

Psychic Discoveries. The Iron Curtain Lifted

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Hoofdstuk 26 Psychotronic Generators - Psychic Machines?

The next thing that we saw, the climax of our stay in Czechoslovakia, sounds fantastic and is fantastic - but it may be genuine. We were confronted with a gallery of objects - burnished and gleaming, rough and pebbled, steel, bronze, copper, iron, gold - "psychotronic generators" that do the impossible. We saw them demonstrated in a film shown by Czech scientists at the International Parapsychology Conference in Moscow. We held these psychotronic generators, heavy in our hands. We worked one of them ourselves.

What are they all about? There isn't an easy answer. The Czechs start out explaining them this way: "Human beings and all living things are filled with a kind of energy that until recently hasn't been known to Western science. This bioenergy, which we call psychotronic energy, seems to be behind PK; it may be the basis of dowsing. It may prove to be involved in all psychic happenings. The psychotronic generators draw this bioenergy from a person, accumulate it, and use it. Once charged with your energy, the generators can do some of the things a psychic can do." That was the first door they opened for us into the mystery. There were corridors to come.

The psychotronic generator, or Pavlita generator as it is sometimes called after its inventor, sprang in part from antique manuscripts and forgotten discoveries, old learning combined with the knowledge of modern science. The idea of a bioenergy is an old one. The ancient Chinese said that you are not a machinelike collection of parts, but a powerhouse of unusual energy. They called it "chi" or "ki" - a Life Force or Vital Energy. The universe, too, they said, is suffused with Vital Energy, and thus you are linked with the cosmos.

Next door in India, the ancient Hindus spoke of this vital force in you which they named Prana. Modern Yoga is based on the idea of Prana. But if this vital or "X" energy is more than a philosophical concept, how come no one in the West ever stumbled across it?

"They did," the Czechs said. Many "discoverers" caused a momentary flurry with their new energy, then were forgotten or, at best, remembered as brilliant cranks as Western science hurried on to its great technological flowering. The chart shows only the most famous discoverers. There have been many others. They all came to their finding by different paths, they all gave "it" a different name, but surprisingly, they very often agree on the characteristic of this supposed energy in you.

DISCOVERER	NAME OF "X" FORCE
Ancient Chinese/Japanese	Vital Energy, Chi or Ki
Ancient Hindu	Prana
Polynesian Huna	Mana
<i>Renaissance</i>	
Paracelsus	Munis
van Helmont	Magnale Magnum
<i>Eighteenth to twentieth centuries</i>	
Mesmer	Animal magnetism
Reichenbach	Odic force
Keely	Motor force
Blondlot	N-rays
Radiesthesists	Etheric force
L. E. Eeman	"X" force
Current medicine	Psychosomatic [?]
Reich	Orgone energy
<i>Communist world</i>	
Soviet scientists	Bioplasmic energy
Czech scientists	Psychotronic energy

In the Soviet Union groups of pure scientists were looking into a "new discovery" - a vital, previously unknown energy connected with living beings. "Bioplasmic energy" is their name for it. But the Russians have a big plus going for them. Thanks to the Kirlian discovery (detailed in chapters 16, 17, and 18), bioplasmic energy can be seen by anyone, in photographs and electron microscopes. It can be scientifically observed and studied as it swirls in sparkling flares of color. Twentieth-century scientists, with their tracking and charting devices, lifted the atom of the ancient Greeks out of the realm of philosophy and into the realm of the actual, making it a practical energy. Perhaps the Soviets starting with the Kirlian apparatus will do the same for the Vital Energy of ancient cultures. Or perhaps the Czechs will, with their psychotronic generators. They, too, have made the rediscovery.

Robert Pavlita, grey-haired in his mid-fifties, was an inventor and design director for a large Czech textile plant. In person, very much the no-nonsense, efficient businessman, Pavlita has for thirty years worked privately on psychotronic generators. He believes they run on this newly discovered energy.

Pavlita's name reached the West amid a mishmash of confusion. "Czech businessman is fine PK medium." Then, "Pavlita has no PK ability." Is he or isn't he? Sitting in parapsychology offices in America, there was no way to tell. The story behind the reports shows how the confusion got started. After thirty years of experimenting, Pavlita went to Hradec Králové University, east of Prague. An electrophysiologist, a physicist, and eventually the entire physics department tested him.

The scientists set up experiments with a device designed by Pavlita. Inside a tightly sealed metal box a spike revolved, run by an electric motor beneath. On top of the turning spike the scientists had balanced a copper strip. It looked like a letter T. The only other thing inside the box was a small metallic object in one corner, not connected to anything. The revolutions of the copper strip going round and round were recorded photo-electrically.

Pavlita, as the scientists watched, stood about six feet away from the contraption. He concentrated, stared hard at it. Suddenly the copper strip stood still, as though some force were holding it, counteracting the turning rod. What could it be? The entire device was even magnetically screened.

