

and *Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (1904) led ultimately to assigning expectations to all life stages and prescriptions about what individuals "could and should be doing at specific ages."

By the start of the 20th century, young people were attending age-graded schools with highly specialized curricula, and pediatrics had become a vital new field of medicine. As the importance of youth development and education grew, says the author, so too did the belief that growing old meant degeneration: The aging lost status, needed attention, and "no longer command[ed] respect as repositories of wisdom and experience."

Peer groupings have now expanded from schools to the workplace and to free-time activities. When Americans retire, they often move to retirement communities. While many believe that age grading has been bad, Chudacoff thinks that "tinkering with or removing these standards" would be difficult. After all, age, along with sex, "has considerable practical advantages as an administrative and normative gauge. It is easily measured . . . cannot be readily manipulated" and meets America's craving for organization. Age grading is here to stay, he concludes. But improved health care and decreasing birth rates may force a re-thinking of age stereotypes in the 21st century.

ROCK AROUND THE BLOC: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. By Timothy W. Ryback. Oxford. 272 pp. \$21.95

The scale of recent change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has caused scholars to search for hidden cracks within the Soviet system—for elements that did not fit into the Marxist-Leninist framework. Ryback, a Harvard lecturer in history and literature, focuses on popular music. Following Frederick Starr's *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917–1980* (1983), Ryback argues that, despite government attempts to dominate every aspect of social life, popular culture in postwar Eastern Europe has been largely shaped by foreign (and mostly American) models.

From Russia to Hungary, from Poland to Bul-



garia, in all the countries Ryback discusses, the story is roughly the same: An alienated younger generation embraces Western music—first rock, then heavy metal, and finally punk—while the cultural apparatchiks reject it as "decadent," "immoral," and a "poisonous" export of Western imperialists. The struggle of Lenin versus Lennon for the hearts and minds of the younger generation has many turns. Outright bans on nightclubs, concerts, and musicians only forced the rock scene underground; communist regimes then tried more subtly to co-opt the least objectionable rock bands and make rock serve socialism. In return for cutting their hair, lowering the decibels, and submitting their lyrics to the censor, state-sponsored bands such as the Happy Guys (Russia) and the Free Sailing Band (Bulgaria) were provided with state-of-the-art musical equipment and all the "perks" of Western rock stars. But the public was not easily gulled: It eventually rejected most state bands, preferring the more radical groups such as Plastic People of the Universe (Czechoslovakia), Coitus Punk Group (Hungary), and Lady Pank (Poland)—all untainted by collaboration with the hated establishment.

Ryback describes the triumph of rock and roll in the Soviet bloc as "the realization of a democratic process." He considers his young heroes—less interested in heroic dreams of world revolution than in sex, rock and roll, and occasionally drugs—to be in fact the real revolutionaries. Yet Ryback never shows his rock revolutionaries involved in actual political events. (Plastic People's support for, and from, Václav Havel's Charter 77, for example, is never mentioned.) One can only infer the conclusion that Ryback never explicitly reaches: The rock revolution, and the notion that an individual's private life can be created independently of the state, have played a crucial, if incalculable, role in the breakup of the Stalinist system. Despite its flaws, *Rock Around the Bloc* helps dispel the assumption, made by cold warriors as well as orthodox Marxists, that a communist society can totally and effectively control its population.