Jazz Seduction

A U.S-Soviet Soft Power Paradox

By Teagan Wall

> "I remember very clearly when he said Jazz, his gold tooth shined, and the silver one in the depth of his mouth. He pronounced it with a slight and sad smile with which people speak about something unreachable, and then suddenly he came to his senses and looked cautiously at the door."
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> — 'The Sound of Jazz' by Yakov Lotovski

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A Personal Note / Philosophical Prologue:

The following is an interdisciplinary and in-depth analysis of culture as a bridge between two political poles — the United States of America and Russia. Structured around the administrative perspectives and retrospectives of both entities, we follow jazz specifically throughout the twentieth century to establish the role of music and culture and, more importantly, to understand the divergence in contemporary and historical understandings. The eccentricities of this analysis lend themselves primarily to qualitative methodologies. The concept of 'soft power' itself is rooted in the experience of the individual; its goal is something that cannot really be quantified. For cohesion in our context, I have collapsed the structure of literature analysis and review. Existing conceptions of the relationship between art and politics are (almost wholly) subjective. The positions of both western and Russian historians, political officials and academics will be integrated throughout. Thematic continuities will remain apparent as we trace the story of jazz — through both institutions and individuals — across the Soviet Union from the 1917 Revolution through Nikita Khrushchev's 'Thaw,' which concluded in the mid-1960s.

This piece is both a research paper and a research proposal. I centralize interpersonal understanding, rather than political efficacy, in my effort to explore a peace-building process as it exists within the individual. This is a peace-building of mutual curiosity: of appreciating, rather than looking down upon, the cultures of the world. Music offered a lens through which one could step into lives they would never know personally. Consequently, it nurtured a respect for the humanity of others — one grown internally, rather than imposed. At the bare minimum, an important notion underlies this story: that of music as a vehicle through which one can understand the world; for researchers, students, artists and consumers. Culture is a product of people; it is a production that is inextricable from its producers. It establishes the boundaries and guidelines for comprehensive analysis of the current state of cultural exchange and its capacity for reaching across a political and ideological polarization that is portrayed (by political bodies) as insurmountable. Throughout research, synthesis and reflection, my conscious intention has been to offer a balanced understanding and one that intentionally critically analyzes the existing literature. I reflect upon the institutions that impact culture on a surface level and the preconceived notions that drive political perspectives. On a deeper level, I hope here to offer an unexpected consideration to matters of cultural diplomacy. By employing jazz as an instrument of diplomacy, the US government attempted to transform culture into political propaganda. But

decades earlier, across the Iron Curtain, the Party had already begun to vilify Western culture. I hope to promote a mutual understanding that informs the ways in which culture is utilized as a political tool in the neverending Cold War.

Rapidly and audibly, jazz crept across the globe — its intuitive innovation infectious. Music that made you *feel* free. Jazz was the expression of black American musicians defining their place in American music, resisting the structures of oppression that they were forced to reckon with in society. Yet, how did the infectious spirit of jazz become a tool in cultural diplomacy? How did the global diffusion of jazz impact foreign relations during the Cold War? What are the lasting implications of employing music as a 'soft power' practice in cultural diplomacy?

Some say that jazz, in its purest form, resembles true democracy. The jazz band is a group of individuals organically creating in collaboration; of individuals improvising both independently and collectively. Jazz has been explored as a framework through which complex relations can be understood, how individuality and dissonance overlap with harmony. Jazz was carried abroad by American sea merchants and military men and manifested itself in the birth of new jazz subcultures across the world. One of the most notable jazz scenes is in Japan. In the context of the former Soviet Union, jazz subcultures established the strongest presence in Russia's cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg) and in the satellite states that littered the outskirts of the USSR from the Second World War through to its demise in 1989. Attraction to the art form was organic, before it was later strengthened by institutional initiatives. American musicians — more specifically, black American musicians — were sent on world tours to spread the jazz spirit of individuality, innovation and freedom; notions that perfectly fall into alignment with the Western ideals of capitalist democracy. As such, we may look to President Nixon's speech, awarding Duke Ellington the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969:

> When we think of freedom, we think of many things. But Duke Ellington is one who has carried the message of freedom to all the nations of the world through music, through understanding, understanding that reaches over all national boundaries and over all boundaries of prejudice and over all boundaries of language. [1]

A capacity for understanding that reaches across prejudice and across differences, all attributed to the black American art form; moreover, attributed to something immaterial, yet tangible within every individual. The subtlety and subjectivity of jazz made it a malleable creative influence. It inspired newborn musical subcultures globally — each with their own unique fusion of influences — and imbued them with its subtle rejection of the status quo.

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[1] Richard Nixon, "Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Duke Ellington," www.presidency.ucsb.edu (The Presidency Project, 1969)

Jazz celebrated the polyrhythmic roots of African music traditions while integrating a Caribbean influence, culminating in the birth of a new creative culture in late nineteenth century New Orleans. There are some sonic subtleties distinctive to jazz that contribute to its nature of 'rebellion' on a musical level: most commonly identified as improvisation, syncopation ('swing'), and use of 'blue notes.' [2] In the case of Soviet-era Russia proper, however, these distinctions were relatively easily lost in translation following the original influx of jazz in 1922. In many ways, Soviet musicians did not have the capabilities, because they lacked the necessary resources, to truly develop their own styles of jazz. By the time jazz arrived, cultural exchange had been ongoing between the US and the USSR since the mid-eighteenth century – albeit with varying degrees of intensity. As Starr emphasizes, "the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on American politics, diplomacy, and literature has been the object of much study. The impact in Russia of America's democratic and liberationist upheaval in popular culture remains *terra incognita.*" [3] As an instrument of soft power — pursued explicitly by the US government — 'jazz diplomacy' peaked in the 1970s, demarcated by Duke Ellington's 1971 tour across the Soviet Union. As Harvey Cohen illustrates, "the Soviet tour occurred during the efforts of President Richard Nixon to establish détente at the end of the Cold War between the United States, the Soviet Union and China." [4] At the time cultural diplomacy between the US and the USSR were heavily strained, but other American jazz musicians, like Benny Goodman and Charles Lloyd, had already spearheaded the mission to bring Jazz to the Soviet population.

Our analysis is situated in the Cold War, balancing within the Soviet organs of cultural control. These institutions, fundamentally structured around a social reinforcement of Stalin's socialist ideals, opened themselves to the world and attempted to adapt to new rhythms of life and new realities. Alongside other forms of American popular music (i.e., rock 'n' roll, "beat music"[5]), jazz played a role in forming a bridge between the Soviet Union (USSR) and the United States of America (US) — a bridge built upon culture. As Starr writes in *Red & Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union*, "...there does exist one form of expression — jazz — that has

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[2] Blue notes can generally be understood as alterations of the major scale; flattening / sharpening notes in a way that allows one to be more expressive; typically ♭3 – ♯4 / ♭5 – ♭7.
[3] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 19
[4] Cohen, "Visions of Freedom: Duke Ellington in the Soviet Union," *Popular Music* 30, no. 3 (2011): 297
[5] "Beat music" is the term utilized by Havadi (2010). The term vaguely refers to music that adopted a musical emphasis on rhythmic elements, in contrast to the melodic priorities traditionally identifiable in Western music.

far outstripped the others in its impact upon social life, private relations, and practically every other field of the arts." [6] However, Starr appears to poetically prescribe great power to the art form; he interprets the role of jazz to be of much greater importance than other disciplinary theorists. Maintaining an interrogation of *paradox*, I make an intentional effort to comparatively interpret the *reported* influence of jazz (by some historians and academics, and most prominently by government officials) versus the *realistic* influence of jazz.

The *realistic* influence of jazz is a vague categorization of the experience of individuals, using qualitative data (periodicals, journals, newspapers, interviews, blog posts) to understand the genuine role of jazz. I do not assume much specific power to jazz uniquely as an iteration of US cultural diplomacy. Instead, I centralize jazz to narrate the foundation of America's co-optation of music as a political tool and as a weapon in the Cold War, and most acutely, of the preceding — and more pure, in a political sense — years of an organic, individual-to-individual process of cultural exchange between two entities posed consistently as enemies. In these earlier years, jazz had a unique lifespan in the Soviet Union, both Russia and satellite states, long before official diplomatic employment. The choice to utilize jazz musicians in post-WWII alliance-building is interesting, but it is more politically strategic and opportunistic than some jazz historians (including Starr) represent. To identify the true role of jazz in our context necessitates a more intimate understanding of the Soviet Union, focused on the experiences and perspectives of Soviet citizens. This story, of jazz and the Soviet Union, is deeply nuanced. In his analysis of post-WWII Hungarian jazz, Havadi articulates that the "freedom ethos" with which jazz was imbued was, largely, more fiction than fact; half "fuelled by American political hegemony and consumerist mass culture" and half fuelled by "the anti-Americanism of the Communist regime." [7] As Havadi depicts, the sunset of Stalinist cultural control, and the subsequent political approval of jazz resulted in its abandonment by many Soviet musicians, especially in satellite Soviet states, to whom the measures of cultural isolation were relatively new. This theme reappears in exploring the development of jazz scenes in the Baltics — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — where jazz uniquely flourished, in comparison to Russia proper. What Havadi emphasizes here reveals a unique distinction. Jazz was not fundamentally political but, as any other art form, its creation was situated in place and time. Genre creation, following the

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[6] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 9

[7] Havadi, "Individualist, Traditionalists, Revolutionaires, or Opportunists?," (2010): 109

assertions of Lena (2012), is fundamentally shaped by the musical community (or communities) that pioneered it. Jazz, specifically, embodied a sense of counter-hegemonic rebellion, rooted in its denial of the stylistic and structural norms of Western music. In this framework, a nature of rebellion appears inherent to jazz. Further the global spread of jazz was organic in its earliest stages — shifts in its reception were largely resultant of changes in the official approval of the art form. It could be understood, for our purposes, that the employment of jazz as an official tool of cultural diplomacy nullified much of its potential for influence.

I. Theoretical Grounding

Considerations of music are largely absent from mainstream political discourse. Despite a lack of formal recognition, analysis of music in a globalized world (as well as the narratives surrounding it) provides invaluable insight on the dynamics of cultural interaction unfolding constantly. This enlightened perception of music rejects conventional misconceptions that hold auditory art as purely aesthetic. Further, while any musical production remains rooted in its **setting** — in other words, the context in which it is born — this framework holds that such works are not inherently politicized in the process of creative production. Rather, understanding setting is fundamental to any critical analysis of any musical form as an individual's reaction to a multitude of contexts (i.e., social, political, religious, economic, cultural, etc.). Further, music is transferred into the political sphere more directly through modern forms of music distribution and consumption.

a. Culture, Coercion & The West

The power practices of the Cold War era have restructured our conception of diplomacy by employing new, and more subtle, instruments of persuading public opinion (Nye 1990). Soft power "occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants" through power demonstrations of power that are increasingly "less transferable, less coercive, and less tangible." [8] Soft power resources include "cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions." [9] Guan and Chagas-Bastos (2023) find that soft power projections, specifically studying the

[8] Nye, "Soft Power," Foreign Policy 80, no. 80 (1990): 166-7
[9] Guan, et al., "Winning Hearts and Minds: Soft Power, Cinema, and Public Perceptions of the United States and China in Brazil," *Global Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (2023): 167

medium of film, contribute to building a positive perception of a foreign entity. [10] Soft power is distinctly influential in shaping attitudes because it is subtle, to the extent of being (at times) completely subliminal: "attracting people to it rather than coercing them." [11] **Soft power**, Nye argues, is a form of co-optive power, or "the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences and define their interests in ways consistent with its own." [12] In other words, to overcome existing bias or political polarization, co-optive power seeks to coerce foreign audiences by creating a situation in which individuals interests and values naturally fall into alignment with that of another entity. According to Nye, the U.S has more of this power than most other agents, as today's international economic institutions "tend to embody liberal, free-market principles that coincide in large measure with American society and ideology." [13] Additionally, "this power tends to arise from such resources as cultural and ideological attraction" — i.e., cultural diplomacy. [14] Pajtinka (2014) defines **cultural diplomacy** as "a set of activities, undertaken directly by or in collaboration with diplomatic authorities of a state, which are aimed at the promotion of foreign policy primarily by means of fostering its cultural exchange with other (foreign) states." [15] The US Department of State considers cultural diplomacy to be "the linchpin of public diplomacy; for it is in cultural activities that a nation's idea of itself is best represented [...] For the values embedded in our artistic and intellectual traditions form a bulwark against the forces of darkness." [16]

Hence, from the twentieth century onwards, the United States has consistently pursued peaceful relations through diplomatic projects of cultural exchange with peoples across the world; a stance that may be most eloquently articulated as the goal 'of winning hearts and minds' during the Vietnam War. This notion relates to public diplomacy, in which diplomatic missions are focused on engaging with foreign civil society, i.e. the daily life of foreign citizens, in order to "cultivate people-to-people ties among current and future global leaders that build enduring networks and personal relationships and promote U.S. national security and values." [17] As

[10] Guan et al., "Winning Hearts and Minds" (2023): 1
[11] Aydemir, "Soft Power in the Concept of Transculturation" Trames. Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences 28, no. 2 (2024): 160
[12] Nye, "Soft Power," (1990): 168
[13] Nye, "Soft Power," (1990): 168
[14] Nye, "Soft Power," (1990): 168
[15] Pajtinka, Erik. "Cultural Diplomacy in Theory and Practice." (2014): 95
[16] U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Diplomacy the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy," (2005)
[17] U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Diplomacy," (2005): 1. Emphasis added

previously noted, for the US, the 'nation's idea of itself' was almost perfectly embodied in the phenomenon that had infected American audiences — Jazz. Perhaps, most strikingly they enumerate: "the traditions of American art, dance, film, *jazz*, and literature [...] continue to inspire people the world over despite our political differences." [18] According to the State Department, "cultural diplomacy can enhance our national security in subtle, wide-ranging, and sustainable ways [...] history may record that America's cultural riches played no less a role than military action in shaping our international leadership." [19] The conception of culture as a diplomatic tool is crucial to understanding the narratives that surround it in 'official,' political contexts, as well as governmental co-optation of the naturally-unfolding dynamics of an increasingly globalized world. In this context, I am less concerned with the specifics of American foreign policy or focused on reforming U.S. diplomatic strategies. Rather, I call attention to the organic processes of cultural exchange that occurred all over the world as communication expanded into a globalized network. It can occur within politicized or state-sanctioned arenas, but simultaneously remains rooted in the subjective experience of the individual.