Pavlita continued to stare. The witnesses watched intently. Slowly, the copper strip began turning - this time in the opposite direction. It looked as if some invisible force inside the sealed case were pushing it, spinning it in opposition to the revolving rod that held it. For two years the scientists tested Pavlita.

"PK! A fraud-proof demonstration of PK," wrote British journalist Theo Lang, who'd heard of Pavlita and flown in to witness a demonstration. The scientists agree it was a fraud-proof demonstration of something, but what? They couldn't find any known force that could cause the strip to stop and reverse as Pavlita stared. It sounds like PK, but it isn't - not exactly.

Pavlita maintains he is a technologist operating a form of energy, clicking it off and on, directing it, as any technologist would direct an energy like electricity. The small unconnected device inside the sealed box is a psychotronic generator. Supposedly, as Pavlita stares, his bioenergy is drawn into the generator, which accumulates it and directs it. The Czechs believe many people could have PK ability this way, with the generator functioning as go-between. Pavlita's early PK test was a demonstration that this so-called vital, psychotronic energy could be harnessed and directed at will. But all its discoverers claim this is a vast universal energy. The Czechs told us, tried to show us, that even at this stage of discovery they can do much more than just duplicate PK.

The prime question for all the Westerners who've come up against this vital or psychotronic energy for the past five hundred years is, what does it do?

Paracelsus, the Renaissance alchemist and physician, reported this energy radiated from one person to another and could act at a distance. He believed it could purify the body and restore health, or could poison the body and cause disease. Dr. van Helmont, the seventeenth-century Flemish chemist and physician, believed the energy could enable one person to affect another at a distance. The famous German chemist, Baron von Reichenbach, said the energy could be stored and that substances could be charged with it. Unknown to Reichenbach, the Polynesian practitioners of Huna agreed that the Vital Energy could be transferred from humans to objects.

Other researchers into this now-and-then rediscovered human energy reported that it could even move objects at a distance - in other words, PK. According to the British medical magazine *Lancet* for July 30, 1921, Dr. Charles Russ, M.R.C.S., showed the Ophthalmic Congress at Oxford in 1921 that with a proper apparatus a person could cause a solenoid to move by gazing at it.

Through the years, varied researchers came up with "facts" about this supposedly non-existent energy. It could be reflected, refracted, polarized, and combined with other energies. It could, many reported, create effects similar to magnetism, electricity, heat, and luminous radiations, but was in itself none of these. It conducts slower than electricity, but can build up something similar to an electrostatic charge. It was said this odd energy from humans could be conducted by paper, wood, wool, silk, and many substances that are electrical insulators. And this fabled energy that flowed from people seemed to be somehow involved with psychic things.

It really does sound like the creaking plot of an old mystic horror movie - the secrets of the ancients revived. The flickering occult shadows that seem to automatically attach themselves to such an idea may be one reason our scientists have never given the matter a serious look. But the Czechs are willing to examine facts. After hearing experimental reports on the psychotronic generators, the Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party approved research. It was also backed by the Czech Academy of Science.

In Moscow, at the session of the Parapsychology Conference held in the Czech Embassy, we were introduced to the world of the psychotronic generator. The leader of the Czech delegation, Dr. Zdenek Rejdak, who works for the military, explained, "Everybody has psychic abilities, but most of the time we are unaware of them. The psychic force lies dormant or is blocked, making telepathy or PK a rarity. To cause psychic powers to work, we need something to evoke them or to reinforce them. If we assume human or other living things give off a certain energy, then we might be able to accumulate it. If so, we can have work carried out by the energy. ESP needn't be a rarity then. It could work all the time and under any conditions." Later he told us, "I've heard that the United States is also thinking about making machines to do this."

The Czechs showed a very memorable documentary film created by one of their major movie studios. Like the tour-de-force Czech films that have dazzled crowds across America, this science film was artistically executed, right down to the electronic music. The content, for a science film, was even more dazzling. One after another, the camera lit up what seemed to be modern sculptures - gleaming forms that could have been created by Brancusi, or more intricate ones, perhaps by Dali. Other objects looked like precision-cut components for machines that hadn't been invented yet, spare parts from 2001. Still other small metal and wood sculptures were reminiscent of these "ritual objects" set out by the museums of the world, from the British Museum in London to the little, dusty museums of Asian Turkey and southern Egypt. But these are not sculptures; the objects aren't in a museum. This is an ordinary apartment in a small town in Czechoslovakia. The devices sitting on the table supposedly collect psychotronic energy given off by living things. The human beings donating their "energy" to the generators in the film are the designer Robert Pavlita and his daughter Jana.

