

D. L. F. C. A. B.

# Iron Curtain Zine



Punks of the Word Unite!

Visual Urbanism Fall 2008

No, fuck that. But check out our collection of what's brewing behind the Iron Curtain. Unlike our decadent degenerate brethren in Manchester's capitalist hell, punks around here are rebelling against a collective we never asked to join. A state that, rather than ignoring our needs, is eager to provide for us: Job security, national security, educational security, intellectual security - hell, if we're so misguided as to refuse their security, they'll provide it free of charge!

The scene is different wherever you go, but having a bunch of commie squares breathing down your neck at every turn will produce some commonality too. Restrictions vary, Yugo punks have a lot of access to western media, so they got in on it early and weren't censored as heavily either. The impossibility of legitimate press has generated self-publishing in Russia.

What started out as an infatuated imitation of the West is turning into a creative movement in it's own right. Here it is.

## YUGO PUNK

Unlike the rest of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia's been getting all the music from Great Britain and the United States. I'm sure everyone's heard The Sex Pistol's Never Mind the Bollocks by now. If you haven't, TUNE IN TO RADIO STUDENT, one of Yugo's first local radio stations and the first and only independent student radio station in all of Eastern Europe. Other bands to look out for include The Clash (they are also from the UK) and The Ramones (from America); they are also very good.

Here in Ljubljana, we've got a few bands, but they've had a hard time getting out LPs because the big record labels don't want to pick them up. They think that punk is just a phase. Pankrti, who started in '77, used to just do covers of the Sex Pistols, The Clash and New York Dolls, just had their first single released, Lublana Je Bulana. It was self financed, recorded in Gorizia, Italy, and released through the Students' Cultural Center (SKUC). It's got a good sound and good lyrics.

A. B.

КИНО\*\*аквариум\*\*времени машинча

## LENINGRAD ROCK CLUB

13  
Rubinstein  
Street



# TONIGHT

The best way to keep the scene alive is to support the bands and go to the gigs. It's hard to have shows because there aren't many good venues, promoters or PA's, but we'll keep you updated in the Zine about show dates. Radio Student has done a pretty good job at spreading the music on the airwaves and they've also been organizing gigs. Since there aren't too many recordings of bands, they've also been recording the shows and passing them out on cassettes. If you've been to any of the shows and have any recordings, SEND THEM TO RADIO STUDENT, they'd love to play them.

-D.L.

To the left is a typical scene on any city street. Keep your eyes peeled for cool symbols!



## Graffiti

So you might have noticed all of the graffiti around all of the buildings in every Soviet city you've been to. Taking a more careful look at all of the different designs, characters, and tags, an incredibly clear trend is popping through.

Sure, many artists are signing their names and year. However, many are voicing their support for rock bands (like the ones we review here!). Because the government does not want us to even hear rock music, let alone play it, support it, or write about it, people are constantly looking for new ways to spread the word about their bands. Preferably ways that cannot be traced back to them through Xerox machine ID numbers or through typewriter identification. So, graffiti has taken over!

Look for the letter "A" with a halo around the top— that means someone supports Aquarium! If there's a crown on top of the symbol, the artist is showing that they support Aquarium over any other band! Vremeni Mashina, Kino, and Civil Defense are also popular bands often displayed on the walls of city buildings.

Some of the artwork is more political. A painting of a person throwing a swastika in the trash shows the elimination of Nazi sentiments. And if you see the phrase "freedom—not dead," you better hope the person who painted that did not get caught!

Basically, keep your eyes peeled for double entendres, your favorite bands, and government officials waiting to catch you in the spray-painting act!

# CONTINENTAL



--JC

a.b.

L'Attentat  
Leipzig-Berlin-Deutschland in Ruins (1985)

One of the early East German DIY Punk bands, the band started out as "Wutanfall" (Fit of Rage.) Singer Jürgen "Chaos" Gutjahr, Guitarist Andreas "Typhus" Schmits, bassist Frank "Zappa" Zappe and drummer Uwe "Rotz" Plociennik. They actually MADE their first guitar, just a bunch of kids who idolized the Sex Pistols and the Clash and hated the State. These kinds of activities wouldn't, however, go unwatched or unpunished. The band was closely observed by the Stasi, and for a while Zappa tried to satisfy them by playing the game - but the more he gave, the deeper the agents dug, so he turned his back on the appeasement approach. The threat (and at one point, actuality) of imprisonment, and bullying at a very intimate level by the Party and the cops were a fact of life for the band.