Globalization, an important factor in any consideration of twentieth century cultural exchange, can be difficult to define due to its wide span of impact on "a multitude of disciplines, communities, and cultures." [20] For our purposes, I utilize Al-Rodhan's proposed definition of **globalization** as "a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities." [21] This definition attempts to incorporate the ever-growing dynamics and manifestations of a global society that, as described by Larsson (2001), is undergoing "the process of world shrinkage, of distances getting shorter, things moving closer." [22] In other words, globalization brings peoples, and their respective cultures, in closer proximity. Rooted in an acknowledgement of the multicultural structure of modern society, Aydemir (2024) argues that interpersonal communication in a modern society therefore creates a space for contact between different cultures through the

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[18] U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Diplomacy," (2005): 1, emphasis added
[19] U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Diplomacy," (2005): 1, emphasis added
[20] Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, "Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security Definitions of Globalization: A Comprehensive Overview and a Proposed Definition" (*Geneva Centre for Security Policy*, 2006): 3
[21] Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, "Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization," (2006): 3
[22] Larsson (2001); qtd. in Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, "Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization," (2006): 3

process of **transculturation** (Ortiz 1940), in which "new identities, institutions, societies and values" are constructed (Davis 2020) and, consequently, culture is transformed (Rama 2012). [23] Further, Aydemir reiterates Fernando Ortiz's argument that "transculturation [...] has occurred in many societies that have been disconnected from their own ties in a flow, and cultural phenomena have been created through the process of transition from one culture to another." [24] This dynamic, of dissonance from 'true culture,' is readily apparent in the case of the Soviet Union, as we will explore shortly.

Soft power is intricately related to the process of transculturation. Aydemir (2024) emphasizes that "soft power plays a prominent role in shaping the transculturation process" by bringing "the distinctive qualities of human beings into question" and transforming "established traditions, practices, values and beliefs of society." [25] In the context of the US, soft power was intended to demonstrate western values of freedom, equality and democracy to international audiences; furthermore, "today, the United States is at the center of this transculturation process, and the terminology of the resources advancing the process is soft power." [26] Soft power practices are especially important for diplomatic analysis — the subtlety of influence compounds their impact on the minds and perspectives of individuals around the world. Using this framework, I posit that music assumes a unique role in terms of cultural diplomacy and soft power practices contemporarily and apply this theory retrospectively to diplomatic relations in the twentieth century.

b. Globalization and National Identity

To track a rough conception of national identity, we centralize the role of youth. This allows us to tailor our analysis and assists in developing a framework through which *intergenerational* dynamics can be assessed. Greater justification for this analytical approach will follow but, briefly, tracking the sentiments of the youth allows us to follow a notion of a 'culture of the future,' as Mally (1990) describes it. In conversations of national identity, the geographical and geopolitical nuances of the Soviet Union must be reiterated and emphasized. For all intents and purposes, there is no feasible way of generalizing across the Union — an

[23] Aydemir, "Soft Power in the Concept of Transculturation" (2024): 158
[24] Aydemir, "Soft Power in the Concept of Transculturation" (2024): 159
[25] Aydemir, "Soft Power in the Concept of Transculturation" (2024): 157
[26] Aydemir, "Soft Power in the Concept of Transculturation" (2024): 161

obstacle continuously faced by the musicians, composers and musicologists present in our discussion. Thus, our focus remains largely on the political and ideological institutions that governed art, and the microhistories of the musicians within.

c. Performing Power Projections

Jazz is especially situated to shed light on a number of different dynamics. First, the racial dynamics of the art form are implicit. A level of historical revisionism plagues today's widely-held conception of jazz, perhaps epitomized in the romantic misrepresentation of F. Scott's Fitzgerald's 'Jazz Age.' Overlooked in this understanding is the controversy with which Jazz was immediately confronted, on the sole basis of race. Jazz, first and foremost, was a form of musical expression for black Americans. Early jazz musicians embraced a rejection of western music, instead placing a value on individuals' techniques and respective style (or 'voice') — a symbolic rejection of the imposed racial hierarchy that structured American society. Davenport (2009) describes: "As American society rendered blacks invisible, jazz men and women carved out their own cultural space, acknowledging that they were not fully accepted as equals in American life." [27] However, there is stark divergence between the domestic dynamics of race and the international dynamics. Despite its mixed reception at home, Jazz played a much different role abroad. The seminal work on jazz in international relations is *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (2009) by Lisa E. Davenport. Institutional recognition of the art form is easily identifiable in American cultural diplomacy initiatives such as the Jazz Ambassador Program, which sent American artists abroad to represent the country. However, this duality — of projected ideals versus practiced reality — would serve to fundamentally damage the perceived validity of American values. Davenport illustrates that "jazz diplomacy poignantly illuminated America's cultural and racial paradoxes on the world stage." [28] This paradox litters the history of jazz diplomacy; these institutional initiatives were not immune to the extremes of racial discrimination, manifesting in explicit decisions on *who* would represent American culture. At times, this involved the deployment of all-white Jazz bands, and (when this did not go over well), an explicit acknowledgment and renewed appreciation for the black musicians who created the style.

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[27] Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (University Press Of Mississippi, 2013): 32
[28] Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (2013): 32

Jazz diplomacy was most evident during the Cold War, as the US hoped to build support for democracy through shifting the preferences of foreign civil society against communism. As demonstrated in the Vietnam War, the US was pursuing a policy of cultural containment that limited any Communist influence and, instead, promoted democracy and neoliberalism. This was especially important in post-colonial nations, where populations were being targeted by Kremlin agents to join the Communist cause. For instance, Louis ('Satchmo') Armstrong and the All Stars' Africa tour in 1960. This is especially striking in considering the Bolsheviks historical relations with pan-African and black nationalist theorists in the early twentieth century. As Davenport illustrates, these tours exemplify that "jazz became an instrument for expanding Western power — and black culture became a paradoxical symbol of that power." [29] Black culture as a symbol of Western power is a striking notion, especially when contextualized within the period of peak civil unrest in the U.S. as black Americans protested the social institutions that segregated and hierarchized them. In the eyes of the international community, this exposed a fundamental paradox that "harmed the American image." [30] Nevertheless, in 1963, Duke Ellington was sent on a tour of the Middle East. Later in 1971, he would tour the Soviet Union, demarcating an important turning point in the forms of cultural exchange between the US and the USSR. Due to Ellington's importance in Jazz diplomacy, his autobiography — *Music is My Mistress* — provides insight on the dynamics of "representing America at its best, while having experienced its worst" (Tye 2024). Therefore, understanding the role of jazz as *simply* an instrument of diplomacy is inherently shaped (and at times, limited) by its paradoxical production and propagation. Jazz diplomacy was, in many ways, a performance of racial harmony amidst a reality of domestic dissonance.

A lens that simply focuses on influence as a result of political co-optation also fails to adequately encompass the organic outcroppings of globalization on society and culture around the world. Beginning in the 1950s, when a Cold War-era American government realized the influence of popular culture, they flooded support into sending musicians abroad. The Jazz Ambassadors' first tour — an eight-week tour spanning Europe, Asia and South America — launched in 1956, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, and Dave Brubek. Five years later, in 1961, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers pioneered one of the first

[29] Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (2013): 114-15
[30] Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (2013): 125

post-WWII cultural exchange programs with Japan. Saxophonist Wayne Shorter reflects on his experience in the liner notes of 'First Flight to Tokyo,' "I was amazed at the reception when we finished, not just the whole concert, but each thing we played. Every time we went on, we knew we were being appreciated in ways we never had been in America." [31] Many (black) American jazz musicians experienced similar revelation, in that glorification by international audiences illuminated the comparatively lackluster reception at home.

The decision to employ jazz therefore embodies the first realizations of apolitical art as a political weapon; US policymakers pinpointed the power of 'taste-making' through creative fields on molding political predispositions. But it would be misleading to assume that cultural exchange began with official diplomacy. Rather, music as a US soft power projection was only effective insofar as the art forms were genuinely *popular*, on a national and/or international level. Jazz is perhaps heralded as the catalyst to international diplomatic initiatives because of its immense global popularity. Jazz had infected Western Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century. From there, it began to seep into the Soviet Union — marked by its arrival in Moscow in 1922. In the decade before official diplomacy initiatives, the USSR had long grappled with the debate over culture, music and the West. In this context, the American government's realization of the political power of popular culture appears only secondary to the Soviet Union's conception of arts and culture as an instrument. From the 1930s onwards, Stalin had been propagating a position that vilified Western culture — all based on the presupposition that it was already being employed by the US government, for the specific purposes that American diplomatic initiatives would later assume. Thus, we must orient our exploration within the Bolshevik's conception of culture and the subsequent institutions of cultural control. Our story begins in 1917.

[31] Blue Note Records, "ART BLAKEY & the JAZZ MESSENGERS 'FIRST FLIGHT to TOKYO: THE LOST 1961 RECORDINGS' out DEC. 10 - Blue Note Records," Blue Note Records (2021)

II. Culture & Contention

> "The spirit is music. Once upon a time, the daimon intimated to Socrates to listen to the spirit of music. With your whole body, with your whole heart, with your whole consciousness – *listen* to the Revolution."
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> — 'The Intelligentsia and the Revolution' by Aleksandr Blok (1918)

Comprehending culture in the Soviet Union is complex, involving consideration of various nuances. First and foremost, culture has been splintered into the state-sanctioned and the organic (the grassroots, the folk, the *proletarian*). October 1917 catalyzed an "explosion" of cultural organizations (Mally 1990). The Bolsheviks, spearheaded by Vladimir Lenin, were aware "that education and artistic creation were powerful channels through which to establish a new social and political ethos" and thereby immediately began a "structural reorganization of national cultural life." [32] Thus, popular culture was conceived of as a tool for uniting the working class globally — building a universal proletarian culture. An early organizational focus on constructing the 'culture of the future' would be intensified by Joseph Stalin; following his assumption of power in 1924, Stalin reinforced **cultural control** with vigilance and violence until his death in 1953. Hence, under Stalin, any truly 'organic' culture was hence subjected to intense Party-state scrutiny, and non-compliance could be a life-or-death matter. In this context, **'cultural control institution'** is used in reference to the Party-state structures that governed everyday life throughout the existence of the USSR, including workers' unions, artistic committees and youth organizations.

Recurrent themes can be identified in this early phase of construction: (a) emphasis on youth and intergenerational dynamics; (b) the role of the Party-state in structuring social relations; and (c) self-policing as a means of survival. Our preliminary illustration of sociocultural institutions also recognizes the unique obstacles engendered by the geographical and geopolitical complexity of the Soviet Union, which renders quantitative analysis distinctly less effective. After Stalin built the walls of cultural isolation, the permeation of any unsanctioned (aka illegal) outside culture into the USSR was not uniform. As we will explore, this enabled the development of jazz scenes in Soviet satellite states that outperformed their

[32] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (Univ of California Press, 1990): 33

counterparts in Russia, where jazz was largely concentrated in urban centers — sites of increased globalization — like Moscow and St. Petersburg.

A 2022 Moscow Times article provides a contemporary institutional retrospective, a state-sanctioned perception of music (specifically jazz and rock 'n' roll) as a tool of soft power in the late Soviet Union:

> In the spring and summer of 1989 [...] the Iron Curtain that prevented them [Soviet political elites] from going abroad suddenly parted. This had revolutionary implications for Soviet politics, especially for the educated Moscow-centered intelligentsia. Since Stalin's times, the West had been the forbidden fruit and the object of intense curiosity for Soviet citizens. The post-Stalin intelligentsia held an "imagined West" as a vital part of their identity, dreams, and cultural self-validation. Several educated cohorts had grown up with a veritable obsession with and idealization of Western culture and music, first jazz, then rock. Many of those people who learned to despise the Soviet system under Brezhnev felt uncritical admiration for all things Western. [33]

The importance of the culture, here, is of its role in disenchantment; a subtle poison that, from the inside-out, disintegrated the USSR, by infecting the minds of the comrades. Watching the Soviet dance of cultural institutions as we move through the historical timeline, the role of the individual — the Party members and citizens of which these bodies are composed — asserts itself. Despite the path dependence that seemingly plagued post-Soviet sociocultural institutions, tying them to their Stalinist past, cultural control found its weak point in the years following his death. The 2022 article reveals the continuation of many themes present within the subsequent story of Soviet jazz. The Party's overarching cultural control was achieved through institutions tailored and machianted over decades spent under Stalin's watchful eye. Close government oversight into daily lives and interpersonal relations was compounded with the Party's emphasis on the role of the youth. The chief architect of socialist society, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (henceforth, Lenin), saw the construction of a Socialist future to be the handiwork of the youth, perhaps epitomized in a declaration at the Third *Komsomol* Congress in 1920:

> The generation of people who are now at the age of fifty cannot expect to see communist society. This generation will be gone before then. But the generation of those who are now fifteen will see a communist society, and will itself build this society. This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society. [34]

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[33] Latypova, "Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union ," Moscow Times, August 28, 2022.
[34] Neumann, "'Youth, It's Your Turn!': Generations and the Fate of the Russian Revolution (1917-1932)," *Journal of Social History* 46, no. 2 (November 11, 2012):. 275

Emphasizing youth brings rise to the intergenerational dynamics that imbued the Party-state system with a sense of paternalism. Compliance with the Party's mechanisms of cultural control was largely fear-based in the early stages. As these institutions developed and expanded, these values endured through the efforts of Party officials dedicated to Stalinism.