"The generators accumulate human energy," we were told during the film. "Then they carry out work. There are different types of generators for different types of work." We're shown a rotor being turned by an electric motor. Robert Pavlita and his daughter Jana place a needle on the revolving rotor. A psychotronic generator is aimed at the needle. The supposedly non-existent energy makes the needle stop turning.

Next, we cut to an apparatus that looks like a fat screwdriver. Just as Nelya Mikhailova apparently builds up some sort of energy that attracts matches, glass, bread, this Pavlita generator draws small bits of substance to itself. "The force of attraction depends on the amount of energy accumulated in the generator," the Czechs state. It looks like electrostatic energy - the force you get when you rub a comb on wool, turning it into a "magnet" that picks up paper and other light things. Static electricity doesn't work underwater. The Pavlita generator is placed in water; still it attracts and lifts bits and pieces of nonmagnetic material.

As if to confirm our feeling that these generators are reminiscent of something seen before, the film shifts to scenes from ancient Egyptian texts. The eye of the camera focuses and stays on the Egyptian ankh, the sacred symbol of life.

It is reported that commissions of experts from the Czechoslovakian Academy of Science and the University of Hradec Králové - physicists, electronics experts, radio technicians, electrophysiologists, and mathematicians - all investigated the psychotronic generators. We're shown a generator whose force turns a small blade. They've tested to eliminate static electricity, air currents, temperature changes. The blade turns. The blade doesn't react to a strong magnet. The experts test with magnetic fields. They make no difference. The "vital energy," that supposedly philosophical concept, continues to turn the blade. We see them cover the entire device with a glass cylinder. Nevertheless, it moves. We're told they've suspended it in water. Still it revolves.

Apart from the film, Dr. C. Vesely, an electrophysiologist, Dr. Jiri Macko, a physicist, Dr. Peregrin and Mr. H. Kuksin, who tested and studied Pavlita's equipment at Hradec Králové University, declared in an interview, "The experiments have excluded any conceivable physical agent - even heat." Several members of the Academy of Science reported, "We must continue to explore this energy."

Dr. Julius Krmessky, an outstanding Czech mathematician and physicist, tackled this unexplained energy radiating from humans and published an important scientific paper for the Chair of Physics of the Pedagogical Institute of Trnava. Krmessky calculated the force required to make the blade turn at 1.2×10^3 dynes. "It can't be heat or air," he reports. "The radiation goes right through glass, water, wood, cardboard, any type of metal - even iron - and its strength doesn't diminish at all. Furthermore, the mind seems to control this energy."

Returning to the film, the camera shifts to pans of bean seeds divided into experimental and control groups. Another psychotronic generator, a studded metal square supporting a coiled, bore-like neck, is directed at one of the pans of seeds. Days later, the plants developing from the "radiated" seeds are easily seen to be almost double the size of those from the "untreated" seeds. This is something we have seen before, notably at McGill University in Montreal. In an excruciatingly well controlled series of tests, Dr. Bernard Grad showed that seedlings watered with a flask of saline solution previously held in the hands of a well-known healer grew fuller and higher plants than seeds watered with unheld saline solution. The Czechs had said that their psychotronic energy was the "X" force behind many psychic mysteries.

The film gave close-ups on other tests, pointing to practical uses for psychotronic generators. Sealed bottles of dye-filled polluted water from a textile factory are irradiated with psychotronic energy from the Pavlita generators. In twelve hours the water is clear. The pollutant seems to have crystallized and fallen to the bottom of the flasks. A signed, official chemical analysis of the water by an independent laboratory flashes on the screen. "This purification of polluted water could not have been done by a chemical purifier," it concludes. What was not said in the film, but told to us later by one of the scientists involved, is something more extraordinary. "Analysis found that whatever the energy was, it had caused a change in the actual molecular structure of the water itself! The two hydrogen atoms spread farther apart."

This rang a bell too. We'd been told by a reputable scientific source in the United States that a well-known American chemical lab studied water that had been held in a sealed flask by a healer. Word had it that there seemed to be a molecular change in this water, a spreading of the bonds between the hydrogen and oxygen. "This is only an infinitesimal part of the Pavlita experiments conducted by the inventor and many other scientists in Czechoslovakia. The psychotronic generators have obtained results in telekinesis, telepathy, clairvoyance tests." Telepathy? But that was the end of the movie.

None of the Westerners (ourselves very much included) seemed to know what to make of this Merlin-like Czech with his artful device, that seemed to have few if any moving parts, yet drew a wondrous, invisible energy from human beings.

Dr. Genady Sergeev, the Leningrad neurophysiologist, commented at the conference, "The Pavlita work shows it is possible to transfer energy from living bodies to non-living matter. The most important influence of this energy is on water. In fact, we use this very principle in the development of the detectors that examine the fields around Mrs. Mikhailova during PK"

Later we learned a Russian scientist, after seeing the Pavlita film, had tried to build a generator on his own. "He made it out of the wrong material," said Dr. Rejdak. "It was very crude, but I'm told it did work. He wanted us to tell him a lot more about the generators after that."

