff's success could be partly explained by his Russian language skills and the fact that he spent more time in the country than ordinary festival

**129** *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 August 1957, 1, "Free Speech in Moscow. No counter-revolution yet". According to The New York Times, *Sovetskaia Rossiia* had accused Abrams of being an agent of the US state department. See *The New York Times*, 9 August 1957, 2, "Soviet Chide U.S. Youth".

**130** Frankel, Max, *The Times of my Life and My Life with The Times* (New York: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 1999), pp. 164, 175. For the role of correspondents in the Cold War, see Fainberg, Dina, *Cold War Correspondents: Soviet and American Reporters on the Ideological Frontlines* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

**131** Paget, *Patriotic Betrayal*, 194.

**132** Garthoff, Raymond, *Journey Through the Cold War: A Memoir of Containment & Coexistence* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 33.

attendees. That notwithstanding, Garthoff's recollection needs to be read against his background as a representative of the US regime. He, like many other American diplomats and journalists, was a full-blooded Cold Warrior, in the service of the "free world", whose aim was to find and encourage anti-regime opinions.[133] Therefore, he focused on finding and was inclined to emphasize critical views, especially in the post-Cold War context in which he wrote the memoir. It is telling that Garthoff saw no problem with the CIA funding young Americans during the festival. "It later became known that the CIA had paid the way of some participants, not of course to engage in espionage, but to observe attendees from around the world and to engage in the propaganda debate."[134]

## Consequences of Anti-Soviet Talks

While foreign participants, diplomats and journalists could engage in political debates without severe consequences, for some Soviet citizens testing the boundaries of the permissible prompted serious sanctions. In comparison with other crimes that Soviet citizens were arrested for during the festival, such as illegal trade, theft, or drunkenness, those convicted of voicing nonconformism were much fewer, but the punishments they received were far more serious. For engaging in speculation or loose behaviour, one was usually fined or reprimanded, but people jailed for political dissent received long sentences, from two to ten years in prison or labour camps. Based on the investigation files of the Soviet procuracy, fifteen Soviet citizens were convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda under article 58–10 in conjunction with the Moscow youth festival. These were cases in which dissenting activity not only took place in July-August 1957 but was directly related to the festival and the presence of foreigners.[135] These fifteen people make only a handful of the total amount of convictions for

**133** Fainberg, Dina, "The Heirs of the Future: Soviet and American Foreign Correspondents Meeting Youth on the Other Side of the Iron Curtain", in *Winter Kept Us Warm: Cold War Interactions Reconsidered*, edited by Sari Autio-Sarasmo and Brendan Humphreys (Helsinki: Aleksanteri Institute, 2010), 126–136.

**134** Garthoff, *Journey Through the Cold War*, 35.

**135** These 15 cases were identified with the help of an annotated catalogue of sentences for political dissent from 1953–1991. Kozlov, V. A. and Mironenko, S. V. (eds), *58–10 Nadzornye proizvodstva prokuratury SSSR po delam ob antisovetskoi agitatsii i propaganda: annotirovannyi katalog mart 1953–1991* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond Demokratiia, 1999). Cases where someone was convicted for drunken outbursts of anti-Soviet sentiment during the festival have been omitted in cases where the investigation protocols did not demonstrate any other connection to the festival or its participants. There are also cases of people who had been

political dissent in the late 1950s. From 1956 to 1958 nearly 3,000 people were arrested and sentenced for dissenting activity.[136] Such a small number of cases at a period when sentences for dissent were on the rise suggests that the authorities allowed a broader scope for voicing criticism and discontent during the festival period than normally would have been the case.

In the late 1950s, the most frequently punished act of dissent was a single outburst against the regime by a lone individual. The majority of those convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda were Russian men between 24 and 40 years of age. Almost half of them were workers who acted alone and who were most often convicted for anti-Soviet oral expression. The reasons for their arrests included spreading letters and leaflets of an anti-Soviet nature and establishing contacts with foreigners.[137] What was notable in regard to anti-Soviet crimes at the festival was that there were more students and more highly educated people amongst offenders, they were younger than the average (the majority were between 16 and 26 years of age) and most arrests were for establishing contacts with foreigners. In addition, the accusations ranged from dissemination and possession of anti-Soviet literature and other materials to spreading lies about the Soviet Union to sending anti-Soviet letters to festival participants, foreign tourists and embassies. More than half of those convicted belonged to either the Komsomol (8) or the Communist Party (1). Among these cases we find represented three particular political groups. All of them had been established already before the festival and it is uncertain whether whole groups or only some individuals were involved in dissenting activity at the festival.