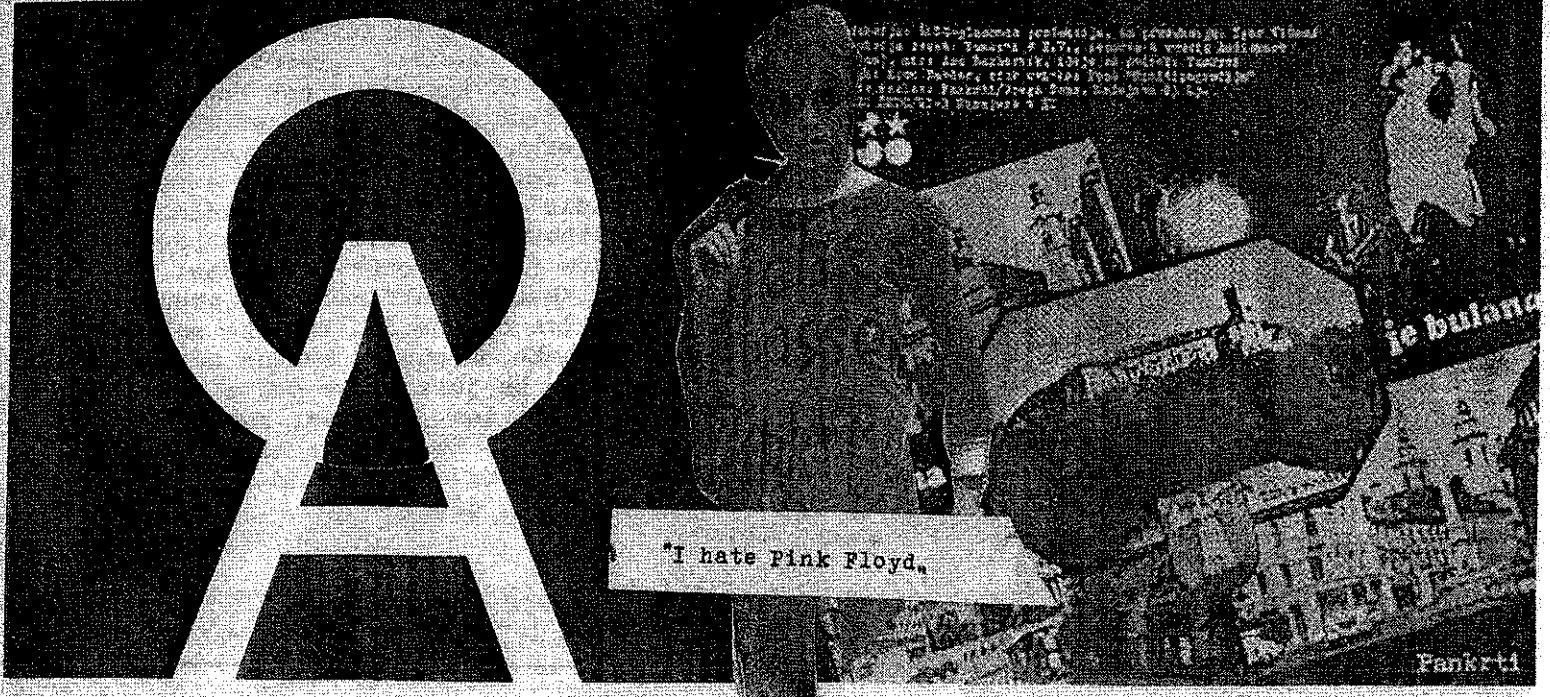
Like so many of the DIYers, the band underwent several transformations, later becoming L'Attentat. The members admit that they weren't any good as musicians, but that's only if

you consider being able to play the guitar the most important part of being a musician. Wutanfall was one of the first DDR Punk bands, and during that brief period, they had an eager audience, and their reputation continues.