The ideals of Soviet culture were also pursued through the construction of 'houses of folk creativity.' Soviet Houses of Folk Creativity (also known as Houses of Culture and Palaces of Culture) were workers' clubs that "sought to 'nationalize' leisure by encouraging 'the active involvement of subaltern groups in their social and cultural experiences.'" [35] According to Tsipursky, "after the October Revolution, individual factory committees, the trade unions, the movement for a proletarian culture (*Proletkult*), and the Bolshevik party all founded clubs." [36] The role of such cultural clubs would remain in flux throughout the lifespan of the Soviet Union. In the early 1930s, their role became less specialized, instead intending to serve "groups of enterprises and even whole urban districts"; these larger structures would come to be referred to as 'palaces.' [37] Siegelbaum highlights that, in addition to dispersing culture, such clubs also "functioned as sites for friendship-making, bonding, courtship, informal exchanges of information, sheer entertainment, fun, and a host of other purposes." [38] Such purposes were not officially sanctioned but arose organically in the social setting of cultural clubs.

a. Institution of a Revolution

The Russian Revolution of 1917 began in February when Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne, resulting in an eight-month power vacuum during which (two mains) parties vyed to lead the construction of a new Russia: the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and the Social Revolutionary Party (SP). The years leading up to 1917 the Social Democratic Party was characterized by extensive planning, much of which occurred in exile, and widespread disagreement. The Party was thus internally split into two factions along competing conceptions on how socialist state-building should occur: the Bolsheviks (Marxists) and the Mensheviks

[35] Siegelbaum, "The Shaping of Soviet Workers' Leisure: Workers' Clubs and Palaces of Culture in the 1930s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (October 1999): 79
[36] Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945–1970* (University Of Pittsburgh Press, 2016): 79
[37] Siegelbaum, "The Shaping of Soviet Workers' Leisure," (1999): 79
[38] Siegelbaum, "The Shaping of Soviet Workers' Leisure," (1999): 83

(largely middle-class intelligentsia). Lenin and the Bolsheviks would, eventually, be the pivotal component in the Revolution and fundamentally change the course of history for the USSR.

When the Revolution was over, much of what would become the USSR was divided up into *soviets,* i.e. councils. Local committees and organizations thus became the structural model for the USSR's administrative organization, and the framework through which socialist ideological education could be enforced. This understanding of cultural structures guides our comprehension of the Party-state frameworks through which (at best) indoctrination or (at worst) fear-motivated compliance could be enforced. A preliminary analysis of the structures in place provides an access point from which we can delve deeper into Soviet state-sponsored culture. The central institution in this conversation is the Central Committee (CC) of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), which was officially incorporated in 1917. However, lasting elements of the CC's administrative structure can be identified in the two decades preceding the Revolution, when it existed underground. During this period members were largely Russian, rather than representing other regions of the empire like Ukraine or Belarus. They were also concentrated in urban areas, Moscow and (what would become) Petrograd. Membership of the pre-Revolution CC was held equally by official members as candidates (substitutes), due to the pervasive danger of such meetings; this also contributed to a high level of turnover. Mawdsley & White (2020) identify these dynamics in the pre-Stalin operations of the newborn Soviet Union's Central Committee (1917—23). Lenin divided the elite of the CC into three departments: the *Politburo* ('Political Bureau'), i.e. key figures of the state, concerned with policy making; the *Orgburo* ('Organizational Bureau'), i.e. the wing of the Communist Party, concerned with administrative management; and the *Secretariat*, which was more generally concerned with the day-to-day operations of the CC. The *Politburo* oversaw executive and judicial branches, while the other departments focused on Party affairs and personnel. Though members of the CC were seemingly elected, Mawdsley et al. find that they were almost completely hand-picked by Lenin in this period, contributing to the common "convergence between CC membership and key office-holders — that is, the national elite." [39] Effectively dissolving the supposed distinction between the Party and the state, this overlap hints at a challenge that cultural institutions would continually face.

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[39] Mawdsley & White, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: The Central Committee and Its Members, 1917-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 5

In 1918 two other crucial organizations emerged — *Narkompros* and *Komsomol* — reflecting the continued development of complex bureaucratic structure incorporating different levels of regional governance and oversight. Similarly, the components of these institutions had existed previously in grassroots associations of the Bolsheviks. Now, theorists of socialist culture and education composed *Narkompros*, The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, and the structure rapidly expanded to encompass 17 regional sub-divisions, all involved with cultural control. Trade unions and *soviets* had also established cultural divisions within their organizations, and "a whole complex of educational societies and circles flourished under the loose collective control of several state bureaucracies." [40] The second important organization established in 1918 was *Komsomol* — the Russian Communist Youth League, then known as the All-Union Leninist Youth Communist League. *Komsomol* explicitly intended to "institutionalize the communist upbringing of young people in the Soviet Union" and contribute to the construction of a Soviet identity. Later, it played an important role in processes of Soviet cultural control, sending "brigades to cultural institutions and restaurants with the goal of uncovering and denouncing forbidden tunes" and pressuring compliance from other institutional organs. [41] We will return to *Komsomol* and the role of the youth later, in the context of Khrushchev.

An inherent consequence of this exponential expansion was **parallelism**, i.e. overlapping responsibilities by different agencies and organizations, leading to internal competition over each respective body's goals and role, as well as for resources, funding and personnel from the central government.[42] Parallelism was exacerbated by the weakened authority of any central enforcer in the post-revolutionary period, in that "the revolution was initially a centrifugal force that challenged the traditional overcentralization of the old regime." [43] The Revolution represented the peoples' pull away from the government, yet the Bolsheviks' subsequent state-building process necessitated a reversal of this trajectory. As a result, thematically recurrent is the complexity — yet interdependency — of competitive and cooperative relations between Soviet cultural institutions and departmental agencies as they continuously vied for a position in the centralized Soviet structure. The emergence of a new institution was closely related to the denouncement (and subsequent widespread abandonment) of its predecessor; similarly,

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[40] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 34
[41] Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun* (2016): 55
[42] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 35
[43] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 36

institutions often dedicated themselves to criticism of their competitors and defined themselves in relation to one another.

b. Artistic Autonomy & Folk Culture

The inner workings and goals of the institutions during the 1917—23 period reveals that musicians, musicologists and composers were deeply embedded in a debate between the traditional and the modern; a struggle with which the Soviet Union would never truly be able to satisfy. Through the 1920s, the administration of culture remained largely within the hands of the government, rather than the Party. Fitzpatrick (1974) asserts that the new government was attempting to rebuild cooperative relations with much of the *old intelligentsia* that it had isolated during the Revolution. [44] The established goal was still to imbue culture and education with socialist Soviet ideals, but structured around a gradual timeline; the development of their own *new intelligentsia* would occur in time, and begin by facilitating increased access to education for much of the "proletarians," i.e. laborers and peasants living in more rural regions. [45] *Narkompros* has allowed universities to remain autonomous but simultaneously declared that admission was open to all, though most universities refused to comply. [46] *Rabfaks* ('workers' facilities') were formed to facilitate the ideological education of the laborers. In matters of culture and education, a class war was unfolding, between the existing *intelligentsia* and those of the socialist future.

The official political stance until 1928 was a "'soft' line on culture." [47] This environment allowed artists to form their own associations "as a matter of privilege, not of right" — whose autonomy could be instantaneously revoked, as demonstrated by *Proletkult*. [48] Fitzpatrick suggests,

> If this seems paradoxical, it was part of the general paradox of party and government relations. The party leadership was, on the one hand, formulator of the policies which the government executed. On the other, it was protector of the special party or 'proletarian' interests. [49]

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[44] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies: Soviet Cultural Policy, 1922-1927," *Slavic Review* 33, no. 2 (June 1974): 267
[45] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 267
[46] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 270
[47] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 267
[48] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 268
[49] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 268

Through analysis of *Proletkult* ('Proletariat Culture') we can begin to integrate culture and music into the new Party-state formation. The Revolution transformed *Proletkult* from a local organization to a national institution. In name alone, *Proletkult* seemed to align very closely with the Bolshevik ideal of a global proletariat culture under which the world's working class could unite. Yet its rapport with the Party was not without obstacles; it both benefited from, and was challenged by, the Soviet organs of cultural control in the post-revolutionary period. In October 1917, the founders of Proletkult met in Petrograd and laid the ideological basis of their organization. When the Bolsheviks assumed control, *Proletkult* staunchly defended its autonomy, holding the position of *Narkompros* leader Lunacharskii, who argued the existence of "four organizational forms of the workers' movements – political parties, trade unions, cooperatives, and cultural circles." [50] Using a combined consideration of unions and cooperatives as 'economic organizations,' Proletkultists articulated "three paths to workers' power[,] through economics, politics, and culture." [51] The position held that the actions and initiatives of the unions, the Party, and *Proletkult* should each respectively be free from state intervention. Further, it "denied the party any special power over Proletkult or union affairs." [52] In other words, *Proletkult* made a clear argument that theirs should be an autonomous institution, immune to the oversight of both the state and the Party. This stance, passively antagonistic of the central authority and the Communist Party, was controversial, but not detrimental. Mally (1990) references the statements of the editorial board of *Proletarskaia kul'tura*, the official journal of the organization:

> We demand that the proletariat start right now, immediately, to create its own social forms of thought, feeling, and daily life, independent of alliances or combinations of political forces. And in this creation, political allies — the rural and urban poor — cannot and must not control [the proletariat's] work. [53]

Mally delineates that the passive antagonism of statements was not inherently paralleled in action, especially in regards to the Communist Party, as many key *Proletkult* officials were Bolsheviks. On the other hand, clashes with the state began almost immediately, as *Proletkult* was unwilling to accept subordination to *Narkompos*, as exemplified in their 1918 refusal to cooperate in constructing a Petrograd theater consortium. These aspirations were clearly defined at the inaugural conference of the Moscow *Proletkult* in February 1918, where delegates

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[50] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 37
[51] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 37
[52] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 37
[53] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 38

discussed topics from labor and education to hygiene and food. [54] Pavel Lebedev-Polianskii and Fedor Kalinin defended the organization, arguing that "if no one demanded that unions become part of the Commissariat of Labor, or that the Communist Party itself cease to exist because there was now a Soviet government [...] then no one should question the separate identity of the *Proletkult* from that of *Narkompros.*" [55] The group was abolished by Lenin in 1920.

III. Ragged Times in Russia

Despite the recent growth of 'jazz studies' as an academic discipline, jazz in the Soviet Union has only recently received scholarly appreciation. English translations of Soviet-era newspapers and publications are also rare. To combat this methodological shortcoming, I consult Julia Khait's dissertation (2021) for translation and interpretation of *Sovetskaia muzyka* ('Soviet music'), the Soviet periodical of composers established in 1933. Khait's review spans sixty years of the publication, tracking the fluctuating level of Party-state intervention and, thereby, its respective circulation of propaganda. I also consult Katerina Clark et al.'s *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917–1953* (2007), which features translations from Russian by Marian Schwartz. Here, it must be noted that translation and transliteration between English and Russian lend themselves to a variety of different spellings of names. For the ease of the readers, I worked to streamline these inconsistencies. Dividing up a timeline of relevant historical events is complicated in its own right. I cross-reference a variety of previously utilized timelines and their respective definitions to provide a range of interpretations of the ebbs and flows of Soviet policies and perspectives toward jazz. These timelines are visualized in Table 1. The most nuanced timeline comes from Frederick Starr's *Red & Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (1983), an extensive historical study that is largely considered the seminal work on Soviet jazz. As Starr's timeline (Table 1a) lends itself to more concision, I utilize it as guidance for my analysis. My review of existing literature on late Stalinist era cultural control is also augmented by Gleb Tsipurksky's *Socialist Fun: Youth, Consumption, and State-Sponsored Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1945–1970*.

In 1917, two "cultural explosions," both "thoroughly cosmopolitan" (i.e., based in urban centers), shook the world: the Russian Revolution & the global spread of American jazz. In the

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[54] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 41
[55] Mally, *Culture of the Future* (1990): 42

decades before, ragtime music became popular amongst the Russian empire under Tsar Nicholas II. Starr articulates this to be "inseparably linked with the public's fascination with black Americans" and the 'exoticism' with which black Americans were viewed. [56] These portrayals were fundamentally racist and played into stereotypical connotations widespread in the time period, in which "sheet music covers conjured up uninhibited savages wailing erotic melodies under a tropical moon." [57] Jazz first appeared in the Soviet Union in 1922. Martin Lücke provides useful insight on the fluctuating and controversial presence of jazz in the Soviet Union. Jazz had appeared in Western Europe a few years prior; its arrival in Moscow was facilitated by musician, choreographer and poet Valentin Parnakh. While in exile in 1921, Parnakh saw a performance by American Louis Mitchell's Jazz Kings in Paris; upon his return to Moscow, he staged the first performance of his own jazz band — *Pervyj v ékscentriceskij orkestrdzaz-band Valentina Parnacha* — in October 1922.

