

PLEASURE, POWER, AND THE PURSUIT OF COMMUNISM:
SOVIET YOUTH AND STATE-SPONSORED POPULAR CULTURE DURING THE
EARLY COLD WAR, 1945-1968

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Abstract

GLEB TSIPURSKY: *Pleasure, Power, and the Pursuit of Communism: Soviet Youth and State-Sponsored Popular Culture during the Early Cold War, 1945-1968*
(Under the direction of Donald J. Raleigh)

My dissertation investigates how the Soviet Party-state tried to build communism through fun and leisure during the early Cold War. I explore organized cultural activities for young people, including concerts, shows, dances, and cultural education—what I collectively call state-sponsored popular culture. My research relies on archives, newspapers and other official publications, literature, cinema, memoirs, and interviews.

Chapter 1 overviews state-sponsored popular culture from its early years to the immediate postwar period. The next chapter illuminates the extreme politicization in the officially recommended cultural activities during the antic cosmopolitan campaign, 1947 to 1953. Chapter 3 traces the attack on western-style music and dancing in state-sponsored popular culture in the same period, and the difficulties in fully implementing this policy. In chapter 4, I explore how the more pluralistic cultural policies during the early Thaw, 1953-56, impacted organized cultural activities. The fifth chapter presents a case study of the transformations in the Thaw by focusing on the novel institution of youth initiative clubs. Chapter 6 provides insights on the Kremlin's campaign to instill normative aesthetic tastes among youth as part of a brief militant turn in late 1956 and 1957. Finally, the last chapter traces the zig-zags in top-level cultural policy and its impact on youth everyday life during the "socialist sixties," 1958 to 1968.

I conclude that a multitude of young people truly had fun in Soviet organized cultural activities. State-sponsored popular culture, riven by tensions between a hard-line and soft-line approach to cultural policy, opened up significant room for youth agency and grassroots activism. This proved especially true during the Thaw, with the new post-Stalin leadership seeking to build a socialist alternative to a western modern consumer society as a means of constructing communism and fighting the Cold War on the domestic front. For state-sponsored popular culture, this socialist consumer society meant a combination of satisfying cultural consumption desires, shaping aesthetic tastes, and eliciting initiative from below.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Agnes Vishnevkin, my life partner, with my boundless gratitude for her care, concern, and support.

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Introduction

My dissertation explores how the Soviet Communist Party tried to build communism through fun and leisure during the early Cold War, 1945 to 1968. Both popular and academic writings traditionally depict Soviet official culture as drab, dreary, and boring. Yet my research helps complicate this image by analyzing state-funded organized cultural recreation for young people that largely took place in the widespread network of cultural institutions known as clubs.¹ These organized cultural activities, which I collectively call state-sponsored popular culture, comprised music, theater, and dancing, and had mass grassroots participation.²

The Party-state complex managed all of these activities, either directly through the government or Party-controlled social organizations such as trade unions or the Komsomol, the mass Soviet youth organization. Dedicated to socializing young Soviet citizens, the Komsomol was open to all those between approximately fourteen to twenty-

¹ Official discourse called this sphere *kul'turno-massovaia rabota*, cultural-mass work, and also *kul'turno-prosvitel'naia rabota*, cultural-enlightenment work.

² I define "popular culture" as any human endeavor with a substantial aesthetic component, made for the consumption of ordinary people, as opposed to elites. For discussions of popular culture in the Soviet setting, see Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-8; Louise McReynolds, "Russia's Popular Culture in History and Theory," in Abbott Gleason ed., *A Companion to Russian History* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 295-310; and Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 14-20. For the Soviet context in general, see Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1-9. For broader theoretical perspectives on popular culture, see Tony Bennett, "Introduction: Popular Culture and the 'Turn to Gramsci,'" in Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer and Janet Woollcott eds., *Popular Culture and Social Relations* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986). For a recent overview of the field of popular culture studies, see John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2009).

eight years of age, with membership vital for those seeking upward social mobility, university admission, and white-collar professional careers.³ The Komsomol played a central role in organizing youth-oriented state-sponsored cultural activities that provided the key public spaces for youth entertainment, socializing, play, relaxation, and romance. Consequently, state policies on organized cultural recreation had a defining impact on youth socialization, shaping not only young people's everyday lives, but also the fate of the USSR as a whole. Moreover, an analysis of state-sponsored youth popular culture illuminates a project at the heart of the Soviet experiment: the effort to forge the young into model communists and thus to build the utopia of communism. Specifically, the Party intended organized cultural recreation to manage youth cultural consumption desires, aesthetic tastes, social values, and leisure behavior, all integral parts of individual identities.⁴ Despite the significance of state-sponsored popular culture, historians have paid little attention to the developments in this sphere during the early Cold War years.⁵

³ Komsomol stands for the *Vsesoiuznyi Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodezhi*, All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League. For more on the Komsomol, see Allen Kassof, *The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 14-18.

⁴ I define "identity" as a concept encompassing an individual's personal worldview and beliefs – their selfhood or subjectivity. I will thus use these terms interchangeably. For criticism of the undefined use of "identity," see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *Theory and Society* 29.1 (February 2000): 1-47.

⁵ We lack archive-based monographs on state-sponsored popular culture, but two historians have published insightful articles on state-sponsored popular culture in the late 1950s and 1960s that touch on college students. See Susan Costanzo, "Reclaiming the Stage: Amateur Theater-Studio Audiences in the Late Soviet Era," *Slavic Review* 57.2 (Summer 1998): 398-424; Costanzo, "Amateur Theaters and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-71," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 372-94; Bella Ostromoukhova, "Le Dégel et les troupes amateur. Changements politiques et activités artistiques des étudiants, 1953-1970," *Cahiers du monde russe* 47.1-2 (January-June 2006): 303-25; and Ostromoukhova, "KVN – 'molodezhnaia kul'tura shestidesiatykh'?", *Neprikosnovennyi zapas: Debaty o politike i kul'ture*, 36.4 (September 2004), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/> [Accessed December 31, 2009]. A monograph published before the archives opened provides a useful broad overview: Anne White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland and Hungary, 1953-89* (New York: Routledge, 1990). A recent Russian edited volume, which lacks archival evidence, is comprised of articles written by specialists in theater, music, and art rather than mainstream historians, and focuses largely on cultural rather than political and social analysis: K. G. Bogemskaja ed.,

Consequently, my dissertation helps fill an important historiographic gap, while stretching the boundaries of existing literature by helping revise our perspective on socialist official culture, political practices, identity construction, and everyday life. Drawing on cultural, political, and social history, my study analyzes the formulation of top-level cultural policy, the implementation of state initiatives in urban cultural institutions, the shape of official discourse on cultural recreation, and the actual behavior of youth in clubs. In the process, it engages with scholarly conversations about the nature of the postwar and post-Stalin Soviet Union, and broader interdisciplinary conversations about consumption, the Cold War, youthhood, agency, public and private, tastes, modernity, and globalization.

Historiography

During the postwar Stalin years, 1945-53, the Soviet Union transitioned from a total war environment to a peace-time setting, yet one characterized by a continued mobilization of the population in an extensive, rapid, and exhausting reconstruction.⁶ Simultaneously, the Kremlin tightened ideological controls with its campaign against “cosmopolitanism,” which targeted everything defined by the leadership as non-Soviet.⁷ By the mid-1950s, the situation in the USSR had changed, in some ways drastically. The new top officials now placed more emphasis on consumption, rehabilitated many victims

Samodeiatel'noe khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo v SSSR: Ocherki istorii, konets 1950-kh – nachalo 1990-kh godov (St. Petersburg: “Dmitrii Bulanin”, 1999).

⁶ Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, Hugh Ragsdale trans. and ed. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 31-39.

⁷ On the antic cosmopolitan campaign, see David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 183-96.

of Stalinist terror, encouraged public debates and grassroots participation in governance, sought out “peaceful coexistence” with the US and western Europe, and even expressed some tolerance for “western” cultural influence.⁸

The traditional historiographic paradigm emphasizes Stalin’s death in 1953 as the primary factor that brought about this more pluralistic, tolerant period, one dominated by conflicts between soft-liners who wanted to reform militant Stalinist policies, and conservatives who wanted to maintain the hard-line status quo. The name bestowed on this era, the Thaw, is meant to embody these shifts. This period lasted from 1953, through N. S. Khrushchev’s tenure in office from 1955 to 1964, and ended under L. I. Brezhnev in the late 1960s.⁹

Some recent publications, however, have cast doubt on the neatness of this paradigm. Juliane Fürst, among others, questions the attention given to 1953 as a monumental break in Soviet history, while still acknowledging the transformative impact of Stalin’s death on some areas of Soviet life. This approach roots much of the Thaw-era innovations in the postwar Stalin years, positing that they came to fruition in the mid-1950s more as a result of broad processes such as the completion of postwar

⁸ I do not capitalize “western,” as doing so functions to homogenize a widely varied set of historical experiences and makes problematic claims to an inherent separation between western and “eastern.” I am informed here by Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); and Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

⁹ For works supportive of this perspective, with various degrees of caveats, see Melanie Ilic, “Introduction,” in Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-8; Polly Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-18; William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003); L. B. Brusilovskaia, *Kul’tura povsednevnosti v epokhu “ottepeli”*: *Metamorfozy stilia* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo URAO, 2001); P. L. Vail and A. A. Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988); and Stephen F. Cohen, “The Friends and Foes of Change: Reformism and Conservatism in the Soviet Union,” Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch and Robert Sharlet eds., *The Soviet Union since Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 11-31.

reconstruction, than of policy shifts resulting from the ascendance of a new leadership.¹⁰ Refuting the pluralism and tolerance traditionally associated with the Thaw, Oleg Kharkhordin argues that, under Khrushchev, the increasing power of official collectives resulted in a higher degree of close surveillance, harsh coercion, cynical infighting, and deep intervention into everyday Soviet life than Stalin's hierarchical policing.¹¹ Another challenge to the traditional paradigm comes from Miriam Dobson, who expresses skepticism over the significance given to the hard-line versus soft-line contest in explaining the actions of Party-state officials during the Thaw. She contends that Soviet bureaucrats changed their outlooks due to an evolving mixture of optimism and anxiety.¹² Stephen Bittner similarly downplays the impact of conflicts between militants and those more pluralistically-oriented, instead spotlighting generational struggles as playing a vital

¹⁰ See Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20-29. For others holding a similar viewpoint, see Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 296-336; Juliane Fürst, Polly Jones and Susan Morrissey, "The Relaunch of the Soviet Project, 1945-64: Introduction," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 201-07; and David Nordlander, "Khrushchev's Image in the Light of Glasnost and Perestroika," *The Russian Review* 52.2 (April 1993): 248-64.

¹¹ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 279-302. Other authors, while not necessarily endorsing Kharkhordin's specific arguments, also drew attention to the coercive elements of the Thaw. See V. A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, Elaine M. MacKinnon trans. and ed. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002); Brian LaPierre, "Defining, Policing, and Punishing Hooliganism in Khrushchev's Russia" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 2006); and Gleb Tsipursky, "Citizenship, Deviance, and Identity: Soviet Youth Newspapers as Agents of Social Control in the Thaw-Era Leisure Campaign," *Cahiers du monde russe* 49.4 (September-October 2008): 1-22.

¹² Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 156-85, and Dobson, "Contesting the Paradigms of De-Stalinization: Readers' Responses to One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," *Slavic Review* 64.3 (Fall 2005): 580-600.

role. He also criticizes the term “Thaw” itself as having come to convey an excessively liberal understanding of this period.¹³

An examination of organized cultural recreation enables me to scrutinize the ruptures and continuities across 1953 as well as the multifaceted nature of the post-Stalin years, and add nuance to the conclusions of some newer studies, at least in regard to cultural consumption for youth. I find that new initiatives by the post-Stalin leadership played a determining role in shaping state-sponsored popular culture. This conclusion complicates the thesis advanced by Fürst, Julie Hessler, and other scholars that novel Thaw-era policies primarily evolved organically from processes such as postwar reconstruction than the coming to power of new top officials. Kharkhordin’s view of intensifying coercion and repression associated with official collectives under Khrushchev fits poorly with the everyday life experience of young people in clubs. While agreeing with Kharkhordin that an expansion of club activities during the Thaw led to greater official surveillance, my evidence demonstrates that youth had a great deal of fun and pleasure in organized cultural events. This refutes the equation of all official collectives with coercion and cynical strife, pointing to areas of agreement and cooperation between Soviet governing structures and ordinary citizens. Finally, my study confirms that the changes in the Kremlin’s cultural policy did, to an extent, result from shifting mixtures of optimism and pessimism, as Dobson argues. However, in contrast to her and Bittner’s conclusions, I argue that tensions between those favoring hard-line and

¹³ Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev’s Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow’s Arbat* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 1-13. For more discussion of the term “Thaw,” including how it was perceived in the post-Stalin period, see Nancy Condee, “Uncles, Deviance, and Ritual Combat: The Cultural Codes of Khrushchev’s Thaw,” in William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason eds. *The Khrushchev Era: A Reappraisal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 160-76.

soft-line approaches also played a central role in defining state-sponsored popular culture. Owing to my findings, I continue to use the term Thaw as the best way to convey the quickening pace of change from the mid-1950s onward, while fully recognizing that this decade and a half hardly represented an unvarnished period of liberalism.

My dissertation likewise casts new light on Soviet efforts to forge model young communist citizens, New Soviet People, by expanding the chronological boundaries of previous scholarship to encompass the two and a half postwar decades, and the thematic boundaries by examining officially-organized cultural activities. Despite the prominent place of young people in Marxist-Leninist ideology, Party-state policy, and Soviet everyday life, historians are only now beginning to examine postwar youth in any depth.¹⁴ So far, scholarship has focused on young people who engaged in alternative cultural practices and also those who deviated from established political norms.¹⁵ While

¹⁴ For earlier works, which did not have access to archival sources, see Hilary Pilkington, *Russia's Youth and Its Culture: A Nation's Constructors and Constructed* (New York: Routledge, 1994); John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); James Riordan ed., *Soviet Youth Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989); Kassof, *The Soviet Youth Program*; and Ralph T. Fisher Jr., *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

¹⁵ For postwar youth engaging in alternative cultural practices, see Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); William J. Risch, "Soviet 'Flower Children': Hippies and the Youth Counter-culture in 1970s L'viv," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.3 (July 2005): 565-84; Juliane Fürst, "The Importance of Being Stylish: Youth, Culture and Identity in Late Stalinism" in Juliane Fürst ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 209-30; Mark Edele, "Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the *Stiliagi*, 1945-1953," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50.1 (March 2002): 37-61; Kristin Roth-Ey, "Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s," (Ph. D. diss.: Princeton University, 2003), 46-98; Gleb Tsipursky, "Living 'America' in the Soviet Union: The Cultural Practices of 'Westernized' Soviet Youth, 1945-1964," in Eva-Maria Stolberg ed., *"Rivals of the Twentieth Century": USSR and USA. Two Geopolitical Powers in Competition* (forthcoming in 2011); and Tsipursky, "Coercion and Consumption: The Khrushchev Leadership's Ruling Style in the Campaign against 'Westernized' Youth, 1954-64," in William J. Risch and Kate Transchel eds., *The Socialist Beat in the Soviet Bloc* (Lanham: Lexington Books, forthcoming in 2011). On youth political dissent, see Juliane Fürst, "Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomena of *Kompaniia* among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s," in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 229-50, and Ludmilla Alekseeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990). Several broader studies have come out, for example on student life and

the scholarship has shed much light on alternative youth cultures in the postwar decades, the cultural practices of the large majority of young people who did not openly deviate from officially-prescribed norms remains largely in the shadows.¹⁶ This imbalance implicitly reproduces the one found in literature on US and western European youth, which excessively privileges nonconformist young people and, as a result, conveys a slanted picture of reality.¹⁷ My investigation of organized cultural recreation therefore opens the curtain on the central venue for the public cultural activities of the vast majority of young urbanites, revising our image of Soviet youth cultural practices.

This study likewise engages with broader research on youth and generations. This field's models of analysis generally emerge from an examination of western contexts.¹⁸

politics in the Thaw. See Benjamin K. Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964" (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2007), and L. V. Silina, *Nastroeniia sovetskogo studenchestva, 1945-1964* (Moscow: Russkii mir, 2004). One broad study of postwar Stalinist youth is Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*. For such studies of youth in the interwar years, see Anne E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State, and Community in Leningrad, 1917-1941* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); and Corinna Kuhr-Korolev ed., *Sowjetjugend 1917-1941: Generation Zwischen Revolution und Resignation* (Essen: Klartext, 2001).

¹⁶ I do not use the term "subculture" due to this concept's indelible association with homogeneous, tightly bounded groups that practice class-based resistance: Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, "Introduction," in Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris eds., *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1-18. In turn, the suggested models of "lifestyles" or "neo-tribes" presented by advocates of the post-subcultural approach have been effectively undermined as lacking adequate appreciation of local contexts: Hilary Pilkington and Richard Johnson, "Peripheral Youth: Relations of Identity and Power in Global/Local Context," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6.3 (August 2003): 259-83.

¹⁷ Michael Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1985); Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1975]); James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils & Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

¹⁸ See, for example, Jeffrey J. Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001); John Springhall, *Youth Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002); and Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, Paul Kecskemeti trans. and ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952). Two recent works that draw on both socialist and western contexts are: Stephen

By illustrating the evolution in the socially constructed meaning of youthhood and generation in the socialist, authoritarian Soviet setting, I suggest the need to pay more attention to governing structures in shaping such conceptions. Here, the change over time in the official discourse's presentation of what makes ideal New Soviet Women and Men proves especially illuminating. Furthermore, I argue for the emergence of an empowered post-Stalin generation, with its activist nature attributable in large part to top-level policy and discursive transformations during the early Thaw.

My exploration of youth-oriented cultural consumption for the masses in the 1945 to 1968 period also offers a different perspective on Soviet cultural construction.¹⁹ To date, scholarly works on this topic have scrutinized only the efforts in the 1920s and 1930s to inculcate culturedness (*kul'turnost'*), "appropriate" standards of culture and behavior, in the Soviet populace, with a particular emphasis on elites.²⁰ Extending the reach of historical analysis into the postwar decades, this dissertation finds that the post-Stalin state launched an unprecedented initiative to instill normative aesthetic tastes in the young during the late 1950s, what I term a Thaw-era version of culturedness. By

Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), and Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

¹⁹ My treatment of cultural activities as consumable products is informed by Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Richard Nice trans. and ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 466-85, and Simon Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music," in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 174-86. For the use of cultural consumption in the historiography on the USSR, see Zhuk, *Illusions of the West in the Closed City*, and Kristin Roth-Ey, "Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s," (Ph. D. diss.: Princeton University, 2003).

²⁰ David L. Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-41* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 15-88; Vadim Volkov, "The Concept of *Kul'turnost'*: Notes on the Stalinist Civilizing Process," in Sheila Fitzpatrick ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 210-30; and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75-88.

examining the nature and outcome of this initiative, my dissertation not only makes a contribution to historiography on the Soviet Union, but also joins an interdisciplinary conversation about the factors involved in the formation of popular tastes.²¹

An examination of youth cultural tastes in the context of organized cultural recreation offerings in the period from 1945 to 1968 inevitably deals with the issue of the impact of western cultural influence as an element of the domestic cultural front of the Cold War. Historical scholarship has revealed how both the governments of the US and the USSR actively deployed culture as a weapon in the struggle for the hearts and minds on the domestic and foreign fronts, and this played a vital role in the eventual outcome of the Cold War.²² The limited literature on western popular culture in the Cold War USSR, such as jazz, rock'n'roll, and western dancing, has largely emphasized the state's efforts

²¹ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: The Modern Library, 1934 [1899]), 68-101; Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 466-85; and Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).

²² David Cate, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Tony Shaw, and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010); Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999); Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock'n'Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); Rósa Magnúsdóttir, "Keeping Up Appearances: How the Soviet State Failed to Control Popular Attitudes toward the United States of America, 1945–1959" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006); Margaret Peacock, "Contested Innocence: Images of the Child in the Cold War" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2008); Melvyn P. Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know'?" *The American Historical Review* 104.2 (April 1999): 501-24; and Sabina Mihelj, "Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West: Uplifting the Working People, Entertaining the Masses, Cultivating the Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53.2 (forthcoming in 2011).

to suppress this “bourgeois” influence.²³ My project explores how Soviet authorities during the Thaw consciously appealed to youth desires for fun cultural consumption as a way to attract young people to cultural activities considered appropriately socialist, instead of western. Furthermore, based on a close scrutiny of the youth culture of jazz enthusiasts in the postwar Soviet decades, my research concludes that expressing fascination with some aspects of western popular culture did not necessarily mean that young people sought to emulate a western lifestyle or demonstrate nonconformism, a finding at variance with much scholarship on the cultural Cold War.²⁴ The impact of American popular culture on the USSR can also be viewed as a case study in the assessment of the globalization of US cultural influence in the postwar decades.²⁵

In treating organized cultural recreation as an instance of cultural consumption, this dissertation enters into dialogue with the burgeoning subfield of Soviet consumption

²³ On jazz, rock, and western dancing in the USSR, see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 158-237; S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); N. I. Nikolaeva, “‘Chuyen’ klevaia Laba, chetyre saksa’ (molodezhnaia subkul’tura 40-kh – nachala 60-kh godov XX veka),” in A. S. Maiorova ed., *Neofitsial’naia zhizn’ gorozhan: Zapad-Rossii-Vostok* (Saratov: “Nauka”, 2007), 123-30; Yngvar B. Steinholt, *Rock in the Reservation: Songs from the Leningrad Rock Club, 1981-86* (New York: MMMSP, 2005); Sabrina P. Ramet, “Rock: The Music of the Revolution (and Political Conformity),” in Sabrina P. Ramet, ed., *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 1-14; Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Block: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and Artemy Troitskii, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester: Faber and Faber, 1988).

²⁴ One exception is Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 158-237.

²⁵ Sabrina P. Ramet, “Americanization, Anti-Americanism, and Commercial Aggression against Culture: An Introduction,” in Sabrina P. Ramet and Gordana P. Crnkovic eds., *KAZAAM! SPLAT! PLOOF! The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 3-8; and Rob Kroes, “American Mass Culture and European Youth Culture,” in Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 82-105. For a non-European example, see Eckhardt Derschmidt, “The Disappearance of the Jazu-Kissa: Some Considerations about Japanese ‘Jazz-Cafés’ and Jazz-Listeners,” in Sepp Linhart and Savine Frühstück eds., *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 285-302.

studies, which has traditionally privileged the Stalin years and material consumption.²⁶ However, recent works by Susan Reid, David Crowley, György Péteri, and others help open the curtain on consumption, particularly of material goods, in socialist settings during the 1950s and 1960s. Building on their insights, which show how the post-Stalin Soviet Bloc governments endeavored to manage material consumption as a means of competing with the US and finding a “socialist” and “modern” mode of consumption, I suggest that something similar occurred in cultural consumption.²⁷ Just as the American version of modernity centers on pursuing happiness through a culture of individualized consumption, my analysis of state-sponsored popular culture for young people illuminates the Khrushchev Kremlin’s efforts to build a socialist version of a modern consumer society, and therefore a particularly Soviet “multiple modernity.”²⁸ The post-

²⁶ See Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin’s Russia* (Berg: New York, 2003); Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade*; Sheila Fitzpatrick, “‘Middle-class Values’ and Soviet Life in the 1930s,” in Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon eds., *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Vera S. Dunham* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 20-38; and Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass values in Soviet Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²⁷ Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union,” *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211-52; David Crowley, “Warsaw’s Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw,” in Reid and David Crowley, eds. *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 25-48; Crowley and Reid, “Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism,” in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52; and György Péteri, “The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity,” *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 929-37. For how other Soviet Bloc states competed with western consumption, see Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Berg: New York, 2005), and Paulina Bren, “Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall ... Is the West the Fairest of Them All? Czechoslovak Normalization and Its (Dis)Contents,” *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 831-54.

²⁸ On the concept of “multiple modernities,” meaning a polity that uses western Europe and the US as referents for the traditional vision of modernity, while attempting to forge its own, unique path to the future, see Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzak Sternberg, “Analyzing Our Time: A Sociological Problématique,” in Eliezer Ben-Rafael with Yitzak Sternberg eds., *Identity, Culture, and Globalization* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 3-17. For modernity and consumption, see Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007). For more on modernity, see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

Stalin leadership perceived organized cultural recreation as especially important for constructing a uniquely socialist vision of a consumerist modernity. This derived not only from the inherently collective and culturally uplifting aspects of state-sponsored popular culture but also from its potential to activate grassroots initiative, a vital marker that differentiated socialist from capitalist modernity in the context of the Cold War's cultural competition. Nonetheless by tracing the evolution of organized cultural recreation from 1945 to 1968, my study reveals the obstacles posed to policy implementation by Party-state institutions with different missions.²⁹ In contrast to Stephen Lovell's postulate that consumerist market forces played an insignificant role in shaping official Soviet cultural production before the late 1980s, I find wide-ranging tensions between ideology and consumption within the system of state-sponsored popular culture already in the postwar years.³⁰ Setting the Soviet case within the broader literature on consumerism, this dissertation emphasizes the role of the state in shaping consumption, a topic given short shrift in models of consumption that emerge from analyzing western settings.³¹

²⁹ On the significance of conflicts between different Soviet state institutions, see Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-10.

³⁰ Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution*, 18.

³¹ For western historiography on consumption, see Paul Glennie, "Consumption within Historical Studies," in Daniel Miller, ed., *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 164-203; Grant McCracken, "The History of Consumption: A Literature Review and Consumer Guide," *Journal of Consumer Policy* 10 (June 1987): 139-66; Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1964). For interdisciplinary approaches, see Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Steven F. Rendall trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Neva R. Goodwin, Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron eds., *The Consumer Society* (Washington: Island Press, 1997); Kate Soper and Frank Trentmann eds., *Citizenship and Consumption* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1958); Ragnar Nurske, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); and Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy: The Psychology of Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Likewise, my dissertation inquires into how young people behaved within the cultural recreation network, shedding light on the potential for youth agency and room to maneuver within official Soviet cultural settings. By speaking of youth agency, I do not wish to convey the image of resistance and subversion, which fails to convince by juxtaposing state and society in postulating an inherent rift between a genuine, everyday culture and an official, state-managed one.³² Simultaneously, those scholars who treat the USSR's ideological apparatus as presenting only one legitimate version of the New Soviet Person problematically assume a fully coherent Soviet ideology and discourse.³³ The works of Anna Krylova and Kiril Tomoff, which point out that official discourse and institutions lacked full cohesion and thereby left individuals with room to shape their own subject positions, suggest a more fruitful analytical approach.³⁴ My dissertation, informed by their insights, underlines how young people maneuvered within official socialist cultural settings. While restrained by the boundaries of this culture, youth negotiated with

³² Here, I draw on Lynne Viola, "Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s: Soliloquy of a Devil's Advocate," *Kritika* 1.1 (Winter 2000): 45-70; Anna Krylova, "The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies," *Kritika* 1.1 (Winter 2000): 119-46; and Jochen Hellbeck, "Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia," *Kritika* 1.1 (Winter 2000): 71-96.

³³ For depictions of Soviet discourse as unified, see Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3-18, and Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialism as Will and Representation, or What Legacy Are We Rejecting?," *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 675-708. For how this discourse produced New Soviet People, see Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), and Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000). My criticism is informed by: Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-26; Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone, "Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective," *Slavic Review* 67.4 (2008): 967-86; Alexander Etkind, "Soviet Subjectivity: Torture for the Sake of Salvation?" *Kritika* 6.1 (Winter 2005): 171-86; Malte Griesse, "Soviet Subjectivities: Discourse, Self-Criticism, Imposture," *Kritika* 9.3 (Summer 2008): 609-24; and Eric Naiman, "On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars Who Make Them," *The Russian Review* 60.3 (July 2001): 307-15.

³⁴ See Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 20-26; *ibid.*, "Identity, Agency, and the First Soviet Generation," in Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe*, 101-22; and Tomoff, *Creative Union*.

authorities for pleasurable cultural consumption that satisfied their desires, particularly during the Thaw. They exhibited and developed their agency—individual, self-directed actions primarily motivated by personal interests and wants—regardless of whether or not it fit officially prescribed models. Ordinary young people who did not seek to deviate from the broad Soviet cultural field thus proved capable of shaping their environment in minute ways to fit their interests. In doing so, these youth helped determine broader historical processes.³⁵

The multifaceted relationships between youth and the authorities contribute to eliding the boundaries between the categories of “public” and “private.” Scholars such as Vladimir Shlapentokh and more recently Kharkhordin have traditionally drawn sharp lines between the public sphere, meaning everything associated with the Soviet state, and the private sphere, referring to personal emotions and interests, pleasure, sociability, friends, romance, family, and home.³⁶ Lewis Siegelbaum and others, however, have offered an alternative viewpoint, arguing for multiple and layered public and private spheres in the Soviet contexts, with porous, shifting, and unstable boundaries.³⁷

Supporting the latter perspective, my study brings to light the liminal spaces of club

³⁵ This argument on youth agency shaping broader historical processes is informed by Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 113-27. My understanding of agency, in addition to drawing on the works of Grossberg, Krylova, and Tomoff, is most influenced by Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven F. Rendall trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29-42; and Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (Verso: New York, 2000), 11-43.

³⁶ Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*.

³⁷ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, “Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context,” in Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism*, 1-21. For the public and private in the Thaw, see Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), and Tromly, “Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia.”

events in the first postwar decades, where public and private life met and intersected. Thus, “public” Party-state organs, in many cases quite deliberately, sponsored cultural activities that encouraged the expression and development of what scholarship traditionally ascribed to the private sphere: friendship, romance, pleasure, sociability, as well as emotions and interests not directly related to communist construction. In fact, youth communities, networks, and collectives, at least of that vast majority who did not openly deviate from social norms, easily crossed the supposedly sharp divide between public and private, having fun both at home and in clubs. Hence, activities traditionally labeled public and private in many instances engaged in productive interactions that served the goals of the Party-state leadership while enriching the lives of individual citizens, a development often overlooked in the historiography on the USSR. In other cases, particularly during campaigns for ideological militancy, the tension between the masses of young people and the Soviet leadership proved more salient, placing club officials and local-level Komsomol cadres in the unenviable position of negotiating the vast gap between popular desires and top-level directives. Finally, an investigation of the Soviet setting helps enrich the image of the public and private spheres developed from scholarly work on capitalist democratic contexts by offering a case study where the state fills the space traditionally occupied by the market in western settings.³⁸

³⁸ On consumption, see the introduction and contributions to Emma Casey and Lydia Martens eds., *Gender and Consumption: Domestic Cultures and the Commercialisation of Everyday Life* (Ashgate: Burlington, 2007), and Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). On popular culture, see Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture, and the Politics of Sound* (New York: Routledge, 1999). For an extensive discussion of the theory on the “public sphere,” see Peter U. Hohendahl and Marc Silberman, “Critical Theory, Public Sphere and Culture. Jurgen Habermas and His Critics,” *New German Critique* 16 (Winter 1979): 89-118.

A Note on Sources

My project examines four interrelated issues. The first concerns the nature of policy formation within central institutions most relevant to youth cultural recreation. For this issue, the most informative data come from the federal archives in Moscow, especially that of the Komsomol.³⁹ There, I studied documents generated by the Central Committee (Tsentral'nyi Komitet, TsK) Bureau of the Komsomol, the highest authority in this organization, and the Komsomol Propaganda Department (Otdel propagandy i agitatsii), charged with overseeing the realization of Komsomol cultural policy. I also consulted the depository of the trade unions, which managed the trade union clubs, the central places of urban mass cultural recreation.⁴⁰ The Ministry of Culture (Ministerstvo Kul'tury, MOC) also proved relevant, as this state bureaucracy helped shape the guidelines for state-sponsored popular culture and directly managed a network of large clubs across the USSR.⁴¹ Likewise, I mined the documents of the Party TsK, which reveled top-level Party interventions and conflict mediation.⁴²

By now, historians have realized that what happened in the Soviet Union cannot be read simply from examining central proclamations, as policy execution frequently clashed with federal intentions. Therefore, following Donald J. Raleigh's call to engage

³⁹ This archive is a branch of Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History), *fond* (f., collection) M-1.

⁴⁰ Its depository is in the Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF, State Archive of the Russian Federation), f. R-5451.

⁴¹ Its documents are stored in the Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (RGALI, Russian State Archive of Literature and Art), f. 2329.

⁴² For the years before 1953, see RGASPI, f. 17, opis' (op.) 125. For post-1953 documents, see Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (RGANI, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History), f. 5, op. 34.

in local studies, my second broad inquiry captures an aspect of the USSR's geographic diversity by a comparative investigation of the implementation of youth popular culture policy at the regional and local levels, juxtaposing Moscow and Saratov.⁴³ The latter, an industrialized capital of a central Russian black earth *oblast* (province) located on the Volga river, is representative of the lived experience of many young urbanites in the Russian heartland. For each city, my approach involves examining the enactment of youth popular culture policy by the local Komsomol, MOC, and trade union organizations at the three levels of hierarchy within the Soviet system: the city level, the neighborhood (*raion*)⁴⁴ level, and in local enterprises and educational institutions.⁴⁵ Along with exploring the citywide agencies, I chose one neighborhood in each city for in-depth analysis. For Moscow, my dissertation explores the Krasnopresnenskii district, and for Saratov, the Kirovskii district, both working-class neighborhoods with a number of enterprises, colleges, and schools. The documents of several large enterprises and universities in each city reveal policy enactment at the microlevel. The archival record proved especially complete for the two universities central to my study, Moscow State University (*Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet*, MGU), the flagship university of the USSR, and Saratov State University (*Saratovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet*, SGU), the major university in Saratov oblast and one of the strongest regional universities in the

⁴³ Donald J. Raleigh, "Introduction," in Donald J. Raleigh ed., *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2001), 1-14.

⁴⁴ The raion is referred to as neighborhood in cities, and as district in rural regions.

⁴⁵ The Moscow Komsomol documents are in: Tsentral'nyi arkhiv obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Moskvy (TsAOPIM, Central Archive of Social-Political History of Moscow). The equivalent in Saratov is: Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii Saratovskoi oblasti (GANISO, State Archive of Contemporary History of Saratov Oblast). The Moscow MOC and trade union archives are stored in: Tsentral'nyi arkhiv goroda Moskvy (TsAGM, Central Archive of the City of Moscow). For Saratov, see Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Saratovskoi oblasti (GASO, State Archive of Saratov Oblast).

Soviet Union. A significant portion of the documents I tapped in both central and regional archives had not previously been used by historians, enabling me to bring much new primary source materials to the historical narrative.

The third broad inquiry concerns the depictions of, and disputes over, youth organized cultural recreation policy in the official discourse. Tracing the evolution in this rhetoric furthers our comprehension of the shifts in the official ways of thinking, talking about, depicting, and understanding Soviet reality, which also played a powerful role in constituting the worldviews and thus the subjectivities of young people. My dissertation consults a range of Komsomol-managed and youth-oriented newspapers at the national level, including the all-union Komsomol paper *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, and regional and local papers in Moscow and Saratov.⁴⁶ In addition, I rely on a variety of other relevant public sources from these years, such as literary works, movies, musical pieces, radio program transcriptions, and especially instruction booklets intended to guide officials in managing state-sponsored popular culture.⁴⁷

Finally, I seek to comprehend the widely varied responses of young people to the Party-state's popular culture policy. To deal with this topic, I draw on personal sources such as published memoirs and diaries, and conducted a series of open-ended interviews in Moscow and Saratov with fifty-five individuals in 2008 and 2009. My interviewees

⁴⁶ I examine the Moscow Komsomol city committee organ *Moskovskii komsomolets*, the MGU paper *Moskovskii universitet*, the Saratov Komsomol city committee paper called *Molodoi Stalinets* until 09/12/1956 and subsequently *Zaria molodezhi*, and the SGU paper, changed from *Stalinets* to *Leninskii put'* in January 1957. In analyzing press sources, I draw on Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 33-7, and Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!*, 3-18.

⁴⁷ These booklets range from 20 to over 400 pages, and usually constitute case studies of recommended practices, whose promotion via publication by official presses gives them a strong stamp of legitimacy. For how other scholars used such booklets, see Catriona Kelly, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 312-93.

include lower-level, mid-ranking, and top officials who participated in formulating and enacting organized cultural recreation policy; youth cultural activists who engaged extensively in state-sponsored popular culture; jazz musicians and their fans; and ordinary young consumers of organized cultural recreation. These sources offer behind-the-scenes insights on policy implementation. More than this, together with letters to the press and reports on youth behavior, the interviews illuminate grassroots opinions on the lived experience of organized cultural activities in Soviet clubs.

Each of these types of sources sheds light on different aspects of the Soviet experience. Archives and official publications, which most clearly reveal the perspective of officialdom, suffer from certain institutional biases.⁴⁸ Oral history and memoirs uncover everyday life, yet, like all memory sources, are inflected by the weight of time.⁴⁹ By comparing the evidence from archival, published, and personal sources, my narrative provides the fullest picture so far of state-sponsored youth popular culture in the period from 1945 to 1968.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 gives an overview of state-sponsored youth popular culture in the USSR from its early years to the immediate postwar period, 1917-46. Here, my study

⁴⁸ A good discussion of the problems of Soviet archival documents is in Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-22.

⁴⁹ In analyzing oral history interviews, I rely on Donald J. Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about their Lives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 10-12, and also Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism*, xiii-32. For the use of memoirs, see Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 1-19, and Irina Paperno, "Personal Accounts of the Soviet Experience," *Kritika* 3.4 (Fall 2002): 577-610. A work that presents a thoughtful balance of archival, published, and personal sources is Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia," 41-45.

explains the nature and function of organized cultural recreation, and the tensions between a hard-line and soft-line approach to this sphere.

The next two chapters illuminate the period of the anticosmopolitan campaign, from 1947 to March 1953. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth look at the extreme escalation of politicization in the officially recommended repertoires for club cultural activities, and the consequences for noncontroversial cultural events. The third chapter traces the attack on western music and dancing in the clubs, and the difficulties in fully implementing this policy.

In chapter 4, I turn to the shifts in state-sponsored popular culture during the early Thaw, 1953-56. This chapter illustrates how the pluralistic turn of the new leadership impacted club activities in general, and western-style cultural forms in particular. Chapter 5 narrows in on Komsomol-managed youth clubs, spotlighting the impact of the novel top-level encouragement of youth leadership and grassroots initiative in club activities.

Reacting to a perceived excess of youth initiative and western cultural influence, the Khrushchev leadership briefly adopted a more militant cultural policy in 1957-58, seeking to instill a Thaw-era version of culturedness, as the sixth chapter shows. Finally, chapter 7 traces the shift to a more pluralistic approach to cultural recreation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, one that welcomed initiative from below and allowed a wider range of western culture, despite opposition from hard-liners. Yet, in the mid-1960s, the authorities turned again to militancy and suppressed youth autonomy, paving the way for a growing gap between youth and the Soviet leadership.

Chapter 1

Ideology, Enlightenment, and Entertainment: State-Sponsored Youth Popular Culture, 1917-46

A late 1945 Komsomol report on clubs in Moscow commended the fact that the clubs “regularly show movies” and “hold evenings of youth leisure” (*vechera otdykha molodezhi*), meaning youth-oriented events with dancing.⁵⁰ In addition to such documents meant for internal bureaucratic use, external Komsomol press rhetoric also praised fun organized activities, such as dancing.⁵¹ Such official rhetorical statements may surprise those familiar with the Stalinist leadership’s policy toward culture in the late 1940s and early 1950s, which emphasized the need for a heavy ideological load and disparaged nonpoliticized entertainment. However, the report and press article cited above do reflect the Party-state’s approach to state-sponsored youth popular culture in the concluding stages of the war and the immediate postwar period, lasting through the summer of 1946.⁵² During this time, the Kremlin followed a relatively permissive policy, and, despite a stated preference for propaganda work in organized cultural activities, the

⁵⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 57.

⁵¹ For example, “Za poleznyi i razumnyi otdykh,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, July 4, 1946. For the significance of the difference between internal and external official discourse, see Donald J. Raleigh, “Languages of Power: How the Saratov Bolsheviks Imagined Their Enemies,” *Slavic Review* 57.2 (Summer 1998): 320-49.

⁵² By using the term “Party-state,” I mean to refer not only to the government structures, but also to Soviet social organizations formally independent of the state, but run by the Party, including the Komsomol, trade unions, etc.

authorities rarely censured events primarily aimed at satisfying young people's desires for fun.

Such an approach to cultural consumption for youth had its roots in the history of state-sponsored popular culture in the early Soviet Union. The New Economic Policy (NEP) years, 1922-28, had particular significance in determining the nature of, including the lines of fracture within, this sphere of activities. These differences of opinion regarding youth cultural activities formed part of a broader tension between an ideologically militant, hard-line, and revolutionary vision of the path to the communist future, versus a more tolerant, soft-line, and pluralistic effort to build a communist utopia. In youth-oriented cultural activities, such fractures expressed themselves in debates over how much youth agency should be permitted and over whether the Party-state should focus on political-ideological work among youth, or satisfy their desire for entertainment, including western popular culture. By the end of NEP, the militant position triumphed. This led, on the one hand, to a period of close control by adult officials over youth cultural activities, and on the other, to a stress on politics and ideology at the expense of entertainment, at least in the first years after NEP. The first part of this chapter traces the origins of state-sponsored popular culture for young people and its developments in the NEP and prewar and wartime Stalin years, drawing largely on secondary sources. This provides the historical setting for the second part of this chapter, which uses primary sources to tell the story of state-sponsored popular culture during the final part of the war and the first postwar year, from mid-1944 to mid-1946.

The Roots of Soviet State-Sponsored Popular Culture

The antecedents of Soviet state-sponsored popular culture date back to the late nineteenth century, when some Russian industrialists and progressive lower-level officials, especially in government-funded sobriety societies, began to sponsor various forms of popular culture for the urban population such as popular theater productions with workers as amateur actors. They intended these offerings to promote what they saw as healthy, appropriate, and modern leisure activities, instead of what they perceived as the harmful working class tradition of drinking and fighting in taverns, or wasteful, purposeless promenading on city streets. The educated, middle-class intelligentsia set up popular theaters during those years as well, meant not only to supplant traditional leisure forms, but also to inculcate “higher” cultural values and tastes among lower class urbanites.⁵³ Local governmental bodies and philanthropists likewise established a small network of cultural institutions called People’s Houses (*narodnye doma*), intended for the cultural “enlightenment” of the population.⁵⁴ After the 1905 Revolution, autonomous workers’ clubs sprang up in Russian urban areas, where more active and socially ambitious workers gathered for cultural self-edification and elite forms of cultural

⁵³ On popular theater, see E. Anthony Swift, *Popular Theater and Society in Tsarist Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and Gary Thurston, *The Popular Theatre Movement in Russia, 1862-1919* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). For more context on Russian theater, see Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 14-75; Patrick O’Meara, “‘All the World’s a Stage’: Aspects of the Historical Interplay of Culture and Society with Myth and Mask in 18th- and Early 19th-Century Russia,” *Kritika* 7.3 (Summer 2006): 619-32; and Catriona Kelly, “A Stick with Two Ends, or, Misogyny in Popular Culture: A Case Study of the Puppet Text ‘Petrushka,’” in Jane T. Costlow, Stephanie Sandler, and Judith Vowles eds., *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 73-97.

⁵⁴ G. G. Karpov and N. D. Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo: Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 13.

entertainment, aided by intellectuals eager to assist them.⁵⁵ Children and youth had fewer opportunities for such organized entertainment, although liberal pedagogues did establish several organizations that provided popular cultural activities for lower class young people, funded by philanthropic support and a few local-level government bodies.⁵⁶ A few individuals even made efforts to offer fun recreational activities to juveniles convicted for crimes as a means of socializing them into society.⁵⁷

These initiatives, for both adults and youth, resulted from two key factors. One, the perceived need to spread the intelligentsia's cultural values among the population and thereby turn the urban "masses" into cultured and modern citizens, involved efforts to inculcate appreciation of "appropriate" cultural products, to wipe out illiteracy, to ensure good hygiene, to instill manners, and, in some cases, to arouse civic engagement. The other motivator for organizing cultural recreation centered on blaming problematic social conditions such as the lack of popular cultural options for criminality. This represented a novel approach advanced by liberal, progressive social reformers, who argued for a more humane, less coercive means of social control. However, most imperial Russian officials, demonstrating their conservative bent, dismissed these proposals, preferring to use punitive methods of dealing with crime, and expressing concern that intelligentsia-sponsored popular cultural activities might spread subversive ideas. The latter fear seems to have had some legitimacy in regard to workers' clubs, where the socialist

⁵⁵ Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Worker's Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 328-34; and Karpov and Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo*, 14.

⁵⁶ V. A. Berezina ed. *Dopolnitel'noe (vneshkol'noe) obrazovanie detei Rossii* (Moscow: "Dialog kul'tur," 2008), 10-11.

⁵⁷ Joan Neuberger, *Hooliganism: Crime, Culture, and Power in St. Petersburg, 1900-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 205-09.

intelligentsia, including Bolsheviks, engaged with workers to pursue not only cultural recreation and enlightenment but also undercover political activities.⁵⁸ As a consequence of such wariness by officials, efforts to sponsor popular culture for the population proved relatively small-scale in imperial Russia, and did not make a deep impact on everyday life.

The popular cultural activities that did exist mirrored and likely drew inspiration from parallel institutions in western Europe during these years. If, during the eighteenth century, British authorities sought to suppress the popular culture of the poor without offering any enjoyable cultural recreation to replace it, the situation changed by the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ For example, Peter Bailey demonstrates that a group of committed middle-class social reformers sought to offer what they perceived as fun, healthy, and “rational” leisure to workers in Working Men’s clubs based on middle-class culture as a means of weaning them away from traditional worker sociability in bars.⁶⁰ During that same period, as the concept of adolescence or youthhood as a separate stage between childhood and adulthood spread among the middle class and later the working class in western Europe and the United States, social activists promoted the need for organized leisure activities for adolescents, founding organizations such as the Boy and Girl

⁵⁸ Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*, 328-34.

⁵⁹ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 401-08.

⁶⁰ Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 169-82. Also see Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). For worker leisure in the US in the early twentieth century, see Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Scouts.⁶¹ The parallels between the efforts of Russian and western liberal reformers during these years hint at broader congruencies between the visions of the ideal future held by each. Both wanted all of society to share their middle-class cultural values and engage in “rational” and “modern” leisure, instead of traditional free-time activities, especially lower class ones, which they considered not only wasteful, but also conducive to criminality. Yet these initiatives, lacking mass popular support or substantive government backing, made only small inroads into the lives of the population in either western countries or imperial Russia, though significantly more in the former than the latter.

State-Sponsored Popular Culture, 1917-44

For Russia, the situation changed drastically after the October Revolution, when the Bolsheviks built on their previous involvement in workers’ clubs to make state-sponsored popular culture a major sphere of activity for the Soviet Party-state. Combining propaganda with cultural recreation, these efforts had several goals: to instill communist ideology, Party loyalty, Soviet patriotism, and concern with production in the population; to transform everyday life into an appropriately socialist one, especially in the sphere of culture, often termed cultural “enlightenment”; finally, to satisfy popular cultural consumption desires for engaging, fun entertainment. Yet the stress placed on each of these aims, and the methods used to achieve them, evolved significantly over the history of the Soviet Union. In turn, controversies surrounding government-managed

⁶¹ Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 185-94; John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present* (New York: Academic Press Inc., 1981), 37-131; and John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillian Ltd, 1986).

cultural activities, particularly visible in the NEP years, laid bare fundamental tensions at the heart of the communist project.

During the Civil War, the Party leadership emphasized the need for this field of activity to instill communist ideology and Party loyalty. The clearest example of this focus lies in Bolshevik celebrations, which, as James von Geldern argued, the state intended to serve primarily propaganda purposes. These celebrations combined new elements such as worker demonstrations with traditional fairground festivities, and used customary genres of drama and spectacle to try to convey Bolshevik principles and to convince the population to espouse them, though with only intermittent success, as von Geldern highlighted.⁶² Nonetheless, with its resources devoted to winning the war, the Party overall gave relatively little attention to the sphere of cultural recreation. This opened up space for more autonomous grassroots initiatives. Individual factory councils opened up workers' clubs that strove both to convey official propaganda messages, and also to transform the everyday lives of workers by creating innovative social and cultural forms that reflected postrevolutionary society.⁶³ Such clubs cooperated closely with an organization known as the Proletkult (*Proletarskie kulturno-prosvetitelnye organizatsii*, proletarian cultural-enlightenment organizations). This institution, which sprang up soon after the October Revolution, had the mission of forging a uniquely "proletarian" culture via worker amateur arts (*khudozhestvennaia samodeiatel'nost'*), which included music-making, theater productions, and so on. The Proletkult had a considerably degree of

⁶² James Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), and Richard Stites, "Festival and Revolution: The Role of Public Spectacle in Russia, 1917-1918," in John W. Strong ed., *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1990), 9-28.

⁶³ Gabriele Gorzka, "Proletarian Culture in Practice: Workers' clubs, 1917-1921," in Strong ed., *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*, 29-55. There were also some efforts made to establish village clubs: O. Tumim, *Zhenskii klub v derevne* (Petrograd: "Nachatki znanii," 1919), 19-31.

independence from official state institutions and relied heavily on activism from below, although it cooperated closely with the Party.⁶⁴ The Komsomol also established a network of youth-oriented clubs, promoting both political propaganda as well as cultural and social transformation.⁶⁵ Throughout the Civil War, the Komsomol clubs, workers' clubs, and the Proletkult experienced growing Party control and centralization, with the accompanying marginalization of grassroots initiative and spontaneity.

The end of the Civil War and the transition to the NEP witnessed the growing coalescence of these disparate activities into a mass cultural network that provided state-sponsored popular culture for the population, one which would largely survive throughout the rest of the Soviet period. This field of activities generally took place under the oversight of trade unions and the Ministry of Culture (Ministerstvo Kul'tury, MOC), which together constituted the Party-state cultural bureaucracy in charge of the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture. This organized cultural recreation was largely based in mass cultural institutions generically known as clubs. Urban clubs belonged, for the most part, to trade unions associated with and funded by specific enterprises or economic sectors. The MOC also controlled a network of clubs, with a MOC club institution located in the capitals of most semi-rural and rural districts, as well as in towns and cities. They had the mission of providing support and oversight functions for state-sponsored

⁶⁴ Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). For more on the Proletkult and its relationship to the Commissariat of Enlightenment, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of the Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 89-109. For the Proletkult's grassroots actions in one Soviet region, see Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 208-15.

⁶⁵ Isabel A. Tirado, *Young Guard! The Communist Youth League, Petrograd 1917-1920* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 117-43.

popular culture in the locale, in addition to serving the population directly. The clubs provided the space, resources, and equipment needed for propaganda, enlightenment activities, and cultural entertainment, as well as cultural workers who managed these activities. Unlike theaters and concert halls, which focused on producing professional performances by the artistic intelligentsia, clubs aimed to promote amateurism and mass participation in cultural activities. Clubs ranged from large, well-funded urban establishments, frequently called palaces of culture or houses of culture, to smaller, typically one-story buildings of a few rooms with a concert/movie hall referred to simply as clubs, down to one-room “red corners” (*krasnye ugolki*), in dormitories, factory shops, and large apartment buildings, run by volunteers or housing supervisors. Villages typically had smaller, poorly supplied clubs, or even tiny reading huts (*izba-chital'nia*), typically owned either by the MOC or *kolkhozy* (collective farms), though trade unions also owned some semi-rural clubs.⁶⁶ A club manager ran each club, hiring staff, planning and managing events, and balancing the budget, with assistance from a volunteer club council (*pravlenie kluba*), and oversight by officials from the trade union, enterprise, MOC, and local Party cells. Such clubs hosted amateur art circles and evening events, the major forms of state-sponsored popular culture.

Parks of culture and leisure (*parki kul'tury i otdykha*, PKOs) played a significant secondary role in the cultural life of young people in cities from late spring to early fall.

PKOs provided entertainment that included stages for concerts by professional and

⁶⁶ For an example of a large urban house of culture, see a 1947 report on the Gor'kii House of Culture, owned by the bread-making trade union. This two-story building had a large hall for 1,000 people, a small one for 300 people, one room for relaxation (*komnata otdykha*), three rooms for amateur art collectives, a library, a foyer, a sports hall, and several secondary rooms such as a buffet. Its inventory includes a variety of music, scene, movie, radio, and other cultural equipment, sufficient for its purpose, according to the archival report. Fifty-six people worked in the House of Culture at the time, and its 1947 budget was 2,900,000 rubles. See TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. ll. 24-25.

amateur artists, dance floors, and room for mass celebrations, but did not host amateur art circles on their own. Large enterprises and universities occasionally held state-sponsored popular culture in workshops and lecture halls on a small scale, often managed by local trade union cultural officials.

Amateur art circles consisted of amateur participants, mostly youth, who voluntarily gathered together on a regular basis in a club or red corner to learn, practice, and perform music, acting, dancing, and other artistic activities, usually with no fee required. Participation in an amateur art circle, especially one that regularly put on shows, counted as a lower-level social service on a Komsomol member's official file, but did not have nearly the same political value as giving lectures or exhorting voters to vote, and thus drew youth interested in the arts rather than simply politically ambitious ones. In some instances, depending on the officials in charge and the quality of the amateur art circle's performance, membership in a circle resulted in various benefits such as time off work or delays for final exams; the better-quality circles, especially ones that advanced to higher levels in amateur art competitions, occasionally had opportunities for state-sponsored trips to perform their pieces around the Soviet Union. Each circle had a leader with a variable degree of expertise in the relevant art form. The cultural organization hosting the amateur art circle solicited volunteers to serve as amateur art circle leaders, and many artists chose to offer their skills for free, sometimes based on their enthusiasm for the art form, or to get credit for volunteer work, or for young graduates from art programs to help build up their resume. In other cases, clubs—especially the wealthier establishments such as houses of culture—paid for qualified professionals to lead the circles. For the cultural institution, amateur art circles represented a necessary part of its

function, as demanded in its by-laws, yearly plan, and higher-up officials. Club managers had responsibility for establishing amateur art circles, finding leaders for them, providing space for the circles to practice and instruments if needed, and serving as stages for performances by amateur art circles, with the high-quality circles helping to fill club coffers and increase the club's prestige. Such quality amateur art circles frequently performed in other venues besides their home institution, such as PKOs, other clubs, theaters, concert halls, libraries, and movie theaters, as well as took part in various official celebrations. Annual reports from clubs sometimes included the number of participants in amateur art circles, the type and number of circles, and how many shows the circles put on, indicating that these served as key quantitative indicators that those in charge used to evaluate the club's work on amateur art. For qualitative evaluation, reports often listed the names of pieces performed, and occasionally gave brief descriptions of shows and concerts, and backgrounds of circle directors.⁶⁷

Amateur art collectives frequently played at events called "evenings" (*vechera*). This broad term encompassed events held in clubs and PKOs for all sorts of purposes, from honoring the best workers, to meeting with elections candidates, celebrating communist holidays, giving concerts, or dancing. To be admitted required either an invitation or purchasing a ticket, depending on the event. In general, evenings had two parts, the first more focused on politics and ideology, and the second on entertainment. Before the event officially began, clubs sometimes organized entertainment in the foyer, such as games or music. The evening typically kicked off with a lecture, speech, or ceremony. Following that, the more entertaining part usually began with a concert that

⁶⁷ For examples of this, see annual reports from the Gor'kii House of Culture in Moscow: TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1.

often in some way related to the first part. Then, dancing went on late into the night, often accompanied by an amateur or professional music group or a gramophone. Notably, many lectures, discussions, and speeches occurred without the second, more fun and entertaining part afterward. Occasionally, evenings had only the entertaining, fun part. Some evenings specifically targeted young people. For these youth evenings (*molodezhnye vechera*), local Komsomol cells frequently assisted the club administration in the planning, organization, publicity, and ticket distribution, helping give a youth-oriented stamp to the event.

As these forms of Soviet organized cultural recreation emerged during NEP, the Party turned its attention from wartime imperatives to determining what a truly socialist society should look like. Although Party leaders, ideologists, mid-ranking officials, and the rank-and-file agreed on the ideal of a communist future, they disagreed on the best path to reach this goal, leading to widespread debates in the context of the relatively pluralistic, open environment of NEP. Party members had a range of different viewpoints on the issues of the day, but eventually two positions coalesced on the appropriate way of managing Soviet society and building communism, associated with the Right and the Left factions within the Party. The Left faction, most closely linked with L. D. Trotsky, favored a hard-line, militant path, with a rapid, coercive transition to communism, led by an ideologically conscious vanguard that, regardless of the desires of the population, forcefully shaped them into model communists. In contrast, the soft-line, pluralistic Right faction, with N. B. Bukharin its most prominent representative, supported a slower, gradual path to the same “bright socialist future,” one that relied more heavily on persuasion over coercion, seeking to appeal to popular desires and elicit initiative from

below as a means of achieving communism with broad-based support. Although these tensions came to the fore in the NEP, conflicts between the Right and Left positions date back to disagreements within the prerevolutionary Bolshevik Party, such as whether to depend on an ideologically conscious but small revolutionary vanguard, or trust in broad-based worker grassroots spontaneity and a more peaceful transfer of power.⁶⁸

While some Party officials consistently favored either soft- or hard-line policies, most stood closer to the center of the Soviet political-ideological spectrum. They shifted from favoring either the Left or Right approach depending on the evolution of their personal ideological perspective, the course pursued by the leadership, and the general political, social, and economic situation in the USSR and abroad. Moreover, their association with the Right and Left factions evolved over time not only owing to shifting conditions but also to their tactical needs in competitions for power and influence, as well as changing institutional positions and professional affiliations. As a consequence, the Right and Left factions in the Party during NEP did not constitute fundamental, static ideological-political camps, but rather loose, diverse, in-flux associations driven by both ideology and power politics. These factions evolved in response to internal and external developments, but maintained the basic difference between an ideologically militant or pluralistic approach to constructing communism and shaping policy.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For an in-depth insight into this issue, see the following discussion: Anna Krylova, "Beyond the Spontaneity-Consciousness Paradigm: 'Class Instinct' as a Promising Category of Historical Analysis," *Slavic Review* 62.1 (Spring 2003): 1-23; Reginald E. Zelnik, "A Paradigm Lost? Response to Anna Krylova," *Slavic Review* 62.1 (Spring 2003): 24-33; Igal Halfin, "Between Instinct and Mind: The Bolshevik View of the Proletarian Self," *Slavic Review* 62.1 (Spring 2003): 34-40; and Leopold H. Haimson, "Lenin's Revolutionary Career Revisited: Some Observations on Recent Discussions," *Kritika* 5.1 (Winter 2004): 55-80.

⁶⁹ For ideological-political conflicts between the Right and the Left in the NEP see, for example, Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society Between the Revolutions, 1918-1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 135-223. For the relationship between such conflicts and youth, see Michael

The difference between the Right and Left found its reflection in the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture, which became one of the battlefields in the struggle for hegemony between these two visions of what constituted the best path to communism. One principal conflict centered on whether officially-managed cultural activities need to carry a heavy ideological load and emphasize political propaganda or focus on appealing to the population by satisfying desires for entertainment. Clearly exemplifying that Party factions did not constitute a cohesive camp, some officials who believed in a militant, revolutionary path to communism expressed skepticism over devoting resources to state-sponsored popular culture at all, while others on the Left strongly advocated for this field of activities. Regardless of the extent of their support for government-organized cultural events, Leftist-oriented officials held that state-sponsored popular culture needed to primarily serve as a “transmission belt” for Marxism-Leninism, Soviet patriotism, and Party loyalty. A more distant, secondary goal involved inculcating *kul'turnost'* or culturedness, meaning normative social and cultural values such as literacy, good hygiene, appropriate manners, and, at least for those who sought upward social mobility, appreciation of officially-approved cultural consumption. In presenting these qualities as laudatory for the New Soviet Woman and Man, the drive for culturedness endeavored to build the communist modernity, closely resembled the goals of many members of the reformist prerevolutionary intelligentsia. It demonstrates the influence of these antecedents on Soviet state-organized cultural recreation. At the same time, this drive had similarities to the contemporaneous efforts by social reformers and even government

David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 83-132, and Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 205-82.

officials in western Europe and North America to instill literacy, hygiene, manners, and cultural knowledge among their populations.⁷⁰

Those officials and activists closer to the Right tended to support state-sponsored popular culture with little reservation, agreeing on the necessity of devoting energy and resources to this sphere. As for its content, their soft-line, pluralistic approach stressed the need to satisfy the population's desires for engaging and entertaining cultural activities, with cultural enlightenment secondary, and political-ideological education last. They suggested that appealing to popular desires would lead to organized cultural recreation functioning as a more effective guide to communism, and emphasized culture over politics when seeking to instill beliefs and values.⁷¹ Although many militant young Komsomol activists tended to align themselves with the former perspective, many ordinary young people preferred the latter.

The question of the extent to which foreign cultural influence had a place in Soviet state-sponsored popular culture constituted an important element in the debate over whether to emphasize politics and ideology or satisfy popular desires. In the culturally permissive environment of the NEP, nightclubs and restaurants owned by Nepmen hosted western popular culture, such as jazz music and foxtrot dancing. Condemned by the more militant as ideologically subversive incursions of "foreign bourgeois" culture, such music received little censure from those advocating a more pluralistic approach. The latter depicted it instead as modern, progressive music, linking

⁷⁰ David L. Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-41* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 8-9.

⁷¹ On the tensions between entertainment and propaganda in clubs, see John B. Hatch, "Hangouts and Hangovers: State, Class and Culture in Moscow's Workers' Club Movement, 1925-1928," *The Russian Review* 53.1 (January 1994): 97-117. For such conflicts in sports, see Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 42-68.

jazz to its origins in African-American culture and thereby legitimating this music by its association with the lower classes. Soft-line officials pressed for permitting state-managed cultural institutions to host jazz and foxtrot as a means of appealing to those who would otherwise go to Nepmen-owned nightclubs, and thus fall out of the sphere of Party-state influence. Indeed, while at first confined to elite intelligentsia circles, jazz spread throughout the NEP to urban middle-class audiences and even, to a lesser extent, workers.⁷² Many youth expressed fascination with such western popular culture, and large segments of urban young people listened to American-style jazz, danced the foxtrot and tango, and even adopted flapper fashions. Ideological militants exhibited particular concerns over the impact of such “bourgeois culture” on the young, demanding that state-sponsored popular culture remove western culture from its repertoire for youth, with only modest success until the end of NEP.⁷³

A closely related battle sprang up over the degree of agency and initiative that ordinary citizens should have within state-owned popular cultural institutions, one that directly mirrored broader debates over consciousness versus spontaneity. Those favoring a more revolutionary, militant perspective believed that officially-organized cultural activities needed close control from above by officials in the cultural bureaucracy and members of the cultural intelligentsia such as professional artists, musicians, and writers. Initiative from below was welcomed only to the extent that it explicitly fit the agenda of

⁷² On conflicts over jazz and western dancing, see S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 37-78, and Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48-49.

⁷³ Anne E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 116-38, and Gorsuch, “Flappers and Foxtrotters: Soviet Youth in the ‘Roaring Twenties,’” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press) 1102 (March 1994): 1-33.

the Left for a rapid, revolutionary transition to communism, and especially when such initiative responded to directions from above by Left-leaning authority figures. Indeed, despite appeals from some militant-oriented cultural officials to forge a “truly proletarian culture,” they systematically rejected cultural products that, despite coming from workers, did not fit the definitions of a “truly proletarian culture” held by such officials.⁷⁴ Other officials and activists, while far from immune to preconceptions of what a proletarian culture needs to look like, advocated for the notion that more of the initiative for and direction of government-managed cultural recreation should come from below and respond to popular interests. Much support existed during NEP for the latter position, as Lynn Mally demonstrated in her study of amateur theaters.⁷⁵

For youth in particular, the issue of whether youth-oriented state-sponsored popular culture should be decentralized, encourage youth agency, and respond to youth desires, or be centralized and directed by adults from above, represented a point of conflict throughout NEP. This struggle formed part of a broader tension over the differing visions of the Right and Left on what defined and how to forge model New Soviet Individuals, especially relevant to youth who were assigned the task of constructing the future society.⁷⁶ The Right viewpoint tended to express a greater deal of faith in young

⁷⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 16-36.

⁷⁵ Lynn Mally, *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). For a similar argument on Soviet amateur cultural activities in general during the early Soviet years, see K. G. Bogemskaja, “Vvedenie,” in K. G. Bogemskaja and L. P. Solntseva eds., *Samodeiatel'noe khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo v SSSR. Ocherki istorii, 1917-1932 gg.* (St. Petersburg: “Dmitrii Bulanin,” 2000), 10-23. For more on workers’ theater, see Richard Stourac and Kathleen McCreery, *Theatre as a Weapon: Workers’ Theatre in the Soviet Union, Germany and Britain, 1917-1934* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 3-76.

⁷⁶ As expressed by V. I. Lenin: *Uchitsia kommunizmu, kniga I. V. I. Lenin, KPSS: O partiinom rukovodstve komsomola* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1982), 41.

people, with the belief that the natural instincts of the young would guide them to communism, and thus called for offering youth more autonomy and inviting young people to exhibit initiative in participating in governance, including by criticizing overly bureaucratic local officials, though within limits. While agreeing on the need for young people to show initiative, the Left position delimited such actions to the very narrow category of direct pursuit of unambiguously revolutionary goals, such as grassroots efforts at agitation in workers' dormitories or disruption of religious services. Overall, the Left insisted that young people needed to exhibit disciplined, conscious behavior that closely followed the directives of the Party hierarchy, expressed much wariness of youth autonomy, and strove to delimit the independence of the Komsomol and did not welcome youth criticism of bureaucrats.⁷⁷

In relation to state-sponsored popular culture, this debate took its most concrete institutional shape over the issue of whether government-managed cultural activities for young people would take place primarily in Komsomol clubs and theaters with direct oversight by Komsomol cells, or clubs owned by trade unions and the MOC, managed by adult officials.⁷⁸ Struggles on the degree of youth autonomy and initiative proved closely intertwined with ones focusing on the content of state-sponsored popular culture. In plenty of cases, when cultural officials permitted young people to have a considerable

⁷⁷ For conflicting NEP-era depictions of ideal youth, see Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia*, 12-27.

⁷⁸ On NEP-era Komsomol clubs and conflicts with trade union clubs, see *ibid.*, 41-78, and Hatch, "Hangouts and Hangovers." On youth theaters, see Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 109-45, and Mally, "Igraia 'Novuiu Zhenshchinu': Komsomolka kak aktrisa i stenicheskii obraz v sovetskom molodezhnom teatre," in P. V. Romanov and E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova eds., *Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika 1920-1930-kh godov: Ideologiia i povsednevnost'* (Moscow: Variant, 2007), 296-320. For NEP-era instruction booklets casting light on these issues, see S. Dolinskii, *Klub molodezhi v den' 1 maia* (Moscow: "Novaia Moskva," 1925); S. Dmitrovskii, *Mezhdunarodnyi iunosheskii den' v klube* (Kiev: "Proletarii," 1925); *Molodezh' v rabochem klube* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1927); and M. A. Rastopchina, *Kak privilech' v klub massu* (Moscow: Izdanie G. F. Mirimanova, 1925).

degree of autonomy and take initiative in organizing cultural events, youth chose entertainment-oriented events, such as dances, jazz concerts, plays with a minimum of ideological content, or ones critical of conditions in the USSR. As a consequence, a position promoting the need for greater control from above usually intertwined with support for a focus on propaganda of politics and ideology in clubs. Tolerance for a greater degree of youth autonomy in effect meant advocating the satisfaction of popular desires through more entertainment-oriented organized cultural activities.

Finally, the question of how to deal with perceived juvenile “delinquency” divided the more ideologically militant from those backing a more gradual, softer path to communism. The Left position generally wanted to utilize more coercive means of dealing with those labeled “delinquents,” including hooligans, thieves, and drunks. In contradistinction, those sympathetic to a more pluralistic position promoted the offering of fun cultural recreation to fill up leisure time as a means of combating “delinquency,” calling it a more modern and effective approach.⁷⁹ This debate, in turn, demonstrates parallels between the pluralistic and tolerant bureaucrats and cultural workers in the early Soviet Union, and the liberal social reformists of the late imperial period, highlighting how novel ideas, largely rejected by the conservative tsarist regime, came to be appropriated and enacted by some Soviet officials.

As Stalin took the reigns of power in 1928, defeating Trotsky, Bukharin, and all other opponents, he put an end to NEP and called for a campaign of ideological revivalism and an all-out effort to drive the Soviet Union toward socialism, which came to be known as the Cultural Revolution. This era, 1928 to 1932, witnessed a decisive turn

⁷⁹ Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia*, 41-95, 139-66, and *V pomoshch' klubnomu rabotniku goroda i derevni* (Tula: Izdanie tulgubpolitprosveta, 1924), 9.

by the Party-state toward a hard-line approach to government policy, including state-sponsored popular culture. The Stalin leadership threw its support behind ideological militants in all spheres of activity during this era, while enacting a series of reforms that placed industry, agriculture, and cultural institutions under increasingly tight control by the Kremlin.⁸⁰ This resulted in the decisive settling of the NEP-era debate between the ideologically militant and the pluralistic approach to state-sponsored popular culture in favor of the former. Thus, throughout the Cultural Revolution, the Party-state increasingly centralized organized cultural offerings for the masses, directing them from above. Cultural institutions now carried a much heavier ideological load, and militant ideologues strove to even liquidate light entertainment, censored as unacceptable “*kul’turnichestvo*,” referring to nonideological, entertaining cultural activities.⁸¹ In particular, a sustained campaign targeted western popular culture, with prominent figures such as Maxim Gorky identifying jazz with “bourgeois decadence” such as eroticism,

⁸⁰ For more on the Cultural Revolution, see Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front*, 115-48, and for a somewhat different take, Michael David-Fox, “What is Cultural Revolution?” *The Russian Review* 58.2 (April 1999): 181-201.

⁸¹ For centralization and guidance from above in the amateur theater of the Stalin years, see Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 215-16. On Stalin-era trade union clubs, and particularly the censure of *kul’turnichestvo* in the late 1920s, see Lewis H. 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): 78-92. The more ideological militant already disparaged *kul’turnichestvo* in the NEP: *V pomoshch’ klubnomu rabotniku goroda i derevni*, 11. For more on the shifts in amateur music, see S. Iu. Rumiantsev and A. P. Shul’pin, “Samodeiatel’noe tvorchestvo i ‘gosudarstvennaia’ kul’tura,” in K. G. Bogemskaiia ed., *Samodeiatel’noe khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo v SSSR. Ocherki istorii, 1930-1950 gg.* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi institut iskusstvoznaniia, 1995), 7-52. On festivals, see Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Choi Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002); Malte Rolfe, *Sovetskie massovye prazdniki* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009); Rolfe, “Constructing a Soviet Time: Bolshevik Festivals and Their Rivals during the First Five-Year Plan. A Study of the Central Black Earth Region,” *Kritika* 1.3 (Summer 2000): 447-73; Rolfe, “A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism,” *Slavic Review* 68.3 (Fall 2009): 601-30; and Rosalind Sartori, “Stalinism and Carnival: Organization and Aesthetics of Political Holidays,” in Hans Günther ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 41-77. On movies, see Denise J. Youngblood, *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

drugs, and homosexuality.⁸² Youth occupied a major role in the discursive tropes accompanying these policies, depicted as corrupted by the permissive spirit of the NEP and requiring ideologically purified state-sponsored popular culture to transform them into model young communist citizens. Moreover, in the context of a shift in conceptualizing behavior as resulting from individual will rather than external factors determined by society, official policy moved away from attributing youth misbehavior to a lack of organized cultural recreation, and adopted a much more punitive method of dealing with juvenile "delinquency."⁸³ The authorities encouraged youth initiative in state-sponsored popular culture only in the narrow, specific boundaries of promoting ideologically militant goals set by the top leadership. This approach is most clearly symbolized by the agitprop brigades that arose during 1929, peripatetic youth theater groups that used didactic, propagandistic sketches to promote industrialization and collectivization, including through the use of humiliating shaming rituals.⁸⁴ In contrast, no space remained for Komsomol-managed youth clubs in the sphere of state-sponsored

⁸² Starr, *Red and Hot*, 79-106, and Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 72-73. For a broader context of the struggle over music in these years, see Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); Nelson, "The Struggle for Proletarian Music: RAPM and the Cultural Revolution," *Slavic Review* 59.1 (Spring 2000): 101-32; and Anna Ferenc, "Music in the Socialist State," in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 109-20.

⁸³ On youth, see Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia*, 116-38, 167-81; Gorsuch, "Flappers and Foxtrotters"; Gorsuch, "'Smashing Chairs at the Local Club': Discipline, Disorder, and Soviet Youth," in Corinna Kuhr-Korolev ed., *Sowjetjugend 1917-1941: Generation Zwischen Revolution und Resignation* (Essen: Klartext, 2001), 247-61; Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 250-88; Gabor T. Rittersporn, "Between Revolution and Daily Routine: Youth and Violence in the Soviet Union in the Interwar Period," in Kuhr-Korolev ed., *Sowjetjugend 1917-1941*, 63-82; and V. Kirov, *Klub i byt: доклад na vsesoiuznom klubnom soveshchanii i rezoliutsii po dokladu* (Moscow, 1930). More broadly on the shift to personal responsibility see, for example, Dan Healy, *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 159-206.

⁸⁴ Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 146-80.

popular culture, with these organizations disbanded or absorbed by other cultural recreation institutions.

By 1933-34, the Party-state increasingly stepped back from some of the more ideologically militant policies in all fields, declaring that it achieved victory in the struggle to transform Soviet society and infrastructure, making the intensity of the Cultural Revolution unnecessary.⁸⁵ For instance, the Stalinist leadership, in contrast to the overwhelming emphasis on heavy industry of the early Stalin years, invested a bigger, though still small, proportion of production resources into making consumer goods and services. The upwardly mobile social strata of managers and educated professionals represented the primary beneficiaries of this effort, which had a relatively minor impact among the mass of the population owing to the extensive social dislocation brought about by collectivization, industrialization, and urbanization.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, this top-level initiative intimates that, despite the decisive victory of the hard-line approach in the end of the 1920s, the vision and methods advocated by the more soft-line Party cadres in the NEP remained part of the possibilities of government policy.

For state-sponsored popular culture, the greater emphasis on satisfying consumption desires meant offering substantially more opportunities for fun cultural

⁸⁵ For the historiographic debate on whether this period was a retreat from a Marxist-Leninist vision of communism, see David L. Hoffman, "Was There a 'Great Retreat' from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered," *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 651-74; Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialism as Will and Representation, or What Legacy Are We Rejecting?" *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 675-708; Jeffrey Brooks, "Declassifying a 'Classic,'" *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 709-19; and Matthew E. Lenoe, "In Defense of Timasheff's Great Retreat," *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 721-30.

⁸⁶ On consumption in the 1930s, see Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Berg: New York, 2003); Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Elena Osokina, *Za fasadom "Stalinskogo izobilia": Raspredelenie i rynek v snabzhenii naselenia v gody industrializatsii, 1927-1941* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998); and Sheila Fitzpatrick, "'Middle class Values' and Soviet Life in the 1930s," in Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon eds., *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Vera S. Dunham* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 20-38.

entertainment. Embodying this turn, the number of clubs grew rapidly during the mid-1930s. For example, between 1927 and 1932, the Soviet Union built 912 of the larger and more expensive urban clubs, and 13,450 rural clubs. By comparison, from 1932 to 1937, the number of urban clubs increased by 2,951 to a total of 8,054, and rural clubs by 30,646, to 72,862 altogether.⁸⁷ Consequently, during the mid-1930s, the population had many more opportunities to participate in state-sponsored popular culture activities.

Furthermore, while retaining a great deal of the heavily ideologized content devoted to inculcating loyalty to the Party and Stalin, communist ideology, and patriotism, the content of club events changed to emphasize more entertaining performances that better satisfied the desires of the population. Clubs began to include substantially more fun, light cultural entertainment among their plans, hosting dances, concerts, and less ideologized plays than previously.⁸⁸ In addition, significant opportunities opened up in these cultural institutions for western popular culture such as jazz and western dances. Soviet jazz musicians performed undiluted versions of the latest American jazz compositions in the Soviet Union between 1932 and 1936. Millions of people listened to and danced the foxtrot, tango, charleston, lindy-hop, and rumba to jazzy music played both by amateur ensembles and professionals such as Alexander Tsfasman and Leonid Utesov, the latter reputedly a particular favorite of Stalin. During

⁸⁷ These numbers do not include the one-room “red corners” (*krasnye ugolki*) run largely by volunteer labor. Note that these numbers, like all Soviet statistics, were probably artificially manipulated by lower-level officials eager to inflate their accomplishments, as well as for the propaganda purpose of appearing to improve the living conditions of the population. Still, as the proportion and nature of such manipulation in all likelihood did not change over time, the shift in the reported numbers is indicative of actual changes at the grassroots. See O. K. Makarova, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe statisticheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1956), 273.