Leipzig in Trümmern, ode to their hometown, shows petulance and sarcasm combined with a strong sense of - morality? Idealism? Naiveté? These are kids who hate cops and don't want Papa Socialism telling them what to do, but at the same time are pissed off about strip-mining and the concrete assault on their country's landscape.

L'Attentat or Wutanfall whatever incarnation y prefer is asserting a kind of ownership of their city through their indignation. They're expressing the fundamental irony of the dictatorship for the people running their city into brutal sterility. By saying that Leipzig is in ruins, they're also implying that at some point, it was whole. What kind of idealistic fantasy is that? What imagined time before the Nazis and the bombs and the Commies are they talking about? It's just this brand of earnestness, a strong sense of morality that distinguishes this short-lived generation of radical youth. It was such a risk to be a punk in the place, that you kind-of had to give a shit.

Singer "Zappa" begins "Leipzig in Trümmern" (Leipzig in ruins) with a bug-eyed rant about his filthy stinking socialist utopia. He sounds like a street-corner prophet rasping trembling hyperbole - till the song speeds up, they start screaming, and we know that these are some of the "negative-decadent juveniles" of the DDR.



"I hate Pink Floyd,"

Fankrti

# WHAT WE'RE GOING TO

## Aquarium Show Preview

Their lyrics are full of references to "new days" and getting through the darkness and finding the light. Their melodies run the full range. Some are slow, and sound like the old songs our ancestors used to sing, very mournful tones. Others are quick and pop-y, and sound like the songs The Beatles used to sing.

Aquarium does not use the sound of the actual music to demonstrate the feeling behind the lyrics. Some angry lyrics are set to sad music, others to pop-y music. The songs are primarily about the words and lyrics, and less about the flow, the beat, the tempo, the melody. This makes for an interesting collection of songs on their albums, and fits every mood. Going to a concert, you don't know what you're going to get!

Usually Aquarium plays in apartments and empty stores, often in the basement and "unplugged" so that they won't get caught by the patrols. However, tonight, the show will be something totally new. For the first time ever, Aquarium will be playing at the Leningrad Rock Club, at 13 Rubinstein Street. Check it out, prepare to be totally surprised!

FIRST MAJOR YUGO PUNK SHOW

The Yugo punk scene is getting pretty crazy. It started in Slovenia with just some kids who were bored with the popular music scene, but now punk bands are forming all over Yugoslavia, especially in Croatia and Serbia. We just had a HUGE show on the Ljubljana University campus. Along with our Pankrti from Ljubljana, we also had Paraf (a great punk band from Rijeka, Croatia) and Prljavo Kazaliste (from Zagreb, Croatia). The bands were great! Hardcore music, great lyrics, great crowd. We tore the place apart! They tried to put some seats in the front (I guess for order) but the audience just threw the seats away or smashed them. Igor Vidmar, who helped Pankrti produce their first LP (and I hear he's always looking to help other bands, if you're in a band and looking for a producer), opened the show and introduced the bands. He had longish hair (not very punk), but I guess that's why he's a producer and not making music.

--JC



The punk scene is growing stronger and the music's spreading! They've been playing some punk bands on SLO National Radio, not just the foreign stuff, but our own as well! And Igor Vidmar just got a weekly radio show on National Radio, although he still has his better show "Rock Front" on Student Radio. On "Rock Front" he talks about the police oppression and the media attacks on punks, but on National Radio he just plays music and gives information. Anyway, keep on listening to Student Radio to hear more bands and to find out about upcoming gigs.

-D.L.

# Interview With BG!

Leningrad: September 24, 1980 In a great stroke of luck, I was getting tickets for the Aquarium show tomorrow night in one of the apartments just across the street from Leningrad State University when I saw Boris Grebenshchikov! He agreed to answer only three questions for me, but how great that he would even talk to me, such an unknown!

Ms: How did you get the idea to start the band?

BG: Anatoly Gunitsky and I were childhood friends and we spent as much time as we possibly could listening to The Beatles. This wasn't actually a lot of time as the records were very expensive and hard to come by, but what we could hear, we loved. Because it was so hard to find and listen to these records, we started learning to play the guitar and started playing Beatles songs ourselves. We started listening to Dylan, to Cat Stevens, and playing all of their songs for our friends so they could hear them, too. After that, it was about five minutes before more people started coming to our apartment to hear us. That's pretty much how it started.

