

“Bill Haley and NATO” (October 31, 1958)

Abstract

In late October 1958, rowdy fans at concerts in Berlin and Hamburg created problems during American rock 'n' roll singer Bill Haley's tour of West Germany. These violent incidents, which were sharply criticized in the Western press as well, were viewed in the GDR as the result of a conscious ideological strategy on the part of the U.S. and the West German government to rob young people of their critical faculties in order to lay the groundwork for nuclear war. This article contrasts the meaninglessness of existence in the West with the positive community of Socialist values in East Germany.

Source

Bill Haley and NATO

Ancient mythology knows the singer Orpheus, whose wonderful melodies calmed even the wild animals. The beasts of prey forgot their blood lust, lay down around the singer and listened. This legend mirrors a certain notion of the meaning and essence of music. It makes people more human and even gets the beasts – and here the myth exaggerates – to behave in a civilized manner.

On Sunday evening, the de-humanizing effect of anti-music was demonstrated in the West Berlin *Sportpalast*. The “transatlantic pompadour idol” Bill Haley tried to “offer a taste of his gyrations, screams, and guitar-pounding.” (We have taken these words from the West Berlin press.) “Haley and his St. Vitus dance instrumentalists” unleashed a hurricane. The indescribable result: more than 30 people injured and property damage of 12,000 D-Marks. “It left behind the greatest damage the *Sportpalast* suffered in the postwar period.” By now, news has arrived from Hamburg that on Monday evening, Haley drove 7,000 out of their minds there as well. A battle took place, during which the police employed tear gas “in self-defense.”

In a country that brought forth Bach and Beethoven, young people today are being transformed into raging beasts with the help of “music.” What kind of system seeks to wash away the great humanistic tradition of our culture through organized mass madness?

We must note: we are dealing with “transatlantic” St. Vitus dancers, and they are coming to West Germany and West Berlin. They are coming from a country that is the center of the threat of nuclear war in the world. They are active in a country that is the chief center of war in Europe. These two countries, the U.S. and West Germany, are the most aggressive members of NATO. Together, they form the sustaining axis of NATO. The anti-human policy of atomic war and the anti-humanistic stultification of rock 'n' roll grow from the same root. This is no coincidence.

Recently, in a speech in Würzburg, Adenauer claimed that it was madness to reject nuclear armament. By contrast, every normal person rejects Adenauer's policy of nuclear war as madness. Adenauer calls madness reason, and reason madness. The person who wants to unleash a nuclear war must break the opposition of reason and rob people of their human dignity. The politicians of atomic war therefore rightly consider it an important piece of psychological warfare to numb the reason of young people in particular. They try to systematically destroy all inhibitions among young people in the hopes of then being able to incite them to all manner of crimes. The American bawlers who are deliberately imported and let loose upon the German youth are a welcome tool for this purpose.

Hitler had his methods to make the German youth ripe for Fascist war crimes. The militaristic-clerical system of Bonn has somewhat different methods, but the goal is the same. What became apparent on Sunday in West Berlin and on Monday in Hamburg is the spirit of the politicians of nuclear war, the spirit of Strauß and Brandt, the spirit of NATO, which is supposedly defending Western culture.

During the Hitler period there were people who were among the most ardent militarists and voracious imperialists, but who turned up their noses at the vulgar methods of the Nazis. They had their men for the dirty work and played the sophisticated folk. The West Berlin newspapers, too, naturally do not approve of the excesses, act surprised, and rail at the dissolute youths and their parents.

But at least the *Tagesspiegel* manages to arrive at the following insight: “Every society has the youth that corresponds to its social conditions. This sounds like materialism. Yes, but where are the ideals?” Young people, it goes on to say, feel a vague discontent with life, are looking for a way out of an emotionally impoverished world of experiences, and are calling for a communal experience. In other words, the nuclear war system is giving the youth precisely the communal experience and ideals that are in keeping with its nature. More precisely, it has nothing to offer that one could call a communal experience and an ideal.

Ideals that are worth working, fighting, and living for are not to be found in this system. However, the young Germans who can tear their eyes away from the gyrating transatlantic St. Vitus dancers and look over to the German Democratic Republic will discover a new world: a community that is worth applying one’s energies to for the common cause. Here they behold a bright future, which will be their own as soon as they have sent the militarists and their entire decadent hangers-on packing.

The issue therefore is not that young people are bad, or the quality of their music. Rather, the issue is the clerical-militaristic system, NATO, American occupation, which is still clinging to German soil thirteen years after the war. The conclusion from the frightful events on Sunday and Monday must be: Ami, go home! Namely all of them together, from the howling St. Vitus dancers to the nuclear strategists together with their bombs. AMI, GO HOME!

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