⁸⁸ Siegelbaum, “The Shaping of Soviet Workers’ Leisure.” On Stalinist cultural norms, see Hoffman, *Stalinist Values*.

the Great Purges, however, censure of western cultural influence in the context of a foreign spy mania resulted in a clampdown on jazz. As a result, jazz ensembles, called *dzhazy*, had to play a watered down, “Sovietized” version of jazz, where saxophones could be featured only along with Russian folk instruments, with American-style jazz tunes forbidden.⁸⁹

Despite these shifts, a central element advocated by the ideological militants in the NEP intensified during the mid-1930s: reliance on control from above rather than appeal to initiative from below. Trade unions and the MOC retained control over youth-oriented cultural activities in clubs and PKOs, with the Komsomol lacking an institutional foothold in this sphere. At the same time, officials within these organizations took steps to severely restrict the potential for the autonomy of the amateur participants in music, theater, and dance circles, and had club managers directly plan club events, demanding that these occasions hew strictly to accepted models. For instance, with the end of the Cultural Revolution, professional artist unions received a much bigger role in overseeing amateurs as part of the broader shift toward the authority of experts over ideologues in all spheres of Soviet life. These cultural elites demanded that amateurs strive to emulate professional standards, and closely supervised their performances, instead of encouraging grassroots initiative and improvisation.⁹⁰ This meant a minimization of opportunities even for youth initiative that explicitly targeted revolutionary goals, embodied by the Party-state’s turn against the agitprop brigades.

⁸⁹ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 107-180, and Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 75-76.

⁹⁰ A tendency best demonstrated by the professionalization of the Paitnitskii Choir. See Susannah Lockwood Smith, “From Peasants to Professionals: The Socialist-Realist Transformation of a Russian Folk Choir,” *Kritika* 3.3 (Summer 2002): 393-425.

Despite their ideologically orthodox mission, these groups held too much potential for social disruption and refused to submit to the control of the professional cultural intelligentsia, resulting in the dispersal of such brigades in the summer of 1932.⁹¹

As a result of such policies, by the mid-1930s a cohesive, defined image of how model young people should participate in state-sponsored popular culture came to the fore: in a disciplined, obedient, and largely passive manner. On the one hand, with the escalation of investment into state-sponsored popular culture in the mid-1930s, young amateurs did receive substantially more opportunities to make music, perform in shows, and dance on stage, while aid from professionals improved their artistry. On the other hand, they had to consume what the clubs offered without having any substantial voice in proposing innovations in club repertoires, though they might help the club management organize events, with close supervision from above. All of this constituted part of a broader shift in the image of the model young Soviet citizen in the mid-1930s, in which official discourse directed young people to adhere fully to directives from above and to follow in a disciplined manner the orders of the official hierarchy at all levels. They needed to focus their efforts on studying and work, as the Stalinist leadership declared that the Soviet Union had reached socialism in its 1936 Constitution and sought to minimize socially disruptive activities.⁹² The only officially-approved space for youth activism lay within closely defined boundaries, such as vigilance in uncovering spies and traitors or volunteering to build Stalinist construction projects, where the initiating

⁹¹ See Mally, *Revolutionary Acts*, 146-212.

⁹² On the 1936 Constitution, see Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934-1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 102-12.

impulse came from above and served the needs of the higher levels of the government.⁹³ Moreover, the government strongly promoted youth compliance by developing the rhetorical trope that the population owed its “joyous” life to gifts granted by the Party and particularly Stalin, as opposed to their individual efforts and initiative.⁹⁴ Notably, in the mid-1930s the image of the ideal child closely followed that of the youth, from a more active, autonomous one in the NEP, to a passive, obedient one focusing their time on studying.⁹⁵

Along with the growth of centralized control and extension of further restrictions on initiative from below, another policy associated with the Left Party faction in the NEP remained in full force and even intensified during the mid-1930s, namely the ascription of youth crime to individual will rather than social conditions. In the early 1930s, the notion that juvenile “delinquency” resulted from “objective circumstances,” such as the lack of organized cultural activities, increasingly lost out to the perception that crime came from individual motivations, with young people who committed these acts seen by more and more officials as “social incorrigibles.” Consequently, the regime enacted an infamous decree to decrease the age of criminal responsibility for certain crimes to

⁹³ Anna Krylova describes both the idealized image and the gaps in constructing such model communists in her “Identity, Agency, and the First Soviet Generation,” in Stephen Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 101-22. Also see Peter Konecny, *Builders and Deserters: Students, State, and Community in Leningrad, 1917–1941* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 229-57.

⁹⁴ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 83-105.

⁹⁵ On children, see Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 62-115.

children as young as twelve in May 1935, embodying the Leftist approach of harsh, coercive methods of dealing with juvenile misbehavior.⁹⁶

World War II, the Great Patriotic War in Soviet parlance, brought tremendous disruption to Soviet life, including state-sponsored popular culture.⁹⁷ As the state mobilized for total war, it directed resources away from clubs and other cultural venues. Evolving to meet wartime needs, the cultural network emphasized wartime mobilization, propaganda of Soviet patriotism and hatred of Nazis, and preparation of nurses and technical specialists in courses held in clubs. Moreover, with the population focused on supporting the military effort and dealing with the harsh living conditions of everyday life, ordinary citizens had relatively little leisure time or energy for participating in amateur music groups or attending cultural events.

Despite these obstacles, some opportunities existed for music-making and other forms of entertainment. Frequently, this occurred on the basis of local initiatives by committed cultural enthusiasts in the context of a general decentralization of the previously rigid centralized controls over this sphere. Most prominent, concerts aimed at military personnel enabled cultural entertainment to explicitly serve wartime needs. In fact, the government loosened the limitations on jazz imposed during the years of the Great Purges, as part of a broader wartime relaxation of late 1930s ideological

⁹⁶ Paul Hagenloh, *Stalin's Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926-1941* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 328. Also see Peter H. Solomon Jr., *Soviet Criminal Justice under Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 153-229; and Peter H. Juviler, "Contradictions of Revolution: Juvenile Crime and Rehabilitation," in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites eds., *Bolshevik Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 261-278.

⁹⁷ For the Soviet experience of World War II, see Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); E.S. Seniavskaja, *Protivniki Rossii v voynakh XX veka: evolutsiia "obraza vruga" v soznanii armii i obshchestva* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006); and Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981).

militancy.⁹⁸ The Party-state now welcomed American-style jazz tunes, performed by amateurs and professionals in clubs, PKOs, concert halls, radio broadcasts, and even at the front, as a way of lifting the morale of the troops and populace as a whole, as well as demonstrating the close relationship with wartime allies. Soviet jazz stars such as Tsfasman and Utesov reached their former prominence with patriotically-themed performances such as Utesov's jazz program "Beat the Enemy." New stars appeared, most notably Adolph "Eddie" Rosner, a Polish-Jewish jazz musician who fled to the USSR at the beginning of the war.⁹⁹ The prevalence of state-sanctioned jazz performances during the Great Patriotic War indicates that the Stalinist leadership did not consider such music as inherently antithetical to Soviet patriotism, despite its patent western connotations. Along with the loosening of ideological limitations on jazz and other spheres of activity, official discourse in the wartime years opened up some space for autonomous activities by young people, praising both youth and children as taking initiatives at the grassroots to aid the war effort.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ For the general relaxation of controls during the war, see Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, Hugh Ragsdale trans. and ed. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 11-20.

Specifically for the loosening of reins in the sphere of culture, see Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 98-116.

⁹⁹ See Starr, *Red and Hot*, 181-203; Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 98-116; and Karpov and Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ On both youth and children, see Kelly, *Children's World*, 115-19. For a case study of how the young people in one regional university experienced the war, see S. L. Merzliakov, "Saratovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet v gody voyny i mira (1941-1964 gg.);" (Kand. diss., Saratov State University, 2008).

State-Sponsored Youth Popular Culture, 1944-46

During the concluding stages of the war and the immediate postwar period, mid-1944 to mid-1946, the Soviet Union transitioned from a total war to a peace-time setting. Despite the widespread expectations of a postwar relaxation, these years were characterized by a continued mobilization of the citizenry in an extensive, rapid, and exhausting reconstruction, with the state demanding strict discipline and self-sacrifice. Although the Soviet people suffered appalling living conditions, including overcrowding and widescale famine, the new, Fourth Five-Year Plan from 1946 to 1950 focused on heavy industry and basic infrastructure such as roads and power plants instead of light industry and housing stock. Additionally, the Stalin leadership made extensive investments in military might. The Kremlin justified this course not only by stressing the need to rebuild the country, but also to ensure that the USSR fully prepared itself for any potential future wars. This occurred during the early stages of a breakdown of the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States, which eventually led to the struggle between the two superpowers for political and ideological dominance that we now know as the Cold War.¹⁰¹

The Party-state mobilized young people to pursue its goals, enacting its agenda through channels such as schools, universities, and especially the Komsomol, which had the direct mission of helping the Party carry out its youth policies. Generally, those with social ambitions such as becoming a Party member or government official, going to

¹⁰¹ For the postwar expectations for a relaxation, and the dashing of these expectations, see Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 31-39. For more on the harsh exactions of postwar reconstruction, see Jeffrey W. Jones, *Everyday Life and The "Reconstruction" Of Soviet Russia During and After The Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2008), and Donald Filtzer, "Standard of Living versus Quality of Life: Struggling with the Urban Environment in Russia During the Early Years of Post-War Reconstruction," in Juliane Fürst ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 81-102.

college, or rising in rank at their workplace joined the Komsomol, as well as those with an interest in organized collective activities. The Komsomol enrolled only 10 percent of all Soviet youth in the mid-1930s, serving as a vanguard organization for activist youth. However, the post-World War II witnessed a major drive for membership growth, as the Party leadership now wanted the Komsomol to become a mass organization. Thus, by 1949 the Komsomol embraced 20 percent of Soviet youth, and by 1958, about half of all young people joined. Belonging to the Komsomol meant paying dues, engaging in varied volunteer work, and attending obligatory Komsomol meetings at primary cells, where members discussed various organizational activities and policies and passed relevant resolutions. Additionally, in a process loosely supervised by higher Komsomol officials, members of each primary Komsomol organization elected their leaders at a special conference, usually held each year. These election conferences also served as a forum to report on the activities of the Komsomol cell and to discuss plans for the upcoming year. Those elected formed the Komsomol committee for each cell, which had responsibility for the daily management of its affairs. A Komsomol secretary led each cell, with other committee members responsible for distinct spheres of Komsomol work, such as propaganda, production, education, cultural events, sports, etc.

The Komsomol resembled the Party in its structure. Institutions where youth worked or studied had primary cells to which select young people belonged. Larger establishments, such as factories, colleges, and some collective farms, had several internal levels of cells. Above the Komsomol cell in each institution were Komsomol organizations at the raion, city, oblast, and, with the exception of Soviet Russia, republic levels, with the lower levels all obligated to implement the directions of higher ones. The

members of Komsomol committees at higher levels frequently belonged to the Party. Above them all stood the central, all-union Komsomol administration in Moscow, with a number of departments responsible for helping formulate and enact youth policy. High Komsomol officials, such as heads of departments and the secretaries of oblast Komsomol organizations, belonged to the Komsomol Central Committee, TsK, headed by the top Komsomol leadership in the Komsomol TsK Bureau, in an arrangement paralleling the Party TsK and its Politburo. N. A. Mikhailov served as the First Secretary of the Komsomol from 1938 to 1952. The Komsomol held occasional congresses, which determined the Komsomol's broad agenda, with only one held between 1938 and 1952, in 1949. Between the congresses, the most important rulings on Komsomol policy originated from occasional Komsomol TsK plenums. Next in importance were decrees issued by the Komsomol TsK Bureau and then the Komsomol TsK Secretariat. Each level of the regional Komsomol hierarchy had to adopt the decrees enacted above, and also passed separate resolutions relevant to its own needs. As a result, lower-level Komsomol committees faced a torrent of decrees, necessitating ignoring or minimizing some in order to conduct work on others. New top-level initiatives generally pushed previous ones into the background, unless higher-level Komsomol committees stressed the need to implement older resolutions through checking up on the work of lower-level cells and through issuing decrees containing messages similar to the ones passed earlier.¹⁰²

The war ravaged the Komsomol's structural and financial cohesion, undermining its ability to carry out its mission. Thousands of primary cells disappeared, along with

¹⁰² Ralph Talcott Fisher Jr., *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 279-91; Allen Kassof, *The Soviet Youth Program: Regimentation and Rebellion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 14-64; and A. A. Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 17-18.

cash from dues and the ability to enact the Party's youth policy. Consequently, after the war, in many regions the Komsomol existed in name only. For example, in 1949, the Komsomol cells in Riazan oblast regularly failed to collect dues, rarely assembled, and in many cases did not even elect leaders. It did not provide political education, organize competitions at the workplace, or offer entertainment. Well aware of these problems, the Komsomol TsK Bureau took a number of steps to solve them, most notably by launching a widescale membership drive to reestablish its structure, finances, and ability to influence Soviet young people.¹⁰³

Along with efforts to strengthen its organizational capacity, the Komsomol strove to enact the Party's broader agenda. The Komsomol's official discourse called on young people to devote most of the small amount of free time left over after work or school, and taking care of basic living needs, to the goals of reconstructing the country and preparing for a potential war. This included rebuilding the physical infrastructure through volunteer labor, reconstructing the human capital by voluntary self-education in academic subjects and Marxism-Leninism, and conditioning the body via extensive participation in civil defense training and athletics.¹⁰⁴

As a result, the small proportion of the Party-state's resources devoted to state-organized recreation at that time went mostly into athletics. Even during the Great Patriotic War, the Komsomol held a number of sport competitions, and helped prepare dozens of thousands of young people to achieve the Ready for Labor and Defense (*Gotov*

¹⁰³ On the Komsomol's structural weakness, see Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32-63.

¹⁰⁴ For youth obligations to prepare for war under Stalin, see Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 35-59.

k Trudu i Oborone, hereafter GTO) badge, which required a series of demanding physical endurance trials meant to strengthen the body.¹⁰⁵ After the war, athletics received even more attention from the Party-state, now called on not only to train exemplary young warriors, but also the workforce needed to rebuild the country, as well as to attain success in international competitions to fit the USSR's new superpower status. The Komsomol TsK Bureau passed no less than four decrees on sports and physical culture in 1946, two in 1947, and three in 1948. A case in point is a 1946 resolution that called for the Komsomol, in cooperation with athletic organizations, to "organize the involvement of wide segments of youth in volunteer sport associations and physical culture collectives."¹⁰⁶ The needs of postwar reconstruction, mobilization for a potential war, and superpower rivalry put the spotlight on athletics as the appropriate form of organized recreation most conducive to these goals. Consequently, central Party-state bodies had very little time and energy left for club activities during the immediate postwar years.

Besides the neglect from the Party-state, state-sponsored popular culture suffered from extensive damage brought about by the war. If official statistics list 9,997 larger urban and 108,035 smaller rural clubs in the USSR in 1941, for 1946 they give figures of 6,450 and 87,921 respectively.¹⁰⁷ In Soviet Russia, the war closed 8,000 urban and rural clubs.¹⁰⁸ Even clubs in territories not occupied by the Axis powers suffered from a lack of

¹⁰⁵ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 7, d. 11, ll. 15-17.

¹⁰⁶ See RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 457, ll. 141-42. The other decrees for 1946 are: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 415, ll. 3-5, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 431, ll. 2-3. For 1947, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 484, ll. 6-13, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 506, ll. 4-6. For 1948, RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 548, ll. 1-2, 15-18, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 579, ll. 6-8.

¹⁰⁷ Makarova, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR*, 273.

¹⁰⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 378, l. 2.

basic supplies such as fuel and furniture that severely hampered their function.¹⁰⁹ In other cases, higher-priority sectors within the Soviet system displaced organized leisure activities, as exemplified by army troops occupying more than a quarter of Moscow's clubs in 1943.¹¹⁰ Many military units continued to base themselves in the clubs after the war, and those in charge of cultural life experienced difficulties in getting the clubs back, as the army had much greater authority and prestige in the Party-state complex.¹¹¹ The government used clubs for other purposes as well. For example, the Chkalovsk oblast Komsomol committee reported that "special hospitals" (*spetsgospitalia*) of imprisoned Germans inhabited three trade union clubs in the fall of 1945.¹¹² In 1948, an agricultural enterprise utilized the Kirovograd city trade enterprise club as a warehouse, resisting efforts to return the club to its original function.¹¹³

Yet even before the end of the war, the bureaucracies in charge of state-sponsored popular culture sought to reestablish the cultural network. United under the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (*Vsesoiuznyi Tsentral'nyi Sovet Professional'nykh Soiuzov*, VTsSPS), trade unions controlled the large majority of urban clubs. The Thirteenth VTsSPS plenum in March 1945 enacted a resolution that called on all trade union organizations to "in the shortest time possible reconstruct, fully renovate, and expand the network of cultural institutions." As for the focus of such work, the VTsSPS

¹⁰⁹ See a 1945 report on Moscow clubs, which indicates that earlier, the lack of fuel and furniture prevented many clubs from functioning: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 57.

¹¹⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 176, l. 1.

¹¹¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 56.

¹¹² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 27-31.

¹¹³ "Skuchno molodezhi v Kirovograde," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 19, 1948.

decree placed political and production concerns over cultural enlightenment, and did not address worker desires for fun and entertainment. It did acknowledge the importance of amateur arts for young people. Still, especially in comparison to later VTsSPS plenums, the resolution largely ignored the young as a particular constituency and did not focus on the Komsomol as an organization to cooperate with in organizing youth cultural recreation.¹¹⁴ This lack of emphasis on youth issues or the need to cooperate with the Komsomol signaled to the trade union club directors that they did not need to specifically target young people in meeting the cultural needs of the population or elicit the Komsomol's participation in planning events.

Similar evidence emerges from the MOC. The 1944 proposed bylaws (*proekt polozheniia*) for the MOC houses of culture stated that such institutions “be created in every district administrative center for political enlightenment and cultural-mass work among the residents of that center and to host mass cultural events.” The MOC listed the five goals of its clubs. The first four dealt with distributing information on the war, propagandizing Party policy, military knowledge, and Soviet patriotism. The last and, in accordance with the structure of Soviet documents, least important, consisted of developing culture and organizing cultural events. The bylaws detailed the obligations of the house of culture manager, but failed to mention the need to work with youth or the Komsomol.¹¹⁵

Nonetheless, already in the later years of the war, some Komsomol officials attempted to increase cultural events directed specifically at young people. Thus, in May

¹¹⁴ GARF, f. R-5451, op. 24, d. 278, ll. 7-17.

¹¹⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 269, ll. 35-36.

1943, a Saratov city Komsomol plenum noted the neglect of cultural work among youth, admitted that Komsomol organizations did not cooperate with clubs and other cultural institutions, and called for “decisive improvement” in this sphere.¹¹⁶ In the same year, the Rostov city Komsomol reported on a local amateur music competition (*smotr*), while Moscow’s Komsomol committees received criticism for failing to help organize cultural activities for young people in Moscow clubs.¹¹⁷

The all-union Komsomol organization also attempted to augment cultural opportunities for youth, in particular through the Propaganda Department, tasked with managing state-sponsored popular culture directed at young people. O. P. Mishakova headed this sector of the central Komsomol administration from 1938 to 1947.¹¹⁸ A subdivision within the Propaganda department, the Cultural-Mass Desk (*otdel kul’turno-massovoi raboty*), came up with a comprehensive proposal in 1944 to “decisively liquidate the neglect of this sphere, and the dismissive attitude of Komsomol organizations to it.” The document listed the need for specific reforms in the extant network of cultural recreation: holding more events in clubs on science, literature, and the Soviet Motherland; having activities specifically targeted for young people; organizing more amateur arts circles and holding amateur arts competitions; teaching youth new songs and dances; and taking collective trips to theaters, movies, concerts, art exhibits, and discussing them afterward. Several points addressed the way to achieve these goals. For example, the proposal called on training more entertainers (*massoviki-zateiniki*) and

¹¹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 117, l. 34.

¹¹⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 117, l. 7, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 176, l. 1.

¹¹⁸ Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii*, 55-56.

amateur arts circle directors, printing more instruction booklets for Komsomol officials responsible for organizing cultural activities, and having *Komsomol'skaia pravda* publish articles on this field. The document also encouraged local Komsomol cells to take a more active role by purchasing string instruments and accordions with money donated by their members, and participating in factory clubs. The document expressed the need for changes within the Komsomol structure itself, proposing that every primary-level Komsomol committee make a member of the committee responsible for organizing state-sponsored popular culture, and recommending that higher-level Komsomol committees organize commissions for coordinating cultural work. Finally, it suggested that the Komsomol should hold such events for youth in its own institutions. This would involve, according to the document, establishing clubs under the control of the Komsomol in large cities, and having oblast, city, and district-level Komsomol committees organize agitation brigades, dance and song ensembles, amateur theater groups, and so on under its management.¹¹⁹ All this added up to a quite ambitious program, demonstrating the desire of the Komsomol Propaganda Department to expand the amount of organized cultural activities for youth. The higher-ups in the Komsomol TsK seem to have fully rejected the last series of proposals on having Komsomol organizations directly manage state-sponsored youth popular culture, likely perceiving them as permitting youth too much autonomy and initiative, and this was unacceptable to the Party leadership at the time.

Some other ideas, however, found top-level backing, as expressed by two front-page editorials published a day apart in January 1945 in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, one on youth-oriented amateur arts and another on youth involvement in trade union clubs in

¹¹⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 269, ll. 1-9.

factories. A close reading of these editorials, appearing in the national organ of the Komsomol during the closing stage of the war, provides insight on the intentions of the Komsomol leadership toward state-sponsored youth popular culture in the immediate postwar years.

The editorial on trade union clubs, published on January 6, provided directions on the appropriate interactions between clubs and young factory workers. It began with a series of quotes from what the author claimed represented the answers of young workers in one factory to a questionnaire on how they want their factory club to function. The workers apparently stated that “the club should be a place where friends meet, where people can talk about various topics of concern to them,” adding that the club should serve as a second home, have a specific youth-oriented setting, and sponsor events targeting young people. For instance, one young worker wanted more lectures about “great Russian military leaders,” another requested literary evenings, a group of Komsomol members desired more lectures on the international situation and on science and technology, and, lastly, one worker asked for more amateur performances at youth evenings. The author stressed the need for Komsomol committees to consult with their members before working with club managers to plan events, since, as the questionnaire supposedly shows, the Komsomol members themselves provided appropriate guidance for successful and effective events. The editorial praised the Zuev club of the Moscow tramway enterprise, which held several lectures allegedly “based on the requests of youth,” such as “The Dynamo and How to Care for It,” “Electricity and Magnetism,” and “Energy of the Future,” as an example of best practices. Youth, in the paper’s depiction, “listened to these useful lectures with great interest.” Finally, the editorial criticized some

club managers, claiming that they need to direct more of their efforts at youth, for example, in ensuring that more young people get involved in amateur arts.¹²⁰

This editorial, representative of many articles published in the press at this time on youth involvement in the cultural network, presented a narrative of how young New Soviet Men and Women should relate to clubs.¹²¹ The main topics of concern to such youth consisted of lectures on the domestic and international political situation, on Russian history, on science and technology, and literature, with amateur arts concerts last and undoubtedly least on the inventory of model young people's priorities. In claiming that lectures on politics and science embodied the priorities of the mass of youth, the newspaper is less reflective of actual youth desires than what, in the regime's eyes, model youth should have desired. The journalist depicted an idealized situation and looked toward the hoped-for future when all young people behaved as New Soviet Individuals, rather than depicting the actual situation on the ground in the here-and-now. This article, then, embodies Socialist Realism, the Stalinist canonical style in rhetoric and cultural production that presented the officially-prescribed model as the true reality, with the goal of transforming the imagined ideal into the real by remaking the consciousness of the population.¹²² Indeed, after a long day of work, and taking care of basic needs in the

¹²⁰ "Priblizit' klub k zavodskoi molodezhi!" *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 6, 1945.

¹²¹ For other articles, see "Komsomol'tsy sela Tatishchevo," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 6, 1945; "Za poleznyi i razumnyi otdykh," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, July 4, 1946; and "Skuchno molodezhi v Kirovgrade," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 19, 1948.

¹²² For more on Socialist Realism, see Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialism as Will and Representation, or What Legacy Are We Rejecting?" *Kritika* 5.4 (Fall 2004): 675-708; and Lynne Attwood, "Women Workers at Play: The Portrayal of Leisure in the Magazine *Rabotnitsa* in the First Two Decades of Soviet Power," in Melanie Ilic ed., *Women in the Stalin Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 29-48.

harsh postwar environment, it seems far-fetched to claim that the typical young worker really wanted to listen to a lecture on “Electricity and Magnetism.” As this chapter will later show, such topics, while undoubtedly interesting for a small minority, did not satisfy the majority of youth. Instead, in depicting youth as fascinated with these topics, this and similar articles demonstrated how the socially engaged and ambitious young people who regularly perused the youth press needed to believe and behave in order to advance within the Soviet system.

Simultaneously, this editorial served as a signal to the leaders of local, city, and oblast Komsomol committees of what they needed to focus on in organizing events for young people at clubs, privileging political propaganda and productivist concerns aimed at fulfilling the Fourth Five-Year Plan over entertainment. A report to the Komsomol TsK in the fall of 1945 from the Cultural-Mass Desk on the problems in trade union club work provides further support for this interpretation. The document complains that most clubs failed to provide laborers with information on domestic and international political events, discussions of the Soviet Constitution, lectures on the Motherland, science, technology, and, last on the list, art and literature.¹²³ Although after an extensive discussion of these issues, the note dealt with other problems with clubs as well, it placed political propaganda on the pedestal as the primary focus of Komsomol work in state-sponsored popular culture.

The second editorial in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, published the next day, spotlighted the Komsomol's role in amateur arts. Stating that youth constitute the majority of participants in amateur arts circles, the editorial insisted that Komsomol

¹²³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

organizations needed to actively involve themselves in amateur arts and promote the engagement of youth in these circles. The author claimed that the circles create “extremely favorable conditions for upbringing work,” as “many young men and women find their way to the Komsomol through these circles.” Amateur arts also helped “rationally organize the leisure of young men and women.” Censuring the current state of affairs in many Komsomol cells that demonstrated a lack of concern with amateur arts, the paper called for more participation by Komsomol organizations in amateur competitions, and assistance to circle directors in providing training, repertoire, and equipment.¹²⁴

What does this editorial reveal about Komsomol policy on amateur arts? First, it highlights the wartime neglect of amateur arts by the Komsomol, from the top of the hierarchy to the rank-and-file, and the perceived need by the Komsomol leadership to revive amateur arts in preparing for the transition to peacetime. In tandem, the Komsomol TsK provided high-level support for amateur arts, for example, in its July 1945 decree on holding an all-union technical college amateur arts competition.¹²⁵ Such competitions occurred at lower levels as well, for instance in Moscow in July 1947.¹²⁶ Another intriguing point in the article, the use of amateur arts as a recruitment mechanism, reflected the Komsomol effort to rebuild its membership structure, devastated by the war.¹²⁷ Stressing the usefulness of amateur arts for getting youth into the Komsomol

¹²⁴ “Khudozhestvennuiu samodeiatel’nost’ – na sluzhbu vospitaniia molodezhi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 7, 1945.

¹²⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 382, l. 125.

¹²⁶ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 6, d. 32, ll. 1-2.

¹²⁷ For the Komsomol’s efforts to rebuild its structure, see Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 32-63, and Kassof, *The Soviet Youth Program*, 14-18.

suggests that amateur arts had real popularity among young people, in contrast to the propaganda lectures on politics and production.

These editorials and decrees embody the Komsomol leadership's program for the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture in the early postwar years. Following these directives, oblast Komsomol committees passed a series of resolutions meant to improve Komsomol cultural work. In Saratov, the oblast Komsomol committee decreed in July 1945 that city and district Komsomol committees improve club services for youth.¹²⁸ As for Moscow, a resolution by the Komsomol TsK in November 1945 called upon the Moscow city Komsomol to strengthen clubs, and this reportedly resulted in real improvements in club activities aimed at young people.¹²⁹ In another instance, the keynote speech of the August 3, 1946, conference of the secretaries of Moscow Komsomol cells demanded better work in PKOs, as "99 percent of the visitors are youth, this is where they relax, but there is no cultural-mass work there," a deficiency resulting from Komsomol neglect, according to the speaker.¹³⁰ This demand reflected a Komsomol TsK decree earlier that year insisting on better cultural activities for the students of higher and technical education establishments during the summer vacation of 1946, including the organization of amateur arts concerts and mass celebrations (*massovki*) in PKOs.¹³¹ The Bureau even enacted a separate resolution in 1946 demanding that Moscow's Komsomol organizations improve their work in Moscow PKOs.¹³²

¹²⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 323, l. 8.

¹²⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 55.

¹³⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 3, d. 120, ll. 9-10.

¹³¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 429, ll. 2-4.

¹³² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 433, ll. 17-19.

These intentions ran into serious obstacles. The editorial on amateur arts alluded to one of them in portraying the situation in Kirov oblast where, despite the fact that the oblast Komsomol committee passed a resolution promoting the development of amateur arts, “there was a problem of a resolution existing, but no work was done on enacting it.”¹³³ The decree on Moscow PKOs also acknowledged this issue, stating that Moscow Komsomol cells “speak a great deal about the needs and demands of youth, enact many resolutions, but do little in practice to create the necessary conditions for youth leisure.”¹³⁴ Such lack of success on amateur arts, mirroring the apathy of many district, city, and oblast Komsomol cells toward state-sponsored popular culture, resulted from the harsh postwar conditions, where youth, including Komsomol members, suffered hunger and poverty. The Komsomol’s fractured structure due to the war, and its low standing in comparison to other institutions within the Soviet system, further undermined the Komsomol’s capacity to help organize cultural events.¹³⁵ Moreover, despite some rhetoric to the contrary, cultural recreation remained a low priority for the Komsomol, resulting in such activities being frequently left by the wayside in Komsomol work.

The problematic situation in the clubs themselves served as a major obstacle to the Party-state’s youth policy. The management of the Moscow trade union club of the factory “Krasnyi bogatyr” reportedly did not prepare for the fall and winter in 1945, since the club lacked fuel, had broken windows, and poor lighting.¹³⁶ Such circumstances

¹³³ “Khudozhestvennuiu samodeiatel’nost’ – na sluzhbu vospitaniia molodezhi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 7, 1945.

¹³⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 433, ll. 17-19.

¹³⁵ On the Komsomol’s low standing in the postwar years, see Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 32-63, and Fisher, *Pattern for Soviet Youth*, 288-90.

¹³⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 56.

prevailed in many clubs during that fall, for example in Chkalovsk, where only ten of the twenty-six clubs had fuel for the winter. The deficit of other basic supplies also haunted Chkalovsk clubs, as they often had no tables, chairs, or cultural equipment for making music and putting on plays.¹³⁷ In the city of Ivanovo, clubs lacked theater curtains, costumes, and similar materials in late 1945.¹³⁸ Local Komsomol cells in some places assisted clubs in dealing with these matters. Komsomol members helped clean and renovate the club of the “Krasnyi bogatyr” factory and supplied fuel for it. The club managed to acquire three couches, three arm chairs, busts of Lenin and Stalin, a life-sized portrait of Stalin, and other paintings.¹³⁹ Still, such instances appear to have been rare and did not represent a systematic policy by the Komsomol, as it generally lacked the financial wherewithal to procure fuel and supplies, and consequently tended to request that wealthier organizations such as trade unions acquire these materials.¹⁴⁰

An inadequate number of well-prepared club managers and amateur arts leaders also represented a serious challenge for the cultural network’s supply of services to youth in the early postwar years. Described as a problem already in the 1944 note from the Komsomol Propaganda Department, a 1946 report from the same bureaucracy stated that the lack of qualified club workers with an appropriate level of education and preparation constitutes “the primary issue” obstructing the improvement of club work. Additionally, these cadres switched jobs with alarming frequency.¹⁴¹ The Komsomol TsK Bureau

¹³⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 27-31.

¹³⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

¹³⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 56.

¹⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

¹⁴¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 378, l. 2.

sought to deal with these problems, resolving in a 1945 decree that the Komsomol, in cooperation with several other central bureaucracies, needed to prepare directors of amateur arts circles in month-long and ten-day seminars. The Komsomol TsK obligated Komsomol organizations at all levels to select Komsomol members to attend the seminars, get enterprise directors to let those selected attend the sessions, support the seminars and their participants materially, and assist those who completed the seminars in their work in amateur activities.¹⁴² In Chkalovsk, the oblast Komsomol committee held two-week seminars for the amateur arts circle leaders for thirty people, and the Oblast Executive Committee Artistic Department (*otdel isskustv oblispolkom*) also provided artists to work with amateur art circles.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, two-week seminars for thirty people in an oblast as large as Chkalovsk likely had only a minimal impact on the quality of amateur arts.

Hooliganism presented a further obstacle to the Komsomol's intentions for cultural activities. The term "hooliganism" served as a broad label used by the Soviet media to describe the "inappropriate" conduct of, for the most part, working-class males. It referred to cultural practices which tended to combine fighting, drinking, stealing, harassing women, smoking, and cursing.¹⁴⁴ As the Komsomol Propaganda Department depicted the situation in the fall of 1945, "in certain cases, clubs are transforming from a source of culture to a source of hooliganism." It mentioned a club in Vladimir oblast with frequent fights, and another in Kemerovo oblast that workers "are very reluctant to visit"

¹⁴² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 381, ll. 1-2.

¹⁴³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 27-31

¹⁴⁴ For youth hooliganism in the postwar Stalin years, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 167-99.

because of hooligans who brawl there.¹⁴⁵ In Rostov-on-Don, young hooligans plagued the city PKO and movie theaters in 1946.¹⁴⁶ For many young males, fighting undoubtedly constituted a fun free-time activity. G. E. Krichevskii, whose postwar adolescence in Moscow involved a multitude of brawls, recalled that among his friends, such fighting “was not considered a sin,” and “even brought joy” (*kaif*). The members of an amateur art ensemble at a Pioneer Palace near his house represented a favored target for his clique and him since, in his words, “street kids” like himself “despised the ensemble” and its participants for their association with the officialdom.¹⁴⁷

The Komsomol made some efforts to deal with hooliganism in the clubs. For example, in 1946 the Komsomol committee of the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood of Moscow reported that, in response to the Komsomol city committee’s directions, it sent 500 members to “brigades of police assistance” (*brigady pomoshchi militsii*), militia groups of ordinary citizens subordinated to the police.¹⁴⁸ According to its claims, the club of Factory No. 27 and several others witnessed a considerable decrease in hooliganism, since “Komsomol members themselves monitor” order in the clubs. Based on this and similar statements, the Moscow city Komsomol committee sent a note to the Moscow city Party committee stating that it established systematic monitoring in both trade union clubs and PKOs.¹⁴⁹ In reality, such efforts proved meager, as shown by the tough laws

¹⁴⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

¹⁴⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 433, ll. 7-8.

¹⁴⁷ G. E. Krichevskii, born 1934, interviewed February 6, 2009. Also see his unpublished memoirs, which he graciously provided: “Samoanaliz, ili razveiat’ mify.”

¹⁴⁸ On such brigades in the prewar period, see Hagenloh, *Stalin’s Police*, 76-79, 328.

¹⁴⁹ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 5, d. 9, ll. 25, 36-42. The Komsomol TsK also received a report from the Moscow Komsomol on successes in fighting hooliganism in clubs in 1945: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 56.

passed in 1947. This law made minors as young as twelve liable for harsh penalties in severe cases. Those under fourteen were liable for nonsevere cases.¹⁵⁰ This indicates that the authorities considered these young adolescents individually responsible for their actions and thereby deserving of punishments, in a revival of the militant, hard-line policies from the prewar period.

In many cases, young people could not even secure access to the clubs. The highest institutional priority for club managers, as in many Soviet enterprises, lay in fulfilling the financial plan, especially in the immediate postwar years when the Party-state had little resources to spare and wanted clubs to support themselves financially. In a fall 1945 note from the Komsomol Propaganda Department on trade union clubs, the authors drew attention to the fact that “almost everywhere the work of clubs is reduced to commercial activity, undermining the broader goal of cultural enlightenment.” They related how, in general, clubs established “unacceptably high” entrance fees, with tickets for concerts costing 20-30 rubles, for dances 10-25 rubles, while billiards cost 10 rubles an hour. Certain clubs even demanded payments for participating in some circles, such as dancing and foreign language study. In many cases, this resulted in only a small, well-off category of older workers had the means to go to clubs.¹⁵¹ The Chkalovsk oblast

¹⁵⁰ Kelly, *Children's World*, 237-57; Juliane Fürst, “Between Salvation and Liquidation: Homeless and Vagrant Children and the Reconstruction of Soviet Society,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 232-48; and Ann Livschiz, “Children’s Lives After Zoia’s Death: Order, Emotions and Heroism in Children’s Lives and Literature in the Post-War Soviet Union,” in Fürst ed., *Late Stalinist Russia*, 192-208.

¹⁵¹ Apparently, although the VTsSPS passed a decree obliging clubs to provide space twice a week to the students of technical colleges, this “is violated almost everywhere”: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

Komsomol related how young workers expressed “much displeasure” over high prices for tickets to clubs, with dances costing 10 rubles, and concerts 15-30.¹⁵²

The criticism in internal bureaucratic discourse also surfaced in external Komsomol rhetoric, with the Komsomol press printing exposes of the costs associated with state-sponsored popular culture in an effort to use social censure to pressure cultural institutions. For example, a 1946 article denounced the high prices charged in PKOs in Khabarovsk, stating that, if a thief robs one person they call it a crime, but “in Khabarovsk if not one person is robbed but a thousand, they for some reason call it a cultural enlightenment enterprise.” The journalist additionally censured the trade union club of the Uralmash factory in the city, writing that when Uralmash Komsomol members wanted to organize a youth evening in the club, the club director demanded 6,000 rubles from them.¹⁵³ The Komsomol TsK took some measures to deal with the costs, asking the Soviet leadership and the VTsSPS to decrease the cost of entrance to clubs by not taxing the clubs and directing 1 percent from the taxes of other enterprises to fund clubs.¹⁵⁴

These complaints also offer revealing insights into the actual popularity of club events, since dances, concerts, and certain amateur circles drew people into the clubs, while lectures notably did not. This indicates the importance of examining the actual, as opposed to idealized, repertoire of club activities. Here, the prevalence of movies and dancing deviated significantly from the desired emphasis of the Komsomol TsK, which

¹⁵² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 27-31.

¹⁵³ “Dobro pozhalovat’!” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, July 13, 1946.

¹⁵⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

ranked political and production propaganda as primary, and amateur arts a distant second, with movies and dancing not on the list of officially promoted activities.

In fact, however, the Komsomol demonstrated an ambiguous approach toward movies and dances in clubs. While not officially promoted in policy statements by the Komsomol TsK, in 1945-46 the Komsomol press and Komsomol committees occasionally expressed guarded praise and assistance for youth engagement in such activities. The above-mentioned article on Khabarovsk and the fall 1945 note from the Komsomol Propaganda Department censured the high prices charged for dancing and movies, with both pursuing the goal of increasing youth access to such activities. In late 1945, as the example cited in the introduction to this chapter indicates, the Moscow Komsomol committee praised clubs in Moscow for regularly showing movies and holding youth dances, for example in the club of the factory “Krasnyi Bogatyr.”¹⁵⁵ A complaint from Chkalovsk mentioned that clubs generally show movies that are too old, and this apparently inspired discontent among youth.¹⁵⁶ *Komsomol'skaia pravda* published an article in July 1946 lambasting the fact that, in the city of Rzhevsk, “people work hard to heal the wounds caused by the war, rushing to rebuild housing and enterprises, but no one here is concerned, in effect, over the leisure of youth.” Instead, the paper presented as a model young workers from the “Serp i Molot” factory who had the chance to relax and dance, indicating that local Komsomol cells need to make similar efforts.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 321, l. 57.

¹⁵⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 27-31.

¹⁵⁷ “Za poleznyi i razumnyi otdykh,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, July 4, 1946.

Still, in 1945 the Cultural-Mass Desk of the Komsomol Propaganda Department expressed concern in an internal report over the fact that “in a considerably number of clubs, there is no cultural-enlightenment work besides showing movies and organizing dances.”¹⁵⁸ Foreshadowing later attacks, the desk expressed concerns in internal discourse over western-style dancing even before the conclusion of the war, when the wartime bonds between the Allies seemed solid. It argued in 1944 for teaching “folk and ballroom dances to youth” as a means of “agitation against [youth] fascination with western dances.”¹⁵⁹ Similarly, articles from a publication controlled by the Union of Soviet Writers and the Committee on Art Affairs (*Komitet po delam isskustv*) censured jazz in the spring of 1944, although the rash of attacks soon died down.¹⁶⁰

Such criticism, nonetheless, proved exceptional and rarely made its way into public Komsomol discourse in the concluding stages of the war and the immediate postwar period, when western movies and dances proved all the rage and youth could engage in these activities largely free of official opprobrium. The movies entered the Soviet Union largely as the spoils of war, and received the label of “trophy” films. One example, the 1944 German musical *Dream Woman*, drew many more spectators than any of the generally staid, bombastic Soviet movies in the Socialist Realist style made in the postwar Stalin years. *Tarzan’s New York Adventure* from 1942, one of the most popular western films, inspired young Moscow college students to imitate the ape-like howling in the dorms at night. American gangster and cowboy movies such as *The Roaring Twenties*

¹⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 403, ll. 17-22.

¹⁵⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 269, ll. 1-9.

¹⁶⁰ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 187-88, 205.

(1939) and *Stagecoach* (1940) also drew large crowds. The very popular 1941 film *Sun Valley Serenade*, featuring the Glenn Miller jazz orchestra, helped inspire the popularity of western music among Soviet youth.¹⁶¹ Many young people greatly enjoyed such movies, going to see them multiple times.¹⁶² Owing to the popularity of the “trophy” films, movie theaters and clubs ran them over and over.

For club managers, the movies proved a bonanza, enabling them to fill depleted club coffers. A case in point, the Gor’kii House of Culture, owned by the bread-making trade union in Moscow, declared in its yearly report for 1946 that the club received 1,164,100 rubles in revenue from movies, a whopping 69 percent of the total 1,681,300 it collected. For comparison, the club made 268,700 rubles from theater performances, 221,200 from concerts, 22,800 from varied evening events, and a paltry 4,500 from lectures. Moreover, the club spent only 999,600 on the movies, turning a tidy profit of 164,500 rubles. While concerts also made money, 12,700 rubles, the rest of the events cost more money to produce than they brought in. Theater performances lost 34,500, evening events 32,200, and lectures 34,900, with the latter by far the most disproportionate in terms of cost of event versus revenue taken in.¹⁶³ Such figures make it obvious why movies proved beneficial for the resource-strapped clubs, with substantial financial incentives for club managers to use the club hall for movies as opposed to lectures.

¹⁶¹ Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 125-26, and Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 3-4.

¹⁶² For the high level of specifically youth interest in these movies, see Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 205-06.

¹⁶³ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 4, l. 19. Note that it was a common practice to hold dances after concerts and theater performances, increasing their popularity and consequently the revenue garnered.

Also important to note, the money obtained from each event reflected the scale of the ticket-paying audience. The 1946 plan for the club called for lectures to take in 109,800 rubles, instead of the measly 4,500 rubles it actually managed to get, fulfilling only 4 percent of the planned goal. This sum underlines the abysmally low level of attendance at lectures. The club's 1946 plan also reveals another crucial point about lectures. According to the plan, the club expected movies, concerts, theater performances, and evening events to take in more money than they lost, although it proved wrong about the latter two. Lectures, however, were written into the plan as a money-losing activity from the start, since the plan included anticipated revenue of 109,800 rubles, and cost of 141,600.¹⁶⁴ Keeping in mind the pressure for self-sustainability on cultural recreation institutions, the fact that financially unsustainable lectures figured in the club's events indicates the political pressure placed on clubs to have lectures, and support them materially with profit from money-making events such as movies.

Western films went hand-in-hand with western dancing and music. The end of the war did not result in any break in the wartime popularity of jazz and, in fact, the peace treaty resulted in many more opportunities to play, listen, and dance to this music. Utesov, Tsfasman, Rosner, and other popular jazz musicians brought their bands to Moscow and Leningrad. Restaurants and bars in these and other cities, especially in the Baltic states, hosted many jazz bands, which sometimes consisted of recently demobilized soldiers. Plenty of talented amateur musicians joined professional groups,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

for example Iurii Saul'skii, who played in Leonid Geller's band at the National Hotel restaurant in Moscow.¹⁶⁵

Youth in particular expressed fascination with western music and dancing. Growing steadily before the conclusion of the war, the number of youth dancing the foxtrot, tango, rumba, and charleston to music with jazz elements, played by jazz bands and *estrada* (variety) ensembles, exploded across the Soviet Union in the immediate postwar period.¹⁶⁶ These dances appealed to all segments of the young urban population. On the one hand, they filled the repertoire of exclusive establishments devoted to light entertainment, such as the Cocktail Hall bar on Gor'kii Street, easily accessible only to those with connections, especially children of elites. On the other hand, jazz and western dances also crowded out political and production-oriented propaganda, as well as cultural events seen as more uplifting and enlightening, in the Party-state's organizations devoted to mass cultural consumption, clubs and PKOs.¹⁶⁷ During this period, the Gor'kii House of Culture hosted a jazz group.¹⁶⁸ A number of jazz ensembles performed in the Gor'kii PKO in Moscow during 1946, including Rosner's band. That year, not coincidentally, the PKO dance hall greatly overfulfilled its plan, with 487 people present on average per dance instead of the 350 as anticipated, resulting in 759,000 actually coming to the dance

¹⁶⁵ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 205-06.

¹⁶⁶ By "music with elements of jazz," I refer to a wide range of musical maneuvers associated with jazz, ranging from syncopation to improvisation. Pieces with elements of jazz might have included anything from a few notes played in a jazz style to full-blown jazz versions of traditional folk or Soviet songs.

¹⁶⁷ Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 201-05; Mark Edele, "Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50.1 (2002), 37-61; Gleb Tsipursky, "Living 'America' in the Soviet Union: The Cultural Practices of 'Westernized' Soviet Youth, 1945-1964," in Eva-Maria Stolberg ed., *"Rivals of the Twentieth Century": USSR and USA. Two Geopolitical Powers in Competition* (forthcoming in 2011); and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 206.

¹⁶⁸ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 14-16.

hall that year instead of the planned 450,000. This compensated for the underperformance of other PKO attractions.¹⁶⁹ Such numbers indicate that the management of the PKO, and undoubtedly other cultural recreation establishments, may have failed to anticipate the escalation of interest in dancing by young people, the vast majority of visitors to the park. Such youth interest in and commitment to dancing served the Gor'kii PKO and other cultural recreation institutions well, helping cover the losses incurred by the much less popular lectures. No wonder, then, that the managers of many cultural recreation institutions proved reluctant to get rid of western music and dancing when these came under systematic attack in the later Stalin years.

Intriguingly, such hedonist cultural practices by many Soviet youth found their reflection in other Soviet Bloc countries, and even the United States and western Europe. For example, in both East and West Germany, the postwar period witnessed a great deal of young people indulging in American-style jazz and dancing, and watching Hollywood movies.¹⁷⁰ Such youth behavior was widespread throughout the Soviet Bloc.¹⁷¹ The postwar period saw similar pleasure-seeking behavior, centered on fascination with American popular culture, across the whole of western Europe.¹⁷² Within the United States itself, the end of the war brought a rapid increase in the number of youth dancing

¹⁶⁹ TsAGM, f. 2011, op. 1, d. 37, l. 86.

¹⁷⁰ Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 31-70.

¹⁷¹ Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

¹⁷² Sabrina P. Ramet and Gordana P. Crnkovic eds., *KAZAAM! SPLAT! PLOOF! The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

to jazz and watching movies at drive-in theaters.¹⁷³ These parallels among the countries participating in World War II indicates a postwar trend common to both capitalist and socialist states, with a large portion of young people reacting to the strains and tensions of the war by plunging into fun entertainment as the military conflict ended, a development not welcomed by many adults within these countries.

Still, in the Soviet case, the vast majority of the Komsomol's documents on cultural activities from 1944 to mid-1946, whether for public consumption or even reports for internal use, lacked criticism of hedonistic behavior and western cultural influence. The major source of hesitancy over youth cultural consumption of western popular culture emerged from the internal discourse of the Cultural-Mass Desk, which represents an exception for this period.¹⁷⁴ In many other instances, Komsomol officials at all levels supported expanding youth access to movies and dancing. This suggests that officials in the Cultural-Mass Desk during these years leaned toward an ideologically militant position, expressing less tolerance than the general Komsomol line toward western influence and ascribing little value to the satisfaction of popular youth desires via light cultural entertainment.

Despite the position of the Cultural-Mass Desk, and its own predilections, the Komsomol TsK chose to avoid openly condemning movies, dancing, and western popular culture in its decrees, and did not direct *Komsomol'skaia pravda* to do so. The Komsomol higher-ups clearly preferred that young people go to clubs primarily to listen to propaganda lectures, secondarily to spend time in amateur arts circles and thereby

¹⁷³ James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 11-61.

¹⁷⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 269, ll. 1-9.

partake in cultural enlightenment, and rarely to watch movies or to dance, as indicated by depictions of model communist youth behavior in official discourse. A confluence of factors, however, explains the failure of the Komsomol TsK Bureau to censure cultural activities that did not fit its inclinations. First, western-themed culture had genuine popularity among the young, and provided an easy and cheap means of satisfying desires for a postwar return to some sort of “normalcy.” Movies and dancing, likewise, relieved the enormous strains of rebuilding the country. The Komsomol, moreover, would have been extremely unlikely to adopt a policy of condemning such western popular culture independently of the Party, since the Soviet leadership would probably have seen it as a dangerously independent act. Additionally, in the context of a drive to recruit members to the Komsomol and get them to pay dues and serve as lower-level officials within the organization, Komsomol higher-ups likely questioned the wisdom of fighting against such a popular form of entertainment. Conversely, the frailty of the Komsomol and its focus on assisting reconstruction in this period meant that it had few resources left to attempt to change youth behavior. Besides, the Komsomol leadership knew it had little chance of getting the directors of cultural recreation institutions not to show movies or host dances without pressure from the hierarchy of the VTsSPS and MOC, which expressed minimal concern for either youth or the Komsomol. As a result, in state-sponsored youth popular culture the Party-state actually did meet the popular postwar expectations for relaxation of prewar constraints, at least briefly.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ A conclusion in accord with other findings for a brief postwar relaxation: Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 31-39.

Conclusion

Soviet state-sponsored popular culture had roots in initiatives by social reformists in imperial Russia, and took its subsequent shape in the dynamic, turbulent NEP years. During this period, several points of conflict emerged over organized cultural recreation, which reflected broader NEP-era struggles between a hard-line versus a soft-line vision of communist construction. In contrast to the militant perspective, the pluralistic, tolerant one encouraged more space for youth agency and fewer restrictions on initiative from below; supported entertainment, cultural “enlightenment,” and political propaganda (in that order); permitted a degree of western cultural influence; and believed in the need to offer youth fun recreation to prevent juvenile “delinquency.”

In the concluding stages of the war and the early postwar years, 1944 to 1946, the Party leadership, the VTsSPS, and MOC had little energy or time to devote to state-sponsored popular culture for young people. Even the Komsomol top-level officials assigned a low priority to this issue, though their external discourse expressed a predilection for heavily politicized organized cultural events, with a smaller dose of cultural “enlightenment,” and largely remained silent on fun entertainment. Yet, while some Komsomol officials expressed hesitation in internal rhetoric about western popular culture, the Komsomol’s external discourse generally refrained from censoring western dances, movies, and music. Some Komsomol newspapers and cells even praised and made efforts to increase the provision of such activities for youth.

A number of factors explain this ambiguous approach. Despite the preference of the Komsomol leadership that young people spend their time listening to lectures on politics and production in clubs, many young people found them boring, refusing to

attend these events. Some youth took pleasure in making noncontroversial music or putting on plays in amateur circles, while many others enjoyed western dancing, music, and movies, similar to young people in other world regions at this time. Thus, official images of young Soviet citizens as interested primarily in lectures, and to a much smaller extent amateur arts, constituted a Socialist Realist construct. This depiction of idealized New Soviet People was intended to instill normative cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes by modeling “appropriate” behavior, rather than mirroring the actual interests and tastes of young people themselves. In fact, given the weak structure of the postwar Komsomol, combined with the enormous strain of rebuilding and lack of strong directives from the Party, the Komsomol leadership tolerated pluralism as a necessary measure in state-sponsored popular culture. Likewise, such a soft-line approach helped the Komsomol recruit young members and procure financial resources from dues. Simultaneously, the financial demands on the managers of clubs and PKOs meant that the Komsomol hierarchy would have had a very difficult time expunging light entertainment from the cultural network. Indeed, since clubs and PKOs had to largely sustain themselves financially, consumers paying for such light entertainment subsidized the money-losing lectures, which the clubs and PKOs organized mainly due to political demands from above.

In this period, then, a Soviet youth could successfully reconcile a self-image as a good Soviet citizen and New Soviet Person with a strong interest in western popular culture. The socially engaged youth who regularly read newspapers and strove to advance within the system would have been aware of official Komsomol preferences that model communist citizens listen to lectures and engage in amateur arts circles in cultural

recreation institutions. Still, the lack of real censure for dancing and movie-watching in the Komsomol's external discourse, combined with the efforts of Komsomol cells and newspapers to secure access to movies and dancing for youth, served notice of the acceptability of such activities. In other words, watching *Sun Valley Serenade* and dancing the foxtrot may not have served to promote one's Soviet identity and bring one closer to the status of an ideal communist citizen, but it did not detract from this either.

Komsomol officials at the lower levels such as the secretaries of primary cells privy to some of the Komsomol's internal discourse quite possibly knew of the concern within the upper reaches of the Komsomol bureaucracy over western cultural influence, as well as the desired emphasis on political and production-oriented propaganda. Yet, burdened with a multiplicity of tasks, such local-level administrators made the organization of lectures and amateur arts circles a low priority, in many ways reflective of the actual intentions of the Komsomol leadership. As they had to walk a fine line between serving the interests of policy-makers in the Komsomol hierarchy and ordinary members who made up their cells, local secretaries had little incentive to openly battle with the western popular culture admired by many Komsomol members.

While bearing a number of parallels to the policies advocated by those closer to the pluralistic position in the NEP as well as some similarities to the mid-1930s, mass organized cultural activities from late 1944 to the summer of 1946 are most suggestive of the breaks associated with wartime realities and the postwar reconstruction needs. The period of relative pluralism in cultural policy after World War II, however, lasted for a little over a year, as the Stalinist leadership turned toward a hard-line approach even more

extreme than the immediate prewar years, illustrating the powerful continuities in state-sponsored popular culture policy, as well as the impact of the escalating Cold War.

Chapter 2

The Anticosmopolitan Campaign, 1947-53: Part 1, Ideologizing the Repertoire

The late postwar Stalin years, 1947-1953, witnessed a major shift in the Party's approach to state-sponsored youth popular culture as part of a broader ideological tightening and hard-line policy known as the anticosmopolitan campaign. The repertoire of organized cultural activities now had to carry a much heavier dose of political propaganda, communist ideology, and Soviet nationalism than in the 1944 to mid-1946 period, while rejecting any trace of western influence and minimizing entertaining content more broadly. Leaving the topic of popular cultural activities condemned by late Stalinist official discourse for the next chapter, here I investigate the transformations in those forms of organized cultural recreation that authorities considered appropriate for young people. By exploring top-level prescriptions on normative club activities, I highlight the Kremlin's efforts to shape cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes as a way of ensuring that young people fit its idealized image of disciplined and politicized New Soviet People ready to build communism and fight the Cold War.

By focusing my analysis on mass cultural activities that did not inspire the ire of ideological organs, this chapter casts light on the cultural life of a subset of young people who held to a largely conformist perspective, a topic understudied in the historiography on the USSR and youth culture more broadly. These young people found pleasure and even excitement in songs about World War II and the Party, in traditional folk and

ballroom dances, and in plays by Soviet dramatists, thereby investing powerful feelings and emotions, generally associated with the private sphere, into the state-sponsored spaces of the Soviet cultural recreation network. My findings in this regard support Lewis Siegelbaum's depiction of multiple, layered public and private spheres in the USSR, with diffuse borders, instead of the traditional view of sharp lines between a clearly defined Soviet public sphere and private sphere.¹⁷⁶ The willing participation of a portion of young people in officially-prescribed organized cultural recreation underscores the fact that, for some Soviet youth, individual self-expression and agency did not prove incompatible with the Party line during the antic cosmopolitan campaign.

Be that as it may, the Party-state apparatus failed to deliver a sufficient amount of noncontroversial, conformist organized cultural recreation to satisfy the demands of many young people for such orthodox activities. Moreover, some young people participated in leadership-approved cultural recreation only with reluctance. They expressed various degrees of discontent with the repertoire of amateur music, theater, and dances promoted by top-level policy from 1947 to 1953, owing to its intense emphasis on politics and ideology, and centralized control from above. Nevertheless, having few other opportunities for organized artistic self-expression in theatrical performances, music-making, and choreographed dancing, these youth chose to engage in state-sponsored cultural activities; for them, the advantages of participation outweighed the disadvantages. Both sets of problems, however, undermined the late Stalinist Party-

¹⁷⁶ See Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context," in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1-21.

state's goal of using the cultural recreation network to forge postwar youth into New Soviet People.

The Context of Organized Cultural Recreation in the Late 1940s and Early 1950s

From the late 1940s, living conditions in the Soviet Union began to markedly improve. As the widescale postwar famine of 1946-47 drew to a close, leaving millions dead, especially in Ukraine, the government ended systematic rationing. The initial wave of Sovietization swept through western Ukraine, Moldavia, and the Baltic states, suppressing resistance by armed nationalists as the Soviet Party-state imposed its authority. Currency reform, while disruptive at the time, led to more financial stability. The high levels of postwar crime also dropped after 1948. Housing stock and social services grew, if slowly, while price reductions made consumer goods more affordable. In addition, since it took less effort to meet the basic needs of everyday life, ordinary citizens had more energy to focus on their leisure.¹⁷⁷

The postwar reconstruction led to a slow but steady expansion of youth access to state-sponsored popular culture. Soviet cities reportedly had 6,450 functioning clubs in 1946, 7,970 in 1948, 9,170 in 1950, and 10,050 in 1953.¹⁷⁸ In 1951, trade unions controlled over 8,000 mostly urban clubs and Palaces of Culture, with 600 built over the span of 1946 to 1950, and many of the other 7,400 opening their doors anew after

¹⁷⁷ See Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, Hugh Ragsdale trans. and ed. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998): 40-56, 139-48; Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Postwar Soviet Society: The 'Return to Normalcy', 1945-1953," in Susan J. Linz ed., *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union* (Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), 129-56; and A. Z. Vakser, *Leningrad poslevoennoi. 1945-1982 gody* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ostrov, 2005).

¹⁷⁸ There were 87,921 rural clubs in 1946 and 113,180 in 1953. See O. K. Makarova, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe statisticheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1956), 273.

renovations.¹⁷⁹ The bureaucracies that owned club institutions expressed somewhat more concern than before over the cultural activities of youth. In 1951, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, VTsSPS, stated that trade union organizations need to improve cultural activities for young people, cooperating with Komsomol committees in doing so.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, in its bylaws for the commission on cultural work of factory trade union committees passed on February 8, 1951, the VTsSPS explicitly discussed work with children but failed to bring up the need to serve the interests of Komsomol-aged youth or cooperation with Komsomol organizations.¹⁸¹ This exemplifies the inconsistencies in VTsSPS policy, which enabled officials in the lower reaches of the trade union cultural bureaucracy to choose for themselves what position to adopt on the issue of orienting cultural activities toward serving the needs of young people.

Regardless, youth participation in organized cultural recreation grew significantly over these years, as illustrated by amateur art circles, with young people making up the majority of members.¹⁸² In 1945, the circles had just over 2,000,000 performers, but by the end of 1947, this number rose to 3,500,000, and in 1950 to over 4,000,000. By February 1953, 4,800,000 people engaged in artistic activities in 324,000 circles; theater circles garnered the highest popularity, with about 2,000,000 participants.¹⁸³ The young

¹⁷⁹ GARF, f. R-5451, op. 24, d. d. 900, l. 11.

¹⁸⁰ GARF, f. R-5451, op. 24, d. d. 900, l. 17.

¹⁸¹ L. I. Poliakov, *Sbornik rukovodiashchikh materialov po kul'turno-massovoi rabote* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1957), 34-37.

¹⁸² I would again like to stress that such numbers, based on reports from the locale, were undoubtedly inflated, but they can be used meaningfully as a way of measuring change in the provision of amateur art over time.

¹⁸³ For 1945 and 1947, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 673, ll. 7-8. For 1950, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 102. For early 1953, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, l. 3. The numbers for early 1953 do not

performers in these circles also had more access to cultural products. While complaining of the lack of published repertoires for amateurs in 1950, by February 1953 the Komsomol expressed satisfaction over the quantity of literature, with 4,077,700 copies of repertoire collections available.¹⁸⁴

This growth occurred in spite of, rather than because of, efforts of the Komsomol leadership, which, as in 1944 to mid-1946, continued to pay comparatively little attention to improving the provision of state-sponsored popular culture to young people. In the 1947 to March 1953 period, the Komsomol TsK Bureau passed only two decrees on state-sponsored popular culture, one in 1947 and another in 1951.¹⁸⁵ A 1950 Komsomol TsK plenum also enacted a resolution calling for improving state-sponsored popular culture for youth.¹⁸⁶ The Komsomol leadership continued to stress organizing sports over club events, with the Party TsK's decrees in 1948 calling for more work on athletics promoting this focus.¹⁸⁷ For instance, First Secretary of the Komsomol P. A. Mikhailov, in his keynote speech at the 1949 Eleventh Komsomol Congress, spent about six times as long talking about sports than clubs and amateur arts.¹⁸⁸ This sent a clear message to

include data from army and school amateur art circles, and the statistics from previous years may or may not include this data, but this does not impact the overall image of a gradual increase in amateur arts.

¹⁸⁴ For 1950, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 185, and for 1953, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, ll. 1-6.

¹⁸⁵ For 1947, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 523, ll. 3-6. For 1953, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 698, ll. 52-55.

¹⁸⁶ *Postanovleniia chetvertogo plenuma TsK VLKSM (23 avgusta – 25 avgusta, 1950 goda)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1950).

¹⁸⁷ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 99, ll. 70-71.

¹⁸⁸ P. A. Mikhailov, *Otchetnyi doklad na XI s''ezde komsomola o rabote TsK VLKSM* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1949), 33-34, 36-39. The early 1950s featured an ongoing commitment to expanding athletics: *Postanovleniia vos'mogo plenuma TsK VLKSM* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1952), 14-21.

regional Komsomol cells, indicating that they needed to devote substantially more time and energy to organizing sports rather than to pressuring clubs to host youth evenings or getting youth involved in amateur arts.

The Anticosmopolitan Campaign and Youth Cultural Policy

Suffering from the strain of wartime reconstruction after the devastation of the war, the population looked forward to a “normal” life. People proved more and more willing to speak and act against state demands for discipline and self-sacrifice.¹⁸⁹ The Stalin leadership, however, strove to maintain its wartime insistence on absolute obedience and on keeping the populace mobilized, as best embodied in Stalin’s famous 1945 praise of Soviet citizens as “small cogs” holding together the “state machine.”¹⁹⁰ The authorities ramped up the cult of personality, stridently demanding that the population show extreme gratefulness to the leader for victory over the Nazis and for any improvement in living conditions, as opposed to their own individual initiatives.¹⁹¹ A series targeted purges aimed at powerful cliques perceived as too autonomous.¹⁹² Worried over the loosening of ideological controls during the war, the triumvirate of top officials who achieved predominance in 1948, led by L. P. Beria, G. M. Malenkov, and M. A.

¹⁸⁹ Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 101-08, and Fitzpatrick, “Postwar Soviet Society.”

¹⁹⁰ On this phrase, see Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 27-30.

¹⁹¹ Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), and Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 195-232.

¹⁹² Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 445-75.

Suslov, launched a campaign to intensify ideological and political education in all spheres of life.¹⁹³

Likewise, Soviet authorities had a clear target to mobilize its citizenry against, as the Cold War escalated in the late 1940s. This served to justify maintaining a wartime footing, which demanded from Soviet citizens continued discipline, self-sacrifice, and preparation for a potential war. To achieve its goals, the Kremlin launched the campaign against “cosmopolitanism,” a label used by official discourse to condemn anything seen as alien and foreign to the Soviet way of life. Beginning in late 1946, reaching its apogee in 1948, and continuing largely unabated throughout the rest of the postwar Stalin years, this campaign had two interlinked goals. First, it promoted Soviet and particularly Russian nationalism and militant, hard-line interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, as well as full loyalty to the Party and Stalin as leader. Second, the antic cosmopolitan campaign aimed to purge “anti-Soviet” elements, overtly targeting western influence of all sorts.¹⁹⁴ Less openly, this initiative also targeted Jews.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 165-66.

¹⁹⁴ On the antic cosmopolitan campaign, see David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 183-96; Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 62-71; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 238-57; N. I. Nikolaeva, “Nekotorye itogi antiamerikanskoi kampanii v SSSR v kontse 40kh-nachale 50kh godov,” in A. V. Gladyshev and V. S. Mirzekhanov eds., *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* (Saratov: Izdatel'stvo Saratovskogo universiteta, 2004), 100-12; and V. D. Esakov and E. S. Levina, *Stalinskie "sudy chesti": Delo "KR"* (Moscow: Nauka, 2005).

¹⁹⁵ Specifically against Jews, see Jonathan Brent and Vladimir P. Naumov, *Stalin's Last Crime: The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors, 1948-1953* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 282-300.

In the arts, the first waves of this campaign began in the late summer and early fall of 1946. Instigated by Politburo member A. A. Zhdanov, a series of high-level Party TsK decrees appeared in August and September 1946 on literature, theaters, and movies, and a rash of newspaper articles publicized these pronouncements.¹⁹⁶ For instance, the August 1946 decree by the Organizational Bureau of the Party TsK on theaters censured drama theaters for putting on too few plays dealing with Soviet reality and those that were performed for presenting a “perverted image of Soviet life.” The decree cited as the “worst political mistake” the introduction of plays by “foreign bourgeois playwrights,” which “poison the consciousness of Soviet people with a worldview hostile to Soviet society.”¹⁹⁷

Although sporadic censure of western influence in music began in late 1946, such criticism took off only in late 1947, when a revived series of attacks on jazz appeared in the press. These presaged the full-blown expansion of the anticosmopolitan campaign into the sphere of music the next year.¹⁹⁸ The key event in this new wave of anticosmopolitan stridency came in the infamous February 10, 1948, Party TsK resolution condemning V. I. Muradeli’s opera “Great Friendship” and other Soviet composers. In this resolution, the TsK stated that Muradeli and others had wrongly taken a “formalist path,” with a style that that “transformed music into cacophony,” which

¹⁹⁶ See Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 116, and S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 213.

¹⁹⁷ The full text of the 1946 decree against theaters is published in: A. N. Iakovlev ed., *Vlast’ i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b) – VKP(b) – OGPU – NKVD o kul’turnoi politike. 1917-1953* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond “Demokratiia”, 1999), 591-96.

¹⁹⁸ Kiril Tomoff suggests that, in regard to music, the first wave of the anticosmopolitan campaign in late 1946 was ameliorated by the Composers’ Union. See his *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 97-121.

“strongly recalls modern bourgeois culture.”¹⁹⁹ With this initiative, the Party TsK forbid clubs, dance halls, and restaurants from playing jazz, directing these institutions and former jazz musicians to perform bland variety music, folk songs, classical pieces, and ideologized tunes. The authorities removed jazz stars from high positions in the cultural industry, while some jazz players, including Eddie Rosner, ended up in the Gulag. The word “jazz” acquired a negative connotation in official discourse, and the state even banned saxophones.²⁰⁰ By underscoring the need for “ideologically sound” works, and censoring the western music popular among youth, the Party TsK signaled the importance of stressing politics over fun entertainment, intolerance toward western influence, leadership by a narrow ideological vanguard, and the use of heavy-handed censorship. This turn toward ideological militancy in music marked the triumph of those who advocated positions in many ways similar to the NEP-era Left.

The Komsomol leadership devoted minimal energy to mass cultural activities in these years, and much of it went to ensuring that the club repertoire matched the tenets of the antic cosmopolitan campaign as opposed to increasing the opportunities for youth to participate in state-sponsored popular culture. The emphasis on enacting the antic cosmopolitan campaign meant undertaking a range of efforts aimed at promoting ideological militancy and strict discipline. In this regard, Komsomol cultural policy fit the pattern identified by Juliane Fürst, who argued that, after the war, ideological purity came to the forefront of the regime’s goals for youth as Stalin wanted to secure his legacy by

¹⁹⁹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1069, ll. 42-48.

²⁰⁰ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 204-233, and Tomoff, *Creative Union*, 122-151. Besides jazz, another target of the Party TsK decree was western art music. See Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26-27.

ensuring that youth develop absolute loyalty to his vision of the future.²⁰¹ At the same time, such efforts formed part of the broader Stalinist endeavor to create a unified, homogeneous cultural field that concealed the existence of cultural tastes that did not conform to the newly-promulgated official norms.²⁰²

The evidence demonstrates that the early stage of the anticosmopolitan campaign in the arts, from late 1946 to 1947, already had some impact on organized youth cultural activities. One example comes from the Komsomol TsK Bureau's 1947 decree on preparing for an all-union amateur art competition of technical college students, which demanded that the competition function as "a new, bright sign of the benefits of our socialist art, in the face of the pernicious capitalist art that causes youth degeneracy."²⁰³ In contrast, the two Komsomol TsK Bureau resolutions on state-sponsored popular culture in 1946 did not include such ideologized wording, focusing on the pragmatic issues involved in increasing youth participation in club activities.²⁰⁴

Nonetheless, the Party TsK decree on the opera "Great Friendship" represented the most crucial event for extending the anticosmopolitan initiative into state-sponsored popular culture. The Komsomol Propaganda Department, headed during this period by A. G. Klimov in 1947-48 and V. I. Kochemasov from 1949 to 1955, sought to implement the Party TsK's directives.²⁰⁵ Less than a month after the censure of "Great Friendship,"

²⁰¹ Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 23.

²⁰² For how this functioned in regard to reading, see Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 43-44.

²⁰³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 523, l. 3.

²⁰⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 429, ll. 2-4, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 433, ll. 17-19.

²⁰⁵ A. A. Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 62-63.

an internal policy document from the Komsomol Propaganda Department stated that all Komsomol cells have to fully implement the Party TsK resolution.²⁰⁶ Oblast Komsomol organizations heard these signals. For instance, the Rostov-on-Don Komsomol city committee reported in 1948 that, after the Party TsK decree, it significantly improved work on promoting classical music and music written by Soviet composers among youth in the city.²⁰⁷ The Komsomol leadership's external discourse reinforced this message: At the 1949 Eleventh Komsomol Congress, Mikhailov highlighted the need to "vigilantly defend youth from pernicious foreign influences."²⁰⁸ Similar tropes persisted in the Komsomol's discourse during the rest of Stalin's rule. A case in point, a 1950 Propaganda Department report on state-sponsored popular culture expressed the essence of the Komsomol leadership's emphasis in the years of the antic cosmopolitan campaign. It stated that the Party and the population demand "Bolshevik idealism" (*bol'shevitskaia ideinost'*) from arts, which, according to the department, meant propagandizing the Party's political line and helping the Party bring up youth in the spirit of absolute loyalty to the Soviet system.²⁰⁹

The rhetoric of other institutions involved in the organization of cultural recreation for young people contained parallel messages in the 1948 to 1953 period. Thus, at its 1951 plenum, the VTsSPS condemned the performance of what it termed "ideologically lacking and antisocial" pieces in some trade union amateur circles.²¹⁰ This

²⁰⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 120.

²⁰⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 475, l. 140.

²⁰⁸ Mikhailov, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 33-35.

²⁰⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, ll. 149-50.

²¹⁰ GARF, f. R-5451, op. 24, d. 900, l. 12.

differed from the 1945 VTsSPS plenum's resolution on cultural recreation, which lacked such anticosmopolitan language.²¹¹

Officially-Recommended Amateur Arts and Youth Evenings

The anticosmopolitan campaign impacted all spheres of amateur arts, with music one prominent example. Repertoire booklets and Komsomol conferences stressed performing pieces eulogizing the Party and Stalin, praising high production achievements, Soviet patriotism and “the friendship of the peoples,” the “struggle for peace in the whole world,” and so on.²¹² Club managers, amateur art directors, and local Komsomol cadres clearly grasped what the hierarchy expected of them, as indicated by the actual repertoires of state-sponsored popular cultural events. Young amateur musicians performed many songs devoted to the Motherland, the Party, the Komsomol, Stalin, and heroic labor.²¹³ For instance, the first piece in an amateur concert at the Pervomaiskii House of Culture in Odessa was the “Song about Stalin.”²¹⁴ An automobile factory's palace of culture indicated that its amateur chorus learned the songs of Soviet composers and those from other socialist countries.²¹⁵ In contrast, even classical western pieces did not find much welcome during the anticosmopolitan campaign.²¹⁶

²¹¹ GARF, f. R-5451, op. 24, d. 278, ll. 7-17.

²¹² For example, see the following instruction booklet: *V pomoshch' krasnym ugolkam* (Moscow, 1951), 33. Also, see a speech at a 1952 Komsomol conference in Saratov's Kirov neighborhood: GANISO, f. 3234, op. 11, d. 85, l. 15.

²¹³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 17-18.

²¹⁴ *Vechera molodezhi* (Odessa, 1952), 6.

²¹⁵ “Vo dvortse kul'tury avtozavoda,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 2, 1951.

²¹⁶ Although official rhetoric did not directly censure such pieces, they only rarely received acknowledgment as appropriate: for one example, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 120.

The authorities in the postwar Stalin years heavily promoted choruses above all other forms of amateur music collectives. The 1950 Komsomol TsK Plenum's resolution on organized cultural recreation called for the organization of amateur choruses in enterprises, collective farms, schools, and colleges.²¹⁷ In Leningrad, the Komsomol city committee underscored its work in helping create choruses, for example a 120-member city youth chorus at the Leningrad Conservatory.²¹⁸ V. E. Semichastnyi, a prominent Komsomol official, even proposed creating an All-Union Chorus Society.²¹⁹ V. K. Stepanchuk, who rose to the rank of secretary of a neighborhood Komsomol cell, also underlined the significance attributed to choruses at this time.²²⁰

The stress of choruses resulted from their embodiment of the late Stalinist ideal. They constituted a mass, collective, disciplined endeavor, whose success depended on its members functioning together as “small cogs” holding together the “machine” of the chorus, evocative of Stalin's famous toast. Another benefit of choruses was their link to traditional Russian heritage, a perfect fit with the stress on nationalism in the anticosmopolitan years.²²¹ Also, Party officials easily understood songs, in contrast to more abstract musical pieces.²²² Lastly, with minimal need for equipment, amateur chorus circles required little financial outlays.

²¹⁷ *Postanovleniia chetvertogo plenuma TsK VLKSM*, 7, 12-13.

²¹⁸ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 630, l. 90.

²¹⁹ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 630, l. 110.

²²⁰ V. P. Stepanchuk, born 1929, interviewed May 19, 2009.

²²¹ On promoting nationalism in the anticosmopolitan campaign, see Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 214-26.

²²² For the problems Party officials experienced in managing music due to its inherently abstract nature in the 1920s and 1930s, see Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

The repertoire of drama collectives, which put on plays and read poems, paralleled that of music circles. Frequently, they began their performance with a eulogy of Stalin. A case in point, one performance by students of technical colleges began with a reading of “A Word to the Great Stalin,” and another with “Stalin—equals peace.”²²³ While official rhetoric did not ban classical Russian plays, the emphasis lay on Soviet productions, as exemplified by a 1951 list of recommended plays that included only Soviet ones.²²⁴ Thus, at Saratov State University, SGU, an amateur collective produced a play entitled “First Joys” in 1952, based on a novel about Saratov in World War I written by the Saratovite Konstantin Fedin, who had received a Stalin Prize.²²⁵

Drama circles received explicit censure if they did not put on ideologized Soviet plays. For instance, the Moscow city Komsomol committee criticized certain amateur theater groups for performing “vulgar” plays, such as “Old Wives’ Tales,” and censured lower-level Komsomol organizations that did not appropriately monitor the ideological content of club activities.²²⁶ In another example, the author of an instruction booklet described how the amateur collective of the Labinsk House of Culture had great success among the audience with its first few performances. However, the group drew a rebuke from the district Party committee for putting on light, entertaining plays, which supposedly did not satisfy the demands of the local citizenry. The committee informed

²²³ For the first, see “Na stsene – remeslenniki,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, June 13, 1951, and for the second, see *Vechera molodezhi*, 6.

²²⁴ *V pomoshch' krasnym ugolkam*, 35-37. Still, classical plays were occasionally performed. See “V svobodnye chasy,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 29, 1948, and “Samodeiatel'nost' kluba imeni Zueva,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, December 13, 1951.

²²⁵ Untitled article, *Stalinets*, May 6, 1952.