Ms: When was the moment you knew you'd finally made it?

BG: Well, it's hard to say. Because the day we made our first record with the Young Technicians Club in the Soviet recording studio we bribed someone to use, that was huge for us. Also, when Artem Tertitskiy invited us to play at the Tbilisi Rock Festival, that was big. But you know, I think in some ways we still haven't really made it. The day we make a record with Melodiya, I think that will be the biggest break.

Ms: Let's talk more about the Tbilisi Rock Festival. Now, what a great show! But you guys got in some trouble, right? For throwing Frisbees?

BG: Well, that's the funny thing that's not so funny. Another band actually threw the Frisbees, but the GGB thought it was us. They were angry about the whole thing, and I got fired from my job, and my Komsomol membership. That made it almost impossible to get another job. I guess, to look at the silver lining, it gave me more time to focus on music but it is a shame that a case of mistaken identity so long ago is still causing so much trouble. Okay, I have to get going, I need to go to practice!

Ms: Well, thanks so much! I will be there tomorrow night!

--9C



Berlin has history of Radical politics, so it's only natural that an intensely political punk scene would arise here at the birth of the '80's.

Of course, our current administration is hardly hospitable to dissent, or even people who look like they may be dissenters. The punks, however, are only one movement in a stream of dissenters. The first? The clergy. Thus the

formation of an unlikely alliance. Members of the scene Mechthild Katzorke and Cornelia Schneider say they were born into the opposition - as preacher's daughters.

They learned to resist the state from Mama and Papa, singing their first songs of dissent in Christian youth group. But they wanted their own resistance, and that was Punk Rock. Despite some pretty obvious ideological differences, and plenty of

religious leaders who are less than impressed this youth subculture, churches have to serve as safe places for punks

to be, and even sometimes as concert venues. This is an especially active setting of the anti-fascist activities of the Punk movement in Berlin.

PUNK, CHURCH... A.B.

# Retro Choreography

Leningrad: May 13, 1981. Last night in the discotheque where Time Machine played last week, (you know the one! But of course I'm not going to say where, just in case this zine gets found!), there was another concert. This time, a DJ played the music, instead of having a live band. The first few hours of the dance had songs from Time Machine, Kino, and the other usual groups.

By the late night, however, the DJ must have found some really old records in a room somewhere in a basement, and started playing all of the old Soviet Comrade songs. People became very boisterous and loud (perhaps from all of the drinks we smuggled in) and started trying to do all of the dances that were supposed to go along with these songs. They were so funny looking!

We had heard about all of these very stiff and boring dances that were choreographed so that we Soviet youth would not be corrupted by the Beatles and the Americans. Someone in the club who looked a bit older than all the rest of us students had learned some of them at a Komsomol meeting years ago and began teaching them to us. We looked so funny! After a bit we started adding our own moves and doing the twist, because let's face it - we were there to have fun! I almost wish Khrushchev could see what became of his precious choreography!

I guess it got too loud and boisterous, and the dance got shut down. The musical raids are starting to get so serious! I ran so fast and did not get in trouble, but I bet the DJ is facing some serious time in jail! Anyway, based on how much fun and craziness that dance was, I bet we can expect to see some of those old moves on dance floors across the city in the near future. If you see someone dancing in a really silly old-fashioned way, don't laugh at them, copy them! It's the newest thing, and you heard it here first!

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## PUNK AFFAIR

Let's talk about punk and the media now. For the most part, as punks go, we haven't had much trouble with the law. Sure, there were some police breakups during shows and stuff, but nothing big. The media didn't pay too much attention to us, which was fine. But now thanks to this stupid "Nazi Punk Affair," we're getting lots of coverage, and it's all shitty. So for those of you who don't know the REAL story, the one the media isn't covering, here it is.