We wanted to be told a lot more too. When we got to Prague we inundated the scientists with questions about Pavlita and psychotronics.

THE SECRET'S IN THE FORM

"I first met Robert Pavlita about four years ago," Dr. Rejdak told us. "Word of his generators had somehow reached England. A British journalist came over, saw a generator in action, and wrote quite a story. Of course, our press got wind of it and rushed into print with a rash of controversial articles. It caused a tremendous sensation. You see, the government didn't know anything about the generators. They were as surprised as the public. The whole subject of Pavlita and biological radiation was hushed up, and a number of scientists, including myself, were asked to investigate. Following our reports, Pavlita has been rehabilitated."

Rejdak is nicely qualified to investigate. Apart from being a psychologist, he has also specialized in physiology and worked in parapsychology for years with the famous Czech sculptor and psychic researcher Brëtislav Kafka. His judgment seemed well respected by other scientists in Czechoslovakia and the other Communist countries. What had he uncovered in his investigations of Pavlita that convinced him it was not fraud?

Before we could even get to that question, we wanted to start at the beginning. "Where did Pavlita get the inspiration for his generators?" We wondered if the Egyptian scenes in the movie could possibly have been meant as more than an artistic touch.

"Pavlita got the idea from studying many very old texts." Which ones? The Czechs smiled and shook their heads. "We're sorry, we can't tell you that yet." This didn't give us much to go on. Czechoslovakia is awash with forgotten treatises and antique books. Manuscripts that haven't been thumbed for centuries wait in the state libraries and in the collections of the medieval castles and even still turn up in second-hand bookstores.

"One of our main problems with the psychotronic generators right now," the Czechs went on, "is that they are not fully patented yet. Naturally, Pavlita doesn't want to let the plans get out." Robert Pavlita realizes the value of patents. Years ago he invented a new process for the textile industry. Royalties rolled in from the Socialist bloc and Western Europe, particularly West Germany. "Fortunately Pavlita was able to use these rather considerable royalties for his research into psychotronic energy. No one else would finance the work at the beginning."

The Czechs weren't about to give us a do-it-yourself generator kit. But they were willing to open doors trying to give us a sensible view of psychotronics. The next door they opened is the most mind-teasing.

"The secret of the generators is their form. That's the key thing Pavlita gleaned in his studies. It's the shape that lets you accumulate this energy and turn it to whatever purposes you want." Now we understood why they were so hooked on the light-hearted pyramid razor-blade sharpener. There, too, the "secret" is supposedly the form.

"In some ways the principle of the generators is like art. You make generators out of one sort of material to do one thing and out of a different sort to do another. It's the juxtaposition of materials within a specific form that makes it work. Pavlita uses copper, iron, gold, steel, brass, various kinds of metals, and sometimes even wood. Most generators are a carefully formulated combination of metals.

"When we first saw these generators," said Rejdak, "some of the other scientists were baffled. But I happened to be familiar with the research done by Reichenbach, and I realized Pavlita's work was along the same lines. It's an extension of Reichenbach's idea of an odoscope, but modernized and far, far more sophisticated." (Reichenbach invented an odoscope apparatus which supposedly could collect what he called "odic force," "an all-pervasive energy.")

"Aside from generators that accumulate energy from living things, we also have generators that accumulate 'cosmic energy' or energy from the environment. The pyramid is an example of a generator that works on cosmic energy."

Apparently, the Czech psychotronic energy (like the old Chinese Vital Energy) springs from living things and from the cosmos, as do in-the-environment "cosmic electricity" and bioelectricity from the human body.

If you had a generator, how would you charge it with your own energy?

"The energy doesn't come from a particular organ in your body. It comes from your entire force field, so to speak. Many of the generators have a certain staring pattern carved into them to help concentration and conduction of the energy."

Here's another old idea, the staring pattern that is now tacked up in rooms across America as a result of the influx of Eastern philosophy, the staring pattern that is said to boost concentration and release psychic or spiritual power. The Czechs maintain that this power, handled correctly, can amp up a geranium plant or run a small motor.

Do you have to keep a specific thought in mind while trying to charge a generator? "No. You don't have to think anything in particular or will your energy into the generator. Staring in pattern is enough to direct the force, if the generator is properly made. Now, we've developed automatic generators that work without staring. We believe they can collect biological energy from anything living - human, animal, plant. Tests are scheduled to see if they can accumulate energy from something as basic as a fertilized egg."

If energy is really being drawn from you, don't you get tired?

