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DIARY by SARAH GIBBINGS

## Red stars

THE KREMLIN'S latest money-spinning project is one of the most unlikely it has attempted.

Courtesy of an American smuggler and British bands such as The Smiths and The Cure, the Russians are going into the pop music business.

American Joanna Fields has made eight trips behind the Iron Curtain since 1984, sneaking illicit Russian punk music out and frowned upon British pop in.

As a result an album of communist punk, called Red Wave, has sold 25,000 copies in the US and will soon be released in Britain by Big Time.

But last time Joanna made the journey she was nicked by the KGB and detained for two days.

"They made it clear they expect the state to receive its share of the album's profits," says Big Time's Marcie Blaustein.

Unfortunately, the Russian bands are far from pleased by this apparent good fortune.

"Up till now they didn't officially exist," Marcie adds. "But now they have



HERO: Morrissey

been acknowledged by their government they'll be subject to state control, which is exactly what they don't want."

But British bands can look forward to being idolised on a huge scale.

"The most popular Western artists in Russia are English," says Marcie. "Dr Robert of The Cure has become an icon and Russian kids can't get enough of Morrissey from The Smiths." Perhaps the KGB fancy a cut of their earnings too.

when the gaffers whined and we got rises."

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