But in the throes of revolution and reconstruction, jazz did not rapidly infect Russian society in the same fashion with which it had swept across Western Europe. In some senses, a more 'folk' culture thrived from 1917–24. Russian composers from the Romantic period, including Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93) and Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839–81) were glorified for their value in Russia's cultural and artistic heritage. Many of the musical byproducts of this period were revolutionary in rhetoric, as embodied in the Russian Futurist movement. [58] Trotsky (1924) articulates that Russian Futurism was born amidst the chaos of the revolution and therefore:

> It caught rhythms of movement, of action, of attack, and of destruction which were as yet vague. It carried its struggle for a place in the sun more sharply, more resolutely and more noisily than all preceding schools, which was in accordance with its activist moods and points of view. To be sure, a young Futurist did not go to the factories and to the mills, but he made a lot of noise in cafes, he banged his fist upon music stands, he put on a yellow blouse, he painted his cheeks and threatened vaguely with his fist. [59]

Still, the pre-Stalin period was crucial for jazz. Foreign dance styles were being imported, including the ragtime and the foxtrot from the U.S. But, in an instant, artistic freedom would be eliminated. Important shifts in the administration of culture were taking place; in 1924, Joseph Stalin would come to power and begin socialist reformation of the existing systems,

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[56] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 33
[57] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 33-4
[58] Abel, "Music, Class and Party in 1920s Russia," *International Socialism*, (2019)
[59] Trotsky, "Alexander Blok," in *Literature and Revolution*, 1924.

implementing Stalinism until 1953 and imposing it upon satellite states from 1944—1953. Stalin saw policies of indoctrination through cultural production, through work and leisure respectively, as the backbone of constructing a socialist society strong enough to catapult the USSR to the status of a global superpower. In the period leading up to World War II, Stalin grew increasingly concerned with the influence of culture on Soviet society — an initiative that originated in the late 1920s — and Russian Futurism would be forced to succumb to Socialist Realism.

In Russian historical memory, Schwarz depicts that, in many ways, "all shortcomings of Soviet music — real or imaginary — are blamed on the activities of the two warring factions — the modern-oriented Association for Contemporary Music (ACM) or the leftist Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM)." [60] In other words, the shortcomings of musical culture have been largely blamed on the consequences of parallelism in cultural control. The **ACM**, established in 1923, sponsored concerts to elite audiences of music that "was modernist, rather than avant-garde, in that it sought to be at the cutting edge of the classical canon, rather than aiming to achieve rupture with tradition." [61] **RAPM** — the sister organization of the Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) — was also established in 1923. [62] Both were born out of the government's brief time in charge of the organization and content of cultural and ideological education. RAPM was founded by employees of *Agitotdel* ('Agitational Department,' i.e. propaganda). Focused on making their messages palatable to the 'commoner,' RAPM disseminated their ideological framework for music through a plethora of journals. [63] Their general role was that of a liaison, coordinating between cultural divisions of a plethora of organizations and acting "as a means of co-ordinating and unifying critics, performers, composers, administrators and educators who were sympathetic to the regime and the aims of *Agitotdel*." [64] Supplemented by the influx of talented musicians after the dissolution of *Prokoll*, [65] "RAPM acquired a monopolistic position of power on the musical scene" between 1929—32. [66] Its favorable position with both Party and state was affirmed when the tables turned in 1928, and

[60] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917-1970* (University of Indiana Press, 1972): 49
[61] Abel, "Music, Class and Party in 1920s Russia," (2019)
[62] Abel, "Music, Class and Party in 1920s Russia," (2019)
[63] including *Muzykalnaya Nov* ('Musical News,' 1923-24), *Muzyka i Oktyabr* ('Music and October,' 1926), as well as *Proletarskyi Muzykant* ('The Proletarian Musician,' 1929-32), and *Za Proletarskuyu Muzyku* ('For Proletarian Music,' 1930-32).
[64] Edmunds, "Music and Politics: The Case of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 78, no. 1 (2000): 67
[65] *Prokoll*: Production Collective of Student Composers
[66] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 58

the 'soft line on culture' was denounced. The new 'hard line' motto was "vigilance in the face of the class enemy." [67] 1930 "was the best of times (for RAPM) [and] was the worst of times (for all others)." [68]

In music, Siegelbaum (1999) highlights the 1930s as the period in which "organized culture assumed the shape it would retain for decades to come." [69] In the spring of 1931, two meetings of the RAPM — first solely Russian, followed by an all-Union convention — were held, the rhetoric of which articulated a stance that "deprecated the musical heritage of the national minorities, neglected the wealth of native folklore, and belittled the composers writing in a 'national' idiom." [70] In 1931 disheartened members of the RAPM worked with former members of the ACM (which had been abolished the year earlier) began to organize; declaring the necessity of reforming the RAPM to implement Marxist-Leninist theory and critique. [71]

In musical creation, this manifested in the proposal "to cultivate not only the mass genres, i.e. songs and light music, but also the large forms of opera and symphony," i.e. more 'elitist' forms. [72] Thus, the Soviet music composers of the 1920s faced the complex issue of appealing to a vastly diverse population, "ranging from the remnants of a sophisticated intelligentsia to a barely educated proletariat." [73] The paradox presented two pathways — the traditional and the modern — overlaid by the official sanctions and the "artificial folksiness of the mass songs" produced, in large part, by the RAPM. [74] The first professional jazz institution, *Amajazz*, was founded in 1928. The Ministry of Culture sent Soviet musician Leopol'd Teplickij to America to receive formal jazz training; Teplickij returned in 1927 and formed his own band — *Pervyj Konsertnyj Dzaz-Band* — when he returned to Russia. However, this preliminary support for Soviet jazz was short-lived. In 1928, ideological shifts within the Party resulted in a concentration of support in the RAPM, which would only last until 1932.

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[67] Fitzpatrick, "The 'Soft' Line on Culture and Its Enemies," (1974): 270
[68] Frolova-Walker et al. (2012)
[69] Siegelbaum, "The Shaping of Soviet Workers' Leisure," (1999): 78
[70] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 59
[71] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 59
[72] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 59
[73] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 61
[74] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* (1972): 61

a. Red Jazz

In 1932, the RAPM was abolished. The same year, the Party issued a resolution focused "on restructuring literary and artistic organizations" that introduced a bureaucratic structure of creative unions through which literature, art and music could be imbued with *Socialist Realism*.[75] From this point forward, Soviet musical cultures and their related industries were explicitly subjected to Party monitoring and intervention. Despite waves in the strictness of enforcement, this framework can be understood as a source of path dependence for cultural control tendencies in the Soviet Union; it would outlive Stalin, persisting through the Party officials of his administration who carried on the debate over the modern and the traditional in the arts.

Socialist Realism, which "call[ed] for art and all cultural objects to be faithful to socialist ideals and the principle of class struggle," was now the only approved artistic aesthetic. [76] However, it would primarily be implemented in the postwar period. Still, during the 'Red Jazz' years, "through their indulgence in these seemingly innocent pastimes, the Stalinist elite became a kind of Trojan horse for jazz in the 1930s." [77] One notable early example is the Yakov Skomorovsky orchestra. Skomorovsky, based in Leningrad, had heightened access to western cultural influences during the 1920s. Reviews of Skomorovsky's 'jazzy orchestra' reveals that it was not necessarily reminiscent of American jazz at all; this Soviet jazz (*dzhaz*) had a choppy rhythmic flow and lacked the characteristic swing feeling, but nevertheless "developed an appreciative following among young Soviet audiences and, equally important, gained the respect of Moscow's aspiring jazzmen." [78] Starr outlines the numerous challenges facing the Soviet jazz scene at this time, many of which were resource-based — a lack of instruments (especially saxophones), sheet music (arrangements had to be manually transcribed by ear) and recording technologies. [79] Further, very few foreign jazz recordings made it to the Soviet Union, thereby increasing their value and creating an underground market around their illegal importation by Soviet seamen; notably, these merchant men did not have great taste in jazz music, and another access channel was established through "Soviet officials and members of the elite who indulged

[75] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 43
[76] Sofla & Taghi, "The Relationship between Art and Politics in the Soviet Union," *Central Eurasia Studies* 13, no. 2 (2020): 543
[77] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 113
[78] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 117
[79] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 118

their own passion for jazz records during sojourns abroad," such as Leningrad-based [80] collectors like Ivan Medved and Sergei Kolbasev. [81] The latter, a naval officer, diplomat, writer, and son of a bureaucrat, began collecting jazz records while abroad with the Red Navy and on diplomatic initiatives. Starr highlights that Kolbasev had the most extensive jazz collection by the 1930s; he also began reproducing his own records and recording "whatever American jazz could be picked up by radio in Leningrad" with homemade equipment. [82] In Kolbasev, Starr hints at the individual-level through which cultural exchange occurs, by highlighting the collector's pedagogical mission: in the early 1930s, he began using his apartment as a destination for Jazz fans and traveled to other cities to host public listening and discussion sessions about Jazz. [83] Boldly, Kolbasev "preached his crusade wherever an audience could be assembled." [84] But this style of cultural education reiterates that access to international cultures was overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of the elite and the *intelligentsia*.

Kolbasev's sonic dissent would be punished by execution in the purges of 1936—38, widely referred to as the 'Great Terror,' which exposed a clear hypocrisy to many Party members: "Men and women who had dedicated their entire working lives to building up the Party found themselves charged with conspiring against it." [85] And, as many 'more cultured' elite were the biggest followers of jazz, some would fall victim to the Great Terror. According to Starr, "Karl Radek, the expert on German affairs who followed American jazz; Ivan Medved, chief of the secret police in Leningrad and a record collector; Sergei Kolbasev, the lecturer on jazz; and Ivan Kabakov, the regional Party secretary and protector of jazzmen in Sverdlovsk—all disappeared." [86] Musicians were also arrested, including "Georgi Landsberg, then leader of the Moscow Radio Jazz Ensemble, was arrested at his home; [and] pianist David Gegner was seized on the bandstand at the Metropol Hotel," alongside the pioneering Soviet jazz musician Valentin Parnakh. [87]

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[80] Today's Saint Petersburg was first named Petrograd; then Leningrad. The latter two terms will be used interchangeably for our purposes.
[81] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 119
[82] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 119
[83] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 120
[84] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 120
[85] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 169
[86] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 170
[87] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983):: 170

b. 'Chaos Instead of Music' — Institutions in Action

In January 1936, Stalin attended a performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's opera, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*. The ideological attack on Shostakovich had important implications on both the musical compositions of the Stalinist era, as well as the official stance towards jazz. Born in St. Petersburg in 1906, Shostakovich was a prolific composer. In 1934, he reimagined Nikolai Leskov's 1865 novel 'Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District' for the stage. For Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth* would be a double-edged sword. It was a hit among most audiences but was hated by the most important group — Stalin and his party officials. Stalin's opinion was articulated in the headline article of Pravda the following morning — 'Chaos Instead of Music.' According to *Pravda*, Shostakovich "was forced to borrow from jazz its nervous, convulsive, and spasmodic music," manifesting in "deliberate dissonance" and "a confused stream of sound." [88] The review is largely accurate, if only in identifying the sonic eccentricities of jazz. Its 'deliberate dissonance' is the use of alternative scales and chord progressions that are uncommon, and more often completely unprecedented, in the Western musical tradition. The article continues:

> The expression which the listener expects is supplanted by wild rhythm. Passion is here supposed to be expressed by noise. All this is not due to lack of talent, or lack of ability to depict strong and simple emotions in music. Here is music turned deliberately inside out in order that nothing will be reminiscent of classical opera, or have anything in common with symphonic music or with simple and popular musical language accessible to all. This music is built on the basis of rejecting opera… [89]

It becomes clear that the fundamental problem of jazz music, especially as it manifested in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*, was rooted in a conception of the music as inherently antithetical to Russian artistic tradition. *Pravda* portrays the opera in a negative light, characterizing it as sinful, subversive and vulgar. The Stalinist idea of culture as an instrument for ideological unity and the construction of a socialist state is evident: "The power of good music to infect the masses has been sacrificed to a petty-bourgeois, 'formalist' attempt to create originality through cheap clowning." [90] Thus, 1936 began with the most comprehensive cultural campaign the Soviet Union had seen since its inception: Stalin's anti-Formalism campaign. The same year, the Committee for Artistic Affairs (*Komitet po delam iskusstv*, **KDI**) was established.

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[88] Pravda, "'*Sumbur Vmeste Muzyki*' ('Muddle instead of Music')," 1936
[89] Pravda, "'*Sumbur Vmeste Muzyki*' ('Muddle instead of Music')," 1936
[90] Pravda, "'*Sumbur Vmeste Muzyki*' ('Muddle instead of Music')," 1936

Led by chairman Platon Kerzhentsev, the KDI pursued the Composers' Union's failed objective of propagating Soviet musical works to opera houses across the USSR and focused on reforming musical repertoires through the introduction of Russian classics and contemporary Soviet pieces. The Composers' Union had been established in the 1932 resolution on creative unions, a structure through which Stalin was able to (forcefully) imbue cultural products with 'Socialist Realism.'