"There's only a very slight aftereffect, but it's stronger if emotion is involved. There are changes while you're charging it." The Czechs did EEG tests on Pavlita's daughter while she charged a generator. They found an "unusual pattern." Soviet scientist Dr. Genady Sergeev, who flew in and tested Robert and Jana Pavlita with EEGs and other monitoring devices while they charged generators, said there was a change in the structure of the biological fields around their bodies. He reports, "There was unstable, cold electronic plasma in the brain. During certain phases of brain activity, magnetic, electric, and other types of waves were given off."

"Look," said the Czechs, "you can try a simple test for yourselves before we leave for Pavlita's." Dr. Rejdak dug a box out of a drawer in his desk. Inside the box was a small round stick of wood about four inches long that looked like a cuticle stick, pointed at both ends.

"This was made two years ago, under pressure, by a special process. It was charged by a generator so that it is able to channel the biological energy of a person."

He handed the stick to one of us and scattered, on the coffee table, small fragments: aluminium, salt, tin, stone, iron, crystal, et cetera, about the size of one's little fingernail. Some were magnetic, some weren't. We looked over the stick - no trace of adhesive or anything else on it. No friction was applied. Neither Rejdak nor either of us rubbed it on anything. We touched a fragment of crystal, prodded it.

The crystal clung. With the crystal still attached, we moved the stick over a circle of metal. It stuck to the crystal. Moving the stick over the table, one item after another eventually clung to it, until they hung from the stick in a small daisy chain. It was like playing Nelya Mikhailova, PK medium. Or was it some obscure workings of static electricity?

"Everybody thinks of static electricity," the Czechs agreed, "which is why we've done so many tests to prove it isn't. Psychotronic energy, the energy you're using in a small way right now, has many similarities with electromagnetic energy, which is natural. But psychotronic energy itself is much more subtle," Dr. Rejdak told us. "This stick, by the way, doesn't work as well when you're tired."

How long does a charge stay in a generator? "The generator that speeds plant growth, once charged, works steadily for three days. That's about the longest at the moment. We have one designed to turn a small electric motor. The first day it requires a charge of half an hour. Then, a few minutes every day and the generator will turn the motor about fifty hours."

If you owned a psychotronic generator, what else could you do with it? Would it actually be what Marshall McLuhan calls "an extension of man" - in this case an extension of your psychic

faculties? If they operate on the energy that is supposedly behind supernormal happenings, would a generator be "psychic"?

The Czech scientists, who seem eminently sane and responsible people, said yes. They showed us small segments of film to back up this "yes." One generator, they said, could do that most classic of all ESP tests, the card test.

This "telepathy" generator has a rotating pointer on top. ESP cards are arranged in a circle beneath. The generator is the "receiver." In another room sits a person who will send. He holds the pack of twenty-five cards shuffled and randomized. The sender turns one card at a time face-up and concentrates on its pattern. In the first room, the pointer of the generator slowly turns and stops, directed at the card with the same symbol the sender is looking at. As the sender goes through the deck, the generator continues to swing from card to card as an observer notes down its "choices" in order.

What kind of ESP scores does the generator get?

"It is always 100 percent correct. The generator never makes a mistake."'

It was a funny-looking creature to be the ESP subject of the century! But it isn't a subject, it's a machine, though rather unlike the kind of machines we're used to. Even familiar machines like computers can be programmed to identify a specific symbol when it's encountered. The "only" difference is that the psychotronic generator, because it works on another kind of energy, recognizes symbols across space, through walls, when a person stares at them.

Engineer Drbal, the specialist in electronics, tried to clarify. "All forms, whether sculptures, designs, rooftops of buildings like the pyramid - all forms have wave fronts. So do the patterns on the ESP cards." Supposedly, when a person thinks about this pattern on the card, it seems to intensify the wave front. The generator is designed to pick up this pattern. That's the hypothesis, anyway.

"Instead of cards being placed under the pointer, we can put a potato, an apple, various vegetables and fruits. Another set is placed in front of a person in a separate room. As the person selects each, the revolving pointer on the generator also turns to indicate the matching vegetable." Their generators, the Czechs added, could also distinguish blood samples and match a child with his parents.

In the United States Cleve Backster, head of the Backster School of Lie Detection in New York, has found that organic matter - plants, fruits, vegetables, blood samples - seems to have a form of "primary perception." They communicate, sometimes across vast distances. And they "recognize"; even cell scrapings from a person's mouth "recognized" their owner according to the polygraph tracings.

Have the Czechs with their generators succeeded in isolating whatever basic factor it is in living things that's capable of "perceiving" and "recognizing" at a distance?

If psychotronic energy is real, what happens if you aim it at people?