Characteristic of dissenting behaviour related to the youth festival was the number of Jews among those who were jailed (4 out of 15). All the convicted Jews were connected to Zionists from the Israeli delegation and were also found guilty of possessing anti-Soviet materials. The most famous case was that of Anatolii Rubin (1927–2017) from Minsk. Rubin had survived the holocaust by managing to escape the Minsk ghetto. He was an active Zionist and a dissident and had already endured one spell in a labour camp. According to his investigation file, Rubin had established contacts with the Zionists, had been in contact with an official at the Israel embassy and had told lies about Soviet conditions to American tourists. He duly received six years in prison. Rubin continued his activities

involved in dissident activity since before the festival, and their activities during the festival were only a part of the reason for their arrests.

**136** Hornsby, Robert, *Protest, Reform and Repression in Khrushchev's Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 54, 134.

**137** Hornsby, *Protest, Reform*, 1, 54, 134.

and was imprisoned several times before emigrating to Israel in 1969.[138] Another Jew arrested and convicted after the festival was David Khavkin (1930–). According to his file, Khavkin had contacted the Israel delegates, praised Israel and received some materials (leaflets, music records, calendar and souvenirs) and voiced a wish to travel to Israel.[139] Khavkin recounted in an interview that he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. He had contacted the Israeli delegates first during the opening ceremony, when he had been smuggled into the stadium as part of a foreign delegation. There he had found the Israelis and learned that they were stopping in Ostankino. Khavkin remained with the Israelis for the whole period of the festival. In Khavkin's view, he was arrested because he had mingled with an Israeli whom the authorities considered a spy. According to Khavkin, this person, a leader of the Israeli sporting delegation, had been searching for missing Israelis in Europe after the war but was by no means involved in espionage.[140] The Israel delegation, its Zionist group and its contacts with the local Jewish population frequently appear in authorities' reports. The Soviet relationship with Zionism was especially difficult, because the creation of a Jewish state was supported by the United States, and therefore Zionism was seen as a bourgeois, reactionary nationalist movement.[141]

Most of the criminal cases were related to giving foreigners information, which was against the interests of the Soviet state, or else did not improve the image of the country. Dmitrii Kiselev, a 45-year old worker at *Trud* newspaper, was found guilty of sending 22 anonymous anti-Soviet letters to American, Italian and German delegates. According to the procurator records, these letters criticized the policy of the CPSU and maintained that the first secretary (Khrushchev) ought to be shot for his mistakes in leading the country. He had also written that Soviet people were living in hunger and that the CPSU was not interested in increasing the living standard of the country. Kiselev got five years in prison.[142] Nikita Krivoshein, a 23-year-old former student of the Moscow pedagogical institute of foreign languages and an interpreter at *Novoe vremia* magazine, was accused of telling a foreign delegate that Komsomol workers were to report daily on the

**138** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 85052, ll. 1–66. The investigation file of Anatoli Rubin.

**139** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 84990. The investigation file of Khavkin.

**140** Interview with David Khavkin, [http://www.angelfire.com/sc3/soviet_jews_exodus/Interview_s/InterviewKhavkin.shtml], (Accessed 4 January 2022).

**141** Pinkus, Benjamin, *The Soviet Government and the Jews 1948–1967. A Documented Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 250.

**142** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 79834, ll. 1–40. Investigation file of Kiselev; see also Aksiutin, Iurii, *Khrushchevskaia "ottepel'" i obshchestvennye nastroeniia v SSSR v 1953–1964 gg* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004), 245.

moods of foreign delegates, which was considered to constitute revealing state secrets to the enemy. Furthermore, he had apparently met with foreign correspondents and given them information later used in articles about the youth festival. Krivoshein paid for his activity with three years in prison, and upon his release was not allowed to live closer than 100 kilometres to Moscow.[143] A similar case was that of the only woman among the convicts, Rimma Shorinkova, a 21-year-old unemployed girl who already had a record of anti-Soviet activity. Shorinkova was accused of having established contacts with American and West German correspondents and having told them lies about the Soviet Union, for example, that Soviet youth had been advised not to get in touch with representatives of the capitalist countries. Furthermore, she had wanted a war between the USSR and the USA, had continued her anti-Soviet activism after the festival and possessed a copy of *Time* magazine. For these offences, Shorinkova received four years in prison.[144]

Among those prosecuted for offenses related to the youth festival, people involved in any kind of underground dissident group were the hardest hit. One such case was that of Vadim Kozovoi, a 20-year-old history student at Moscow State University (MGU), who was handed an eight-year sentence for anti-Soviet crimes committed before, during and after the youth festival. According to the investigation record, Kozovoi had established contact with an alleged a British spy named Julian Watts and a French citizen named Lerasno. He had told them details about the CPSU plenum in July 1957, which had not yet been published in the Soviet newspapers, and offended the party leaders. His most serious crime, however, seemed to have been his participation in an illegal group formed by nine students and teachers at MGU.[145] This underground group to which Kozovoi belonged had been formed in the history faculty by a postgraduate named Lev Krasnopevets and included teachers, students and former graduates. They distributed anti-Soviet materials around Moscow and prepared materials for a "new history of the CPSU".[146] Except for Kozovoi, other members of the group had temporarily left Moscow because of the risk that the festival posed to dissidents.[147]

**143** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 97391, ll. 1–135. Investigation file of Krivoshen; GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 97392, ll. 1–36. Krivoshen.