²²⁶ In its February 1953 annual conference: TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 133, l. 49.

the house of culture management that such plays “might lead to rolling down a slippery path to apolitical cultural entertainment” (*apolitichnogo kul’turnichestva*), and recommended that the theater circle put on a play critical of foreign warmongers and another praising collective farm production, which the group did.²²⁷

In claiming that the population wanted plays condemning foreign warmongers and praising collective farms instead of the entertaining plays, the booklet presented an idealized, Socialist Realist vision of what the bulk of the spectators actually desired. After all, it was the light plays that made the Labinsk House of Culture drama collective popular in the first place. This example illustrates the tension between what the Party committee perceived as the problem of cultural recreation devolving to “apolitical entertainment,” and the potential to use amateur arts to promote the agenda of the Party-state, fighting the Cold War and increasing production. As such, this instruction booklet shines bright light on the everyday, grassroots efforts of the authorities to mold the cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes of the population to fit the antic cosmopolitan ideal of a New Soviet Woman and Man.

Amateur dance circles also carried an ideological load, though in a less direct fashion than song and theater collectives. Dance groups typically performed various forms of “mass dances,” often staged for official events, such as shows for election voters or celebrations of the anniversary of the October Revolution.²²⁸ Folk dances represented the most common form of recommended dances, especially Russian ones, embodying the antic cosmopolitan emphasis on Russian nationalism. An instruction booklet even

²²⁷ E. Semenov, *Dom kul’tury na Kubani* (Moscow, 1950), 9-10.

²²⁸ “Kontserty dlia izbiratelei,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, January 28, 1951, and “Vo dvortse kul’tury avtozavoda,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 2, 1951.

criticized satirical depictions of Russians in Russian folk dances, such as the traditional personage of the “merry fool.” The author claimed that World War II revealed the “amazing qualities” of Russian people, making their negative depictions in Russian folk dances inappropriate.²²⁹ Likewise, cultural officials promoted novel “modern” and “socialist” ballroom dances. The Party-state intended such ballroom dances both to convey ideological messages and to replace western dances, a goal pursued by some officials already in the late stages of the war, as the last chapter made clear. These endeavors took on new life in the anticosmopolitan campaign, as authorities promoted novel ballroom dances, with names such as “Meeting of Friends.”²³⁰ The Komsomol Propaganda Department placed high value on ballroom dances, old and new, insisting in 1952 that they had “almost completely” forced out western dances.²³¹

Likewise, during the anticosmopolitan period, the vast majority of youth-oriented evening events, which the Komsomol often helped to organize in clubs and PKOs, centered on heavily ideologized themes. For instance, in 1949-50, the main themes of Leningrad’s youth evenings spanned the struggle for peace and democracy, the great communist construction projects, and the image of Lenin and Stalin in the arts.²³² A typical example of one such event comes from the Gor’kii House of Culture. Targeting young voters, this event had games, songs, and dances in the foyer before the event kicked off with a lecture entitled “The Stalin Constitution and Soviet Youth.” A theatrical

²²⁹ *Khudozhestvennaia samodeiatel'nost'*, 59-81

²³⁰ “Molodye talanty,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, June 6, 1950.

²³¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, l. 6.

²³² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 90.

performance followed the lecture.²³³ Another event, devoted to friendship between Moscow and Kiev college students, began with a speech praising the “great teacher and leader” Comrade Stalin, followed by an amateur concert, and, finally, dancing the waltz.²³⁴

Nonetheless, in contrast to the 1944 to 1946 period, from the late 1940s the Komsomol’s official discourse powerfully censured club evening events that devoted “excessive” effort to entertainment and lacked “sufficient” ideological content. In 1948, *Komsomol’skaia pravda* strongly condemned a Kirovograd club that provided only dancing.²³⁵ Such themes persisted into the early 1950s. For instance, in 1951 the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol committee chastized a club that held daily dances instead of organizing mass political work with youth.²³⁶ Similarly, the SGU newspaper critiqued youth evenings lacking in ideological content.²³⁷ A 1951 editorial in *Komsomol’skaia pravda* complained that evenings at clubs that feature dances and old movies “cannot attract youth.”²³⁸

Since clubs often sought to offer the kinds of events that appealed most to youth in order to fulfill financial plans by having visitors pay entry fees, such discursive claims reveal the gaps between official rhetoric and actual youth desires at this time. Most youth continued to find political propaganda unappealing, and lectures, as previously, drew

²³³ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 3-4.

²³⁴ “Večer družby,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, February 7, 1953.

²³⁵ “Skuchno molodezhi v Kirovgrade,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, June 19, 1948.

²³⁶ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 41, l. 10.

²³⁷ “Bol’she vnimaniia studencheskim obshchezhitiiam,” *Stalinets*, March 25, 1952.

²³⁸ “Udovletvoriat’ kul’turnye zaprosy molodezhi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, December 12, 1951.

only a small audience, failing to fill halls and satisfy the financial needs of clubs. The most revealing evidence comes from a keynote speech at a conference of Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol cadres, a semi-closed forum that permitted more honesty. The secretary of the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol disparaged the club of the Silicate factory for holding too few lectures on youth themes, and also the secretary of the factory Komsomol cell, Comrade Olenin, for not doing anything about this since, in Olenin's words, "youth will not go to them anyway." Additionally, the speaker criticized the club of the Stromynka dormitory at Moscow State University, MGU, for its lectures that had poor attendance. The club's plan, according to the speech, failed to respond to the demands of the students, for example by not propagandizing Soviet patriotism sufficiently.²³⁹ Yet, as shown by the lack of popularity for lectures, such Socialist Realist claims did not correspond to reality. Here, as elsewhere, such discursive tropes functioned as a signal to convey top-level pressure for a heavier ideological load.

In addition to acting against "inappropriate" club events, the Komsomol hierarchy made occasional calls for Komsomol organizations to get more involved in organizing youth evenings, for example in the 1950 Komsomol TsK Plenum resolution.²⁴⁰ Regional Komsomol committees responded to these instructions. The Saratov oblast Komsomol organization, in reporting on its implementation of the 1950 plenum's decree, spotlighted musical evenings held for youth.²⁴¹ The 1951 Krasnopresnenskii Komsomol annual

²³⁹ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 39, l. 14.

²⁴⁰ *Postanovleniia chetvertogo plenuma TsK VLKSM*, 15-17.

²⁴¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 676, l. 13.

conference censured some Komsomol cells that apparently did not pay sufficient attention to organizing evenings of youth leisure.²⁴²

The Komsomol leadership's encouragement of local Komsomol committees to organize evenings for young people did not mean that the Komsomol's top officials wanted youth to exhibit autonomy in managing their own cultural activities. A 1952 instructional booklet, based on a trade union club at a Minsk factory, illustrates this well. Printed by the Komsomol press, it represents an authoritative model of prescribed cultural organization for Komsomol committees. According to the text, the club's council formulates the monthly plan in agreement with the factory Party and Komsomol committee. The Party committee "pays a great deal of attention to the upbringing of youth, and gives the club leadership much valuable advice and directives." Komsomol members helped organize youth evenings, consulting with the Party committee on the topic of the lecture, finding a lecturer, and, together with the club management, organizing a concert. These evenings, always tied to the production goals of the factory, also endeavored to instill Soviet patriotism and artistic tastes in young workers, and expand their cultural horizons.²⁴³ Another 1952 booklet, while stating that Komsomol cells "should be the initiators" of activities in cultural institutions, highlighted the need for all cultural work to serve the goal of bringing up youth in the spirit of Bolshevik ideology, friendship of the peoples, and Soviet patriotism.²⁴⁴

²⁴² TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 41, l. 10.

²⁴³ *Kogda konchaetsia smena*, 13-14.

²⁴⁴ *Vechera molodezhi*, 3, 5.

Such sources shine light on the nature of officially-prescribed youth activism in state-sponsored popular culture in the late Stalin years. The Party-state's rhetoric on organized cultural recreation demanded that local Komsomol cells show discipline and subordinate themselves to the directives of Party committees. Recollections by a former Moscow Komsomol neighborhood committee secretary, V. S. Miakhovka, support this point. She stressed the important role of local Party committees and also trade union committees and Ministry of Culture organizations in controlling the content of the repertoire of club activities for youth during the antic cosmopolitan period, noting that Komsomol cells had only a minor voice.²⁴⁵ In fact, the trope of discipline pervaded rhetoric on cultural recreation in these years. Thus the railroad trade union instructed its red corners to help "raise the discipline of each worker."²⁴⁶ Komsomol rhetoric not dealing with state-sponsored popular culture likewise emphasized discipline.²⁴⁷

Allusions to youth autonomy and initiative figured only rarely in postwar Stalinist discourse on young people. When they did, such references frequently appeared in the context of discipline and management from above. For instance, the Komsomol's national organ published an article in December 1951 about the city of Melikess, entitled "Develop Youth Initiative." It praised a local Party committee for activating a Komsomol cell. Before the Party's intervention, the Komsomol cell "barely showed life," but with the Party's deep, pervasive attention, the cell held conferences regularly and "discipline has improved," and now the Party would need to intervene only if the Komsomol gets off

²⁴⁵ V. S. Miakhkovka, born 1923, interviewed April 29, 2009.

²⁴⁶ *V pomoshch' krasnym ugolkam*, 12.

²⁴⁷ For instance, on higher education: *O rabote komsomol'skikh organizatsii vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii*, 5-6.

track.²⁴⁸ In the same spirit, the 1952 Saratov city Komsomol conference censured the city Komsomol committee for not providing enough direction to local Komsomol cells.²⁴⁹ Other Komsomol conferences and press stories in this period confirm that the vast majority of criticism on the question of leadership ensued from insufficient instructions and guidance from above, not from higher-up officials failing to provide room for grassroots initiative.²⁵⁰ This mirrored the dynamic of the campaign for criticism and self-criticism of the late postwar Stalin years, whose very narrow boundaries permitted only a minimal scope for autonomous activism from below.²⁵¹

The stress on youth discipline and passiveness dovetailed with the eulogizing of Stalin. Artistic pieces about the “Great Leader” constituted part of the Stalin cult of personality that reached new heights with the celebration of Stalin’s seventieth birthday in 1949.²⁵² The rhetoric’s demands that the populace show loyalty and gratitude to the leader ascribed to Stalin the role of the initiator of any productive activity. The tropes in the official discourse depicted young people as passive and responding only to top-level initiatives, especially those originating directly from Stalin, which inevitably functioned to deprive youth of legitimate space for individual agency.²⁵³

²⁴⁸ “Razvivat’ initsiativu molodezhi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, December 9, 1951.

²⁴⁹ GANISO, f. 4529, op. 9, d. 3, l. 289.

²⁵⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 84-87, 130-35, and “Rabotat’ tvorcheski, initsiativno,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, December 8, 1951.

²⁵¹ On this campaign and its limits, see Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 103-12.

²⁵² On the cult, see Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!*, 195-232.

²⁵³ On Stalin as source of authority, see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 36-76.

Instruments of Oversight and Officially-Prescribed Motivations

Responding to pressure from above to improve controls over state-sponsored popular culture, Komsomol and club officials undertook various institutionalized efforts to monitor amateur arts. For instance, they joined or established art councils, which brought together Komsomol, Party, trade union, MOC, and enterprise officials, as well as professional and amateur artists. In the prewar period, such institutions sought to improve the artistic quality of club events and to control their content. Largely inactive during the war, art councils experienced a revival in the years of the anticosmopolitan campaign, with their censorship function acquiring priority. For example, the Gor’kii House of Culture organized an art council, which reportedly gave directions to each amateur collective on implementing a “high-quality” program.²⁵⁴ The Stalin auto factory Palace of Culture indicated that it created an art council to better manage its amateur arts.²⁵⁵

In certain large cities, cultural institutions known as a House of Folk Creativity (*Dom narodnogo tvorchestva*, DNT, also called House of Amateur Arts, *Dom khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel’nosti*), played a central role in oversight functions. Top Komsomol officials, such as Semichastnyi, underlined the importance of DNTs in managing the work in amateur arts at that time.²⁵⁶ The most prominent Soviet DNT, in Moscow, had oversight over the capital and attendant influence over the rest of the USSR.²⁵⁷ Its functions included examining and approving all amateur circle repertoires and giving the collectives guidance, training, and support, with the goal of managing their

²⁵⁴ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 12, ll. 29-31.

²⁵⁵ “Bol’shaia družba,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, May 27, 1950.

²⁵⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, ll. 108-09.

²⁵⁷ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1.

artistic content.²⁵⁸ For instance, DNT representatives watched all shows before their open debut at Moscow's Gor'kii House of Culture.²⁵⁹

Amateur cultural competitions served as another instrument of managing organized cultural recreation. These began with local-level contests, for example between amateur circles within a local establishment, such as the ten amateur circles at the different workshops of the Cheboksarsk electric appliance factory.²⁶⁰ SGU had even more amateur collectives, holding annual internal competitions between the different departments (*fakul'tety*).²⁶¹ Collectives that won local competitions met in neighborhood and then city-level competitions.²⁶² The collectives awarded top honors in these contests sometimes went on to oblast and then national competitions, with financial support for travel often coming from Party-state institutions.²⁶³

These contests offered an opportunity for the hierarchy to assess the current state of amateur arts, which provided a corrective to the overly rosy picture in reports from below.²⁶⁴ Clubs and Komsomol organizations, fully realizing this evaluative aspect of the contests, devoted much more energy to amateur arts shortly before and during these events, a practice that inspired much criticism from above. In 1947, for example, the

²⁵⁸ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 1-2.

²⁵⁹ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 7-10.

²⁶⁰ "V svobodnye chasy," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 29, 1948.

²⁶¹ "Nachalsia smotr khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel'nosti," *Stalinets*, December 12, 1952.

²⁶² "150 sel'skikh khorov," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 3, 1950, and "Molodye talanty," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, June 6, 1950.

²⁶³ For the oblast level, see "Smotr sel'skoi khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel'nost'," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, December 7, 1950. For the all-union level, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 523, ll. 3-6.

²⁶⁴ On the problem of inflation of numbers in reports from below in regard to industry, see Joseph S. Berliner, *Factory and Manager in the USSR* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol lambasted the fact that amateur circles functioned primarily during competitions.²⁶⁵ Three years later, the Komsomol Propaganda Department similarly lambasted such behavior, testifying to the scale of this problem.²⁶⁶ Still, these events enabled the bureaucracy to gather more data about the state of amateur participants than reports from below would have provided by themselves, and limited the potential for extreme falsification. Furthermore, the contests served to intensify work in the amateur arts. In doing so, they mirrored elements of the competitions in industry, which also praised model laborers and collectives in order to improve production.²⁶⁷

In contrast to industrial production, however, amateur art contests served as a way to monitor and send signals about the appropriate repertoire and the ideological goals of amateur art. For instance, the Komsomol Propaganda Department's report on the 1947 competition of Moscow's technical college students stressed that "in the repertoire of circles, there now appear works reflecting the might and steadfastness of the Soviet system, instilling love in the Motherland."²⁶⁸ Such statements are strongly indicative of the differences between officially-recommended amateur art competitions in the anticosmopolitan years and those held earlier, which featured more entertainment-oriented and less ideologized pieces. Amateur competitions, likewise, served to reveal problems in the repertoire. A case in point, Semichastnyi criticized amateur cultural

²⁶⁵ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 14, l. 159.

²⁶⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 151.

²⁶⁷ On such industrial competitions, see Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 72-105, and Berliner, *Factory and Manager*.

²⁶⁸ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 6, d. 32, ll. 1-2.

competitions in 1950 for “apolitical, low-quality works lacking in ideological content.” Not coincidentally, he also called for holding regular competitions at all levels.²⁶⁹ Press rhetoric and the awarding of prizes highlighted officially-prescribed repertoires, setting them as a model for the all to follow.²⁷⁰

While the brunt of the demands on Komsomol work regarding state-sponsored popular culture emphasized ideological concerns, cultural enlightenment received some attention as well, if scant. Though decidedly emphasizing the ideological load of organized cultural activities, the 1950 Komsomol TsK Plenum’s resolution did mention the need to bring up cultured youth.²⁷¹ The keynote speaker of the 1951 Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol conference directed Komsomol organizations to improve their work on raising the cultural level of youth.²⁷² Lists of approved lectures, overwhelmingly dealing with politics and production, generally included a few on cultural topics at the bottom.²⁷³

Less frequently, official rhetoric presented amateur arts and youth evenings as helping to draw young people into greater involvement in Party-state institutions, especially in conjunction with the eventual goal of joining the Komsomol, a continuation of the postwar drive for higher membership. Official publications sometimes linked the Komsomol’s organization of cultural events with growth in the Komsomol ranks, for instance inspiring the increase of a sewing factory’s cell from twenty-six members in

²⁶⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 110.

²⁷⁰ “Smotr sel’skoi khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel’nosti,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, December 7, 1950.

²⁷¹ *Postanovleniia chetvertogo plenuma TsK VLKSM*, 9.

²⁷² TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 41, l. 9.

²⁷³ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 16, ll. 11-13, and *V pomoshch’ krasnym ugolkam*, 14-18.

1947 to over a hundred in 1952.²⁷⁴ The Rostov-on-Don Komsomol reported in 1948 that the improvement of political and cultural work resulted in the city cell increasing its rate of growth.²⁷⁵ Such claims likely had some basis in reality. The appeal of getting free tickets to a Komsomol-organized evening may well have swayed some to join. Likewise, if a primary Komsomol cell involved itself actively in bringing about amateur art and youth evenings, it might well have convinced youth interested in state-sponsored popular culture to join the Komsomol. Furthermore, membership offered young people a chance to play a bigger role in organizing club activities, which some youth enjoyed.

Another benefit, as portrayed in the discourse, consisted of improving labor productivity. Some press stories depicted fun and pleasurable cultural recreation as a requisite that leads to better labor at the workplace.²⁷⁶ However, such direct connections between relaxation and higher labor productivity appeared with rarity during the late Stalin years, owing to the Stalinist state's emphasis on nonstop production efforts.²⁷⁷ More in line with the latter trope, official sources depicted club activities that propagandized production as inspiring workers to commit to higher outputs. For instance, improved cultural work supposedly resulted in young Rostov-on-Don workers fulfilling and over fulfilling production plans.²⁷⁸ A youth evening in Minsk centering on lowering costs and saving metal apparently inspired groups of Komsomol members to take on the

²⁷⁴ *Vechera molodezhi*, 8.

²⁷⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 475, l. 142.

²⁷⁶ "Park – dlia molodezhi," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 2, 1949.

²⁷⁷ See Stephen E. Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 131-33.

²⁷⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 475, l. 142.

obligation to save many tons of metal.²⁷⁹ Undoubtedly, some young workers motivated by socialist competition found the combination of propaganda and fun inspirational and, following the tropes of official discourse, readily took on new obligations after such events.²⁸⁰ For others more skeptical of the assertions in official rhetoric, such evenings may have served as a signal of current priorities and consequent potential rewards for following the demands of the system in taking on new obligations.

Tellingly, the use of state-sponsored youth popular cultural activities to battle against juvenile “delinquency” received almost no attention in high-level policy statements or the youth press during the years of the anticosmopolitan campaign. In rare instances, it appeared in internal reports from the oblasts.²⁸¹ Instead, the Komsomol generally ascribed even the most violent crimes to insufficient political lectures and upbringing work.²⁸² The postwar Stalin Komsomol press, in the rare instances when it acknowledged hooliganism by young people, generally connected it to incompetent socializing by the local Komsomol or educational organizations, or blamed parents.²⁸³ Other Party-state agencies similarly prescribed a mixture of political propaganda and coercion as the appropriate solutions to juvenile “delinquency,” with the use of force

²⁷⁹ *Kogda konchaetsia smena*, 16-17.

²⁸⁰ On the belief of many postwar Soviet youth in official claims, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 134-36.

²⁸¹ For instance, a Komsomol Propaganda Department summary of the reports of a host of oblasti on organized cultural recreation referenced only one, the Karelo-Finskaia SSR, which connected the poor organization of state-sponsored youth popular culture to the existence of youth hooliganism. See RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 83.

²⁸² A case in point, when Leonid Gorenkov, born in 1936, a school Komsomol secretary, killed the fourth-grader Aleksandr Kishkin in December 1952, the oblast Komsomol organization reported that “this fact resulted from unsatisfactory political enlightenment and teaching in the school”: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 742, ll. 25-26.

²⁸³ “‘Trudnye’ mal’chiki,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, December 25, 1952, and “Za otsovskoi spinoi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, June 22, 1950.

receiving preference at the top levels of policy-making.²⁸⁴ In this approach to youth misconduct, the postwar Stalinist state in the late 1940s reproduced the prewar pattern, continuing to hold to the hard-line posture advocated in the NEP by the Left faction.

Young People and Officially-Recommended Organized Cultural Recreation

Young people generally participated in amateur art circles based on personal enthusiasm for cultural activities. Komsomol members did fulfill social obligations by doing so, while Komsomol officials received credit for their work on these activities.²⁸⁵ Nonetheless, amateur arts stood on the bottom rung in the hierarchy of praiseworthy social work, with considerably more importance given to political propaganda or volunteer construction work and, in the postwar Stalin years, sports. D. V. Gal'tsov, an amateur art circle participant, made this clear: "the administration considered participation in amateur arts as social work, and every [student] had to have some sort of social work," which "was included in one's official file." Otherwise, the student might be criticized as an "antisocial element" and encounter potential obstacles in one's life path, such as in attempting to enter graduate school, since "all formal moments were tied with" the official file. Yet amateur cultural activities, in his words, lay "in the bottom drawer" of the hierarchy of prescribed social work. He underscored that he would have "undoubtedly" participated in amateur arts without getting official credit for it, since

²⁸⁴ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 102, ll. 215-22; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 289, ll. 2-12; and GARF, f. 9401, op. 2, d. 199, l. 184-89. Reprinted in: E. Iu. Zubkova, L. P. Koshelova, G. A. Kuznetsova, A. I. Miniuk, and L. A. Rogovaia eds., *Sovetskaia zhizn', 1945-1953* (Moscow, Rosspen, 2003), 194-210. For more on the postwar Stalinist approach to youth crime, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 167-99.

²⁸⁵ Such praise of lower-level Komsomol officials was described by N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009.

“people engaged in amateur arts out of their own personal desire.”²⁸⁶ V. A. Miliaev, another amateur art activist, confirmed that amateur arts figured in the official file of Komsomol members, but also insisted that he did not participate in them just for “a checkmark” in his file.²⁸⁷ According to O. V. Chernyaev, amateur arts “was that which you were not forced to do, but did by choice out of your own personal desire, yet when the official file is written, it includes active participation in social work, in amateur arts.”²⁸⁸ Such personal memories help illustrate the real desire of many young Soviet people to partake in club events, with 4,800,000 participants on the eve of Stalin’s death.

Furthermore, these personal sources open the curtain on the willingness of young people to invest their emotions and feelings, traditionally ascribed to the private realm, into conformist forms of cultural recreation organized by the Party-state, generally equated with the public sphere. A case in point, during her reading of a selection from a Stalin Prize-winning novel, A. A. Fadeev’s *Young Guard*, at an oblast-level amateur art competition in Ukraine, N. K. Petrova experienced such intense emotion that she burst into tears, and audience members cried as well. She remembers this event and the emotion it evoked with clarity to this day.²⁸⁹ As a schoolgirl, S. N. Shchegol’kova enjoyed the opportunity to dance officially-recommended ballroom dances in amateur dance circles.²⁹⁰ The Saratovite F. A. Kurilova sang and read poetry, and recalled her

²⁸⁶ D. V. Gal’tsov, born 1942, interviewed February 20, 2009.

²⁸⁷ V. A. Miliaev, born 1937, interviewed February 28, 2009.

²⁸⁸ O. V. Chernyaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009. For more confirmation that amateur arts counted as social work for the Komsomol, see S. V. Semenov, born 1948, interviewed March 18, 2009.

²⁸⁹ N. K. Petrova, born in the late 1930s, interviewed May 5, 2009.

²⁹⁰ S. N. Shchegol’kova, born 1937, interviewed February 19, 2009.

excitement over going through all levels of an amateur art competition, up to the final performance at the oblast level.²⁹¹ In another case, V. N. Iarskaia enthusiastically performed in amateur plays, and even over fifty years later clearly recollected the details of a scene where she played the role of a spy interrogated by the Soviet political police.²⁹²

Although youth had minimal input on the shape and content of organized cultural recreation, many young people who sincerely accepted the claims of official discourse and were not bothered by the heavy ideological load found in state-sponsored popular culture a means of expressing themselves, their values, and their agency. Furthermore, if writing personal diaries could serve the goal of making a model communist on an individual level, singing paeans to the Party, World War II, and production achievements in a chorus of fellow amateur singers likely contributed to a collective process of instilling and confirming officially-prescribed ideals among these youth.²⁹³ The fact that young people invested personal emotions and feelings and devoted much time and energy to such activities may well have contributed to them being forged into New Soviet People through organized cultural recreation.

However, the slow rate of expansion of such “appropriate” state-sponsored popular cultural offerings for youth served as an obstacle to the Party-state’s intentions. A major reason for the failure of the mass cultural recreation network to orient itself toward

²⁹¹ F. A. Kurilova, born 1936, interviewed May 15, 2009.

²⁹² V. N. Iarskaia, born in the mid-1930s, interviewed May 30, 2009.

²⁹³ On diary writing, see Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Also, see the contributions to Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller eds., *Autobiographical Practices in Russia/Autobiographische Praktiken in Russland* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). Especially relevant is Katerina Clark, “‘The History of the Factories’ as a Factory of History: a Case Study on the Role of Soviet Literature in Subject Formation,” in Hellbeck and Heller eds., *Autobiographical Practices in Russia*, 251-78. Also see Anna Krylova, “In Their Own Words? Autobiographies of Women Writers, 1930-1946,” in Adele Barker and Jehanne M. Gheith eds., *A History of Women’s Writing in Russia* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002), 243-63.

youth was the reluctance of many local-level Komsomol cadres to invest much effort into club activities. For instance, the director of a PKO in the city of Gor’kii complained in 1949 that neighborhood Komsomol committees expressed no interest in the PKO’s work.²⁹⁴ In 1950, Moscow’s Komsomol paper decried Komsomol committees in Moscow oblast’s Kommunisticheskii district for not taking any measures to correct problems in local clubs that provided insufficient cultural events for youth.²⁹⁵ The Komsomol of the “Avtostal” factory in Stalin oblast came under criticism from the Komsomol Propaganda Department in 1952 for its failure to organize adequate cultural activities for young people, as out of 6,000 young workers, only 88 participated in amateur art circles.²⁹⁶

Considering the fact that the Komsomol leadership paid minimal attention to state-sponsored youth popular culture, such statistics should not have surprised the department. The Komsomol’s top officials placed much more pressing demands on local Komsomol cadres, with political propaganda, production needs, and even sport organization having higher priority than cultural recreation. The overloaded local Komsomol cadres, consequently, had little incentives to put more than token efforts into helping organize club events in the postwar Stalin years. According to L. K. Baliasnaia, a former Komsomol TsK Secretary, those few who engaged in substantive cultural work largely acted out of their own, personal enthusiasm and commitment, as opposed to responding to directives and incentives from above.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ “Parki i sady – dlia molodezhi,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, June 3, 1949.

²⁹⁵ “V storone ot zaprosov molodezhi,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, May 20, 1950.

²⁹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 19-25.

²⁹⁷ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009. In the early and mid-1950s, Baliasnaia served in Ukraine, rising to the position of managing all young people in Ukrainian educational institutions. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, she became a Komsomol TsK Secretary in charge of all Komsomol activities

In addition to the lack of attention from the top, the demographic profile of Komsomol cadres played a major role in the low level of concern local-level officials expressed over supplying young people with state-sponsored popular culture. At this time, a high percentage of Komsomol officials were war veterans. As a result, a significant age gap existed between them and their cell members.²⁹⁸ The former soldiers who served as Komsomol cadres focused their energy on education, job training, and political activism in an effort to catch up on what they missed during the war and to establish a career. They had little time left for Komsomol work, such as club activities, that they, quite accurately, perceived as not advancing their careers. Furthermore, as recalled by A. I. Avrus, who matriculated into SGU in 1948, former soldiers personally preferred to spend their free time on paramilitary training and sports, and considered cultural recreation intrinsically less important.²⁹⁹

This led to some tensions with nonveteran Komsomol members at SGU. Avrus related that SGU students who went to college straight from high school sought not only to acquire an education for a career, but also to find a path into adult society and an identity, and even to “spend five years having fun.” As a result, nonveteran SGU students tended to spend much more time on state-sponsored popular cultural activities, especially since they developed some artistic abilities due to the opportunities to participate in amateur circles in schools and after-school programs. Overall, Avrus recalls that “during

aimed at youth in schools. From the mid-1960s, she served as the Deputy Minister of Enlightenment. For more on Baliaskaia, see A. A. Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 72.

²⁹⁸ For more on veterans, including their role as Komsomol officials and interactions with nonveteran members, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 32-63, and Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39-101.

²⁹⁹ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

this time there was a comparatively strong desire among students to engage in amateur arts,” owing to the end of the war and the accompanying “desire for a peaceful life, with participation in amateur arts and sports helping show that peace had arrived.” Further, according to Avrus, students lacked other forms of entertainment in those years, with the exception of movies, making “amateur arts or participation in sports the only way of relaxing.”³⁰⁰ Others, such as N. A. Troitskii, also at SGU in those years, similarly recalled student enthusiasm for amateur arts.³⁰¹ This evidence confirms the tensions resulting from the gap found in the literature in age and veteran status between lower-level Komsomol officials and Komsomol members.³⁰² Moreover, it illustrates the Party-state’s failure to deliver a sufficient amount of conformist cultural consumption options to satisfy the desires of at least some young people who wanted such cultural recreation.

If a deficiency in the amount of normative mass cultural recreation functioned as one obstacle to using club activities to build model young communists, the content of conformist cultural events offered another challenge. A subset of young people who liked the noncontroversial, officially-approved forms of state-sponsored popular culture rejected some of the tropes resulting from the heavy ideologization of repertoires during the antic cosmopolitan campaign. Troitskii, for example, enjoyed performances in an amateur vocal circle and also served as a Komsomol primary cell official in charge of cultural activities. According to him, “it was obligatory to open a concert with a song about Stalin,” yet this “was perceived as a formality” that did not reflect the actual

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009.

³⁰² On these conflicts, see Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation*, 32-63, and Ludmilla Alekseeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 29-56.

sentiment and values of young people, at least in his clique. In contrast, although patriotic songs also formed a compulsory part of a concert, he insisted that youth sang such songs with true feeling, despite their obligatory nature, as they, and he, “believed, with pleasure” (*ia sam veril, s udovol'stviam*), in the content of songs about the Civil War, the Great Patriotic War, and the Soviet Motherland.³⁰³ For young people such as Troitskii and his friends, the contradiction between some of the tropes in the obligatory amateur art repertoire, and their personal sentiments and feelings, undoubtedly bred cynicism and undermined the Party-state's attempt to forge New Soviet People through mass cultural events.

Likewise, the politicization of professional cultural activities in the antic cosmopolitan campaign inspired the hostility of some young amateurs. Iarskaia, the amateur drama circle performer, remembered how she, together with her class in school, went to see a contemporary opera written by a Soviet composer, Mal'tsev, entitled “From the Whole Heart.” Sitting in the nosebleed section in the gallery, she and other members of the class “listened with horror,” as the tenor began to sing: “and so, we begin the Party committ-ee mee-ting.” The whole gallery, according to her, began to laugh. The class did not even stay until the end of the performance.³⁰⁴

Moreover, not all club events ostensibly devoted to ideologically approved themes fit the confines of officially-recommended practices, as exemplified by an unusual SGU amateur concert held on May 9, 1950, to mark the fifth anniversary of the end of the war. While Stalin revoked the celebration of Victory Day soon after the war,

³⁰³ N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009.

³⁰⁴ V. N. Iarskaia, born in the mid-1930s, interviewed May 30, 2009.

many veterans celebrated it on a more informal basis.³⁰⁵ SGU student veterans decided to mark the occasion with a concert, finding support from the SGU Komsomol as many of its officials fought in the war. This performance featured an SGU student veteran who sang what Avrus labeled “folklore from the front.” During the concert, the 200 audience members “did not make one sound” because of “how interesting the songs were.”³⁰⁶ Such events, which conveyed the individual soldier’s perspective as opposed to the prescribed vision of the authorities, did function to promote patriotism, yet undermined some aspects of the official narrative of the war, and thus the molding of New Soviet Women and Men.

Conclusion

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Stalinist leadership pursued the goal of forging an anticosmopolitan version of model young Soviet people, ones highly ideologized and politicized, disciplined as opposed to initiative-oriented, and mobilized for the Cold War. To achieve this aim, the Party-state wanted to manage the cultural consumption desires, aesthetic tastes, and social values of young people through state-sponsored popular culture, powerfully impacting this sphere of activities. Indeed, much of the relatively limited efforts the Komsomol devoted to organizing cultural events for youth in these years revolved around enacting the tenets of the anticosmopolitan campaign, in contrast to expanding youth access to fun cultural recreation as in the immediate postwar period. The anticosmopolitan campaign insisted on a widescale escalation in the ideological elements of club activities, along with an extensive

³⁰⁵ For more on local-level celebrations of Victory Day by veterans, see Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War*, and Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead*.

³⁰⁶ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

centralization of repertoire management. These initiatives achieved significant successes in imposing top-down controls over noncontroversial, leadership-recommended forms of club activities in the late postwar Stalin years. The Party-state created and distributed a series of recommended plays, songs, and dances, as well as instructions for normative youth evenings. Instruments of oversight such as artistic councils and DNTs, and amateur cultural contests, helped the Kremlin monitor repertoires at the grassroots. Official rhetoric demanded that any youth activism in this and other spheres fully subordinate itself to the ideologically conscious vanguard, meaning all levels of the Party hierarchy. This chapter, by tracing how the Soviet cultural bureaucracy implemented the anticosmopolitan campaign on the ground, helps illustrate how official ideological initiatives were enacted in Soviet everyday life.

In spite of the high ideological load of state-sponsored popular culture during the anticosmopolitan campaign, on the eve of Stalin's death 4,800,000 youth took part in amateur arts. Unlike some other officially-approved forms of social work such as volunteer construction projects or sports, amateur arts carried a heavy ideological load during the anticosmopolitan campaign. Many of the young amateur performers did not express any hesitation about their participation, as they sincerely believed in the ideals and values promoted by the anticosmopolitan campaign. These true believers willingly and enthusiastically performed pieces eulogizing official tropes, spotlighting the fact that, for some conformist youth, individual agency was compatible with full participation in heavily ideologized state-sponsored cultural activities. Additionally, young people placing their emotions and feelings into their artistic self-expression at highly politicized

club events illustrates the lack of clear, distinct boundaries between sharply marked private and public realms.

For such youth, participating in amateur arts likely proved effective in strengthening their acceptance of the rhetoric's messages, and also taking in new official tropes, such as the disparagement of the US during the anticosmopolitan campaign.³⁰⁷ In this regard, state-sponsored popular culture contributed to the Stalinist leadership's goal of molding youth into an anticosmopolitan version of New Soviet Individuals, especially since inspiring strong emotions serves as a powerful way of instilling values and norms.³⁰⁸ Building on the recent literature on Soviet subjectivity that illustrates how official discourse encouraged the writing of autobiographical narratives to attempt to forge people into model communists, my findings enrich this historiography by highlighting another mechanism of doing so, one deployed on a mass scale and in a collective setting.³⁰⁹

The Party-state, however, faced a series of obstacles in using ideologically-approved forms of cultural recreation to forge young New Soviet People. The Soviet leadership placed little emphasis on increasing the provision of organized cultural activities for youth. Because of this, the Komsomol leadership and much of the

³⁰⁷ See Rósa Magnúsdóttir, "Keeping Up Appearances: How the Soviet State Failed to Control Popular Attitudes toward the United States of America, 1945–1959" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006).

³⁰⁸ For how the prewar Soviet state sought to use positive emotions resulting from festivals to instill norms and values, and the challenges in doing so, see Malte Rölfe, *Sovetskie massovye prazdniki* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009), and Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

³⁰⁹ On using narratives to forge model communists, see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*; Clark, "'The History of the Factories' as a Factory of History"; Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-26; and Krylova, "In Their Own Words?"

Komsomol hierarchy focused on political propaganda and production concerns, and to a lesser extent on improving youth access to sports. Cultural activities occupied a miniscule portion of Komsomol organizational work, with only cultural enthusiasts among lower-level cadres investing much effort into this sphere. The cultural consumption demands of many rank-and-file Komsomol youth, even for fully normative forms of organized cultural recreation, remained unmet, especially due to the gap between age and veteran status of Komsomol cadres and ordinary members. This inspired tensions between conformist youth and the Komsomol hierarchy, and, as a result, the Party-state. The leadership's own policy, therefore, contributed to undermining its intentions in this sphere.

Another challenge to the Party-state's goals emerged from the fact that a number of young people participated in the heavily-ideologized forms of amateur arts and youth evenings that fit within the tenets of the antic cosmopolitan campaign only due to the lack of other options. These young people enjoyed officially-approved forms of amateur artistic activities, such as choruses and plays, while rejecting some or most aspects of the heavily politicized repertoires, especially eulogies of Stalin, though patriotic-themed events found much grassroots support. For such young people, participating in organized cultural recreation meant distancing their personal sentiments and feelings from what they performed. Such "singing Bolshevik" bred cynicism and disillusionment, subverting the aims of the Stalinist leadership to forge New Soviet Men and Women.³¹⁰

Simultaneously, these young people developed a strategic approach to interactions with

³¹⁰ Here, I tweak Stephen Kotkin's use of the term "speaking Bolshevik," which he defines in the context of the Stalin era as "the obligatory language for self-identification and as such, the barometer of one's political allegiance to the cause." See Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 220.

the Party-state, maneuvering within the clubs to acquire access to the artistic activities they desired, a skill that would serve them well in their adult lives.

Chapter 3

The Anticosmopolitan Campaign, 1947-53: Part 2, Purging the Repertoire

The previous chapter investigated the impact of the anticosmopolitan campaign on top-level guidelines for appropriate state-sponsored cultural offerings for the masses of youth, and the resulting intensification in the politicization of club activities. This chapter reveals that a number of clubs, as well as parks of culture and leisure—PKOs, hosted jazz and western dancing, activities that went directly against the tenets of the anticosmopolitan campaign, undermining its spirit and purpose. I first examine official efforts to expunge western dancing and jazz from club activities, especially by the Komsomol leadership and ideological control organs such as the Houses of Folk Creativity, DNTs. The significant challenges they met in enacting the anticosmopolitan campaign's prohibition on western popular culture at the grassroots level offer insights on the nature of the Soviet system as a whole. I demonstrate that official socialist culture in the height of the postwar Stalin period, far from being monolithic, was riven by tensions between economic incentives oriented toward consumption and ideological directives from the top, a conflict ultimately attributable to the policies of the Kremlin itself.

In the chapter, I also draw on interviews with former Komsomol officials as well as with a variety of ordinary youth who grew up in the postwar Stalin era to illuminate the perspective of young people who partook in western popular culture during the anticosmopolitan campaign. First, this chapter scrutinizes the understudied alternative

youth culture of jazz enthusiasts, a community of fans who used legal and illegal means to listen to the newest American and western European jazz music, despite official prohibitions. Second, it investigates the much larger mass of youth who danced what official discourse at this time labeled as western dances, including the foxtrot, tango, and rumba. Though such behavior presented a challenge to the Stalinist leadership's goals of forging disciplined, militant young New Soviet People mobilized for the Cold War, the preponderance of youth who consumed western popular culture did not perceive their actions as resistant or anti-Soviet. Instead, their conduct exhibits a high degree of awareness of the Soviet system and thus integration into it, as they successfully maneuvered to achieve their desires within its confines, showing the room available for individual agency in official cultural institutions. Likewise, I illustrate the ideological organs' difficulty in transforming the cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes of young people. Finally, my findings permit insights on the nature of the public and private spheres in the Soviet context, as well as on the young generation growing up in the postwar Stalinist era

The Party-State's Struggle with Western Popular Culture in Club Institutions

The anticosmopolitan campaign pronounced a strict proscription on western cultural influence in club activities. For popular music, this included not only a prohibition on all American-style jazz, but even the Sovietized jazz that mixed balalaikas with saxophones. In regard to dancing, the ban spanned not only the more recently-imported jazz dances, such as the lindy-hop and charleston, but also the older foxtrot, tango, and rumba. While these dances had less explicit associations with jazz as such, in

the Soviet context they were traditionally danced to music with elements of jazz played by jazz bands.

Following the tenets of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, and particularly the Party TsK's 1948 decree on music, the Komsomol leadership took a series of steps to purge western popular culture from mass recreation, since youth constituted the largest demographic group consuming such cultural offerings. Komsomol-owned newspapers played a central role in this top-down initiative. A case in point, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* published a letter to the editor that condemned a club in a workers' settlement where "mournful (*zaunyvnye*) tangos and vulgar foxtrots are boring youth, but there are no other dances there."³¹¹ Expressing similar antiwestern rhetoric, *Moskovskii komsomolets* critiqued the administration of the club of the Bauman factory for thinking that "the only entertainment for youth should be dancing the foxtrot to the sound of jazz," with the journalist lambasting the "cacophony produced by one dingy ensemble" with "as a rule, only a western repertoire."³¹² A 1952 story in this paper attributed the interest of young people at a Moscow factory in "vulgar romances and foxtrots" to incompetent work in socializing youth, criticizing the Komsomol organization there.³¹³ While the paper's disparagement of foxtrot dancing explicitly relates to the broader criticism of western popular culture, the mention of "vulgar romances" refers to a blend of gypsy, criminal, and folk music that served as popular entertainment. The latter, becoming popular in the cities of late imperial Russia and surviving throughout the Soviet period despite official

³¹¹ "V klube tol'ko tantsuiut...", *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, December 8, 1951.

³¹² "Klub ili... tansploshchadka?" *Moskovskii komsomolets*, January 19, 1950.

³¹³ "Kak zhe nam provodit' svobodnoe vremia?" *Moskovskii komsomolets*, August 14, 1952.

disapprobation, suffered a degree of suppression in the general clampdown of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, although not nearly as much as jazz or western dancing.³¹⁴ In publishing such articles, which appeared with some regularity in the youth press throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, newspapers fulfilled their function as investigators and overseers of the implementation of the Komsomol leadership's policy. The papers censured club and PKO managers for putting on western dances and Komsomol officials for looking the other way, instead of taking appropriate educational and disciplining measures.

The press depicted ordinary youth, however, as going to these dances only because of a lack of other interesting activities, or due to young people's confusion about what constituted "appropriate" popular cultural activities. Although clearly hostile to such dances, Komsomol rhetoric rarely presented overt criticism of their young participants and, despite the occasional article broadly condemning "bowing down to the West," the papers usually did not draw explicit connections between "bowing down" and dancing the foxtrot, tango, and rumba. The young dancers themselves, consequently, occupied an ambiguous location in the contours of official public discourse, demonstrating the difficulties in finding the appropriate approach to an officially condemned activity enjoyed by so many young people. Besides such press rhetoric, the Komsomol also sent brigades that included music students to visit cultural institutions and restaurants and ensure that western music did not appear there. They compared the

³¹⁴ On the origin of such songs, see Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12-16, and Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 223-52.

repertoires of house bands with lists of forbidden melodies and styles, and vetoed forbidden jazz-style tunes.³¹⁵

The Komsomol hierarchy placed direct pressure on central Soviet agencies to comply with the drive against western popular culture. In 1950, the First Secretary of the Komsomol P. A. Mikhailov sent a note to Deputy Prime Minister G. M. Malenkov criticizing the content of gramophone records produced by government-owned factories. Their repertoire apparently included “dance music in jazz style,” such as rumbas and foxtrots by Alexander Tsfasman, as well as gypsy songs performed by Tamara Tsereteli, a prominent female singer, and also songs influenced by a criminal lifestyle. Mikhailov requested more Russian folk and Soviet songs.³¹⁶ In another letter to Malenkov, Mikhailov complained of repertoire booklets with “songs in a westernized jazz style.”³¹⁷ In 1952, the Komsomol Propaganda Department asked for a decrease in the radio broadcasts of what it called “American and western European dance music.”³¹⁸

While such censure of non-Komsomol institutions served as a relatively painless and easy way of underlining the Komsomol’s commitment to the antic cosmopolitan campaign, the department likewise undertook investigations into how regional Komsomol cells followed central Komsomol policy. One investigation into Orlov oblast

³¹⁵ S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 216-17.

³¹⁶ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 630, l. 79.

³¹⁷ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 630, ll. 182-83.

³¹⁸ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 710, l. 16.

disparaged the fact that youth evening events “have nothing but western dances,” with frequent drinking of alcohol and fighting.³¹⁹

Such scrutiny proved necessary for the center to implement its policy, as messages condemning youth’s interest in western culture appeared only rarely at local Komsomol conferences during these years. For example, the keynote speech of the 1950 annual Moscow city Komsomol conference condemned “bowing down before foreign influences,” but the keynote speeches of the subsequent two postwar Stalin conferences, in 1951 and early 1953, failed to mention this issue.³²⁰ The Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol conferences from 1947 to 1952 did not bring up this matter at all, neither in the keynote speech nor the recorded comments of delegates.³²¹ The Saratov city Komsomol conference keynote speech and conference resolutions in 1952 also lacked references to western influence in popular culture.³²² Despite the clear presence of Komsomol members who enjoyed western music and dancing both in Moscow and in Saratov, the Komsomol secretaries who spoke at these conferences proved reluctant to deal with these issues. After all, in contrast to Komsomol newspapers or the Propaganda Department, local Komsomol secretaries bore responsibility for the behavior of the members of their cells, making them reluctant to publicize problematic conduct.

³¹⁹ RGASPI, op. 32, d. 742, l. 95.

³²⁰ On 1950, see TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 11, d. 31, l. 24. For 1951, see TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 12, d. 1. For 1953, see op. 13, d. 133.

³²¹ For 1947, see TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 14; for 1948, see TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 20; for 1950, see TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 33; for 1951, see TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 41; and for 1952, see TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 2, d. 49.

³²² GANISO, f. 4529, op. 9, d. 3.

Besides the Komsomol, control organs within the network of cultural institutions themselves attempted to enact the Party's policy shift in the late 1940s. The most revealing case study on how the broader impact of the antic cosmopolitan campaign played out at the local level in clubs and PKOs comes from the Moscow DNT. This institution stood on the front lines of the battle against western elements in the mass cultural network in Moscow, but also indirectly impacted the rest of the USSR, since it served as an example to all other Soviet DNTs. In 1949, the Moscow DNT censured certain Moscow amateur orchestras that played "formalist, western European and American music," and avoided having their repertoire approved in the DNT.³²³ By 1951, the DNT found that the activity of amateur variety orchestras—the ones that played a range of popular music, including jazz, in the immediate postwar era—to have "noticeably decreased over the last years," with only two performing at an all-union amateur contest. The DNT did not complain about the music of such orchestras or their failure to approve the repertoire. Instead, it emphasized the fact that the DNT did a lot of work to ensure the appropriate content of amateur arts and to improve the qualifications of circle leaders.³²⁴ From this, it can be inferred that the antic cosmopolitan campaign generally succeeded in expunging jazz and even music with elements of jazz from the amateur art circles in Moscow. The fall in the number of amateur collectives devoted to variety music likely resulted from the ban on western music in their repertoire, and resultant lack of youth interest in such music. One example comes from the Gor'kii House of Culture, which reported that, after the Party's shift on the ideological front, the club got rid of its own in-

³²³ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 16, 20.

³²⁴ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 2-3, 24-25.

club jazz ensemble. In addition, it sought to improve educational work in its amateur collectives by holding lessons on “appropriate” dancing, likely meant to purge western dancing.³²⁵

This helps explain the substantial decrease in the growth in amateur art circle membership in the late postwar Stalin years. From 1945 to late 1947, the number of participants grew by 1,500,000. From that date to early 1953, however, membership increased by only 1,300,000, as the previous chapter has shown. The 1945-47 period undoubtedly witnessed a postwar upswing, with Soviet citizens embracing amateur arts in the peacetime transition. Still, this does not fully explain the rapid decrease in the rate of growth of amateur arts in the late 1940s to early 1950s, especially since the opportunities for amateur art increased with the provision of space, equipment, and repertoires for amateur art circles. However, the ban on western music in early 1948 led to the dissolution of many amateur art circles devoted to western popular culture and the transformations in the repertoire of many others to focus on ideologically-prescribed themes. This, along with the escalation in the ideological load carried by amateur arts, likely discouraged many Soviet youth from engaging in amateur arts. Further support for this point comes from the more rapid growth of amateur artistic circle membership after the antic cosmopolitan campaign ended with Stalin’s death, as detailed in the next chapter.

Examining the Moscow DNT also provides insights into the Party-state’s struggle against western dancing and efforts to promote officially-prescribed dances. In 1949, the DNT criticised dance directors at clubs such as the Metrostoi House of Culture, whose

³²⁵ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 14-16.

amateur dance collective apparently did not teach ballroom dancing.³²⁶ Focusing much energy on managing dancing in 1951 in response to the continued popularity of what it termed “foreign influences” in dancing, the DNT sent representatives on 236 inspections of mass dances in Moscow’s cultural institutions. The DNT likewise promoted new ballroom dances with the goal of “helping in the struggle against western dances foreign to us.” It tried a new tack in dealing with recalcitrant directors of dance collectives by creating an Attestation Commission, intended by the DNT to confirm all dance circle leaders before they would be hired, with thirty-six confirmed in sixteen commission meetings in 1951.³²⁷ Yet, as revealed by the 1953 yearly report from the MDNT, this tactic did not prove fully effective as the managers of some clubs refused to submit those they wanted to hire to the DNT Attestation Commission. As a result, the DNT complained that “incompetent people” continued to work in the clubs.³²⁸

Overall, the DNT undertook vigorous efforts against western music and dancing. This may indicate that its officials held an ideologically militant vision of communism. At the same time, working to expunge jazz, tango, foxtrot, and rumba from clubs enabled the DNT to claim a larger slice of administrative turf, reflecting the institutional drive of any bureaucratic entity. In addition, such efforts fit the interests of the dance teachers working in the DNT choreographic division, who sought to use the Attestation Commission as a means of professionalizing the teaching of dance under their own control, imposing their traditional views on what constituted normative dancing.

³²⁶ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 13, l. 20.

³²⁷ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 3, 24-25.

³²⁸ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 34, ll. 48, 58.

A 1952 internal policy report on dancing in Moscow prepared by the Komsomol Propaganda Department provides in-depth evidence of western influence in dancing, and of Komsomol efforts to combat it. The very fact that the department thought it necessary to produce such a document demonstrates its concern with this issue. The report closely mirrors the sentiments expressed by the DNT and points to ideological concordance and likely cooperation between the DNT and certain officials in the Komsomol Propaganda Department, who already in late 1944 expressed hesitancy over western dances. Thus, like the DNT's reports cited above, the Komsomol Propaganda Department criticized club officials that it termed "dance poachers, who distort the tastes of Soviet youth" by "propagandizing degenerate western foxtrots, languid tangos, and vulgar rumbas." With the pressure of the campaign for officially-prescribed dancing, these "dance speculators" (*tantseval'nye del'tsy*), according to the report, "quickly painted themselves over" as teachers of ballroom dances, yet they "teach ballroom dances in a vulgar foxtrot style." The department also complained that the managers of dance halls failed to hire "dance controllers, who need to correct those dancing and call to order those who distort Russian ballroom dances." The report, essentially repeating the DNT position, blamed these problems on the lack of a centralized system of management over dancing directors, as club managers hired whomever they want. As for evening dances, the Propaganda Department found that dance halls, such as the ones in the Central PKO and in the Krasnopresnenskii PKO, "still propagandize western dances, while ballroom dances are often performed in a distorted manner" (*iskazhenno*). It claimed that youth complained about western dances, for example quoting a letter to *Komsomol'skaia pravda* by three young people who blew the whistle on a PKO dance floor where "a jazz ensemble"

performed “cosmopolitan ‘foxtrots’ and ‘crying’ tangos.” The department also condemned the broadcasting of western dances on the radio and sale of records with western dance music.³²⁹

The evidence indicates that the anticosmopolitan campaign’s targeting of western popular culture in clubs had some partial successes on the eve of Stalin’s death. It managed to expunge the more recently imported dances associated most clearly with jazz, such as the lindy-hop and charleston, from the network of clubs and PKOs, since, despite their popularity in the Soviet Union during the 1930s-mid 1940s, they were not mentioned as a problem either by the Moscow DNT or the Komsomol Propaganda Department. In addition by 1951-52, these institutions raised no concerns over amateur art groups performing American-style or even Sovietized jazz in Moscow. The struggles in these years moved to dances generally perceived as less western and thus less subversive, namely foxtrot, tango, and rumba, which still had great popularity among youth. Ideologically militant officials from the Komsomol and control organs in the cultural recreation network itself lamented the presence of such dances and music in clubs and PKOs. By 1952, these efforts pushed such dances to the margins of legitimacy in state-sponsored popular culture, with teachers of the foxtrot and tango having to present themselves as experts in ballroom dancing while avoiding the officials of the DNT Attestation Commission.

³²⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 6-8.

Young Enthusiasts of Western Popular Culture

Nonetheless, certain club and PKO directors continued to provide young people with limited opportunities to dance foxtrot, tango, and rumba in state-owned cultural institutions. This primarily resulted from, as the Komsomol Propaganda Department admitted in the internal discourse of its 1952 report, the existence of a substantial “group of fans of western dances” among young people. As a result, “certain club and park directors, seeking to attract more visitors to the dance halls to fulfill the financial plan, allow western dances.” Some dance teachers, those the department labeled “dance speculators,” apparently made a good living by making financial deals directly with the club managers to take charge of teaching dancing and organizing evening dances.³³⁰ In the context of the resource-scarce postwar Stalin years, the willingness of many young people to part with the rubles necessary to gain admittance to a dance floor indicates their enthusiasm for these dances and the substantial role played by western popular culture in their everyday lives.

The Komsomol had trouble explaining the popularity of western cultural activities among youth. In external rhetoric, it often claimed that young people went to such dances only because of a lack of “appropriate,” officially-approved options such as lectures or amateur art circles. In its internal bureaucratic discourse, however, other explanations appeared. The ongoing provision of western-style music and dancing by Party-state institutions, such as clubs, PKOs, radio stations, and record stores received a major portion of the blame. Another factor in explaining the widespread appeal of “western” dancing among youth, at least according to the Komsomol Propaganda Department, was

³³⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 7-9.

that young people simply did not know how to dance ballroom dances, while lessons for ballrooms dances cost too much, at forty rubles each. Yet, distressingly for the department, “a significant portion of youth” tried to “make themselves look like ‘foreigners’ and recreate the most repulsive western European and American foxtrots.” It stated: “among these emulators of foreigners, new dances appeared, such as ‘Get Your Hands Off Korea’ and ‘The Wall-Street Smile,’ as well as expressions such as the ‘Truman style.’”³³¹

This evidence intimates at the rise of *stiliagi*, a youth counterculture that appeared in the USSR at the end of World War II. Popularized by an infamous 1949 article in the satirical journal *Krokodil*, the term *stiliagi*, loosely translatable as the “style-obsessed,” was used by official discourse to homogenize and stigmatize young people who were enamored with and adopted western European and American cultural practices.³³² These young people, largely male, emerged from among the children of Soviet elites in the mid-1940s, and most *stiliagi* in the postwar Stalin years continued to come from this social group, particularly since participation required considerable financial resources. By the early 1950s, though, some middle- and even working-class youth began to join the ranks of the *stiliagi* as living conditions and the purchasing power of Soviet citizens improved. *Stiliagi* made adopting a style they considered western central to their lives and self-definition. Indeed, the *Krokodil* article tellingly condemns the protagonist, a young male, for “complex and absurd dance moves” in the dance hall, a reference to American-style

³³¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 7-8.

³³² “*Stiliaga*,” *Krokodil*, March 10, 1949. Some of these youth disliked the term at first, preferring to call themselves *chuvaki* for young men and *chuvikhi* for women, although eventually adopting the term *stiliagi* as their own. See Artemy Troitskii, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester: Faber and Faber, 1988), 13.

dancing, and for wearing a jacket with an orange back and green sleeves, yellowish-green pants, and socks in colors suggestive of the American flag. More generally, it censured stiliagi for “developing their own style in clothing, conversations, and manners,” where “the main thing is to not be like normal people.” Notably, the article lambasted the fact that stiliagi “studied all foxtrots, tangos, rumbas, lindy-hops in-detail.”³³³ This official condemnation makes references to important signifiers in stiliagi cultural practices, including music and dancing, fashion, an argot, and manners, in which these youth affected a western style.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly in light of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, the postwar Stalin leadership expressed little concern with such youth, with minimal public denunciations and no substantial actions by the central Komsomol bureaucracy, although some of the more militant local Komsomol secretaries made efforts to censure stiliagi. Recent archival-based scholarship has substantially advanced our understanding of the history of this alternative youth culture in the postwar Stalin years.³³⁴ However, other Soviet youth who did not belong to the stiliagi alternative youth culture also expressed a

³³³ *Krokodil*, March 10, 1949, “*Stiliaga*.”

³³⁴ See Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 217-35. Here, she develops the ideas she expressed earlier in: Fürst, “The Importance of Being Stylish: Youth, Culture and Identity in Late Stalinism” in Juliane Fürst ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 209-30. Also see Mark Edele, “Strange Young Men in Stalin’s Moscow: The Birth and Life of the *Stiliagi*, 1945-1953,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50.1 (2002): 37-61, and Gleb Tsipursky, “Living ‘America’ in the Soviet Union: The Cultural Practices of ‘Westernized’ Soviet Youth, 1945-1964,” in Eva-Maria Stolberg ed., *“Rivals of the Twentieth Century”: USSR and USA. Two Geopolitical Powers in Competition* (forthcoming in 2011).

genuine interest and even fascination with certain aspects of western popular culture, a topic poorly illuminated in the historiography.³³⁵

As a result, focusing on young jazz enthusiasts who eventually became jazz musicians and promoters serves to expand the boundaries of current research. With rare exceptions, jazz musicians did not self-identify as stiliagi, as they considered the aesthetics of jazz music, its sound and feel, much more significant than its origins in the United States.³³⁶ For example, A. A. Kuznetsov, a prominent Moscow jazz musician, stated that “I was not among the stiliagi.” He underlined that the marginal position of jazz and its association with US culture did not serve as a draw for him, that he was interested in jazz because of the aesthetic qualities of the music itself.³³⁷ A Saratov jazz musician, F. M. Arons, also indicated that he did not consider himself a stiliaga.³³⁸ V. N. Iarskaia, a Saratov jazz singer during the mid-late 1950s, considered stiliagi fashion amusing, and expressed apathy toward stiliagi in general.³³⁹ One of the most famous jazz musicians in the Soviet Union, the late G. A. Garanian, suggested a clear difference between “jazz enthusiasts” (*dzhazovye liudi*) and stiliagi. The latter, in his words, had their own way of dressing, slang, everything, “all with an air of superiority.” Garanian stated that he did not really have any contacts with stiliagi cliques. He related how he and his jazz

³³⁵ Thus, both Fürst and Edele mentioned the existence of youth interested in western popular culture who did not belong to stiliagi ranks, but focused the lens of their analysis on stiliagi. See Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 218, and Edele, “Strange Young Men.”

³³⁶ A. S. Kozlov is one such exception, a prominent jazz musician who did consider himself a stiliaga. See his memoir, *“Kozel na sakse”: I tak vsiu zhizn’* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998).

³³⁷ A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009.

³³⁸ F. M. Arons, born 1940, interviewed May 18, 2009.

³³⁹ V. N. Iarskaia, born around 1936, interviewed May 30, 2009.

enthusiast friends “were so into jazz that we had no other interests, it was jazz and nothing else.”³⁴⁰ These jazz enthusiasts, for whom a major component of individual self-understanding and social life revolved around a form of popular culture associated with the US, constituted an alternative youth culture with similarities to, but distinct from the stiliagi one. In furthering our understanding of the experience of jazz enthusiasts in the antic cosmopolitan campaign, we gain insights on how this initiative shaped youth lives.

Interviews with and memoirs by jazz enthusiasts reveal the powerful impact of the antic cosmopolitan campaign on their everyday existence. Garanian described the Party TsK’s 1948 resolution as a crucial break point after which the authorities did not allow jazz.³⁴¹ I. P. Zhimskii, who became a prominent jazz musician in Saratov during the post-Stalin years, recalled that the resolution resulted in the “harassment” (*pritesnenie*) of jazz ensembles. He confirmed that the campaign targeted the instrument most symbolic of jazz: “saxophones were replaced by clarinets.” Even accordions were either moved to the back rows or replaced by *baiany*, a Russian version of an accordion.³⁴² Another such jazz musician in Saratov, L. A. Figlin, stated that even “the word jazz was banned,” and “playing jazz, with saxophones, was called cacophony” in official discourse, with a broad consensus in place within the field of music experts and commentators that “jazz is not our music.”³⁴³ Avrus, not a jazz enthusiast but deeply involved in and informed about the Komsomol’s activities in the late 1940s-50s, related that in Saratov in the postwar Stalin

³⁴⁰ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

³⁴¹ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

³⁴² I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009.

³⁴³ L. A. Figlin, born 1938. interviewed May 25, 2009.

era, “there was a struggle against jazz.”³⁴⁴ Multiple sources depict an absence of jazz at youth evenings in schools or colleges.³⁴⁵

Even so, young people fascinated with jazz had a number of options in their efforts to access this music in the postwar Stalin years, some of these within the boundaries of the law. For example, Iarskaia recalled how, in the late 1940s-early 1950s, she repeatedly watched “Happy-Go-Lucky Guys” (*Veselye rebiata*), a Soviet jazz comedy from the time when the authorities permitted jazz in the 1930s.³⁴⁶ Both she and a future jazz promoter, V. E. Kleinot, also described the high esteem of jazz enthusiasts for trophy films, as these often featured jazz music, most notably *Sun Valley Serenade*, described in chapter 1.³⁴⁷ According to Zhimskii, plenty of old records survived the ban on jazz music, as the Party-state did not confiscate them. Middle-class young people whose parents had gramophones could dance to these tunes at home. Crucial to this was the fact that many well educated adults ignored the ban on jazz music, the music they grew up with in the 1930s, and even danced the foxtrot and tango themselves, in Zhimskii’s words.³⁴⁸ Not only future jazz musicians, but ordinary youth such as S. N. Shchegol’kova, who did not express a fascination with jazz, danced to tunes with jazz

³⁴⁴ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

³⁴⁵ See the following: N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009; F. A. Kurilova, born 1936, interviewed May 15, 2009; A. S. Derzhavets, born 1935, interviewed April 28, 2009; and L. I. Derzhavets, born 1939, interviewed April 28, 2009.

³⁴⁶ V. N. Iarskaia, born around 1936, interviewed May 30, 2009.

³⁴⁷ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

³⁴⁸ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009.

elements by the famous musician Leonid Utesov, despite knowing full well about the antic cosmopolitan campaign's ban on jazz and western dancing.³⁴⁹

Those really enthusiastic about jazz also adopted illicit methods to access the newest foreign jazz pieces and information on jazz, requisite for those who considered themselves part of a jazz fan community.³⁵⁰ They used the black market to acquire illegal records, such as those made by Soviet underground music production studios. Such studios, which sprouted up with the conclusion of the war, demonstrate how entrepreneurially-minded citizens found ways to satisfy popular cultural consumption demands in ways that went around the Party-state's system of cultural provision. Moreover, this underground production testifies to the deficiencies in the late Stalinist government's efforts to control cultural life in the USSR.

The "Golden Dog" (*Zolotaia Sobaka*) represents a case in point of one such underground enterprise. In late 1946, several young people, including Stanislav Filon and Boris Taigin, opened the "Sound Recording" (*Zvukozapis*) music recording studio as part of an officially sanctioned cooperative. They relied on "trophy" German musical recording equipment that had the capacity not only to copy extant gramophone records but also to create new records. Overtly, this studio's business model consisted of making "sound letters" (*zvukovye pis'ma*): people came in to record themselves giving short speeches or singing songs. As Taigin notes, though, "this served as an official cover,

³⁴⁹ S. N. Shchegol'kova, born 1937, interviewed February 19, 2009.

³⁵⁰ For more on the formation of fan communities, see Simon Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music," in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 174-86; John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Essex, Pearson Education Ltd., 2009), 223-25; and Eckhardt Derschmidt, "The Disappearance of the Jazu-Kissa: Some Considerations about Japanese 'Jazz-Cafés' and Jazz-Listeners," in Sepp Linhart and Savine Frühstück eds., *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 285-302.

since the primary purpose of this studio lay in illegally produce ‘profitable goods’ (*khodovoi tovar*) in order to sell them.” The actual work of this studio began after the end of the business day, when it recorded popular music, including foreign pieces, as well as gypsy and criminal-style songs, on used X-ray films, which received the name of “music on bones,” also known as “music on ribs.” This studio, one among many underground production studios in Leningrad, distributed their black market recordings through a network of dealers for several years. However, in November 1950, the police made mass arrests of approximately sixty people involved in making and distributing “music on bones” in Leningrad, with Taigin receiving a five-year sentence.³⁵¹ Such arrests of black marketers constituted the main coercive actions by the police agencies of the Stalinist state against youth fascinated with western popular culture. These black market practices also occurred in the Soviet regions, as illustrated by Figlin’s recollection that youth in Saratov got access to jazz via “black marketers making records on X-rays.”³⁵² Besides underground distribution methods, the official network of state-owned retailers also made efforts to cash in on the passion of youth western music.³⁵³ In an illustrative example, the Komsomol Propaganda Department complained that in music stores, “there are cases when records with American foxtrots have the labels of Russian ballroom dances.”³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ See the following published interview with Boris Taigin, “Rastsvet i krakh ‘Zolotoi sobaki’,” *Pchela* 20 (May-June 1998) <http://www.pchela.ru/podshiv/20/goldendog.htm> [accessed 03/02/2009].

³⁵² L. A. Figlin, born 1938, interviewed May 25, 2009.

³⁵³ For more on the Soviet retail network in these years, see Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 296-328.

³⁵⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, ll. 7-8.

This evidence demonstrates the existence of illicit record production and distribution networks of some sophistication within the USSR. These networks spanned enterprises directly owned by the Party-state such as music stores, or those more distantly affiliated with it, such as the “Golden Dog” studio, whose distribution occurred through underground dealers. Therefore, jazz enthusiasts who wanted to access jazz, as well as club directors who sought to play dance music with elements of jazz at their clubs, had the option of shopping on the black market and even in those official music stores where salespeople were willing to run the risk of stocking illegally-produced records, undoubtedly making a tidy profit on them.

The illegal purchase of western-style goods even received its own term, “*fartsa*.” While jazz enthusiasts focused on purchasing music records, stiliagi bought western-like clothing, cigarettes, and alcoholic products, along with records. Some of these were made illegally in the USSR itself, while others were smuggled in by Soviet sailors, diplomats, performers, and other visitors abroad. These goods had a clear hierarchy of values, with those produced in the US most prestigious and expensive, followed by western Europe, then the nonaligned countries, with socialist allied states next and, last and least, those made in the Soviet Union.³⁵⁵ The trade in western products made up part of the broader grey economy that permeated the USSR.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ For more on *fartsa*, see E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova, and P. V. Romanov, “Fartsa: Podpol’e sovetskogo obshchestva potrebleniia,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas: Debaty o politike i kul’ture* 5.43 (2005), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/> (Accessed December 31, 2009).

³⁵⁶ Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia’s Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch, “Introduction,” in Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch eds., *On Living Through Soviet Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-24.

Another option for young Soviet jazz enthusiasts, especially those whose families had no gramophones, involved listening to jazz illegally on foreign radio stations. Soon after World War II, radio stations financed and managed by the US and British governments started making radio broadcasts into the USSR, including not only news but popular culture as well. Despite Soviet state efforts to jam foreign radio stations in this period, some signals got through.³⁵⁷ The most prominent radio station for jazz, the US State Department's *Voice of America* (VOA) with Leonard Feather's *Jazz Club USA* program in the postwar Stalin years and from 1955 Willis Connover's *Jazz Hour*, enabled many future jazz musicians and promoters to listen to their favored music.³⁵⁸ Iarskaia describes how, in the early 1950s, she listened to what she called "American music" on VOA; her parents allowed her to do this as "they were democratic."³⁵⁹ In turn, K. A. Marvin, who later became a prominent Saratov jazz musician during the post-Stalin years, recalls trying to listen to Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong.³⁶⁰ Arons relates how, while still quite young, he managed to catch jazz on VOA, and "understood already back then that this is a very interesting music, literally jumping up in the air" with excitement.³⁶¹ *Jazz Club USA* and *Jazz Hour* allowed many young people who had a passion for jazz to both listen to and acquire information on this musical genre, such as

³⁵⁷ For more on these radio stations and efforts to jam them, see Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

³⁵⁸ On jazz broadcast into the Soviet Union, see Starr, *Red and Hot*, 210, 228.

³⁵⁹ V. N. Iarskaia, born around 1936, interviewed May 30, 2009.

³⁶⁰ K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13.

³⁶¹ F. M. Arons, born 1940, interviewed May 18, 2009. For memoir accounts of jazz enthusiasts listening to foreign radio stations, see Mikhail Kull', *Stupeni Voskhozhdeniia* <http://www.jazz.ru/books/kull/default.htm> [Accessed March 24, 2011], and Kozlov, "Kozel na sakse," 9-16, 90.

the names of prominent musicians, the varied jazz styles, the playing techniques, and so on, all necessary to the formation of a fan community.³⁶² In the Soviet context, however, this fan community of jazz enthusiasts formed into a youth counterculture due to the politicization of jazz and the criminalization of the means of getting access to this music during the anticosmopolitan campaign.

Listening to this music on foreign radio stations had a more overtly politicized element in the Soviet Union than listening to jazz on 1930s Soviet records and movies, and even purchasing illegally-made records in stores and the black market. The US government sponsoring western popular culture on VOA constituted a direct challenge to the Soviet Union on the cultural front of the Cold War. It proved quite effective in reaching its goals.

In finding out information about this music, many young jazz enthusiasts received exposure to and developed an interest in the western way of life and culture. For instance, Garanian, Kuznetsov, and Kleinot remembered that they grew to admire American culture. Kleinot in particular stressed the importance of his realization about the inextricable connections between jazz and the United States, especially black culture. Seeking to emulate western jazz musicians, they often wore what they considered American-style clothing to concerts and youth evenings.³⁶³ However, this interest in American culture more broadly stemmed from and was decisively secondary to their passion for jazz. Unlike many *stiliagi*, they did not explicitly self-identify with the United

³⁶² Jazz fan communities worked similarly in other contexts: Derschmidt, “The Disappearance of the Jazu-Kissa.”

³⁶³ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009; and G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

States or western Europe and did not adopt a specifically western style in their everyday life and behavior.³⁶⁴ Since they broadcast other information besides jazz, the radio programs served as a source of knowledge external to and at odds with official discourse. As such, they provided an outside frame of reference in the postwar years for those who risked tuning to these programs, in contrast with the much more limited options in the prewar years.³⁶⁵

Besides listening to jazz, legally and illegally, jazz enthusiasts frequently tried joining amateur music circles as a means of trying to play this music, unlike the vast majority of stiliagi. Garanian recalled that his participation in amateur arts at his Moscow institute enabled him to access the piano after hours, which he used to figure out the notes of the jazz pieces he memorized from the radio. This involved some risk since, according to him, if the college administration found out that a student musician played jazz, then “the student might have been kicked out.”³⁶⁶ Such punishment, likely in association with expulsion from the Komsomol, though relatively mild in comparison to the harsh treatment of Ukrainian nationalist partisans or exiled ethnic minorities, posed a serious threat to young people who wanted to achieve a white-collar career and middle-class

³⁶⁴ On stiliagi self-identification with the United States in particular, and to a lesser extent with western European countries, see the following memoir accounts: V. P. Aksenov, *V poiskakh grustnogo bebi: Kniga ob Amerike* (New York: Liberty Publishing House, 1987), 14-22; V. I. Slavkin, *Pamiatnik neizvestnomu stiliage* (Moscow: “Artist. Rezhiser. Teatr,” 1996), 5; and Kozlov, “Kozel na sakse,” 82-98.

³⁶⁵ On the 1930s, see Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1-26, and Jochen Hellbeck, “Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia,” *Kritika* 1.1 (Winter 2000): 71-96. In the post-Stalin years, another frame of reference external to official discourse became widespread in the USSR, the one that developed within the Gulag. See Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 119.

³⁶⁶ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

lifestyle in the USSR.³⁶⁷ Notably, neither Garanian nor the vast majority of other jazz enthusiasts received a formal education in music. They generally taught themselves how to play jazz by ear, and many did not even know how to read musical notation.³⁶⁸

Despite the risk of punishment, some amateur student collectives proved willing to introduce jazz elements into their repertoire. In the geology department of Saratov State University, SGU, Marvin joined a collective in 1952 that played songs in a jazz style, “although this was frowned upon.”³⁶⁹ Figlin got his start in a twenty-member variety ensemble at the Saratov Medical Institute in the early 1950s, which had, in his words, “elements of jazz.” The ensemble managed to play jazz compositions by deceptively listing a different name and author to avoid censorship.³⁷⁰ Zhimskii similarly recalled the formation of collectives in 1951-52 that played jazz-influenced tunes in movie theaters. He himself belonged to one amateur group in high school that played pieces such as the “Chattanooga Choo-Choo,” yet calling them by a different name for the official records.³⁷¹ In another interesting case, Oleg Lundstrom, a prominent jazz musician already before the war, managed to survive the antic cosmopolitan campaign relatively unscathed through a voluntary exile to Kazan’, where his group played

³⁶⁷ On Ukrainian nationalists, see Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On exiled minorities, see

Alexander Statiev, “The Nature of Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance, 1942-44: The North Caucasus, the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic, and Crimea,” *Kritika* 6.2 (Spring 2005): 285-318.

³⁶⁸ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009; K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13, 2009; and Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 134-35.

³⁶⁹ K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13, 2009.

³⁷⁰ L. A. Figlin, born 1938, interviewed May 25, 2009.

³⁷¹ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009.

jazzified Tatar folk music.³⁷² The recently-annexed Baltics, as the most western-oriented region in the Soviet Union, proved an especially safe haven for jazz in the late postwar Stalin years.³⁷³

Thus, in some Soviet regions, jazz-inspired music survived the antic cosmopolitan campaign's ban on western influence in state-sponsored popular culture, particularly by the early 1950s, when the vigor in implementing the decree seems to have abated somewhat in certain locales outside of Moscow. The capital likely proved fraught with danger for jazz musicians as a result of potential discovery due to the presence of so many ideological workers in the central bureaucracy, and the diligent efforts by the militants in the Moscow DNT to suppress this music, which did not let up by the early 1950s. Such evidence suggests the potential pitfall of mistaken interpretations in relying on sources only from Moscow. Still, even in the periphery, slipping a modicum of jazz into club activities depended on either more tolerant local cultural officials, or alternatively incompetent ones incapable of identifying such music, while state policy continued to tilt heavily against this music on the eve of Stalin's death.

The antic cosmopolitan campaign, which identified the model New Soviet Person as someone inherently opposed to anything deemed "western," labeled the activities both of jazz enthusiasts and of the stiliagi as "deviant," despite the distinctions between these alternative youth cultures.³⁷⁴ The Stalinist leadership, in enacting the 1948 Party TsK

³⁷² Michael May, "Swingin' under Stalin: Russian Jazz during the Cold War and Beyond," in Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds., *Here, There and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 179-91.

³⁷³ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 228-32.

³⁷⁴ As Fürst noted, in the tense early Cold War environment, "any form of individualism was soon condemned as selling out to the West." See her Fürst, "The Importance," 225. For the powerful effect of labeling a group as deviant, see the historiography on the "labeling theory," which posits that "deviants"

decree condemning western-style music, chose to politicize and denigrate the jazz enthusiasts' tastes, regardless of whether the young people feeling the brunt of this censure saw themselves as good Soviet citizens, opponents of the regime, or something in-between. This state policy marginalized jazz enthusiasts within the Soviet system during the late Stalin era, not because of something they actively did, but because of a change in state policy, part of a broader pattern of an increasingly exclusionary approach to governing by the Party-state at this time.³⁷⁵

The Party TsK's 1948 decree functioned to create "deviance" where none existed beforehand by relabeling behavior considered quite acceptable previously as subversive and intolerable.³⁷⁶ Indeed, in contrast to stiliagi, for whom, in Juliane Fürst's words, "differentiation, not pure entertainment, was their driving force," the jazz enthusiast counterculture was not driven by deliberate attempts by young people to juxtapose themselves to the extant cultural mainstream.³⁷⁷ In this regard, jazz enthusiasts also

become "deviant" when those with power successfully attach this label to them: Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, George E. G. Catlin ed., Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller tr. (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 47-75; Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 177-208; Stephen Pfohl, *Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); 345-98, Stuart H. Traub and Craig B. Little eds., *Theories of Deviance* (Itasca: F. E. Peacock, 1985), 277-332; and Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, George E. G. Catlin ed., Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller tr. (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 47-75. For a work that utilizes labeling theory in the Soviet context, see Brian LaPierre, *Defining, Policing, and Punishing Hooliganism in Khrushchev's Russia* (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 2006).

³⁷⁵ For more on increasing exclusionary tendencies, see Golfo Alexopoulos, "Amnesty 1945: The Revolving Door of Stalin's Gulag," *Slavic Review* 64.2 (Summer 2005): 274-306, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Postwar Soviet Society: The 'Return to Normalcy', 1945-1953," in Susan J. Linz ed., *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union* (Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), 129-56.