"That depends on the kind of generator. Some, we believe, could speed healing of wounds and recovery from illnesses. Others have a harmful effect. We tested the force of one type of generator, for example, on the brain. Pavlita's daughter Jana offered to be the guinea pig. At a distance of several yards, we beamed this energy from a generator toward her head. The EEG showed it caused a change in her brain waves. Jana became dizzy - her spatial orientation was affected, and she began to swirl around.

"There have been various experiments on lower forms of life. Snails, for one, were subjected to the psychotronic force. It caused them to withdraw into their shells and go into a state similar to hibernation. We've also tested insects." They showed us photos of the generator used. It looked like a chunky metal doughnut with a slice through it on one side. The metal circle was held up on a rod and base, like a mirror. "We placed flies in this generator. They died instantly."

If psychotronic energy could kill flies, could it kill bacteria or diseased cells in the body? Could it alter genetic material - DNA and RNA? Before we could go further into this death ray for flies, several more people arrived to join our group.

A VISIT TO THE CZECH MERLIN

Our convoy of cars drove through the suburbs of Prague, out into the Bohemian countryside and headed east toward the small town where Pavlita, our modern-day Merlin, lived.

The man driving our car had been introduced as a composer. "I'm a specialist in criminology," he told us. "I've worked quite a bit with the police in the past, before I took up composing fulltime." He was the heir to a very distinguished family name, known far beyond Czechoslovakia. His father was one of the country's famous composers, his grandfather was renowned as the architect of some of the grand buildings of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This moderately well-known son wrote show tunes, "songs with plenty of melody."

What did he know about Pavlita? Not very much, but he'd come up against enough frauds and clever swindles in his police work. If there was something funny going on, he assured us he'd spot it.

"I have heard that Pavlita is a medium who does PK, moves objects. That's something I'd like to see."

It seemed Pavlita caused confusion on his home turf, too.

We tried to explain to our companion that we'd heard Pavlita wasn't exactly a PK medium, but he'd built generators that supposedly worked on the human energy that caused PK. "That's even harder to swallow!" That much we all agreed on. "I always try to keep an open but sceptical attitude toward everything in ESP," he went on. "I can't say it's impossible, still..." He reached into his raincoat pocket. "I hope I don't spoil anybody's afternoon." He produced two "super-magnets." "Maybe we can find out a little more about the ways of the generators with these. I intend to try them on the Pavlita machines."

We'd been speeding over hill and dale for hours, past neat villages of red-roofed stone houses built close to the road, through spas, heavy with dark green leaves, baroque fountains, and statues in the town squares. Occasionally our friend pointed to turrets and dragon-teeth walls on the summit of a distant hill and gave us a short history of some of the medieval castles Czechoslovakia is famous for.

Finally, we reached a small town and pulled to a stop on a street lined with tall old shade trees and four-story buildings standing wall to wall. As in many Czech towns, classical sculpture and colourful painted frescoes wound around the building. A carved stone figure, like a miniature Atlas, supported the rooftop at the corner and surveyed the crossroads with wary eyes. The street was deserted, misty with a fine rain. A tall, athletic-looking man, with dark eyes and even features, came out of a building entrance to greet us. Robert Pavlita was casually dressed in slacks and a plaid sport shirt. He could have been an American executive relaxing on a day off.

Upstairs in the apartment, Pavlita's nineteen-year-old daughter Jana led us into the bright, spacious living room furnished with blond, industriously polished Scandinavian-style furniture, a grand piano, and many paintings. She left us around the dinner table and almost instantly reappeared with coffee and cake. Jana was a pretty girl, delicate and chic in a white flowered miniskirt, her reddish hair styled in a short high-fashion cut. A Czech friend had described her as "very docile" and observed that she worked a heavy schedule on generator research without, it seemed, a murmur of complaint and without much time for anything else. That afternoon she seemed slightly unnerved at finding herself the hostess of our polyglot group.

There seemed to be very little frivolity about Robert Pavlita. He came over as a man who has no time to waste, who's used to getting straight to the point and dispatching matters. After a brief conference with Dr. Rejda, he brought out a few of the seventy or more psychotronic generators he's designed. He set them on the table and let us examine them. "They're beautiful," one of the Czechs commented. And they were. Most of our companions had not been introduced to the wonders of Pavlita before, either.

We picked up the first generator. It looked like a small abstract figure of an ancient fertility goddess - a rectangle of metal for the head and a trapezoid of iron for the body, with bosomlike projections on it. Although it stood only six or seven inches high, it was enormously heavy. Etched on the "head" was a staring pattern, a vertical zigzag design. For different functions, the "head" segment

could be removed and other components substituted. How do you charge it? Pavlita showed us how he held it, his thumb on one of the conical projections on the front and one of his fingers on a similar projection on the back. As you moved your eyes along the zigzag pattern in a sort of figure eight, the device supposedly picked up and accumulated your bioenergy.