As Mikkonen depicts, "this is most clearly seen in the festivals of different nationalities organized from 1936 onwards, since the committee succeeded in bringing music into the general upswing of celebrations and festival culture." [91] These festivals served as celebrations of cultural diversity that adhered to Stalin's ideal of culture as "national in form, socialist in content." According to Mikkonen, to promote "musical nationalism," "opera was allocated a central role for the development of national musical cultures"; opera houses were constructed in each republic, and Russian composers were dispatched to various locations to augment the developing music culture. [92] Mikkonen notes that this emphasis on distinct, local musical cultures was paired with a perception of Russian culture "as preeminent, and local cultures were expected to acknowledge its superior nature." [93] The promotion of Russian culture was intended to distance Soviet musicians and audiences from western traditions and influences, both American and European. Inspired by the festivals, Chairman Kerzhentsev wrote in *Pravda* that folk themes in music "were an answer to all those formalists about how to create works of good quality." [94]

According to Mikkonen, the anti-Formalism campaign spurred by Shostakovich's opera in the 1930s only increased the controlling nature of the KDI:

> By autumn 1937 the committee's musical administration had sent its inspectors on eighty-nine missions of correction and instruction in different musical institutions. They were also responsible for all important nominations for prizes and awards on the artistic front, and their ratification of appointees to important music administrative posts was carried out in co-operation with the Central Committee of the Party. [95]

Contention between the KDI and the Composers' Union grew as the former consolidated power over Soviet music, against a wider context of the Great Terror (1936-9). In December

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[91] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936: Cataclysm of Musical Administration," *Shostakovich Studies* 2 (2010): 235
[92] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 235
[93] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 235
[94] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 236
[95] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 237

1936, the committee met with the Moscow branch of the Composers' Union to address its perceived shortcomings. Nikolaĭ Cheliapov, Moscow chairman and editor of *Sovetskaia muzyka* since 1933, defended the Union's work on Soviet music. Khait notes that Cheliapov's "double appointment attested both to the importance of *Sovetskaia muzyka* and the existence of a close bond between the new journal and the Union."[96] In other words, since its inception, *Sovetskaia muzyka* ('Soviet Music') was intimately related to the aspirations and interests of the Party. Mikkonen outlines that KDI Chairman Kerzhentsev and Chief of the Music Administration Committee Moisei Grinberg, aiming to cement the Union as inferior to the KDI, criticized the lack of communication between regional branches, in that "the lack of an all-union structure meant [...] that Moscow should act as an all-union organ." [97] Kerzhentsev called for another meeting in April 1937, reiterating his previous calls for reform of musical repertoire and launching a campaign against the remnants of RAPM. In May 1937 a five-day meeting of the Party cell of Composers' Union, memorialized in a report titled 'The final eradication of RAPM,' brought these conflicts to the surface. *Sovetskaia muzyka* editor Cheliapov was accused of protecting the former chief ideologue of RAPM, Lev Lebedinskiy, and allowing for the 'invasion' of RAPM ideology. In the aftermath of this meeting, Mikkonen depicts the true intentions of this campaign to be focused on Cheliapov, despite the targeting of Lebedinskiy and RAPM.

Here, Khait's chronology of *Sovetskaia muzyka* provides more depth into the ongoing relationship between Soviet culture and music. Khait describes Cheliapov's editorial in the inaugural issue of *Sovetskaia muzyka* as setting an important precedent for its identity as an academic musicological journal. Cheliapov praised Stalin and the Communist Party on the success of the Five-Year Plan, declared the journal's compliance with the April 1932 decree, and "promised to maintain a centrist political position" that balanced the distortions of the right (ASM) and the left (RAPM). [98] Cheliapov articulates the journal's bold intention to be a tool for ideological education, contributing to the 'development of Marxist-Leninist musicology' as well as assimilating diverse cultural heritages and providing "coverage of the events of musical life and activities of musical organizations in the USSR." [99] Articles of the first issue signifying

[96] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 46
[97] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 238
[98] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 47
[99] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 48

reform include 'On the Question of Socialist Realism in Music' by V. M. Gorodinsky and 'On Problems in Soviet Opera' by M. Iordansky, P. Kozlov and V. Taranushchenko. Khait depicts that *Sovetskaia muzyka* also explicitly worked to distance itself from *Proletarskiĭ muzykant* ('Proletariat musician'), the journal of RAPM. The first issue included an anonymous article criticizing *Proletarskiĭ muzykant* for diverging from Party ideals, as well as "RAPM's hostility towards non-proletarian classes, its all-or-nothing approach, and [...] the need for a careful treatment of fellow-travelers to ensure their conversion to the new aesthetics and cooperation with the proletarian regime." [100]

The concentration of members in urban centers, specifically Moscow and Leningrad, contributed to its *cosmopolitanism*. Attempting to address the issue of geographical division — which Kerzhentsev would later target as a key deficiency — "Cheliapov and Chulaki advocated establishing a network of correspondents across the Union, capable of reporting on musical activities at the periphery." [101] The issue had become evident in July 1934 following the publication of an article with a distorted representation of the Belorussian music scene; *Sovetskaia muzyka*'s subsequent retraction included an admission "that the editorial board lacked the ability to double check the information because of the absence of communication with the periphery." [102] Another important dynamic is highlighted. The representation of any 'Soviet culture,' especially one that was assumed to be (somewhat) universal, was and remains severely restricted by geographical constraints and a lack of clear communication between different national groups. As outlined previously, the Bolsheviks conceived of culture as an important tool in the unification of the proletariat class. But the vast diversity of the newly-established Soviet Union made finding commonalities practically impossible, offering an inherent challenge to administrative unity.

According to Khait, another challenge facing *Sovetskaia muzyka* in its early years its ability to find a balance between the contemporary and the historical, as "the first three issues of *Sovetskaia muzyka* did not actively promote Soviet music" but reported on the Composers' Union. [103] This reflects the ongoing debate over socialist realism and formalism. In July 1933, Cheliapov called "for more attention to daily musical life — music in workers' families, factory

[100] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 49
[101] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 55
[102] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 54-55
[103] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 50

clubs, and farmers' collectives." [104] By 1934, the goal of *Sovetskaia muzyka* transitioned from academic to propagandistic; made clear at the journal's conference in January, they now aimed to make content more accessible to a larger audience. Nikolaĭ Cheliapov announced in March 1935 "that the journal was ready to enter into a new stage of development, moving on from discussing individual composers and works to a broader analysis of Soviet symphony, Soviet opera, and mass genres." [105] To reconcile Russian musical heritage with contemporary culture, *Sovetskaia muzyka* resolved "to place classical music on guard for Soviet values," becoming an "artistic and publicizing organ." [106] Cheliapov concluded: "'every academic journal must be fighting and thereby publicistic in style, because every academic work is by nature a fighting work.'" [107]

And *Sovetskaia muzyka* did become a fighting organ, as exemplified in their response to the 'Lady Macbeth affair' that targeted Shostakovich's formalism in early 1936. [108] In February 1936, *Sovetskaia muzyka* reprinted articles and endorsed Party complaints with their own reviews. [109] According to Khait, "each article condemned formalism and promised to fight for realist art [...] Thus the journal joined in the ritual of public confession and self-criticism, reiterating the earlier pledge to communal values, purging its own ranks from anyone supposedly damaging, and issuing warnings to other members." [110] Thus, *Sovetskaia muzyka* entered into its own form of 'self-policing.' In the meeting of the KDI and the Composers' Union in December 1936, Moisei Grinberg and Kerzhentsev targeted Cheliapov's inadequate "ideological guidance." [111] Strikingly, Grinberg would become the next chief editor of *Sovetskaia muzyka*, highlighting the enduring relationship between the Party and Soviet music. At the meeting of the KDI and the Composers' Union in May of 1937, Khait highlights the role of public attacks on *Sovetskaia muzyka* by another periodical — *Sovetskoe isskusstvo* — and a parallel offensive against the Composers' Union by KDI's recently established newspaper, *Muzyka*. According to Khait, *Muzyka* was employed as a music periodical that appealed to mass readership, pursuing the same goal as *Sovetskaia muzyka* has been for four years. However, *Muzyka* also served as a "weapon

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[104] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 51
[105] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 52
[106] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 52-3
[107] "Konferentsia zhurnala 'Sovetskaia muzyka'," SM, no.7-8 (1935): 132-133; qtd in Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 54
[108] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 60
[109] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 61
[110] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 62-3
[111] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 66

against the Composers' Union," publishing coverage of the Union's perceived shortcomings and attacking Cheliapov's management. Thus, Cheliapov's loss of autonomy for his journal became evident at this meeting. Grinberg and Kerzhentsev, supported by composers from across the Union, called for the introduction of an all-union structure and the integration of a ten-point resolution delivered by Armenian representative Musheg Agayan, which "included the establishment of an all-union musical fund and an organizing committee, something that had been rejected by the Party in 1932." [112] Mikonnen depicts a level of heightened tension as some composers expressed solidarity with Shostakovich. Cheliapov announced his resignation as chief editor of *Sovetskaia muzyka* in the issue of July 1937. [113] He was arrested the next month, "accused of counterrevolutionary activities, and executed on January 8, 1938." [114]

Beginning in July 1937, Moisei Grinberg assumed the role of acting lead editor of *Sovetskaia muzyka*. His position was made official the following year. As noted earlier, this appointment was preceded by his involvement with the KDI, where he served as the first chairman of the Department of Music. [115] Further, he had served as music editor for *Sovetskoe isskusstvo*, the periodical that led the charge against the Composers' Union. Strikingly, from his new position, Grinberg led an attack against *Sovetskoe isskusstvo* in *Sovetskaia muzyka*, aiming to secure the latter's position as the expert source on Soviet music. Grinberg's era as chief editor is marked by its heavy politicization, with the journal publishing updates on the trials of the Great Terror and coverage of the Supreme Soviet elections in December 1937; both of which praised Stalin, who would win the election. Articles also focused on the achievements of Soviet innovators and pioneers in numerous fields unrelated to music, portraying them as heroes: examples include Ivan Papanin and Mikhail Gromov. [116] Khait highlights the goal of these political and cultural articles to be larger than education or simple reporting; they simultaneously "participated in the creation of the modern Soviet myth, with the new heroic Soviet man at its core." [117] As such, this period is characterized by *Sovetskaia muzyka*'s participation in the dissemination of Stalinist propaganda: reprinting his speeches in full, publicizing accusations

[112] Mikkonen, "'Muddle instead of Music' in 1936," (2010): 241
[113] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 70
[114] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 75
[115] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 78
[116] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 84
[117] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 85

against dissenters, praising his achievements. As such, Khait conceives of *Sovetskaia muzyka* as contributing to the 'cult of personality' formed around Stalin.

c. Dzhaz Militant

Starr describes 1941–1945 as a period of 'militant' jazz, developing during the Great Patriotic War [118] while "the mass arrest of thousands of officials and the deportation of ordinary mortals had cast a pall of extreme caution over all cultural life." [119] Domańska (2019) observes that contemporary remembrance of WWII as largely a patriotic undertaking by the Red Army constitutes a thematic backbone in the "the Kremlin's ideological offensive to legitimise Russia's great-power ambitions." [120] Therefore, from here, it is more efficient to distance our analysis from the inner workings of the Soviet system and shift the lens back to the people of the Soviet Union. Despite Stalin's extensive efforts at control, World War II would fundamentally rupture the walls of isolation from western culture. Here, Stalin's seemingly manic oscillations in policy and enforcement foreground themselves. But to understand, we must first take a detour through the political background of World War II, with its related foreign policy, military strategy and ideological aspirations.

Concerns about the USSR's relationship with Nazi Germany began to mount on the eve of the Second World War. Adolf Hitler has risen to power in the Weimar Republic [121] in the early 1930s, culminating in the rapid transition from democracy to dictatorship in 1933. During this period, Soviet foreign policy largely emphasized collective security, manifesting in mutual assistance agreements. [122] The invasion of Sudetenland in 1938 had significantly heightened the salience of a Soviet response. [123] In 1939 a non-aggression treaty, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact[124]

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[118] The 'Great Patriotic War' refers to the period from June 1941 — May 1945 as it is remembered by many Russian historians of the Second World War.
[119] Starr, "Red & Hot," (1983): 181-2
[120] Domanska, "The Myth of the Great Patriotic War as a Tool of the Kremlin's Great Power Policy," OSW (Centre for Eastern Studies, December 31, 2019): 1
[121] "Weimar Republic" was the democratic political organization of Germany from 1918—1933.
[122] Mutual assistance pacts were signed with France and Czechoslovakia. Benn, D.W. (2011): 711.
[123] Sudetenland refers to the Sudeten mountains ranges in the eastern region of (then) Czechoslovakia along the shared Czech-German border, including northern and western Bohemia and northern Moravia. The region was largely inhabited by Sudeten Germans who joined the Nazis and partially facilitated the invasion.
[124] Also referred to as the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a Treaty of Nonaggression signed in August 1939. Soviet leadership disclosed that the agreement had included a 'secret protocol'

was signed between the two entities — an event widely held in US political and military histories to have served as a major catalyst for the coming world war. On the other hand, some twenty-first century Russian historians (Dyukov 2009; Narochnitskaya et al. 2009) defend the pact. Beliaev (2020) articulates the contemporary Russian government's defense of the agreement to be a tool of revisionist propaganda, defining two important lines of reasoning used: (a) *strategic downplaying*, i.e. the argument that this was a rational (and relatively mundane) choice made in Stalin's attempts to navigate an intense and salient geopolitical context; and (b) *whataboutism* as a tactic of diverting blame to the West. In our context, *whataboutism* refers to (what Beliaev sees as) the Russia tendency to respond to accusations of human rights violations by pointing out (what they believed to be) American hypocrisy, such as the realities of racism. [125] The debate over the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and whether or not it should be condemned, remains divisive in Russian politics today. [126] Western historians hold it to be

Thus, we can review the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact more generally, without getting too lost in contestation. Benn (2011) attempts to find the middle ground between these oppositional viewpoints. Independent of true intentions, in August of 1939, Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov arrived at a Moscow tarmac to cordially welcome Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Minister of Foreign Affairs. In those same days, the Red Army, led by Georgy Zhukov, mounted an offensive against the Japanese-held Khalkhin Gol.

Benn states that "there is no evidence that Stalin actually sought a conflict," and therefore surmises that "the breakdown of collective security confronted Stalin with a choice: between the Anglo-French offer, which amounted to nothing more than talks about talks, and the German proposal, which offered strategically important territorial gains for the USSR together with, at the very least, a military breathing space." [127] Stalin chose the latter. Our understanding of this choice is augmented by looking to the strategies of the Red Army. Sella (1975) reflects that "Soviet military doctrine rested on [...] the primacy of the offensive." [128] Interpreting the academic recollections of V. K. Triandafillov (former Chief of Operations of the Red Army

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that divided Poland into 'spheres of influence' between Germany and the USSR, including the Baltic states and Finland — all of which were decidedly within the Soviet sphere.