They weren't really censoring us, but the State wasn't comfortable with all the punks around. I guess they were afraid of an Anarchist uprising or something. Punk was spreading; we were on National Radio and everything, and you can see us all over the streets. We'd even renamed a central Ljubljana square Johnny Rotten Square. But it's not like we were actively looking for trouble. We were just bored kids looking for

Ministry of the Interior didn't know how to handle a "punk movement," so they did some digging. All of a sudden, they arrested a few members of some band called the Fourth Reich. They weren't even a real band yet. NO one in the underground scene knew who they were. I heard that Igor Vidmar listened to them play and told them he'd never produce their racist lyrics and bad music. And one of the people they arrested was a singer of Lublanski Psi (KICK ASS band), who didn't even have anything to do with the Fourth Reich.

It was a total police and media set-up, but the state used it to paint punk as racist, fascist, and totalitarian. Ordinary punk kids are being interrogated by the police and we're getting harassed on the streets. Major newspapers are calling us Nazis and manipulating our image. The three arrested have been absolved of all accusations because lack of evidence, but the damage has been done. Now people think Punks are Nazis and there's a stupid moral panic spreading. This depresses me.

## INTERVIEW WITH IGOR VIDMAR

Could you please introduce yourself to our readers?

I'm Igor Vidmar, born in the '50s in Ljubljana, Slovenia, then Yugoslavia; studied Political Science in Ljubljana, member of the Communist Party for a few years, then expelled for insubordination and ideological dissent. Worked at Radio Student (first and only independent College Radio in Eastern Europe) as political journalist; writer on strip (as in comic strip) and rock; publisher of first YU book of strip; from '78 punk DJ and political commentator at same Radio Student until '89; co-producer and

publisher of first SLO/YU punk single (by Pankrti) and album in '78 and '80 respectively; promoted first bigger punk concert in Ljubljana in '78; first punk rock show at SLO National Radio; co-innitiator of Novi Rock - first punk/new wave festival in '81 (which is in its 20th edition this year); put together three punk/new wave compilations from 1980 to 1984; from '83 to '88 collaborator of Laibach, publisher of their first album in '85; from '83 also concert promoter - started with Siouxsie &

the Banshees, then scores of punk, reggae, new wave bands - from Sex Pistols to Beastie

Boys to Nirvana to Pearl Jam and RATM; '90s promoting and indie political pamphleteering on National TV.

After 20+ years, what's your stand on Yugo punk? Do you think it changed anything over there?

Well, it didn't change the "system" or "regime" or "government", but it certainly changed the general social atmosphere. It dragged the latent intolerance and repressiveness of

the system out in the open and attacked it, exhibiting a de facto unprecedented - at least in mass culture - freedom of expression. It offered an outlet for youth dissatisfaction. It provoked public debate on taboo topics and animated younger academic intellectuals; opened up certain - mostly electronic media;

it even "staged" a first spontaneous demonstration against Government - at the Pankrti concert in '83 there was a massive shouting "Down with the deposit" (at the time Yugoslav residents had to pay dear taxes on going abroad), etc. So, it can be said pur was - besides being an exciting, creative sub or alternative youth culture - also a veritable grass roots spontaneous mass pro democracy and pro civ rights movement, as well as a strong agent of "urbanisation" and pluralisation of Slovenian and Yugo culture. So, yes, I think it DID change something.

-D.L.



# Guide to rock around the bloc!

Leningrad: Leningrad Rock Club, 13 Rubinstein Street. Great shows by big name underground artists, a raucous affair to be enjoyed by all! Ask any University kid for directions and info!

0231 Sverige  
Sverige  
Suomi  
Finland

Norge  
Norway

Bergen  
Oslo

Helsinki  
Tallinn  
Estonia

Sanst-Peterburg  
Saint-Petersburg

Berlin Churches Hospitable to Punks

PFINGST CHURCH  
Petersburger Platz  
Berlin Friedrichshain  
PRO-FI-KELLER  
Erloser Parish  
Berlin Lichtenberg

The University of Belgrade  
Bulevar AVNOJ-a 179  
CULTURAL CENTER "STUDENT CITY"  
Radio SKC  
Cultural Center SC is the largest cultural institution in the country... This is where the music happens!

The University of Ljubljana  
Kongresni trg 12 1000  
The first and largest university in Slovenia  
Radio Student  
Covering the punk music scene since the beginning!