Circular-shaped generators, like small suns, sat on the table: a circle of black iron dappled with speckles of gold or brass, others with diamond-shaped designs cut into them. Some were ice smooth, some rough like a wrought-iron gate. "What got you into this?" we asked Pavlita. "I've always been interested in the idea of another form of energy," he said. "Even when I was just a boy at school." He'd been educated in a technical school and after graduating, his genius for inventions quickly led to new processes and machines for industry.

As he chain-smoked, Pavlita explained some of the things the generators could do. "Every motion a person makes in a room leaves a pattern, a trace. The generator is able to pick up this trace at a distance of several rooms. Even moving one's hand in a circle over a table creates enough of a trace for the machine to pick up and identify."

One of the Czechs tried to explain to us in slow, careful English. "This trace he is speaking of is a form. It is not an energy, as we know it. They think what occurs is that a sort of indentation is made into the surroundings. This is the trace."

The composer-criminologist didn't buy this idea at all, or much else that was being said. Pavlita showed him privately a huge book of pictures and reports in one corner of the room.

"This energy is a real energy," Pavlita said, "a genuine force of nature." When Jana was a small child, he and his wife discovered she'd gotten into the room where they kept the generators. Thinking the bright objects must be toys, Jana began to play with them. "We caught her, but not before the little finger on each of her hands became paralyzed," Pavlita said. "Fortunately it was only temporary."

While the groups wrangled over various theories of how the generators worked, Pavlita set up an experiment in the kitchen for just the two of us to see. It was a well-lit, ordinary kitchen. He put a circular collar of copper about ten inches in diameter and five inches high on a table. There was an inch-wide gap between the two ends of the collar. A small tubular generator, which simply seemed to be a hollow piece of metal, with no moving parts, no wires, was attached vertically to the collar beside the gap. He put a small metal ball on top of the tube. Inside the collar, a tin wheel resembling the spokes of an umbrella was poised on a needle-like stand.

Pavlita set up a glass shield between himself and the device. He took off his watch. He reached around the glass and adjusted the metal ball. Then he drew his hands back behind the barrier and began the charging process by gazing at a pattern on the generator, moving his head slightly up and down. He called to Jana to join him. She stood behind him, directed her gaze to the generator, and moved her head gently from side to side. They did not seem to be straining.

In less than a minute the generator was charged; slowly the tin wheel began to turn. It turned as if pulses were being directed at it, then faster and more smoothly. We didn't detect any draft of air, any heat wave that could have caused the motion. There were no magnets in sight, no wires, nothing attached under the table. No scientist would accept this as a test, but it was a very-much-out-in-the-open, sharply illuminated demonstration. The Department of Physics of the University of Hradec Králové, which had examined some of the Pavlita devices, as well as experts from the Czech Academy of Science, and agreed that normal physical causes had been fairly well ruled out in controlled tests. Then, how did it work?

Dr. Rejda explained that copper seems to attract this psychotronic energy and that the copper circular collar seemed to polarize, one side positive and one side negative. Presumably, the interplay of force from the two poles caused the wheel to be attracted, then repulsed, forcing it to move.

Pavlita cleared the table and came back with another type of generator. This one was a long hollow rectangle of steel about seven inches long and an inch or two in width. He attached a conical aluminium tip to the bottom end. "The tip can be of wood, plastic, anything nonmagnetic," he said. When he was done, the generator looked like a pudgy ballpoint pen.

The other guests joined us. Pavlita scattered fragments of non-magnetic substance onto a sheet of glass. Various people tested them with a magnet. When they were satisfied that magnetism had no effect on the fragments, Pavlita picked up the generator, placing his fingers on two metal circles on the back. He moved his thumb back and forth over a scalloped opening in the front, as if he were playing a clarinet. He touched the tip to a piece of copper. It picked it up. He carried the copper to pieces of crystal, silver, aluminium. They all clung together in a stack from the generator. "The energy is going into these nonmagnetic substances," he said. "Now that we've put a charge on them, anything will pick them up." He asked us for a match.

We produced some wooden ones we'd bought in Romania. He put a match near a piece of aluminium, near other little chips. Our match attracted them and, with prodding, picked them up and stacked them. He asked us to hold a magnet over the pieces. It had no effect. It did not attract them. These little chips of non-magnetic metal and crystal, once charged with psychotronic energy from the generators, would also attract or repel the pole of a suspended magnetic needle.

Pavlita put a sheet of glass on a stand and held a formidable horseshoe magnet, about five inches long, underneath it. This time he scattered magnetic fragments on top of the glass and moved the chips about with the magnet. Then he pointed his generator at them. The generator easily picked them up despite the force of the magnet attracting them beneath. His generator also drew the pieces away directly from the magnet.