[125] Beliaev, Ivan. "The Munich Agreement and the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact as a Tool of Russian Revisionist Propaganda." *Soudobé Dějiny XXIX*, no. 3 (2022): 880

[126] Benn, "Russian Historians Defend the Molotov—Ribbentrop Pact," ed. Andrei Dyukov and N. A. Narochnitskaya, *International Affairs*, 87, no. 3 (2011): 712

[127] Benn, "Russian Historians Defend the Molotov—Ribbentrop Pact," (2001): 712

[128] Sella, "Red Army Doctrine," *Soviet Studies* 27, no. 2 (1975): 245

Staff), Sella articulates that, as state-building continues, the construction of a 'mass army,' rather than a 'professional army,' was decided upon to be the most effective method of military modernization; an orientation that would remain contested for years to come. Operationalizing this strategy in the 1930s, the Red Army grew rapidly to almost one million soldiers, half of which were affiliated with the Party. The Red Army was still undergoing this process on the eve of WWII, boasting competitive artillery and manpower but still lacking the seasoned, logistical prestige of other national armies, including those of the rising powers of Germany and Japan. The situation is only intensified when contextualized alongside the purges of 1936—38, during which Stalin had executed around 20,000 military officers; quantitative analysis has posited this loss as statistically nonsignificant, yet it seems to have played a major role in shifting both strategy and morale for the Red Army.

The primary point of contention within the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was the 'secret protocol addendum' that was only confirmed when Soviet authorities disclosed the original documents in 1992. The additional policy divided the region into German and Soviet 'spheres of influence.' Finland, Latvia and Estonia all fell within the USSR's sphere of influence; Lithuanian was originally considered to be Germany's but was later resolved to be a Soviet satellite. Thus, by October of 1939, Stalin had entered into pacts of mutual assistance with Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia; all of which would later be incorporated into the USSR.[129] But before those pacts were established, in September of 1939, the Red Army invaded eastern Poland (Soviet geography conceived this territory as western Ukraine and western Belorussia). Hill (2014) states that the initiative was presented to the Red Army as one of liberation — both national and socialist liberation. Ironically, Starr depicts jazz as the soundtrack of the Red Army's liberation of European cities from Nazi authority. According to Starr, *dzhaz* [130] bands were deployed to the battlefront to reinvigorate Red Army troops. Further, following the recollections of Nikolai Minkh, bandleader of the Red Flag Baltic Fleet Jazz Orchestra, "jazz bands existed in practically every army group in the fleet." [131] As such, many musicians, both amateur and professional, would perish in the war.

Starr describes the rhetorics and repertoires of *Dzhaz* during this period to vary between Russian folk influence and militant nationalism, reflecting the characteristics of primary jazz

[129] Soviet-Latvian Mutual Assistance Treaty (October 1939)
[130] Use of the Russian term for jazz, referring to the Party-state's 'sovietization' of jazz.
[131] Minkh: 7; qtd in Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 184

consumers at the time – the Red Army. In many ways, this period birthed the first truly 'Soviet' jazz. According to Starr, a ban on private ownership of short-wave radios limited civilian access to jazz. [132] Therefore, the primary recipients of jazz in this period were soldiers. The Red Army, at that time largely composed of Soviet peasants for whom military service was simultaneously "a modernizing and urbanizing experience," conceived of jazz as a typical part of urban life. [133] Some of this attraction rooted in the desire for escapism, as "for the peasant and worker alike [...] a *dzhaz* carried intimations of happier times, of joyful moments of individual release and self-expression." [134] Starr illustrates:

> As Tolstoy observed [...] it is ultimately the common soldier's will to fight that constitutes the essential ingredient of victory. Folksy patriotic songs can sometimes help to strengthen that will. But twenty years of sporadic exposure to jazz and the popular music of the West had also left their mark [...] No less powerful than the nationalistic urge, and often giving it expression, was the Soviet fighting man's wartime interest in *dzhaz*, to which the Red Army wisely responded. [135]

Furthermore, the alliance increased access to American jazz recordings and transcriptions, as well as the broadcasts of Voice of America radio.

IV. Do Not Refreeze

When the Second World War ended, the Soviet Union was thrust into the Cold War and, unknowingly, a pivotal period for Soviet musical cultures. The Communist Party had grown rapidly, incorporating swathes of soldiers who lacked a sufficient socialist education. Thus, Stalin slammed the door shut on Western influences and attempted to reinstitute the pre-war cultural freeze. This was the era of peak Party intervention into musical culture, during the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign that Tsipurksky calls the 'saxophone straightening era' (1946—53). [136] Invoking similar rhetoric to the anti-Formalism campaign of the 1930s, this initiative was demarcated by the strict prohibition of western-style culture in social clubs across the Union; "the new drive vetoed all American-style jazz and even sovietized jazz." [137] In other words, the drive manifested itself in another era of strict regulations on 'acceptable,'

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[132] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 192
[133] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 189
[134] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 189
[135] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 188
[136] Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun,* (2016): Ch.3, 'Ideology and Consumption'
[137] Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun,* (2016): 55

state-sanctioned culture. It extended to restrictions on dances associated with the West. This included elements of composition and instrumentation; saxophones, specifically, were subjected to the wrath of the Party. The term 'saxophone-straightening' is derivative of a key event in 1949:

> One day [...] every saxophonist was told to bring his instrument and identification card to the office of the State Variety Music Agency. The despicable instruments were confiscated, and the former saxophonists' identification papers were changed to remove any indication that they had ever played… [138]

Tsipursky observes that the Party's rhetorical justification for cultural control — at this time manifesting in anti-cosmopolitanism — had "greatly expanded the range of cultural activities labeled as 'western' and intensified the stigma associated with this label." [139] The anti-cosmopolitanism campaign was the result of several compounding postwar dynamics. First, the Party needed simultaneously to demobilize the new recruits of the Red Army, who were accustomed to life as a soldier and had to be naturalized to the dynamics of the Party to meet economic needs. Second, the Soviet Union needed to establish political control over the newly-acquired Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (which, notably, were the hotbeds of jazz). After the end of WWII in 1945, membership in the Soviet Communist Party increased. To educate these new members, Party propaganda was pursued with renewed vigor, intending to imbue the masses of Soviet society with the Marxist-Leninist political consciousness that the government espoused. In August 1946 the CC issued a decree in August 1946 that targeted literary magazines *Leningrad* and *Zvezda* for publishing the 'bourgeois' and 'foreign-influenced' work of Mikhail Zoshchenko and Anna Akhmatova. [140] Later that month, the CC issued another decree pertaining to theatrical productions, accusing the major theatres of Moscow and Leningrad of insignificant representation of contemporary Soviet life. The third decree, which came in early September 1946, focused on the film industry. According to Elphick, "for the rest of the year and into 1947, the CC focused on breaking ties with the West [...] The highest criticism was reserved for Soviet artists and critics who showed obvious enthusiasm for any Western cultural products or styles."[141] This second wave manifested itself in *'Zhdanovshchina'* — named for Stalin's chief

[138] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 216
[139] Tsipursky, *Socialist Fun,* (2016): 55
[140] Elphick, "'Formalistic Freaks in Music': 'Ilya Golovin', Shostakovich, and Zhdanovshchina for the Masses," *Music & Letter*s 105, no. 3 (2024): 368
[141] Elphick, "'Formalistic Freaks in Music,'" (2024): 368

aide, Andrei Zhdanov, who led the cultural crackdown of 1947-48. [142] During this wave, more musicians were arrested and disappeared. Most of this campaign was enforced through 'self-policing,' as "composers were instructed to observe and police themselves based on the literature, theatre, and film interventions." [143] State Jazz Orchestras became 'State Variety Orchestras.' [144] It was obvious to much of Soviet civil society that the period of relative openness was over. With renewed militancy, Stalin strove to cleanse Soviet culture of Western influences.

Party officials conceived of the audible spread of jazz across postwar Europe as "a sinister plot by the American government to break down local cultural resistance to American imperial expansions," while failing to recognize the phenomenon was "due far more to the sheer appeal of the music itself and to the peculiarly receptive conditions in the receiving countries than to any deliberate effort by the government of the United States." [145] This rhetoric effectively vilified jazz, specifically targeting the jazz scenes of Moscow and Leningrad, as well as the external influence of Voice of America radio. which continued to broadcast into Russia until the Trump administration cut program funding in March 2025.

a. Jazz in Waves, Jazz in Orbit

The postwar period is especially important in considering case studies of the Soviet satellite states that had been incorporated in the build-up to WWII. This period also encompasses the beginnings of Voice of America, which can be understood as the seminal music-based cultural diplomacy initiative pursued by the U.S. in the Cold War. By illustrating these dynamics in parallel, analysis of the crucial changes ongoing in the late Stalinist period becomes possible.

The Smith-Mundt Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1948, established the government's terms for public diplomatic engagement. An 'information and education exchange' policy, the goals of public diplomacy were now codified: "to promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations." [146] To do so, the Smith-Mundt Act enabled the Department of State to begin the global dissemination of American "press, publications, radio, motion pictures, and other information

[142] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 219
[143] Elphick, "'Formalistic Freaks in Music,'" (2024): 368
[144] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 215
[145] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 209
[146] Pub. L. No. 80–402, 62 Stat. 6 aka 'Smith-Mundt Act' (1948)

media." [147] Strikingly, it also prohibited the domestic dissemination of the propaganda being deployed abroad. In other words, the 1948 act allowed the US government to actively pursue cultural diplomacy initiatives without disclosing their content to the domestic American populace. The first Russian-language broadcast of Voice of America (**VOA**) radio aired in February 1947. President Roosevelt had originally been adverse to the idea of global broadcasting, but the onset of WWII facilitated his begrudged establishment of government radio. Following the urges of foreign policy consultant Robert Emmett Sherwood, the VOA then fell under the management of the newly-created Office of War Information (**OWI**). Pomar (2022) articulates that,

> From the outset, VOA chose straightforward reporting of the facts as its main weapon to defeat the Axis powers. [...] His reasoning was that fact-based broadcasting embodied deeply held American values and would immediately set VOA apart from the Axis broadcasts, thereby helping to win the trust of people living under Nazi rule. [148]

Three pillars formed the ideological and strategic foundation of VOA broadcasts: (a) accurate, concise reporting; (b) 'surrogate' broadcasts, i.e. creation of credible, 'local' stations; and (c) a transparent presentation of the US. [149] Yet, on both sides, the historical memory of VOA is under dispute. Pomar observes that "many officials in the State Department saw the founders of VOA as leftist radicals who placed their ideology above government policy." [150]

Surprisingly, there was originally little to no Party-state response. Two months of radio-silence concluded when "the first quasi-official public reaction" arrived; an article ('A False Voice') written by Ilya Ehrenburg was published by *Culture and Life*, the newspaper of the CC's propaganda department. [151] From this point, Inkeles (1953) provides an overview of the response to VOA through a study of Soviet press and radio broadcasts between April 1947 and March 1951. What this short period exemplifies, according to Inkeles, is suggestive of "a highly fluctuating and variable attack." [152] As a target of Soviet propaganda, it was "increasingly mentioned, but to be so mentioned in a more casual, relatively incidental manner." [153]

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[147] Pub. L. No. 80–402, 62 Stat. 6 aka 'Smith-Mundt Act' (1948)
[148] Pomar, *Cold War Radio: The Russian Broadcasts of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (Potomac Books, 2022): 14
[149] Pomar, *Cold War Radio*, (2022): 15
[150] Pomar, *Cold War Radio*, (2022): 17
[151] Inkeles, "The Soviet Attack on the Voice of America: A Case Study in Propaganda Warfare," *American Slavic and East European Review* 12, no. 3 (1953): 319
[152] Inkeles, "The Soviet Attack on the Voice of America," (1953): 323
[153] Inkeles, "The Soviet Attack on the Voice of America," (1953): 325

Furthermore, the denunciation of VOA broadcasts by Party officials was not focused on directly refuting American statements to the sections of the Soviet population who received them.

During this same postwar period, in the Soviet satellites of the Baltics and Hungary (among others) jazz was emerging into a completely different world. Post-war, the flourishing jazz scene had been disbanded, largely due to the Party's sanctioned intervention: "To counteract the popularity of rock 'n' roll and beat, jazz was infused with the state ideology and actively promoted by the *Magyar Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség* (KISZ), the Hungarian Young Communist League, to the country's youth." [154] Party officials' attempts to imbue jazz with ideology only resulted in its abandonment with the youth, who shifted the 'revolutionary' rhetoric to newer forms of Western music, including rock 'n' roll. In an interview, Russian composer Victor Lebedev reflects that "Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were always West-oriented, and the music that came from the West found a lively response there." [155]

b. Rebellion Returns Underground

Here, we diverge from analysis of state-sanctioned culture to consider 'true' culture — in other words, forms of culture that were forced underground and into the shadows due to the looming presence of Soviet cultural control organs. One of the best examples of this division is evident in the dissent of the youth in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in the years leading up to Stalin's death. Coming of age between 1949 and 1953, Starr depicts the emergence of the *stiliagi* ('style-hunters', 'hipsters'), who were "closely united on the need for a truly authentic popular culture," and "laid claim to jazz as their own private musical language." [156] The youth, as Stalin continuously emphasized and exemplified in *Komsomol*, were the backbone of any socialist Soviet future. According to Starr, the *stiliagi* represent an organization of urban youth who were open to the West — "the inverse image of the Stalinist society of their fathers' generation" — who "rebelled against the officially sponsored mass culture of the Soviet Union" and "represented youth's search for inner-directedness." [157] The Kremlin's limitations on Western influences in this period actually helped this generation of jazzmen. Western jazz was now

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[154] Havadi, "Individualist, Traditionalists, Revolutionaires, or Opportunists? The Political and Social Constellations of Jazz in Hungary during 1950s-1960s," *Korall* 10, no. 39 (2010): 112
[155] Wendell Logan, Satrina Yrina, and Victor Lebedev, "The Development of Jazz in the Former Soviet Union: An Interview with Victor Lebedev," *Black Music Research Journal* 12, no. 2 (1992): 227
[156] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 236
[157] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 239

accessible in the USSR, it just had to be found; as such, "their engagement with jazz had the intensity of religious belief within the underground church." [158]

To expand on these dynamics, I reference *samizdat* studies — the study of alternative Soviet cultural practices — and focus on the related concept of *roentgenizdat*. *Samizdat* was a way for the Soviet population to circumvent the constant stream of propaganda that they were subjected to by the Party; as such, it "soon developed into the privileged medium of political dissent and, as much, was incorporated into Cold War narratives." [159] Following Alejnikov's definition:

> *Samizdat* means autocracy. Everyone who self-publishes a typewritten text grants himself self-sufficient power over his own editorial production. But this kind of power is nothing compared with the power of *samizdat* itself. This enormous gift will swallow everyone who is involved in it, and will draw them into a whirlpool, whose bottom we cannot see. And that is why we all feel nostalgia for *samizdat*, because its power over us is absolute. [160]

Stalin's renewed cultural crackdown had reinvigorated an underground marketplace of unsanctioned products, including literature and music. Through subversive techniques, music found its way. One of the best examples of *samizdat* is 'music on ribs' (Glanc YEAR), the practice of making homemade records of banned music on discarded hospital x-ray film that began in the 1950s. The seminal work on this practice is *Bone Music: Soviet X-Ray Audio* by Stephen Coates (2023). Most x-ray records no longer exist. Shallow grooves etched three or four minutes of sound into thin discs so fragile that they often deteriorated after only a few plays. [161] Coates estimates that hundreds of thousands of 'bone records' were produced over the years, but states clearly: "It is impossible to know how much Bone Music was produced, let alone the number of buyers." [162] Keeping the production of these records hidden from the eyes of the party and the state was necessary for its survival. Coates reports that "the emergence of this underground x-ray record phenomenon was a direct response to cultural repression — to prohibition, to ideological and economic control."[163] Under these circumstances, innovative citizens develop unique ways to access music.