³⁷⁶ Such making of "deviance" was not only the oblast of the Stalinist leadership: for example, as Brian LaPierre recounts, the post-Stalin Kremlin by relabeling cursing and minor altercations as unacceptable behavior, actually created "deviant" groups. See his "Making Hooliganism on a Mass Scale: The Campaign against Petty Hooliganism in the Soviet Union, 1956-1964," *Cahiers du monde russe*, 47, 1-2 (January-February 2006): 349-75.

³⁷⁷ Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 220-22.

differed from western alternative youth cultures such as British Teddy Boys, American beatniks, and German *Halbstarken*, as these countercultures self-consciously departed from the cultural norms.³⁷⁸ By its actions, the Party hierarchy inevitably alienated these youth due to its repression of their favored leisure activity. Such alienation, though, did not rise to the level of resistance in the sense of political dissent, in contrast to some other youth who formed underground groups dedicated to political reform.³⁷⁹ Moreover, the Kremlin's censure of jazz transformed this cultural form into a forbidden fruit that likely drew some of those inclined toward youth rebellion into the jazz enthusiast youth culture, although those who did not develop a passion for jazz did not remain within it.

Generally well educated, jazz enthusiasts tended to come from middle-class social backgrounds. The cultural and financial resources provided by growing up in the families of Soviet white-collar professionals, and/or through being a college student, was conducive to acquiring the taste for and the access to jazz music and information on jazz, marking membership in the jazz enthusiast culture as a middle-class attribute. Unlike the stiliagi counterculture, the children of the Soviet elites rarely joined the ranks of jazz enthusiasts, as the cultural practices of the latter did not revolve around western-style fashion and other conspicuous consumption products, leaving less space for creating

³⁷⁸ On western youth countercultures, see Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1975]); James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-10; Deena Weinstein, "Youth," in Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss eds., *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 101-10; Michael Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1985); Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils & Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987); and John Springhall, *Youth Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

³⁷⁹ For political dissent by underground circles of youth in the postwar years, see Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, Hugh Ragsdale trans. and ed. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 109-16, and Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 327-35.

spectacular taste-based social status hierarchies.³⁸⁰ With rare exceptions such as Iarskaia, jazz enthusiasts were male, similar to the jazz musicians in non-Soviet contexts.³⁸¹ The Soviet jazz fans' interactions with each other, whether at jam sessions, public performances, black market exchanges, or social events, created a homosocial male space that provided an alternative vision of Soviet youth masculinity.³⁸² Overall, though, the Stalinist Party-state's constraints on jazz resulted in jazz enthusiasts constituting a relatively small minority among young people.

By comparison to the strong censure of jazz music, dancing the tango, foxtrot, and rumba, pastimes enjoyed by a great many youth, received less intense denunciations in the official discourse, and occupied a more ambiguous position in organized cultural recreation during the antic cosmopolitan campaign.³⁸³ Avrus described how the authorities focused their efforts on battling jazz as opposed to the foxtrot and tango. As a result, students at SGU danced the foxtrot and tango more often than ballroom dances.³⁸⁴ Troitskii confirmed that evening dances at SGU in those years featured the foxtrot and

³⁸⁰ For the role of taste-based social hierarchies created by conspicuous consumption in youth countercultures, see Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).

³⁸¹ For the United States, see Becker, *Outsiders*, 79-119.

³⁸² For other sources of alternative masculinities in the postwar Stalin years, see Ethan Pollock, "'Real Men Go to the Bania': Postwar Soviet Masculinities and the Bathhouse," *Kritika* 11.1 (Winter 2010): 47-76, and Edele, "Strange Young Men."

³⁸³ For more on how youth enjoyed tango and foxtrot *en masse* during these years, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 201-08.

³⁸⁴ Specifically in regard to foxtrot and tango under Stalin, he stated: "Yes, there was a struggle against jazz. But I do not recall such a battle against tango and foxtrot" (*da, protiv dzhaza borolis'. A protiv tango i fokstrota, ia uzhe ne pomniu, chtoby takaia bor'ba shla*). A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

tango.³⁸⁵ N. K. Petrova remembered the foxtrot and tango as widely performed in dance halls in Briansk, Ukraine, although waltz had more prominence.³⁸⁶ The future Komsomol TsK secretary Baliasnaia also depicted the foxtrot and tango as widespread in dance halls in Ukraine, where she resided in the postwar Stalin years.³⁸⁷ L. I. Derzhavets, however, recalled that in postwar Stalinist Moscow, “tango was forbidden.”³⁸⁸ A. S. Derzhavets, her husband, stated that in the Ukrainian town where he grew up, waltz had the most popularity, with “the foxtrot considered a bourgeois dance”; he did not dance it, but others did.³⁸⁹

Not all of those who danced the foxtrot, rumba, or tango had a passionate cultural taste for western dances. Youth attended the dances on a regular basis, frequently paying sizable entrance fees, because the foxtrot, tango, and rumba lay at the core of youth sociability for significant segments of the young population at this time, especially in regard to developing romantic relationships. For young men, as Zhimskii described, these dances provided an opportunity for “meeting girls, this is what we dreamed of. These [dances] offered us our first romantic adventures, our first loves.”³⁹⁰ N. A. Popkova, who attended SGU, underlined the importance of dancing for entertainment, hanging out, and “of course” for meeting young men, as these dances enabled “more intimate

³⁸⁵ N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009.

³⁸⁶ N. K. Petrova, born in the late 1930s, interviewed May 5, 2009.

³⁸⁷ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

³⁸⁸ L. I. Derzhavets, born 1939, interviewed April 28, 2009.

³⁸⁹ A. S. Derzhavets, born 1935, interviewed April 28, 2009.

³⁹⁰ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009.

socializing.”³⁹¹ The official censure of the foxtrot, tango, and rumba, which imbued these dances with a rebellious character, likely contributed to their romantic appeal for some youth.

In many cases, those to whom the Party-state assigned the task of ideological control over youth did not carry out this mission to the full extent demanded by the antic cosmopolitan campaign. F. A. Kurilova, a former Komsomol secretary in her all-female school in Saratov during the early 1950s, recalled that officials promoted ballroom dances such as the mazurka, and if “people started dancing the foxtrot or tango, they were told ‘this is not recommended’ in those years.” The school’s principle, for example, informed Kurilova before school-sponsored youth functions that “according to official guidelines, the foxtrot and tango should not be danced” and told her that “I am relying on you” to make sure that everything goes well. Kurilova, in turn, using her prerogative as the Komsomol secretary, allowed one or two tangos or foxtrots danced in a calm and unprovocative manner each evening, but she “immediately chased away the boys” visiting her all-female school if “foxtrot dancing began to get out of control” (*nachinalos’ buistvo v foxtrote*). Once some boys even tried to take revenge on Kurilova for kicking them out by jumping her after school during the winter; she managed to get away, but her friends were not so lucky, and the boys rubbed them down with snow. Still, Kurilova danced the tango and foxtrot at private parties without any guilt.³⁹² If the Komsomol enforced controls at Kurilova’s school, teachers took on this role at Zhimskii’s school. There, despite knowing about the ban on the foxtrot and tango, the

³⁹¹ N. A. Popkova, born 1936, interviewed May 20, 2009.

³⁹² F. A. Kurilova, born 1936, interviewed May 15, 2009. For another recollection of ballroom dancees promoted in schools, see S. N. Shchegol’kova, born 1937, interviewed February 19, 2009.

students, who apparently “had control over the gramophone,” put on the foxtrot and tango, resulting in conflicts with teachers who “disapproved of this” and told them “stop it, stop it.”³⁹³ Figlin suggested that one way that the foxtrot and tango, which “were partially forbidden” (*kak-by zapreshcheny*), avoided censorship involved deceptive re-naming: “the foxtrot and tango became slow and fast dance,” respectively.³⁹⁴

This creative labeling, similar to the techniques used by jazz enthusiasts when performing in official clubs, indicates the need to revise the image of the transformations in official discourse in the post-Stalin years as identified by Alexei Yurchak. He argued that Stalin’s death and the consequent collapse of legitimating authority resulted in official discourse becoming increasingly oriented toward seeking validation from past cannons and thus divorced from everyday life. At the grassroots, this resulted in what Yurchak called a performative shift, with local-level cadres fully emulating the tenets of official discourse in their conversations with and reports to higher-ups, while actually doing quite another thing on the ground level. He specifically used the example of Komsomol officials condemning rock’n’roll publicly and then organizing rock music events.³⁹⁵ The evidence adduced here demonstrates that such practices, in regard to jazz and western dancing, occurred already in the 1940s and were not related to Stalin’s death per se. Likely, they occurred earlier as well. This not only illustrates that Stalin’s discursive authority was hardly absolute, but also indicates the need for a new look at post-Stalin official discourse.

³⁹³ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009

³⁹⁴ L. A. Figlin, born 1938, interviewed May 25, 2009.

³⁹⁵ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 36-125.

My findings confirm that foxtrot, tango, and rumba acquired a semimarginalized status, tainted by association with western cultural influence but not to the same extent as jazz music or dances more directly associated with jazz, such as the charleston or lindy-hop. As a result, youth experiences varied based on the positions taken by local figures of authority, whether club managers, Komsomol cadres, or university and school administrators. Realizing the relatively soft nature of the ban on the tango, foxtrot, and rumba, officials sympathetic to a pluralist viewpoint and/or motivated by financial and other incentives could risk permitting some “slow dances” and “fast dances.” When those with authority did tolerate such western dances, they often put limitations on these activities, making efforts to distance themselves from prospective repercussions. At the school evening events Zhimskii depicted, the decision to allow students control over the gramophone functioned both to allow a modicum of western popular culture, yet remove teachers from suffering the consequences, as they could claim to have attempted to stop these dances. The principal at Kurliova’s school probably knew that she would allow a couple of banned dances that evening, but made a pro-forma nod to the official prohibition, thereby covering himself in the event of any negative consequences. Kurilova, in turn, limited foxtrots and tangos to one or two per evening, a common practice at this time, and made sure they were danced in a nonprovocative manner. Such behavior, which those involved in organizing official cultural activities for young people considered within the acceptable range, provide a glimpse into the gaps between official rhetoric and everyday practice by local cadres.

Such examples illustrate the implicit negotiations taking place between young people who loved western music and dancing, and local officials with authority in the

sphere of state-sponsored popular culture, who had systemic incentives to permit such popular cultural forms. In the case of club institutions, the popularity of the foxtrot, tango, and rumba among youth led to fulfilling the plan and profits gained by club managers and dance entrepreneurs willing to organize the foxtrot, tango, and rumba. For the club managers, strongly pressured to run self-supporting institutions throughout the postwar Stalin years, western dances, along with trophy films, could help achieve their institutional goals, while subsidizing the obligatory, but financially draining lectures.³⁹⁶ These dances likely grew even more profitable than earlier, since only certain club and PKO directors decided to continue hosting the foxtrot, tango, and rumba despite the prohibition from above, resulting in more young people congregating on the dance floor of each individual institution. Permitting amateur groups to perform music with jazz elements occurred more rarely, as this was a less profitable and more perilous undertaking. Still, allowing jazz rhythms in an amateur variety music circle certainly drew more young people to participate in it, permitting club managers to claim greater successes on their annual reports.³⁹⁷

The leaders of local Komsomol cells also had many reasons for allowing their constituents to engage in the consumption of western popular culture. On the one hand, unlike club managers, local Komsomol officials denouncing western popular culture among their cell members fulfilled the ideological component of their positions. On the other hand, admitting that such activities took place in their cell reflected badly on the

³⁹⁶ For example, in 1950 the Gor'kii PKO was given the goal of not incurring economic losses: TsAGM, f. 2011, op. 1, d. 164, ll. 17-18.

³⁹⁷ For how financial incentives led to the tolerance of western popular culture in Soviet clubs during the 1960s-70s, see Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnipropetrovsk* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 65-212.

cell's secretary. Moreover, tolerating jazz music and "western" dancing led to better statistics for youth participation in organized social activities in reports to higher-ups. A permissive stance by local Komsomol cadres also contributed to increasing membership in the Komsomol and the fees paid, a central priority of the Komsomol leadership at the time, since a hard-line approach would have discouraged some from joining.

Additionally, the success of lower-level Komsomol officials in collecting dues, organizing cell members to accomplish projects, and even achieving production goals rested on the attendant goodwill of their constituents, with a militant position on western popular culture having the potential to undermine these crucial social bonds. This proved especially so since the leaders of local cells not only managed their members, but also socialized and often even lived with them. The failure of official criticism of the foxtrot, tango, and rumba to gain much traction in this youth milieu, as the continuing popularity of the dances indicates, made the suppression of such dances that much more difficult. For those lower-level Komsomol officials disinclined to pursue the political career track, the likelihood of harming their relationships with their friends and coworkers made them even less interested in vigorously implementing the antic cosmopolitan campaign. All this indicates that the Komsomol collective functioned less as a social control mechanism than envisioned by the authorities.³⁹⁸

These findings further our understanding of the tensions and diversity within the postwar Party-state structure. The Stalinist leadership would undoubtedly have liked to purge every trace of western popular culture from the Soviet Union during the late 1940s

³⁹⁸ For how student collectives in postwar Stalinist universities in some cases undermined the intentions of the Party-state, see Benjamin K. Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964" (Ph. D. dissertation: Harvard University, 2007), 94-150.

and early 1950s. Top-level officials, however, continued to make other demands that subverted the full-scale implementation of the anticosmopolitan campaign. They stressed the importance of clubs and PKOs meeting financial plans and of increasing membership and dues payment in the Komsomol. This highlights the tensions between ideological priorities and market forces in the function of the Soviet system. The fact that different institutions within the Soviet polity had varying missions, with some financially oriented and others centered on ideology, exacerbated these fractures. Thus the club managers reported directly to the directors of their enterprise and higher-ups in the trade union hierarchy, for whom financial matters and plan fulfillment often held sway. The DNTs focused on the question of ideology and could safely disregard the need to achieve financial self-sufficiency and planned targets for the number of amateur performers. In the case of the Komsomol, the ideologically-oriented figures in the Propaganda Department did not have to contend with the need to raise membership and dues, in contrast to the leaders of lower-level Komsomol cells. A more extensive implementation of the anticosmopolitan campaign's censure of western popular culture would have required a significant investment of financial resources, which the Stalinist leadership proved unwilling to do. The Stalinist leadership's contradictory policy, thereby, placed club managers and local Komsomol officials in the position of negotiating the vast gap between top-level ideological directives, and systemic demands for fulfilling financial plans and achieving membership growth.

Faced with these competing priorities, club managers and lower-level Komsomol officials made a wide variety of choices, with some banning western popular culture outright, and others tolerating some degree of such music and dances. To an extent, the

decision-making of individual administrators resulted from diverse local factors. For example, the vigilance of the Moscow DNT and central ideological organs in the capital increased the difficulty of sponsoring western popular culture in Moscow. A large number of young people in a given Komsomol cell interested in the foxtrot, tango, rumba, and jazz offered more incentives for hosting evenings with western dancing and even jazz elements in amateur circles.

The personal ideological predilections of local officials likely constituted another factor that played a role in the amount of western popular culture present in state-sponsored popular cultural activities for youth. Indeed, this may best explain the diversity in offerings by clubs in the same neighborhood, and thus facing somewhat similar political conditions and serving largely overlapping populations of young people. The cadres in charge of organized cultural recreation for youth, conversant at least somewhat with earlier developments in this sphere, could hardly have been unaware of the ideological implications of their activities during the anticosmopolitan campaign. This suggests that the managers who allowed elements of western popular culture in their institutions, and the Komsomol officials who did not censure their Komsomol members or even assisted in organizing such activities, tended to hold a more tolerant, pluralistic vision of the appropriate popular culture in a communist society than that advocated by, for example, the Moscow DNT. The fact that many grew up in the 1920s and 1930s listening to jazz and dancing the foxtrot, tango, even the charleston and lindy-hop, likely contributed to their tolerant perspective on western popular culture. This finding highlights the central role played by the agency of these officials in the postwar Stalinist Party-state.

Conclusion

The rhetoric of the antic cosmopolitan initiative denied any legitimate space for western music and dancing in the Party-state complex, including in the Party-state-managed cultural recreation institutions. Nonetheless, some club and PKO directors organized these forbidden activities, motivated by material consumption desires ranging from gaining bonuses to keeping their jobs, all resulting from the need to fulfill financial plans. Plenty of local Komsomol cadres adopted a tolerant stance, also as a consequence of the incentive structure within the Komsomol organization. At the same time, a more pluralistic ideological stance may have played a role in the decision-making process of both club and Komsomol officials.

The actions of these club and Komsomol officials illuminate the multiple and layered private and public spheres in the USSR, with unclear, shifting, and porous boundaries, as opposed to traditional depictions of clearly delineated, singular, and cohesive public and private realms. Informed by this perspective, I posit that the individual clubs and PKOs each represent a distinct layer of the Soviet public sphere that, while certainly part of the broad public sphere of the Party-state, occasionally acted against the ideological directives of the top officials who led the USSR. In doing so, local-level officials responded to the private, individual consumption desires of a multitude of Soviet youth for western popular culture. At the same time, young Soviet citizens satisfied their desires for western dancing and music in government-funded clubs, spaces unmistakably denoted as part of the public sphere both in official discourse and popular conceptions. This evidence spotlights the interpenetration between the public

and private, and the diffuse boundaries between them. More than this, Soviet youth had varied perspectives on what constituted private and public. While plenty considered dancing western dances as appropriate both at home and in cultural institutions, others drew a difference between these spaces. For instance, Kurilova danced the foxtrot freely at home and at friends' parties, while restricting it in her public capacity as Komsomol secretary at school. Overall, however, the presence of the jazz enthusiast counterculture and the mass dancing of foxtrots, tangos, and rumbas in clubs indicates a distancing by large segments of young people from what we may call the top layer of the public sphere, the leadership and press discourse, during the anticosmopolitan campaign.

In evincing the contradictions between ideological and consumption-oriented factors within the postwar Party-state's system of organized cultural offerings, this chapter expands upon recent work by Kiril Tomoff that underlines the need to examine the actions and motivations of different entities in the government in order to acquire a nuanced understanding of the USSR.³⁹⁹ Moreover, the chapter shows that the postwar Stalinist leadership placed varied degrees of emphasis on its campaigns, and even on different aspects of the same initiative. In the anticosmopolitan campaign, for instance, the prohibition on contact with foreigners was much more stringently enforced than the ban on western music and dancing, although anticosmopolitan discourse denounced both.⁴⁰⁰ The postwar Stalin years, then, often regarded as the ones most closely approaching the "totalitarian" model of a monolithic authoritarian state fully dominating

³⁹⁹ Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-10.

⁴⁰⁰ On enforcing the ban on contacts with foreigners, see V. D. Esakov and E. S. Levina, *Stalinskie "sudy chesti": Delo "KR"* (Moscow: Nauka, 2005).

a passive citizenry, actually prove much less than totalitarian on close examination, offering both local officials and youth significant room to maneuver on certain questions.

Still, the antic cosmopolitan campaign's rhetoric and the enactment of policies associated with it undoubtedly influenced everyday youth experience. The previous chapter underscored how the heavy politicization of officially-recommended amateur cultural activities had a powerful impact on the millions of amateur performers, particularly those skeptical of pieces eulogizing official values. Through its radical transformation of the Soviet cultural field, the Kremlin forced true jazz enthusiasts into a nonconformist, alternative youth culture, who had to indulge their taste for jazz largely in spaces labeled private and often using illicit methods. The foxtrot, tango, and rumba occupied a more ambiguous position, as despite the criticism in official discourse and the actions of ideological organs, some clubs continued to provide these western dances, although to a substantially lesser extent than previously. The presence of the foxtrot, tango, and rumba in the public sphere of the cultural recreation network reflects the diversity within socialist official culture in the years of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, which likely contributed to a degree of skepticism about top-level pronouncements among young people.⁴⁰¹ Yet the latter could hardly remain unaware of the Stalinist leadership's disapproval of these cultural forms. Willingly engaging in such violations planted the seeds of future evasion of Party-state guidelines among young people, a finding in line with Fürst's writing on this subject. Still, the antic cosmopolitan campaign's

⁴⁰¹ This situation differed to a degree from the context of the 1930s, when youth had room to express their agency due to a lack of unity in official discourse on appropriate youth identities. In the case of western dancing, the official discourse was characterized by a significant degree of cohesion in its censure: the space for youth agency lay in the gaps between top-level policy and its grassroots implementation. On the 1930s, see Anna Krylova, "Identity, Agency, and the First Soviet Generation," in Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe*, 101-22.

powerful impact on everyday youth cultural life suggests the need to revise another of Fürst's conclusions, namely that, with the exception of the small minority of direct victims of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, this initiative had little meaning for and influence on the large majority of young people.⁴⁰²

Official club activities offer insights into the cohort of young people growing up in the postwar Stalin years, what Fürst labeled "Stalin's last generation."⁴⁰³ Fürst correctly notes that these young people, despite sharing a generational location, which Karl Mannheim defines as growing up in similar circumstances, did not develop a common worldview or a generational consciousness, meaning self-awareness as a generation or unity of action around this consciousness. They thus constituted what Mannheim would call a silent generation.⁴⁰⁴ The recent work of Jane Edmunds and Brian Turner provides further nuance on the analytical category of generations in this regard. They differentiate between "active" generations who develop a strong generational consciousness, which contributes to their ability to bring about social change based on a self-conscious unified front with other members of their generation, and "passive" generations that lack a clear self-identification and consequently fail to act in tandem with their age cohort to bring about social change.⁴⁰⁵ From this perspective, Stalin's last

⁴⁰² Specifically, she argues that "the antic cosmopolitan campaign targeted primarily the creative and academic intelligentsia, leaving less educated youth puzzled over what it was really all about." Also, "the campaigns did leave a lasting and negative impact on a small, but significant segment of youth. Young people who found themselves to be victims in the antic cosmopolitan and anti-Western drives lost their beliefs in the righteousness of a system, in which they had hitherto fervently believed." See Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 92-93.

⁴⁰³ Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 17-21.

⁴⁰⁴ Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, Paul Kecskemeti trans. and ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 276-80.

⁴⁰⁵ Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, "Introduction," in Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner eds., *Generational Consciousness, Narrative, and Politics* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002),

generation would belong to the latter category, as it did not have a cohesive generational identity and did not attempt to undertake substantial social transformation as part of a united effort with other members of their age group.

Fürst argues that Stalin's last generation, despite lacking a unified generational consciousness, had shared experiences and developed some common values and beliefs. Most notably, "consumption, not ideology, became the dominant identifier for young people, who defined themselves by the dresses they wore or the music they liked rather than considering themselves bound together by a shared communist outlook," side-stepping official norms while largely not expressing active resistance to the system.⁴⁰⁶ My findings support Fürst's argument of a growing gap between the Party-state's leadership and major segments of Stalin's last generation. A substantial portion of the latter, by participating in western popular culture within clubs, shirked official calls for them to emulate the late Stalinist vision of disciplined and politicized New Soviet People.

However, I suggest that consumption may be read as indicative of conformity to the Party-state, as well as side-stepping the system. After all, while many youth engaged in western dancing in clubs and PKOs, plenty of others willingly performed in amateur art circles and other club activities with a heavy ideological load, and even demanded much more of these activities than the Stalinist Party-state provided. Since aesthetic

1-12, and Edmunds and Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 16-23. For more on generational theory, see, for example, Norman B. Ryder, "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change," *American Sociological Review* 30.6 (December 1965): 843-61. For other writings on generations in Russia, see Stephen Lovell, "Introduction," in Stephen Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1-18; Lovell, "From Genealogy to Generation: The Birth of Cohort Thinking in Russia," *Kritika* 9.3 (Summer 2008): 567-94; and Rex A. Wade, "Generations in Russian and Soviet History," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 32.1 (2005): 125-41.

⁴⁰⁶ Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 3-4.

tastes and cultural consumption desires constitute a crucial component of youth identities, their participation in such diverse club activities sheds light on the vast differences among the values and beliefs of the postwar generation. This suggests a lesser commonality of beliefs and ideals among the Stalin's last generation than claimed by Fürst.

The behavior of Soviet youth who adroitly maneuvered within the mass cultural network in order to access western popular culture illuminates their awareness of the borders of the tolerable within the Soviet system, and their willingness to stretch these limits. These youth, especially the educated urbanites coming from middle-class backgrounds, thought of themselves as being integrated into society and conscious of its various dimensions. They negotiated the boundaries of the permissible and tested the restrictions of the multiple and layered Soviet public spheres in ways familiar to any teenagers around the globe. Their socialization into the Soviet system, thereby, expressed itself in ways diametrically opposed to the diarists examined by Jochen Hellbeck in the 1930s, who sought to write themselves into the social and political order of the USSR.⁴⁰⁷ This may speak to the much greater sense of self-confidence and even entitlement among young people who grew up within the Soviet system. Aware that the censure of jazz and western dancing began only recently, that the punishments tended to be less than severe, and that some of their parents and local officials disregarded this prohibition, such youth generally did not perceive their conduct as anti-Soviet, but as lying within the broad Soviet public sphere while departing from the leadership's current cultural policy. This mass of youth, then, hardly had to "speak Bolshevik" in their interactions with the more

⁴⁰⁷ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 4-5.

tolerant club and Komsomol cadres who permitted western cultural activities in local public spheres.

The independent-minded amateur artists, the small minority of jazz enthusiasts, and the mass of youth who found pleasure in western dancing highlights the failures of the postwar Stalinist leadership to forge all youth in Stalin's last generation, even Komsomol members, into disciplined model communists, and mobilize them for the cultural front of the Cold War. While far from rejecting Soviet reality or resisting the state, such youth articulated a personal vision of "Sovietness" that did not fit the narrow strictures of the antic cosmopolitan vision of the New Soviet Women and Men. The contradictions inherent in state-sponsored popular culture between official rhetoric and grassroots cultural activities left much space for youth to engage in conduct that both expressed and further shaped their cultural tastes, and thus personal identity, on their own terms, and at some variance with the Stalinist Party leadership's wishes. In choosing to side-step the Kremlin's demands, youth who engaged in western popular culture experienced an intertwining of pleasure with risk, of joy with guilt, whose powerful emotional impact became a component of their identities.⁴⁰⁸

The conduct of these young people illustrates how some members of Stalin's last generation shaped their environment in ways that fit their personal interests in consuming western popular culture, expressing their agency while influencing broader historical processes. Similarly, the citizens in western Europe and America expressed their agency

⁴⁰⁸ On the power of dancing to shape youth identities, see Peter Wicke, "Music, Dissidence, Revolution, and Commerce: Youth Culture between Mainstream and Subculture," in Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 109-26, and Barry Doyle, "'More than a dance hall, more a way of life': Northern Soul, Masculinity, and Working class Culture in 1970s Britain," in Schildt and Siegfried eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola*, 313-30. On how emotions associated with cultural consumption shaped Soviet identities, see Crowley and Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism."

to shape their own environment as well. In those settings, the capitalist marketplace played the central role, and many ordinary people used the opportunities and products supplied by the market to form an individual identity that departed from the mainstream.⁴⁰⁹ In juxtaposing this pattern to the case of the USSR, it becomes clear that, instead of a capitalist marketplace, the Soviet government and Party-managed social organization structured the cultural and material consumption options available to youth. The Party-state, however, did not constitute a cohesive, monolithic entity, as lower-level cadres, particularly in the regions, did not fully implement the attack on western popular culture during the antic cosmopolitan campaign. This resulted from the pressure exerted by youth consumption desires on club and Komsomol officials, underlining the powerful role of market forces in the Soviet system of organized cultural recreation, a finding that challenges Stephen Lovell's thesis on the nature of Soviet cultural production.⁴¹⁰ My evidence thus points to parallels between the Soviet system and the capitalist marketplace in western Europe and America in regard to the power exerted by popular demand and mass cultural tastes.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Steven F. Rendall trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29-42; Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 147-217; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5-11; and Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 113-27.

⁴¹⁰ He argues, based on a study of Soviet print culture, that market forces had little impact on official Soviet cultural production, at least until the late 1980s: Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 18.

⁴¹¹ For more on how youth dancing in the western context placed pressure on the dominant capitalist system and opened up new spaces of youth activities, see Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture, and the Politics of Sound* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 158-86.

Chapter 4

State-Sponsored Popular Culture for Youth in the Early Thaw, 1953-56

“Carnival Night” (*Karnaval'naia noch'*), the most popular Soviet movie of 1956, tells the story of a New Year celebration at a house of culture. On the eve of the holiday, a new director arrived at the club, Comrade Ogurtsov. He wanted the celebration to be “typical” and “the main thing, serious!” Expressing discontent with the program for the festivities, Ogurtsov banned the performance of the house of culture’s amateur ensemble, whose large complement of saxophones suggested a jazz overtone. Instead, he directed the house of culture workers to invite a staid, traditional ensemble from the pensioners’ association to perform at the New Year event. Moreover, he suggested starting the celebration with a forty-minute speech on the achievements of the house of culture, followed by a propaganda lecture. The young club workers refused to accept Ogurtsov’s plan for such a boring, politicized event. Taking matters into their own hands, they used subterfuge to achieve their goals, for example, getting the propaganda lecturer drunk. Furthermore, the house of culture ensemble members dressed up as pensioners, and began their performance with classical music. The camera’s close-up of Ogurtsov showed his surprise when the “pensioners” launched into a jazz-style number heavy on saxophones and brass, and his anger when they began to do somersaults. By the end of the movie, the house of culture employees managed to ensure a festive celebration for

everyone except Ogurtsov.⁴¹² “Carnival Night” evokes of the transformations in Party-state policy on, and discourse about, club activities during the early Thaw, 1953-56, the topic of this chapter.

These shifts constituted part of a broader array of changes that occurred following Stalin’s death in March 1953. The new leadership, especially after N. S. Khrushchev consolidated power, launched a reenergized drive to achieve the “bright socialist future,” characterized by optimistic renewal of the mission to reach communism. As a part of this initiative, Kremlin officials endeavored to transform everyday life or *byt* in a fashion that they perceived as fitting the idealized communist future.⁴¹³ Furthermore, the abrupt ending of the antic cosmopolitan campaign and amnesties of Gulag prisoners soon after Stalin’s death contributed to the hesitant questioning and calls for limited reform that emerged at all levels of Soviet society. Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin in the Secret Speech at the 1956 Twentieth Party Congress accelerated these processes.⁴¹⁴ Previously accepted versions of truth began to lose their sanctified status, for example, in the sphere of elite culture, where the dominant model of Socialist Realism faced intensifying

⁴¹² On this film, see Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 51-56.

⁴¹³ Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), and Polly Jones, “The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization,” in Polly Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-18.

⁴¹⁴ On the ending of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, see Jonathan Brent and Vladimir P. Naumov, *Stalin’s Last Crime: The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors, 1948-1953* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 312-29. On the amnesties of Gulag prisoners, see Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 21-49. For the calls for changes in the Thaw and the popular reactions to the government’s reforms, see Iu. V. Aksiutin, *Khrushchevskaiia “Ottepel’” i obshchestvennye nastroyeniia v SSSR v 1953-1964 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004).

challenges.⁴¹⁵ At the same time, a massive expansion in the provision of consumer goods improved the living conditions of the population, providing better housing, furniture, vacation homes, modern appliances, clothing, and social services.⁴¹⁶

Much of the scholarship emphasizes the crucial role played by Stalin's death and the coming to power of the post-Stalin leadership in shaping the course of Soviet history. Some new publications by Juliane Fürst and others have questioned this postulate, positing that Thaw-era innovations resulted more from postwar reconstruction, than from policy shifts resulting from the ascendance of a new leadership.⁴¹⁷ My investigation of organized cultural recreation for young people, though acknowledging some areas of continuity, offers more evidence for casting 1953 as a substantial break. The post-Stalin Kremlin instigated a rapid escalation in organized cultural recreation accompanied by a

⁴¹⁵ For literature, see Stephen Lovell and Rosalind Marsh, "Culture and Crisis: The Intelligentsia and Literature after 1953," in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 56-85. For other spheres of elite culture, see M. R. Zezina, *Sovetskaia khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia i vlast' v 1950-e – 60-e gody* (Moscow: Dialog-MGU, 1999).

⁴¹⁶ On housing, see Steven E. Harris, "'I Know all the Secrets of My Neighbors': The Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment," in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 171-190. On furniture, see Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211-52. On vacation homes, see Stephen Lovell, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 163-208. On appliances, see N. B. Lebina and A. N. Chistikov, *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoi zhizni gorozhan v gody nepa i khrushchevskogo desiatiletiia* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003). On fashion, see L. V. Zakharova, "'Naibolee rasprostranennoi iavliaetsia forma priamogo pal'to s odnobotnoi zastezhkoj': o sovetskoi mode epokhi 'otpepli,'" *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas: Debaty o Politike i Kul'ture* 45.1 (2006), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/> (Accessed December 31, 2009). On social services, see E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova, P. V. Romanov, N. B. Lebina, "Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika i povsednevnost', 1940-85," in E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova and P. V. Romanov eds., *Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika: Stseny i deistvuiushchie liitsa, 1940-1985* (Moscow: Variant, 2008), 7-33.

⁴¹⁷ See, in particular, Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20-29. Also see Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 296-336, and Juliane Fürst, Polly Jones and Susan Morrissey, "The Relaunch of the Soviet Project, 1945-64: Introduction," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 201-07.

decrease in its political load, tolerance of some western dancing and jazz, and the use of club activities to combat juvenile “delinquency.” While informed by ideas present already during the postwar Stalin years, and enabled by the postwar reconstruction of the infrastructure of mass cultural recreation, such a shift would not have been enacted without the change in leadership.

These findings add support to scholars such as Susan E. Reid and Christine Varga-Harris, who argue that the post-Stalin Kremlin offered a new consumerist social contract to the population.⁴¹⁸ While the literature has shed much light on the growth in material consumption, I focus on the poorly-studied field of cultural consumption, which provides important insights on the Thaw-era social contract. Garnering social legitimacy for the new leadership after the demise of Stalin constituted one motivation for this policy. Nonetheless, rather than serving only as a social palliative or “safety valve,” the consumerist social contract was intended to attract the mass of Soviet citizens to communist construction by convincing them—in a marked departure from postwar Stalinist tropes—that communism would satisfy their individual desires and personal interests. Importantly, I find that the sphere of cultural consumption experienced a sharper break with postwar Stalin precedents than material consumption, due to the

⁴¹⁸ As opposed to Julie Hessler, who sees Thaw-era consumption as evolving organically from postwar Stalinist trends. See Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade*, 296-336. For the contrasting view, see Christine Varga-Harris, “Constructing the Soviet Hearth: Home, Citizenship, and Socialism in Russia, 1956-1964” (Ph. D. diss.: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005), 1-24; David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, “Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism,” in Crowley and Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52; Catriona Kelly, “The Retreat from Dogmatism: Populism under Khrushchev and Brezhnev,” in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 249-73; Lebina and Chistikov, *Obyvatel’ i reformy*; and Iarskaia-Smirnova, Romanov, and Lebina, “Sovetskaia sotsial’naia politika.” This debate began already in the 1960s. See Alec Nove, “Social Welfare in the USSR,” in Abraham Brumberg ed., *Russia under Khrushchev: An Anthology from Problems of Communism* (New York: Praeger, 1962), 571-90.

deemphasis on politics, spotlighting of entertainment, and some tolerance of western influence in state-sponsored popular culture.

The Thaw-era leadership endeavored to satisfy popular consumption desires in a manner it considered ideologically appropriate and conducive to communist construction. For instance, supplying more club activities for youth and making them more entertaining aimed to increase the amount of time young people spent in clubs. The intention was to enlarge the sphere of “communist time,” the period when one supposedly behaves most like a model New Soviet Person by having youth not only work and study, but also relax in state-monitored, public, collective settings. This expanded the role of official collectives in Soviet life during the Thaw, but did not necessarily result in a more repressive everyday experience for the population.

These diverse aspects of the Thaw-era social contract suggest that the new top-level officials sought to build a Soviet version of modernity, in the sense of modernity as defined by a combination of mass consumption and an emphasis on individualization.⁴¹⁹ In doing so, the Thaw-era Party-state strove to enact a socialist version of what Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzak Sternberg termed a “multiple modernity,” a vision of the future informed by yet explicitly alternative to, the traditional modernity of western Europe and

⁴¹⁹ On this view of modernity, especially as related to consumption, see Mike Featherston, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007 [1991]), and Daniel Miller, “Consumption as the Vanguard of History: A Polemic by Way of an Introduction” in Daniel Miller ed., *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies* (New York, Routledge, 1995), 1-57. On its relation to leisure, including cultural activities, see Rudy Koshar, “Seeing, Traveling, and Consuming: An Introduction” in Rudy Koshar, ed., *Histories of Leisure* (New York: Berg, 2002), 1-25. Others term similar developments as postmodernism instead of modernity, for example Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 209-12.

the US.⁴²⁰ The post-Stalin shift in foreign policy made this especially crucial, as the Thaw-era Kremlin moved away from postwar Stalinist militarism to an emphasis on the Cold War's "peaceful competition," with the USSR seeking to present itself, at home and abroad, as a model of modernity for the world's future.

Kremlin Policy on Youth Cultural Recreation

During the Thaw, an essential component of the revived drive to forge New Soviet Men and Women as a means of building communism centered on youth as the individuals who would construct and live in this idealized future. Furthermore, after the losses of World War II, those younger than twenty-six years of age constituted just under half of the population in 1959, making their integration into society central not only for the idealized future, but also for the pragmatic needs of the present.⁴²¹ At the same time, the spirit of optimism and rejuvenation in the Thaw was frequently associated with youthhood. All of this helps explain the prominence given to young people during these years. In fact, one scholar described the Thaw as characterized by a spirit of youthfulness.⁴²²

The Soviet orientation toward youth intersected with another novel departure in the public discourse, namely the stress on the need for official institutions and collectives, such as clubs and Komsomol cells, to provide fun entertainment and deemphasize heavily

⁴²⁰ See Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzak Sternberg, "Analyzing Our Time: A Sociological Problématique," in Eliezer Ben-Rafael with Yitzak Sternberg eds., *Identity, Culture, and Globalization* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 3-17.

⁴²¹ Out of 117,534,315 people in the RSFSR, 54,796,718 were under 25 in 1959. See Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda, RSFSR* (Moscow, 1963).

⁴²² L. B. Brusilovskaia, *Kul'tura povsednevnosti v epokhu "ottepeli": Metamorfozy stilia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo URAO, 2001), 169-74.

politicized activities. This switch found reflection in the crucial September 1953 Plenum of the Party Central Committee, TsK, held only half a year after Stalin's death. Along with electing Khrushchev as the Party leader, the plenum participants announced a new policy course of acceleration the provision of both material and cultural consumption.⁴²³ Consequently, central Soviet institutions, including the Komsomol, erupted in a flurry of activity aimed at increasing cultural consumption opportunities. By November 1953, two months after the Party TsK plenum, the Komsomol Propaganda Department made a number of recommendations for improving state-sponsored popular culture for young people. For example, it wanted to ensure that each district with more than 5,000 residents had a house of culture with a concert hall accommodating 400 to 500 people.⁴²⁴ Moreover, the department noted that, "after work, young people want to sing, dance, have fun, read a good book or simply get together at a club."⁴²⁵ It must be emphasized that this phrasing fails to mention youth wanting to listen to propaganda lectures or study Marxism-Leninism, a substantial shift away from the kinds of themes emphasized in the postwar Stalin years. In October 1953, a report from this department that explicitly referenced the previous month's Party TsK plenum strongly criticized the poor material conditions in clubs. It also underlined the need to change the primary focus of club managers. The department noted that, since local institutions such as Party and Komsomol committees engage in extensive political agitation, while schools teach literacy and the intelligentsia provide propaganda of science, the club managers should

⁴²³ For example, see a decree that followed the plenum on increasing the production of light consumer goods relevant to both material and cultural consumption: RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 30, ll. 122-28.

⁴²⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, l. 100.

⁴²⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, ll. 23-25.

focus “only on organizing cultural recreation work: amateur art, youth evenings, etc.”⁴²⁶ This deemphasis of political, scientific, and literacy education in the clubs’ agenda, and highlighting of entertaining and fun events hints at a rethinking of the goals of state-sponsored popular culture institutions. Indeed by May 1954, an internal Komsomol Propaganda Department document on the goals of cultural recreation did not mention inculcating loyalty to the Party and patriotism to the USSR, which would have been unthinkable only fifteen months prior to this date.⁴²⁷

Such transformations in internal bureaucratic discourse and policy soon found their expression in external rhetoric at the February 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress. The keynote speaker at the 1949 Eleventh Komsomol Congress had devoted less than half a page to club activities and only praised accomplishments, indicating to local-level Komsomol cells that they did not need to focus on state-sponsored popular culture.⁴²⁸ In 1954, the Komsomol First Secretary A. N. Shelepin’s keynote speech devoted about five times as much space to discussing clubs, amateur music, and amateur theater, and expressed criticism of the work done by clubs and Komsomol cells.⁴²⁹ The final resolution of the congress called on Komsomol organizations to “pay particular attention to the management of youth recreation,” and to organize concerts of amateur art, various excursions, games, sport events, and tourist trips for youth during vacation days, a list that did not include propaganda lectures on ideologically-laden topics or improving

⁴²⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, ll. 8-10.

⁴²⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 700, l. 20.

⁴²⁸ P. A. Mikhailov, *Otchetnyi doklad na XI s’ezde komsomola o rabote TsK VLKSM* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1949), 33-34.

⁴²⁹ A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad TsK VLKSM XII s’ezdu komsomola* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1954), 44-45.

productivity. Importantly, the resolution also proposed a change in the introductory section of the Komsomol *Ustav*, its bylaws, that called on the Komsomol to assist in “continually raising the material and cultural level of society,” moving such activities closer to the center of the Komsomol’s work.⁴³⁰

Rather than constituting an ephemeral, short-term campaign, the Komsomol leadership kept up the pressure on lower-level organizations to act. For instance, in its final resolution, the 1956 Fifth Komsomol TsK Plenum criticized the inadequate use of “the widescale capacities for undertaking cultural recreation.” Expanding on its message, this resolution underlined the need for Komsomol cells to “fight for (*dobivat’sia*) the use of halls and clubs for work with youth,” much stronger language than postwar Stalin-era documents.⁴³¹ This trend continued in later years. Khrushchev himself gave a major speech at the Thirteenth Komsomol Congress in April 1958, a substantial break with precedent as Stalin did not address the only postwar Komsomol Congress in 1949, providing further evidence of the Thaw serving as a major shift, and highlighting the escalating importance of the young in the post-Stalin years. The Soviet leader paid a great deal of attention to state-sponsored popular culture, noting that although the country has “hundreds of thousands of clubs and houses of culture,” the “spiritual demands of the people are growing all the time, and thus there are not enough cultural institutions. In addition, some of these cultural institutions function poorly, failing to satisfy the demands of youth.”⁴³² Overall, he devoted approximately one-fifth of the speech to what youth do

⁴³⁰ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 38, ll. 119, 126.

⁴³¹ *Dokumenty piatogo plenuma TsK VLKSM* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1956), 4.

⁴³² N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospityvat’ aktivnykh i soznatel’nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva (rech’ na XIII s’ezde VLKSM 18 apreliia 1958 goda)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1961), 35-36.

in their leisure time and how to satisfy their cultural demands, reflecting the attention this issue garnered at the top levels of the Soviet power structure in the Thaw.

Likewise, when compared to the postwar Stalin years, youth newspapers expanded the amount of column inches devoted to cultural consumption, and reduced the space offered to more directly ideologically-laden stories on construction, industry, and agricultural triumphs. For instance, occasional listings of upcoming cultural events in the back of the newspaper grew from approximately one-tenth of the last page of *Moskovskii komsomolets* in the early 1950s, listing mostly movies, to about one-third or more by the late 1950s, including movies, shows, concerts, plays, and so on.⁴³³ The general tone of newspaper discourse shifted as well. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, for example, placed a greater emphasis on improving state-sponsored youth popular culture in the post-Stalin years.⁴³⁴ Regional and local youth papers did so as well.⁴³⁵

These shifts indicate a swing toward moving the satisfaction of youth cultural consumption desires closer to the center of official concerns. Former Komsomol administrators confirm this shift. For instance, L. K. Baliashaia, a former Komsomol TsK secretary, stated that, earlier, “our country either fought or carried out reconstruction after the war. Thus, there was no time to organize leisure, and this was not seen as a serious

⁴³³ For example, compare the number of listings on the last page of *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 19, 1952, to the substantially larger number of listings on the last page *Moskovskii komsomolets*, July 4, 1953. These listings grew even more copious by the mid-late 1950s.

⁴³⁴ See “Otkroite eti zaly dlia molodezhi,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, May 25, 1956, and “Komsomol'tsev zdes' ne vidno,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 3, 1955.

⁴³⁵ “Khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel'nosti – postoiannoe vnimanie,” *Stalinets*, October 22, 1955, and “Uchis' otdykhat'!” *Zaria molodezhi*, December 14, 1956.

issue.” Now, in the mid-1950s, “we already had time for leisure” since “the time to tighten the screws was over.”⁴³⁶

The post-Stalin administration also expanded the time young people had to participate in state-sponsored popular culture events. In a break with Stalinist practices, the authorities in the early Thaw provided substantially more leisure to the population.⁴³⁷ Young people in particular received more hours per week free from work and study. A 1955 resolution by the Komsomol TsK delimited the workday of young people between fourteen and sixteen years of age to four hours, and those aged seventeen and eighteen to seven hours.⁴³⁸ At the same time, the number of youth enrolled in higher education grew substantially, with such students having large swaths of free time.⁴³⁹ The Komsomol publicly depicted such measures as indicative of the state’s concern for the population. A case in point, the keynote speaker at the April 1956 Twelfth Moscow city committee Komsomol conference said that “in 1957, there will begin a transition to a seven-hour work day,” and “each young person gratefully and joyfully greets these Party decisions.”⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁶ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009. As a Komsomol TsK secretary, Baliasnaia occupied a high position within the Komsomol, in charge of all of its activities aimed at school-age youth. She also oversaw the Pioneers, a separate organization for children between about ten and fourteen, but one managed by the Komsomol. For more on Baliasnaia, see the biography of Komsomol TsK secretaries: A. A. Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 72.

⁴³⁷ For more free time available in general in the post-Stalin years, see John Bushnell, “Urban Leisure Culture in Post-Stalin Russia: Stability as a Social Problem?” in Terry L. Thompson and Richard Sheldon eds., *Soviet Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Vera S. Dunham* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 58-86, and Jiri Zuzanek, *Work and Leisure in the Soviet Union: A Time-Budget Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 39-49.

⁴³⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 877, ll. 3-4.

⁴³⁹ For example, see a report on how students at technical colleges had plenty of free time, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 802, l. 125.

⁴⁴⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 484, l. 30.

The last phrase embodies a central motivation as described in the official discourse of the early Thaw for changes in state-sponsored youth popular culture policy: satisfying youth desires. During the postwar Stalin years, public rhetoric suggested that lectures on politics, ideology, science, and production best satisfied the desires of young people. This Socialist Realist claim bore little resemblance to reality, and instead served to signal how idealized young New Soviet People should behave. In contrast, the resolutions of the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress proclaimed the need for mass cultural work “that responds to the interests and demands of youth,” calling on Komsomol organizations to initiate mass celebrations, carnivals, amateur music concerts, and so on—privileging fun entertainment in state-managed cultural events.⁴⁴¹ At the 1954 Moscow city Komsomol committee conference, its first secretary stressed: “the spiritual world of our youth is rich and diverse, their demands high and varied, they grow every day. Our youth likes having fun, singing songs, reading interesting books, enjoying themselves.”⁴⁴² Shelepin’s speech at the 1956 Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party had criticized the Komsomol for “inadequate organization of [youth] free time.” Claimed Shelepin, “we are timid and slow to add new and interesting content to work with Komsomol members,” which “naturally, cannot satisfy young people.”⁴⁴³

The official discourse’s emphasis on fulfilling youth desires rings true. The post-Stalin leadership had a vested interest in acquiring political legitimacy after the death of the central authority figure of the last quarter-century, and satisfying the desires of the

⁴⁴¹ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 38, l. 119.

⁴⁴² TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 12, d. 267, l. 42.

⁴⁴³ *XX s’ezd KPSS. Stenograficheskii otchet. Ch. 1* (Moscow, 1956), 606-07.

population constituted an effective way of doing so: in other words, offering youth in the early Thaw a consumerist social contract. Doing so extended the offer given by the Kremlin during the late Stalin period to managers and higher-up officials—what Vera Dunhama termed the Big Deal—to include youth, at least in regard to state-sponsored youth popular culture.⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, the post-Stalin leadership likely intended the provision of fun cultural consumption to help close the gap between the Party-state and young people that grew wide during the anticosmopolitan campaign.

At the same time, the leadership intended the extension of a social contract to serve as a draw for Soviet youth to participate actively in the process of making communism by illustrating the promise of the communist utopia on an everyday, practical level. In the postwar Stalin years, the official discourse stressed the need for the masses of young people to sublimate personal consumption desires for the sake of the leadership's demands, and presented any improvement in consumption as a gift from Stalin, for which Soviet citizens had to express abject gratitude. During the Thaw, however, the Komsomol's rhetoric, as seen from the quotes above, stressed the need for official institutions to satisfy individual wants and personal interests of youth. Similar to the Big Deal for elites, the Thaw-era discursive tropes functioned to mark the desires of young people as legitimate and deserving of attention from the Party-state. This sent the message to young people that, by actively contributing to the building of communism, they not only deserved but would actually achieve satisfaction of their personal desires

⁴⁴⁴ Vera Dunham argues that the major beneficiaries of consumption-oriented measures in the postwar Stalin era constituted professional middle class managers and Party cadres, in a "Big Deal". See her *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976). In contrast, others suggest that the "Big Deal" described by Durham originated in the late 1930s. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, "'Middle-Class Values' and Soviet Life in the 1930s," in Thompson and Sheldon eds., *Soviet Society and Culture*, 20-38, and Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Berg: New York, 2003), 145-52.

with the assistance of the Party-state, a key element of the vision of socialist modernity promoted by post-Stalin leaders.

Undoubtedly, state-sponsored cultural policy for youth in the mid-1950s built upon the gradual gains made in the reconstruction of the network of cultural recreation institutions in the postwar Stalin years. Nonetheless, the turn in public policy toward improving club activities for young people constituted a conscious shift away from Stalinist priorities, and fit the broader development of expanding consumption options for the population. Still, some differences existed between material and cultural consumption. The emphasis of the early Thaw authorities on material consumption represented a deliberate and powerful intensification of already extant postwar trends toward improving the living conditions of the population. In contrast, the sphere of cultural consumption witnessed a sharper, more revolutionary break associated with Stalin's death, since the shift away from politics and toward entertainment in state-sponsored popular culture had no clear parallels to material consumption. Instead, it constituted a decisive transformation connected to the ascendancy of new leaders in the Kremlin. This challenges the view of Fürst, Hessler, and other scholars that Thaw-era innovations resulted from structurally-determined policies that evolved organically from broader processes associated with postwar reconstruction as opposed to being attributable primarily to the actions of the new top officials in the Kremlin. My analysis also calls into question Anne White's suggestion that the softening of cultural policy in cultural recreation institutions was an "unintended" consequence of broader top-level initiatives.⁴⁴⁵ In addition, the Party-state's endeavors to increase youth free time and

⁴⁴⁵ Anne White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland and Hungary, 1953-89* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 37.

provide pleasurable organized cultural activities indicate the need to revise Stephen Hanson's thesis that the post-Stalin Kremlin, like the Stalinist leadership, focused exclusively on demanding time-transcending heroic labor.⁴⁴⁶

Indeed, the Komsomol TsK explicitly linked the new initiatives in the Thaw to de-Stalinization. An overview report on the state of the Komsomol sent by its TsK to the Party TsK in early 1956, for instance, criticized the fact that, "in many enterprises, the most basic conditions for youth leisure are lacking: there are no clubs" or other facilities. The blame for this failure "was due to the cult of personality, as essentially all of the propaganda work in the Komsomol was aimed at the rote memorization of what Stalin said or wrote."⁴⁴⁷ Furthermore, at the 1957 Seventh Komsomol TsK Plenum, Shelepin drew attention to "the correctness of the Komsomol's turn" following the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress and especially after the Twentieth Party Congress to more actively organizing youth popular culture—underlining the shift after 1953.⁴⁴⁸

Moreover, if the postwar Stalinist government managed society via constant mobilization for a potential war, embodied by the militant, discipline-oriented anticosmopolitan campaign, an important part of the Thaw-era reforms in organized youth recreation centered on a transition toward peacetime activities.⁴⁴⁹ This demobilization of society played a considerable role for moving youth free time, and

⁴⁴⁶ Stephen E. Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 171-75.

⁴⁴⁷ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 179, ll. 45-46.

⁴⁴⁸ A. N. Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii ideino-vospitatel'noi raboty komsomol'skikh organizatsii sredi molodezhi (Doklad na VII plenum TsK VLKSM 1957 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1957), 6.

⁴⁴⁹ For more on preparing for war as the primary goal of the Stalinist leadership's youth policy, see Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 35-87.

particularly cultural activities, closer to the center of public attention and policy-making. If the late Stalinist authorities devoted the large brunt of their efforts in organizing youth leisure activities to sports, the much intensified attention of officialdom to cultural recreation in the mid-1950s gave state-sponsored popular culture similar attention. For instance, A. N. Shelepin's keynote speech at the 1954 Komsomol Congress spent approximately the same amount of time on club activities and amateur art as it did on sports, illuminating the rapid rise of priority ascribed to cultural recreation in the sphere of youth leisure organization.⁴⁵⁰ Indicative of the shift to peace, in the second half of 1956 the Komsomol TsK even changed the name of its sport subdivision from "The Military and Physical Culture Department (*Voenno-fizkul'turnyi otdel*)" to the "The Department of Physical Culture and Sports (*Otdel fizkul'tury i sporta*)."⁴⁵¹ These policies formed part of a general revision in outlook, promoted particularly by Khrushchev, which took a less confrontational stance toward western Europe and America.⁴⁵² Such reforms in state-sponsored youth popular culture embodied, and brought into the everyday life of the population, the turn from the presumption of an inevitable war between communism and capitalism toward peaceful competition; they encouraged young people to see themselves less as soldiers of communism who need to prepare for future conflicts during

⁴⁵⁰ A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 44-45, 49-51.

⁴⁵¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 912, l. 103.

⁴⁵² On a more peaceful stance in foreign policy soon after Stalin's death, especially as promoted by Khrushchev, see Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Insider Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 5-32; Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 62-94; Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 49-116; and Melvyn P. Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know'?" *The American Historical Review* 104.2 (April 1999): 501-24.

their free time, and more as peaceful, if vigilant, citizens who can afford to spend more of their leisure engaged in fun, playful activities.

Club Activities and Youth “Deviance”

Besides satisfying cultural consumption wants, the other crucial motive for the new initiatives in mass cultural recreation as presented in official discourse involved the desire to fill up youth free time and ensure normative behavior concordant with the standards of New Soviet Men and Women. Specifically, the early years of the Thaw witnessed an emphasis on using club activities as a means of combating youth “deviants,” namely hooligans and, to a lesser extent, *stiliagi*.⁴⁵³ In the postwar Stalin years, the authorities generally utilized a mixture of political propaganda and, more often, harsh police repression to deal with youth misbehavior. In 1947, they even made minors as young as twelve liable for harsh penalties. The Thaw-era Kremlin, which launched an initiative to liquidate juvenile “delinquency” as part of its broader efforts to reform Soviet daily life, relied less on policing measures, and more on satirical press articles lambasting “deviants”; especially novel was an emphasis on community policing, which involved the

⁴⁵³ Stiliagi are discussed in the previous chapter, and hooliganism in the Soviet Union before the Thaw is covered in Chapter 1. On hooliganism in the Thaw itself, see Brian LaPierre, *Defining, Policing, and Punishing Hooliganism in Khrushchev's Russia* (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 2006); Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism,” *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 47, 1-2 (2006): 377-408; Miriam Dobson, “‘Show the Bandit-Enemies No Mercy!’: Amnesty, Criminality, and Public Response in 1953,” in Jones ed., *The Dilemmas*, 21-40; Ann Livschiz, “De-Stalinizing Soviet Childhood: The Quest for Moral Rebirth, 1953-1958,” in Jones ed., *The Dilemmas*, 117-34; Juliane Fürst, “The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuities in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy between Stalin and Khrushchev” in Jones ed., *The Dilemmas*, 135-53; and V. A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, trans. Elaine M. MacKinnon (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

population in fighting crime via new institutions such as Komsomol patrols, volunteer groups of young Komsomol members who patrolled the streets to maintain order.⁴⁵⁴

So far, however, the scholarship has overlooked the role that the authorities ascribed to state-sponsored popular culture in combating juvenile “delinquency,” particularly hooliganism, in the early Thaw. For instance, the Komsomol launched the campaign against youth “deviance” with a resolution at the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress. It called for Komsomol cells to struggle with drunkenness, hooliganism, theft, and licentiousness, demanding that Komsomol organizations ensure the widespread development of cultural recreation activities among youth, “which encourages worthy leisure.”⁴⁵⁵ A 1954 Komsomol TsK decree spotlighted the need for Komsomol cells to improve state-sponsored youth popular culture: “the provision of cultured leisure and rational entertainment is a decisive method of propaganda for a healthy everyday life and struggle against drunkenness among youth.”⁴⁵⁶ Shelepin’s speech in 1957 at a Moscow city Komsomol conference highlighted the change from earlier methods of dealing with youth “deviance,” stating that “administrative measures alone are insufficient”: to solve this problem, the Komsomol needed to “undertake the organization of youth leisure with

⁴⁵⁴ On how post-Stalin authorities strove to expunge delinquency in a new campaign, particularly for Komsomol patrols, see Juliane Füst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 167-49, and N. A. Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia: Dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR, 1953-1985 gody* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003). On newspapers in this initiative, see Gleb Tsipursky, “Citizenship, Deviance, and Identity: Soviet Youth Newspapers as Agents of Social Control in the Thaw-Era Leisure Campaign,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 49.4 (September-October 2008): 1-22. For the broader campaign against hooliganism, see Brian LaPierre, “Making Hooliganism on a Mass Scale: The Campaign against Petty Hooliganism in the Soviet Union, 1956-1964,” *Cahiers du monde russe*, 47, 1-2 (2006): 349-75.

⁴⁵⁵ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 80, l. 18.

⁴⁵⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 841, l. 81.

real Komsomol energy.”⁴⁵⁷ Newspapers also published articles underlining the importance of organizing appropriate state-sponsored youth popular culture to fight crime.⁴⁵⁸ Making sure that youth spent their free time “appropriately” acquired particular significance due to the increase of free time available to young people in the Thaw. As an example, a Komsomol conference in Saratov’s Kirov neighborhood emphasized that “with the transition to a seven-hour workday, the organization of youth cultural leisure is acquiring particular significance.”⁴⁵⁹

Interviews with former Komsomol cadres support these findings from official sources. For example, the former Komsomol TsK secretary Baliasnaia confirms that, before the mid-1950s, there was no systematic national policy to use organized recreation against hooliganism, although some individual Komsomol officials made efforts to do so. From the mid-1950s, however, the organization of youth free time activities as a means of dealing with hooliganism and drunkenness “became part of the program of Komsomol activities, and thus obligatory.” Baliasnaia specifically explained the motivations of official policy on cultural activities in this period, which she helped create and enact: “if schools and families do not inculcate in children an interest in something beautiful and a way of satisfying their interests, then what will happen? They may smoke and drink.”⁴⁶⁰

This perspective reflects that of many Komsomol bureaucrats in high positions during the Thaw. A case in point, N. I. Butov, who served as the assistant director of the

⁴⁵⁷ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 14, d. 546, l. 47.

⁴⁵⁸ For example, see “Gde molodezhi otdykhat’?” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, June 22, 1955; *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 9, 1957; *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 12, 1958; and *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 9, 1957.

⁴⁵⁹ GANISO, f. 3234, op. 14, d. 8, l. 56.

⁴⁶⁰ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

Komsomol Propaganda Department and thus was directly involved in formulating and implementing cultural recreation policy in the Thaw, maintained that “it was necessary to organize youth leisure, otherwise there would have been drinking parties.”⁴⁶¹ Komsomol officials at the local level, for example Avrus at Saratov State University, also stressed the perceived need to use organized leisure as a means of preventing hooliganism at that time.⁴⁶² Those more directly involved in cultural recreation at the grassroots during the Thaw held similar viewpoints. S. A. Krylov, a Soviet bard and later a music promoter who cooperated closely with various Komsomol committees, thought that amateur art “undoubtedly” protected young people from becoming hooligans.⁴⁶³ L. V. Guseva, who organized cultural events in the SGU library, claimed that they helped ensure that “youth would not become criminals.”⁴⁶⁴ This helps explain part of the motivation for the shift in top-level policy to promoting fun and pleasurable youth-oriented club activities, and for the active support of many mid- and lower-level officials for this change in course.

Such efforts to get rid of hooliganism have class overtones. Hooliganism served as a broad concept used by official discourse to label supposedly “immoral” free time activities generally associated with male workers and peasants, such as drunkenness, brawling, cursing, rude manners, mistreating women, smoking, stealing, and so on. By attempting to replace such conduct with normative cultural recreation, Thaw-era officials emulated on a mass scale, whether knowingly or not, the small-scale endeavors of the

⁴⁶¹ N. I. Butov, born 1944, interviewed February 16, 2009. He rose from membership in his university Komsomol committee in the 1960s, through the ranks of the Komsomol during the 1960s-70s, and up to the assistant director of the Komsomol Propaganda Department in the 1970s-80s.

⁴⁶² A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

⁴⁶³ S. A. Krylov, born 1941, interviewed March 2, 2009.

⁴⁶⁴ L. V. Guseva, born 1935, interviewed June 1, 2009.

progressive intelligentsia reformers of the late imperial period, who inspired the early Soviet state-sponsored popular cultural practices. As in late imperial Russia, well-educated individuals in the Thaw sought to have working-class “hooligans” take on leisure values associated with the middle class.

The post-Stalin Kremlin’s stress on the use of club activities as one of the major tools against juvenile “delinquency” formed part of a wider transformation. Moving away from a method of rule characterized by centralized state coercion, the Party-state shifted toward more populist and decentralized strategies of ensuring normative conduct.⁴⁶⁵ In doing so, it relied to a much greater extent than previously on grassroots surveillance and persuasion, whether by the newly-empowered community policing groups or existing institutions such as official Komsomol collectives, which were now directed to focus on managing youth misbehavior. Part of the same development was the Soviet policy in the early Thaw that aimed to expand “communist time” from the well-surveilled work and study of the Stalin years to encompass leisure, in cultural recreation institutions and other spheres of life.⁴⁶⁶ Through getting young people to spend much more of their free time in state-monitored settings, the new leadership wanted to make youth leisure to more

⁴⁶⁵ On the weakening of state police powers and reliance on community policing after Stalin’s death, see Louise I. Shelley, *Policing Soviet Society: The Evolution of State Control* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 44-45.

⁴⁶⁶ The Stalinist leadership, demanding exemplary free time conduct of the new managerial and communist elite in the 1930s, enforced by Party control commissions, paid much less attention to the leisure of the rest of the populace: David Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 57-88. For the expansion of surveillance into other spheres of life in the Thaw, particularly the home, that previously were considered a nonstate matter, see Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality*, and Edward D. Cohn, “Sex and the Married Communist: Family Troubles, Marital Infidelity, and Party Discipline in the Postwar USSR, 1945–64,” *The Russian Review* 68.3 (July 2009): 429–50.

visible, organized, and productive, more “rational” in the words of official rhetoric.⁴⁶⁷ By doing so, the Party-state sought to intensify social controls and forge youth into model New Soviet People.⁴⁶⁸ This constituted part of the process of shaping values and desires that, along with the offering of the consumerist social contract, were vital in the Thaw-era endeavor to move toward a socialist version of modernity.⁴⁶⁹

However, this analysis does not indicate my agreement with scholars who read evidence of the government’s intentions as indicative of its actual success. Most notably, Kharkhordin, relying largely on government manuals providing instructions on forming collectives, argued that official Soviet collectives grew more influential and repressive in the Thaw, while the internal life of these official collectives was characterized by cynical strife. The increased power and coercive orientation of such collectives resulted in the massive intervention of the public sphere into the private life of the population.⁴⁷⁰ As the last chapter illustrated, however, collective bodies such as Komsomol cells did not prove

⁴⁶⁷ Thus, an internal 1954 report by the Komsomol Propaganda Department on mass cultural activities, in describing the aims of the cultural recreation network, gave pride of place to the goal of “helping Soviet youth spend its leisure rationally” (*razumno*): RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 770, l. 20. Another example specifically advocating “rational and beneficial” (*razumnyi, poleznyi*) leisure is in an instruction manual on clubs. See Z. A. Petrova and M. P. Rymkevich eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1962), 85.

⁴⁶⁸ For the classical analysis of how surveillance is meant to manage behavior, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 178-79. For criticism of the applicability of Foucault to the USSR, see Laura Engelstein, “Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia,” *The American Historical Review* 98.2 (April 1993): 338-53. I would instead agree with Jan Plamper, who defends the use of certain ideas from Foucault to shed light on the USSR. See his “Foucault’s Gulag,” *Kritika* 3.2 (Spring 2002): 255-80.

⁴⁶⁹ For how this admixture of consumption and social mobilization were part of the new method of rule in the Thaw and how this applied to youth, see Gleb Tsipursky “Coercion and Consumption: The Khrushchev Leadership’s Ruling Style in the Campaign against ‘Westernized’ Youth, 1954-64,” in William J. Risch and Kate Transchel eds., *The Socialist Beat in the Soviet Bloc* (Lanham: Lexington Books, forthcoming in 2011). On how this applied to consumption in particular, see Crowley and Reid, “Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism.”

⁴⁷⁰ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 279-302.

all that effective at imposing social controls, in contrast to the assumptions of the authors of manuals. In turn, the multilayered and diffuse nature of the Soviet public sphere meant that the individual environment within each club may well have departed from the overarching intentions of the leadership. Consequently, the emphasis on community policing and collective surveillance in the Thaw, accompanied by the decreased reliance on harsh police tactics, might well have improved youth lives, suggesting a less negative outcome for the populace than allowed by Kharkhordin.

Arguably, then, the use of club activities to combat juvenile “delinquency” denoted a more peaceful, humane means of dealing with youth misbehavior in the Thaw, in which the authorities extended the rights associated with children under Stalin to young people. If the late Stalinist authorities deployed harsh penalties against criminals in their early teens, the government blamed the misconduct of children under twelve on the lack of appropriate state-sponsored popular culture opportunities.⁴⁷¹ The Thaw-era Kremlin, in proposing that youth criminality was due in large part to a deficit of mass cultural recreation for young people, shifted some of the guilt for the crimes of individual youth to failures in the club network. Paralleling this new approach, the post-Stalin Party-state and especially the Komsomol TsK pushed to increase the age of criminal responsibility and to grant amnesties for youth.⁴⁷² In doing so, as well as in ascribing part

⁴⁷¹ For example, the Komsomol TsK’s 1952 decree on liquidating childhood vagrancy paid substantial attention to providing more cultural recreation: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 744, ll. 46-50.

⁴⁷² For discussions on raising the age of responsibility for the most severe crimes from twelve to fourteen, and less severe ones from fourteen to sixteen, as well as discussions of amnesties for youth, see GARF, f. R-8131, op. 28, d. 4218, ll. 2-25, and GARF, f. R-8131, op. 28, d. 2526, l. 58. The age of criminal responsibility was finally raised in 1958: Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 125-26, 271. Yet, already in late March 1953, the new Soviet leadership passed an amnesty that included youth under eighteen: Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer*, 21-49.

of the blame for youth “deviance” to the lack of fun cultural consumption opportunities, the actions of the Thaw-era leadership extended the period of social protection from adult responsibilities from childhood to youthhood. Similarly, the post-Stalin focus on improving the provision of cultural consumption opportunities for youth aimed to ensure that they had a “happy youthhood,” mirroring the “happy childhood” promoted by the Stalin regime for Soviet children.⁴⁷³ Expanding the privileges of childhood status to youth after 1953 has intriguing parallels to what scholars of youth in western Europe and the United States find occurred in these countries around the turn of the twentieth century, a development explicitly associated with becoming modern.⁴⁷⁴ This Soviet top-level government policy, then, arguably constituted another building block in the Thaw-era efforts to build a socialist modernity.

Ironically, though, the government bodies of the United States and Britain in the postwar years tended to emphasize varying combinations of increasing police coercion, judicial penalties, and censorship to deal with their own young “deviants.” Stanley Cohen, for instance, revealed how supposed “experts” assailed the British youth counterculture of Mods and Rockers, while the press published exaggerated accounts of youth “immorality” and crime, creating deep anxieties among the population, a “moral panic.” Harsh extralegal coercion was deployed by the police and the courts to repress

⁴⁷³ On the trope of “happy childhood,” see Kelly, *Children’s World*, 99-154.

⁴⁷⁴ For the transformations of the meanings associated with youth as western states approached modernity, including the extension of protections earlier granted only to children, see John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present* (New York: Academic Press Inc., 1981), 37-131; John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillian Ltd., 1986); Wallace and Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society*; Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 250-59; and Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers/The Invention of “delinquency”* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969).

these youth, labeled as socially “deviant.”⁴⁷⁵ Similarly, the US press printed greatly embellished accounts of the misbehavior associated with the postwar youth culture that revolved around jazz and rock’n’roll, less inhibited sexuality, souped-up cars, milk bars, and so on. Top government and law enforcement figures, such as J. Edgar Hoover, presented inflated statistics of youth crimes and even equated juvenile “delinquency” with infection by communist totalitarianism. This led to mass anxiety and consequent efforts to censor movies and comic books, as well as to police action targeting young people, with arrests climbing rapidly, especially due to the newly-implemented puritanical behavior codes passed at the local levels.⁴⁷⁶ The central governing bodies of these countries made little efforts to offer normative recreation as a solution for youth misconduct in these years.⁴⁷⁷ Hence, the post-Stalin Party-state had the opportunity to use its new approach toward youth crime as a way of presenting itself as comparatively more humane, modern, and democratic.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils & Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 71-91.

⁴⁷⁶ See James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America’s Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 11-78, 142-77; Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 275-309; and Michael Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 99.

⁴⁷⁷ While youth “experts,” the press, and central governments in western Europe and North America generally advocated a mixture of coercion and censorship in targeting youth “deviance,” some local government bodies and government-funded nonprofits and churches, made efforts to offer organized leisure activities, though these programs were few and far between and, as a result, never had much reach for youth. For children, though, after-school programs and the Boy and Girl Scouts did provide many opportunities for fun organized recreation options. See Margaret Peacock, “Contested Innocence: Images of the Child in the Cold War” (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008).

⁴⁷⁸ On the use of youth policy as Cold War propaganda, see Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 168-205.

Although the change in leadership in 1953 was decisive for this and other policy shifts in the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture, such transformations did have some roots in the Stalin years. After all, for the swift changes in the years after 1953 to occur, a number of those who held administrative positions already in the late 1940s and early 1950s had to disagree with the extant policies and believe in the necessity of a different course.⁴⁷⁹ Indeed, even during the ideological militancy of the antic cosmopolitan campaign, some officials risked hosting western popular cultural activities, or suggested that youth “deviance” originated from the lack of fun club activities.⁴⁸⁰ Others expressed some hesitant criticism of the one-dimensional, unrealistically politicized and ideologized depictions of daily life in the repertoire for youth amateur art. For example, an internal 1952 Komsomol Propaganda Department report censured I. Kasumov’s play “Happy Day” for having the protagonists discuss about production matters while confessing their love to each other.⁴⁸¹ Only with the arrival of the new administration, however, could they openly advocate for a soft-line, tolerant course in mass cultural recreation, an

⁴⁷⁹ Here, we can see intriguing parallels to the liberal bureaucrats that W. Bruce Lincoln describes as developing ideas and proposals for reform under Nicholas I, which they then implemented under Alexander II. See his *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990). Although not directly related to state-sponsored youth popular culture, recent research indicates that some of the reforms implemented under Khrushchev were already discussed in high Party circles in 1945-47, only to be buried as a result of the hard-line turn by the Stalinist leadership from 1948 onward. See Alexander Titov, “The 1961 Party Program and the Fate of Khrushchev’s Reforms,” in Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 8-25, and A. V. Pyzhikov, *Khrushchevskaiia “ottepel’”* (Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2002), 15-40.

⁴⁸⁰ For some rare examples of links drawn between the lack of organized cultural recreation and juvenile “delinquency” in the late Stalin years, made by lower-level officials and generally ignored by those higher up in the power hierarchy, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 83, and RGASPI, f. 17, op. 122, d. 102, ll. 215-22.

⁴⁸¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 741, ll. 4-6. For more on criticism of such stultified portrayals in theater during 1952, see Manon van de Water, *Moscow Theaters for Young People: A Cultural History of Ideological Coercion and Artistic Innovation, 1917-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 67.

approach that fit the optimistic sensibilities and goals of the post-Stalin Kremlin.⁴⁸²

Additionally, the postwar reconstruction under Stalin helped ensure that there would be resources available to enact the shift in policy toward club activities that took place in the mid-1950s. In this sense, the transformations in the early Thaw owe a debt to developments in the postwar Stalin years.

Going back even further reveals insightful parallels between the policy initiatives of the mid-1950s and state-sponsored popular culture during earlier periods of Soviet history, most notably the 1920s. As chapter 1 described, in the wide-ranging debates during NEP, officials favoring the more pluralistic and soft-line Right faction promoted more entertaining cultural recreation, with some elements of western culture, and believed in using club activities as a tool against juvenile “delinquency.” The contrasting position of the Left faction prevailed by the late 1920s and largely predominated under Stalin, especially in the late Stalin era. Still, the policy options associated with the Right faction provided a potential precedent for those who wanted to pursue an alternative course. Considering that the post-Stalin leadership sought to revive what it termed the “Leninist principles” of the 1920s as a means of finding a path to communism untainted by Stalin’s “cult of personality,” it is not surprising that its approach to state-sponsored popular culture resembled that of the Right faction in the NEP.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸² For insights on early Thaw-era optimism, see Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer*, 156-85. We should be wary of giving Shelepin much individual credit for these soft-line changes, as less than a month after Stalin's death, Shelepin sent a letter to the Secretary of the Communist Party, Khrushchev, asking him to consider renaming the Komsomol into the “Vsesoiuznyi Leninsko-Stalinskii Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodezhi,” and the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* into *Stalinskaia smena* (Stalin's shift). See RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 38, l. 33.

⁴⁸³ For how the 1920s served as an inspiration for many of those in the Thaw, see Melanie Ilic, “Introduction,” in Ilic and Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev*, 1-8; Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca,

Enacting the Early Thaw Initiatives in State-Sponsored Popular Culture

The gaps between official Soviet rhetoric and grassroots reality require an examination of how the authorities implemented their intentions to transform cultural recreation for youth. Before turning to this, we need to consider developments in the network of clubs in the mid-1950s. Data on clubs owned by trade unions, which controlled the large majority of clubs in cities, indicate that the trade unions in 1951 had over 8,000 clubs and larger cultural recreation institutions, with 600 built in the last five years, and 80,000 red corners.⁴⁸⁴ By 1956, the trade unions had over 10,500 clubs, and 112,000 red corners, suggesting that most of the construction took place after Stalin's death.⁴⁸⁵ Data from specific urban areas illuminate similar trends. In the Soviet capital, the number of clubs expanded minutely from 204 in 1950 to 207 in 1953, but grew to 226 in 1955. In Saratov, clubs showed a more sustained growth, accelerating after Stalin, from 20 in 1950, to 25 in 1953, and 32 in 1955. Tellingly, the number of club workers in the urban clubs belonging to the Ministry of Culture, MOC, more than doubled over this period, from 846 in 1951 to 2,200 in 1956, while those in trade unions increased by nearly half, from 19,400 in 1951 to 28,854 in 1956.⁴⁸⁶ In 1952, the Moscow Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood had 31 clubs, with no larger houses of culture, and also

Cornell University Press, 2008), 75-104, 211-19; and William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 236-99.

⁴⁸⁴ GARF, f. R-5451, op 24, d. d. 900, ll. 11.

⁴⁸⁵ GARF, f. R-5451, op 24, d. d. 1543, ll. 19.

⁴⁸⁶ O. K. Makarova, *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR: statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe statisticheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1956), 46-49, 276.

had 13 red corners in large housing complexes. By 1962, there were 35 clubs, of them 5 large houses of culture, and 57 red corners.⁴⁸⁷

Club growth after 1953 relates to financial investment in clubs. For example, the Komsomol's 1954 budget for financing social and cultural events (*sotsial'no-kul'turnye meropriatiia*) amounted to 141,400,000,000 rubles, or 9.8 percent more than in 1953.⁴⁸⁸ Moreover, soon after 1953 regional officials began writing to the Party TsK to ask for various forms of assistance, mostly financial, in constructing clubs, probably inspired by the shift in discourse emphasizing the importance of state-sponsored popular culture.⁴⁸⁹

Official publications also gave greater attention to the club network. For instance, youth newspapers printed substantially more articles on clubs.⁴⁹⁰ In addition, the USSR began to systematically publish guidebooks on how to conduct appropriate work in clubs, while very few such publications appeared in the late Stalin era.⁴⁹¹ The content of these manuals also reveals a shift associated with Stalin's death. A case in point, a 1955 booklet stated that "cultural recreation work now acquired deep significance,"

⁴⁸⁷ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 15, ll. 19-21, and TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 114, l. 1.

