

NIKOLAI

My own "Moscow Nights" song, trying to catch the spirit of change in the USSR in 1990. Things changed so fast "Nikolai" went through three versions before he was killed in Chechnya in 1995. Here are both the first and final versions.

Nikolai, the feeling's high in those Moscow summer nights;
Instead of Party slogans now there are superstars' names in lights
And the Kremlin's even got a bill of rights.
And McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Natalya's dressed in blue jeans
And the roubles flow so freely in the juke boxes and games machines
So you've got to be happy now, Nikolai.

Your granddad was a peasant when the Red Revolution came.
He was bonded to his brothers, still his bonds were very much the same,
But this time it's more than just a name.
For McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Natalya's dressed in blue jeans
And the roubles flow so freely in the juke boxes and games machines
So you've got to be happy now, Nikolai.

Freedom! – your people shed so many tears....
And now the race is on to make up all those wasted years
So you'd better be happy now, Nikolai.

And all those Lithuanians - they want some action too,
And your Moslem Soviet neighbours don't see things the same as you
And the Kremlin is not sure what to do.
But McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Natalya's dressed in blue jeans
And the roubles won't last long in all the juke boxes and games machines
So you've got to be happy now, Nikolai.

NIKOLAI (1995)

Nikolai, they still get high in those Moscow summer nights;
It's one way they can tell themselves that everything will turn out right,
And the army's okay until you have to fight.
But McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Mother sold the blue jeans
And the roubles disappeared in all the juke boxes and games machines
And she'll never be happy now, Nikolai.

When Nikolai was Emperor the Chechens were the same;
And some got rich but they all had something Mother Russia couldn't tame
So she sent her sons to put them down again.
But McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Mother sold the blue jeans
And the roubles disappeared in all the juke boxes and games machines
And she'll never be happy now, Nikolai.

You don't want to kill the horseman who's riding for a cause,
But they've always killed the likes of you and his odds aren't the same as yours

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And gunships hit the dust as Grozny roars.
But McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Mothers sold the blue jeans,
And they hired a bus to find their sons in the burnt out wrecks and war machines
And she'll never be happy now, Nikolai.

Nikolai, he'd scarcely seen a tank before
And now he's gone to hell in one, they found his passport, nothing more
And she'll never be happy now, Nikolai.
And McDonalds is on Gorky Street and Mothers sold the blue jeans,
And they hired a bus to find their sons in the burnt out wrecks and war machines
And she'll never be happy now, Nikolai.