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[158] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 260
[159] Parisi, ed., "Samizdat: Between Practices and Representations," in *Lecture Series at Open Society Archives* (Budapest, 2013): 7
[160] Alejnikov 258 qtd in Parisi, ed., "Samizdat: Between Practices and Representations," in *Lecture Series at Open Society Archives* (2013): 7
[161] Coates, *Bone Music: Soviet X-Ray Audio* (MIT Press, 2023): 19
[162] Coates, *Bone Music: Soviet X-Ray Audio* (2023): 20
[163] Coates, *Bone Music: Soviet X-Ray Audio* (2023): 11

Other illegal tapes, also known as *magnitizdat*, were the commodity of an underground bard culture network (Moir 2012). According to Moir, "the possession of reel-to-reel tape players was not restricted by the government; and for this reason, the tapes produced in recordings were quite easy to create and disseminate." [164] As we move beyond the Stalinist era in Soviet history, Moir depicts the lyrical content to surround themes of Gulag culture – the cultures of the labor camps where thousands had been relocated — a rhetoric that satirically played upon the Socialist Realist songs of labor. Integrating the insights of Daughtry (2009), I note that the concept of *magnitizdat* has often been conceived of as synonymous with the genre of *avtorskaia pesnia* ('author's song'). Though the two are distinct, Moir's work appears to ignore the distinction. Daughtry (2009) describes *avtorskaia pesnia* (a Russian folk music) as the primary genre of *magnitizdat* tape recordings, while Coates (2023) highlights the x-ray vinyls to be dominated by American recordings of rock n' roll and jazz. I also follow Daughtry's methodology of viewing *magnitizdat* "as a complex cultural practice — a human activity that, while situated within a world of discourse, is capable of structuring that world of discourse as well." [165] As Daughtry depicts, the practice was more automated than that of *samizdat*, simply because tape-recorder technology allowed for any tape to be reproduced rapidly. [166] 'Bone music,' as a creative and cultural production, would eventually die out in the 1960s due to technological innovation. But its existence reiterates the important underground endurance of the unrestricted cultural flows and of Soviet dissent.

V. THAW *(ottepel*) — Free Jazz

The Thaw (1953 – 1964) refers to the period of de-Stalinization and liberalization pursued by Nikita Khrushchev following the death of Stalin in 1953. However, within the Cold War, this short period would become a pivotal turning point in the strength of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev intentionally diverged from the strategies of his predecessor, denouncing Stalin's cult of personality at the Twentieth Congress of the Community Party, and choosing to pursue the construction of more peaceful relations with the United States. Khrushchev strove to reform the atmosphere of fear that Stalin had invoked among the population and began releasing

[164] Moir, "The People's Phenomenon: 'Author's Song' in Khrushchev's Soviet Union," *Constructing the Past* 13, no. 1 (2012): 4
[165] Daughtry, "'Sonic Samizdat': Situating Unofficial Recording in the Post-Stalinist Soviet Union," *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (2009): 32
[166] Daughtry, "'Sonic Samizdat,'" (2009): 35

prisoners from the labor camps. His approach to engagement with Soviet artists and the intelligentsia emphasized causal cordiality, regularly holding "informal meetings [...] meant to demonstrate a sense of mutual trust, warm feelings, and shared goals, and, at the same time, serve to reaffirm artists in proper behavior." [167] Beginning after 1953 cultural exchanges with the U.S. and Europe were re-established, though the first jazz exchanges would not occur until Benny Goodman's tour in 1962. As mentioned, this period of cultural development is notable specifically because of its generational interplay. Starr illustrates:

> Yet those forgotten founding fathers of the *stiliagi* had, between 1949 and 1956, defined the new Soviet jazzman and his audience. Before the *stiliagi*, jazz had been absorbed into the cultural establishment and crushed by it. Jazz emerged from the *stiliagi's* incubator as the centerpiece of a new subculture, cultivated for its own sake and without compromises. [168]

Medvedev (1979) reflects that the dissident movement has always existed in the Soviet Union, but acquired a new form in the sixties; when it "embraced comparatively large [...] sections of the intelligentsia and the younger generation, and it began to be reported more regularly, and in significantly more detail, in the Western mass media." [169] Younger generations, as embodied in the *stiliagi* (also *stiliyagi*, *stilyaga*) demonstrated a clear interest in Western culture. Khrushchev's own children were widely regarded as *stiliagi*, a fact that did not go unnoticed amongst his comrades. Khrushchev himself was a unique successor to the Stalinist regime. Relative to the heavy-handed paranoia that drove Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev seemed somewhat aloof, especially when it came to matters of culture. His son (henceforth Sergei, for simplicity) recollects his father's retrospective on the 'Shostakovich issue' of 1936, in that the leadership "did not understand Shostakovich's support for jazz," but that Shostakovich "was right to support [it]. You can't fight against any type of music by administrative means, and that goes for jazz, too. Let the people themselves express their attitude toward this music." [170]

Khrushchev's position on culture reinvigorates the theme of intergenerational tension. Stalin's paranoid co-optation of the institutions governing day-to-day Soviet life had manifested in the minds and rhetoric of the older generations of comrades, who were convinced of the acute danger of cultural affairs. Khrushchev's relaxation of cultural controls and his unapologetic divergence from the Stalinist path, one that the Soviet party officials had grown accustomed to,

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[167] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 206
[168] Starr, *Red & Hot*, (1983): 237
[169] Medvedev, "The Future of Soviet Dissent," *Index on Censorship* (1979): 26
[170] Sergei Khrushchev, *Khrushchev in Power: Unfinished Reforms*, 1961-1964, trans. George Shriver: 303

served to undermine his bureaucratic authority. Most evidently, through culture. In the arts, this meant that younger generations' relative openness to Western influences was subjected to 'self-policing' by older artists, continuing the informal structures of control enforced under Stalin. Khrushchev was willing to engage, but "unlike Stalin, he did not weed anyone out of the 'creative' flowerbed. And when he was removed from office, the new rulers found that it was beyond their power to weed out the flowerbed completely." [171] An important notion emerges here. In many ways, Khrushchev's unwillingness to continue the cultural program left unfinished by Stalin was incomprehensible to many of his fellow comrades.

Yet, an openness to the West was not universal amongst Soviet youth, especially as the years of cultural freedom wore on. A 1960 chronicle of articles published by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the newspaper of *Komsomol*, exemplifies this point. *Komsomol* had traditionally operated in a co-optive role. In 1960, a *Komsomol* 'music patrol' was established in Kiev. *Komsomol* youth, in small groups, were dispatched across the city to review the music being heard and performed. First, they simply offered opinions, before beginning organized programs through which local musics could be reformed to the tastes of the Party. The article illustrates: "Now wherever the "squad of nightingales" has been, new choral collectives, new classical and national orchestras, new bands are formed. Wherever they have been the work of musical collectives improves." [172]

Originally published in July 1960, the article spurred debate. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* subsequently published the submitted response of B. Firsanov, who articulated: "Every country has all types of orchestras-symphonic, chamber and jazz-which perform all manner of music. This is especially so in restaurants [...] Let us assume the band is playing American songs [...] What now? Will Komsomol members interfere here too? Let them rather look to order in the streets and not try to butt in and offer their absurd advice in matters musical!" [173] Firsanov's argument was answered by Soviet composer Yuri Milyutin. Milyutin's response is worth lengthy citation, as it illuminates the Party viewpoint:

> There was a time when Komsomol patrols for keeping the peace were a phenomenon resulting from the exigencies of the times. Does it not seem to you that it is again an

[171] *Khrushchev in Power*: 305
[172] Komsomolskaya Pravda, "A Music Patrol," *Soviet Review* 2, no. 3 (July 1960): 3–6
[173] Komsomolskaya Pravda, "Who Needs Music Patrols?," *Soviet Review* 2, no. 3 (March 1961)

> exigency of the times which creates the idea of music patrols? I must confess that I myself am deeply in sympathy with the Kiev Komsomol members. [174]

Milyutin's claims clearly define the sanctioned cultural opinions of the time. Of music and politics, he articulates that the two are inextricably linked: "For to be neutral in politics means in our time to be creatively sterile — to compose, to create no one knows for whom and to what purpose.[...] Music, and indeed all the arts, express man's thoughts, his world orientation, his ideological and political outlook." [175] In other words, music is grounded in its setting, its participants and its recipients. Furthermore, the casual listening that occurs in restaurants and social spaces is of unique danger, according to Milyutin. He interrogates Firsanov's position through the lens of Party morals: "Does this mean that in a restaurant anything goes, regardless of whether public taste is being ruined or obviously perverted? Are restaurants outside the realm and the norms of our existence? Why should we reconcile ourselves with the fact that many restaurants have inferior bands, that what one hears there is vulgar music?" [176] Here, he reiterates the role of social relations in subconsciously structuring ideology. Still, rather ironically, he considers one of the primary issues of Soviet jazz to be a result of technical inferiority. He affirms the value of *Komsomol* music patrols, in that "it is necessary to encourage and help our bands and orchestras in every way, not only through criticism but by concrete action." [177]

The debate did not end there. Milyutin's notions on music and youth and ideology were highly controversial, receiving almost a hundred letters of response from across the Union. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published another response shortly after, titled 'Sovet Jazz Awaits Its Composers.' According to them, 96% of respondents agreed with Milyutin. [178] The dissidents expressed their concerns — their iterations of Soviet culture's long embedded challenges — including the parentalism of the Party and the oversaturation of music and art with ideology. "What do our convictions have to do with jazz?" they implored; "What if people's tastes are downright bad? Should we just stand back and look on? Hardly," the Party responded. [179]

Returning to our cultural institutions, Elena Grosheva was appointed lead editor of *Sovetskaia muzyka* in 1961. The arrival of a new editor was coupled with a new editorial board,

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[174] *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and Yuri Milyutin, "An Answer to B. Firsanov," *Soviet Review* 2, no. 3 (1960)
[175] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "An Answer to B. Firsanov," (1960): 7
[176] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "An Answer to B. Firsanov," (1960): 8
[177] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "An Answer to B. Firsanov," (1960): 9
[178] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "Soviet Jazz Awaits," (1960): 10
[179] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "Soviet Jazz Awaits," 1960): 12

and provided a catalyst for a new trajectory, all of which largely aligned with the Stalinist cultural conception. Under Grosheva, the journal wished to expand visual engagement, range of genre coverage and levels of propagation and leadership. In October 1961, the XXII Party Congress was held — outlining the drastic goal of construction of a communist society by 1980 "through rapid development of the material and technological basis for communism, involving a transformation of social relationships, elimination of differences between physical and intellectual labor, and ultimately creation of a new communist citizen." [180] As such, cultural concerns received renewed interest amongst senior Party officials.