⁴⁸⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 770, l. 16.

⁴⁸⁹ These letters met with some limited success. See RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 11, ll. 27, 34-35

⁴⁹⁰ As an example, in comparing three randomly selected two-week periods of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, I found only two relevant articles on clubs in 1950 and the same number in 1951, but six stories in 1955 and eight in 1956.

⁴⁹¹ For examples of these guidebooks, see T. Kutasova, *Samodeiatel'nyi tantseval'nyi kollektiv* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1954); T. Amosova and E. Ivanova, *Tematicheskie molodezhnye vechera k 40-letiu leninskogo komsomola* (Alma-Ata, 1958); B. Kozudlin, *Kul'turno-prosvetitel'naia rabota sredi molodezhi* (Sverdlovsk: Sverdlovskoe knizhnoe izdanie, 1954); I. N. Nikolaeva, *Rabota kluba s molodezh'iu* (Moscow: "Sovetskaia Rossiia", 1957); M. E. Nepomniashchii ed., *Entuziasty: Sbornik o peredovikakh kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959); and Z. A. Petrova and Rymkevich, M. P. eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1962).

differentiating the mid-1950s from the recent past when organized cultural entertainment had much less prominence.⁴⁹²

The Komsomol's efforts to use its own resources to increase both the number of clubs and of club workers served as another important reason for improving the club network. While lacking the financial capacity of the trade unions, the Komsomol had access to a resource of equal magnitude, namely having Komsomol members engage in semi-obligatory labor as part of their Komsomol duties, including construction. In the postwar Stalin years, the Komsomol's construction efforts in regard to building recreational institutions focused on sport complexes.⁴⁹³ Soon after 1953, however, the Komsomol TsK directed its cells to build clubs as well as sports complexes, for example, in the 1956 Fifth Plenum of the Komsomol TsK.⁴⁹⁴ Similarly, youth newspapers promoted club construction. In December 1954 *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, for instance, published a letter critical of the lack of a club in the village of Kuznetsovo, attributing "immoral" pastimes to the lack of organized recreation. As a result, a club was built in Kuznetsovo by January 1955, with the main labor coming from local Komsomol members.⁴⁹⁵

Regional Komsomol committees responded to the signals from the Komsomol leadership and youth press, and invested time and energy into constructing clubs. Thus

⁴⁹² A. Bratenkov, *Klubom rukovodit sovet: Iz opyta raboty kluba Krasnoiarskogo lespromkhoza* (Tomsk, 1955), 6-7.

⁴⁹³ As made clear by the keynote speech in the 1949 Eleventh Komsomol Congress: Mikhailov, *Otchetnyi doklad na XI s'ezde komsomola o rabote TsK VLKSM*, 38.

⁴⁹⁴ *Dokumenty piatogo plenuma TsK VLKSM*, 23.

⁴⁹⁵ "Klub otkrylsia v derevne Kuznetsovo," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 16, 1955. Also see *Leninskii put'*, October 26, 1957, and *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 4, 1955.

the Novgorod oblast Komsomol helped repair many clubs and establish red corners.⁴⁹⁶ A Komsomol conference at a wood production enterprise in the town of Pugachevsk, Saratov oblast, resulted in the organization of a youth brigade to fix the factory club. With the factory providing 10,000 rubles of financial support, the brigade reportedly completed a capital overhaul of the club building, with the enterprise's Komsomol committee receiving the right to manage the club's activities.⁴⁹⁷ This document, like many others, demonstrates how local Komsomol cells cooperated with the management of their enterprises to construct spaces for recreation. Additionally, it illustrates how, as a result of its activities, Komsomol organizations frequently acquired more input into and influence on the work of the clubs. A speaker at a Kransnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol conference specifically emphasized that Komsomol committee needs to take a major role in shaping club activities in the district in order to improve youth popular culture, since otherwise the clubs "present plans that do not satisfy us."⁴⁹⁸

The Komsomol also used its labor resources in directing members to both work and volunteer in clubs. At the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress, Shelepin called on the Komsomol to improve the quantity of amateur circle directors.⁴⁹⁹ By the 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress, Shelepin praised the Komsomol for helping prepare qualified workers of cultural recreation institutions and directors of amateur art collectives, as in the preceding two years Komsomol cells sent over 30,000 members to work in clubs and

⁴⁹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 802, l. 75.

⁴⁹⁷ GANISO, f. 4158, op. 20, d. 472, l. 10.

⁴⁹⁸ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 3, d. 26, l. 58.

⁴⁹⁹ He called on Komsomol cells to assist in preparing courses and seminars for training directors of such amateur collectives from among amateur artists. See Shelepin, *Otchetnyi доклад*, 46.

libraries.⁵⁰⁰ Likewise, Komsomol members served on club councils and volunteered in these institutions, roles that frequently overlapped. An instruction booklet describing the volunteer council of a club belonging to a wood production enterprise in Krasnoiarsk reported that seven youth actively volunteered in a club, with each taking on a sector that fit his or her interests: for example, N. I. Devianin, who liked photography, ran the photo collective.⁵⁰¹ Club councils helped chart and carry out the club's activities, making them an important component in determining the function of mass cultural recreation institutions. In sum, the Komsomol played a vital role in enacting the Thaw-era leadership's efforts to expand cultural consumption provided to youth. In so doing, the Komsomol acquired a greater presence in the club network than before 1953, and increased its abilities to lobby on behalf of its young constituents.

The trade unions, though, controlled the large majority of clubs in the cities, and thus their policy on youth cultural entertainment was vital to the everyday life experience of urban youth leisure. It is instructive to compare two resolutions on club activities issued by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, VTsSPS, one at a plenum in 1951 and the other at a plenum in 1956. In 1951, the plenum resolution did not mention using cultural recreation as a tool against "deviants," while the 1956 decree explicitly linked shortcomings in the organization of state-sponsored popular culture to drunkenness and hooliganism. The 1951 resolution noted the need to improve cultural recreation for young people; however, the more strongly worded 1956 decree stated that

⁵⁰⁰ A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Vsesoiuznogo leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuzna molodezhi XIII s''ezdu komsomola (15 apreliia 1958 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), 43-44.

⁵⁰¹ Bratenkov, *Klubom rukovodit sovet*, 4-5.

trade union organizations are “obliged (*obiazany*) to improve their work” in regard to youth cultural recreation.⁵⁰²

The rhetorical shift did not remain confined to the plenums, as the VTsSPS enacted new guidelines reflecting the emphasis on working with youth in its mass cultural network. Thus, in its bylaws for the commission on cultural recreation work of factory committees passed in February 1951, the VTsSPS discussed work with children but failed to bring up the need to serve the interests of young people or work with the Komsomol. Five years later, in its 1956 bylaws for trade union clubs, the VTsSPS gave a prominent place to youth and even listed the Komsomol first among the social organizations with which the club’s management should cooperate.⁵⁰³

This formed part of a broader focus on youth within clubs, both those owned by trade unions and other organizations. For instance, an oversight institution, the Moscow Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood’s cultural-enlightenment department, already in October 1953 criticized the “lack of thematic evenings for youth, which does not satisfy youth desires” in the club of the city bus transport system, not something for which the department censured clubs in previous years.⁵⁰⁴ In 1956, the archival holdings for this department for the first time included a separate report on how the clubs in this neighborhood worked with youth.⁵⁰⁵ This document clearly indicated interest in the issue of youth cultural entertainment higher-up in the hierarchy. Those demanding such reports

⁵⁰² For the 1951 plenum, see GARF, f. R-5451, op 24, d. d. 900, ll. 12-17. For the 1956 plenum, see GARF, f. R-5451, op 24, d. d. 1543, ll. 20-25

⁵⁰³ L. I. Poliakov, *Sbornik rukovodiashchikh materialov po kul'turno-massovoi rabote* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1957), 34-37, 49-53.

⁵⁰⁴ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 13-15.

⁵⁰⁵ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 49, ll. 2-3.

intended not only to get information on youth cultural activities, but also to reorient the club network toward serving youth more directly by encouraging club managers to organize events for young people in order to report successful club activities to those above.

To an extent, this emphasis on youth interests in the clubs resulted from the Komsomol TsK's intervention with the Party TsK to ensure that youth had a social space for fun entertainment. For instance, in 1956 the Komsomol TsK asked the Party TsK to build more trade union clubs, impose fewer limitations on existing club financing for state-sponsored popular culture, free up club spaces occupied by other organizations, and increase the production of musical instruments and other equipment for cultural recreations.⁵⁰⁶ In April 1956, the Party TsK suggested the need to consider allowing college and secondary school students the right to use sport and cultural recreation institutions in the daytime without paying fees.⁵⁰⁷ In addition, the Party TsK devoted more club time to events dedicated only to youth and organized with the participation of the Komsomol, such as youth evenings by limiting the amount of movies shown in clubs, despite the loss in income from a very profitable enterprise. The Komsomol TsK declared in 1956 that the Party TsK had accepted its suggestion to decrease the number of movie-days in trade union clubs from eighteen to fifteen after January 1957, and directed Komsomol cells to use this as a means of improving cultural recreation work among youth in clubs.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, ll. 27-28.

⁵⁰⁷ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 179, ll. 54-55.

⁵⁰⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 912, l. 5.

As a result of such across-the-board efforts by the Komsomol, the Party, and trade unions, the number of state-sponsored popular cultural activities for young people shot up. Shortly after March 1953, youth evenings received significantly more attention from clubs and from institutions overseeing clubs. For example, the Moscow Gor'kii House of Culture had ten youth evenings in 1950, one-third of the total evenings that year, with the rest largely dedicated to revolutionary dates and elections.⁵⁰⁹ Yet between October 1955 and October 1956, the house of culture held forty-nine evenings of youth leisure and fourteen evenings of college student amateur concerts, which, together, made up 69 percent of the total ninety-one evenings, over six times the number of youth-oriented evenings in 1950.⁵¹⁰

The rise in club activities for youth comes through even clearer in amateur art, a sphere in which the Party-state gathered more thorough statistics. In 1950, the USSR had over 200,000 amateur art collectives with 4,000,000 participants, mostly youth.⁵¹¹ By 1954, around 5,000,000 performed in 350,000 circles.⁵¹² However, the number of those involved in amateur art reached 9,000,000 participants in 600,000 collectives by 1962, with a much faster rate of growth from 1954 to 1962 than previously.⁵¹³

Other evidence demonstrates a shift in priorities from political lectures to amateur art concerts. In 1955, the clubs belonging to the Ministry of Culture held 2,571,000

⁵⁰⁹ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1-4.

⁵¹⁰ TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 50, ll. 5-6.

⁵¹¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 102.

⁵¹² Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 46.

⁵¹³ S. P. Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo Komiteta VLKSM i zadachi komsomola, vytekaiushchie iz reshenii XXII s'ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 51.

lectures and political speeches with 197,000 in attendance, and 2,786,000 lectures and political speeches in 1959 with 226,000,000 in the audience, an increase of less than 5 percent in the number of events and just over 13 percent in the audience members. Comparing this to amateur art performances, with 757,000 shows in 1955 and 105,000,000 in attendance, and 1959 with 951,000 performances and 143,000,000 in the audience, reveals increases of more than 25 percent in the number of events, and over 36 percent in the people attending amateur art shows.⁵¹⁴ Consequently, although lectures certainly remained important, Thaw-era MOC clubs placed comparatively more stress on increasing the provision of amateur art.

The growth in the number of amateur art participants reflected the stepped-up measures of Komsomol cells in the mid-1950s to promote youth involvement in amateur art. A case in point, the keynote speaker at the 1956 Moscow city Komsomol conference stated that “we need to, in the most active manner, get youth involved in amateur art collectives,” with the goal of “ensuring that each club will be the favorite place for youth leisure.”⁵¹⁵ In contrast, the keynote speaker at the 1951 Moscow city Komsomol conference expressed far less concern over involving young people in amateur art activities, and instead underscored the need for sport stadiums to become “the favorite place for youth leisure.”⁵¹⁶

The pressure for sustained youth participation in amateur art occurred in primary Komsomol cells as well, as evinced by the Komsomol organization of the Third State

⁵¹⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1055, l. 5.

⁵¹⁵ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 484, l. 51

⁵¹⁶ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 12, d. 1, l. 31.

Ball-Bearing Factory of Stalinsk neighborhood in Saratov. In late December 1953, the Komsomol committee disparaged the fact that the factory's amateur arts had so few Komsomol participants. The Komsomol committee censured the Komsomol secretaries of factory workshops who considered amateur art "a secondary activity," and called for participation in amateur circles "to be considered one of the primary obligations (*pervoocherednykh obiazannostei*) of Komsomol members."⁵¹⁷ This statement on behalf of amateur art activities by the factory Komsomol committee used much stronger rhetoric than the committee used previously, for example, at its 1952 Komsomol conference, helping illuminate the weight and speed of the shift after March 5, 1953.⁵¹⁸ Avrus similarly describes amateur art at SGU during the mid-1950s as being "much more developed than previously."⁵¹⁹

This evidence demonstrates the impact of the early Thaw campaign in the sphere of state-sponsored youth popular culture. It illustrates that youth in the mid-1950s did, in fact, have substantially more opportunities to participate in officially-managed cultural recreation institutions, which organized events oriented more toward young people. Thus, the post-Stalin Party-state did not only offer young people a new social contract in its official discourse, but also invested significant energy and resources into attempting to satisfy youth desires at the grassroots level of the cultural recreation network. Additionally, by having young people participate in many more club activities, the authorities arguably succeeded in substantially expanding the period of "communist

⁵¹⁷ GANISO, f. 654, op. 1., d. 16, l. 166.

⁵¹⁸ GANISO, f. 654, op. 1., d. 12, l. 37.

⁵¹⁹ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

time” that youth spent in officially-monitored settings, though whether doing so actually increased social controls is another matter.

The Content of Club Events in the Early Thaw

In addition to the greater amount of club activities targeting young people in the early Thaw, these events grew more popular among young people, as revealed by a close examination of the fate of jazz and western dancing. Previously denounced by official discourse and marginalized within clubs, western popular culture slowly emerged from the margins of the Soviet musical scene after 1953. Music with jazz elements began to play on Soviet radio, *estrada* or variety ensembles in restaurants started to include more syncopated rhythms in their repertoire, and formerly prominent jazz musicians returned to Moscow and Leningrad from either voluntary exile or prison.⁵²⁰ Party-state organizations that organized youth popular culture dropped antic cosmopolitan language from their policy statements. The 1956 VTsSPS Plenum decree on cultural recreation work, in contrast to the 1951 plenum decree, did not censure “antisocial” amateur art pieces.⁵²¹ At the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress, the TsK sent an important signal in Shelepin’s keynote speech, which conspicuously failed to mention western music as a problem.⁵²² All of this marked a sharp departure from the militant Stalin-era approach.

⁵²⁰ Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 123-35; S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 261-88; and David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 441-67.

⁵²¹ GARF, f. R-5451, op 24, d. 1543, ll. 13-25.

⁵²² Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 44.

Nonetheless, those holding militant ideological perspectives fought stridently against these reforms. The Moscow House of Folk Creativity, DNT, provides a clear example of this. A letter sent by the director of this institution, N. A. Astriev, to the MOC on December 27, 1953, acknowledged that “certain western dances are broadcast over the radio with the knowledge and permission of the MOC.” Despite this, the Moscow DNT, “lacking specific directions to the contrary,” would not change its policies, since “who would be interested in corrupting the ideology of our youth?” The Moscow DNT thus will continue to “stop *any attempt* to dance foxtrots and tangos in the clubs and parks of the capital.”⁵²³ Another missive sent soon afterward by a commission in this DNT underlined the need for “dance directors” at dance floors, meant to “discipline stiliagi, hooligans, and defend the rest of youth from their harmful influence” and instill the appropriate “culture of behavior and beauty in dancing.”⁵²⁴

Despite such opposition, the permissive policy from above continued. In 1954, the Moscow DNT complained that dance floors witnessed “the introduction of the foxtrot and tango.”⁵²⁵ The next year, its report failed to mention the foxtrot or tango at all.⁵²⁶ This does not indicate that the foxtrot disappeared or that the Moscow DNT stopped caring about the issue; likely, it saw no point in continuing to make such complaints. Indeed, despite the argument of the Moscow DNT that its dance teacher attestation commission functioned to ensure that dance “teaching was concentrated in the hands of

⁵²³ Emphasis in original: RGALI, f. 2329, d. 16, l. 4.

⁵²⁴ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 16, l. 11.

⁵²⁵ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 39, l. 39.

⁵²⁶ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 45, l. 37.

professionals instead of random people,” the Moscow city executive committee officially closed the commission in 1956.⁵²⁷

This closing reflected the growing acceptance of western-style dancing in state-sponsored popular culture institutions. It also responded to specific criticism of the Moscow DNT, which shows that another approach to youth socialization via dance took hold, visible in a letter sent by A. K. Azarov, a Moscow dance teacher, to the MOC in 1956. He criticized the period of what he called the “veto” on foxtrots, meaning the late postwar Stalin years, as having resulted in youth learning to dance these dances “improperly, without pedagogues, without good examples, having lost the criteria of what is good and what is bad in dancing.” Azarov proclaimed that “we must help them!” and went on to censure the Moscow DNT for continuing to forbid the teaching of foxtrots and similar dances, which result in youth learning them from the “back door” (*chernogo khoda*), giving birth to stiliagi-style dancing, “with jaunty (*razviaznymi*) bodily movements and indiscreet poses.” He concluded: “this is exactly what we cannot allow.”⁵²⁸ Such statements illustrate that the Moscow DNT vigorously fought against tangos, rumbas, and foxtrots less out of its institutional position than out of the ideological orthodoxy of its administration, which failed to adapt to the more pluralistic context of the early Thaw and lost some of its bureaucratic turf.

Other sources confirm the increasing acceptability of the foxtrot and tango, despite continued criticism by more militant officials. Thus, an instruction booklet issued in 1957, a publication that typically does not press the boundaries of acceptability,

⁵²⁷ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 58, l. 37.

⁵²⁸ RGALI, f. 2329, d. 324, ll. 4-6.

approvingly portrayed the dancing of a tango at a youth ball in a club, quoting the ball director as stating: “Let us continue the ballroom program! Tango! The best dancers will get a prize.”⁵²⁹ F. A. Kurilova, the Komsomol secretary of her school who tried to limit youth from dancing the foxtrot or tango at school dances during the postwar Stalin years, remembered that at SGU in the mid-1950s, students freely danced the foxtrot and tango at university-sponsored evenings. In 1957, she even danced the boogie-woogie herself, taught to her by Czech visitors to a Soviet summer camp.⁵³⁰ Another student at SGU, N. A. Popkova, stated that the foxtrot and tango were the only dances in her student dormitory, since lack of space in the dorm did not permit ballroom dances.⁵³¹ Marvin, the Saratov jazz musician, remembered young people dancing the foxtrot and tango in the 1950s, and the boogie-woogie in the 1960s.⁵³² A Saratov jazz musician, Arons, suggested that the young students at SGU danced the foxtrot, tango, and boogie-woogie in the late 1950s.⁵³³ However, the former Komsomol secretary of SGU Avrus remembered that, at the university-sponsored evening events of the mid-1950s, youth danced the foxtrot and tango, but boogie-woogie remained “officially forbidden,” and the Komsomol and trade union organizers of the evening events prevented youth from dancing this dance, even though youth danced the boogie-woogie at home.⁵³⁴ These discrepancies show that, while

⁵²⁹ E. Makhlin, *Opyt raboty kul'turno-prosvititel'nykh uchrezhdenii na zheleznodorozhnom transporte* (Moscow: Gudok, 1957), 102.

⁵³⁰ F. A. Kurilova, born 1936, interviewed May 15, 2009.

⁵³¹ N. A. Popkova, born 1936, interviewed May 20, 2009.

⁵³² K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13, 2009.

⁵³³ F. M. Arons, born 1940, interviewed May 18, 2009.

⁵³⁴ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

the boogie-woogie did not become widespread in the mid-1950s among Saratov youth and faced opposition from the SGU Komsomol committee, the foxtrot and tango grew commonplace. This occurred in spite of disapproval from the more militant Saratov Komsomol city committee, as embodied in a 1955 newspaper article that criticized a young dancing couple who supposedly “inspired nausea” with their dancing of the rumba, boogie-woogie, and foxtrot (Figure 1).⁵³⁵

⁵³⁵ “Na ostrie pera...,” *Molodoi stalinets*, August 21, 1955.



Figure 1. A 1955 editorial cartoon from *Molodoi stalinets* that illustrates “improper” dancing.

Other hard-line officials also expressed opposition to the more tolerant policy of the post-Stalin leadership. Baliaskaia related a story from the time when she served as a secretary in the Ukrainian Komsomol TsK in charge of students and Pioneers from October 1953 to 1958. Her remembrances embody the new focus on and conflicts over youth cultural recreation and tolerance of western cultural influence in the early Thaw.

She described how, when she visited a school in Khar'kov, she found that the principal refused to hold an evening dance as students preferred the boogie-woogie and "did not like waltzes," while the principal, like many other principals at the time, "did not understand such music." The principal told Baliasnaia that "the school roof will fall on my head or I will quit my job before the boogie-woogie will be danced here." Baliasnaia, in turn, answered that "you can write a letter of resignation right now, because I will not leave Khar'kov until your school hosts a dance with the boogie-woogie." According to Baliasnaia, this argument reflected a broader tension between the Komsomol and "a type of authoritarianism of principals," as the Komsomol at that time "forcefully promoted (*nasazhdali*)" such youth evenings. She, thereby, forced the dancing of western dances in order to ensure well-attended state-sponsored events, despite her personal feeling that, compared to the foxtrot or tango, "boogie-woogie was a truly alien (*chuzhdyi*) dance for us," as "the music itself was alien, and the dance was alien."⁵³⁶

All of this indicates that the changes in policy toward youth dances in Moscow's clubs and PKOs had strong parallels throughout the Soviet Union. In the mid-1950s, the narrow range of acceptable dances expanded from ballroom dances in the postwar Stalin years to include the foxtrot, tango, and rumba. The struggle moved on to dances more closely associated with western Europe and the United States, such as the boogie-woogie. However, from the late 1950s, especially after the 1957 Sixth International Youth Festival in Moscow,⁵³⁷ other dances appeared, most notably those inspired by rock'n'roll, which troubled even soft-line officials.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁶ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁵³⁷ This remarkable event marked a key turning point in opening the USSR to western influence. See Kristin Roth-Ey, "'Loose Girls' on the Loose: Sex, Propaganda and the 1957 Youth Festival" in Melanie

The attitude toward jazz music in state-sponsored cultural events also changed in the early Thaw. The Moscow DNT again offers a revealing case study. In its annual report for 1954, the Moscow DNT stated that:

Variety ensembles are becoming more and more widespread, especially in Moscow colleges. Yet it has to be acknowledged that both in their repertoire and manner and style of performance, many of them seek to emulate western jazz ensembles. They are too caught up in rhythmic complexity, do not pay attention to the clearness of the sound, sometimes deliberately play off key, and abuse saxophone and tuba glissandos. Thus, they lose the feel of light, elegant music, and transform into bad dance ensembles. There is an intensive struggle taking place to rid these ensembles of everything superficial and alien to the Soviet listener. In places where ensembles are managed by experienced and cultured musicians, and not volunteer directors, it is possible to ensure an appropriate manner of playing, with a repertoire of light music by Soviet composers.⁵³⁹

This passage provides information on what it meant for variety ensembles to include jazz elements, which are similar to those parts of the “pensioner’s ensemble” that so upset Ogurtsov in “Carnival Night.” In addition, it demonstrates that the Moscow DNT fought against the growing number of jazz-style variety ensembles, just as it struggled against the foxtrot, rumba, and tango. The passage also hints at similarities in how the Moscow DNT approached this conflict, as in both cases it wanted to control who directed the amateur art collective, whether dance or variety ensemble by having a professional lead the group, presumably one approved by the Moscow DNT. The Moscow DNT did not fare well in this battle, reporting in 1955 that “the number of variety ensembles continues to increase,” with many “in the hands of unqualified directors.” These ensembles

Ilić, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood eds., *Women in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 75-96, and Pia Koivunen, “Overcoming Cold War Boundaries at the World Youth Festivals,” in Sari Autio-Saraso and Katalyn Miklossy eds., *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming in 2011).

⁵³⁸ For rock’n’roll after the festival, see V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

⁵³⁹ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 29-30.

“emulate bad jazz ensembles,” as a result of which “the situation of most variety ensembles,” especially in universities, “remains unsatisfactory.”⁵⁴⁰ Thus, the militants in the Moscow DNT music section, just like those in the dance section, lost some battles in the struggle to keep jazz elements out of amateur ensembles and to place people loyal to their views in charge of these groups.

The archival data suggest a palpable improvement in the official environment of clubs for jazz enthusiasts, which is borne out by interviews. In Moscow, Garanian described how, in the mid-1950s, his underground jazz group, the “Golden Eight,” joined one of the most prestigious youth orchestras at the time in the Central House of Artists (*Tsentral’nyi Dom Rabotnikov Iskusstva*), under B. S. Figotin and later Iu. V. Saul’skii.⁵⁴¹ Another prominent jazz musician of the Thaw, A. S. Kozlov, recalled that the Komsomol committee at Moscow State University helped him purchase a saxophone for participating in university amateur art activities, despite the fact that many continued to view this instrument as an alien object.⁵⁴² In Saratov, Marvin commented that, after Stalin’s death, the atmosphere “became somewhat freer” in regard to jazz.⁵⁴³ Arons stated that the Saratov jazz scene truly took off toward the end of the 1950s.⁵⁴⁴ Yet Zhimskii recalled new jazz-oriented collectives forming already in the mid-1950s and performing

⁵⁴⁰ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 25-26.

⁵⁴¹ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009. For more on Iu. V. Saul’skii, see chapter 1. For more on the “Golden Eight,” see Starr, *Red and Hot*, 245-47.

⁵⁴² The date for this purchase is unclear, likely sometime in the late 1950s: A. S. Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse’: i tak vsiu zhizn’*” (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), 134-35.

⁵⁴³ K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13, 2009.

⁵⁴⁴ F. M. Arons, born 1940, interviewed May 18, 2009.

on university stages.⁵⁴⁵ He supplied a photograph of his jazz group performing at the Saratov Pedagogical Institute, visually illustrating the growing acceptability of jazz (Figure 2).



Figure 2. This is a photograph of a performance at the Saratov Pedagogical Institute. Courtesy of the private archive of I. P. Zhimskii.

The SGU newspaper even featured Zhimskii in an overall friendly cartoon in 1958, which did not hesitate to use the term jazz with a positive connotation (Figure 3).

⁵⁴⁵ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009.



Figure 3. This editorial cartoon from *Leninskii put'* demonstrates the friendlier tone toward jazz in the mid-1950s. The article is "Druzheskie sharzhi," *Leninskii put'*, April 5, 1958.

Local Komsomol officials echo these comments. According to Avrus, after Stalin's death and especially the Secret Speech in 1956, space opened up for jazz and jazz-oriented amateur art collectives began to appear.⁵⁴⁶ A Komsomol official who

⁵⁴⁶ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

entered SGU in 1955 and reached the rank of Komsomol Secretary of the university Komsomol in the early 1960s, L. E. Gerasimova, remembered that jazz-style pieces began to appear in amateur competitions from the late 1950s.⁵⁴⁷

A particularly fascinating example in regard to amateur art competitions, and one illustrative of the contestation between those holding hard-line and soft-line viewpoints, comes from a debate by the jury of an amateur art competition over variety ensemble performances in preparation for the 1957 Moscow International Youth Festival. The discussion centered on Saul'skii's Central House of Artists ensemble, where Garanian played at the time. One jury member censured the ensemble's piece as "played in the modern style, the style of an American jazz ensemble." He concluded that "giving an award to this ensemble would mean that other jazz ensembles would see this as" meaning that jazz "is now permitted!" Leonid Utesov, the professional jazz musician popular since the 1930s who sat on the jury, took a more tolerant view: "we should not think of this collective as flawed" owing to the "several sharp techniques used from the arsenal of American jazz ensembles." Fearing such a style of play, in his view, would result in "the creation of ensembles lacking any spirit." Utesov insisted, in regard to Saul'skii's group, that "we need such music, it needs to be joyful and full of life."⁵⁴⁸ The ensemble ended up getting a bronze medal, and this undoubtedly demonstrated the acceptability of jazz to many other young musicians, as the more orthodox jury member feared.

Nevertheless, since those controlling the repertoire in the early Thaw tended to have a more militant perspective than jazz enthusiasts who joined amateur ensembles, the

⁵⁴⁷ L. E. Gerasimova, born in the late 1930s, interviewed May 27, 2009.

⁵⁴⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 873, l. 105-26.

latter had to use a variety of strategies in order to overcome censorship, which, unsurprisingly, resembled some of the methods used under Stalin. One strategy, according to Garanian, involved playing jazz music in satirical skits making fun of the United States. For example, in a dance scene about a conflict between the USSR and US, when the performer representing the latter danced on the stage, he stated that “we played jazz.” This “was one of the naïve strategies to play a couple of jazz notes” while “what was happening on the stage was irrelevant to us,” and “the audience gladly listened to jazz.”⁵⁴⁹ I. V. Gaponov, who enrolled at MGU in 1952 and rose to Komsomol secretary of the physics department as a graduate student in the early 1960s, participated in a series of amateur art activities during these years, such as the opera “Dubinushka.” Written in 1954-55 by several students in the physics department, this piece had a scene with a stiliaga dancing rock’n’roll. In Gaponov’s words, although the opera depicts the stiliaga as “a negative character,” his presence “gave us the opportunity to present real rock’n’roll on the official stage of MGU,” and “in this way, legitimate this [music].” He added that every subsequent opera authored by students of the physics department—several were written after “Dubinushka”—had a similar scene of “moral degeneration,” giving students a way to perform western dances on the university stage. According to him, “this was a form of freedom, under the guise of making fun of western models,” a strategy that he specifically describes as appearing “in the post-Stalin years, before Khrushchev’s Secret Speech, but not right away after Stalin’s death.”⁵⁵⁰ While he speaks authoritatively about

⁵⁴⁹ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

⁵⁵⁰ Likely, the dances that Gaponov refers to as rock’n’roll were not the same as rock’n’roll in the US at this time, and should be understood to mean as the most radically western-themed dances, those considered unquestionably beyond the boundaries of legitimacy by the censors. I. V. Gaponov, born 1934, interviewed April 28, 2009.

MGU, elsewhere, especially outside Moscow, jazz enthusiasts in the antic cosmopolitan campaign may have used similar tactics where more pluralistic local officials tolerated them.⁵⁵¹

People in the regions certainly deployed such methods in the Thaw. In Saratov, M. I. Ryskin remembered how, in an SGU amateur art collective in the late 1950s, the student who was supposed to represent a cheater on an exam danced to foxtrot music. Overtly, this depicted foxtrot in a negative light, which allowed the amateur art collective to get such dancing through the censorship process and show it on the stage. In reality, however, the situation proved more complex. The role of the cheater was given to the most popular, good-looking male in the group, implicitly associating high status and prestige with western-style music.⁵⁵² Gerasimova presented another strategy. She described how an artistic council approved repertoires for amateur art competitions and festivals at SGU, and “could put the brake on more radical, fashionable music (*krainye veshchi, modnye*), on ‘cacophony,’” meaning jazz-style music. In her words, while the amateur art collectives stuck to the program, they “could perform a more daring piece (*ostruiu veshch’*) after the end of the program if the audience called for an encore (*na bis*).”⁵⁵³

The shift in the content of state-sponsored youth popular culture in the early Thaw toward acceptance of some western cultural influence had a flip side: a decrease in the ideological load of amateur art. Avrus, much involved in Komsomol work at SGU from

⁵⁵¹ Starr presents one example from a professional theater, but does not discuss amateurs: Starr, *Red and Hot*, 224.

⁵⁵² M. I. Ryskin, born 1938, interviewed June 1, 2009.

⁵⁵³ L. E. Gerasimova, born in the late 1930s, interviewed May 27, 2009.

the late 1940s to the late 1950s, related that the ubiquitous songs devoted to Stalin disappeared, and “there were no songs about Khrushchev,” though the USSR and the Party continued to receive praise. Moreover, cultural recreation “took on a more entertaining character” and “less attention was paid, much less than in the [postwar Stalin years], to ideological orthodoxy (*chtoby eto vse bylo ideologicheski vyderzhanno*).”⁵⁵⁴ A perusal of instructional booklets on state-sponsored popular culture confirms his statements. After 1956, Stalin did not appear in their pages and Khrushchev received little attention in amateur songs.⁵⁵⁵ Likewise, choruses declined from their previous position because Thaw-era authorities did not express nearly as much support for them as in the postwar Stalin years, and both club workers and young cultural activists poured more energy into variety ensembles and other cultural forms. Propaganda lectures, although still frequent, increasingly altered their themes from a more ideological focus to dealing with issues of greater interest to youth, such as lectures entitled “About Love, Comradeship, and Friendship.”⁵⁵⁶ *Moskovskii Komsomolets* even proposed replacing the existing forms of political education with dancing, watching movies, listening to records, and studying new songs.⁵⁵⁷

Overall, the data illuminate the reality of the everyday impact of the early Thaw initiatives in the sphere of state-sponsored youth popular culture. This should not come as a surprise, since this new course fit in well with the existing incentives for club and

⁵⁵⁴ A. I. Avrus, born 1930, interviewed May 28, 2009.

⁵⁵⁵ There are instances where Stalin’s name is mentioned in the period between 1953 and 1956. For example, see N. Sizov, *V klubakh i dvortsakh kul’tury* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1954), 47.

⁵⁵⁶ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 49, l. 2-3.

⁵⁵⁷ This information comes from a 1957 report on youth newspapers: RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 43, l. 43.

Komsomol officials. For clubs and PKOs, ideologically-oriented events such as political lectures continued to cause financial losses.⁵⁵⁸ Hosting western dances and to a lesser extent jazz ensembles enabled them to fulfill financial plans, and the soft-line policy of the leadership decreased the barriers to doing so. For local Komsomol officials, permitting their charges to engage in western popular culture, or even helping organize such events, served to satisfy the cultural consumption desires of young people and helped ensure the growth of their cells, payment of dues on time, and the willingness of members to undertake obligatory social activities.

Nevertheless, those within the Party-state hierarchy holding a more militant outlook opposed the pluralistic notes in the reforms of the early Thaw. Both cultural and Komsomol officials, for instance those in the Moscow DNT, Ogurtsov, and the Saratov city Komsomol committee, struggled to limit the foxtrot, rumba, tango, and jazz, despite the nod from above for such forms of western popular culture. They disparaged the turn toward entertainment and pleasure. For example, at the 1956 Komsomol conference at MGU, an institution with a well-established reputation for pluralism, a representative noted that “comrades have said that our Komsomol cells are losing their political face and are becoming sport and cultural clubs.”⁵⁵⁹ Hard-line officials also criticized the policy of greater lenience toward youth “deviance.” Thus, a March 1955 letter from the Head Procurator P. Baranov to the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet criticized

⁵⁵⁸ As the Krasnopresnenskii cultural-enlightenment department admitted in 1954, there were some problems with lectures, and “first of all, the inability to assemble an audience, as a result of which there are cases when lectures are cancelled and when lectures have a small audience.” See TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 29, ll. 9-11.

⁵⁵⁹ TsAOPIM, f. 6803, op. 1, d. 1, l. 138.

the proposed shortening of sentences for crimes committed by youth under eighteen.⁵⁶⁰

Some ordinary citizens also expressed hesitancy over lenient treatments of criminal youth.⁵⁶¹

Such evidence, along with the struggles over western popular culture in clubs, highlights the prominence of conflicts during the early Thaw between cadres holding hard-line and soft-line views on “appropriate” organized cultural activities. These findings from the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture lead me to argue that tensions between those holding opposing views of the post-Stalin reforms had a larger impact on daily life than suggested by some recent scholarship that deemphasized the importance of these struggles.⁵⁶² I am not arguing for the existence of a fixed, unchanging camp in the Thaw opposed to de-Stalinization, whose battles with a reformist-oriented faction fully explain the developments during this period. Few supported or opposed the Thaw-era shifts wholesale, and the outlooks of officials and citizens on these changes evolved over time and in reaction to concrete developments. Nonetheless, as evinced by the sphere of organized cultural recreation, conflicts between those holding hard-line and soft-line positions took place both within the bureaucracy and at the everyday level of planning and implementing cultural activities. Because the late Stalinist leadership pursued a radically militant position on state-sponsored popular culture for young people, supporting a hard-line approach even after the transformations in the early Thaw marked people as opponents of de-Stalinization. In turn, strong supporters of reforms generally

⁵⁶⁰ GARF, f. R-8131, op. 28, d. 2526, l. 58.

⁵⁶¹ Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer*, 21-49, 79-108.

⁵⁶² See in particular Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*, 1-13, and Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer*, 156-85.

held a more pluralistic and tolerant position toward state-sponsored popular culture than the post-Stalin Kremlin's moderate soft line in the mid-1950s. Moreover, throughout the Thaw, the leadership's official policy on cultural activities for young people wavered between more or less pluralism. Although many officials simply followed the Party line, some actively and openly promoted a softer approach, while others advocated a harder one, which generally corresponded to their view of de-Stalinization as a whole. This pattern recalled the developments in organized cultural recreation policy in NEP, though without the open, formal factions of the 1920s.

If some officials and citizens expressed opposition to the new course from a militant position, certain youth refused to conform to even the more pluralistic policy of the post-Stalin leadership in state-sponsored popular culture. A former stiliaga, for example, described what seems like a standard maneuver for a school evening: "one of us would get into the playing booth, lock the door, and put on American music. In the dance hall, several pairs would begin to dance, while the rest, the 'proper' students, looked on with wonder and jealousy."⁵⁶³ In a letter-to-the-editor published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, a group of young factory women condemned their co-worker, Valia. According to the letter, Valia was forced to leave an evening event for youth because she danced "differently" than everyone else, while also apparently revealing too much of her body and wearing too much make-up, all associated with female stiliagi.⁵⁶⁴ The growth in the number of stiliagi during this period, and the further expansion of this counterculture to middle-class and even working-class youth such as Valia, made such confrontations

⁵⁶³ This story depicted the late 1950s, and American music here referred to jazz: Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*," 72.

⁵⁶⁴ "Nam stydno za nashu podrugu," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, June 21, 1955.

increasingly common. Likewise, hooliganism in clubs continued from the postwar Stalin years into the Thaw. A case in point, a group of nearly a hundred youth aged fourteen to eighteen, armed with sticks and metal bars, invaded the dance hall of the “Pavshikh Bortsov” club and beat up those inside.⁵⁶⁵

Both stiliagi and hooligans felt the brunt of persecution from the Party-state due to the new initiative against juvenile “delinquency” in the early Thaw. This proved especially true for stiliagi, since the Stalin authorities, though clearly placing them beyond the boundaries of legitimacy, expressed little active concern over this counterculture. The Thaw-era leadership, however, launched a campaign against stiliagi in the mid-1950s, relying in particular on Komsomol patrols and youth newspapers.

This marked a sharp break between the official treatment and the resulting everyday experience of stiliagi and jazz enthusiasts. The latter increasingly entered the Soviet mainstream as the music that stood at the center of their social and cultural life acquired patronage from above. Jazz enthusiasts, then, represented one of the major beneficiaries of the new consumerist social contract offered to youth. The willingness and even eagerness that jazz enthusiasts expressed during the early Thaw over participating in club activities monitored and managed by the Party-state further illuminates the difference between stiliagi and jazz enthusiasts. Jazz enthusiasts did not perceive or use jazz as a subversive mechanism of oppositional cultural politics. They focused on the aesthetics of jazz, not on showcasing their defiance of the mainstream through adopting spectacular western styles, like stiliagi did.

⁵⁶⁵ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 186, l. 82.

The developments described above signify how the top-level shift toward a more tolerant approach in regard to western popular culture contributed to a reconceptualization of New Soviet Men and Women. During the anticosmopolitan campaign, the Party prohibited model communists from bearing any trace of western influence, contributing to the escalating gap between the authorities and the many youth who refused to abandon western popular culture. After 1953, the Party-state's policy opened up room for young New Soviet People to adopt a limited degree of western culture style. Indulging in Sovietized, although not American-style, jazz, and in the foxtrot, rumba, and tango, although not the boogie-woogie, became increasingly acceptable.

Likewise, debates ranged in the press on what constituted appropriate fashion.⁵⁶⁶ For instance, *Moskovskii komsomolets* attempted to begin a discussion by publishing a letter in 1955 from one young woman, entitled "And What Do You Think?" The author wrote that many young women have begun to wear pants, but "this clothing surprises some passersby, and occasionally one hears 'stiliaga' addressed to those women" from people with a "stagnant mindset" (*kosnost*').⁵⁶⁷ Other articles similarly expressed an ambiguous position on and threw open to debate the exact parameters of *stiliazhnichestvo*.⁵⁶⁸ Such debates provide further evidence of the conflicts between "stagnant" and soft-line approaches in the mid-1950s.

⁵⁶⁶ Tsipursky, "Citizenship, Deviance, and Identity."

⁵⁶⁷ "A kak dumaete vy?" *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 10, 1957.

⁵⁶⁸ See *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 13, 1957; *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, July 9, 1958; and *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 6, 1958.

Furthermore, the post-Stalin leadership's new course left much room for individual youth to formulate their own viewpoint on the crucial question of the appropriate relationship to western culture. This resulted in the substantial expansion of the space for youth agency, as young people had the opportunity to choose from a diversity of competing claims by official figures, including those that validated occasional indulgence in certain forms of jazz, western dancing, and western fashion.⁵⁶⁹ The Thaw-era leadership, in effect, extended a compromise to the mass of Soviet youth tempted by some aspects of western influence in an effort to avoid alienating them by allowing them to maintain a degree of western style, while still perceiving themselves as loyal Soviet citizens. Moreover, the Party-state's public campaign against the small minority of full-fledged stiliagi enabled young people who adopted only a limited degree of western culture to avoid seeing themselves as beyond the bounds of Soviet legitimacy.⁵⁷⁰ This, in part, helps explain why jazz enthusiasts, such as Garanian, Kuznetsov, Iarskaia, and Kleinot, chose to not identify as stiliagi, despite the parallels between jazz enthusiasts and stiliagi, and the fact that those more militant might have labeled jazz enthusiasts as stiliagi.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ For how official discourse left room for young people to shape their own perspective in the 1930s, see Anna Krylova, "Identity, Agency, and the First Soviet Generation," in Stephen Lovell ed., *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 101-22.

⁵⁷⁰ This point is informed by Alexei Yurchak's analysis of the mid-1960s to 1980s: apparently, similar mechanisms were at work already in the mid-1950s. See Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 164-65.

⁵⁷¹ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009; G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009; and V. N. Iarskaia, born around 1936, interviewed May 30, 2009.

Conclusion

An analysis of state-sponsored popular culture for youth testifies to the post-Stalin leadership's offer of a new social contract to young people. The top-level officials invested substantially more resources into the club network, directed its activities toward young people, and increased the entertaining aspects of club events while decreasing their political load. Moreover, they validated a degree of western popular culture in the club network. The changes in state-sponsored youth popular culture, rather than evolving naturally from postwar Stalinist processes, resulted from the Thaw-era Kremlin's decision to undertake a series of conscious policy shifts, with cultural consumption undergoing an even more radical break than material consumption. Jazz enthusiasts made particular gains. As their favored cultural form acquired legitimacy, they eagerly performed under the Party-state's supervision, underscoring their focus on the aesthetics of jazz and lack of subversive or oppositional intentions.

All of these efforts likely did garner legitimacy for the leadership by appeasing youth desires. Besides serving as a social palliative, these cultural consumption offerings arguably helped persuade young people that building communism would help satisfy their personal desires and interests, decreasing the gap between the officialdom and youth that remained from the postwar Stalin years. Furthermore, the more tolerant approach by the leadership toward New Soviet Women and Men expressing a degree of interest in western influence, along with the debates over this issue in official discourse, permitted young people room to express and develop their agency by determining their personal viewpoints and preferences.

While offering young people many more consumption options, the post-Stalin leadership wanted to shape youth values and conduct. Its desire to impose social controls on youth leisure by extending “communist time” constituted another fundamental motivation for the Party-state leadership’s new course on state-sponsored youth popular culture. The post-Stalin leadership considered the lack of organized cultural recreation as a primary reason for youth “deviance,” and hoped to prevent such behavior by offering appealing club activities, in a collective, officially-monitored context. The increase in the number of entertaining youth-oriented events in clubs and PKOs meant that young people did spend substantially more time in cultural recreation institutions, although this hardly implies a deep penetration of the public into the private sphere, or a rise in repressive social controls. As stiliagi and hooligans in youth-oriented club activities illustrate, young people, in fact, did not always behave “appropriately” in clubs. Some research, however, indicates that softer and subtler versions of cultural propaganda may have more impact in instilling desired beliefs than more overt propaganda. This, along with the growth of time youth spent in clubs, might have functioned to improve the propaganda effectiveness of clubs.⁵⁷²

Taken together, the new policies on youth-oriented club activities illuminate the intentions of the early Thaw top officials to construct a socialist version of a “multiple modernity,” one informed by but explicitly alternative to the traditional western model of modernity, while also at some variance with postwar Stalinism. The post-Stalin leadership wanted to achieve a uniquely socialist form of a mass consumer society,

⁵⁷² On how this functioned regarding American cultural propaganda, see Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 1-7.

characterized by a welfare state that satisfied individual desires and interests in a fashion conducive to building communism and forging a Thaw-era version of young New Soviet Individuals.⁵⁷³ In contrast to the Stalinist ideal of disciplined and politicized citizens constantly preparing for war with the western enemy, the official discourse in the Thaw directed model communist citizens to hold a more peace-oriented and pluralistic perspective. Instead of sacrificing their consumption desires for the sake of the state's goals, the post-Stalin Party-state encouraged New Soviet People to partake in more fun and entertaining cultural consumption, even a degree of western popular culture, while still remaining fully committed to communism.

Unlike the late Stalinist approach of presenting any improvements in consumption as gifts from on-high, the post-Stalin leadership acknowledged that young people's actual desires have legitimacy and deserve satisfaction from Party-state organs. Such official recognition of and attempts to appease popular opinions and wants speaks to the movement away from the widescale reliance on the harshest aspects of what Michael Mann termed "coercive power" and the incorporation of "infrastructural power" elements. According to Mann, the latter constitutes the state's capacity to bring about changes in everyday life by its interpenetration, integration, and negotiation with society, while despotic power refers to authoritarian, coercive state actions.⁵⁷⁴ Through its actions in state-sponsored popular cultural policy, the post-Stalin Kremlin tried both to gain

⁵⁷³ According to Paul Glennie's overview of the historiography on consumption, most historians agree on certain attributes of a "consumer society," including growth of: per capita consumption, production of consumer goods, individualism in social life, and consumer acquisitiveness. See his "Consumption within Historical Studies," in Miller, ed., *Acknowledging Consumption*, 164-203. Another good overview is Grant McCracken, "The History of Consumption: A Literature Review and Consumer Guide," *Journal of Consumer Policy* 10 (June 1987): 139-66.

⁵⁷⁴ Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in John H. Hall ed., *States in History* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 109-36.

social support among young people and to get them to spend their leisure in state-monitored settings in official collectives, augmenting “communist time.”

Nonetheless, in conceding that young people have valid desires for cultural consumption that the Komsomol needs to assuage, the Party-state opened room for potential criticism from below. The discourse and policy shifts of the Thaw-era Kremlin initiated a transformation in the perception of state-sponsored popular culture for young people. From being seen as a luxury, it came to be considered a need and even a right. This left the government open for criticism based on how well it met the desires of youth.⁵⁷⁵ Thus, in its policy on cultural recreation, post-Stalin leaders sought to walk a fine line between satisfying young people and attracting them to the process of constructing communism, while not diluting the meaning of what it defined as “communism,” all while contesting the Cold War’s cultural front.

As illustrated by the opposition of militant officials to the Thaw-era Kremlin’s soft-line approach to state-sponsored popular culture, conflict between those opposing de-Stalinizing reforms and those supportive of the new course had a considerable role in shaping young people’s everyday experience. These fractures bear some parallels to the tensions in the popular cultures of capitalist states. Still, in the latter, struggles for hegemony revolve primarily around issues associated with social class.⁵⁷⁶ Some of the

⁵⁷⁵ On the transformations of luxuries into needs in postwar socialist contexts, see the contributors to Crowley and Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism*. On luxury in the prewar Soviet Union, see Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne*.

⁵⁷⁶ See Tony Bennett, “Introduction: Popular Culture and the ‘Turn to Gramsci,’” in Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer, and Janet Woolcott eds., *Popular Culture and Social Relations* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986), xi-xix, and Stuart Hall, “Popular Culture and the State,” in Bennett, Mercer, and Woolcott eds., *Popular Culture and Social Relations*, 22-49. Also see Richard B. Gruneau, “Introduction: Notes on Popular Culture and Political Practice,” in Richard B. Gruneau ed., *Popular Cultures and Political Practices* (Toronto: Garamong Press, 1988), 11-32. For hegemony, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From*

central conflicts over Soviet state-sponsored popular culture, such as over tolerance of western influence or over the balance of ideology and entertainment, reveal that ideological and political factors related to broader debates over the correct path to communism had a crucial part in the open battles within officialdom over popular culture in socialist contexts. Such disagreements over organized cultural recreation policy date back to earlier periods in Soviet history, and while expressed most openly in the NEP, they influenced the Stalin years as well. This sheds light on the larger tensions between hard-line and soft-line visions of building communism that lay at the heart of the Soviet experiment. Class also played a vital role in organized cultural recreation, yet a less overt one, as the efforts to expunge traditional working-class leisure practices via club activities imply. Neither hard-line nor soft-line officials expressed sympathy for behavior labeled as “hooligan,” though they disagreed on the appropriate means of getting rid of it. As a result, rather than taking place within Thaw-era official discourse, struggles related to class largely played out at the everyday level of the clubs, over whether working-class youth would successfully indulge in supposedly immoral behavior.

the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith trans. and ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 57-58, 263, 275-76, 417.

Chapter 5

Youth Initiative and Youth Initiative Clubs in the Thaw, 1953-64

Besides advancing the cause of jazz, the 1956 film “Carnival Night” also sent another signal by depicting how young club workers refused to enact the new manager’s politicized and boring program for the New Year and took initiative into their own hands to put on a fun event. This reflects another major break with the late Stalinist approach, as the Thaw-era leadership now sought to inspire grassroots activism among youth. First Secretary of the Komsomol A. N. Shelepin underscored the importance of youth social activism in his speech at the 1956 Twentieth Communist Party Congress. Shelepin repeatedly stressed the “serious” problem of Komsomol cells relying on “bureaucratic methods,” without bringing anything “new and interesting” to their work, which “cannot satisfy youth.” To deal with this dilemma, Shelepin proclaimed that the Komsomol Central Committee, TsK, wanted to “broadly develop initiative and grassroots activism.”⁵⁷⁷ This chapter first offers an overview of the Komsomol TsK’s attempts to promote social engagement among young people in the post-Stalin period. Then, it empirically grounds these efforts within the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture by offering a close look at one concrete institutional measure taken by the Komsomol to advance this goal: the creation of youth initiative clubs (*molodezhnye initsiativnye kluby*, also known as *molodezhnye samodeiatel’nye kluby*).

⁵⁷⁷ XX s’ezd KPSS. *Stenograficheskii otchet. Ch. 1* (Moscow, 1956), 603, 606-08.

As we have seen, the post-Stalin Kremlin assigned a vital role to satisfying cultural consumption desires in its drive to bring about an alternative, socialist version of a modern consumer society. However, the new top officials, led by Khrushchev, also considered grassroots activism and social engagement in governance through official collectives essential to enacting a socialist modernity. Despite this, scholars have not undertaken any in-depth analyses of the intersections between consumption and initiative during the Thaw.⁵⁷⁸ Kremlin leaders saw initiative from below as integral to forging a Thaw-era version of activist New Soviet Men and Women, ready to participate fully in the self-governing of society once the state withered away in the eschaton of communism.⁵⁷⁹ The post-Stalin top officials also supported new social institutions, such as youth initiative clubs, which they saw as necessary for eliciting community-based governance. Their campaign marked out a vision of a socialist modernity which, in some ways, clearly differed from the western model of consumerist modernity. An analysis of grassroots activism is thus crucial for understanding the unique aspects of the alternative, socialist version of a modern consumer society, especially in the context of the Cold War's "peaceful competition" between two modes of modernity.

⁵⁷⁸ In one exception, a recent work does comment on the important role of these intersections. See David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism," in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52.

⁵⁷⁹ On the post-Stalin efforts to solicit grassroots initiative, see Melanie Ilic, "Introduction," in Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-8; Polly Jones, "The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization," in Polly Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-18; and Soo-Hoon Park, "Party Reform and 'Volunteer Principle' under Khrushchev in Historical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993). The classical work on this subject is George Breslauer, "Khrushchev Reconsidered," in Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch and Robert Sharlet eds., *The Soviet Union since Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 50-70.

While contributing to the further intermingling of public and private and a shift to a different mode of governance, the emphasis on grassroots activism resulted in greater room available in official settings for youth agency and the formation of a civic spirit. Youth initiative clubs offered young people room to achieve their desires and thereby express and develop their agency. In turn, the post-Stalin Party-state's creation of youth initiative clubs and other venues for community engagement in governance paved the way for the growth of a civic spirit that in some ways served as an alternative civil society, as these official collectives encouraged reflection on, and debates over, issues that had a bearing on political life.⁵⁸⁰ These youth initiative clubs helped bring such discussions out of kitchens and other private spaces into the public spaces of clubs.

The youth clubs also demonstrate that the early Thaw witnessed a movement away from the Stalinist emphasis on despotic power. The Kremlin reached out to and negotiated with young people, encouraging them to have substantial input in shaping their own cultural leisure activities. This, of course, was far from full-scale infrastructural power, as the Khrushchev leadership only allowed a limited range of autonomy. By setting boundaries on "appropriate" youth interests through these clubs, Soviet authorities sought to channel youth cultural consumption desires into directions that fit the Party's goals, while also getting youth to spend their leisure in officially-monitored spaces.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ For how civic spirit formed in Soviet cultural activities, see Susan Costanzo, "Amateur Theatres and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-71," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 372-94. For how civic spirit and civil society arose in response to state encouragement in Russia, see George E. Hudson, "Civil Society in Russia: Models and Prospects for Development," *The Russian Review* 62.2 (April 2003): 212-22, and Alexander N. Domrin, "Ten Years Later: Society, 'Civil Society,' and the Russian State," *The Russian Review* 62.2 (April 2003): 193-211.

⁵⁸¹ For another example of how the Soviet state sought to channel consumption desires, see Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211-52.

Doing so served to increase the role of official collectives in the lives of young people. Still, by showing how youth enjoyed themselves in Party-state institutions such as youth initiative clubs, I challenge Oleg Kharkhordin's conclusion that this growth of "communist time" led to a more repressive, coercive everyday life experience for the Soviet population.⁵⁸²

Youth Initiative in Top-Level Discourse and Policy

The post-Stalin Kremlin's turn toward social engagement dates back to controversies within the prerevolutionary Marxist movement over whether to trust spontaneity and initiative from below, or to impose centralized control over grassroots activism, expressed in the historiography as the spontaneity-consciousness paradigm discussed in chapter 1. Once the Bolsheviks seized power, the question of how much room to allow for youth initiative, including within organized cultural activities, became a topic of debate between Right and Left Party factions. The latter perspective, which minimized the space for any youth autonomy and instead demanded that young people exhibit full obedience to Party officials at all levels, won out under Stalin. The period of the antic cosmopolitan campaign witnessed a particularly strong emphasis on youth discipline, leaving little legitimate space for young people to exhibit activism that did not directly advance the narrowly-defined needs of the Soviet state.

The Party-state's rhetoric on youth initiative showed changes already by the 1954 Twelfth Komsomol Congress, held a year after Stalin's death. Its resolution underlined the importance of "developing criticism and self-criticism, especially from below, the

⁵⁸² Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 279-302.

strengthening of Komsomol members' control over Komsomol organs, and the escalation of Komsomol member activism.”⁵⁸³ A January 1956 major internal report on the state of the organization from the Komsomol TsK presents an even harsher indictment of Komsomol methods than Shelepin's Twentieth Party Congress speech. This document lambasted what it identified as the main problems of Komsomol work: an insufficient number of interesting activities for youth due to excessive bureaucracy, authoritarian methods, and a lack of concern with the actual interests of young people, which led to boredom among youth. Consequently, the Komsomol TsK lamented that “a significant number of Komsomol members grow estranged from the Komsomol and find an outlet for their initiative, occasionally, in unseemly activities.” The report drew attention to violations of the principle of democratic centralism in the use of administrative methods, such as higher Komsomol organs demanding that local Komsomol cells implement their decisions without any room for discussion, instead of using persuasion. To deal with such issues, the Komsomol TsK proposed a “perestroika,” or restructuring, meant to achieve the “decisive development of initiative and grassroots activism by the Komsomol masses.” Among other measures, the Komsomol TsK called for substantial changes in the Komsomol's by-laws: giving more power to lower-level Komsomol cells, emphasizing the grassroots activism of individual Komsomol members, and relying more on volunteerism and enthusiasm than on paid officials.⁵⁸⁴

The Komsomol TsK passed a series of decrees in the mid-1950s that reinforced this discursive shift with concrete policies. In September 1955, a resolution helped

⁵⁸³ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 38, l. 127.

⁵⁸⁴ This report was prepared by the Komsomol TsK and sent to the Party TsK, indicating its importance: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, ll. 1-13.

decentralize the Komsomol by limiting the Komsomol TsK's control through lowering the number of top-level (*nomenklatura*) appointments that required its approval.⁵⁸⁵ The Komsomol TsK changed the Komsomol's by-laws in early 1958, adding that "one of the most important principles of Komsomol work is initiative and grassroots activism by all its members and organizations."⁵⁸⁶ Oblast Komsomol cells followed the policy discourse of the Komsomol TsK in highlighting youth community leadership.⁵⁸⁷ Komsomol advice literature unambiguously stated that to move upward within the Komsomol organization necessitated exhibiting initiative.⁵⁸⁸ Komsomol press discourse expressed strong support for grassroots activism, and criticized officials who did not support young people's community engagement.⁵⁸⁹ In an interview, L. K. Baliasnaia, a former Komsomol TsK secretary and at that time a high-ranking Komsomol official in Ukraine, also confirmed the new emphasis on youth initiative from below during the early Thaw. She drew a particular difference between those officials who supported the idea of grassroots initiative and those "not very wise" functionaries who could not shed their habit of discipline and command acquired earlier, a type of governing style that, in her words, repelled youth.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 880, l. 36.

⁵⁸⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 971, ll. 62-63.

⁵⁸⁷ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 14, d. 484, l. 20.

⁵⁸⁸ A. Disudenko and A. Skrypnik, *Zakon komsomol'skoi zhizni* (Moscow: "Molodaiia gvardiia," 1966), 96.

⁵⁸⁹ "Videt' i podderzhyvat' komsomol'skuiu initsiativu," *Leninets*, June 1, 1957.

⁵⁹⁰ L. K. Baliasnaia, interviewed April 5, 2009.

Furthermore, the Komsomol TsK linked the focus on youth grassroots activism to the renewed drive of the post-Stalin leadership to achieve communism. Shelepin's keynote speech at the 1958 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress devoted one out of its five sections to developing grassroots activism in the Komsomol. Said Shelepn: "The Party teaches us that, as we move toward communism, the functions of the government will gradually shift, and the role of the Party and social organizations such as the Komsomol in life will grow." He praised the Komsomol's work in dealing with the problems caused by Stalin's "cult of personality," and spotlighted the effectiveness of the measures aimed at decentralizing and lowering the number of paid officials, claiming that the Komsomol bureaucracy shrunk by over 15 percent.⁵⁹¹ Khrushchev also gave a major speech at the congress, where he underlined similar themes: "The Komsomol is increasingly becoming an organization that is instilling in youth an ability to live in a communist society and manage its activities. What is needed for this? A wider development of grassroots activism."⁵⁹² Although forging enthusiastic and activist young model communists constituted the major motivation for the focus on youth initiative in official discourse, decreasing administrative expenses constituted a secondary motivation. For instance, a Komsomol TsK resolution criticized the growth in paid cadres, because this did not fit the spirit of the Komsomol as a grassroots, initiative-based organization and also contradicted the Party's directives on reducing the size and cost of the apparatus.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Vsesoiuznogo leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuzna molodezhi XIII s'ezdu komsomola (15 apreliia 1958 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), 63-65.

⁵⁹² N. S. Khrushchev, *Vospityvat' aktivnykh i soznatel'nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva (rech' na XIII s'ezde VLKSM 18 apreliia 1958 goda)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1961), 40.

⁵⁹³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 946, ll. 12-13.

Such evidence indicates a desire to transform the image of the New Soviet Young Person, from a disciplined, militarized, and obedient postwar Stalinist youth, to an empowered young Thaw-era citizen, taking charge of managing local-level community affairs. In effect, the Thaw witnessed a transition in the semiotics associated with the term “initiative,” from its postwar Stalinist meaning of heavily circumscribed activism directly responding to orders from the hierarchy, to encouragement of grassroots activism and a search for more innovative and autonomous forms of Komsomol work from below. This drive, combined with the effort both to appeal to and manage youth interests and desires, became the hallmark of the Thaw-era vision of a socialist consumer-oriented modernity.

Club Activities and Youth Initiative

The Komsomol’s fresh rhetorical tropes and policies powerfully impacted state-sponsored popular cultural offerings for young people. National and local youth newspapers promoted Komsomol members taking a leadership role in creating spaces for organized cultural recreation. For example, a series of articles in youth newspapers called on Komsomol members to express their initiative by building clubs with their own hands. According to one such story, Komsomol youth in one primary cell succeeded in turning an empty room into a club space, acquiring a place to have interesting meetings and lectures, socialize, read, and sing fun songs.⁵⁹⁴ Oblast Komsomol committees highlighted

⁵⁹⁴ “Po initsiative komsomol’tsev: Svoimi rukami,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 15, 1955. For similar stories, see “Vse mozno sdelat’ svoimi rukami,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, August 4, 1955, and “Postroim klub svoimi rukami!” *Leninets*, October 26, 1957.

their success in having members contribute to building clubs “using initiative-based means” (*initsiativnym sposobom*), meaning volunteering their labor.⁵⁹⁵

Furthermore, club officials were explicitly directed to promote youth activism. Instructions to club workers now stressed the need for “youth-oriented events to occur in an atmosphere that encourages the fullest expression of personal initiative,” according to one 1957 guidebook.⁵⁹⁶ In the words of another, club officials had to “create an atmosphere in which young people felt themselves to be true owners of the club, initiators and organizers.” The author of the 1959 publication gave many examples of how to activate youth initiative. For instance, one club director gave a young man who liked photography a newspaper story about amateur movie-making groups. After reading the story, the latter apparently pressed the director to organize a similar group at the club. The director, however, replied that he had no time to do so and that the club lacked the money for the equipment. Hearing that, and encouraged by the club director, the youth decided to take on the requisite fundraising and organizing duties.⁵⁹⁷

Nevertheless, the Komsomol TsK drew attention to ongoing problems with organizing youth cultural activities in trade union clubs. It complained that Komsomol organizations “are deprived of being able to use trade union clubs for youth work, since they have been transformed into commercial organizations, showing movies days and nights.”⁵⁹⁸ The Komsomol TsK requested that the Party TsK decrease the obligatory

⁵⁹⁵ For example, in Kemerovo: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 838, l. 120.

⁵⁹⁶ E. Makhlin, *Opyt raboty kul'turno-prosvititel'nykh uchrezhdenii na zheleznodorozhnom transporte* (Moscow: Gudok, 1957), 3.

⁵⁹⁷ M. E. Nepomniashchii ed., *Entuziasty: Sbornik o peredovikakh kul'turno-prosvititel'noi raboty* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 38-39.

⁵⁹⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 8.

movie days in the club plans, and the Party TsK did so. Yet, since the Party TsK left the total financial demands in the club plans unchanged, the clubs apparently still spent much of their time showing movies in order to meet these high economic goals.⁵⁹⁹ After all, as the Komsomol TsK complained, “trade union committees often evaluate the work of clubs based on their fulfillment of financial plans, and thus Komsomol organizations lack the opportunity to use club spaces for their own purposes.”⁶⁰⁰ With this in mind, the Komsomol TsK, both in its internal and external discourse, stressed the importance of creating a variety of innovative cultural collectives for young people managed by the Komsomol itself, with their own independent official status, material base, and budget.⁶⁰¹ These Komsomol-managed collectives represented a clear departure from Stalin-era practices, when the leadership refused to let the Komsomol have control over autonomous institutions dedicated to organizing cultural activities for youth.

One type of new cultural form, interest-based clubs (*kluby po interesu*), catered to diverse youth interests and social groups.⁶⁰² Exemplifying the variety of such clubs, a proposal for a plan to construct a Youth Palace in Moscow included rooms for youth clubs aimed at differing demographics, such as college students, young women, and older school students (*starsheklassniki*), those in seventh through tenth grades aged

⁵⁹⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 912, l. 5, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 8. Apparently, movies permitted club directors to receive bonuses by over-fulfilling the plan for profits: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 838, l. 119.

⁶⁰⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 8.

⁶⁰¹ For internal discourse, see the 1956 internal report on the state of the Komsomol: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 14. For external discourse, see Shelepin’s speech at the Twentieth Party Congress: *XX s’ezd KPSS*, 607-08.

⁶⁰² For an in-depth look at one of these new types of clubs devoted to nature protection, see Douglas R. Weiner, *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 312-39.

approximately fourteen to seventeen. It also included youth clubs dedicated to specific interests: photography, movies, radio, music, tourism, fishing and hunting, keeping pigeons, collecting stamps, cars, technology, aeronautics, gardening, and an international club.⁶⁰³

Many sources report the successful establishment of such clubs throughout the Soviet Union in the late 1950s. The Rostov oblast Komsomol noted the creation of a club for young writers.⁶⁰⁴ In Kemerovo, chess, tourist, and photography clubs expanded the range of cultural activities for youth. These club forms also contributed to the varied duties of the Komsomol, with the photography enthusiast clubs, for instance, creating photo displays, producing satirical newspapers, and preparing albums with views of the city and the countryside, all done using youth initiative, and this decreased financial outlays.⁶⁰⁵ The Komsomol TsK passed a resolution in 1956 on improving the function of Komsomol cells in schools, underscoring the need to create clubs for older students, in which the students themselves took responsibility for club work, with oversight from the Komsomol, parents, and educators.⁶⁰⁶ The next year, the Rostov Komsomol documented the creation of several clubs for older school students.⁶⁰⁷ The Saratov Pioneer Palace and many schools in the city created clubs for older school students that, according to the Saratov Komsomol paper, held many interesting activities. The students themselves played a major role in the organizational work of such clubs. For instance, a tenth-grader

⁶⁰³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 133.

⁶⁰⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 839, l. 22.

⁶⁰⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 838, l. 120.

⁶⁰⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 901, l. 168.

⁶⁰⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 839, l. 22.

headed the organizational committee of the club in the palace. The Komsomol paper wrote favorable articles praising this collective activity (Figure 4).



Figure 4. This photograph from a *Zaria molodezhi* article illustrates the collective nature of clubs for older school students. The article is “Klub starsheklassnikov,” *Zaria molodezhi*, September 13, 1957.

This stress on youth activism points to a crucial difference between interest-based clubs and the previously existing club circles. Circles had an adult leader who organized activities that necessarily had a patent didactic and socializing purpose. In contrast, the young club members themselves took charge of an interest-based club’s organizational work, though within the limits defined by the club’s mission and various oversight institutions. An interview with a club official in Moscow’s Pioneer Palace, who worked with both circles and interest-based clubs dedicated to aeronautics and astronomy during the Thaw, further illuminates these differences. When asked to compare circles and clubs, he stated that clubs had an element of self-management, more autonomy, and less bureaucracy.⁶⁰⁸ Another difference stemmed from interest-based clubs serving a much broader range of interests, as no Stalin-era circles involved activities such as collecting

⁶⁰⁸ B. G. Pshenichner, born 1933, interviewed April 29, 2009.

stamps or watching movies that lacked a clear educational function. Likewise, Stalin-era circles did not target specific demographic groups, as that would implicitly admit the need to offer differentiated cultural activities for young people. These interest-based clubs functioned to legitimate young people actively pursuing their own individual interests, departing from the postwar Stalinist pattern of condemning any expression of individualism.⁶⁰⁹ While current scholarship, most notably by Anne White, considers such clubs a phenomenon of the 1960s, my research shows that they actually originated in the previous decade.⁶¹⁰ Interest-based clubs contributed to the growing differentiation of organized cultural recreation activities to serve varying wants and interests. They also opened up room for the expression and development of youth agency and a civic spirit, something that youth initiative clubs advanced even further.

Youth Initiative Clubs: Origins and Structure

If interest-based clubs catered to specific interests and demographic groups, youth initiative clubs offered young people belonging to all social elements the opportunity to come together to pursue a diversity of interests as a single collective. Based on volunteer labor and lacking much direct financing, youth initiative clubs did not have to file annual reports. Consequently, most of the case studies in this section come from newspaper articles or archival reports by local officials to higher-ups on these clubs, which tend to highlight the best clubs in each oblast. Nonetheless, these model clubs illuminate the

⁶⁰⁹ For the postwar Stalinist approach, see Juliane Fürst, "The Importance of Being Stylish: Youth, Culture and Identity in Late Stalinism" in Juliane Fürst ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (New York Routledge, 2006), 209-30.

⁶¹⁰ Anne White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland and Hungary, 1953-89* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 2.

lived experience of the many young members of such clubs and served as models for other initiative clubs founded across the USSR.

Thaw-era youth initiative clubs bore a great deal of similarities to the Komsomol-managed clubs of the 1920s. Both provided young Komsomol members at the local level with a chance to run official collectives devoted to cultural recreation. This makes the youth initiative club movement part of a broader Thaw-era search for a path to communism on “Leninist principles” untainted by Stalin’s “cult of personality.”⁶¹¹ Another potential contribution to the creation of youth initiative clubs came from abroad. During a trip to Norway in 1955—the visit itself a result of de-Stalinization—Baliasnaia recalled being impressed with a college club based on independent student management. She successfully promoted the establishment of analogous institutions once she returned to Ukraine.⁶¹² Similar clubs in other Soviet Bloc countries, and even Yugoslavia, may have served as another source of inspiration.⁶¹³

The first Soviet youth initiative clubs emerged at the local level in 1954-55, originating from the individual efforts of Komsomol officials such as Baliasnaia willing to experiment with new forms of organizing youth cultural leisure activities in the more open environment of the Thaw. However, they received widespread promotion only after the Komsomol TsK deemed them worthy of emulation and promoted their formation

⁶¹¹ For this turn, see Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 75-104, 211-19, and William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 236-99.

⁶¹² L. K. Baliasnaia, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁶¹³ For more on such clubs in Bulgaria, see Karin Taylor, *Let's Twist Again: Youth and Leisure in Socialist Bulgaria* (Wien: Lit, 2006), 95. On initiative from below in Yugoslavia, see Sabina Mihelj, “Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West: Uplifting the Working People, Entertaining the Masses, Cultivating the Nation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53.2 (forthcoming in 2011).

throughout the USSR in early 1956. Regional Komsomol committees quickly responded to this directive. A representative from the Moscow Dzerzhinskii neighborhood called for the establishment of a Komsomol-managed club at the 1956 city Komsomol conference.⁶¹⁴ A number of lower-level Komsomol conferences also supported providing youth with more autonomous leisure institutions. At the 1957 Saratov State University Komsomol conference, the main speaker, A. I. Avrus, articulated the need for innovative state-sponsored popular culture forms, commenting that they already existed at other universities.⁶¹⁵ Iu. V. Gaponov spoke at the 1956 Moscow State University Komsomol conference in favor of transferring a poorly-managed university-owned club to students as a way of both improving its work, and promoting youth initiative.⁶¹⁶ Youth newspapers also encouraged the youth initiative club movement, publishing articles praising the establishment of these institutions and providing instructions on how to do so.⁶¹⁷

All this translated into youth activism at the grassroots level in establishing youth initiative clubs. A story in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* opens a window into “*Petrogradskaia storona*” (Petrograd Side), a club in Leningrad. Before its founding, youth were “obviously reluctant” to attend organized cultural events. Eventually, Komsomol activists realized that the problem lay with the fact that youth “felt themselves to be not owners, but guests,” and decided to establish a youth initiative club in cooperation with a local

⁶¹⁴ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 484, l. 94

⁶¹⁵ GANISO, f. 652, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 51-52,

⁶¹⁶ TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 164-65.

⁶¹⁷ “Molodezhnyi klub v TsPKiO,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, May 23, 1957; “Fakel,” *Zaria molodezhi*, October 3, 1956; and “Klub kul'tury,” *Leninskii put'*, March 21, 1959.

house of culture, where “the tone is set by the creative energy and imagination of the youth,” who themselves organize evenings, balls, lectures, debates, and exhibitions.⁶¹⁸ A Moscow club in the Kuibyshev district, “*Fakel*” (Torch), which reported 200 members in 1957, was described as “friendly collective that came together during youth evenings, meetings, debates, tourist trips.”⁶¹⁹

Youth initiative clubs, while promoted from above, found a great deal of enthusiastic response from young people. I. V. Sokolov, who grew up in the city of Kaluga in the 1950s, recalled the identically-named Kaluga club “Torch” being a “child of the Thaw.” He explained that, in contrast to previous practices where “everything originated from above,” this youth initiative club “sprang from below, because of the Thaw.” Sokolov described how a group of local Kaluga young people came together to promote the idea of creating a youth initiative club. Soon, they received sponsorship from the Kaluga city Komsomol organization, and especially the Kaluga Komsomol newspaper *Molodoi leninets* (Leninist Youth).⁶²⁰ According to the *Molodoi leninets* editors, the Kaluga city Komsomol called the creation of the Kaluga “Torch” youth initiative club “a useful, healthy, and very important activity.” This club had 172 members by November 1957, with 112 of them workers, and was thus a largely working-class club.⁶²¹ While the club itself got started at the grassroots level, the inspiration for this club came from elsewhere, specifically a newspaper article about the Moscow

⁶¹⁸ “Boi serosti i skuki,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, September 6, 1956. This club was likely opened in 1955, and may have served as one of the examples to the Komsomol leadership in its promotion of youth initiative clubs. For an extensive depiction of this club, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 213-18.

⁶¹⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 112.

⁶²⁰ I. V. Sokolov, interviewed April 16, 2009.

⁶²¹ RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 11, ll. 64-67.

“Torch” club. The Kaluga “Torch” even borrowed many of its organizational forms, such as its by-laws, from Moscow’s “Torch” club, with representatives from Kaluga’s “Torch” visiting Moscow’s “Torch” for advice and directions.⁶²² Many local Komsomol papers reprinted the same article about Moscow’s “Torch,” perhaps as a result of a directive to do so as a means of jump-starting the creation of such clubs.⁶²³

In some cases, higher-ranking Komsomol officials instigated such clubs in the areas they oversaw, creating the structures necessary to bring young cultural enthusiasts together. Baliasnaia succeeded in getting the first student club established in Dnepropetrovsk, followed by many others. The Dnepropetrovsk club’s leadership committee comprised students from several major colleges in this city. Pupils representing different institutions took turns organizing planned events. This led, in Baliasnaia’s words, to each group “trying to outdo the last.”⁶²⁴ Thus, Baliasnaia utilized college loyalty and competitiveness as a mobilizing tool for youth clubs.

The Komsomol TsK helped develop the work of youth initiative clubs by asking the Party TsK to transfer control of one trade union club in each major urban area to the city Komsomol, and also for district houses of culture to be available to youth at least four times a month. Noting that the Komsomol lacked money approved for use on state-sponsored popular culture, the Komsomol TsK asked the Party TsK to allow the Komsomol to use some of its budget for such needs. It also acquired the right to raise money for youth cultural recreation from volunteer Komsomol-organized events such as

⁶²² RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 11, l. 65.

⁶²³ For an example from Saratov, see “‘Fakel,’” *Zaria molodezhi*, October 3, 1956.

⁶²⁴ L. K. Baliasnaia, interviewed April 5, 2009.

selling tickets to youth amateur concerts and collecting scrap metal and paper, without having to pay taxes.⁶²⁵ Furthermore, youth initiative clubs received assistance from various institutions within their towns, ranging from enterprises to artistic and hobby associations and educational establishments, and this defrayed much or all expenses.⁶²⁶ Consequently, the creation and financing of youth initiative clubs, and therefore their effective functioning, depended heavily on advocacy by the Komsomol TsK, on the organizational impetus of activist local Komsomol committees and youth papers, on the support of local enterprises, and especially on the enthusiasm of Komsomol members themselves.