**144** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 84511, ll. 3–4. Investigation file of Shorinkova.

**145** GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 79865, ll. 1–166; GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 79866; GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 79867; GARF, f. 8131, op. 31; GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 79867a; RGANI, f. 89, per. 6, dok. 8, ll. 1–5. KGB, I. Serov v TsK KPSS, 17.2.1958; RGANI, f. 89, per. 6, dok. 7, ll. 1–4. KGB v TsK KPSS P. Ivashutin.

**146** Hornsby, *Protest, Reform*, passim; Zubok, *Zhivago's Children*, 77 and Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 354–355.

**147** Aksiutin, *Khrushchevskaia "ottepel'"*, 243.

It is important to note that political dissent in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the socialist countries at this time did not fundamentally target the socialist system per se; rather, those voicing discontent aimed at improving the system and thought that bringing the difficult situation to foreigners' knowledge might be an effective way to facilitate change. In similar fashion, Czechoslovakian students supported the reforms of the Prague spring and the ideas of "socialism with a human face", and Polish students supported a Polish way to communism.

The Moscow festival was indeed much more open in terms of free and open speech than any similar event in Soviet society or any other of the World Youth Festivals before and after. Still it was only one short moment, which temporarily multiplied the volume of contacts. The festival hardly played a significant role in the emergence of the Soviet dissident movement, as has sometimes been speculated.[148] The experiences of meetings with foreigners certainly encouraged some people to voice nonconformism and to engage in dissenting activities. However, dissidence was a mass phenomenon already before the festival and the catalyst for dissident activism was something different: the Secret Speech, the Hungarian uprising or, more widely, new chances for Soviet young people to negotiate their identities and their place in Soviet society. The youth festival served merely as an instrument for channelling the thoughts of some Soviet people and enabling networking.[149] It is quite telling that only three memoirs written by well-known Soviet dissidents even mentioned the Moscow festival, and none of them raised the topic in relation to their own dissident activism.[150]

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The way the Soviet authorities promoted the image of a more open Soviet Union support arguments about the partial liberalization of the country under Khrushchev.[151] Allowing thousands of foreigners to visit the country, go inside the Kremlin and discuss politics on Red Square, and letting Soviet people freely

**148** Sinyavsky, Andrei, *Soviet Civilization. A Cultural History* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1988), 237; Rositzke, Harry, *CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action* (London: Westview Press, 1977), 163; Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, 211.

**149** Hornsby, *Protest, Reform*, 286–289; Tromly, Benjamin, "Soviet Patriotism and its Discontents among Higher Education Students in Khrushchev-era Russia and Ukraine", *Nationalities Papers*, 37, No. 3, 2009, 316.

**150** Bukovsky, Vladimir, *To Build a Castle. My Life as a Dissenter* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978); Plyushch, *History's Carnival*; Vail', Boris, *Osobo opasnyi* (London: Overseas Publications, 1980).

**151** Fürst, "The Arrival of Spring?, 145, 148–150; Hornsby, *Protest, Reform*; LaPierre, *Hooligans in Khrushchev's Russia*.

communicate with foreigners, demonstrated that something had changed in Soviet relations to the outside world after Stalin. Some of the freedoms allowed for the period of the festival were only temporary. The harmonious picture of two weeks of peace and friendship without conflicts or a fully transformed USSR was far from the truth. Even if the Soviet press promoted the idea of being friends even with those who did not share the same political stance, it was difficult to define who actually was an acceptable friend. The boundaries of permissible behaviour and contact were flexible depending on the issue and the people involved. First and foremost, the boundaries were different for locals and foreigners. While a few festival guests were arrested for drunkenness and other forms of petty hooliganism, Soviets faced arrests for illegal trading, loose sexual behaviour and incorrect ilicit with foreign guests. The evidence shows that the most serious offences from the authorities' perspective were those that might impact negatively upon the image of the USSR. Photographing the wrong places, voicing oppositional views on the country, as well as creating an impression of disenchantment among Soviet youth all resulted in social control measures enforced either by the authorities or by fellow citizens. This control, however, was different from what obtained during Stalin times. Dancing, singing and having discussions with foreigners were allowed as long as these encounters remained within acceptable bounds and, given the massive number of imprisonments during the Stalin years, the amount of people convicted for crimes related to activities during the Moscow festival was much smaller. This suggests that even as the Soviet press promoted an unrealistically liberal attitude to the outside world than was accepted in reality, the official attitude towards foreigners and relations between Soviet people and foreigners had nonetheless altered in fact.