The debate over culture reached a turning point in December 1962 with Khrushchev's visit to the Manège, stoked by the Second Secretary of the Party Mikhail Suslov. To illustrate the events of the visit to the Manège, S. Khrushchev (2014) cross-references the recollections of art studio director Eligiy Belyutin and film director Mikhail Romm with the official stenographic record. These sources reflect varying interpretations of Khrushchev's behavior that night, but provide useful insight on the fundamental shifts taking place in the last years of his regime. Nikita Khrushchev's characteristic dismissal of cultural concerns reveal that it was Suslov who coordinated the showing, one that intended to upset the First Secretary enough to spark an official campaign on the arts. The trip to the Manège focused on showcasing the work that Suslov felt to be of cultural concern; contrasting art that aligned with party ideals with the abstract artistic experimentation being pursued by younger generations. Despite Khrushchev's disinterest in cultural affairs, he agreed to attend the Manège. Suslov's plan succeeded; the first domino had fallen. Following Belyutin's recollections:

> The Manège was his main choice, an opportunity to take revenge. Therefore he mobilized not only the reactionary group of artists but also his apparatus, a kind of secret police of his own. They even edited, with great diligence, the information that was to reach foreign correspondents about the events at the Manège. In Suslov's version of those events, everything was transformed into rebellion by a few isolated individuals, rather than a manifestation of a broadly inclusive movement among the artistic intelligentsia [...] a movement that Khrushchev had now spoken out against, as the result of a provocation.[181]

Wishing to capitalize upon this moment, Suslov began to expand the initiative, alluding to parallel issues plaguing literature, film, music, and theater, and recommending to Khrushchev a conference with the Central Committee on ideology, which would be held on Dec. 17th at the

[180] Khait, "Sixty Years of SOVETSKAIA MUZYKA" (2021): 235
[181] *Khrushchev in Power*: 248

Conference Center in Lenin Hills. Suslov's primary target was Leonid Ilyichev, head of the Ideological Department of the CC. Belyutin recollects that Ilyichev "after doing so much to bring about the cultural renewal of our country [...] was now like any panic-stricken rank-and-file party member [...] ready to let the heads of everyone close to him be placed on the chopping block, for no other reason than to save himself.'" [182] The intricacies of 'acceptable art' were debated at the December conference. Though little resolution was made, Khrushchev considered the ordeal handled and relegated any further actions to the Second Secretary, Suslov, who had a much different plan for the culture of the future. The 'decisive battle' occurred in March 1963 when Suslov called a second meeting of over 600 artists and composers at the Sverdlov Hall in the Kremlin: [183]

> Father knew virtually nothing about the sources of these hostilities [between artists]. **He had no interest in the various literary and artistic trends** of the Silver Age, and **in this he was no different from the majority of the population** in the Soviet Union. And now **suddenly it was up to him,** the Number One person in the Soviet government, **to try to steer by intuition through this stormy sea of other people's passions and ambitions, alien to him.** His feeling of helplessness in this situation put Father into a darker and darker mood and made him angrier and angrier. [184]

This combination of initial unwillingness then genuine inability to fully comprehend and accommodate the concerns of the Party's cultural control organs — the relics of a Stalinist society — would contribute to Khrushchev's eventual devastation. Khrushchev opened the meeting, explained its intention to extend the previous discussion on ideology in the arts and promptly implored 'volunteer informers for foreign agencies,' [185] i.e. those speaking to Western journalists, to leave. A highlight of the conference was discussion of Marlen Khutsiyev's 1962 film *Zastava Ilyicha* ('Outpost of Ilyich,' or 'Lenin's Guard'). Khrushchev and his sons had watched the film a month earlier, alongside Suslov and his own family. [186] Khrushchev's reaction was minimal but Suslov did not relent, according to Sergei, claiming the film's intention "to portray the group of young people as a guard against Ilyich—and everyone knew the Ilyich he was talking about. [...] He didn't like anything about the film: these young people wandering around the streets at night, eating unpeeled potatoes, and doing so by candlelight at that." [187]

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[182] *Khrushchev in Power*: 251-2
[183] *Khrushchev in Power*: 269
[184] *Khrushchev in Power*: 272
[185] *Khrushchev in Power*: 271
[186] *Khrushchev in Power*: 262
[187] *Khrushchev in Power*: 263

Zastava Ilyicha followed a group of young adults living in contemporary (1960s) Moscow, grappling with their futures and the meaning of life. In a pivotal scene, the main character's deceased father, who died serving the war, appears to him. The main character —also named Sergei— asks his father for advice. His father asks, 'How old are you?' to which Sergei says 'Twenty-two.' 'But I am only twenty,' his father replies, and disappears. Suslov singled out this scene as demonstrative of an incongruent ideological platform. Khrushchev would succumb to the pressures of Suslov and his ideological allies, espousing at the March conference the same rhetoric, describing *Zastava Ilyicha* as a statement against both party and state. It was decided that Khutsiyev would edit the film to align with party values. The film was released to Soviet audiences in 1965 under a new title, *Mne dvadtsat let* ('I Am in My Twenties'), with a notable change to the most controversial scene: the father's ghost gives his son an inspirational lecture on life. [188] Film director Mikhail Romm's account of the conference illustrates the gap in knowledge between Khrushchev's comprehension of the film and the issue platform he was articulating or, more accurately, reiterating.

In the end, Suslov would succeed and become pivotal in the overthrow of Khrushchev in October 1964. The story illustrates the limitations of institutional path dependence, as well as the ideological positioning of the ruling Party at the time. In the years to follow, culture — especially where it concerned the youth, the intelligentsia and their political predispositions — would remain in flux. The system of self-policing comrades would never truly find reform. The dissent movement began to decline in the second half of the 1960s, and was plagued by internal division throughout the '70s.

VI. Waxing Poetic, Waning Dissidence

Put simply, jazz did not play as large of a role as the American government wanted the world to believe; their cultural co-optation was much less effective than the organic processes of exchange, rooted in globalization, that substantially served to shift predispositions toward the US. The rhetoric of 'freedom' and 'democracy' with which jazz music was likely more fable than fact, yet culture itself continues to serve as a bridge between nations. The ineffectiveness of the political rhetoric propagated alongside jazz diplomacy was partially rooted in its clear hypocrisy (in the eyes of Soviet audiences). The institutions and associations established under

[188] *Khrushchev in Power*: 268

Stalin — roughly from 1928 until 1953 — became complex bureaucracies through which the Party could closely monitor any state-sanctioned forms of art and culture. Jazz was never truly 'banned,' but it came in and out of favor with the Party-state system relative to the moment's respective political context. In some phases, jazz was an instrument of the state (State Jazz Orchestras); in others, it was rationale for denunciation, humiliation and 'enemy of the state' accusations (Shostakovich). A lack of organized communication created ideological and political disunity between the numerous and geographically widespread cultural institutions of the USSR, which allowed for jazz to flourish in Soviet satellite states (Estonia, Hungary) whilst under dispute in Russia proper. However, from the mid-1950s into the early 1960s, Khrushchev's relaxation of cultural control provided the space for Russian jazz to truly develop. The ice thawed and artistic subcultures that had long been rooted in the underground began to emerge, and embedded themselves on the surface of culture. This moment in time provided an opportunity and the *stiliagi* [189] would not fail to seize it. When the doors slammed shut again, they knew they just had to find the key. The Russian poet, according to Sergei Khrushchev, was allowed to become simply a poet — an artist and no longer a fighting organ of the Party. Somewhat ironically, in the memory of Russia, a characteristic villain remained — jazz-loving Party officials served as conduits for American culture in the 1930s, and decades later, jazz and rock 'n' roll are still understood as fundamental factors in the ideological repositioning of comrades. In the case of the latter, it is believed to have been a major factor in the fall of the Soviet Union.

Let us look a little deeper. Questions about the contemporary value of cultural diplomacy in navigating geopolitical relations has recently received an influx of scholarly attention, specifically in terms of political dissent amongst Russia's younger generations (Meyer-Olimpieva 2020). Throughout our exploration, a discussion of generational ideological gaps has been consistently evident. The history of political opposition towards the end of the Soviet Union was equally impacted by such fluctuations. Medvedev (1979) reflects that a dissident movement has always existed in the Soviet Union but it acquired a new form in the sixties, when it "embraced comparatively large [...] sections of the intelligentsia and the younger generation, and it began to be reported more regularly, and in significantly more detail, in the

[189] X-Ray Audio Project: Bone Blog, "Smells like Teen Spirit," BONE MUSIC. There were *stiliagi* movements in other Soviet states. In Hungary — *Jampecek*; Poland — *Bikiniarze*; Czechoslovakia — *Potapka*.

Western mass media." [190] These two social groups — the youth and the intelligentsia — remain at the forefront of the shifts. More widespread acceptance of the Western media also meant that larger portions of Soviet society "became incomparably better informed about the various forms of protest and dissidence in the country." [191] Interestingly, the dissident movement began to decline after the second half of the 1960s. It was periodically revived, but internal ideological divergences began to intensify in the early 1970s, causing fundamental fractures in unified organization. Administrative repression of political dissidence directly targeted grassroots institutions, thereby focused on eliminating "any attempts to create an organized political, religious, national or ideological opposition in the USSR." [192] Our research has provided illuminating insight on the legacies of dissent in the Soviet Union, especially in Soviet Russia. These dynamics are beneficial in contextualizing contemporary research into the political consciousness of Russia's 'Generation Z,' whose "early socialization and maturation [...] took place against a background of authoritarian consolidation and rapid growth of corruption." [193] Using focus groups in St. Petersburg, Kazan, and Rostov-on-Don with Russian students ages 18 to 23, the authors find that today's youth simultaneously recognize both (a) "the pervasive and systemic character of corruption in Russia and its destructive economic and social consequences," and (b) "their practical inability to change this situation." [194] In other words, despite having developed an astute awareness of corruption, mobilized, collective political dissent among young Russians is rare because it is conceived of as ineffective. When looked at through the lens of these findings, the rich heritage of underground cultural rebellion appears to have been deemed pointless.

Academic conclusions on indifference align with the share of social science research that articulates today's Russian youth to be politically indifferent (Gudkov et al. 2011), loyal to the regime and unlikely to mobilize. Yet, despite this conception, young people did make up a large percentage (up to 70%) of participants in the 2017 wave of protests that took place in over 100 Russian cities — the largest in the country since the so-called 'Snow Revolution' in 2011–12. Mobilization in 2017 was largely facilitated by opposition leader Aleksei Navalny, who ran for

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[190] Medvedev. "The Future of Soviet Dissent." (1979): 26
[191] Medvedev. "The Future of Soviet Dissent." (1979): 26
[192]Medvedev. "The Future of Soviet Dissent." (1979): 27
[193] Meyer-Olimpieva, Irina. "Russian Youth and Corruption: NEW EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE on ATTITUDES towards CORRUPTION among RUSSIAN STUDENTS" (March 2020): 1
[194] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 4

President in 2018. Navalny's popularity amongst Russian youth posed a significant threat to the regime. He was arrested by the Kremlin for incitement of unlawful protests, first in March 2017, a month after he was convicted of embezzlement, and then again in June of the same year. Navalny campaigned for the presidency — despite laws prohibiting convicted Russians from running for office — and then survived an assassination attempt in August 2020 and left the country. He was detained upon returning to Russia in 2021 and killed in prison in February 2024. Navalny's struggle is pivotal in understanding how opportunities for dissent and opposition are perceived, as well as how social organization and mobilization occurs in Russia.

Today, participation in corruption is seen as a necessary evil by most students. Across Meyer-Olimpieva's interviews, there was only one mention of improving legislation to bridge the structural gaps that facilitate enduring corruption; rather, most of the students interviewed spoke of stricter punishments as the ideal administrative response. [195] Bribery as an instrument of privilege is one of the most common examples mentioned of this casual corruption. [196] Most of the state's attempts at eliminating corruption are seen as surface-level and performative, because the ruling parties themselves are the product of these same practices. [197] Nalvany's impact, according to interviewees, is primarily held within the informative value of his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), as Meyer-Olimpieva reflects: "Whereas the FBK's investigative projects are generally viewed in a positive light, most informants were neutral and even skeptical about the protests organized by the FBK. They argued primarily that these protests have brought about no visible results." [198] Most evident in the interviews is a fundamental distrust for the narratives and institutions of the state (even within a political oppositional movement) and the logical reasoning for non-participation in protests: "they see it as a serious danger to themselves and their families and a threat to their future professional careers." [199]

With this in mind, what conclusions can be gleaned from our story? Soft power does not simply 'win hearts and minds'; it performs itself and asks to be praised, and then that praise is taken as politically significant. It appears that what is truly achieved is the connection of individuals, of people learning the world through one another. Jazz diplomacy asked art to become a political mouthpiece, but it could not truly overcome a simple fact: culture is of the

[195] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 12
[196] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 11-12
[197] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 14
[198] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 17
[199] Meyer-Olimpieva. "Russian Youth and Corruption" (2020): 18

people, and not of the state. America asked black musicians to go abroad and share their art, and expected this to be winning the Cold War by (literally) performing an idealistic image of the United States. But the Soviet recipients of jazz understood institutional goals and political incentives, the discrepancies between people and state. In the realm of art and culture, younger generations of avant-garde thinkers were accustomed to the uphill battle against traditionalists. For most, music was for listening, dancing and enjoying; for creating, innovating and expressing. To some, jazz retained a symbolic value — that of rebellion against political overreach and against the controls of the Party. Yet, it would be derivative to assume that this symbolic value was the driving factor at any given point in time. In the same underground where the Bolsheviks built their Revolution, true culture lived on. The repression of the Party forced grassroots organizations underground and reinforced the value of individual connections in cultural exchange. Therefore, in the memory of the Soviet Union, jazz attains a special value — that of its unifying power. Music became a currency because it was an avenue for individual connection; one separate from the state, the Party and their imposed ideological orientations.

An Interview with Louis Armstrong, U.S. News Report, 1955:

Q: You had some [people] coming over from the Iron Curtain?

A: **I didn't have them. They did it. [...] in Berlin these boys were there, and one of them said, "We slipped over the Iron Curtain to hear our Louis," and they said "We don't know how we gonna get back." And I never heard of 'em since, but that's what they did.**

Q: Did you see these people, talk to them?

A: **Yeah, they came back to me and talked, that's how I knew they was there.**

Q: They knew your music over there?

A: **Sure, that's why they come – come over to hear me. If you don't believe it, lemme play in Russia and you'll have so many people goin' you'd think they was goin' to a football game.**

Q: One of our ambassadors, in Czechoslovakia, behind the Iron Curtain, said they all knew American jazz behind the Curtain and your music was there –

A: **Sure, they all got the records and everything. [. . .]**

Q: Is it the same all over with jazz – no frontiers, no Iron Curtain?

A: **That's right. [. . .]**

Q: Are there Hot Clubs [200] behind the Iron Curtain?

A: **There's got to be. Those are disciples. Those are my disciples. Guns and nothin' else couldn't keep them boys from comin' over to hear hot [jazz]. They come from everywhere.**[201]

[200] 'Hot clubs' are foreign jazz bars.
[201] Armstrong, Louis. "They Cross the Iron Curtain to hear American Jazz." (1955)

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