The youth initiative club campaign took off quickly, and by 1957 acquired a high enough priority among Komsomol activities that the Komsomol Propaganda Department prepared a summary report on these clubs. Noting that over twenty existed in Odessa alone, a sizable number given that Shelepin called for such clubs only in the previous year, the department stated that they “have to be created in every town and village cultural establishment.” It praised youth initiative clubs for allowing youth to do everything by themselves, giving freedom to grassroots enthusiasm and voluntarism, and creating a core of activists around Komsomol committees. The department claimed that participating in such clubs helped develop a collective spirit among youth and confidence in their own power and capacity. The clubs encouraged friendship and unity among young people from diverse social groups and between the mass of youth, Komsomol committees, and youth newspapers. Finally, the clubs “got youth accustomed to rational

⁶²⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 26, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 912, l. 6.

⁶²⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 111.

leisure.”⁶²⁷ The last phrase illustrates the department’s goal of using such clubs not only to provide room for and strengthen grassroots activism, but also to channel youth interests and desires into “appropriate” forms. These appeals to and implicit negotiation with youth highlights the Kremlin’s optimistic turn in the mid-1950s to moving away from despotic power and incorporating certain infrastructural power elements through negotiating with young people and appealing to their desires.⁶²⁸

The Activities and Impact of Youth Initiative Clubs

The nature of the events sponsored by youth initiative clubs supports the claim that they both reflected and sought to inspire grassroots activism, initiative, and enthusiasm. The theme and structure of the formal part of evening events at these clubs aimed to engage youth, appealing to their interests and desires, with generally much less ideological content than activities at trade union clubs. For example, one event in the Odessa “*Klub interesnykh vstrech*” (Club of Interesting Meetings), billed as an evening for newlyweds, invited young people to discuss love, friendship, loyalty, and jealousy. According to the club’s report, placards, drawings, and signs with folk sayings helped create a warm, informal atmosphere. Beforehand, the organizers collected questions from young people. Among the more revealing ones are: “How can one learn how to love for real?”; “Can one love a second and third time?”; and “Is it good to be jealous?” A young philosophy teacher addressed these issues in a presentation, followed by a question and

⁶²⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 107-12. Hilary Pilkington touches on the drive of Soviet state in the post-Stalin years to get youth used to supposedly rational leisure in “‘The Future is Ours’. Youth Culture in Russia, 1953 to the Present,” in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 368-86.

⁶²⁸ On the mid-1950s as a period of optimism, see Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 133-55.

answer session with the audience. Youth could also pose questions they wanted answered to long-wed couples. The club held a competition for the best-dressed couple, and provided flowers, a beauty salon, and fashion consultation.⁶²⁹ Another youth evening event, “Girls! Let’s Talk about Taste,” featured models of and advice on “proper” haircuts and clothing.⁶³⁰ Evening organizers purportedly paid careful attention to filling events with “interesting content, and original forms, which helped express the main theme.”⁶³¹ The evenings aimed to engage issues that mattered to young people, and in the process to promote youth initiative, while ensuring “rational” youth leisure in the context of an official setting.

While lectures, the overwhelming means of conveying political information in the Stalin years, were dull and ponderous, the post-Stalin era witnessed an explosion in a comparatively open, dynamic mode of ideologically-oriented events—youth debates.⁶³² The Komsomol TsK’s 1956 internal report to the Party TsK emphasized the need for

⁶²⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 110-11. Questions for long-wed couples may have had particular relevance due to the low level of knowledge about sex among the population in the Khrushchev era. See Anna Rotkirch, “‘What Kind of Sex Can You Talk about?’ Acquiring Sexual Knowledge in Three Soviet Generations,” in Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson and Anna Rotkirch eds., *On Living through Soviet Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 193-219. For scholarship on Soviet fashion in the Thaw, see Olga Gurova, “The Art of Dressing: Body, Gender and Discourse on Fashion in Soviet Russia in the 1950s and 60s,” in Paulicelli Eugenia and Hazel Clark eds., *The Fabric of Cultures: Fashion, Identity, Globalization* (New York: Berg, 2008), 73-91; Ol’ga Vainshtein, “Female Fashion, Soviet Style: Bodies of Ideology,” in Helena Goscilo and Beth Holmgren eds., *Russia – Women – Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 64-93; and L. V. Zakharova, “‘Naibolee rasprostranennoi iavliaetsia forma priamogo pal’to s odnobotnoi zastezhkoj’: O sovetskoi mode epokhi ‘ottepeli,’” *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas: Debaty o Politike i Kul’ture* 45.1 (2006), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/> [Accessed December 31, 2009].

⁶³⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 109.

⁶³¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 110.

⁶³² The archive of the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood branch of the Ministry of Culture lacks documentation of debates in the postwar Stalin years in contrast to the Khrushchev era. See TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1. While the Stalinist state allowed disputes on literary works, the clubs held them rarely, if ever, likely due to the potential of significant punitive actions if something went wrong: TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 11, d. 31, ll. 15-16.

more of these, since “youth like to argue and discuss issues of deep concern to them,” for example “on the most important questions of modernity, on moral themes, books, movies, plays, friendship, love, comradeship.”⁶³³ According to the Komsomol Propaganda Department, “it is necessary that heated debates take place in youth initiative clubs, that youth find here the answers to all the questions that concern them.”⁶³⁴ The activists of the Leningrad youth initiative club “Petrograd Side” believed that “the rules and norms of communist morals can become convincing only when you defend them successfully in passionate debate, when you are yourself completely convinced of their correctness.” These disputes strove to engage youth in discussing issues that the club activists described as having fundamental relevance to youth lives, with titles including “About love and loyalty,” “The question of happiness is on the agenda,” and an especially serious dispute on “What does it mean to live a communist life?” In contrast to the sparsely-attended political lectures, the debates apparently drew many youth, with the hall not large enough to fit all those who wished to participate.⁶³⁵

The Komsomol TsK promoted the debates as an effective instrument of instilling normative values, and even sent an instructional letter to local Komsomol cells on conducting them. According to these instructions, the debates were both popular and didactic. They helped to expunge negative phenomena from youth collectives, enabled youth to express and defend their views, and confirmed the best and newest in their lives, the latter a reference to the Party’s guidance. The letter stated that the topic had to interest

⁶³³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, ll. 25-28.

⁶³⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 114.

⁶³⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 216-18.

youth, and presented a model debate on “What should a real friend and comrade be like?” Reportedly, this debate’s organizers announced the debate widely. They prepared the ground by publishing satirical newspapers making fun of “improper” views on friendship and love, which inspired heated discussion among youth even before the event itself. The debate began with a presentation. A speaker familiarized himself with local events, using these to address general questions, such as: “What is the essence of principled behavior among friends?”; “Does love presume friendship?”; and “What is friendship, and what are corrupt relations?” The letter explained that the presenter aimed not to impose his own opinion, but to inspire debate on each of these issues. After this initial speech, many audience members took the floor, debating these issues with the presenter and each other.⁶³⁶

Such events encouraged youth to interrogate the tenets of official ideology, morals, and ethics within the contexts of Komsomol-managed events, with the intention of shaping the outcomes of debates and strengthening young people’s faith in the system. Komsomol TsK communications reveal a further purpose, noting that “currently, debates among youth, as a rule, take place outside of Komsomol organizations.”⁶³⁷ A number of underground youth groups devoted to discussing issues of concern to young people sprang up in the postwar Stalin years.⁶³⁸ The Thaw-era state-sanctioned debates meant to bring these cliques back into spaces with government oversight.

⁶³⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 814, ll. 17-18. Also see an instruction booklet on youth debates: M. P. Kapustin, *Kak provedsti molodezhno-komsomol'skie disputy v klube* (Tashkent, 1959).

⁶³⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 28.

⁶³⁸ On unofficial youth debate groups in the late Stalin era, often repressed by the state, see Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, Hugh Ragsdale trans. and ed. (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 109-38, and Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 95-136.

Still, the extended room for discussion and argument caused the Komsomol leadership some discomfort. In a 1957 meeting of the Moscow city Komsomol committee devoted to explaining the Seventh Komsomol TsK Plenum, Shelepin disparaged those who, instead of true Marxist criticism, engaged in “demagoguery and lies about the Party,” which need “to be fought decisively.”⁶³⁹ One example of a problematic debate, described at the MGU university-wide Komsomol conference of 1963, occurred over abstract art, with certain students accused of “showing political immaturity, failing to understand the Party’s positions on art.”⁶⁴⁰ This episode constituted part of a broader crackdown on abstract art by the Khrushchev administration from late 1962, precipitated by the Soviet leader’s derision of such art forms in December 1962 at the Manege exhibit.⁶⁴¹ Such instances demonstrate the limitations of the top-level promotion of youth grassroots initiative, as the Khrushchev leadership reigned in youth autonomy when it threatened to go beyond the boundaries of the permissible. The dates cited above have particular resonance, since both 1957-58 and 1962-63 represent two periods when those at the top of the Party hierarchy moved away from pursuing a more pluralistic, tolerant policy course, due to anxiety inspired by both sharpening Cold War hostilities and domestic developments.⁶⁴² In these periods, official rhetoric censured what it labeled as

⁶³⁹ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 546, ll. 56-57. This is likely related to criticism of the Party associated with the fallout from the Secret Speech and the Hungary invasion. For more, see Polly Jones, “From the Secret Speech to the Burial of Stalin: Real and Ideal Responses to De-Stalinization,” in Jones ed., *The Dilemmas*, 41-63.

⁶⁴⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 52, ll. 166-67.

⁶⁴¹ Susan E. Reid, “In the Name of the People: The Manege Affair Revisited,” *Kritika* 6.4 (Fall 2005): 673-716.

⁶⁴² On these anxieties, see Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer*, 156-88.

“excessive” youth initiative in debates, although, even then, the debates received official support.

Debates in youth initiative clubs served as incubators of a civic spirit. Such discussions in state-sanctioned, official settings enabled youth to reflect on pressing issues of importance to their lives, and, consequently, on the political life of the Party-state as a whole, given the major place of young people in Soviet policy and discourse in the Thaw.⁶⁴³ Youth initiative clubs likewise functioned as a venue for youth to take concrete actions to deal with perceived problems, such as organizing club events that satisfied desires and wants not met by other components of the Soviet system.

Youth initiative clubs hosted a range of other activities as well, as exemplified by the Kaluga “Torch” club, which organized a skiing trip that the *Molodoi leninets* editors cited as illustrative of the didactic function of the club. They spotlighted Valentin Kriukhin, a youth who “radically changed” his behavior during the trip. At first, he tried “to set himself off from others, as always,” but when he met with difficulties, “everyone helped him, and soon his arrogance was gone. The young man felt the strength of the collective.”⁶⁴⁴ This case demonstrates how the clubs simultaneously promoted the official Soviet value of collectivism, in contrast to “arrogant” individualism, and imposed the social control of the collective on individuals whose behavior deviated from accepted social norms. Undoubtedly, similar reprimands of misbehaving club members took place at youth evenings and other events. The plan for the “Torch” club included a series of

⁶⁴³ In fact, during the perestroika years, clubs offered a space for meetings by dissenting political groups: A. G. Borzenkov, *Molodezh' i politika: Vozmozhnosti i predely studencheskoi samodeiatel'nosti na vostoke Rossii (1961-1991 gg.)*, *Chast' 2* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 2002), 166-67.

⁶⁴⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 67-68, and I. V. Sokolov, interviewed April 16, 2009.

other activities, for instance a jazz orchestra, a theater studio, and a “Museum of Bureaucracy,” likely meant to criticize officious bureaucrats.⁶⁴⁵

The role of youth initiative clubs as both social control institutions and spaces for the development of civic spirit is particularly evident when the Komsomol hierarchy interacted with *kompanii*—bohemian cliques of marginal, semi-dissident writers, poets, musicians, and artists.⁶⁴⁶ Perhaps the most evocative example comes from the attempt to create a club for the unofficial poets of Moscow’s Maiakovskii Square. In what its participants referred to as a Soviet Speaker’s Corner, Maiakovskii Square served since 1958 as a gathering place for young amateur poets who read their poetry to the populace, drawing huge crowds and establishing an informal public space for poetry. While at first the poetry tended to stay within the limits of what the leadership tolerated, by 1960 its tone changed to an increasingly harsh critique of the Soviet government. Hard-pressed to deal with mounting criticism in such an open, public environment, local authority figures began to harass these poets. At one point, however, a group composed of lower-level Komsomol officials and activists, and some poets and enthusiasts from Maiakovskii Square, decided on a different solution. Lower-level cadres managed to convince mid-level officials in the neighborhood Komsomol committee and a local club manager to offer the young poets an autonomous club.⁶⁴⁷ For Komsomol officials, providing such a

⁶⁴⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 830, l. 14a.

⁶⁴⁶ On *kompanii*, see Juliane Fürst, “Friends in Private, Friends in Public: The Phenomena of *Kompaniia* Among Soviet Youth in the 1950s and 1960s,” in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 229-50; Benjamin K. Tromly, “Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964” (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2007), 155-56; and Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993).

⁶⁴⁷ This case study is based mainly on a collection of primary sources composed of published interviews with participants, including the poets and also Komsomol cadres, as well as on extensive quotes from

club aimed to solve the immediate problem of such open criticism by redirecting it into a less open, although still public context, embodying the Khrushchevite state's decreased reliance on despotic power and incorporation of infrastructural power elements. Thus, kompanii not only tried to privatize public spaces, as Fürst insightfully notes.⁶⁴⁸ In some cases, authorities actively negotiated with kompanii over the boundaries between public and private, enriching our understanding of the phenomenon of Thaw-era kompanii and their relationship to the Party-state.

Shelepin's 1956 call for new forms laid the groundwork for the appearance of other novel initiative-based institutions, including the MGU "*Arkhimed*" (Archimedes) studio, which combined elements of a youth initiative club and an amateur art collective.⁶⁴⁹ This group coalesced around the staging of the 1960 opera "Archimedes" in the MGU physics department, part of a trend of creating operas by this department that began in the mid-1950s, as exemplified by the "Dubinushka" opera described in the previous chapter. "Archimedes" originated from a resolution of the October 1959 annual conference of the MGU physics department Komsomol cell to prepare a fun celebration for the next spring. In fact, the committee decided on the creation of a holiday, Physicists Day, celebrated on the supposed birthday of Archimedes, which the committee decreed to be May 7. The fact that young people had the confidence and took the initiative to establish this new holiday speaks volumes about youth social activism. During the

newspaper articles and archival documents: L. V. Polikovskaia, *My predchustviie... predtecha... ploshchad' Maiakovskogo, 1958-1965* (Moscow: Zvenia, 1997), 143-52. For official criticism of the Maiakovskii Square events, see: "Kubarem s parnasa," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 14, 1962.

⁶⁴⁸ Fürst, "Friends in Private."

⁶⁴⁹ This narrative is based on the group memoir of the "Archimedes" collective: S. K. Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish', fizfak? Neformal'nye traditsii fizfaka MGU* (Moscow: Pomatur, 2003), 81-86, 362. For the broader context of MGU in the 1950s, see Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia," 310-69.

following months, a select group of Komsomol cultural officials and activists among the MGU physics students invested a great deal of energy into preparing the celebration.

The 1960 celebration, attended by a huge crowd, began on the steps of the building housing the physics department, with performances of amateur arts by each class. Next followed an unruly, carnival-like parade, led by floats with students dressed up as famous scientists: Archimedes, Newton, Popov, etc. The world-famous physicist N. D. Landau, the faculty patron of the celebration, joined the fun on one of the floats (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A photograph of the first Physicists Day parade. Landau is in the black suit. Courtesy of the private archive of M. A. Lebedeva.

After circling the university, the procession ended up at the MGU club, where, in the extremely overcrowded hall, the students put on the opera “Archimedes” for the first time. The plot of this opera juxtaposed the heroic Archimedes, a university dean at the University of Syracuse, Sicily, fighting for the future of physics against the might of the Greek gods, who are wary of being left behind by the progress of science (Figure 6).

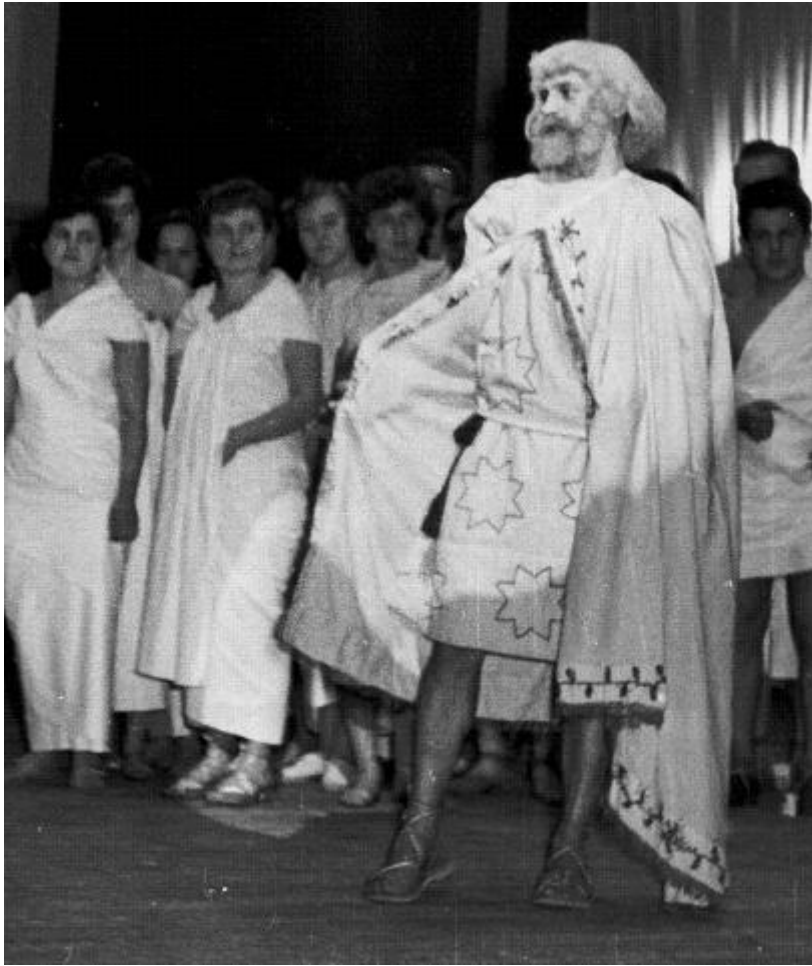


Figure 6. A photograph of the “Archimedes” scene where Archimedes challenges the Greek gods. Courtesy of the private archive of M. A. Lebedeva.

The gods, among other measures, encouraged corrupt behavior by university staff. They also tempted students to drink and dance the twist, forbidden at the time due to the officialdom associating it with rock’n’roll music, sexual licentiousness, and an excessive

western orientation. A key moment in the show came when, as the opera's libretto states, "the students, tempted by the gods, for a minute lose their humanity, and a general dancing of the twist (*tvistopliaska*) begins." The opera's first performance apparently "had incredible success" with the audience (Figure 7).



Figure 7. A photograph of the audience for the first performance of "Archimedes." Note that many audience members had to stand in order to fit into the overcrowded hall during the show, and some sat on the banisters. Courtesy of the private archive of M. A. Lebedeva.

The play combined three basic tropes that came to the fore in Thaw-era official discourse and policy: propagation of science and technology, criticism of bureaucratism, and disparagement of "negative" student behavior such as stiliagi-style dancing.⁶⁵⁰ Such censure of "deviance" occurred elsewhere as well, for instance at an exhibit in the youth

⁶⁵⁰ For how these came to the fore in the Thaw, see P. L. Vail and A. A. Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988).

initiative club “Petrograd Side.” Called an electric patrol, this exhibit featured dolls dancing, and “suddenly—a wailing siren. The lights of two projectors pick out a dancing pair that performs an ugly [referring to American-style] dance move.”⁶⁵¹ The day the club opened witnessed several short skits making fun of “bureaucracy, boredom, drunkenness, and ‘style’ [referring to stiliagi].”⁶⁵² The targeting of stiliagi, in particular, illuminates the at least outward concordances between youth initiative in state-sponsored popular culture and the broader Thaw-era campaign against youth “deviance” as described in the previous chapter.

“Archimedes” participants recall enthusiastically engaging in this Komsomol-organized cultural leisure activity. T. M. Tkacheva enjoyed an “enormous emotional lift” from her performances in the opera, and for D. V. Gal’tsov, it “was just fun.”⁶⁵³ In addition to singing and acting itself, the opera experience involved the customary post-performance banquet for its members, remembered with pleasure by S. V. Semenov (Figure 8).⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵¹ “Vot chto takoe klub molodezhi!” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, July 9, 1957.

⁶⁵² “Boi serosti i skuke,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, September 6, 1956.

⁶⁵³ T. M. Tkacheva, born 1945, interviewed January 20, 2009, and D. V. Gal’tsov, born 1942, interviewed February 20, 2009.

⁶⁵⁴ S. V. Semenov, born 1948, interviewed March 18, 2009.



Figure 8. A photograph of a banquet held after an “Archimedes” performance. Courtesy of the private archive of M. A. Lebedeva.

In the words of the poet-bard S. A. Krylov, the extracurricular life of the physics department, such as “Archimedes,” played “an extremely significant role in the lives of students,” constituting “a bright memory of wonderful times.”⁶⁵⁵

“Archimedes” played a deep social role as well. According to O. M. Lebedikhina, the chorus master, “Archimedes” represented “real life” for its members, the center of their social world.⁶⁵⁶ S. N. Shchegol’kova confirmed the key role of the clique that formed around the opera, describing them as “friends, with whom we are close and hang out (*obshchaemsia*) with pleasure” to this day.⁶⁵⁷ Gaponov, the opera’s director, stated that for him, “creating a collective” from among the opera participants constituted the key

⁶⁵⁵ Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish, fizfak?*, 4.

⁶⁵⁶ O. M. Lebedikhina, born 1947, interviewed December 25, 2008.

⁶⁵⁷ S. N. Shchegol’kova, born 1937, interviewed February 19, 2009.

goal of the “Archimedes” project.⁶⁵⁸ S. K. Kovaleva similarly stressed the importance of “our group of friends that lasts to this day.” She also illuminated how the opera gave a “sportive, combative spark (*strunku*) for the rest of one’s life,” inspiring her to consider that “we can achieve whatever we want.”⁶⁵⁹ The co-author of the opera V. A. Miliaev likewise underscored its crucial role in personal growth, since having to work with so many people developed his social skills. For Semenov, the opera also proved helpful in gaining confidence in public speaking. Both also highlighted the crucial role of friends made via “Archimedes.”⁶⁶⁰

Evidence indicates that other youth initiative-based institutions also powerfully influenced young people. Perhaps in some cases too much so, as revealed by an alarming letter from the leadership council of the “Kuibyshev city youth club” (*Kuibyshevskii gorodskoi molodezhnyi klub*), in Novosibirsk oblast, to the First Secretary of the Komsomol S. P. Pavlov in 1964. The missive describes the founding of the club in 1962, and its rapid rise in popularity among youth, with 400 “fanatics-enthusiasts” who “devote all of [their] free time after work to the club,” and events drawing 35,000 people in 1963. However, the club lacked a space of its own, despite promises from the oblast Komsomol and Party organizations. This posed the danger of the club collapsing and youth who actively participated “walking away embittered,” if Pavlov did not intervene. A separate note by the president of the club explicitly stated that “if the club fails, the Komsomol members and youth of the city will lose faith in the Komsomol organization of the oblast

⁶⁵⁸ Iu. V. Gaponov, interviewed April 29, 2009.

⁶⁵⁹ S. K. Kovaleva, interviewed March 3, 2009.

⁶⁶⁰ V. A. Miliaev, interviewed February 28, 2009, and S. V. Semenov, born 1948, interviewed March 18, 2009.

and in all guarantees and promises of Party organs.”⁶⁶¹ Confirming the genuine importance to young people of the new clubs, the documents hint that, in some cases, these institutions acquired greater meaning in the lives of young people than the Komsomol itself. The letter also points to the potential problem of grassroots disillusionment when initiative from below did not receive support from above.

Such findings apply to other institutions as well, since youth initiative clubs proved far from the only Komsomol activity where the Komsomol TsK encouraged autonomous youth grassroots activism. Community-based policing through patrols of Komsomol members, discussed in chapter 4, represents one such example. Another case, Komsomol construction brigades, originated in Moscow universities in the late 1950s and traveled to the Virgin Lands and other “heroic” construction sites.⁶⁶² The Komsomol took a much broader role in managing tourism and sport activities as well, drawing on grassroots activism to do so. Youth-themed television shows, such as KVN, presented role models of initiative-oriented youth, relying on teams of young enthusiasts to voluntarily devote time and energy to competing.⁶⁶³ In the early 1960s, neighborhood and city-level Komsomol cells opened up youth cafes, staffed by volunteers and featuring engaging cultural events. These examples show that the encouragement of youth initiative was not limited to clubs, but represented a broad trend in the Kremlin’s youth

⁶⁶¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1170, ll. 97-100.

⁶⁶² While the Virgin Lands campaign began during the immediate post-Stalin years, the Komsomol construction brigades in particular sprang up as grassroots groups in the late 1950s. See Tromly, “Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia,” 370-424, and Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish’, fizfak?*, 32-75.

⁶⁶³ Kristin Roth-Ey, “Playing for Cultural Authority: Soviet TV Professionals and the Game Show in the 1950s and 1960s,” in Crowley and Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism*, 147-76.

policy during the Thaw.⁶⁶⁴ Besides such specifically youth-oriented activities, the Party-state also encouraged the general population to express active social engagement in other venues.⁶⁶⁵

Points of Tension in Youth Initiative Clubs

Nonetheless, discontinuities existed between the vision of “appropriate” popular culture activities held by many youth initiative club members and some authority figures. Evidence for this comes from a conference devoted to youth initiative clubs in May 1962, sponsored by the Komsomol TsK. The very first speaker noted that many of the conference participants likely recalled meetings with officials at the dawn of the youth initiative club movement, meaning the mid-1950s, when “many expressed mistrust and lack of faith” in youth initiative clubs.⁶⁶⁶ In a prominent example, the Moscow Kuibyshev neighborhood club “Torch,” which served as a model for many other youth clubs, at one point almost failed. According to the Komsomol Propaganda Department, this resulted from club activists proving unable to overcome the “conservatism and mistrust” toward the club from the local house of culture, which denied them space for events. The department censured the Kuibyshev district Komsomol committee, which “did not exhibit appropriate behavior” over this problem. The Moscow city Komsomol committee also received a reprimand for its “skepticism toward youth initiative.”⁶⁶⁷ This

⁶⁶⁴ Of course, far from all youth wanted to belong to such official collectives, as exemplified by unofficial kompanii: Fürst, “Friends in Private.”

⁶⁶⁵ Park, “Party Reform.”

⁶⁶⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 3.

⁶⁶⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 113.

incident offers a glimpse at the tensions between younger, lower-level Komsomol officials and activists, enthusiastic over new Thaw-era initiative-based forms, and older, more orthodox officials and club managers reluctant to permit innovations and support grassroots social engagement, preferring the postwar Stalinist model of discipline instead.

Another case is even more illustrative of such conflicts. The editors of Kaluga's *Molodoi leninets* complained to the Party TsK about the Kaluga city Party committee's conduct toward the Kaluga youth initiative club "Torch." The complaint stated that "the spirit of the cult of personality has become so rooted in the consciousness of certain Party cadres that they are ready to limit and regulate everything, including the enthusiastic creativity of the masses, which even makes them afraid." On November 20, 1956, the committee called in the club's activists and "voiced baseless, irrational charges," condemning the "intolerable autonomy" in the establishment of "Torch," and labeling those in charge of the club "apolitical." Furthermore, the local Party officials accused the club members of providing "a wide breach for the enemy," implying that the club served the interests of western Europe and the United States. As a result, the committee members decreed the closing of the club, imposing punishments for "Torch" activists, including the editors of *Molodoi leninets* and the city Komsomol committee second secretary. The denunciation letter commented that such misguided "vigilance" can come only from "people poisoned by bureaucracy, who are thus capable of destroying initiative."⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁸ RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 11, ll. 69-70. For more on complaint letters in the Thaw, see Gleb Tsipursky, "'As a Citizen, I Cannot Ignore These Facts': Whistleblowing in the Khrushchev Era," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58.1 (March 2010): 52-69.

The “Torch” supporters’ appeal to a series of agencies in Moscow received a quick response. By December 9, *Komsomol’skaia pravda* published a story condemning the situation surrounding the Kaluga “Torch.”⁶⁶⁹ Sokolov still remembers this article, indicative of the significance of the club in the lives of some Kaluga youth.⁶⁷⁰ In addition, the letter sent by the *Molodoi leninets* editors resulted in an investigation by the Party TsK Propaganda Department, which confirmed all of the facts in the complaint, and ensured the continued existence of the club, as well as the revocation of Party reprimands on club activists.⁶⁷¹ Such actions by the Khrushchev leadership, which undermined the authority of regional Party leaders and expressed strong support for youth grassroots enthusiasm and initiative, made clear the seriousness of and dedication to the new course in the Party TsK, and served as guidelines for all Party officials elsewhere who showed reluctance over youth initiative clubs. This example draws an especially stark divide between those supportive of Thaw-era reforms in regard to youth initiative in state-sponsored popular culture, and those who expressed a hard-line, conservative desire to maintain militant methods characteristic of the anticosmopolitan period.

The promotion of youth initiative clubs caused some tensions with well-established cultural recreation institutions, as revealed by a December 14, 1956, note sent by a high official in the Ministry of Culture, MOC, to the minister, who then forwarded it to the Komsomol TsK. The official suggested that, as a consequence of youth initiative clubs, the best organizers and amateur arts performers may quit trade union clubs and

⁶⁶⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 208, and “Kak tushili ‘Fakel,’” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, December 9, 1956.

⁶⁷⁰ I. V. Sokolov, interviewed April 16, 2009.

⁶⁷¹ RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 11, l. 71.

“form some sort of elite caste of chosen youth.” Problematically, according to the official, youth initiative clubs “focus on the newness, unusual nature, originality of this enterprise, and not its practical purpose and necessity.” Moreover, he implied that, in some cases, the youth initiative clubs had too much autonomy, creating a “special organization of youth,” a “Komsomol within the Komsomol,” with its own program. He specifically cited the Kaluga “Torch” as exemplary of such problems, and censured *Komsomol'skaia pravda* for defending it. Concluding that organizing youth initiative clubs “is a mistake,” the note proposes instead that the Komsomol form commissions to participate in the work of trade union clubs.⁶⁷² In unpacking the motivations behind this note, we see on the one hand the same sort of conflict as described in the example above, as the official expresses wariness of the autonomy found within youth initiative clubs and implicitly advocates for a militant vision of the path to communism, guided from above. The second aspect of the note relates to the MOC’s oversight of the cultural recreation network, with his censure evincing a desire to protect bureaucratic turf against an unwelcome incursion. The references to the Kaluga “Torch” club hints at this local struggle achieving the status of a point of conflict within the central government itself over the course of cultural policy. This gives more weight to the Party TsK Propaganda Department’s condemnation of the Kalugan oblast Party committee.

These instances exemplify the many early attempts of hard-line officials to hamper the development of youth initiative clubs. Still, the promotion of such clubs by soft-line top-level bureaucrats in the Party and Komsomol, and their popularity among youth, ensured the expansion of these institutions. Indeed, the Party TsK and the

⁶⁷² For the original report to the Minister of Culture, see RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 183, ll. 28-31. For the copy forwarded to the Komsomol TsK, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 830, ll. 11-14.

Komsomol leadership generally continued to support youth initiative clubs during the brief swing away from more pluralistic, tolerant policies from late 1956 to early 1958.⁶⁷³ By 1959, the MOC seems to have accepted their existence, with a textbook for club managers and employees published under its oversight mentioning youth initiative clubs as a new form of club work.⁶⁷⁴ In 1962, the clubs reportedly acquired “a mass character” and their main concerns transformed from questions of their continued existence to a search for space and financial support.⁶⁷⁵ The 1962 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress mentioned that 214 youth initiative-based collectives existed in Moscow alone.⁶⁷⁶ The Komsomol’s archivists even devoted separate archival folders in 1966 and 1967 to documents on such institutions, indicating their prominence.⁶⁷⁷ Although a careful search of the Komsomol archives did not reveal summary statistics on the number of participants in these clubs, reports from individual clubs indicate that they had anywhere from several dozen to several hundred members, with 172 for the Kaluga “Torch,” 200 for the Moscow “Torch,” and 400 for the “Kuybishev city youth club.” Given that, in 1967, 12,000 such institutions functioned across the Soviet Union, total membership ranged anywhere from a few hundred thousand to over a million youth.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷³ For an example of the impact of this turn on youth cultural policy, see Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*, 84.

⁶⁷⁴ G. G. Karpov and N. D. Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo: Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow, 1959), 26.

⁶⁷⁵ According to a Komsomol TsK-sponsored conference: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 3-16.

⁶⁷⁶ S. P. Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo Komiteta VLKSM i zadachi komsomola, vytekaiushchie iz reshenii XXII s'ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 37.

⁶⁷⁷ These files included: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 68, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 141.

⁶⁷⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 141, l. 95.

Owing to their growing acceptance and integration into the state-sponsored popular culture system by the late 1950s and early 1960s these organizations proved increasingly capable of defending their interests against militant local officials who disliked youth initiative. “Archimedes” serves as a good example. From the first performance in 1960, its organizers had to deal with a multitude of obstacles from the physics department administration, which, according to Kovaleva, “tried to use various means to limit youth activism.” The Party committee and department administration demanded a demonstration of the opera rehearsal, after which “passionate debate” broke out, with parts of “Archimedes” censored.⁶⁷⁹ Still, some of it continued to inspire official disapproval, such as hints of official corruption, implicit mockery of university administrators, daring costumes, and the implication that dancing the twist and intoxication were widespread among physics students.⁶⁸⁰ In 1961, the second year of “Archimedes,” the department Party committee “was aiming to shut down” the Physicists Day celebration until the participants in “Archimedes,” led by the new physics department Komsomol secretary Gaponov, and with the assistance of Landau, managed to invite the visiting Niels Bohr to the opera (Figure 9).

⁶⁷⁹ Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish, fizfak?*, 81-82.

⁶⁸⁰ T. M. Tkacheva, born 1945, interviewed January 20, 2009.



Figure 9. A photograph of Niels Bohr giving a speech after the “Archimedes” performance. Landau is to his right. Courtesy of the private archive of S. N. Shchegol’kova.

After watching “Archimedes,” Bohr famously said “if these students are capable of the same creativity and brightness in physics, then I am not worried about its future.” Despite continuing opposition from some figures in the university administration, Physicists Day and the “Archimedes” opera received praise in the 1963 MGU university-wide Komsomol conference, with the university Komsomol secretary calling it “a shining phenomenon in the life of the physics department, and even the whole university.”⁶⁸¹ That same year, G. S. Titov, the second man to orbit the Earth, appeared at the Physicists Day celebration, almost causing a mass stampede by star-struck students. In 1964, MGU’s Physicists Day event was shown on Soviet television, and received coverage in

⁶⁸¹ TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 52, l. 18.

the press and radio broadcasts. A number of physics departments in other higher educational institutions held celebrations based on MGU's model.⁶⁸²

The Thaw-era leadership's decision to shift course from Stalinist practices by offering room for grassroots initiative and seeking to satisfy youth cultural consumption desires received unambiguous support from many members of the "Archimedes" collective. They also approved other de-Stalinizing reforms and the revival of the drive to build communism. "Archimedes" participants frequently described themselves as having believed in a vision of communism "with a human face," romantic and initiative-based, during their youth. This correlates with the spirit of optimism suffusing the USSR in the beginning of the 1960s, as Khrushchev pronounced the upcoming achievement of communism within a generation in the Third Party Program at the 1961 Twenty-second Communist Party Congress.⁶⁸³ According to A. N. Krichevich, an "Archimedes" member, when he was young, "it seemed that communist ideology could be cleaned up and made into something decent," something "romantic, positive."⁶⁸⁴ Tkacheva recalled her faith and that of her friends in constructing communism.⁶⁸⁵ Miliaev attributed the popularity of "Archimedes" to the opera fitting "the liberal spirit of the time, a spirit of freedom of expression."⁶⁸⁶ The physicist Landau is well known for inviting reforms and opposing ideologically militant colleagues and university administrators. Other evidence

⁶⁸² Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish, fizfak?*, 91-95.

⁶⁸³ On the spirit of optimism and its relationship to the Third Party Program, see Vail and A. A. Genis, 60-*e*. For more on the program itself, see Alexander Titov, "The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev's Reforms," in Ilic and Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev*, 8-25.

⁶⁸⁴ A. N. Krichevich, born 1950, interviewed December 12, 2008.

⁶⁸⁵ T. M. Tkacheva, born 1945, interviewed January 20, 2009.

⁶⁸⁶ V. A. Miliaev, interviewed February 28, 2009.

supports these pluralistic sentiments. The letter about the Kaluga “Torch” deployed rhetoric unambiguously critical of the Stalinist trope of “vigilance” and praised the post-Stalinist emphasis on “lively creativity.” So did the Komsomol Propaganda Department in its censure of the Moscow city Komsomol for its suspicion of youth initiative.

Consequently, my analysis confirms that the traditional historiographical paradigm’s spotlight on struggles in the Thaw between hard-liners and soft-liners has some validity, despite recent criticism from scholars including Miriam Dobson and Stephen Bittner.⁶⁸⁷ While far from suggesting that post-Stalin society was dominated by two camps, the evidence indicates that advocacy of youth initiative and appeal to popular interests proved controversial stances and inspired much opposition from conservatives who wanted to maintain late Stalin-era practices. Furthermore, the Thaw-era conflicts over youth initiative clubs bear parallels to 1920s debates over NEP-era Komsomol-managed clubs. Setting Thaw-era conflicts within this historical context highlights the fact that prerevolutionary and early Soviet tensions over spontaneity and consciousness continued to exert a powerful impact on the postwar USSR. This points to long-standing fractures at the heart of official ideology over the appropriate path to communism.

Certainly, the position of various bureaucrats on the question of youth initiative evolved over time. The example of youth debates discussed earlier shows that, especially during periods of domestic and international tensions, Party-state authorities reigned in what they perceived as excessive autonomy. At the same time, the possibilities for youth grassroots activism and agency rose substantially throughout the Khrushchev years. If in the mid-1950s the default position of officials toward youth initiative and youth initiative

⁶⁸⁷ See Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer*, 156-85, and Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev’s Thaw*, 1-13.

clubs was rather hesitant by the end of the 1950s, only a minority of militant-oriented bureaucrats expressed skepticism of youth initiative clubs. Nonetheless, conflicts over youth initiative between officials holding divergent perspectives continued throughout all the vicissitudes in the Thaw and had a powerful impact on youth everyday experience.

While such debates were ongoing, youth initiative institutions had the potential to push the boundaries of the permissible without crossing them and to deploy Aesopian language to express viewpoints unacceptable in direct speech, going beyond the intentions of the Khrushchev leadership in the process. The “Kuibyshev city youth club” seems to have acquired more legitimacy than the local Komsomol among at least certain young club members, a result that certainly contradicted the goals of authorities for youth initiative clubs. “Archimedes” provides another case in point. A major point of conflict between the department Party committee and the “Archimedes” collective unfurled over the Greek god Apollo’s backup dancers, who, in a scene designed to seduce the students of Archimedes into following Apollo into music and art instead of physics, performed a cabaret in daring costumes (Figure 10).



Figure 10. A photograph of the “Archimedes” scene with Apollo’s backup dancers. Courtesy of the private archive of M. A. Lebedeva.

Shchegol’kova, one of the dancers in the photograph, related that the students made the attire by shortening their gymnastics costumes, and even wanted to dance the charleston or twirl a baton, but decided against it. When university and Party officials saw the costumes at the rehearsal, “of course, their jaws dropped” (*oni, konechno, akhnuli*). Many officials found the costumes excessive and frivolous, and tried to get the dancers to at least take off the gloves for a more “sport-like look.” Yet with the support of more pluralistic members of the Party committee, the students managed to talk their way into leaving the costumes unchanged by insisting that they sought to depict the spirit of the young Greek women dancing for Apollo. Another, unvoiced motive for the costumes and the number itself, according to Shchegol’kova, was for the chance to publicly dance a

foreign cabaret in appropriate garb.⁶⁸⁸ Kovaleva recalls that the style of the dance constituted another reason for the indignation of the Party committee, as the “dance is not ours, it is western.” Still, they allowed the dance and, unsurprisingly, the student audience “liked it very much, girls with such figures.”⁶⁸⁹

Similarly, the opera outwardly depicted dancing the twist as something negative. Many members of the audience may have understood it as such, with the co-author of “Archimedes” Valerii specifically commenting that he disliked stiliagi, and intended no irony in the scene where the students danced the twist as an embodiment of bad behavior.⁶⁹⁰ Nonetheless, regardless of the author’s meaning, Gaponov emphasized that such scenes were deliberately included both in “Archimedes” and other performances as a means of exhibiting officially censured dances in sanctioned venues.⁶⁹¹ Plenty of students, as Gal’tsov recalled, welcomed a chance to see the kinds of dances they engaged in at unofficial student parties performed in shows on stage.⁶⁹² Sergei liked that scene most of all both for its “beautiful young women, dancing well,” as well as for its realistic depiction of everyday life in the physics dormitory.⁶⁹³ While the risqué costumes of the backup dancers challenged norms in regard to appropriate garb for women in official student performances, both the cabaret and especially the twist undermined the

⁶⁸⁸ S. N. Shchegol’kova, born 1937, interviewed February 19, 2009. For more on the outrage of the Party committee about the costume and the argument about the gloves, see Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish’, fizfak?*, 82.

⁶⁸⁹ S. K. Kovaleva, interviewed March 3, 2009. For how such activities constituted efforts to engage with an “Imaginary West,” see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 158-237.

⁶⁹⁰ V. A. Miliaev, interviewed March 1, 2009.

⁶⁹¹ Iu. V. Gaponov, interviewed April 29, 2009.

⁶⁹² D. V. Gal’tsov, born 1942, interviewed February 20, 2009.

⁶⁹³ S. V. Semenov, born 1948, interviewed March 18, 2009.

state-prescribed mission of expunging stiliagi-like behavior in the context of the Cold War. “Archimedes” enabled youth to exhibit officially condemned dances and functioned to implicitly negotiate and expand the limits of tolerance for non-Soviet styles, both reflecting and advancing youth agency in the process. Recent research on the post-Khrushchev years demonstrates that youth clubs provided cover for various unsanctioned activities as well.⁶⁹⁴

In rare cases, the subversive aspects of youth initiative club work in the Thaw acquired a distinctly political cast. The youth initiative club offered by the Komsomol authorities to the Maiakovskii Square poets came with a promise of full autonomy for its members. They organized a literature section and also wanted to stage an exhibit of abstract art. However, the director of the cultural establishment that provided the room for the club refused to permit the exhibit and the Komsomol district and city committees chose not to force the issue. The poets decided to return to the square and, soon afterward, the government used force to disperse the poets.⁶⁹⁵ By explicitly going far beyond the boundaries defined for culture and attempting to stretch the tolerance of the Khrushchev authorities for youth initiative too much, the poets placed themselves in patent opposition to the Party-state, resulting in their repression.

⁶⁹⁴ See Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 31-52, and Yngvar B. Steinholt, *Rock in the Reservation: Songs from the Leningrad Rock Club, 1981-86* (New York: MMMSP, 2005).

⁶⁹⁵ Polikovskaia, *My predchustviie*, 143-52.

Conclusion

The post-Stalin endeavor to bring about an alternative, socialist version of a modern consumer society involved a turn toward satisfying consumption desires and appealing to popular interests while trying to channel these in “appropriate” directions. Yet advocacy of initiative from below and citizen participation in managing society had just as central a role in the Thaw-era vision of a socialist modernity. The latter marked socialist modernity as unique and explicitly dissimilar from traditional western consumerist modernity, with such differentiation an important aim in the Cold War’s cultural competition. Likewise, the Khrushchev leadership intended the robust development of grassroots initiative in its version of modernity to contribute to building communism, when ordinary citizens would manage society. Youth played a vital role in this narrative, as those who would construct and live in the ideal future. Indeed, the post-Stalin authorities placed particular emphasis on inspiring social activism among young people as part of a shift from a discipline-oriented late Stalinist ideal of a young New Soviet Person, to a Thaw-era version characterized by initiative and enthusiasm. The youth initiative clubs combined all of these elements. Studying them illuminates important facets of the transition toward a Thaw-era socialist version of modernity, and the consequences for Soviet everyday life.

This chapter shows that the post-Stalin Party-state’s advocacy of youth initiative and satisfaction of youth desires resulted in a far-ranging impact on the lives of a number of young club-goers. In effect, Thaw-era authorities succeeded in utilizing an approach characterized by greater reliance on infrastructural power to ensure that the socialization of these youth occurred in the context of an officially-approved and monitored collective.

Although this finding supports the notion of an increasing role for official collectives in regulating people's everyday lives, I depart from Kharkhordin's evaluation of such collectives as censorious and repressive, with Soviet citizens finding real meaning only in nonstate settings of friendship groups and the home. Instead, as seen in "Archimedes," the "Kuibyshev city youth club," and other youth initiative institutions, young people gained meaning, emotional support, self-definition, and lifelong friendships within these official collectives, making them vital to forming personal youth identities. Such institutions did not necessarily constitute separate spaces from what Kharkhordin termed friendship groups, with the former surveilling and repressive and the latter supportive and meaningful. In fact, youth clubs highlight the complex and ambiguous relationship between the multilayered and intertwined public and private spheres, as young people found deep meaning, friendship, and support within official, public spaces, while participating in activities that largely conformed to Party-state strictures. The government's actions even contributed to the growth of a civic spirit within these clubs, as youth debated issues of significance to their lives and undertook limited forms of popular activism to address deficiencies they identified within the Soviet system.

The establishment of interest-based clubs that catered to diverse youth interests and desires, and, even more so, the youth initiative clubs that gave young people substantial room to organize cultural activities appealing to them, underscore the differentiation of the Party-state's cultural offerings in the post-Stalin era. Combined with the evidence from the previous chapter of growing tolerance for western cultural offerings, this finding suggests the need to refine Stephen Lovell's conclusion that, in the Thaw, cultural production for the masses continued to promote a cohesive, unified vision

of a Soviet cultural consumer that hid the cultural and thus social differences among the population.⁶⁹⁶ Instead, an investigation of youth clubs indicates that officialdom acknowledged the existence of Soviet society's diversity, cultural and otherwise.⁶⁹⁷ The Khrushchev Party-state legitimated New Soviet Men and Women possessing differing interests that did not directly relate to communist construction.

Youth initiative club members helped establish and participated in these institutions, spending a great deal of time and energy in doing so, because these clubs reflected the desires of young people for fun. Although enabled and encouraged by the Soviet leadership and fulfilling some socialization functions, youth initiative clubs, in their essence, relied on enthusiastic youth social activism. Here, my conclusions depart from those of Juliane Fürst, who claimed that, from the postwar Stalin years, "despite short flames of new enthusiasm," youth were characterized by "consumption, subcultures and shirking the system."⁶⁹⁸ Moreover by having fun in youth initiative clubs, young people developed their agency.⁶⁹⁹ In effect, these clubs brought young enthusiasts together in a self-willed fashion to pursue cultural activities reflecting their desires.

⁶⁹⁶ He does note major changes in cultural production for elites during the Thaw: Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 46-48.

⁶⁹⁷ Also attested to by the rebirth of sociology to study social differences. See B. A. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia: Ocherki massovogo soznaniia rossiiian vremen Khrushcheva, Brezhneva, Gorbacheva i Eltsina v 4-kh knigakh. Zhizn' I-ia, epokha Khrushcheva.* (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001); Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Jiri Zuzanek, *Work and Leisure in the Soviet Union: A Time-Budget Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1980).

⁶⁹⁸ Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 19.

⁶⁹⁹ For how pleasure is conducive to agency, see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5.

Active youth participation in the hard-line vs. soft-line struggles in the Thaw offers further support for the idea that young people did not simply shirk the system, but invested deep meaning, energy, emotions, enthusiasm, and a sense of self-definition into the future of the Soviet Union. The fact that young people engaged in public debates with higher-up officials, whether in the case of the Kaluga “Torch” or “Archimedes,” underscores that rhetorical battles over appropriate degrees of initiative meant a great deal to young people. This complicates Alexei Yurchak’s argument for the increasing irrelevancy of official discourse for everyday youth experience in the Soviet Union from 1953 onward, at least for many of those young people actively involved in initiative-based club activities. In this regard, Yurchak’s argument is a better fit for the 1970s and 1980s than the 1950s and 1960s.⁷⁰⁰ For other young people, as chapter 3 demonstrated, the distancing between official discourse and youth lives began already in the late 1940s with the ban on jazz and western dancing. This indicates the need to tease out the distinctions between the experience of different groups of youth, with some actively involved in promoting their interests within the channels permitted by the system and others side-stepping such officially-approved paths.

The conflicts over youth activism, as well as those over a more tolerant approach to western popular culture described in the previous chapter, helps illustrate that struggles between hard-liners and soft-liners had a great deal of importance for everyday cultural life in the Thaw. They also highlight the significance of long-standing tensions at the heart of Soviet ideology and discourse over whether to build communism by relying on

⁷⁰⁰ Thus, for the 1970s, Yurchak describes how official discourse did not permit room for conflict, leading to young people telling officials one thing, while in reality doing another. See his *Everything was Forever*, 36-76.

mass spontaneity and popular support, or an ideologically consciousness vanguard and forceful methods.

The stress on satisfying youth desires and developing their initiative in official discourse and policy during the early Thaw, along with the growing prominence of youth in public life, arguably resulted in young people acquiring a more cohesive sense of themselves as a distinct social group, one whose opinions and interests deserved attention and respect. All of these contributed to the formation of a recognizable generational consciousness of an age cohort that I suggest is best termed a “post-Stalin generation,” the people who grew up in the whirlwind of changes during the 1950s following the dictator’s death.⁷⁰¹ In contrast to Stalin’s last generation, the post-Stalin one was what Jane Edmunds and Brian Turner called “active.” Its members had much more room to unite with each other and engage in grassroots community leadership to pursue their goals, uplifted by the validation provided by top-level advocacy of initiative from below and participation in governance.⁷⁰² Youth initiative clubs served as important spaces for the formation of the post-Stalin generation’s sense of unity with other members of their age cohort. Their resultant generational consciousness, in combination with the civic spirit promoted in the clubs, resulted in public activism that sought to achieve the goals and desires of young people, although one quite limited in scope and oriented primarily at cultural activities as opposed to overtly political ones.

⁷⁰¹ I do not use the term “Thaw generation,” as the Thaw covered a long period, with more than one generation. For more on the term “Thaw generation,” see Alekseeva and Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation*.

⁷⁰² See Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, “Introduction,” in Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner eds., *Generational Consciousness, Narrative, and Politics* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 1-12, and Edmunds and Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 16-23.

Notably, top-level advocacy of youth initiative and interests occasionally served to challenge the goals of the Thaw-era leadership in its shift away from despotic power. In some cases, youth went too far, from the authorities' perspective, in expressing their agency, whether through their critical comments, unruly activities, provocative conduct, or adoption of too many elements of western culture. The Party-state also faced a broader problem. The stress its discourse placed on youth desires and grassroots activism legitimated having young people pay more conscious attention to their personal needs and wants, and validated them by deploying their initiative to achieve these desires, without ensuring that this matched the Party-state's own aims. The leadership, then, had to find some way to achieve a socialist version of modernity characterized by limited but growing consumption and social engagement with communist construction via official collectives, without permitting an "excessive" orientation at individualist consumption, particularly as relating to western cultural forms.

Chapter 6

The Hard-Line Shift and the Aesthetic Upbringing Campaign, 1956-1958

Starting in late 1956 and early 1957, the Soviet leadership temporarily shifted to a more hard-line approach to managing the country, narrowing the boundaries of acceptable self-expression. This method of governance, dominant until mid-1958, represented the Kremlin's reaction to the wide turmoil spurred by Khrushchev's Secret Speech in the USSR and in the allied socialist states. In addition, the opening of the Soviet Bloc to western Europe and the United States during the early Thaw brought what top officials perceived as an excess of western influence. This chapter examines the impact of the Kremlin's hard-line turn on organized cultural activities for youth, as embodied by a campaign launched in 1957 that focused on a particular form of cultural enlightenment—*aesthetic upbringing* (*esteticheskoe vospitanie*). An attempt to mold young people's conception of what is tasteful and beautiful in cultural expression, aesthetic upbringing contrasted to the emphasis in the early Thaw on organized activities that appealed to extant cultural consumption desires and permitted youth to enact their own cultural preferences via grassroots activism within certain limits defined by the Party-state.

Aesthetic upbringing constituted part of a broader top-level push to inculcate officially-prescribed norms among Soviet youth during the late 1950s. I term this the drive for a "Thaw-era culturedness," which had some similarities to the government's

endeavors to instill culturedness in the population during the 1930s. In that period, culturedness for the masses encompassed a series of behavioral norms that included cleanliness, sobriety, and diligent work. The elites and those seeking upward mobility had a higher standard to meet in order to be considered cultured, such as appropriate manners and dress. Besides this, they had to possess normative aesthetic tastes and some cultural knowledge.⁷⁰³ The Thaw-era campaign for aesthetic upbringing likewise called for appropriate cultural tastes and knowledge. In the late 1950s, however, the Soviet leaders wanted all youth, not just elites, to adopt normative aesthetic tastes and cultural desires. Furthermore, the Kremlin's motivation stemmed not only from the drive to construct communism, but also the need to fight the Cold War on the cultural front.

An investigation of the drive for aesthetic upbringing also offers further insights on the post-Stalin Kremlin's efforts to build a socialist version of a modern consumer society. The early Thaw efforts to solicit initiative from below brought out one important aspect of what differentiated an alternative, socialist modernity from the western one. In this chapter, another major difference comes to the fore, namely the attempt to shape popular cultural tastes and desires as a means of governing a socialist consumer society. Recent works on post-Stalin policies explore how the state sought to supervise material consumption as a form of managing the citizenry, in other words a modern population politics. Most prominently, Susan Reid has argued that Party-state consumption policies aimed to ensure stability and legitimacy for the Soviet leadership, while also fighting the

⁷⁰³ On Stalin-era culturedness, see David L. Hoffman, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-41* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 15-87; Vadim Volkov, "The Concept of *Kul'turnost'*: Notes on the Stalinist Civilizing Process," in Sheila Fitzpatrick ed., *Stalinism: New Directions* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 210-30; and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75-88.

Cold War on the domestic front through competing over consumption with western states.⁷⁰⁴

Building on the insights of Reid and other scholars, who largely draw on material consumption, this chapter focuses on the management of cultural consumption wants through organized cultural leisure activities. My work confirms the significance of the Kremlin's desire for political stability and legitimacy, as the leadership intended the drive for aesthetic upbringing to help convince the population that the Party-state successfully satisfied consumption needs. Cold War concerns played an even more central role in cultural than in material consumption, since the aesthetic upbringing initiative directly targeted western popular culture, especially jazz. Furthermore, a study of cultural consumption is particularly well suited for spotlighting another crucial motivating factor for the Khrushchev leadership's policies in consumption management: the ideological aspect. The Thaw-era Kremlin hoped that the USSR's population could be guided to consume their way into communism by adopting the subject position of model communist consumers who derive pleasure and meaning from consuming Party-prescribed cultural activities during their free time. Ideally, such young New Soviet Individuals would then use the leeway provided for activism from below during the early Thaw to organize normative cultural forms at the grassroots level.

⁷⁰⁴ Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211-52; David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism," in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52; David Crowley, "Warsaw's Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw," in Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 25-48; György Péteri, "The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity," *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 929-37; and L. V. Zakharova, "'Naibolee raspostranennoi iavliaetsia forma priamogo pal'to s odnoborotnoi zastezhkoj': O sovetskoi mode epokhi 'ottepeli,'" *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas: Debaty o Politike i Kul'ture* 45.1 (2006), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/> [Accessed December 31, 2009].

Although the Khrushchev leadership narrowed the range of permissible cultural events and grassroots activism, it mainly focused on providing “appropriate” cultural options through the aesthetic upbringing drive. It poured resources into increasing the amount of orthodox organized cultural activities and establishing “universities of culture” (*universitety kul'tury*), didactic cultural institutions, across the USSR. Through these initiatives, the Kremlin tried to convince youth to adopt its prescribed cultural cannon, composed of Soviet cultural products, the Russian and foreign classical cannon, folk arts of the peoples of the USSR and allied socialist states, and Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. It promoted this cannon as superior to, more refined, and more cultured than western popular culture, which official discourse derided as vulgar and unseemly. All this formed part of a broader effort by the Kremlin in late 1956 and 1957 to forge a young generation whose desires, tastes, and values proved conducive to fully engaging with communist construction and living in a communist society. The Soviet leadership, however, met with many challenges in trying to achieve its goals.

The Hard-Line Turn in Late 1956 and 1957

In his Secret Speech at the 1956 Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev condemned Stalin's crimes, provoking controversy in the Soviet Union. The Kremlin condoned some limited discussion and debate of Stalin's “cult of personality,” but insisted that any conversations come to “appropriate” conclusions. This meant placing the blame for the “excesses” of the Great Purges squarely on the shoulders of Stalin himself, as well as some political police cadres, and absolving the Communist Party and the Soviet system of any guilt. Nonetheless, some college students, members of the

intelligentsia, and other citizens went beyond the boundaries of the permissible, publicly suggesting that the Great Purges resulted from systemic failures and calling for fundamental reforms in the USSR. Moreover, some especially ideologically militant officials and citizens openly rejected the Khrushchev leadership's criticism of Stalin. Furthermore, in the Soviet republic of Georgia, Stalin's birthplace, nationalistic Georgians perceived censure of Stalin as an attack on Georgians as a whole. They participated in mass protests in defense of Stalin, which the Soviet authorities put down by force.⁷⁰⁵

The top-level criticisms of Stalin and revelations of his misdeeds spurred more extreme reactions in the allied socialist states, especially Poland and Hungary. Poland, in comparison to other Soviet Bloc states, allowed an unusually open discussion of the Secret Speech in the spring and summer of 1956, as part of a contest between hard-line and soft-line factions within the hierarchy. Popular disturbances took place in the summer and fall of 1956, provoked by economic and political demands. In October 1956, the Polish Party-state found a way out of this tense situation by, without consulting the Kremlin, placing the previously-imprisoned moderate Wladyslaw Gomulka in charge. Despite Moscow's initial wariness, Gomulka proved capable of calming the situation in Poland. Hungary also experienced wide-ranging public debates and mass protests.

⁷⁰⁵ Polly Jones, "From the Secret Speech to the Burial of Stalin: Real and ideal Responses to De-Stalinization," in Polly Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 41-63; Cynthia Hooper, "What Can and Cannot Be Said: Between the Stalinist Past and New Soviet Future," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 306-27; and V. A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, trans. Elaine M. MacKinnon (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002). Specifically on students going beyond the permissible in criticizing the Soviet system, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 821, ll. 96-99, and A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Vsesoiuznogo leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuza molodezhi XIII s'ezdu komsomola (15 apreliia 1958 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), 33.

Hungary, following the Polish example, rehabilitated the moderate Imre Nagy and appointed him prime minister. He, however, took a different path than Gomulka. After mass street protests, Nagy announced his intention to leave the Warsaw Pact, declaring Hungarian neutrality. Moscow decided to intervene militarily and crushed the Hungarian Revolution.⁷⁰⁶

This confluence of events spurred a more hard-line approach by the Soviet leaders at home. Such unexpected domestic and foreign reactions to the Secret Speech gave powerful ammunition to the militants who opposed de-Stalinizing reforms in the first place. They also helped convince the many centrists who had mixed feelings about changing the status quo that de-Stalinization went too far and too fast. Furthermore, they gave pause to those officials inclined toward a more pluralistic approach, including Khrushchev himself, who naively presumed that the population would act “appropriately” when given the autonomy to do so and more accurate information on which to base decisions. As a result, by late 1956 and early 1957 the Kremlin began to pull back from the greater openness of the early Thaw and instituted tougher top-down controls. For example, in literature, V. D. Dudintsev’s novel *Not by Bread Alone*, published in the soft-line *Novyi Mir* journal in early 1956, at first received praise in the press for denouncing corruption. By the end of 1956, official discourse began to censure Dudintsev for an excessively negative depiction of Soviet reality. B. L. Pasternak came under severe criticism for publishing his *Doctor Zhivago* abroad.⁷⁰⁷ This dynamic also

⁷⁰⁶ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 270-324, and Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Insider Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 114-32.

⁷⁰⁷ Denis Kozlov, “‘I Have Not Read, but I Will Say’: Soviet Literary Audiences and Changing Ideas of Social Membership, 1958-66,” *Kritika* 7.3 (Summer 2006): 557-97; Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 253-309; and Stephen Lovell, *The*

applied to the state's position on western popular culture, as fears of excessive western influence led to a tightening of the restrictions that Soviet authorities relaxed from late 1953 to early 1956.

The opening of the USSR to foreign visitors also raised concerns among the hierarchy already before late 1956. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recorded one problematic instance, when a member of a 1955 visiting delegation of students from England returned home and published an article in the English newspaper *Observer* about Soviet youth. Entitled "Speculators and Hooligans," this story related how a small minority of Soviet youth tried to emulate western ways in a "vulgar and loud" manner and attempted to purchase western products from foreign visitors. The ministry suggested that youth organizations deal with the problems described in this article in order to prevent the publications of such articles in the future, especially due to the upcoming 1957 Sixth International Youth Festival in Moscow.⁷⁰⁸ Foreign visitors, thus, brought western cultural products into the USSR and returned home with their impressions of the country, with the Party seeking to manage both of these.

From late 1956, the Komsomol hierarchy began to pay substantially more attention to managing western influence. This comes through clearly in a fall 1956 internal document of the Komsomol Propaganda Department. The department censured *Komsomol'skaia pravda* for its "very weak" reporting on "the imperialist essence of modern capitalism." The authors disparaged the lack of articles targeting "cosmopolitanism," meaning foreign influence, and pointed out the rising need to combat

Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 45-71.

⁷⁰⁸ RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 179, l. 87.

it since the USSR's ties with "foreign bourgeois countries continue to grow."⁷⁰⁹ Several months later, the Party Propaganda Department filed a report that also criticized youth papers for failing to conduct a "frontal assault against bourgeois ideology." Additionally, it denounced the papers for providing youth with "light, entertaining reading" instead of articles that mobilized young people to help achieve economic and political goals, as journalists wrongly considered stories on plan fulfillment and love for the Motherland "boring and uninteresting."⁷¹⁰ Thereby, the report condemned pieces that corresponded to popular interests and desires, in contrast to the orientation toward the satisfaction of the population's wants during the early Thaw. These two reports illuminate conflicts between higher-up ideologically militant officials and the more pluralistic approach of some lower-level newspaper editors. Besides a personal ideological preference for a pluralistic editorial style, editors may also have been motivated by the desire to sell more papers, an increasingly important concern in those years.⁷¹¹ Still, the filing of these reports illustrates the growing dominance of the hard-line approach by late 1956.

By the end of 1956 and early 1957, such sentiments began to be expressed in the Komsomol's public rhetoric as well. After the criticism from the Komsomol Propaganda Department, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* regularly published articles denouncing western propaganda. In one January 1957 piece, it condemned Allen Dulles, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the CIA-sponsored radio station "Radio Free Europe," for lying about mass disorders among Soviet youth and conflicts among the Komsomol

⁷⁰⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 821, ll. 47-50.

⁷¹⁰ RGANI, f. 5, op. 34, d. 17, ll. 41-43.

⁷¹¹ Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 33-70.

leadership.⁷¹² A little over a week later, it mocked the BBC for its efforts to begin radio broadcasts in Ukrainian.⁷¹³

The key public event signaling the hard-line shift in youth cultural policy came at the February 1957 Seventh Plenum of the Komsomol Central Committee. In his keynote speech, First Secretary of the Komsomol A. N. Shelepin condemned attacks by “bourgeois” propaganda, commenting that although most Soviet youth do not fall for “Dulles’ fairy tales,” some do accept such “bourgeois lies.” Komsomol cells, according to Shelepin, “need to struggle against blind kowtowing to everything western.” He decried the fact that “a part of our youth is excessively interested in western dances and light jazz music, and buys records underground.” In Shelepin’s view, the preparation for the 1957 Moscow youth festival led to the creation of too many jazz ensembles, “often with a poor, light-minded program.”⁷¹⁴ Therefore, he sent the signal that a limited degree of jazz and western dancing may be appropriate, but that the explosive growth in such western popular culture since 1953 went too far for the leadership’s liking.

This message reflected not only the escalating hard-line turn by the Kremlin, but also behind-the-scenes battles between the Komsomol and other Party-state bureaucracies. In an early 1957 letter to the Party TsK’s Cultural Department, Shelepin complained about a speech made by First Secretary of the Soviet Composers’ Union T. N. Khrennikov. Apparently, Khrennikov accused Komsomol TsK representatives of putting unwarranted effort into promoting jazz collectives in preparation for the 1957

⁷¹² “Eshche odna ‘utka’ ‘Svobodnoi Evropy,’” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 9, 1957.

⁷¹³ “Senk iu, babka Bibisishka,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, January 18, 1957.

⁷¹⁴ A. N. Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii ideino-vospitatel’noi raboty komsomol’skikh organizatsii sredi molodezhi (Doklad na VII plenum TsK VLKSM 1957 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1957), 7-9, 45-48.

festival. According to Shelepin, this phrase was inserted into Khrennikov's speech by B. M. Iaroslavskii, a high-ranking cultural official. Shelepin insisted that this characterization of the Komsomol TsK's actions did not match reality. He listed cases where the Komsomol TsK censured "inappropriate" music, and highlighted the fact that the TsK specifically condemned excessive preoccupation with creating jazz ensembles for the upcoming festival. In response, Iaroslavskii claimed that, over the last year, the most widespread form of youth concert activity was an "Americanized form of western jazz," a revealing comment on the popularity of this music among youth. According to Iaroslavskii, the Komsomol TsK assisted this development through its cultural policies and financial support. Furthermore, the TsK encouraged jazz groups comprising only brass and percussion instruments, therefore guaranteeing a particularly "cacophonic sound." They often performed songs in English and Spanish, or jazz versions of Soviet folk songs. All of this "negatively impacted the development of young people's artistic tastes." Iaroslavskii acknowledged that the Komsomol TsK censured the spread of such jazz ensembles at its February 1957 Seventh Plenum, but insisted that previously some cadres in the Komsomol TsK's apparatus had actively encouraged the organization of jazz ensembles for the upcoming festival.⁷¹⁵ This heated exchange demonstrates the relatively soft-line position occupied by the Komsomol TsK before late 1956 and its efforts to protect its authority from attacks by other Soviet institutions after this shift.

Such evidence also underscores the tensions inspired by the international youth festival, which the Komsomol organized and managed. On the one hand, the Komsomol TsK wanted foreign visitors to perceive the Soviet Union as a progressive and appealing

⁷¹⁵ RGANI, f. 5, op. 36, d. 46, ll. 51-56.

alternative to the western version of a consumer society. This required presenting a degree of jazz and western dancing. On the other hand, especially due to the growing wariness over western influence, the Komsomol did not want youth to partake in an “excessive” amount of western popular culture. Such competing priorities resulted in broad and vague definitions of what constituted an “appropriate” amount of jazz and western dancing, and what went beyond the limits. Consequently, while the Komsomol TsK and other central institutions narrowed the boundaries of permissible cultural practices for model New Soviet People, local officials and ordinary youth had considerable leeway in getting ready for the youth festival.

Owing to this, many jazz collectives appeared in preparation for this event. As the exchange between Iaroslavskii and Shelepin indicates, the Komsomol TsK’s policies and representatives assisted their formation. The Komsomol TsK’s January 1956 decree on the amateur music competitions for the upcoming youth festival included a contest for jazz and light music ensembles, which contributed to the widespread formation of such groups. Komsomol TsK representatives took action to build up the number of jazz collectives as well. A case in point, an official working for the Komsomol TsK recommended that the Moscow Conservatory establish a jazz ensemble.⁷¹⁶

Other central agencies also helped promote jazz in the months preceding the festival. In August 1956 the Council of Ministers of the USSR decreed the need to have amateur competitions of jazz and light music for the festival.⁷¹⁷ Responding to such

⁷¹⁶ RGANI, f. 5, op. 36, d. 46, ll. 54-56.

⁷¹⁷ TsAGM, f. 429, op. 1, d. 517, ll. 24-25.

signals, clubs established jazz-style variety ensembles in droves.⁷¹⁸ Indeed, the hard-liners in the Moscow House of Folk Creativity complained that out of thirty-six variety ensembles that took part in a competition in preparation for the youth festival, thirty-three played “in the spirit and style of a western jazz ensemble.”⁷¹⁹ Since the ideological militants at the Moscow DNT controlled the jury for that particular contest, they permitted only those three groups that did not perform explicitly western music to advance further.⁷²⁰ Pluralistically-oriented festival juries, however, had a more open attitude toward groups whose repertoire included American-style jazz, as described for Iurii Saul’skii’s ensemble in chapter four. In another example, L. A. Figlin, a Saratov jazz musician, recalled playing music with jazz elements in a competition for the festival. Although his ensemble did not advance further, Figlin emphasized that his jazz-style group receiving permission to participate in the competition was itself indicative of the greater room for jazz.⁷²¹ Consequently, despite the growing censure of western popular culture in top-level policy rhetoric by early 1957, the wave of jazz-style amateur groups that sprang up due to the liberalization of state-sponsored popular culture after Stalin’s death continued to grow. This opens the curtain on the challenges experienced by the Kremlin in reversing its course and enacting a new cultural policy that went against extant youth cultural consumption desires.

⁷¹⁸ For instance in the Gor’kii House of Culture. See TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 55, l. 43.

⁷¹⁹ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 58, l. 23.

⁷²⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 873, ll. 105-26.

⁷²¹ L. A. Figlin, born 1938, interviewed May 25, 2009.

Furthermore, the festival itself prominently featured jazz music.⁷²² Saul'skii's collective impressed both Soviet citizens and visitors from abroad and came in second overall, winning a silver medal. Its participants, including G. A. Garanian, received invitations from abroad to perform. Other Soviet ensembles with western musical elements also lit up the scene while inspiring hard-line opposition.⁷²³ For instance, in a jury debate about light music performances at the festival, a militant member lambasted the Uralmash factory collective as "the most vulgar expression of western popular music" and stated that, if he had his way, the group would not have been allowed to perform in the first place. But other jury members, including a representative from the Komsomol TsK, commended the Uralmash ensemble for its superb performance and proposed awarding it the second-place prize in its category. The hard-liner on the jury complained that doing so might encourage youth to turn toward unworthy music. Nonetheless, with the endorsement of soft-line members of the jury, the Uralmash collective received its prize.⁷²⁴

Jazz enthusiasts came from all over the USSR to participate in or just take in the atmosphere of the festival and began to form jazz networks. Concomitantly, foreign jazz bands from allied socialist states and capitalist countries powerfully impacted the Soviet jazz scene, with a Czechoslovak group just beating out Saul'skii's ensemble to win the

⁷²² For more on the festival, see Pia Koivunen, "Overcoming Cold War Boundaries at the World Youth Festivals," in Sari Autio-Sarasmo and Katalyn Miklossy eds., *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming in 2011), and Kristin Roth-Ey, "'Loose Girls' on the Loose: Sex, Propaganda and the 1957 Youth Festival" in Melanie Ilić, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood eds., *Women in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 75-96.

⁷²³ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009, and S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 248-51.

⁷²⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 874, ll. 44-51.

festival's gold medal in this genre. These foreign jazz groups played the newest forms of jazz, such as bop and cool jazz, thereby enabling Soviet jazz musicians to make contacts with foreigners that paved the way for later exchanges.⁷²⁵ Such cultural influence from eastern Europe shows that western Europe and the US did not represent the only external "Other" for the USSR.

Nonetheless, the immediate post-festival future looked gloomy for jazz. For one, the Komsomol TsK no longer needed to support jazz in order to demonstrate a modern face to the outside world. Likewise, the impact of foreign jazz ensembles, as part of a broader inflow of western cultural influence during the festival, inspired a backlash that turned Soviet authorities even more toward a hard-line position. For instance, L. K. Baliasnaia, the former Komsomol TsK secretary, recalled that Komsomol officials at the time perceived the opening to the outside world as bringing a number of negative phenomena, "which needed to be opposed."⁷²⁶ Furthermore, the next major celebration held only several months later, on the fortieth anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution, proved conducive to more conservative musical styles, with pieces oriented toward political propaganda and military marches.

As a result of all this, jazz experienced a renewed attack during late 1957. A case in point, soon after the festival ended, the journal *Sovetskaia kul'tura* denounced Iurii Saul'skii's ensemble as "musical *stiliagi*" who played vulgar jazz music. Despite winning the festival's silver medal, Saul'skii's group was soon disbanded. Garanian had to join

⁷²⁵ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009; V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; A. S. Kozlov, "*Kozel na sakse*": *I tak vsiu zhizn'* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), 100-16; and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 248-51.

⁷²⁶ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

Oleg Lundstrom's variety band, which Garanian complained played only one or two jazz pieces out of every twenty-five numbers it performed.⁷²⁷ A Komsomol Propaganda Department report on the outcomes of the festival decried that "some variety collectives exhibit insufficient care in selecting their repertoire and copy western styles."⁷²⁸ This report, mailed to all oblast-level Komsomol organizations, sent a clear message on the need to curb jazz. At the November 1957 conference of the Komsomol organization of Kirov neighborhood in Saratov, the keynote speaker censured the fact that many amateur music circles "are not under the control of the Komsomol," and consequently "perform pieces lacking in ideological content." As an example, the speaker cited repertoires that had numbers by the Soviet jazz musician Eddie Rosner and by the American swing-style jazz trumpeter Harry James.⁷²⁹ Moscow's Komsomol also censured jazz bands. For instance, the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol cell condemned jazz groups that played "wild music, squeals and shrieks, instead of folk music."⁷³⁰

Many club managers disbanded their jazz collectives under pressure from militants. The amateur competitions that preceded the 1957 youth festival played an important role in enabling the Moscow DNT to identify and target the groups that performed American-style jazz music.⁷³¹ The cultural bureaucracy's increase of the DNT's control over amateur circle directors enabled this activism, as the DNT acquired

⁷²⁷ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009, and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 250-51.

⁷²⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 861, l. 83.

⁷²⁹ GANISO, f. 3234, op. 13, d. 96, l. 8.

⁷³⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 3, d. 26, l. 58.

⁷³¹ For example, at the Serafimovich club. See TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 58, l. 31.

the right to confirm all of the directors for Moscow's amateur collectives in 1958.⁷³² This exemplified the strengthening of control organs in the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture as part of the hard-line turn. Ideologically militant lower-level Komsomol members also pressured clubs. Reviving a practice of the anticosmopolitan period, groups of hard-line Komsomol youth began to check the repertoires of amateur and professional music ensembles, denouncing those that played American-style jazz. Later, these activities became formalized under the name of "music patrols" (*muzykal'nyi patrul'*), paralleling the Komsomol groups that patrolled the streets against crime.⁷³³

This does not mean that top-level cultural policy swung back to the full rejection of western popular culture characteristic of late Stalinism. Shelepin wrote a letter to the Council of Ministers in 1957 asking for an increase in the production of musical instruments for wind orchestra and variety ensembles. He noted the need to provide more saxophones, among other instruments, to raise youth participation in amateur circles.⁷³⁴ Such a request of the instrument symbolizing jazz is hardly imaginable in the period of the anticosmopolitan campaign.

Instead of a ban, 1957 witnessed a limitation on jazz, as the Party-state's cultural policy narrowed the space permitted for jazz elements in musical performances within state-sponsored popular culture. It disbanded some of the more daring ensembles such as Saul'skii's, but the existing jazz groups dealt with the hard-line turn by making some

⁷³² TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 64, ll. 9-10.

⁷³³ Although we do not know when these efforts first began on a local and less formal basis, the institution of "music patrols" received its first endorsement from the Komsomol leadership in 1960, based on earlier Kiev activities: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 11; "Muzykal'nyi patrul'," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, July 1, 1960; and L. Tiutikov and M. Sishigin eds., *Sila obshchestvennogo pochina* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 29-39.

⁷³⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 137.

accommodations to the Party-state's new limitations. They played a mix of jazz and nonjazz music, and performed jazz in a Sovietized style, not relying only on brass and percussion instruments that Iaroslavskii condemned, but also including string instruments and others. The Saratov jazz musician I. P. Zhimskii's ensemble combined a saxophone, clarinet, piano, drums, accordion, maracas, and a guitar (Figure 11).



Figure 11. A photograph of a jazz-style variety ensemble performance at the Saratov Pedagogical Institute. Courtesy of the private archive of I. P. Zhimskii.

K. A. Marvin related that his quartet combined jazz pieces with what he termed “patriotic songs.”⁷³⁵ As before, some used deceptive tactics to get around restrictions.⁷³⁶ Still, the

⁷³⁵ K. A. Marvin, born 1934, interviewed May 13, 2009.

⁷³⁶ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009; I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009; and A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009.

state's initiatives curbed the previously rapid growth of jazz ensembles and more controversial American-style repertoires.