Next, Pavlita dumped all the nonmagnetic substances into a glass dish of water. (Electrostatic energy doesn't work underwater.) The generator not only picked up each substance, it also appeared to make the water itself cling to the tip of the generator in a narrow column. The composer brought his super-magnets into play. The little fragments didn't budge. He tried it on the tip of the generator; no attraction. Pavlita said his device would even attract cloth and jokingly used it to draw out the edge of the composer's handkerchief from his pocket.

And that was enough experimenting, our host decided. By this time Mrs. Pavlita had arrived home. A small, warm, bustling woman, she shook hands warmly and insisted we stay for supper.

On the long black drive back to Prague through pelting gusts of rain, great sprays of lightning lit the sky like heraldry against a backdrop of frowning fortresses and ancient castles. It brought to mind some of those late-night-movie scenes of Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory as he tries to infuse life into an inanimate creature. Could this strange psychotronic energy succeed as Frankenstein's "lightning" did? Could it endow the inanimate with motion?

Have the Czechs isolated the energy that allows Nelya Mikhailova to cause nonmagnetic objects to move at a distance? Have they captured in a generator the "X" force from the healer's hands that causes wounds to heal, plants to speed their growth?

Does man have powers he never dreamed of, energies that can be isolated and used? Maybe this psychotronic energy is a key to ghosts and even to the supposed ectoplasmic substances emitted by mediums. The Czechs have only reported on the uses for psychotronic energy that they feel they've confirmed. To their mind, this is just the beginning of a discovery - an awesome discovery. We heard much speculation. And we talked finally about the future which the Czechs looked to so hopefully and about philosophy and history.

"In Czechoslovakia, history certainly repeats itself," one of the businessmen said. "For centuries about every fifty years somebody invades us. Do you really think that's about to change?" he asked with a cynical laugh.

But Czechs we met elsewhere, in restaurants, in shops, on buses, everywhere, told us again and again, "The Soviets will never invade." Many of them kidded us about being worried. "What are we guilty of? We are not leaving socialism. All we're trying to create is socialism with a human face. We're trying to guarantee freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, freedom of inquiry. The goals of the Czech experiment are the goals of the whole of human society."

In another kind of experiment during that brief Czech spring-time, we had seen the psychotronic generators. What are they all about? Even the Czechs don't claim to know all there is to know about their new energy. The cardinal point in their minds is that Pavlita's generators demonstrate that an unknown energy does exist, subtly intertwined with human beings.

If it is real, if it continues to check out, one day this account will read like the report of two primitives trying to describe a television or a phonograph. If before the patents were secured, we chanced in on a private demonstration of Mr. Edison's talking machine ninety-five years ago, we'd probably have written about a bizarre, almost unbelievable machine. It could, as Caruso sang in the room, somehow capture his voice in hair-like grooves on a circle of wax. A week later this circle could be put on a rotor, a sort of metal arm would trace the grooves, and, as if time didn't exist, we would hear Caruso sing out his aria like a conjured ghost. What's more, it was reported that the wax would stay charged with the voice for a long time, perhaps even for years.

The very few - two or three - Western scientists who have seen Pavlita's generators are wary of them. No one likes to wear a historical dunce cap like the members of the French Academy who bodily threw Mr. Edison's agent and his talking machine out of their chambers. They knew, after all, that wax can't talk, that the whole thing was a cheap ventriloquist's trick. Yet no one, particularly scientists, likes to be fingered as gullible, either.

Just days after we left Prague, the Soviet Union invaded. They brought in more heavy war equipment than even Nazi Germany used to occupy the country. Helmeted Soviet soldiers were squatters on the castle heights overlooking the city where we'd seen long-haired hippies painting art nouveau designs on the sidewalks. Soviet tanks turned the street sullen where we'd talked over the plans the Czechs had for psychotronics.

Will the new energy disappear under a new iron curtain? The Czechs told us there were isolated people in Europe and America working quietly on this "vital energy." Perhaps someone here will come up with a psychotronic generator that passes all the tests Pavlita's did. Or perhaps, hard line or soft line, the Czechs will decide they have a good thing going and let the rest of us know more about it.

It's our opinion that the Czech scientists believe they're onto something. They're secure enough in this belief to announce their discovery to outside scientific conferences. It is also our opinion that the generators work. The question is why, on what energy? Is it Prana, the Vital Energy of the Chinese, the bioplasmic energy of the Kirlian effect?

The discovery of a new-old form of energy, a vital energy, a more intimate energy than electricity or x-ray, is a scintillating idea. It asks for a leap of the imagination. It implies a landing place outside the rings of current scientific knowledge, a landing place where mind and energy are no longer irrevocably split apart, but instead interact to work their wonders.

Is psychotronic energy the subtle, vital energy that mystics, mediums, and philosophers have posited and that scientists recently have looked for behind psychic happenings? Pavlita's generators reverberate in the mind like gleaming question marks against the now muted Czech countryside.