Such developments in the official musical scene illustrate the ambiguities in the post-Stalin leadership's relationship to western popular culture. The opening to western influence during the early Thaw narrowed in times when cultural militancy predominated. In these periods, official rhetoric even deployed tropes that evoked late Stalinist antiwestern language, such as censure of cosmopolitanism and kowtowing to the "west," although the attacks on jazz never approached the stridency or impact of the antic cosmopolitan campaign. Those holding soft and hard-line positions constantly struggled to enact their divergent visions, with the militant view generally predominant within the bureaucracy from late 1956 until mid-1958 due to the backlash over the Secret Speech and Cold War concerns. Nonetheless, worries over the Cold War did not inevitably lead to hard-line outcomes. In some cases, as in the lead-up to the international youth festival, Soviet efforts to present an appealing socialist alternative to western modernity in the eyes of the outside world counterbalanced the Party's concerns over excessive western influence. In most cases, though, Cold War tensions prompted a clampdown on western popular culture in the USSR.

In addition to the attacks against jazz, the Party-state's hard-line turn in 1957 resulted in some hesitancy regarding youth agency and social activism. In his Seventh Komsomol TsK Plenum speech, Shelepin praised grassroots initiative by local Komsomol cells, but also noted the need to maintain unity of purpose in the Komsomol's work on socializing youth.⁷³⁷ In their reports on the implementation of this plenum's

⁷³⁷ Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii*, 52.

resolutions, some oblast Komsomol committees went further. The Kemerovo Komsomol, for instance, stated that “youth initiative requires a degree of direction and close management.”⁷³⁸ While many mid-level Komsomol cadres who came to power under Stalin may have thought so privately, making such claims in official internal documents constituted a radically hard-line position. Most oblasts that reported on their implementation of the plenum’s decrees instead underlined their attempts to develop youth initiative instead of managing it from above.⁷³⁹ However, at least in some instances, the Komsomol hierarchy placed more controls on youth initiative-based cultural institutions. A case in point, a number of youth initiative clubs opened up in Minsk during 1956 and early 1957. Yet, after the hard-line shift, the city Komsomol committee created an umbrella “Central Komsomol Club” to unify such activities, which resulted in closer oversight from above.⁷⁴⁰

Launching the Campaign for Aesthetic Upbringing

The tactics outlined above represent despotic power methods associated with the late 1956 and early 1957 hard-line turn in the cultural sphere. However, the Soviet authorities placed much more stress and invested many more resources into strategies that aimed to convince youth to adopt normative aesthetic tastes. During the first decade after World War II, the Komsomol leaders, while talking extensively about raising cultural levels through conveying cultural knowledge to youth, did not acknowledge the

⁷³⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 838, l. 131.

⁷³⁹ For one instance, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 144.

⁷⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 159-63.

possibility of any inherent problems with young people's cultural tastes. Consequently, top-level policy discussions paid little attention to the question of managing youth aesthetic tastes. Within the Komsomol Propaganda Department, documents rarely mentioned youth cultural tastes before 1956.⁷⁴¹ An examination of the Komsomol TsK Bureau's archive from 1944 onward shows that the first mention of youth tastes as an issue of concern appeared in 1957.⁷⁴² Instruction booklets for cultural officials started to focus on young people's tastes only after the launch of the campaign for aesthetic upbringing in 1957.⁷⁴³

The earlier lack of concern with youth aesthetic tastes is not surprising. The late Stalinist leaders' concerns centered on conveying political and ideological propaganda through organized cultural activities and they cared little for the actual cultural preferences of young people. In turn, many of the post-Stalin top officials naively presumed that, once offered the chance to express and satisfy their own desires after the oppressive atmosphere of late Stalinism, Soviet youth would naturally exhibit tastes in concordance with the leadership's view of model communist citizens. Thusly, the Komsomol hierarchy in the early Thaw encouraged young people to take responsibility for the development of their own cultural standards within the limits permitted by the Soviet system. The Khrushchev administration even allowed room for a degree of western popular culture. The unexpectedly explosive growth of jazz and western dancing from 1953 to 1957, combined with the backlash from the Secret Speech and the context

⁷⁴¹ For example, RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 710, l. 7.

⁷⁴² In RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 930, l. 12.

⁷⁴³ For a case in point, see G. G. Karpov and N. D. Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo: Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 90-112. An exception that mentioned cultural tastes before 1957 is T. Kutasova, *Samodeiatel'nyi tantseval'nyi kollektiv* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1954), 20-26, 53.

of the ongoing Cold War, convinced the Khrushchev Kremlin by late 1956 that it had made a mistake. Retreating from its previous emphasis on satisfying young people's interests and trusting grassroots spontaneity, the leadership underlined the need to mold the tastes of the young generation, turning toward the model of an ideologically conscious vanguard leading the population.

Although reports and local Komsomol conferences began to discuss aesthetic tastes in 1956, the February 1957 Seventh Plenum of the Komsomol TsK marked the Komsomol leadership's public launch of the aesthetic upbringing campaign.⁷⁴⁴ At the plenum, Shelepin underlined the need for increasing the "cultural level" of youth as part of the progress toward communism. He specified that the term "cultural level" included "one's outward appearance, one's behavior at home, in public, and at work, and how one follows the rules of socialist society and communist morals," acknowledging that the Komsomol had paid little attention to such issues previously.⁷⁴⁵ These standards closely paralleled the culturedness guidelines for elites under Stalin, now expanded to the youth masses as a whole in a Thaw-era version of culturedness, similarly to the extension of the consumerist social contract to the young during the early Thaw.

Shelepin highlighted that an important component of this policy involved the Komsomol and other Soviet institutions "decisively improving the aesthetic upbringing of young people" by developing their "aesthetic taste." In Shelepin's words, this would not only contribute to achieving communism, but also respond to the "propagandists of western culture who constantly strive to impose foreign views and tastes among Soviet

⁷⁴⁴ For one such internal bureaucratic report from late 1956, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 821, ll. 55-56. For a 1956 Komsomol conference, see TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 484, l. 33.

⁷⁴⁵ Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii*, 43.

youth,” resulting in many “emulating the bad tastes of the bourgeois West.” Komsomol cells, according to him, needed to strengthen their struggle with western tastes by helping young people to “figure out what is truly artistic and beautiful.”⁷⁴⁶ Interviews with former Komsomol administrators likewise demonstrate the weight of the 1957 Komsomol TsK Seventh Plenum’s messages.⁷⁴⁷ Khrushchev’s speeches in May 1957 at meetings with members of the cultural intelligentsia reinforced the plenum’s message.⁷⁴⁸

Shelepin’s speech accentuates the Komsomol’s attempt to instill a Thaw-era version of culturedness from 1957 onward. This policy built on and further advanced the Party’s early Thaw efforts to transform everyday life as a means of reaching communism.⁷⁴⁹ The 1957 aesthetic upbringing initiative correspondingly sought to build the communist tomorrow, but also focused on fighting the Cold War on the domestic front as a central goal. Cold War concerns played a particularly important role in the attempt to shape youth aesthetic preferences, as illustrated by Shelepin’s admission that “many” young Soviet citizens exhibited western tastes. Consequently, the drive for aesthetic upbringing combined one of the traditional goals of state-sponsored popular culture, cultural enlightenment for the population, with the new task of winning the cultural competition between the superpowers.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., 48-49.

⁷⁴⁷ Baliasnaia underscored the powerful impact of Shelepin’s speech in organizing youth cultural activities. See L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁷⁴⁸ For how Khrushchev’s speeches impacted Komsomol policy see, for example, a Komsomol conference that referred to Khrushchev’s message: GANISO, f. 4529, op. 12, d. 24, l. 203. For the complex relationship between the Khrushchev leadership and cultural intelligentsia, see M. R. Zezina, *Sovetskaia khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia i vlast’ v 1950-e – 60-e gody* (Moscow: Dialog-MGU, 1999).

⁷⁴⁹ Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007); Polly Jones, “The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization,” in Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization*, 1-18; and Melanie Ilic, “Introduction,” in Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-8.

The plenum resolutions provide further insights on the anxieties expressed by top officials over the post-Stalin generation. According to them, this generation grew up in a time when socialism triumphed and young people won many rights and privileges. The “current generation did not pass through the harsh school of revolutionary battle” as had the older generation. Consequently, some among this young generation did not value the price paid “in blood and sweat” for its current situation, accepting their benefits and lifestyle as a given: “demanding much from the state and giving it little in return.” The resolutions criticized Komsomol organizations for failing to pay sufficient attention to this problem, as well as to the allegedly intense western propaganda against the Soviet Union. This document also underscored the need for “moral and aesthetic upbringing” of young people.⁷⁵⁰

These resolutions make clear the Party’s own perception of and willingness to talk about generational tensions within the USSR. My finding challenges Juliane Fürst’s argument that the Soviet leadership avoided dealing with generational conflict as the USSR matured in the postwar decades, with official discourse proclaiming the unity of all generations.⁷⁵¹ As shown by the plenum resolutions published in youth papers and discussed at Komsomol meetings, problems relating to generations certainly figured within the Party-state’s public rhetoric during the Thaw.⁷⁵² The 1958 Thirteenth

⁷⁵⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 930, ll. 4-6.

⁷⁵¹ Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16, 232-33.

⁷⁵² Embodying their public nature, the plenum resolutions were printed in youth newspapers, for instance in Saratov: “Ob uluchshenii ideino-vospitatel’noi raboty komsomol’skikh organizatsii sredi komsomol’tsev i molodezhi,” *Zaria molodezhi*, March 1, 1957. They were also discussed in local Komsomol meetings. For an example in Moscow, see TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 546, ll. 6-62. For one in Saratov, see GANISO, f. 4529, op. 14, d. 2, l. 19.

Komsomol Congress also spotlighted generational tensions in Soviet society, using language similar to the Seventh Komsomol TsK Plenum, as did discussions of this congress at local Komsomol conferences.⁷⁵³ Through an unprecedented move, namely openly acknowledging the existence of a generation gap, the Komsomol TsK stressed its determination to solve this problem.

Implementing the Aesthetic Upbringing Campaign, Part 1: The March for Culture

The 1957 Seventh Plenum of the Komsomol TsK made suggestions regarding how to deal with the troubling issues it identified. For example, in educating youth about beauty and taste in cultural activities, Shelepin proposed assisting young people in “appropriately evaluating literature, art, sculpture, and music.” To do so, local Komsomol organizations would organize youth meetings with cultural professionals, lectures on cultural topics, and collective visits of varied cultural venues. Higher-level Komsomol bodies would create commissions on such issues.⁷⁵⁴ Soon, the Komsomol TsK passed a decree establishing working groups that brought together Komsomol and cultural officials, writers, artists, professors and others to assist in using cultural activities for the aesthetic upbringing of young people.⁷⁵⁵ Other central agencies joined this effort. In November 1957, the Soviet Ministry of Culture ordered all cultural institutions to make the aesthetic upbringing of youth and children an obligatory part of their plan.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵³ For the congress, see Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 32. For local Komsomol conferences, see GANISO, f. 4529, op. 14, d. 2, l. 19.

⁷⁵⁴ Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii*, 48-49.

⁷⁵⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 967, ll. 13-15.

⁷⁵⁶ This quote came from an order by the minister, reprinted in M. A. Solov'ev, *Materialy po kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi rabote* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 78-82.

The Komsomol hierarchy quickly took up the promulgation of aesthetic upbringing. If previous annual conferences of the Saratov city Komsomol did not speak about young people's tastes, the 1957 one stressed the need to work on youth aesthetic upbringing.⁷⁵⁷ Saratov's Third State Ball-Bearing Factory held a Komsomol conference that condemned western tastes and directed the Komsomol committee to fight against them through aesthetic upbringing: "instilling in young people the essence of what is beautiful and appropriate tastes."⁷⁵⁸ The 1958 Komsomol conference of Saratov State University called for "aesthetically educated" (*esteticheski gramotnye*) young people.⁷⁵⁹ At a meeting of Moscow city Komsomol cadres, Shelepin himself gave a speech that essentially repeated the points he made at the 1957 Komsomol TsK Seventh Plenum.⁷⁶⁰ The "Petrograd Side" youth initiative club "placed a great deal of significance on the aesthetic upbringing of young people."⁷⁶¹ The 1957 conference of the Moscow Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol noted the problem of young people "lacking good musical tastes and expressing too much interest in jazz."⁷⁶² Such western tastes likewise received censure at the university-wide Komsomol conference of Moscow State

⁷⁵⁷ GANISO, f. 4529, op. 12, d. 24, l. 203.

⁷⁵⁸ GANISO, f. 654, op. 1, d. 24, l. 65.

⁷⁵⁹ GANISO, f. 652, op. 1, d. 31, l. 24.

⁷⁶⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 546, ll. 6-62.

⁷⁶¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 217.

⁷⁶² TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 3, d. 26, l. 85.

University.⁷⁶³ Komsomol newspapers at all levels published articles with analogous messages.⁷⁶⁴

To implement this top-level policy shift, the Komsomol hierarchy launched what official discourse termed the “Komsomol march for further elevating the cultural level of young people.”⁷⁶⁵ Oblast-level Komsomol organizations then reported to the TsK on how they intended to enact the new “march for culture” campaign. The Bashkiriia Komsomol committee provided the most detailed plan came from, which reveals much about the way that top-level Komsomol decrees were supposed to be implemented in the regions, at least ideally. After receiving the TsK’s directive in 1957, the Bashkiriia Komsomol committee drew up a plan on what each level of this region’s hierarchy had to accomplish in order to achieve the new drive’s goals, down to the individual Komsomol member. The Bashkiriia Komsomol indicated that, over the next two years, each Komsomol youth would participate in an amateur art circle, interest-based association, or sport section, and get at least one other youth involved as well. All Komsomol members would “learn how to dance,” implying dancing in a normative manner. They would watch movies about once a week, visit the theater once or twice a month, go to the museum once a year, and read actively. Another directive would have each member volunteer four times a month for construction work of relevance to the march for culture, such as building clubs. Furthermore, those who received a higher education would have training in directing an

⁷⁶³ TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 5, l. 142.

⁷⁶⁴ For examples from a local newspaper, see “Zametiki ob esteticheskom vospitanii,” *Leninskii put’*, April 13, 1957, and “Lektsiia-kontsert,” *Leninskii put’*, March 22, 1958.

⁷⁶⁵ In Russian, the actual phrase is “pokhod komsomol’tsev za dal’neishii pod’em kul’turnogo urovnia molodezhi,” RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 967, ll. 113-14.

amateur circle or sport section.⁷⁶⁶ This list demonstrates the kind of behavior that the Bashkiriia Komsomol saw as congruent with culturedness in regard to cultural tastes, as well as the personal duties placed on Komsomol members as part of the new aesthetic upbringing drive.

The Bashkiriia Komsomol organizations also took on a set of obligations related to state-sponsored popular culture. Over the two years, each Komsomol organizations had to organize a set number of amateur circles, youth clubs, and local movie festivals. At the regional level, the Bashkiriia Komsomol promised to help build 150 new clubs and renovate 300 clubs, create and equip over 100 sport complexes, and purchase cultural equipment such as musical instruments, radios, record players, televisions, and so on, using the financial means provided by volunteer youth labor. Besides this, it would direct 1,000 Komsomol members into working in the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture. It also intended to organize a series of cultural events, including a large amateur competition, and a youth festival.⁷⁶⁷

The plans from other regions generally set aims similar to those in Bashkiriia. The Voronezh Komsomol organization took on the responsibility of having youth participate in building 200 rural clubs, 5 district houses of culture, 30 movie theaters, 15 libraries, and several theaters, along with sport and educational institutions. The Komsomol also intended to hold a youth festival and varied cultural competitions, while helping train directors of amateur circles and cultural workers.⁷⁶⁸ In Rostov, the oblast Komsomol

⁷⁶⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 138-39.

⁷⁶⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, ll. 139-44.

⁷⁶⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 967, ll. 113-15.

drew up plans to organize amateur competitions, lectures, movie festivals, youth clubs, and an oblast youth festival, as well as to build clubs and sport complexes.⁷⁶⁹

By 1958, the Komsomol Propaganda Department assessed the impact of the new march for culture in a report for the Komsomol TsK. Apparently, all oblast and republic-level Komsomol committees had clearly laid out two- and three-year plans for raising youth cultural levels (*dvukhletka kul'tury* or *trekhletka kul'tury*). Altogether, they took on the obligation to use youth volunteer labor to help build over 25,000 clubs and other buildings used for cultural activities, as well as renovate and beautify (*blagoustroit'*) 40,000 such structures. They would also prepare over 30,000 cultural workers.⁷⁷⁰ The strong emphasis on training young people to work in the mass cultural network or to serve as volunteer directors of amateur collectives resulted from the growing need for such cadres due to the Komsomol's construction of clubs. Likewise, with the launch of the aesthetic upbringing initiative, the Komsomol wanted trained cultural workers at the grassroots level who could appropriately distinguish between what was "beautiful and tasteful," and what was not.

Regional Komsomol committees had some success in enacting a number of goals in the Komsomol's march for culture. Saratov's oblast Komsomol recorded that, in 1957, it took on the obligation to participate in constructing 350 clubs and libraries over the next two years. By 1958, youth volunteer labor helped complete 204 of these projects. It also assisted in preparing over 150 new cultural workers, but acknowledged that the problem of cadres "is only partially solved." The Saratov Komsomol newspaper regularly

⁷⁶⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 839, ll. 22-27.

⁷⁷⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, ll. 39-42.

published articles under the heading of “The Two-Year Cultural Plan in Action.”⁷⁷¹ In 1959, the Saratov city Komsomol reinforced the importance of the march for culture, castigating Komsomol organizations and cultural institutions in the city for inadequate participation. It maintained that the failure to spread officially-prescribed “cultural habits (*kul’turnye navyki*) and aesthetic and artistic tastes” led to some youth “bowing down before bourgeois culture.”⁷⁷² Other oblasts, for example Rostov, also detailed their achievements in implementing the February 1957 Komsomol TsK plenum’s decisions. By December 1957, the Rostov oblast Komsomol indicated that it already improved its work on state-sponsored popular culture, held youth festivals and amateur competitions at all levels, took part in constructing many clubs, and helped increase participation in amateur collectives.⁷⁷³ The Bashkiriia Komsomol’s efforts proved so exemplary that the Komsomol’s press, *Molodaia gvardiia*, published an instruction booklet written by the Komsomol secretary of Bashkiriia about its Komsomol march for culture.⁷⁷⁴ In addition, the Komsomol TsK sent its representatives throughout the Soviet Union to check up on and assist the work of regional Komsomol organizations on implementing the plenum’s resolutions.⁷⁷⁵

The Komsomol documented significant advances in state-sponsored popular culture during the march for culture. According to the Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum in

⁷⁷¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 902, l. 51; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 946, ll. 164-70; and GANISO, f. 4529, op. 14, d. 2, l. 27.

⁷⁷² GANISO, f. 4529, op. 14, d. 7, l. 258.

⁷⁷³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 839, l. 26.

⁷⁷⁴ R. Kh. Migranov, *V pokhod za kul’turu* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1959).

⁷⁷⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 42.

1960, young volunteers participated in building over 12,000 clubs and 16,000 movie theaters, renovating over 40,000 cultural structures, and preparing 25,000 cultural workers. Komsomol cells also took a central role in organizing youth festivals, youth initiative clubs, and amateur competitions.⁷⁷⁶ This largely matched the intended goals of the Komsomol Propaganda Department's 1958 report. However, as the Saratov Komsomol indicated in 1959, the plans to ensure that individual Komsomol youth engaged in prescribed cultural activities proved more difficult to implement.

Overall, the Komsomol TsK's Seventh Plenum in 1957 turned the Komsomol's focus to enacting aesthetic upbringing through conservative and noncontroversial forms of state-sponsored popular culture. The two- and three-year cultural plans resulted in much more orthodox organized cultural activities for young people. The Komsomol leadership reinforced its intentions at the 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress, where the organization of youth cultural leisure received strong support from Khrushchev and Shelepin. The latter particularly endorsed the idea of two- and three-year cultural plans and directed all oblast Komsomol committees to adopt it.⁷⁷⁷ Other central agencies likewise promoted the Komsomol's cultural march. The RSFSR Minister of Culture, for instance, issued a circular in February 1958 to the oblast-level organizations of the ministry calling on them to support the Komsomol's efforts.⁷⁷⁸

The Soviet leaders intended this rise in normative organized cultural activities to accomplish several things. First, the Kremlin wanted to maintain its post-Stalin shift

⁷⁷⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 3.

⁷⁷⁷ On the congress, see Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 43-44, and Khrushchev, *Vospityvat' aktivnykh i soznatel'nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva*, 35-37.

⁷⁷⁸ Reprinted in Solov'ev, *Materialy po kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi rabote*, 86-88.

toward satisfying cultural consumption desires. It hoped that the growth in the provision of more orthodox state-sponsored cultural activities would function as a counterbalance to the top-level limitations set on western popular culture. This would continue to serve the goal of presenting the Soviet Union as an appealing socialist version of a modern consumer society to domestic constituents, while also helping to legitimate the post-Stalin leaders. After all, unlike the Stalinist state's emphasis on lectures about politics and production, the Khrushchev leaders offered activities that many young people genuinely found interesting, such as initiative and interest-based clubs, youth festivals, and amateur collectives, along with the less appealing lectures.

Second, by supplying much more noncontroversial state-sponsored popular culture, officials intended to shape youth tastes and desires. Komsomol cadres considered youth participation in orthodox cultural activities as itself shaping and reinforcing normative aesthetic tastes. A letter to the Party TsK from the First Secretary of the Soviet Composers' Union clarifies top-level thinking on this matter. Khrennikov wrote that a "minimum of musical knowledge is necessary for each cultured person," adding that amateur collectives "play a major role in the ideological and aesthetic upbringing of a member of the new communist society."⁷⁷⁹ At the 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress, Shelepin made clear that fighting against western cultural propaganda and promoting youth aesthetic upbringing and "good tastes" involved creating amateur music, dance, and other types of circles, among other measures.⁷⁸⁰ At a joint conference of Komsomol, club, and other officials in Donetsk, Ukraine, a high administrator at the Donetsk Palace

⁷⁷⁹ RGANI, f. 5, op. 36, d. 141, ll. 116-18.

⁷⁸⁰ Shelepin, *Otchetnyi доклад*, 44-45.

for Children and School Students stated that those participating in the palace's amateur circles "receive necessary knowledge and skills regarding aesthetic upbringing." A speech by a director of a palace of culture at this meeting also highlighted the importance of amateur circles for "raising cultural levels."⁷⁸¹ Officials, therefore, considered the growth of youth participation in amateur cultural activities as leading to aesthetic upbringing, and thereby to culturedness.

Many aspects of the aesthetic upbringing drive continued into the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. At the Twenty-first Communist Party Congress in 1959, the Khrushchev leadership spoke of the need to promote aesthetic upbringing.⁷⁸² The 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum's decree on leisure organization stated that "it is necessary to ensure that young men and women feel an everyday need to study, read books, visit theaters and movies, participate in amateur arts, practice sports," a list that defined how a cultured New Soviet Youth spent leisure time. The plenum accentuated the need for aesthetic upbringing in music via "developing love for worthy examples of musical art."⁷⁸³ The keynote speech of the 1962 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress reflected similar messages.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1098, ll. 51, 73.

⁷⁸² A. Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy: Iz opyta raboty pervykh universitetov ku'tury* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960), 5.

⁷⁸³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 8-9.

⁷⁸⁴ S. P. Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo Komiteta VLKSM i zadachi komsomola, vytekaiushchie iz reshenii XXII s'ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 46-47.

Implementing the Aesthetic Upbringing Campaign, Part 2: Universities of Culture

Besides increasing the provision of traditional conformist cultural activities, the aesthetic upbringing campaign also promoted innovative cultural forms. Universities of culture best embodied the didactic elements of this initiative. Largely established in clubs, they offered courses on cultural topics and combined education and entertainment. These universities, a cultural form with prerevolutionary and early Soviet precedents, received endorsement from the Komsomol TsK, the Party TsK, the MOC, trade unions, as well as the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo po rasprostraneniui politicheskikh i nauchnykh znanii*, Knowledge Society), and spread quickly throughout the Soviet Union.⁷⁸⁵

Official rhetoric invariably described the mission of universities of culture as cultural enlightenment and aesthetic upbringing. The Communist Party Propaganda Department of Arkhangel'sk oblast reported that these institutions provided the population with musical, theatrical, and artistic cultural knowledge and refined their "artistic tastes," in order to create "fully developed and prepared members of communist society."⁷⁸⁶ A joint circular by the heads of the Komsomol, MOC, and Knowledge Society similarly underlined the benefit of universities of culture for conveying cultural knowledge and forging artistic tastes appropriate for model communist citizens.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁵ The Knowledge Society was dedicated to advancing official propaganda, largely through providing lecturers on various topics.

⁷⁸⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, ll. 72-73.

⁷⁸⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 1.

Instruction guidebooks on establishing universities of culture, reports from clubs, and the by-laws of these universities repeated this trope.⁷⁸⁸

Structurally, universities of culture consisted of courses on a variety of cultural topics. The university at Saratov's Enterprise No. 447 Palace of Culture had a two-year course of study with weekly meetings of four hours each. The academic year lasted from mid-September to mid-April.⁷⁸⁹ Most universities in Arkhangel'sk had a two-year course of study in 1958, and met two to three times a month.⁷⁹⁰ Other universities of culture had slightly different schedules, for example one with a year-long class that held three monthly meetings.⁷⁹¹

Each course covered a set of themes considered requisite for cultured New Soviet Women and Men. Those who wanted to attend a university of culture signed up for a particular department (*fakul'tet*), including music, theater, literature, art, and cinema, with the typical university offering three departments.⁷⁹² In 1959, the MOC presented a recommended model of an educational plan for each course. For the music department, this plan called for a total of 114 hours of educational activities. Of these, the most time went to topics on Russian classical music (28 hours), followed by foreign classical music

⁷⁸⁸ For an instruction booklet, see Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 3. For a report from the Moscow's "Red Star" House of Culture, see TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 18. For the by-laws of a university of culture in Saratov, see GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 58.

⁷⁸⁹ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12.

⁷⁹⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 73.

⁷⁹¹ Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 9.

⁷⁹² In Gomel', the Lenin Palace of Culture's university had a musical, theatrical, and artistic department. See *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1959), 32. The university at Enterprise No. 447 included a musical, literary, and cinema and theater department. See GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12. The Likhachev House of Culture's university of culture had a musical, theatrical, literature, and artistic department. See Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 9.

and Soviet music (20 hours each). Music basics and theory received 18 hours and the music of other socialist states got 10 hours. An additional 10 hours went to the ideological theme of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, and 8 hours to political themes with some relation to culture, such as the Twenty-first Communist Party Congress's decisions on culture. The theater department spent 44 hours on Soviet theater, 26 on prerevolutionary Russian theater, 8 each on theater in socialist and non-Socialist states, and 6 on theater basics and theory. It also had the same 18 hours devoted to Marxist-Leninist aesthetics and political themes. All other departments had a similar political and ideological component.⁷⁹³ With some variations, the curriculums of other universities generally corresponded to this one.⁷⁹⁴ The program of these universities, featuring a mix of Russian and foreign classical traditions, Soviet cultural products, folk themes from the peoples of USSR and other socialist states, and a Marxist-Leninist take on aesthetics, sheds light on the officially prescribed cultural cannon for New Soviet People.

Furthermore, some of the lessons in the model universities of culture presented by the Ministry of Culture bulletin explicitly or implicitly targeted western popular culture. A case in point, one class meeting bore the title "Modern Ballroom Dances and the Struggle with Foreign Influence in Dancing," and another encompassed "Criticism of the Reactionary View of Bourgeois Art Theorists." Lectures on "How to Listen to and Evaluate Musical Compositions," and similar ones on theatrical performances, dancing,

⁷⁹³ *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR*, 36-45.

⁷⁹⁴ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12, and Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 22-23.

painting, and literature explicitly differentiated between appropriate and inappropriate cultural works, most directly aiming to shape youth tastes.⁷⁹⁵

Nonetheless, the universities of culture spent the brunt of their time on less politicized cultural topics that combined educational lectures with cultural events. A joint circular by the heads of the Komsomol, MOC, and Knowledge Society described how model universities, besides lectures, also held seminars, organized conferences, disputes, lecture-concerts, meetings with artists, and collective discussion of artistic exhibits, movies, and music. According to these agencies, “the diversity of themes and methods of instruction” served to “draw in thousands of listeners to the universities.”⁷⁹⁶ For instance, the first day of a university of culture in a club for young construction workers in Leningrad featured a lecture, concert, art exhibit, movie, and meetings with musicians and artists. The courses of study generally combined lectures with cultural activities, along with excursions to cultural events and debates on a variety of cultural topics.⁷⁹⁷ A university in Moscow hosted collective trips to museums, theaters, and exhibits, as well as musical, literary, and theatrical events.⁷⁹⁸ In Severodvinsk’s Gor’kii House of Culture, a university organized concerts, seminars, reader conferences, and meetings with cultural figures. It supplemented the lectures with reproductions of paintings, records played on gramophones, movies, and performances by artists.⁷⁹⁹ A class in the Gomel’ Lenin House of Culture’s university on “Musical Forms and Genres” featured a lecture accompanied

⁷⁹⁵ *Informatsionnyi biulleten’ Ministerstva kul’tury SSSR*, 46-49.

⁷⁹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 2.

⁷⁹⁷ V. I. Travin, *Deistvennoe sredstvo vospitaniia molodezhi* (Leningrad: LDNTP, 1968), 3-9.

⁷⁹⁸ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 61.

⁷⁹⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 73.

by performances of folk instruments, wind instruments, and others, provided by the amateur collective of the house of culture and students at a local music college.⁸⁰⁰

Universities of culture also set up book kiosks and similar activities.⁸⁰¹ The combination of lectures on cultural topics, enlivened with music, movies, and paintings, along with visits to cultural events and other activities appealed to the many hundreds of thousands who signed up for classes.

Besides providing general cultural edification, the universities helped prepare youth for working as volunteer directors of amateur collectives. Some specifically focused on training such directors, as did one in Moscow and another in Khar'kov.⁸⁰² The Saratov City University of Culture's theater department specialized in preparing amateur theatrical collective leaders. The university gave a certificate to those who faithfully attended its courses, likely useful for those who wanted to serve as directors.⁸⁰³ In 1960, the Komsomol TsK explicitly called on those who attended such universities to serve as "active propagandists of culture among youth masses."⁸⁰⁴

The Growth and Structure of Universities of Culture

Universities of culture had antecedents before the launch of the campaign for aesthetic upbringing, although the Stalinist Komsomol hierarchy did not pay much

⁸⁰⁰ *Klub - stroiteliam kommunizma* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1961), 184.

⁸⁰¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 75.

⁸⁰² Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 7.

⁸⁰³ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 58.

⁸⁰⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 12.

attention to such activities previously.⁸⁰⁵ In existence already in imperial Russia, courses that provided cultural knowledge to the masses received promotion by Bolshevik cultural organs during the Civil War.⁸⁰⁶ During the 1920s, some Soviet clubs offered lecture series called “evening universities” or “Sunday universities,” which focused on literacy and basic knowledge, including in the cultural sphere.⁸⁰⁷ They faded away under Stalin in favor of individual lectures on culture that lacked entertaining components, although a few combined lectures and performances.⁸⁰⁸ Very rarely, Stalin-era clubs offered long-term lecture series on their own initiative.⁸⁰⁹

The Thaw-era university of culture movement originated in lower-level Komsomol organizations during the early post-Stalin years, but did not find endorsement at the top until the hard-line shift in 1957. As an example, the Perm’ oblast Komsomol organization reported to the Komsomol Propaganda Department about establishing such institutions in 1956, as a means of responding to the Komsomol TsK’s promotion of organized cultural activities to deal with juvenile “delinquency” during the early Thaw.⁸¹⁰ Officials in the Komsomol Propaganda Department likely simply ignored this cultural form as not responding to their needs in 1956. Shelepin’s speech at the 1957 Seventh

⁸⁰⁵ In one exception, the Komsomol Propaganda Department in 1944 suggested organizing universities of culture directed at artists, but did not discuss universities for the general population: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 269, l. 8.

⁸⁰⁶ Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia’s Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 208-15, 231-36.

⁸⁰⁷ *Molodezh’ v rabochem klube* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1927), 48, and *Saratovskii voskresnyi universitet* (Saratov, 1928), 1-15.

⁸⁰⁸ For example, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 630, l. 90, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 676, l. 13.

⁸⁰⁹ For one rare instance, see V. M. Abramkin, *Universitet literatury i iskusstva: Programmy, plany lektsii, bibliografiia. 1948-49 uchebnyi god* (Leningrad, 1948), 3.

⁸¹⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 811, l. 219.

Komsomol TsK plenum did not mention universities of culture as a way of enacting the Komsomol's goal of aesthetic upbringing.⁸¹¹ However, the Bashkiriia Komsomol organization indicated to the Komsomol Propaganda Department that, as part of its enactment of the 1957 Komsomol TsK Seventh Plenum's resolutions, it established a university of culture.⁸¹² The Voronezh oblast Komsomol also planned to establish a university of musical culture in response to the plenum.⁸¹³ This time, central Komsomol officials paid attention to the idea of such a cultural form, with this concept percolating up to the Komsomol leadership. Consequently, in his keynote address at the April 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress, Shelepin spoke of the universities of culture as a praiseworthy new form. He also singled out the Bashkiriia and Voronezh Komsomol organizations as providing good models for organizing cultural activities.⁸¹⁴ The Komsomol cadres from these regions, therefore, received credit for an innovation that the Komsomol TsK found worthy.

The center taking up and promoting innovations from below when they fit its needs resembled what took place with youth initiative clubs in 1956. Thaw-era Komsomol patrols, youth construction brigades, and other post-Stalin innovations likely followed a similar course.⁸¹⁵ Baliasnaia also confirmed that the Komsomol leadership sought out worthy grassroots innovations and promoted them as recommended best

⁸¹¹ Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii*.

⁸¹² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 858, l. 143.

⁸¹³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 967, ll. 114-15.

⁸¹⁴ Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 43-44.

⁸¹⁵ On patrols, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 167-49. On brigades, see Benjamin K. Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964" (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2007), 370-424.

practices.⁸¹⁶ This shows the potential for the initiatives of local officials to have a widespread impact during times of innovation and change in the Soviet Union. It also bears similarities to how the leadership of other authoritarian states introduced new developments into their own governance, suggesting intriguing parallels between the ways different autocratic governments functioned.⁸¹⁷

The Komsomol TsK's endorsement of the universities of culture led to efforts by local Komsomol organizations to spread these institutions across the USSR. By September 1958 a number of Komsomol cells participated in establishing universities of culture in their locale, including in the Stalingrad, Kuibyshev, and Kiev oblast.⁸¹⁸ Komsomol newspapers praised local efforts to organize such universities of culture, for example one in SGU devoted to music.⁸¹⁹ Instruction booklets published by the Komsomol press provided guidance on establishing such universities of culture.⁸²⁰

If the Komsomol's cultural drive in the late 1950s and the youth initiative club movement of the mid-1950s represented primarily Komsomol activities with some support from other central agencies, the universities of culture proved more of a shared enterprise, even though the universities largely targeted youth. In 1959, the Komsomol, MOC, and Knowledge Society sent out a joint circular to all oblast- and republic-level

⁸¹⁶ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁸¹⁷ For an example far from culture top-level Nazi German officials took up innovative practices from some local cadres related to the Holocaust, and implemented them throughout the Eastern Front. See Christopher R. Browning, with contributions by Jürgen Matthäus, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), 244-308.

⁸¹⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 42.

⁸¹⁹ "Universitet muzykal'noi ku'tury," *Leninskii put'*, November 6, 1959, and "Muzyka! Vechnoe chudo...", *Leninskii put'*, November 14, 1959.

⁸²⁰ Migranov, *V pokhod za kul'turu*, 7-15.

organizations of each agency. This documented promoted the widespread establishment of universities of culture.⁸²¹ Republic-level institutions, in turn, promoted these universities in letters to their subordinate institutions. A 1959 memo from the RSFSR minister of culture and the chairman of the RSFSR Knowledge Society called universities of culture a “new form of cultural-enlightenment work that contributes to the aesthetic upbringing of workers, especially youth.”⁸²² For local cultural institutions, such instructions indicated not only the need to establish these universities, but also that doing so would promote youth aesthetic upbringing. They hoped that the opening of universities of culture would satisfy the new requirements imposed in 1957 by the MOC to make achieving youth aesthetic upbringing an obligatory part of the plan for cultural institutions. The MOC reinforced this message with a February 1959 decree, which again accentuated the need to focus on aesthetic upbringing and sanctioned the universities as one way of achieving this goal.⁸²³

The top-level promotion of these universities continued in the early 1960s. The RSFSR MOC sent a June 1960 letter to the Komsomol TsK indicating its plan to create an interagency council on universities of culture, and invited the Komsomol to provide a representative.⁸²⁴ The All-Union MOC passed a decree in August 1960 on improving the work of these universities.⁸²⁵ Even more significantly, in October 1960 the Communist

⁸²¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, ll. 1-6.

⁸²² Reprinted in: Solov'ev, *Materialy po kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi rabote*, 76-78.

⁸²³ *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR*, 30-50.

⁸²⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 125.

⁸²⁵ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 9.

Party TsK itself enacted a similar resolution.⁸²⁶ This decree from the very top communicated the leadership's conviction of the importance of these new cultural institutions, making universities of culture an even higher priority for the Komsomol, MOC, Knowledge Society, trade unions, and other agencies.

Such top-level endorsement and interagency collaboration led to the rapid growth of these universities throughout the Soviet Union. Twenty-two universities of culture served the population of Arkhangel'sk oblast in 1958. One of these, at the "Red Anvil" Factory House of Culture, had 203 long-term attendees.⁸²⁷ Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood organizations created four in 1959, which together served 1,700 people.⁸²⁸ Saratov's Enterprise No. 447 established a university of culture in 1959, with 555 attending it.⁸²⁹ Another one in Saratov, created that same year, drew 190 attendees.⁸³⁰ Many other locales organized such universities in 1959.⁸³¹

Statistics likewise illustrate the explosive increase in the universities of culture. In 1959, over 2,200 such universities functioned within the USSR, roughly 500 of them in Ukraine and nearly 1,200 in the RSFSR.⁸³² By June 1960, 1,850 universities of culture in

⁸²⁶ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 4.

⁸²⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 73.

⁸²⁸ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 72, l. 24.

⁸²⁹ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12.

⁸³⁰ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 28-29.

⁸³¹ For instance, the Urensk's House of Culture, as shown in M. E. Nepomniashchii ed., *Entuziasty: Sbornik o peredovikakh kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 6. Another example is Moscow's Gor'kii House of Culture. See TsAGM, f. 44, op. 1, d. 62, l. 5. The city of Engels in Saratov oblast established one as well. See O. I. Volkova, *Narodnye universitety* (Saratov: Saratovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962), 5.

⁸³² Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 6.

the RSFSR served 500,000 people.⁸³³ In October 1961, the USSR had 8,000 such universities: 5,000 in the RSFSR with 1,000,000 registered participants, and 1,819 in Ukraine with 250,000 signed up.⁸³⁴ Their growth rate continued at a slower pace, with 10,000 functioning in the USSR by 1963.⁸³⁵

The statistics on university of culture audience members supports qualitative statements from official sources suggesting that these institutions had popular appeal. The MOC maintained that the universities have “acquired a deserved respect and love among audience members.”⁸³⁶ Workers at Moscow’s “Kommunar” machine construction plant apparently held the university at their factory in high esteem.⁸³⁷ Officials at the Enterprise No. 447 club observed that, at an end-of-year meeting, the university audience “expressed satisfaction with the university’s work.”⁸³⁸ In Gomel’, the university at the Lenin House of Culture “won enormous popularity.”⁸³⁹

The Structure, Challenges, and Impact of Universities of Culture

Club managers generally took on the organizational tasks related to setting up universities of culture, with assistance from Party, Komsomol, Knowledge Society, and trade union officials, as well as cultural professionals and professors. Such cadres served

⁸³³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 125-26.

⁸³⁴ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 1.

⁸³⁵ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 37.

⁸³⁶ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 34.

⁸³⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 18.

⁸³⁸ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 24.

⁸³⁹ *Klub - stroiteliam kommunizma*, 183.

on volunteer councils that planned and managed university activities. For example, a university in a palace of culture for railroad workers in Vologodsk included representatives from the local drama theater, philharmonic, art gallery, and a Soviet Writers' Union member. A university council in the village of Ol'ginskoe consisted of the collective farm director, a local club official, a teacher, doctor, engineer, swineherd, and others. Members of the cultural intelligentsia helped create the educational plans for universities of culture, which local Party, Komsomol, and trade union cells then reviewed. Experts in music, literature, theater, painting, and cinema, who sometimes served on the university councils and helped write the educational plans, led the classes. In many universities of culture, audience members formed a bureau that kept attendance records and assisted in preparing lessons.⁸⁴⁰

Official rhetoric presented the universities as relying on the volunteer labor of Party-state cadres and cultural professionals. A report from Saratov Enterprise No. 447's university underscored that all council members served as volunteers and did not receive any honorariums. They did get formal recognition, with Enterprise No. 447 rewarding four with a certificate honoring their work.⁸⁴¹ Universities of culture in Leningrad apparently functioned only on a "volunteer basis" (*na obshchestvennykh nachalakh*), with lectures led by retired cultural experts and teachers.⁸⁴² The phrase "volunteer basis"

⁸⁴⁰ This description draws on: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 73; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 2; GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 24; GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 58; Karpov and Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo*, 282; and Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 14.

⁸⁴¹ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 26.

⁸⁴² RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 8.

regularly featured in many other depictions of universities.⁸⁴³ The MOC praised universities of culture in a report to Minister of Culture E. A. Furtseva by calling them “an illustrative example of grassroots activism in educational work.”⁸⁴⁴ Consequently, these universities not only served the goal of aesthetic upbringing, but also contributed to the Khrushchev leadership’s endeavor to mobilize the population into active societal self-management in order to transfer governing functions from the state to the citizenry.

Such volunteer labor helped these universities offer free or heavily subsidized courses, which certainly contributed to their popularity. The Komsomol, MOC, and Knowledge Society circular stated that most universities of culture did not charge any fees. Some charged a nominal fee, and provided those who signed up for classes with a subscription card (*abonement*) that served as an entry ticket to university classes.⁸⁴⁵ In Gomel’, the Lenin House of Culture’s university of culture did not ask for payments, and this, it reported, helped draw a larger audience.⁸⁴⁶ The Saratov City University of Culture charged thirty rubles to cover the cost of movies, theater shows, concerts, and other cultural activities.⁸⁴⁷ A. A. Vygnanov, a mid-ranking Komsomol official at a Moscow technical institute from 1958 to 1963, recalled that students received inexpensive subscription cards to the institute club’s university of culture, and some received the

⁸⁴³ For instance, in the Saratov City University of Culture’s by-laws: GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 58. Also, see an instruction booklet’s portrayal of Kuibyshev oblast universities: *Klub - stroiteliam kommunizma*, 180. Likewise, see another booklet’s description of a model university in Belarus: V. E. Bondarenko, *Propaganda iskusstva v klube* (Moscow: Minkul’t RSFSR, 1963), 64.

⁸⁴⁴ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 34.

⁸⁴⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 3. Other sources similarly indicate that some universities of culture charged their audience members. See Karpov and Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo*, 282, and *Informatsionnyi biulleten’ Ministerstva kul’tury SSSR*, 34.

⁸⁴⁶ *Klub - stroiteliam kommunizma*, 184.

⁸⁴⁷ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 58.

cards for free as rewards.⁸⁴⁸ Overall, official rhetoric discouraged the universities from charging fees, and limited acceptable payments to cultural events accompanying lectures, as opposed to providing salaries for lecturers or charging for entrance to the club. Consequently, such universities did not help the club's financial plan, in contrast to dances and other paid events. These new institutions represented unfunded mandates, with club managers obliged to organize them due to top-level pressure.

At the same time, established cultural institutions helped the function of the universities. Concert halls, music colleges, theaters, movie theaters, museums, and other cultural establishments frequently helped universities of culture as part of their public service. They offered universities of culture subsidized or free tickets to events, sent cultural professionals to perform at lecture-concerts or to give the lectures themselves, and provided musical instruments, movie reels, and other forms of cultural equipment. For instance, a Moscow factory club's university of culture gratefully acknowledged assistance from the Bureau for the Propaganda of Soviet Cinema (*Biuro propagandy Sovetskogo kinoiskusstva*).⁸⁴⁹ In Gomel', the Music Institute, the oblast's drama theater, and various amateur and professional artists contributed to the university's activities.⁸⁵⁰ Many cultural figures from established institutions served on the university of culture volunteer councils. A series of decrees by the MOC and its subsidiaries encouraged such help by local cultural institutions.⁸⁵¹ Instruction booklets also called on cultural

⁸⁴⁸ A. A. Vygnanov, born 1942, interviewed February 13, 2009.

⁸⁴⁹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 64

⁸⁵⁰ *Klub - stroiteliam kommunizma*, 184.

⁸⁵¹ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 11.

institutions to assist the universities.⁸⁵² Consequently, official discourse presented universities of culture as not draining club budgets, although acknowledging that some clubs purchased educational materials.⁸⁵³

In many cases, enterprises, trade unions, Party cells, and other organizations provided direct financial assistance to clubs for the costs associated with hosting universities of culture. Instruction booklets portrayed this as a typical practice.⁸⁵⁴ Saratov's Enterprise No. 447 and its trade union organization directly sponsored the university at the enterprise club. For the 1959-60 academic year, they gave 58,000 rubles to pay the university's expenses, with eleven concerts costing 37,000 rubles, a theater visit 4,000 rubles, and so on.⁸⁵⁵ Such financial support helped ensure that many universities of culture offered heavily subsidized or free activities. Owing to this, universities of culture drew in a substantially larger audience than would otherwise have been the case. This enabled local Party-state cadres to claim success in meeting the goals of top-level directives, which these officials considered a worthwhile use of their financial resources.

Local Party-state officials widely publicized the universities in order to ensure a good audience. An instruction booklet depicting a model university at a Leningrad construction enterprise gives some insight into what such promotion entailed. The enterprise newspaper systematically published materials portraying the university's activities and inviting the young construction workers to visit a class meeting. The

⁸⁵² Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 10.

⁸⁵³ *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR*, 34.

⁸⁵⁴ See Karpov and Sintsov, *Klubnoe delo*, 282, and Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 12.

⁸⁵⁵ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 25.

supervisors of worker dormitories organized a number of meetings where representatives from the university council and varied officials described the university. Party and Komsomol cells at this enterprise encouraged their members to consider enrolling in the university.⁸⁵⁶ Furthermore, Komsomol, Party, and trade union cells also distributed some free or discounted subscription cards to the universities that charged fees.⁸⁵⁷ Saratov's Enterprise No. 447 university purportedly put much effort into getting the enterprise's workers to attend.⁸⁵⁸ Another booklet highlights the need to endorse these universities in the press, in meetings, on the radio, and through leaflets.⁸⁵⁹ Such advertising helped draw in a sizable audience to attend classes at the universities. In some places, universities of culture even began to limit their audience members. For instance, one model university in Riga described in 1959 how it accepted only those youth who completed their education and had a recommendation from a Komsomol, Party, or trade union organization.⁸⁶⁰

Official policy soon criticized such practices, however, as the Party-state wanted universities of culture to put more efforts into targeting workers and collective farmers in a Soviet version of affirmative action.⁸⁶¹ The 1959 joint circular by the MOC,

⁸⁵⁶ Travin, *Deistvennoe sredstvo vospitaniia molodezhi*, 6.

⁸⁵⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, ll. 63-64.

⁸⁵⁸ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12.

⁸⁵⁹ Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 8.

⁸⁶⁰ *Informatsionnyi biulleten' Ministerstva kul'tury SSSR*, 48.

⁸⁶¹ At this time, the Khrushchev leadership introduced other reforms meant to uplift workers and peasants as well, such as giving them a more preferential status in higher educational institutions than previously. The Kremlin even sought to have those from the middle class work before going to college. To a significant extent, opposition from students, parents, and educators undermined these controversial reforms. For more on these reforms and college education in general, see Benjamin K. Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia: Student Politics and University Life, 1948-1964" (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 2007), 310-48; L. V. Silina, *Nastroeniia sovetskogo studenchestva, 1945-1964* (Moscow: Russkii mir, 2004), 138-

Komsomol, and Knowledge Society discouraged the universities from admitting narrow categories of audience members, such as those with a higher education or model workers. The circular suggested that the universities give preference for matriculation to those with less interest in the arts, with the implication that they needed cultural education the most.⁸⁶² Officials continued to express concerns over too few workers and collective farmers studying at these institutions. In 1960, workers made up only 20 percent of those attending Moscow's universities of culture.⁸⁶³ The MOC criticized the inadequate work in getting workers and collective farmers to visit the universities in 1963.⁸⁶⁴ Although the leaders wanted to enroll more members of the working class, perceived as needing particularly intense cultural enlightenment, into universities of culture, those from middle-class backgrounds, with a better education and more interest in cultural activities, apparently took more advantage of these institutions.

The issue of attendance represented another point of concern for the hierarchy. Some universities maintained audience interest well. In the university at Enterprise No. 447, during the first academic year, the literature department had 60 percent attendance, the music department 85 percent, and the theater and movie one had 91 percent.⁸⁶⁵ Another Saratov university likewise recorded what it termed a good rate of attendance.⁸⁶⁶

41; and S. L. Merzliakov, "Saratovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet v gody voyny i mira (1941-1964 gg.)" (kand. diss., Saratov State University, 2008).

⁸⁶² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 5.

⁸⁶³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 129.

⁸⁶⁴ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 38.

⁸⁶⁵ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 13.

⁸⁶⁶ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 28-29.

In contrast, a 1960 report identified a “significant proportion” of the universities as having poor attendance. For example, in Stalinsk oblast, less than 50 percent of those who signed up to study stayed in the courses through the end of the academic year.⁸⁶⁷ To an extent, this probably resulted from the heavy-handed propagation of the universities. Some people likely signed up to get credit for helping implement the top-level campaign and then avoided the class meetings.

Inadequate attendance also stemmed from poorly designed lessons. The report cited above acknowledged that “the low quality of lectures” led to audience dissatisfaction and lack of interest in continuing their study.⁸⁶⁸ In 1960, the Komsomol TsK called for universities of culture to combine lectures with cultural activities that illustrated the lecture topic.⁸⁶⁹ This demonstrates that some universities did not do so at the time. The MOC complained in 1963 that most universities of culture failed to organize “active learning,” including seminars, conferences, discussions, debates, and collective excursions.⁸⁷⁰ An investigation of a Saratov university identified similar problems.⁸⁷¹ Apparently, lecturers who learned their craft under Stalin found it hard to change their methods, even in the face of pressure from above.

Additionally, investigations by higher agencies and reports from universities of culture often linked low-quality lectures to inadequate aid from local cultural and educational institutions. The Komsomol TsK drew attention to this problem in 1960,

⁸⁶⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 130.

⁸⁶⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 130.

⁸⁶⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 12.

⁸⁷⁰ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 38.

⁸⁷¹ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 29.

calling for the provision of better qualified lecturers for the universities. It also demanded that concert halls, cinemas, museums, and other cultural establishments provided the universities with more art exhibitions, movie reels, concert brigades, etc.⁸⁷² Universities of culture at the grassroots level made similar appeals. For instance, officials at the university at Enterprise No. 447 had to cancel several class meetings because lecturers failed to show up or lacked appropriate illustrations for lecture topics. The university's officials requested that the oblast MOC bureaucracy supply artists to talk with and perform for the university audience—without requiring fees—and also that the philharmonic discount prices for the university's students.⁸⁷³ Such reluctance to sponsor the universities stemmed from the resistance of some concert halls, museums, and similar cultural institutions to voluntarily invest resources into activities that did not help them meet their financial plans. This demonstrates the difficulties that the Kremlin experienced in enacting unfunded mandates in cultural policy at the grassroots level, even with strong top-down pressure.

Financial issues proved a particularly sore point for the universities. The Komsomol Propaganda Department admitted in 1960 that “the call for cultural and scientific professionals to volunteer their time for universities of culture did not find the needed response among writers, artists, painters, musicians, and cinema experts.” In fact, some cultural workers saw giving lectures as “a means of financial support,” with a number of lecturers in Leningrad apparently demanding very high sums for their

⁸⁷² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 11-12.

⁸⁷³ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 11-12.

services.⁸⁷⁴ This practice continued into the early 1960s. In 1963, a Moscow metallurgical enterprise's university complained that the local branch of the Knowledge Society and concert organizations "reduce work with the university of culture to financial deal-making." According to the university, these organizations placed themselves in a ludicrous position by propagandizing Soviet ideology for money: "a despicable practice that causes significant harm to ideological work." Such demands forced the university to charge fees, which upset audience members who expected free classes. When students found out about the required payments, they "openly called the university of culture a 'feeder' for those who lecture in it," and a number dropped out.⁸⁷⁵ Thus consumption motives conflicted with and undermined the ideological goals of cultural officials, who had to use financial incentives to motivate many cultural professionals to respond to ideological exhortations.

Universities of culture faced internal problems when university councils did not function well. At an agricultural institute in Saratov, many of those elected to the council failed to take part in the required activities.⁸⁷⁶ A Moscow university of culture faced a similar problem of a dysfunctional university council. The club director had to take on the burden of managing the university's activities.⁸⁷⁷ In 1963, the MOC censured the "weakening of societal initiative and unsatisfactory organizational work" in universities of culture.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 129-31.

⁸⁷⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, ll. 64-66.

⁸⁷⁶ GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 30.

⁸⁷⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 64.

⁸⁷⁸ RGALI, f. 2329, op. 10, d. 652, l. 38.

Facing all of these issues, it is no wonder that, behind closed doors, some club managers grumbled over having to establish universities of culture. At a 1962 conference of Moscow club workers, the assistant director of Moscow's Zuev Club criticized the fact that "all clubs are obliged to establish these universities of culture." He claimed that this initiative fit less well in some clubs than others. Furthermore, the assistant director complained that clubs have so many obligations that they cannot possibly succeed in all of them.⁸⁷⁹

Although these universities embodied the aesthetic upbringing initiative associated with the militant turn in 1957, they still constituted a place of conflict. This comes through most clearly in the censure of some universities as placing too much emphasis on cultural activities and not enough on political propaganda. The Komsomol, MOC, and Knowledge Society already in 1959 critiqued the many university educational plans that primarily stressed cultural themes. The three agencies instead stated that, together with cultural topics, the universities had to address science and technology, the Seven-Year Plan, and the general goals of communist construction.⁸⁸⁰ In 1960, the Komsomol Propaganda Department criticized some universities of culture for focusing too much on prerevolutionary cultural themes and not enough on Soviet ones.⁸⁸¹ Local records echoed these complaints. An investigation into an agricultural institute's university of culture in Saratov censured its program for the predominance of cultural and prerevolutionary topics and insufficient attention to the political position of the Party and

⁸⁷⁹ TsAGM. F. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l.

⁸⁸⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 973, l. 4.

⁸⁸¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 129.

the achievements of Soviet technology.⁸⁸² In contrast, a 1961 report by the MOC noted that “some Party and government officials have acquired the wrongheaded opinion that the widespread study of the arts in the universities of culture is an expression of ‘cultural excess’ (*kul’turnichestvo*) condemned by the Communist Party.” This improper view, according to the MOC, led to the “artificial limitation of the growth of universities of culture that harmed the communist upbringing of the population.”⁸⁸³

These documents show the desire of ideologically militant-oriented officials to insert a heavier dose of political propaganda into university of culture curriculums, bringing these new institutions closer to the late Stalinist model that saw such propaganda as a panacea for all social ills. More soft-line cadres disagreed with this approach for a number of reasons. First, doing so would have resulted in a smaller audience and consequently undermine the original purpose of the universities of culture—shaping aesthetic tastes. Second, the universities would have been less effective in satisfying the desires of youth for cultural knowledge, and consequently undermine the goal of appealing to popular desires by the post-Stalin Party-state. Local officials responsible for managing the universities of culture had a specific institutional motivation for avoiding a heavy politicization of the curriculum, as this would have led to lower attendance and therefore reflect badly on their work in the reports they sent to their supervisors.

While the problems described above undermined the impact of universities of culture to a degree, official sources reported that the universities often proved effective in reaching their goal of aesthetic upbringing for their students. The Arkhangel’sk “Red

⁸⁸² GASO, f. 2520, op. 2, d. 104, l. 29.

⁸⁸³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1055, l. 9.

Anvil” Factory’s university apparently helped its audience members develop an interest “in serious musical compositions and paintings,” according to the head of the volunteer council. If previously, “symphony concerts seemed boring and incomprehensible to many, now they try not to miss any performances by well-known musicians.” In his view, this displayed the usefulness of universities of culture for improving the cultural level of workers.⁸⁸⁴ A worker from the Uralmash factory credited his attendance of a university class with increasing his cultural horizon and enriching his knowledge of literature and the arts. Two workers at a clothing enterprise in Moscow underlined how they learned a great deal about art at a university class.⁸⁸⁵

Interviews with former youth help confirm that classes that combined educational and cultural activities appealed to and influenced youth who desired cultural growth. N. A. Popkova described how she and her friends went to “unforgettable” free courses on art in Saratov’s Radishchev State Art Museum. She greatly enjoyed lecture-concerts offered by the Saratov State Philharmonic, which cost a nominal sum. She and her clique “went there with great pleasure,” and “learned a great deal about music.” Later, N. A. Popkova, as a librarian at SGU, delivered lectures on literature at a university of culture in the mid-1970s.⁸⁸⁶ I. V. Sokolov, a worker who came from Kaluga to attend the Moscow Energy Institute, recalled feeling that he and others who came from outside of Moscow felt culturally inferior to Muscovites: “I had a big gap in that area.” The institute’s house of culture, however, provided many superb educational and cultural activities. Sokolov

⁸⁸⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 943, l. 75.

⁸⁸⁵ Dimentman, *Kul'turu v massy*, 6-7.

⁸⁸⁶ N. A. Popkova, born 1936, interviewed May 20, 2009.

underlined that the events, free for students, gave him more than the institute itself in regard to cultural growth.⁸⁸⁷

Moreover, interviews with local officials and cultural activists who worked directly with youth attest to their perception of the importance and impact of aesthetic upbringing, both through universities of culture and amateur activities. Vygnanov, for example, believed his Moscow technical institute needed to produce engineers who had some knowledge of poetry, literature, and the arts. The university of culture at the institute's club, in his view, "gave [students] serious knowledge of the art of dance, cinema, theater, and so on." He expressed pride in the fact that the students who left Moscow for work in the regions carried this cultural knowledge with them wherever they went.⁸⁸⁸ The former secretary of the university Komsomol committee at SGU, L. E. Gerasimova, underlined the central role of aesthetic upbringing to the SGU club's enthusiasts, who sought to provide cultural activities at a high level while not doing anything ideologically questionable.⁸⁸⁹ V. E. Sobolev led a dance collective for adolescents and indicated that this circle enabled participants to acquire good cultural tastes in other areas of culture as well, such as art appreciation.⁸⁹⁰ The former director of a theater collective stated that, by performing in shows, youth broadened their interests and obtained an artistic upbringing.⁸⁹¹ Baliasnaia called universities of culture a form of

⁸⁸⁷ I. V. Sokolov, born 1940, interviewed April 16, 2009.

⁸⁸⁸ A. A. Vygnanov, born 1942, interviewed February 13, 2009.

⁸⁸⁹ L. E. Gerasimova, interviewed May 27, 2009, born 1936-38. K. K. Il'in, an activist at the SGU club, also noted that the club organized cultural events aimed at the aesthetic upbringing of students. See K. K. Il'in, born 1944, interviewed May 20, 2009.

⁸⁹⁰ V. E. Sobolev, born 1953, interviewed April 29, 2009.

⁸⁹¹ N. A. Troitskii, born 1931, interviewed May 22, 2009.

organized activity that molded the culture of young people and appeased their demands in the arts and other fields.⁸⁹²

Conclusion

The impact of the Khrushchev leadership's hard-line shift in late 1956 and early 1957 expressed itself within state-sponsored popular culture policy in a variety of ways. The Kremlin used despotic power to limit the range of permissible organized cultural activities, most notably by cracking down on American-style jazz, especially after the 1957 international youth festival in Moscow. Still, in carrying out the hard-line turn, the Soviet top officials placed substantially more emphasis on less coercive methods, namely in the campaign for aesthetic upbringing, illustrating a movement away from despotic power even during periods of ideological militancy. The aesthetic upbringing initiative stressed teaching young people about what is beautiful and tasteful in culture, both by providing more noncontroversial organized cultural activities in the Komsomol's march for culture and by launching the universities of culture movement.

The campaign for aesthetic upbringing helped to satisfy the desires for cultural knowledge and shape the aesthetic tastes of at least some youth. High participation rates in the universities of culture and other activities associated with the aesthetic upbringing campaign illustrate the desire for cultural knowledge among many young citizens. The USSR's fast-paced urbanization, with more urbanites than rural residents by the midpoint of Khrushchev's reign, contributed to this demand.⁸⁹³ So did the growing percentage of

⁸⁹² L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁸⁹³ On urbanization, see Jones, "The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization."

youth enrolled in higher education, including those coming from the working class.⁸⁹⁴

Millions chose to study at universities of culture to satisfy this desire for cultural edification, willingly taking in the Party-state's guidance on what constituted appropriate cultural knowledge and aesthetic tastes: an admixture of Soviet cultural products, the Russian and foreign classical cannon, folk arts of the peoples of the USSR and allied socialist states, and Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. Many youth perceived themselves as becoming cultured owing to their education in the Party's cultural cannon and participation in normative cultural activities, accepting important elements of the official discourse's definition of culturedness. This demonstrates that the Kremlin met with some success in its endeavor to mold young people's aesthetic tastes, and thereby shape their personal identities. The aesthetic upbringing initiative formed part of a broader effort by the post-Stalin leaders to instill cultural knowledge, tastes, values, and behavior considered necessary for New Soviet Women and Men. This drive for what I call a Thaw-era version of culturedness was differentiated from the vision of culturedness pursued in the NEP and Stalin years via extending to all youth as opposed to elites and via seeking to advance the Soviet struggle on the Cold War's cultural front.

The ideologically militant turn in 1957 resulted in the temporary narrowing of boundaries for the cultural practices of model young communists, with significantly less room for western popular culture and wariness of "excessive" grassroots initiative. Those young people who actively engaged in the aesthetic upbringing campaign, garnering pleasure and meaning from their consumption of orthodox cultural activities, publicly enacted the newly limited subjectivity of New Soviet People associated with the hard-line

⁸⁹⁴ On higher education, see Tromly, "Re-Imagining the Soviet Intelligentsia," 40-93.

shift. They exhibited a more conformist agency that better fit the intentions of militant officials, in the context of an overall lessening of the space for youth agency within state-sponsored popular culture during late 1956 and 1957. In regard to these youth, the Party-state's hard-line shift had some success in using cultural consumption management to strengthen its political stability and legitimacy, advance the construction of communism, and fight the Cold War on the domestic front.

The Soviet leadership's effort to convince young people of the superiority of orthodox state-sponsored popular culture via the aesthetic upbringing campaign bears similarities to what occurred in other socialist contexts, as shown by Paulina Bren's depiction of Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion in 1968. She found that the post-1968 Czechoslovak government, in competing with western Europe over living conditions, did not try to produce more consumer goods. Rather than striving for economic superiority, the Czechoslovak Party-state offered better working conditions, more leisure time, and a variety of social welfare benefits, claiming that these resulted in a superior lifestyle to the western one.⁸⁹⁵ My research on the campaign for aesthetic upbringing illustrates that rhetoric concerning socialist superiority to a western way of life played a prominent role in some socialist contexts already before 1968, as part of the Cold War's "peaceful competition." Instead of trying to compete by providing youth with more options to engage in western popular culture, the Kremlin in 1957 chose to emphasize the official cultural cannon and normative cultural activities as uplifting, enlightening, and superior. It condemned jazz and western dancing as uncultured and

⁸⁹⁵ Paulina Bren, "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall ... Is the West the Fairest of Them All? Czechoslovak Normalization and Its (Dis)Contents," *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 831-54.

vulgar cultural practices that hindered communist construction and undermined the Cold War's domestic cultural front.

The Party-state's vigorous attempt in 1957 to take charge over youth cultural practices and desires in the campaign for aesthetic upbringing bears significance for non-Socialist historical contexts as well, especially for our understanding of the societal role of taste. Pierre Bourdieu argues that cultural tastes denote class boundaries, while Sarah Thornton insightfully points out the significance of tastes in building status hierarchies within youth cultures.⁸⁹⁶ These scholars, however, relied exclusively on analyses of capitalist states. This chapter's examination of a socialist setting underscores the need to expand our understanding of the function of taste. My analysis illustrates that shaping taste could also serve as an instrument in the government's arsenal of social engineering tools, as the Soviet Party-state tried to create a citizenry whose aesthetic tastes suited the Kremlin's needs. Still, the challenge of organizing successful universities of culture, owing to the Khrushchev leadership's failure to appreciate the grassroots reality of many local cultural institutions and intelligentsia figures being reluctant to get involved without financial compensation, diluted some of the impact of the aesthetic upbringing initiative. In the top-level blindness to local realities on the ground, the university of culture movement faced problems similar to those of many other modern social engineering schemes.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Richard Nice trans. and ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 466-85, and Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 163-68.

⁸⁹⁷ Such problems even plagued very different modern social engineering schemes that relied on despotic instead of infrastructural power. See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-8.

Certainly, cultural forms related to the aesthetic upbringing initiative did impact many young people. Upwardly mobile workers such as Sokolov, who perceived a lack of cultural awareness and tastes as hampering social ambitions, gratefully attended didactic cultural activities. Some young people from middle-class backgrounds also took advantage of such activities in order to improve their cultural knowledge. Popkova is one example. For them, the universities likely only reinforced existing aesthetic tastes that already matched university offerings. Moreover, no guarantee existed that those who attended universities of culture would reject the boogie-woogie or Americanized jazz. Still, their voluntary engagement with the Party's cultural propaganda indicates a substantial degree of concordance with official cultural tastes.

Authorities, however, struggled to reach those youth who did not wish to attend the universities or participate in other cultural forms associated with the aesthetic upbringing initiative. Young members of the working class who did not enjoy such cultural activities or strive for upward mobility had little reason to attend educational-oriented cultural events, despite top-level affirmative action efforts to target them. Perhaps more problematic, a large proportion of youth who enjoyed western popular culture found the aesthetic upbringing drive contrary to their cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes. The attacks on western cultural influence and the limitations on jazz hardly appealed to such young people. They generally did not attend the universities and, as the next chapter shows, spent less leisure hours in club spaces compared to the early Thaw, decreasing their exposure to "communist time." The Khrushchev leadership, thereby, proved unable to use the aesthetic upbringing initiative to convince large segments of youth of the superiority of organized cultural activities in the universities of

culture over western popular culture. The Czechoslovak state that Bren described suffered a similar fate regarding its efforts to depict its living conditions as superior during the 1970s and 1980s.

Furthermore, in its efforts to do so, the Khrushchev Kremlin likely exacerbated generational differences. By publicly criticizing the young generation at the highest level of policy rhetoric in 1957, top officials introduced generation as a category for commentary in Komsomol, trade union, and Party meetings, as well as youth newspapers, educational institutions, and other venues. The discussion about generational differences likely drew the attention of many young people to this issue, and contributed to their seeing themselves as part of a separate generation. Moreover, global youth movements at this time, combined with the greater exposure of Soviet young people to the outside world, exacerbated a sense of generational difference.⁸⁹⁸ The attacks on western popular culture in 1957, along with the hesitancy expressed over youth grassroots initiative, also played a role in youth perceptions of generational tensions. The emphasis on youth activism and satisfaction of youth interests from 1953 to 1956 already set the basis for the development of a generational consciousness. The events narrated in this chapter built on these early Thaw tendencies, contributing to the formation of a full-scale generational consciousness among the active post-Stalin generation.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁸ On global youth movements, see John Springhall, *Youth Popular Culture, and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 310-33; Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1975]); and Jeremy Varon, Michael S. Foley, and John McMillian, "Time is an Ocean: The Past and Future of the Sixties" *The Sixties* 1.1 (June 2008): 1-7.

⁸⁹⁹ On active and passive generations, see Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 16-23. For the formation of generational

consciousness, the classic work is Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, Paul Kecskemeti trans. and ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 276-320.

Chapter 7

Organized Cultural Activities during the Socialist Sixties, 1958-1968

At the May 23-24, 1962, Leningrad conference of club workers, L. I. Likhodeev, a journalist from *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary Newspaper), stirred up controversy. Repeating the themes raised in his article published in the newspaper on March 1, 1962, he criticized traditional club events for being overly organized, and lacking room for youth initiative. This resulted from the fact that club workers “find it hard to imagine that an individual can be trusted to control himself,” that “a person would not rip out a microphone, tip over chairs, kill a police officer, or gnaw through trolleybus cables.” Having panned orthodox club events, Likhodeev threw his support behind a new cultural form, youth cafes (*molodezhnye kafe*), as creating the opportunity for “the natural human condition” by encouraging *obshchenie*, meaning free-flowing discussions on engaging topics in an intimate atmosphere.⁹⁰⁰ At a late March 1962 Moscow club conference, Likhodeev made similar claims. Challenged on whether youth cafes constituted a western form, he replied that the cafes “are a new stream that came from the West, but it does not matter where they came from.” He censured club workers who accused youth cafes of kowtowing to western influence and said that “it may be kowtowing, but so what?”⁹⁰¹

⁹⁰⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 29-32.

⁹⁰¹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 48-49.

At both conferences, many participants expressed support for the soft-line view championed by Likhodeev, while others criticized his positions. Yet the vociferous support for Likhodeev's ideas, unimaginable in the period of hard-line dominance from late 1956 to early 1958, spotlights the changes that took place in youth-oriented cultural activities from mid-1958 to 1962. This chapter begins with an overview of the continuities and changes in the state's cultural policy during the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, takes an in-depth look at youth cafes, and then briefly discusses club activities during the late 1960s.

From mid-1958, the Khrushchev administration adopted a more tolerant cultural policy on organized cultural activities. This did not result from the dissipation of concerns over western cultural influence or youth misbehavior during periods of leisure. In reality, the Kremlin grew more concerned over how young people spent their free time owing to the shift to a shorter workweek. Consequently, the Khrushchev leadership continued to pour resources into universities of culture and other orthodox and didactic cultural forms. Yet, top officials realized some of the miscalculations associated with the earlier ideologically militant approach, namely the decreased exposure of youth to "communist time." Consequently, they backed away from the attacks on jazz and western dancing and opened up much more space for such activities in the mass cultural network, legitimating the expression of a degree of interest in western popular culture for model New Soviet Individuals. Youth initiative in state-sponsored popular culture once again received full endorsement. All this denoted the Kremlin's further movement away from despotic power and incorporation of infrastructural power elements, as embodied by negotiation with society.

Taken together, such youth cultural policies embody the Khrushchev leadership's approach during the mid-Thaw, 1958 to 1964, to enacting a socialist modern consumer society. The goal consisted of having consumption grow in a controlled manner, while actively molding cultural consumption desires and aesthetic tastes in a fashion conducive to forging communism.⁹⁰² Just as significant, soliciting grassroots initiative in state-sponsored popular culture aimed to prepare youth to govern themselves in the communist future. Striking the right balance in cultural leisure activities had particular relevance due to the growth in free time offered by the Kremlin as part of its effort to provide an appealing socialist modernity.

As it did earlier, the Party-state continued to try to convince youth that cultural activities associated with a socialist consumer society represented a superior option to a capitalist modernity. To reach those youth who did not wish to participate in more orthodox state-sponsored popular cultural events, however, the Soviet leadership tried a somewhat different tactic than previously. Compromising with youth consumerist wishes for western culture, the Komsomol's cultural policy met them halfway by borrowing a western form, youth cafes, whose atmosphere of *obshchenie* and an entertainment program of jazz and other engaging cultural events appealed to youth. The Khrushchev Kremlin intended the cafes to promote first and foremost communist construction by activating youth community activism while increasing "communist time." This caused strains between with young cafe activists, who placed more emphasis on preserving the

⁹⁰² For more on this balancing act, especially regarding material consumption, see David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism," in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52, and György Péteri, "The Occident Within – or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity," *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 929-37.

atmosphere of obshchenie and satisfaction of young people's desires within cafes, than on using these institutions to directly advance communist construction. Such tensions came to the fore in the last years of Khrushchev's reign.

After L. I. Brezhnev came to power in October 1964, youth organized cultural activities underwent a transformation. The Kremlin continued to increase the supply of noncontroversial activities and even allowed more room for western culture than permitted in the last years under Khrushchev. Yet, as part of a gradual hard-line turn during the late Thaw, 1964 to 1968, the new leaders underscored discipline as a central value instead of youth initiative.

Continuities in Cultural Policy during the Mid-Thaw Period, 1958-1964

After having granted more free time to the populace in the early Thaw, 1953-1958, the Khrushchev leadership further augmented leisure hours during the mid-Thaw period. In 1960, it announced a transition to a seven-hour workday. The Third Party Program, a central guiding document for the Communist Party adopted at the 1961 Twenty-second Communist Party Congress, further augmented the population's free time. The state promised to shorten the workweek to only five days from six in 1964. An instruction booklet for club workers stated that "the right to leisure is one of the most substantial rights won by the Soviet people," linking this to the Third Party Program.⁹⁰³

Likewise, the government endeavored to replace domestic chores associated with

⁹⁰³ Z. A. Petrova and M. P. Rymkevich eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1962), 84-85. For the relevance of the Third Party Program to the Komsomol's activities, see S. P. Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo Komiteta VLKSM i zadachi komsomola, vytekaiushchie iz reshenii XXII s'ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 5-6, 35. For the program itself, see *Programma Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974). For an analysis of this program, see Alexander Titov, "The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev's Reforms," in Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith eds., *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 8-25.

cooking, cleaning, and child rearing, performed largely by women, with collective social services, including crèches, community kitchens, and so on. The state also made efforts to offer domestic appliances that eased women's "double burden."⁹⁰⁴ These and similar policies expanded the free time of the citizenry perhaps by as much as twenty-five percent.⁹⁰⁵

Like other central agencies, the Komsomol trumpeted this achievement in its external discourse, presenting the growth in free time as illustrative of the Party's concern for the populace and the superiority of socialist modernity over capitalist modernity. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* printed a page of articles on this topic in the summer of 1960. The lead story lauded the Party's decision to transition to a shorter workweek while maintaining the same salary and compared the length of the Soviet workweek favorably to those of the US, U.K., France, and West Germany.⁹⁰⁶ A front-page editorial in *Moskovskii komsomolets* made similar points.⁹⁰⁷

While offering the Party-state a way to present a socialist modernity as better than a western one, the growth of free time also served as a source of concern, especially in

⁹⁰⁴ For the state's efforts regarding the "double burden," see the contributors to Melanie Ilič, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood eds., *Women in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). For more on social services, see E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova, P. V. Romanov, and Natalia Lebina, "Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika i povsednevnost', 1940-85," in E. R. Iarskaia-Smirnova and P. V. Romanov eds., *Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika: Stseny i deistvuiushchie litsa, 1940-1985* (Moscow: Variant, 2008), 7-33. On appliances, see N. B. Lebina and A. N. Chistikov, *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoi zhizni gorozhan v gody nepa i khrushchevskogo desiatiletiia* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003).

⁹⁰⁵ For example, Jiri Zuzanek references two Soviet time surveys of Krasnoiarsk oblast, one in 1959 and another in 1963 designed to emulate the 1959 one. They show an increase in free time from 1959 to 1963 for men from more than twenty-four to over thirty-five hours, and for women from more than nineteen to over twenty-three hours. See Jiri Zuzanek, *Work and Leisure in the Soviet Union: A Time-Budget Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 41.

⁹⁰⁶ "Arifmetika dvukh sistem," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, July 29, 1960.

⁹⁰⁷ "U nas kazhdyyi imeet pravo: Na trud, na otdykh, na obrazovanie, na material'noe obespechenie," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, December 5, 1963.

regard to youth. The Komsomol conveyed this most clearly in policy documents and Komsomol conferences. A case in point, in the words of the 1960 Moscow city Komsomol conference keynote speech, “the workday is growing shorter and there is more leisure time, but the time span of ‘communist influence’ should not decrease.” Therefore, “we need to think about how to extend our communist influence to the street, the home, and the back yard, and thus to improve the bad reputation of the street,” a reference to youth misconduct on street corners.⁹⁰⁸

The Komsomol also voiced concern over western influence. In December 1960, L. V. Karpinskii, the head of the Komsomol Propaganda Department, prepared a frank internal memo for a Komsomol Central Committee report to the Party TsK concerning the struggle with “bourgeois ideology.” He suggested that the Komsomol TsK inform the Party TsK that “contemporary bourgeois influence” was generally tied to “pleasure and culture,” and expressed itself as “ideological subversion through satisfying leisure desires.”⁹⁰⁹ The Komsomol TsK’s report to the Party TsK included a statement to that effect.⁹¹⁰ Such western influence through leisure gave rise to top-level concerns over the subversion of a key goal pursued by the Party in offering more free time in the first place—making a socialist modernity seem an appealing alternative to the western modern consumer society. These notes of wariness in the internal rhetoric translated into condemnation of western propaganda in external discourse. At the Thirteenth Komsomol Congress in 1958, Shelepin had already critiqued Komsomol cells that did not struggle

⁹⁰⁸ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 14, d. 313, ll. 149-50.

⁹⁰⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1024, l. 79. Karpinskii served from as the head of the department from July 1959 to May 1962. See A. A. Alekseeva, *Stroka v biografii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 78.

⁹¹⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1025, l. 1.

against the “influence of the mad imperialist propaganda” deployed by capitalist states against the USSR.⁹¹¹ At the 1962 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress, Khrushchev articulated a similar sentiment against the “main tool of imperialists—ideological diversion.”⁹¹²

To deal with concerns about juvenile “delinquency” and excessive western influence, the Komsomol placed a new emphasis on teaching young people how to “relax properly.” This initiative took off in association with the transition to a shorter workday in 1960, most notably with the 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum’s resolution on organizing youth leisure. The plenum censured Komsomol committees that did not express concern over the “ideological content of leisure,” doing an inadequate job in opposing the “expression of bourgeois ideology and morals” among some young people. The decree insisted that Komsomol cells had to ensure that all youth know how to spend their free time “correctly.”⁹¹³ The 1962 Komsomol Congress reinforced this plenum’s message. S. P. Pavlov’s keynote speech obliged Komsomol organizations to ensure that young people did not fret away their leisure.⁹¹⁴ After the 1960 plenum resolution and throughout the early 1960s, a series of youth newspaper articles carried similar tropes, as illustrated by a typical title: “Leisure is Serious Business.”⁹¹⁵ Instruction booklets

⁹¹¹ A. N. Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad Tsentral’nogo Komiteta Vsesoiuznogo leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuza molodezhi XIII s’ezdu komsomola (15 apreliia 1958 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1958), 32-34.

⁹¹² N. S. Khrushchev, “*Sluzhit’ delu kommunizma (rechi na XIII i XIV s’ezdakh VLKSM)*” (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1963), 73.

⁹¹³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 4, 22.

⁹¹⁴ Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral’nogo*, 52-53.

⁹¹⁵ “Otdykh – delo ser’eznoe,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, July 10, 1963. Also see “Tvoi dosug – tvoe bogatstvo,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, August 7, 1960, and “Chasy tvoego dosuga,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, July 29, 1960.

likewise stressed teaching youth how to value their free time and use it wisely, not wastefully.⁹¹⁶

In the mass cultural network, such rhetoric found its reflection in some continuities with the policies of late 1956 to early 1958, including the further increase of orthodox and noncontroversial cultural activities. The 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK plenum resolved to continue the Komsomol's march for culture begun in the late 1950s. It instructed Komsomol cells to use volunteer youth labor to build 15,000 clubs and renovate 50,000 cultural institutions.⁹¹⁷ In 1962, the Komsomol TsK asked the Party TsK for stricter monitoring of the construction of apartment complexes in order to ascertain that they contain sufficient club spaces for cultural activities, a request made particularly relevant by the Thaw-era apartment building campaign.⁹¹⁸

As suggested by the explosive growth in the number of universities of culture discussed earlier, the Party-state also continued to pour resources into aesthetic upbringing. In addition, club workers created other cultural forms to teach youth about beauty and taste in culture. One instruction booklet specifically highlighted the crucial role played by clubs in the aesthetic upbringing of youth through music. To achieve this

⁹¹⁶ M. M. Roshchin, *Chto ty delaesh' vecherom?* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1961), 16-17; A. Komissarova, *10 vecherov molodezhi* (Moscow, Molodaia gvardiia, 1963), 5-7; and Petrova and Rymkevich eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov*, 85-86.

⁹¹⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 16.

⁹¹⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1101, l. 68. For more on the housing campaign, see Christine Varga-Harris, "Forging Citizenship on the Home Front: Reviving the Socialist Contract and Constructing Soviet Identity during the Thaw," in Polly Jones ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 101-16; Steven E. Harris, "'I Know all the Secrets of My Neighbors': The Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment," in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 171-190; Mark B. Smith, "Individual Forms of Property in the Urban Housing Fund of the Soviet Union, 1944-64," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 283-305; and Lynne Attwood, "Housing in the Khrushchev Era," in Ilic, Reid, and Attwood eds., *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, 177-202.

goal, the authors recommended a mix of older and newer cultural activities, such as combinations of lectures and concerts, a university of culture on music, debates on music, music discussion evenings, music interest clubs, and music festivals.⁹¹⁹ In a 1964 conference on club work among young people, a speaker described how her club opened up a musical salon, which mixed elements of an amateur music circle and a university of culture. The salon involved free weekly meetings where the young audience members learned how to sing, listened to lectures on music, and saw performances by musicians.⁹²⁰ Pavlov explicitly tied aesthetic upbringing to modernity at the 1962 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress. In his words, “nowadays, there is much debate over what is modern and what is not modern in youth aesthetic upbringing.” According to him, the only appropriate “modern style” in culture involved a rejection of traditional capitalist styles and the expression of the “spirituality and worldview of the new person.”⁹²¹ The latter quote referred to the Third Party Program’s Moral Code of the Builder of Communism, the model for New Soviet People from 1961 onward.⁹²²

Reaching out beyond traditional club spaces, the Komsomol also promoted cultural “work where one lives” (*rabota po mestu zhitel'stva*) from the end of the 1950s as a means of managing youth leisure time.⁹²³ For instance, in 1960 the Komsomol

⁹¹⁹ V. E. Bondarenko, *Propaganda iskusstva v klube* (Moscow: Minkul't RSFSR, 1963), 1-6, 40-65. For the history of one music club, see G. S. Frid, *Muzyka, obshchenie, sud'by: O Moskovskom molodezhnom muzykal'nom klube. Stat'i i ocherki* (Moscow: Sovremennyyi Kompozitorov, 1987).

⁹²⁰ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 536, ll. 26-27. For more on musical salons, see L. Tiutikov and M. Sishigin eds., *Sila obshchestvennogo pochina* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 39-43.

⁹²¹ Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo*, 47.

⁹²² For more on this code and its implementation, see Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007).

⁹²³ Other scholars have briefly commented on such work where one lives, though without focusing on cultural activities as such. See Christine Varga-Harris, “Constructing the Soviet Hearth: Home, Citizenship

Propaganda Department called for the “wide development” of such work, including through an innovative experiment of establishing Komsomol groups in the apartment complexes of major cities.⁹²⁴ The department explicitly tied such cultural leisure organization with the struggle against misbehavior.⁹²⁵ At the Third Komsomol TsK Plenum in July 1963, Pavlov underlined the crucial role of such work “in order to fully fill up and control [youth] free time.”⁹²⁶ Komsomol cells took up the implementation of this initiative, with the Saratov oblast Komsomol indicating in 1960 that it established committees on organizing youth leisure in apartment blocs.⁹²⁷ In 1960 and 1961, the Moscow city Komsomol committee held conferences of Komsomol cadres on leisure organization where children and youth lived.⁹²⁸ These activities also received support from Komsomol newspapers and instruction booklets.⁹²⁹

The cultural activities depicted above came to the fore during the hard-line turn in late 1956 and 1957. The continued growth and diversification of didactic and noncontroversial forms of state-sponsored popular culture continued in the early 1960s.

and Socialism in Russia, 1956-1964” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005), 132-86, and Elena Zhidkova, “Praktiki razresheniia semeinykh konfliktov: Obrashcheniia grazhdan v obshchestvennye organizatsii i partiinye iacheiki,” in Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov eds., *Sovetskaia sotsial’naia politika*, 266-89.

⁹²⁴ As opposed to only at the place of work or study as previously. See RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1024, l. 62.

⁹²⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1101, l. 82.

⁹²⁶ S. P. Pavlov, *Ob itogakh iun’skogo Plenuma TsK KPSS “Ocherednye zadachi ideologicheskoi raboty partii” i roli komsomol’skikh organizatsii v vospitanii sovetskoi molodezhi na sovremennom etape stroitel’sтва kommunizma. Doklad pervogo sekretaria TsK VLKSM tov. Pavlova S. P. na III plenum TsK VLKSM 9 iulia 1963 g.* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1963), 34.

⁹²⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1018, l. 32.

⁹²⁸ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 330, ll. 64-84, and TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 13, d. 370, ll. 44-48.

⁹²⁹ “Komsomol’skim organizatsiam po mestu zhitel’stva – byt’!,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, September 2, 1962, and E. Murav’ev, *Ot vse dushi – liudiam* (Smolensk: Smolenskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1963), 3-29.

They aimed to impose social control over youth leisure in order to limit western influence and juvenile “delinquency,” while also instilling aesthetic tastes and cultural consumption desires consonant with the New Soviet Woman and Man.

Breaks in Cultural Policy, Part 1: Youth Initiative, 1958-1964

Nonetheless, as Soviet authorities came to realize, such orthodox cultural activities could not impact those young people who avoided these events. For instance, the 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum’s decree on organizing youth leisure required Komsomol organizations to pay particular attention to those who shunned amateur circles and other collective activities and led “an improper personal life.” The TsK directed Komsomol cells to escalate its efforts to involve such youth in the social life of collectives and “help them deal with bad habits.”⁹³⁰ Such tropes did not appear in policy statements associated with the militant turn, for instance Shelepin’s speech at the 1957 Seventh Komsomol TsK Plenum.⁹³¹

The Komsomol TsK acted to guarantee that Komsomol organizations paid attention to such young people by directing its representatives sent to the oblasts to monitor this issue. An inquiry into Voronezh oblast by a brigade from the Komsomol TsK found that the oblast Komsomol organizations worked primarily with those youth who attended cultural events without any additional encouragement. Young people who spent their time in “bad company” or who simply “lacked the taste for acquiring knowledge” and avoided lectures, debates, and concerts remained outside of the

⁹³⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 22.

⁹³¹ A. N. Shelepin, *Ob uluchshenii ideino-vospitatel'noi raboty komsomol'skikh organizatsii sredi molodezhi (Doklad na VII plenum TsK VLKSM 1957 g.)* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1957).

Komsomol's influence. The brigade recorded that frequently "young people subjected to bourgeois influence through foreign films, literature, anti-Soviet radio programs and rumors are left to fend for themselves." As a result of the incompetent socializing work by the oblast Komsomol, "some young people leave the Komsomol's influence," and occasionally even commit crimes. Partially due to this, the Komsomol TsK passed a resolution censuring the Voronezh Komsomol's socializing work and imposed a strong reprimand on the oblast Komsomol's first secretary. It also sent this resolution to all oblast- and republic-level Komsomol cells.⁹³² Such actions reinforced the importance of the Komsomol TsK's instructions in this regard.

To draw youth into state-monitored collective leisure and thereby under the influence of communist time, the Komsomol leadership took steps to make organized cultural activities more appealing, including by offering young people more space for initiative from below. After expressing some hesitancy over youth initiative during the hard-line turn of late 1956 to early 1958, the Komsomol TsK once again accentuated grassroots activism as a core value from 1958 onward. At the 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress, Shelepin strongly emphasized the development of grassroots activism in the Komsomol.⁹³³ Khrushchev's speech similarly stressed the need to strengthen youth community leadership.⁹³⁴ Lower-level Komsomol committees repeated these themes. At the 1958 Saratov city Komsomol meeting devoted to this congress, the keynote address

⁹³² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 67, d. 41, ll. 40-41, 44-47.

⁹³³ Shelepin, *Otchetnyi doklad*, 63.

⁹³⁴ N. S. Khrushchev, "*Vospityvat' aktivnykh i soznatel'nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva (rech' na XIII s'ezde VLKSM 18 apreia 1958 goda)*" (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1961), 33-34.

highlighted social activism, particularly in organizing cultural leisure activities.⁹³⁵ The 1958 Moscow city Komsomol's annual conference overtly connected "unworthy behavior" with a "lack of trust and excessive organizational control by adults, where Komsomol members do not feel themselves to be truly in charge of their own cell."⁹³⁶ In the 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum's decree on youth, the TsK accentuated the need for initiative-based organized cultural activities, linking them to the call at the 1959 Twenty-first Communist Party Congress for developing activism.⁹³⁷

Promoting grassroots initiative received further support from the 1961 Twenty-second Communist Party Congress and the Third Party Program it adopted, which stressed the need for more volunteer work. In fact, youth initiative club activists referenced this congress in advocating for more support to such clubs.⁹³⁸ Instructional booklets quoted the program's advocacy of societal self-management and cultural growth, tying this to developing grassroots activism in clubs.⁹³⁹ After the congress, the Komsomol TsK further decentralized the Komsomol by strengthening the power of primary Komsomol cells vis-à-vis higher-level ones.⁹⁴⁰

Along with previously voiced motivations for developing grassroots initiative—satisfying youth desires and helping prepare young people to manage the upcoming communist society—a new one appeared in the mid-Thaw. Komsomol leaders, such as

⁹³⁵ GANISO, f. 4529, op. 14, d. 2, ll. 44-45.

⁹³⁶ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 14, d. 240, l. 23.

⁹³⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 12-18.

⁹³⁸ For example, in RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 7.

⁹³⁹ Petrova and Rymkevich eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov*, 3-4.

⁹⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 67, d. 16, l. 216.

Pavlov at the Fourteenth Komsomol Congress, began to emphasize that western propaganda attempted to undermine the young generation's construction of communism "by advertising false bourgeois freedoms and democracy."⁹⁴¹ In his 1960 memo described earlier, Karpinskii wrote that foreign ideology influences youth through appealing to their morality, "by presenting the idea of freedom of behavior" as attractive. He asserted that the Komsomol's "reliance on prohibitions in its moral upbringing work" could not compete successfully with the deceptive image of freedom and democracy offered by the United States and western Europe. Karpinskii censured extant methods of socializing youth by noting that these approaches "do not match Lenin's understanding of the active and historical creativity of the masses," and that they "resemble religion" in relying on proscriptions.⁹⁴² In other words, certain Komsomol higher-ups advocated offering youth opportunities for initiative from below within the constraints of state-managed settings as a better means of fighting western influence than simple bans on jazz and dancing.

Another new motivation for soliciting youth activism in organized cultural activities came from the effort to deal with what authorities described as the excessively consumerist outlook of some youth. Official discourse also associated this with western propaganda. For instance, Pavlov's Fourteenth Komsomol Congress speech blamed foreign propaganda for presenting "illusions of personal enrichment" and chided those who thought that, under communism, individuals would have all the consumer goods they desired while doing light and easy labor for short periods.⁹⁴³ At the congress,

⁹⁴¹ Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo*, 39-40.

⁹⁴² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1024, l. 86.

⁹⁴³ Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo*, 40.

Khrushchev underlined that “communism, first of all, presumes material and spiritual abundance for each individual,” nonetheless, he also criticized those “parasitic elements” that wanted to “live well without working for it.”⁹⁴⁴ Such public pronouncements reflected internal worries over the failures of the Komsomol’s socializing work, particularly in cultural activities, as illustrated by Karpinskii’s 1960 memo. He tied such concerns over consumption to poorly organized cultural activities for young people, ones that lacked sufficient space for initiative from below. Karpinskii concluded that the ideological struggle with western propaganda was “coming to center on leisure, pleasure, and aesthetics,” and that “the forms of our propaganda and cultural work are not up to par.”⁹⁴⁵ In other words, he advocated giving youth more room for grassroots activism as a way of competing with the western consumer society’s offering of “false bourgeois freedoms” and “illusions of personal enrichment.”

Such top-level support paved the way for an upswing in youth initiative within state-sponsored popular culture from the end of the 1950s. Amateur cultural activities garnered more support and a grander scale. The cultural bureaucracy approved the transformation of some elite amateur theaters into people’s theaters (*narodnye teatry*).⁹⁴⁶ Some amateur classic music circles became volunteer philharmonics and symphony

⁹⁴⁴ Khrushchev, “*Sluzhit’ delu kommunizma (rechi na XIII i XIV s’ezdakh VLKSM)*,” 47. For more on the campaign against “parasites,” see Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism,” *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 47.1-2 (2006): 377-408, and Leon Lipson, “Hosts and Pests: The Fight Against Parasites,” in Richard Cornell ed., *The Soviet Political System: A Book of Readings* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 323-33.

⁹⁴⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1024, l. 87.

⁹⁴⁶ For the by-laws of *narodnye teatry*, see TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 81, l. 1. For more on such institutions, see Susan Costanzo, “Amateur Theatres and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-71,” *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 86.2 (April 2008): 372-94, and Costanzo, “Reclaiming the Stage: Amateur Theater-Studio Audiences in the Late Soviet Era,” *Slavic Review* 57.2 (Summer 1998): 398-424.

orchestras.⁹⁴⁷ Besides the prestige associated with their new titles, such institutions gained more financial resources, with clubs hiring staff devoted to managing them.

Likewise, novel initiative-oriented cultural forms appeared, such as volunteer clubs (*kluby na obshchestvennykh nachalakh*). These institutions with no paid staff went beyond youth initiative clubs that struggled to find room in cultural institutions managed by trade unions and other institutions. Soviet authorities assigned the new volunteer clubs individual spaces, under the control of the club itself. The first such club in Moscow, “*Aktivist*” (Activist) in the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood, provides an example of these new organizations. Created in October 1959 with the help of a local house of culture, “Activist” targeted young people and had a space of its own at 10 Oktiabr’skoe pole Street, which included a hall for 200 people, 7 rooms for various cultural activities, a library with 6,000 titles, and a photography lab. The club’s volunteer activists chose the motto “We have one paid staff member—enthusiasm.” It organized meetings with notables, youth leisure evenings, carnivals, and other events. “Activist” reportedly “became the favorite place for rest and leisure of the youth in the Oktiabr’skii pole microdistrict.”⁹⁴⁸

At an April 1962 club conference, the volunteer director of the “*Entuziast*” (Enthusiast) club stressed that giving young club members responsibility for organizing leisure activities formed the basis for the success of “Enthusiast.” This club had a well-maintained hall for 120 people and 14 small rooms. According to the director, the “Enthusiast” club’s fine appearance resulted from its young club members voluntarily

⁹⁴⁷ Petrova and Rymkevich eds., *Novoe v rabote klubov*, 8.

⁹⁴⁸ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 114, ll. 38-39.

spending their free time to renovate the run-down basement space assigned to “Enthusiast.” As an example of this volunteer club’s appeal, he described how a group of amateurs who enjoyed composing and singing songs felt uncomfortable in trade union clubs when the management directed them to write certain songs (*chto-to po zakazu napisat’*). Furthermore, these clubs refused to dedicate a room for youth to just hang out. “Enthusiast,” however, did not place demands on young people to write certain songs, offering them the scope to indulge their creative talents. It also provided them with club spaces to spend time talking and relaxing with one another, engaging in *obshchenie* instead of conducting directed cultural activities. As a result, these talented amateurs relocated to “Enthusiast” and wrote a series of songs that became popular among Moscow youth.⁹⁴⁹

These amateur singer-composers represented part of the bard movement, who composed and performed poetic songs accompanied by guitar music. This guitar poetry struck a powerful chord with Soviet audiences from the late 1950s onward, at first primarily with the cultural intelligentsia and college students, and later more broadly as well. Some of the bards wrote edgy and daring songs that challenged the limits of the tolerable for the authorities. The new availability of tape recorders enabled the rapid spread of such songs without going through official organs, allowing individual singer poets to achieve national fame.⁹⁵⁰ While scholars have placed the brunt of their attention on the controversies surrounding the most daring bards, plenty of young people

⁹⁴⁹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 258, ll. 34-36.

⁹⁵⁰ See Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 134, and Gerald S. Smith, *Songs to Seven Strings: Russian Guitar Poetry and Soviet “Mass Song”* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

composed guitar poetry that did not provoke official ire, such as the amateurs in “Enthusiast.” They even served as a target of competition between different club managers, underlining the prestige associated with hosting young bards who write popular and noncontroversial songs. These amateurs represent part of a broad movement of guitar poetry that occurred within club spaces, with circles and amateur competitions devoted to this genre drawing mass involvement by young Soviet citizens.⁹⁵¹

Both “Enthusiast” and “Activist” made youth activism central to their activities, while the substantial spaces occupied by these volunteer clubs, a particularly scarce resource in Moscow, illustrates the support for these new cultural forms from above. Moreover, in his speech at the 1962 Fourteenth Komsomol Congress, Pavlov drew attention to “Enthusiast,” “Activist,” and other such clubs, as embodying the renewed emphasis on social activism and on work where youth reside.⁹⁵² Official discourse explicitly linked volunteer clubs to building communism. An instruction booklet about these novel institutions termed them “the cells of the communist future,” as they constituted “the prototype of social organizations that will be in place at the completion of the complex process of the development of socialist governance into communist societal self-management.”⁹⁵³

Volunteer clubs also faced a number of challenges. According to the director of “Enthusiast,” the biggest one consisted of getting prominent actors and writers to visit the

⁹⁵¹ For more on such bards who did not write explicitly controversial songs, see my interview with a prominent bard and later organizer of guitar poetry competitions, S. A. Krylov, born 1941, interviewed March 2, 2009. For another prominent bard who similarly did not challenge authorities, see V. A. Miliaev, born 1937, interviewed February 28, 2009.

⁹⁵² Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo*, 37.

⁹⁵³ V. I. Brudnyi, *V klube gde vsem interesno: Iz opyta raboty kluba na obshchestvennykh nachalakh* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1962), 3-4.

club without paying an honorarium, a problem similar to the one faced by universities of culture. In another financially-related issue, he expressed the desire for minimal independent financing to take care of minor club needs without having to appeal to various agencies. As an alternative, he suggested allowing volunteer clubs to hold paid performances. The director also called for trade union clubs to assist the activities of volunteer clubs.⁹⁵⁴

Despite such obstacles, with the support of youth enthusiasm from below and top-level advocacy from above, volunteer-based cultural forms grew rapidly in the early 1960s. The Moscow trade union hierarchy sent a signal to factories in 1962 on the desirability of shifting club activities to a volunteer basis. As a result by September 1962 the “Kommunal’nik” factory created a volunteer club council and transferred the former club director to work in one of the factory workshops.⁹⁵⁵ By the end of 1962, twenty-six volunteer clubs served Moscow residents, with sixteen of them opening up that year.⁹⁵⁶ Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood cultural institutions set up a volunteer body to coordinate amateur cultural activities.⁹⁵⁷ Volunteer movie theaters appeared, too.⁹⁵⁸ Archival reports from clubs now often included specific sections and even whole reports on how they developed grassroots activism, demonstrating that the cultural hierarchy

⁹⁵⁴ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 258, ll. 39-41.

⁹⁵⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 269, l. 12. Note that the volunteer club council elected the former director as its leader. This may have been a way to formally comply with top-level pressure for more volunteerism, while in reality freeing the club manager from any obligations except running the club. Factory managers used such tactics for the athletes on factory teams, and they may well have applied this tactic here as well. On athletes, see Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People’s Team in the Workers’ State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁹⁵⁶ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 254, ll. 13-14.

⁹⁵⁷ TsAGM, f. 1988, op. 1, d. 114, ll. 34-35.

⁹⁵⁸ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 269, l. 7.

asked clubs to document their efforts.⁹⁵⁹ Volunteer cultural forms arose in rural areas as well. The 1960 Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum commended several collective farm clubs in Belgorod oblast for shifting to an all-volunteer staff.⁹⁶⁰

These examples reflect the renewed commitment of the leadership to grassroots initiative, one even stronger than in the early Thaw. Pavlov confirmed this support at the 1963 Komsomol TsK Third Plenum, stating that the Party's measures to "restore Leninist norms," a euphemism for de-Stalinization, "gave wide room for the development of the creativity, activism, and initiative of the masses." He rebuked traditional, heavy-handed organized activities "characterized by a mix of voluntary and coercive elements (*dobrovol'no-prinuditel'nye*)." Instead, he called for "democratization," so that young people "have the widest possible choice of forms of leisure and the satisfaction of their artistic interests."⁹⁶¹ For local institutions, besides satisfying a top-level policy drive, reliance on volunteers likely served as a welcome cost-cutting measure.

Nonetheless, tensions between hard-liners and soft-liners over youth initiative in organized cultural activities manifested themselves in many settings, most notably at several club worker conferences held in 1962. According to the director of the Rusakov House of Culture, many club events were "excessively organized," which led to "boredom" among youth. He advocated that trade union clubs give young people more room to organize cultural activities on their own.⁹⁶² Another speaker denounced

⁹⁵⁹ For instance, TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 269, ll. 2-12.

⁹⁶⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, ll. 12-18. Also see Z. A. Petrova, *Resheniia XXII s''ezda KPSS pretvoraiutsia v zhizn'* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1963), 87-98.

⁹⁶¹ Pavlov, *Ob itogakh*, 39-40.

⁹⁶² TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 258, l. 20.

“conservatives among club officials” who refused to provide space and financing to youth initiative clubs and support youth activism.⁹⁶³ Similarly, the assistant director of the Zuev club regretted that 90 percent of club events centered on upbringing and ideology, while only 10 percent emphasized fun. He suggested that club workers reverse this ratio, offering cultural activities that primarily stress interesting and pleasurable activities.⁹⁶⁴ L. S. Zhuravleva, the organizer of the November 1962 conference, supported the soft-line position, stating that “some of our club workers are still beholden to old traditions: youth have already stepped beyond [these traditions], but we are somewhat behind.” She instead called for “finding new forms” of working with young people, ones “in step with life.”⁹⁶⁵ Such approaches aimed to attract youth into clubs and develop youth abilities to manage society through encouraging grassroots leadership.

Hard-liners took a different view. The manager of the “Red Proletarian” Press’ House of Culture criticized the idea that “we need to break old traditions and transition to new forms of work,” and expressed her disagreement with the “many that let youth take the lead.” At her club, activities centered on ideology and propaganda, such as lectures and book discussions. She refused to host dances, censuring the practice of “promoting Maiakovskii between evening dances,” meaning using fun activities to get young people into clubs and then exposing youth to a degree of political and cultural propaganda in the club itself. Facing the problem of small audiences, her club applied pressure to get young people to attend propaganda-oriented club events. They took attendance, listing young

⁹⁶³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 108.

⁹⁶⁴ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 58.

⁹⁶⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 52.

workers from each workshop coming to the book discussions and lectures, and publicly critiquing those workshops that had low attendance. This caused the Party and Komsomol cell officials of each workshop to pressure workers to attend. The club director acknowledged that many of those at the club worker conference would disagree with this strategy.⁹⁶⁶ Indeed, her position on such social pressure proved extreme, with no other speaker voicing support for this approach. However, others also strongly promoted lecture propaganda. One speaker, for instance, disparaged the idea that lectures “as a method of propaganda have ceased to be useful,” and called for more such activities.⁹⁶⁷ Overall, however, hard-liners who opposed youth initiative in state-sponsored popular culture occupied defensive positions at these 1962 conferences, where soft-liners generally predominated, supported by top-level policies.

Breaks in Cultural Policy, Part 2: Western Popular Culture, 1958-1964

A more radical shift in the strategies used by Soviet authorities to get more young people into state-managed cultural institutions and consequently into the sphere of communist time involved allowing greater room for western culture in club activities. According to L. K. Baliasnaia, the 1957 Sixth International Youth Festival brought in so much western cultural influence that “stubbornly opposing all of it” on the leadership’s part “was simply unreasonable.” She regretted that youth wanted western dances and

⁹⁶⁶ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, ll. 58-60.

⁹⁶⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 68.

jazz, but noted that Komsomol cadres, including her, “accommodated their wishes,” because “if only the waltz was offered, no one would come to the evening dances.”⁹⁶⁸

Recognizing the reality of this situation, the Soviet leadership abandoned the hard-line approach in 1958. That May, the Party TsK enacted a decree on correcting the mistakes in the February 1948 Party TsK resolution censuring the opera “Great Friendship.” The 1958 decree critiqued Stalin’s “subjective approach” toward artistic activities, as expressed by the 1948 resolution.⁹⁶⁹ Since the latter had formed the basis for the attacks on western popular culture and remained in force until the new statement, the Party TsK’s 1958 resolution opened up much more room for jazz and western dancing in clubs.

Consequently, jazz elements curbed during the hard-line turn of late 1956 and 1957 acquired a more prominent place in the repertoire of amateur variety orchestras at the end of the 1950s. The example of the ideologically militant administration of the Moscow House of Folk Art casts light on this trend at the grassroots level. The Moscow DNT complained in 1959 that amateur variety ensembles “have sprung up in large numbers” with these groups “trying to copy western jazz bands,” particularly variety groups in educational institutions. Youth, “having barely learned to play an instrument, try to find a gig at a dance hall.” The latter statement demonstrates the high demand at evening dances at this time for jazz players, even beginners. The Moscow DNT censured the directors of jazz-oriented variety collectives for following the lead of young people,

⁹⁶⁸ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

⁹⁶⁹ Reprinted in M. A. Solov’ev, *Materialy po kul’turno-prosvetitel’noi rabote* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1959), 43-45.

instead of socializing them into appropriate musical tastes.⁹⁷⁰ The latter illustrates the connections between a pluralistic stance toward western popular culture and permitting youth room for initiative from below: allowing young people to take the lead resulted in more western dancing and jazz playing.

The DNT tried to impose more controls over variety ensembles. For instance, in 1960 it created a department devoted to managing these ensembles, which held meetings, carried out inspections, and issued certifications.⁹⁷¹ These steps did not help much, as shown by the Moscow cultural department's 1962 criticism of the "especially problematic situation" in variety orchestras, which "have recently become widespread," but often "try to emulate bad western jazz groups."⁹⁷² At the March 1962 club conference, the director of the Moscow DNT complained that, "under the pretense of performing folk pieces, variety ensembles play many Negro and American songs." He explicitly tied this music to western Cold War cultural propaganda, describing how West Germany promoted such music among East German youth as a means of turning them toward the western way of life, and implying that similar processes were at work in the USSR.⁹⁷³ The director's words attest both to official worries about, and the reality of, the actual grassroots impact of western cultural propaganda in the GDR, the USSR, and other

⁹⁷⁰ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 70, l. 32.

⁹⁷¹ TsAGM, f. 2987, op. 1, d. 75, ll. 2-3.

⁹⁷² TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 254, l. 11.

⁹⁷³ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 26.

socialist states.⁹⁷⁴ Karpinskii's and Pavlov's statements described earlier show that the Komsomol leaders shared some of these concerns.

Nonetheless, at the end of the 1950s top Komsomol officials decided that getting young people into state-monitored spaces constituted a more important goal than their fears over the subversive impact of western popular culture. As a result, Komsomol newspapers began to publish articles voicing open-mindedness toward jazz. A 1960 editorial in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* suggested that Soviet musicians may play jazz but write their own compositions instead of copying western ones.⁹⁷⁵ Regional newspapers followed suit. In September 1962, the Moscow Komsomol organ ran an article by the controversial writer V. P. Aksenov, entitled "Please Come In, Comrade Jazz." Aksenov defended jazz as a "true folk art," and listed a variety of different jazz styles: "'dixieland,' 'modern,' mainstream,'" as well as "cool jazz" and "hot jazz." He spoke of the many amateur jazz bands in Moscow, Leningrad, Talinn, Novosibirsk, Odessa, and other cities. Going against those who condemned jazz as a western Cold War weapon, Aksenov mocked the view that cultural forms created in the United States necessarily served imperialist goals. The article also had several quotes from prominent Soviet artistic figures supporting jazz.⁹⁷⁶ Moreover, the protagonists in Aksenov's literary works

⁹⁷⁴ For more on western cultural propaganda, see Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds., *Here, There and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000); Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); and Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁹⁷⁵ For this article and a discussion of its context, see S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 262.

⁹⁷⁶ "Dobro pozhalovat', tovarishch Dzhaz," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, September 9, 1962.

frequently listened to jazz.⁹⁷⁷ At the local level, the Saratov State University paper published a story about a university evening event devoted to jazz, which included a graduate student describing the history of this music. The article noted that “youth like jazz,” but spoke about the need to develop appropriate musical tastes in this area and “struggle with vulgarity and primitivism in music, such as ‘rock,’” setting jazz music against rock and roll.⁹⁷⁸ This and similar pieces functioned to legitimate the newest American-style jazz, such as cool jazz and bop, in organized cultural activities. At the same time, the journalist placed rock music beyond the limits of the acceptable.

The new tolerance for jazz paved the way for the creation of jazz interest-based clubs. Apparently, the first sprang up in Leningrad in 1958, where a group of jazz enthusiasts in their early twenties received permission from the administration of the Kirov House of Culture to create a jazz association. The club, named “D-58,” held lectures on jazz and played jazz music.⁹⁷⁹ Other jazz interest-based clubs opened up in Leningrad at the end of the 1950s. In 1960, jazz enthusiasts established the first Moscow club at the Energy Engineer’s House of Culture, which also held jazz lectures and concerts.⁹⁸⁰ Other clubs soon opened their doors in major cities, for instance Kalinin, Novosibirsk, Tashkent, and Voronezh.⁹⁸¹ The Komsomol sponsored these jazz clubs.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁷ For example, in his 1963 novel *Apelsiny iz Marokko*, reprinted in V. P. Aksenov, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Lunost’, 1994), 353.

⁹⁷⁸ “Tem, kto liubit muzyku,” *Leninskii put’*, March 2, 1963.

⁹⁷⁹ See a March 2006 BBC interview with one of the club founders, E. S. Barban, “Dzhaz v epokhu Khrushcheva: ‘Na kostiakh’ i tol’ko na tantsakh,” http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/in_depth/newsid_4753000/4753692.stm [Accessed March 24, 2011].

⁹⁸⁰ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 263. Also see the memoir account of a jazz enthusiast, Mikhail Kull’, *Stupeni Voskhozhdeniia*. <http://www.jazz.ru/books/kull/default.htm> [Accessed March 24, 2011].

⁹⁸¹ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 263.

The Kremlin went further and invited western jazz musicians to tour the Soviet Union.⁹⁸³ The first tour by a western band officially invited to play jazz in the USSR took place in the summer of 1962. A swing-style big band led by the clarinetist Benny Goodman visited five Soviet cities. According to historian Penny von Eschen, Soviet authorities invited Goodman because he played a more traditional swing style as opposed to the newer bop or cool jazz. Besides this, Goodman, as a white jazz band leader, did not offer as much of a challenge to the Soviet official discourse's stress on American racism. Goodman met with much success among the audience and authorities alike. Khrushchev participated in a standing ovation at one performance. Jazz enthusiasts jammed together with Goodman's sidemen in Leningrad, Moscow, and other cities, despite some police intimidation.⁹⁸⁴

During this period, official tolerance also extended to new western dances. From the late 1950s, the boogie-woogie and the charleston became increasingly visible in clubs, and the twist, the shake, and other dances associated with rock'n'roll began to appear. At first, only a small minority performed these dances, while the vast majority either danced ballroom dances or the foxtrot, tango, and mamba, which by now inspired much less controversy. Depending on the local context and individual ideological leanings of the secretaries in local Komsomol cells, the more daring dancers occasionally

⁹⁸² A. S. Kozlov, *"Kozel na sakse": I tak vsiu zhizn'* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), 112-13.

⁹⁸³ western jazz musicians already performed at the 1957 Moscow International Youth Festival. One group, under Michel Legrand, received permission to tour the Soviet Union after the festival, with the cultural bureaucracy apparently not realizing that Legrand's band played both jazz and nonjazz compositions. In its tour premier in Leningrad, the big band played only jazz and had a powerful impact on Leningrad jazz musicians. See Barban: "Dzhaz v epokhu Khrushcheva: 'Na kostiakh' i tol'ko na tantsakh."

⁹⁸⁴ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 92-120, and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 270-72.

received censure. However, the expanded authority gained by primary-level Komsomol cells during the Thaw sometimes served to protect such youth. A. S. Derzhavets, who served as a Komsomol secretary for his class at his Moscow technical college, simply ignored suggestions from the department Komsomol to publicly criticize the western dancing of his cell members at the class-level Komsomol meetings. The department Komsomol did not press the issue. Still, some other primary Komsomol cells in his college did censure such youth.⁹⁸⁵ Musical patrols also targeted controversial western dances, visiting evening dances and reporting on those that went beyond the permitted tango and foxtrot dancing.⁹⁸⁶ In addition to official organizations, parents criticized children dancing the twist and similar dances.⁹⁸⁷

By the early 1960s, official tolerance increasingly extended to the charleston, twist, boogie-woogie, and other dances as young people began to adopt them *en masse*. Many of those I interviewed recalled youth eagerly dancing them, whether in private settings or in state-sponsored events.⁹⁸⁸ Although neither the Komsomol nor parents placed much pressure on youth regarding these dances, some young people found the twist and the charleston hard to accept. As a schoolgirl in the early 1960s, I. B. Sokol'skaia initially disliked the twist, considering it ugly and vulgar. Furthermore, she had a problem with the twist due to the fact that each individual danced it alone, as opposed to the waltz or tango, danced in pairs. Sokol'skaia thus saw dancing the twist as

⁹⁸⁵ A. S. Derzhavets, born 1935, interviewed April 28, 2009.

⁹⁸⁶ Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 133, and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 262.

⁹⁸⁷ I. B. Sokol'skaia, born 1947, interviewed November 8, 2008.

⁹⁸⁸ I. V. Sokolov, born 1940, interviewed April 16, 2009; V. E. Sobolev, born 1953, interviewed April 29; and D. V. Gal'tsov, born 1942, interviewed February 20, 2009.

separating individuals from the collective, something that for her went against Soviet ideological precepts. She did eventually come to like the twist through watching her friend, an amateur gymnast, perform it in an appealing manner. Sokol'skaia also made what she called "an ideological leap" to get over her discomfort regarding the perceived separation from the collective involved in learning how to twist.⁹⁸⁹ Her difficulties in overcoming ideological challenges of embracing the twist illuminates the impact of official propaganda on many youth.

A major impetus for these western dances came from the influx of foreigners to the USSR in the late 1950s, with universities in the main Soviet cities that hosted many international students a particularly potent area of contact and learning. S. K. Kovaleva at Moscow State University remembered learning about both western dances and fashion from foreign students at the university. She visited Czechoslovakia as part of an amateur student troupe, learned the jive, and brought it back with her to the USSR.⁹⁹⁰

During the early 1960s, wide-ranging debates arose among club workers over the appropriate stance toward these dances. At the club conferences in 1962, some officials express a tolerant stance toward the twist, the charleston, and other controversial dances. A representative from the "Red Star" House of Culture expressed surprise over the recent revival in the popularity of the charleston and recalled dancing it himself when young, implying that doing so would not harm Soviet youth.⁹⁹¹ In his speech, the assistant managed of the Zuev club asked the audience to recall that, before 1953, the official line

⁹⁸⁹ I. B. Sokol'skaia, born 1947, interviewed November 8, 2008.

⁹⁹⁰ S. K. Kovaleva, interviewed March 3, 2009.

⁹⁹¹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 20.

precluded all western dances, and asked “why are we so scared that someone will dance rock’n’roll?” He observed that the intolerant stance of many club officials “drove young people away into private apartments,” where they danced the twist anyway.⁹⁹² His remarks spotlight the compromise that many officials called for, permitting western culture in clubs as a means of getting youth into state-monitored spaces. The goal of fulfilling financial plans remained another motive for permissive views of western dances, as many young people eagerly paid the fees to visit the dance halls of clubs that played the twist and the charleston. Other officials rejected this soft-line stance on western dances. An administrator from the Rusakov House of Culture criticized the tolerant stance toward the charleston expressed by the representative from the “Red Star” House of Culture.⁹⁹³ Another official, described as an “elder club worker” in the conference transcript, called new dances, where “people shake instead of dancing,” an example of “true bourgeois ideology, which enters our souls through the feet, through shaking.”⁹⁹⁴ A representative from the Leningrad city Komsomol committee associated modern dances with youth vulgarity and improper relationships with women.⁹⁹⁵

These differences of opinion underscore the tensions between militant-oriented and pluralistic approaches to youth cultural activities and communist construction as a whole. In fact, those who expressed permissiveness toward western dancing at these conferences invariably advocated for youth initiative from below, while those opposed to such dances tended to call for more direction from above. Be that as it may, much room

⁹⁹² TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 56-57.

⁹⁹³ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 72.

⁹⁹⁴ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 258, l. 13.

⁹⁹⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 55-56.

opened up for western culture in organized cultural activities during the early 1960s, despite the opposition of some hard-line bureaucrats. Still, the clubs whose administrations held hard-line viewpoints on this matter avoided offering the newer western dances in spite of the potential financial gains. This made it hard for young people living near or belonging to these clubs to access the twist, the charleston and other dances in official settings, driving many to dance them in private apartments, as the Zuev club representative noted.

Some youth also opted to dance recent western dances in nonofficial contexts to avoid any state monitoring altogether, especially when practicing activities that even the most soft-line officials would not accept. According to the Komsomol Propaganda Department, in 1960 a group of young people in Orsk, composed of factory workers, technical and pedagogical college students, and school teachers, began to gather in private apartments for “drunken orgies.” There, they drank, played cards, and “danced rock’n’roll without any clothes on.” News about the group spread to Sverdlovsk, Kuibyshev, and other nearby cities, and young people began to come to Orsk to participate in these activities. The police shut this group down in early 1962.⁹⁹⁶ It would be an understatement to say that no club in the USSR would have agreed to sponsor such activities, which bore some parallels to hippie communes in the United States.⁹⁹⁷

The discovery of this group served as one of many factors that aroused official concerns about the impact of western cultural influence and drove authorities to another

⁹⁹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1102, ll. 150-51.

⁹⁹⁷ For more on parallels between Soviet countercultural youth and western hippies, see William J. Risch, “Soviet ‘Flower Children’: Hippies and the Youth Counter-culture in 1970s L’viv,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.3 (July 2005): 565-584.

brief hard-line swing in the last years of Khrushchev's reign, from late 1962 onward. However, the most important motive for this shift came from Cold War developments. The Soviet humiliation during the Cuban Missile Crisis placed Khrushchev on the defensive. China's growing rift with the USSR proved even more vital. The Chinese leadership condemned the Khrushchev Kremlin for abandoning revolutionary rigor and adopting an intolerably soft-line approach toward building communism, causing the Soviet top officials to swing toward ideological militancy to address these criticisms. Besides these, the Soviet Party leader's signature domestic programs, the drive to develop the Virgin Lands and to plant corn, increasingly appeared to be serious miscalculations.⁹⁹⁸ All this inspired anxiety among the Khrushchev leadership over whether it had chosen the correct path toward communism.⁹⁹⁹ As a result, the Kremlin sought support among hard-liners with a turn toward militancy.

This change in direction impacted the cultural sphere, including state-sponsored popular culture. During his December 1962 tirade against formalist art at the Manege exhibit, Khrushchev mentioned his dislike for jazz and the newer western dances. At an early March 1963 meeting with cultural figures, Khrushchev spoke out against abstract art, literature that did not fit the strictures of Socialist Realism, avant-garde architecture, and innovative American-style jazz and modern western dances, though clearly leaving

⁹⁹⁸ See Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Insider Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 469-528, and Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 123-91.

⁹⁹⁹ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 529-619. On the role of anxiety in the Khrushchev leadership's decisions, see Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 156-214.

room for Sovietized jazz.¹⁰⁰⁰ Following Khrushchev's lead, Komsomol leaders made similar claims. Pavlov, speaking in July 1963, criticized the fact that dance halls featured so many "'boogies,' 'rocks', and 'twists.'" As an example, he cited dance halls in Ivanovo that featured "a boisterous orgy of delirious bodily movements to the wail of jazz music."¹⁰⁰¹ Cultural institutions, such as Moscow's cultural department, imposed stricter controls over the repertoire of amateur jazz bands and the music played in dance halls.¹⁰⁰² An internal Komsomol Propaganda Department memo critiqued those youth who listened to foreign jazz radio broadcasts and sent letters to these radio stations making song requests and asking for gramophone records and instructions on dancing. The department accused these stations of "using the interest of young people toward these dances to spread skeptical and philistine attitudes among Soviet youth."¹⁰⁰³ This report also illustrates the perustration of letters sent abroad by Soviet youth.

Nonetheless, this change in policy did not have nearly as much of a grassroots impact as the one in late 1956, both because the Khrushchev leadership did not swing nearly as far toward the hard line in late 1962 and because of bottom-up factors. Some of the more prominent and innovative jazz institutions suffered. The Moscow Jazz Club was shut down and touring big bands had to limit the number of jazz pieces in their

¹⁰⁰⁰ Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 193-225; Susan E. Reid, "In the Name of the People: The Manege Affair Revisited," *Kritika* 6.4 (Fall 2005): 673-716; Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer*, 215-36; M. R. Zezina, *Sovetskaia khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia i vlast' v 1950-e – 60-e gody* (Moscow: Dialog-MGU, 1999); Starr, *Red and Hot*, 273-75; and Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 146.

¹⁰⁰¹ Pavlov, *Ob itogakh*, 43-44.

¹⁰⁰² TsAGM, f. 429, op. 1, d. 803a, ll. 6-17, 44.

¹⁰⁰³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1055, l. 13.

repertoires.¹⁰⁰⁴ Clubs expressed more hesitancy over hosting western music and dancing. Still, the explosion of amateur and professional jazz bands and the mass demand among young people for the charleston, the twist, and similar dances hampered top-level efforts to limit western popular culture. Simultaneously, administrators found it challenging to make a serious case for jazz as a source of degeneracy after the tolerant attitude of the previous years. Indeed, while many Komsomol papers published articles censuring jazz, some local-level ones expressed tolerance.¹⁰⁰⁵ Clubs with soft-line officials, as well as ones seeking to achieve high financial goals, continued to play new western dances. Crucially, the Soviet leadership maintained its commitment to youth community leadership and social activism.¹⁰⁰⁶ Thus, many jazz interest-based clubs met, discussed jazz, and played jazz records. Youth initiative clubs hosted western popular culture as well. The increasing number of youth cafes offered more and more venues for novel jazz styles and, in some cases, western dancing. Consequently, most young people retained access to western music and dancing in state-sponsored popular culture, although these grew somewhat more limited during this period.

Youth Cafes, 1960-1964

During the early 1960s, young Soviet urbanites acquired a new place to spend their leisure time: youth cafes. Local Komsomol cells managed youth cafes, which explicitly targeted young people and soon proved immensely popular. This new cultural

¹⁰⁰⁴ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 275.

¹⁰⁰⁵ For criticism of jazz, see “Dzhaz i molitvennyi ekstaz,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 1, 1963. For support of jazz, see “Tem, kto liubit muzyku,” *Leninskii put’*, March 2, 1963.

¹⁰⁰⁶ For example, see Pavlov, *Ob itogakh*, 39-40.

institution best embodied the soft-line turn toward youth initiative and tolerance of western popular culture in organized cultural activities.

In their appearance and program, youth cafes departed from the precedents of trade union clubs. Youth cafes had large, well-decorated halls with tables and chairs, where young people talked, drank coffee and, at some cafes, wine, ate light and inexpensive meals. This contrasts with trade union clubs, whose halls had rows of chairs faced the stage for lectures, concerts, and theater performances, and which offered only snack bars. The youth cafe set-up shifted the center of gravity to the interactions between cafe visitors themselves, as opposed to the stage. On most days, the entertainment largely consisted of jazz ensembles playing American-style jazz. Several times a month, or more often depending on the cafe, they also held special events that resembled those at youth initiative clubs, such as youth debates, meetings with prominent musicians, artists, and writers, and other engaging activities, with no political propaganda lectures. Some cafes had dance floors. Some had rooms where youth hung out, talked, and played ping-pong, chess, and billiards.¹⁰⁰⁷

Local Komsomol cadres proved most crucial to the creation of youth cafes. They took on the task of gaining permission for these new cultural forms, carving a niche for them within the Soviet system, and managing many of the day-to-day cafe activities. The first serious official discussions over youth cafes likely took place in the Moscow Komsomol during 1959. The Timiriazev neighborhood Komsomol officials convinced higher-ups to try out youth cafes as a new experimental form that would appeal to

¹⁰⁰⁷ See TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 30-39. 45-53; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 15-30; and G. Dubrova and N. Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista: Spravochnaia knizhka* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962), 234-36.

youth.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Komsomol leadership offered potent support for youth cafes in the July 1960 resolution of the Eighth Komsomol TsK Plenum. The TsK called for Komsomol cadres to take on the organization of youth leisure in food establishments, and specifically called for the creation of “interest-based cafes that organize meetings, musical and dance programs, competitions, and exhibits.”¹⁰⁰⁹ In a 1960 Moscow conference of Komsomol cadres, “The Struggle for the Culture of the Young Muscovite,” the First Secretary of the Kirov Komsomol neighborhood called for creating exemplary forms of youth cultural leisure, including cafes.¹⁰¹⁰ *Komsomol'skaia pravda* published a series of articles promoting youth cafes in 1961.¹⁰¹¹

With such support, the first youth cafes soon opened their doors in 1960 and 1961. Many failed due to the obstacles involved in organizing such novel volunteer-run institutions that provided both food and a cultural program within the bureaucratized Soviet system. Others survived and thrived, owing to the tremendous efforts of cafe enthusiasts. The first in Moscow included “*Molodezhnoe kafe*” (Youth Cafe) and “Aelita,” overseen by neighborhood Komsomol committees and run primarily by Komsomol activists.¹⁰¹² In Batumi, Georgia, the youth cafe “*Vesna*” (Spring) functioned already in 1960 under the oversight of the Batumi city Komsomol.¹⁰¹³ In Leningrad,

¹⁰⁰⁸ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 269.

¹⁰⁰⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1011, l. 20.

¹⁰¹⁰ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 14, d. 329, l. 3.

¹⁰¹¹ For example, see a series of published letters to the editor on youth cafes that responded to *Komsomol'skaia pravda* articles on March 29 and April 2, 1961: “Do vstrechi za stolikom,” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, May 20, 1961.

¹⁰¹² V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 30-39; A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009; and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 269.

¹⁰¹³ “Prikhodite zavtra v ‘Vesnu,’” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 14, 1961.

several opened up as well, such as “Aeroflot” and “Nord.”¹⁰¹⁴ The cafe “*Iunosť*” (Youth) and “*Veterok*” (Little Wind) were established in Saratov.¹⁰¹⁵

A look at one of the most well-known of these institutions, “Youth Cafe” in Moscow, presents an example of cafe activities. Like many others, the “Youth Cafe” partnered with a traditional food establishment. It functioned as a regular cafe in the morning and afternoon, run by the food bureaucracy. In the evening, the Komsomol transformed it into a club that combined food service with entertainment. Each evening began with jazz music.¹⁰¹⁶ Later in the evening, the cafe held some special events. On many occasions, artistically-inclined college students, especially from MGU, offered their talents, singing, acting, and playing music. Many of the same students regularly visited the cafe as audience members. Prominent artists performed in “Youth Cafe,” for example, from the “Sovremennik” theater and from the “Mul’tfil’m” studio. One discussion on the controversial issue of art included “young artists from the most leftist to the most rightist, and passionate debate ensued.” Sometimes, audience members came on stage and read their own poetry.¹⁰¹⁷

The “*Vostochnoe*” (Eastern) cafe in Moscow offers an example of a smaller and more typical cafe, with a less rich program. The cafe worked in the evening from seven to eleven. During most days, the cafe had music. Each Wednesday and Saturday, the “Eastern” held special events, such as a cycle of lectures on the history of jazz. The

¹⁰¹⁴ These cafes had no formal names, so their habitual visitors gave them informal names that came to eventually define these cafes: Viktor Krivulin, “Nevskii do i posle velikoi kofeinoi revoliutsii,” *Pchela* 6 (October 1996), <http://www.pchela.ru/podshiv/6/coffee.htm> [Accessed February 3, 2009].

¹⁰¹⁵ K. K. Il’in, born 1944, interviewed May 20, 2009, and GANISO, f. 652, op. 1, d. 4, l. 253.

¹⁰¹⁶ Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 157-58.

¹⁰¹⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 36.

“Bolshevik” clothing factory demonstrated its new clothing lines. Amateurs from a technical institute performed on another occasion. A house of culture hosted this cafe, as opposed to a restaurant.¹⁰¹⁸

Some cafes provided more targeted activities for distinct audiences. The “*Pateticheskoe*” (Pathos) cafe, for instance, served writers and poets. Prominent writers from the Writers’ Union visited this cafe and held discussions with cafe visitors. Poets read their poetry to the select cafe audience. This cafe acquired a prominent name among all the literary associations (*literaturnye ob’edineniia*) in Moscow.¹⁰¹⁹

The personnel structure of youth cafes differed markedly from trade union clubs or food establishments. For all work that did not involve food preparation or service, youth cafes relied on a volunteer cafe council. Its members came mostly from the ranks of lower-level Komsomol cadres and to a lesser extent officials from other agencies, as well as from among jazz enthusiasts, cultural figures, white-collar professionals, and others.¹⁰²⁰ Most of those serving on cafe councils expressed passionate support for the youth cafe movement, spending long hours and much energy on organizing and implementing cafe activities. The “Eastern” youth cafe had a council described by a speaker at the March 1962 conference as an “initiative-based group of comrades who are avid supporters of the cafe,” including two officials from the neighborhood Komsomol committee. The cafe council did all the work necessary to “ensure that cafe visitors get a

¹⁰¹⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 39.

¹⁰¹⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 100-101.

¹⁰²⁰ See Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 234-36, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 15. Also, see an interview with a former member of a Voronezh cafe council: “Istoriia s geografiei: Molodezhnye kafe 60-kh” <http://www.nestor.minsk.by/jz/articles/2000/ad/av1201.html> [Accessed March 26, 2011].

positive experience from visiting the cafe.”¹⁰²¹ A 1962 instruction booklet intended for Komsomol activists suggested that cafe council members need to possess organizational talents, but also personal or professional connections with members of the cultural intelligentsia.¹⁰²² V. E. Sadykhov, a jazz musician with close contacts to Moscow youth cafes, described how one council, comprising Komsomol cadres, did all the necessary organizational work for jazz evenings. These Komsomol officials had good relationships with jazz musicians and hung out with them during performance breaks.¹⁰²³ Another jazz enthusiast, V. E. Kleinot, also portrayed the work of cafe councils in a positive light, adding that they even monitored events and maintained order as needed.¹⁰²⁴ Although most members of cafe councils were true enthusiasts, some officials sat on the council as representatives of trade unions, the cultural network, and food enterprises, with the organizational work left largely to Komsomol activists passionate about youth cafes.

The Komsomol leadership’s willingness to launch these experimental youth cafes stemmed from a number of reasons, including appealing to youth desires. According to an internal report by the Komsomol Propaganda Department, these cafes interested young people by enabling them to listen to new music, to dance, to laugh, to hang out with other youth, to talk with famous people, and to discuss and argue about important questions of everyday life. Thus, the “brunt of attention in the evening youth cafes stressed the organization of fun cultural youth leisure, while also conducting a certain degree of

¹⁰²¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 35-39.

¹⁰²² Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 234.

¹⁰²³ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009.

¹⁰²⁴ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

upbringing and political work.”¹⁰²⁵ This highlights the entertainment orientation of cafes at satisfying cultural consumption wants.

Moreover, the department underlined the fact that youth cafes increase communist time, praising these institutions for “providing the Komsomol with more time to intensely influence young people in a relaxed, unrestrained atmosphere.”¹⁰²⁶ In other words, cafes aimed to fulfill the Komsomol leadership’s goal of getting the young into spaces of collective influence and state monitoring. The Komsomol, aware of its missteps during the hard-line turn, particularly targeted young people who avoided traditional forms of youth organized cultural activities. A 1961 published letter to the editor in *Komsomol’skaia pravda* insisted that, if the Komsomol set up fun and exciting youth cafes, then “youth would stop getting together in private apartments.”¹⁰²⁷ The Komsomol Propaganda Department wanted youth cafes to emulate gatherings at private apartments, with the implication that cafes should replace these meetings.¹⁰²⁸ For young people frequenting such private gatherings as opposed to club events, the divisions between a private and public sphere proved more relevant. Still, the willingness of many such young people to spend their leisure in youth cafes demonstrates the porous boundaries between public and private. Indeed, the Komsomol authorities in these years arguably sought to elide these borders through creating an atmosphere in youth cafes that emulated private apartment gatherings, and more broadly through giving young people more room for grassroots activism and self-determination in organized cultural activities.

¹⁰²⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 16-18.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁷ “Uiut, a ne roskosh’,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, May 20, 1961.

¹⁰²⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 16.

Instruction booklets published by the Komsomol press also advocated establishing youth cafes as a means of targeting “inappropriate” behavior. One described cafes as assisting in the struggle with stiliagi.¹⁰²⁹ Another depicted these new institutions as helping deal with youth “bad habits.”¹⁰³⁰ Former members of youth cafe councils also spoke of this goal as important in the Komsomol’s decision to patronize youth cafes.¹⁰³¹ The cafes, consequently, advanced the soft-line approach of fighting with “deviance” through providing normative leisure activities as opposed to using coercion.

For the Komsomol leadership, cafes likewise aimed to advance the goal of aesthetic upbringing. The Komsomol Propaganda Department claimed that the cafes “developed good tastes” in culture. They helped youth “acquire a deeper sense of the beautiful, instill an interest in the arts, literature, music, and choose appropriate aesthetic perspectives.”¹⁰³² The proposed model of by-laws for youth cafes listed the goal of inculcating a desire to study the cultures of the peoples of the USSR and other socialist countries, as well as world culture more broadly.¹⁰³³

Transitioning to social self-management and increasing youth initiative constituted another crucial motive for youth cafes. As part of the Third Party Program, the Soviet leadership placed even more priority on transferring government functions to social organizations. Youth cafes provided the Kremlin with a means to further this effort, shifting both cultural leisure and food provision to social. An instruction booklet

¹⁰²⁹ Tiutikov and Sishigin eds., *Sila obshchestvennogo pochina*, 121.

¹⁰³⁰ Roshchin, *Chto ty delaesh' vecherom?*, 16-17, 32-33.

¹⁰³¹ O. V. Chernyaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹⁰³² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 2-16.

¹⁰³³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 64-67.

from the Komsomol's press explicitly associated youth cafes with the Third Party Program's advocacy of novel forms (*novye formy*), and praised the cafes as "a new type of mass-political work with young people," one "based on the volunteer initiative of Komsomol enthusiasts."¹⁰³⁴ The Komsomol Propaganda Department emphasized that amateur musicians voluntarily performed at the cafes and that enthusiasts managed cafe activities, maintained order, decorated the interior, and undertook other necessary tasks. In some cafes, young volunteers even served the food and drinks.¹⁰³⁵ Model by-laws for youth cafes spotlighted their function of "getting young people widely involved in the organization of active and healthy leisure."¹⁰³⁶ At a 1962 club conference, the volunteer director of Moscow's "Youth Cafe" insisted that "young people themselves are the owners" of the "Youth Cafe," with young activists designing and building the cafe and organizing and implementing cafe events.¹⁰³⁷ The Komsomol Propaganda Department ascribed the popularity of cafes to young enthusiasts taking ownership of cafe events. They did everything necessary to run the cafe, which "developed the activism, initiative, creativity, and inventiveness" of each cafe activist.¹⁰³⁸

All this helps explain why the Komsomol leadership experimented with youth cafes, despite the widespread perception that these new cultural institutions were based on foreign models. Indeed, both supporters and detractors of youth cafes considered them

¹⁰³⁴ Tiutikov and Sishigin eds., *Sila obshchestvennogo pochina*, 121.

¹⁰³⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 18.

¹⁰³⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 64-67.

¹⁰³⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 33.

¹⁰³⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 60.

as explicitly borrowed from the “west,” as seen at the late March 1962 conference.¹⁰³⁹ In May 1961, the national Komsomol organ published a story on a well-run foreign college student youth cafe and suggested that this cafe deserves to be emulated in the USSR.¹⁰⁴⁰ Baliasnaia described youth cafes as “not our idea,” and attributed their creation to the search for new methods and principles of socializing youth into building communism.¹⁰⁴¹ The Saratovite K. K. Il’in, in commenting on the opening of youth cafes in Saratov, stated that this represented “the breach of the western way of life” into the USSR.¹⁰⁴²

These youth cafes, therefore, constituted the most daring step yet on the path of trying to build a socialist version of a western modern consumer society through state-sponsored popular culture. The Komsomol leadership intended youth cafes to appeal to what youth imagined about western cultural life, while offering a socialist alternative whose form in many ways resembled foreign cafe-clubs, but whose essence contributed to building communism.¹⁰⁴³ Consequently, like previous efforts along this path, the Komsomol hierarchy set the goal of having youth cafes satisfy youth desires while activating societal initiative, increasing communist time, and promoting aesthetic upbringing. Official discourse claimed that youth cafes provided Soviet authorities with the opportunity to depict the USSR as modern and progressive by offering a new form that borrowed from western ones but advanced beyond them.

¹⁰³⁹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 48-49.

¹⁰⁴⁰ “Uiut, a ne roskosh’,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, May 20, 1961.

¹⁰⁴¹ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

¹⁰⁴² K. K. Il’in, born 1944, interviewed May 20, 2009.

¹⁰⁴³ For the importance of the imagination in constructing images of western reality, see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 158-237.

Youth cafes were successful in that they had immense appeal among young people. A 1962 instruction booklet portrayed them as immensely popular, with “lines forming long before the cafe opens,” as “unfortunately, there are many less places behind the tables of youth cafes than those who want to get one.”¹⁰⁴⁴ Other sources also confirm that, due to their popularity, getting into youth cafes proved a challenge in the early 1960s, when only a few youth cafes existed in major cities. The director of “Youth Cafe” admitted as much in his speech at the March 1962 conference.¹⁰⁴⁵ So did Likhodeev, while waving off this criticism as irrelevant.¹⁰⁴⁶ Interviews with and memoirs by former youth cafe visitors confirm the challenge of getting into these institutions, with only those possessing connections to the management, jazz musicians, or prominent notables admitted easily.¹⁰⁴⁷

By promoting youth cafes in the pages of Komsomol newspapers before their widespread establishment, the Komsomol created a widescale consumer demand that it had trouble satisfying in the short run, since it took time to create successful youth cafes. This illustrates the difficulties involved in appealing to youth consumer desires.¹⁰⁴⁸ Moreover, youth cafes posed a unique challenge. Owing to the potential threat of going too far in borrowing from the “west,” along with the logistical obstacles in organizing these institutions, the Komsomol proceeded slowly with the creation of youth cafes. This

¹⁰⁴⁴ Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 234.

¹⁰⁴⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 35.

¹⁰⁴⁶ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 46-47.

¹⁰⁴⁷ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009, and Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 158.

¹⁰⁴⁸ For the problems resulting from creating consumer demands in socialist contexts, see Crowley and Reid, “Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism.”

further limited the supply of space in these establishments during the early 1960s. Consequently, in their early years, youth cafes largely served members of the cultural intelligentsia and college students, who either had the connections to get in quickly or the dedication to wait in long lines. Cafes associated with trade union clubs proved an exception, as they offered some evening events specifically targeted at the workers of their enterprises.¹⁰⁴⁹

What drew young people to youth cafes? Certainly, the western aspects of the cafe set-up, with the chance to drink coffee at a table while taking in exciting cultural entertainment, appealed to many. The American-style jazz in particular drew plenty of young jazz fans. Others went to the cafes to check out the new and exotic nature of these institutions.¹⁰⁵⁰ Yet, most former cafe visitors and activists recall the atmosphere and spirit of these cafes as the fundamental element in their appeal, namely the opportunity to hang out and talk with other young people in an intimate and unconstrained atmosphere—obshchenie. G. A. Garanian described the cafes as having “true obshchenie.”¹⁰⁵¹ In Kozlov’s words, “at that time, the obshchenie of two strangers in a public setting where one’s words might be recorded constituted a very new and exciting phenomenon.”¹⁰⁵² Sadykhov recalled the atmosphere of youth cafes as centering on obshchenie, which he

¹⁰⁴⁹ For one cafe that invited factory workers, see TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 8.

¹⁰⁵⁰ V. A. Miliaev, born 1937, interviewed February 28, 2009; V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; and K. K. Il’in, born 1944, interviewed May 20, 2009.

¹⁰⁵¹ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009

¹⁰⁵² Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 157-58.

called wonderful.¹⁰⁵³ The Saratovite M. I. Ryskin found the “spirit of freedom” exciting.¹⁰⁵⁴ Many others referenced obshchenie as crucial to youth cafes.¹⁰⁵⁵

This focus on obshchenie paralleled the sentiments expressed during the early 1960s by some of the cafe activists. At the March 1962 club conference, the director of Moscow’s “Youth Cafe” proclaimed that young people “need a cafe-club where they can have debates, meet with interesting people in a relaxed [*neprinuzhdennaia*] atmosphere,” and “talk with a friend.”¹⁰⁵⁶ Likhodeev’s eloquent commentary at this meeting forcefully promoted youth cafes as essential, since, when young people go to cafes, “they engage in obshchenie and behave themselves like human beings should.” According to him, this obshchenie held the key to youth upbringing in the spirit of the Twenty-second Party Congress, which he described as having at its heart the idea that “human beings are friends, comrades, and brothers to each other,” a frequently-used slogan.¹⁰⁵⁷ He advanced a similar proposition at the May 1962 conference. According to Likhodeev, “we have an extremely low culture of obshchenie and we do not respect each other.” He called youth cafes “the natural human condition” for their promotion of obshchenie.¹⁰⁵⁸ Likhodeev’s rhetoric skillfully tied obshchenie in youth cafes to the Party’s overarching goals. He and

¹⁰⁵³ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009

¹⁰⁵⁴ M. I. Ryskin, born 1938, interviewed June 1, 2009.

¹⁰⁵⁵ For example, V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009, and Krivulin, “Nevskii do i posle velikoi kofeinoi revoliutsii.”

¹⁰⁵⁶ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 32.

¹⁰⁵⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 47-52. For the use of this slogan in official Komsomol discourse, see Pavlov, *Otchet Tsentral'nogo*, 40.

¹⁰⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 27-32.

other cafe activists listed other benefits of cafes as well, such as improving youth cultural levels and dealing with juvenile “delinquency.”¹⁰⁵⁹

Nonetheless, for most cafe activists and visitors, the atmosphere of obshchenie in cafes represented the main element in an ideal pluralistic space of socialist sociability and civic spirit that they saw as fully compatible with communist construction. Likhodeev’s passionate comments attest to this well, illustrating the viewpoint later associated with the effort to forge “communism with a human face” in Czechoslovakia. Interviews with cafe patrons and activists also bear out this proposition, as many revealed their belief in building communism during the early 1960s, for example Kleinot.¹⁰⁶⁰ Sadykhov associated his faith in a Thaw-era vision of communism with youth cafes.¹⁰⁶¹

To an extent, obshchenie fit the intentions of the Komsomol hierarchy. Karpinskii’s 1960 note called for aiming “our best political forces at small audiences and intimate conversations.”¹⁰⁶² Official sources, such as instruction booklets, depicted youth cafes as providing an opportunity for youth obshchenie.¹⁰⁶³ The Komsomol Propaganda Department itself instructed local Komsomol cadres that youth cafe events “should not be excessively organized by filling them with performances and political materials.” Instead, it called for these events “to have an unrestrained and free form,” so that the visitors have

¹⁰⁵⁹ For examples of other motivations, see RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 32, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 94-95.

¹⁰⁶⁰ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

¹⁰⁶¹ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009. Kozlov represents one exception, depicting himself as rejecting communist ideology from an early age: Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 68-100.

¹⁰⁶² RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1024, l. 78.

¹⁰⁶³ Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 234.

the “opportunity to hold interesting conversations, discussions, and debates with other youth around the table.”¹⁰⁶⁴

For the Komsomol leadership, however, providing youth with the opportunity for *obshchenie* served as the means of getting youth into official, collective, and state-managed spaces and placing them under what official discourse termed “communist influence.” In contrast, for youth cafe activists *obshchenie* itself represented the primary goal. This divergence of emphasis between the soft-line cafe activists and the Komsomol leadership did not pose a serious problem during the early 1960s, when the leadership adopted a generally tolerant course. Still, it created the potential for conflicts if the leadership chose to pursue a militant line.

The tension between hard-line and soft-line visions of the communist future, as embodied by youth cafes, came to the fore in the 1962 club worker conferences, where the cafes were a central topic of discussion. Cafe activists pushed clubs to adopt cafe-like forms or even transform themselves into youth cafes, as did the director of “Youth Cafe.”¹⁰⁶⁵ A representative from the “Eastern” cafe stated that “we need not one or two youth cafes, but hundreds.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Not surprisingly, those club officials holding a militant position spoke out against youth cafes and their emphasis on *obshchenie*. A characteristic comment censured the rejection of lectures by youth cafe activists and called for “directed political work” in club activities.¹⁰⁶⁷ Another speaker, a representative from the House of Culture of the Moscow Aviation Institute (*Moskovskii aviaitsionnyi institut*),

¹⁰⁶⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 22.

¹⁰⁶⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 38.

¹⁰⁶⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 35.

¹⁰⁶⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 78-79.

criticized individualized obshchenie in cafes. Instead, the speaker underlined the need for the cultural and aesthetic upbringing of the masses through widescale cultural events in clubs, which he called the best form of obshchenie.¹⁰⁶⁸ When the “Youth Cafe” director spoke, one militant critic inquired how the cafe propagandized the decisions of the Twenty-second Party Congress. The director replied that the cafe did not propagandize them.¹⁰⁶⁹ The Moscow Komsomol organ endorsed the “Youth Cafe” director’s position on this question in an article published after the conference, showing the Moscow Komsomol’s soft-line.¹⁰⁷⁰ Notably, the critics of cafes at the conferences tended to express hard-line views on other issues, such as youth initiative.

More open-minded club officials at the conference offered a sympathetic hearing to youth cafes. The Zuev club’s assistant manager criticized lectures for failing to reach young people, as the latter preferred to “express their own opinions,” which drove young people to go to youth cafes instead of clubs. He suggested instead organizing youth cafe-like events in the clubs themselves.¹⁰⁷¹ The manager of the house of culture at the “Kauchuk” factory expressed a willingness to experiment with youth cafe-like forms.¹⁰⁷² A representative from the club of the “Dorkhimzavod” plant described his successful cooperation with the local Komsomol to establish a youth cafe at the club.¹⁰⁷³ Club

¹⁰⁶⁸ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 62-63.

¹⁰⁶⁹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 37.

¹⁰⁷⁰ “Rozy i shipy,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 28, 1962.

¹⁰⁷¹ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 54-56.

¹⁰⁷² TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 7.

¹⁰⁷³ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 262, l. 9.

officials who supported youth cafes generally adopted soft-line positions on other issues, too.¹⁰⁷⁴

Still, even though some club workers expressed a willingness to establish youth cafes, these cafes ran into obstacles. Club officials voiced concerns over the challenges of getting coffee, wine, and appropriate food into clubs.¹⁰⁷⁵ Acquiring fitting chairs and tables presented another problem.¹⁰⁷⁶ The fact that many fewer people fit into halls with a youth cafe set-up of tables and chairs concerned club workers, many of whom preferred mass events for their wide impact, and, undoubtedly, for helping fulfill the attendance plan.¹⁰⁷⁷ Moreover, the club directors retained some oversight of the cultural offerings in cafes associated with clubs, with the young activists unable to take full managerial control over the cafe entertainment program.

All this explains why, after an initial stage of experimentation, most youth cafes located themselves in food establishments. The food enterprise hierarchy expressed little concern over the cultural program and allowed young cafe enthusiasts to control cafe cultural activities. It also had the tables, chairs, food, and drink necessary for the cafes, although it often needed to acquire coffee-makers.¹⁰⁷⁸

Another problem for youth cafes consisted of getting decor consistent with a post-Stalin Thaw-era style of design, as restaurants and cafeterias hardly provided the modern

¹⁰⁷⁴ The Zuev club manager, for instance, expressing tolerance of rock'n'roll: TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 56-57.

¹⁰⁷⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 258, ll. 14-15.

¹⁰⁷⁶ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 56.

¹⁰⁷⁷ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, ll. 32, 78-79, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 33.

¹⁰⁷⁸ On coffee-makers, see Krivulin, "Nevskii do i posle velikoi kofeinoi revoliutsii."

feel sought by youth cafes.¹⁰⁷⁹ For instance, a guidebook for Komsomol activists stressed that youth cafes needed to have “a beautifully decorated, comfortable hall,” with an appropriately renovated space and fitting paintings, decorations, and furniture.¹⁰⁸⁰ The Komsomol Propaganda Department instructed Komsomol cells creating youth cafes to renovate food establishments in order to create “maximum comfort” and provide appropriate inventory and cultural materials.¹⁰⁸¹ Nonetheless, as illustrated by *Moskovskii komsomolets* in March 1962, decorating and renovating the first Moscow cafes, “Youth Cafe” and “Aelita,” occurred “with enormous and unjustified expenditure of energy and nerves,” with young people having to nag numerous bureaucrats for their needs. The newspaper proposed creating an agency that would help in acquiring records, decorations, light fixtures, food, and other necessities for the many new youth cafes slated to open in Moscow. The journalists also criticized the Moscow food enterprise hierarchy for failing to attend to the specific needs of youth cafes in this regard.¹⁰⁸²

Youth cafes in food establishments faced another issue as well, namely the pressure from the food enterprise hierarchy to fulfill financial plans. Especially in the early days of youth cafes, this bureaucracy pushed youth cafes to serve expensive restaurant-style meals. This challenged the desire of cafe enthusiasts to make youth cafes cheap and accessible to young people. The director of the “Youth Cafe” frankly admitted that “we are not sustainable financially,” and called for the Komsomol to provide

¹⁰⁷⁹ For more on the Thaw-era style, especially in furniture, see Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union,” *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211-52.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 234.

¹⁰⁸¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 4.

¹⁰⁸² “Rozy i shipy,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 28, 1962

financial support for youth cafes.¹⁰⁸³ Likhodeev drew attention to the problem faced by youth cafes in meeting the financial plans proposed by bureaucrats from the food enterprises when the cafes aimed to serve “young people with 12 kopeks.” Accordingly, cafe enthusiasts “have to think hard about how to fool the bureaucrats.” He expressed confidence that the cafes would find appropriate financing, waving off challenges from critics from the audience who expressed skepticism.¹⁰⁸⁴ Instruction booklets and newspapers made a variety of suggestions on how to achieve financial parity.¹⁰⁸⁵

With Komsomol support for youth cafes and the grassroots enthusiasm of young cafe activists, the obstacles slowly grew more manageable. Responding to the censure of the Moscow Komsomol, the chief of the Moscow food enterprise bureaucracy obliged its branches to provide youth cafes with needed food and decor and to give the Komsomol a more prominent role in the construction and renovation of youth cafes. The chief also directed the financial department to revise the financial plan norms for youth cafes.¹⁰⁸⁶ Similar decrees likely passed in other cities taking up the organization of youth cafes.

Youth cafes faced fewer challenges in getting artists to perform in them than did universities of culture or volunteer clubs. Jazz musicians expressed particular enthusiasm over playing in cafes. Enjoying the atmosphere of *obshchenie* and the western-style form, as well as the appreciative audiences and the chance to hang out with other jazz musicians, they performed for free or with minimal payments. Sadykhov recalled that

¹⁰⁸³ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 257, l. 35.

¹⁰⁸⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, ll. 30-34.

¹⁰⁸⁵ See Dubrova and Proshchunin, *Sputnik komsomol'skogo aktivista*, 235. Also see “Prikhodite zavtra v ‘Vesnu,’” *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 14, 1961.

¹⁰⁸⁶ “‘Rozy i shipy,’” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, May 30, 1962.

jazz musicians came to “Youth Cafe,” spent time hanging out with other musicians and audience members, played several pieces, and then listened to other jazz performances. For musicians, playing in this atmosphere “was a celebration for the soul.”¹⁰⁸⁷ The jazz guitarist Kuznetsov, who mostly played in Moscow’s “*Siniia ptitsa*” (Blue Bird) and also a bit in “Youth Cafe,” valued the audience “that greatly desired to listen to jazz” and paid “careful attention” to jazz players, “rewarding them with applause.”¹⁰⁸⁸ Garanian also praised the caliber of the audiences in cafes.¹⁰⁸⁹ A. S. Kozlov helped Komsomol activists organize the “Youth Cafe,” where his jazz band became a habitual fixture.¹⁰⁹⁰ N. I. Butov, a Komsomol functionary who rose to the rank of assistant director of the Komsomol Propaganda Department, explicitly associated “Youth Cafe” and “Aelita” with jazz.¹⁰⁹¹ In fact, a prominent scholar of Soviet jazz called these youth cafes “jazz cafes.”¹⁰⁹²

Members of the cultural intelligentsia also frequented the cafes, particularly the younger ones inclined toward a soft line, attracted by the atmosphere of *obshchenie*, western forms, and jazz music. “Youth Cafe,” according to Sadykhov, had a variety of patrons, from jazz musicians to cultural figures from the theater, cinema, and musical fields, to ordinary cafe visitors.¹⁰⁹³ This cafe had regular performances by actors from the

¹⁰⁸⁷ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009.

¹⁰⁸⁸ A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁸⁹ G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Kozlov, “*Kozel na sakse*,” 152-53, 157-58.

¹⁰⁹¹ N. I. Butov, born 1944, interviewed February 16, 2009.

¹⁰⁹² Starr, *Red and Hot*, 267.

¹⁰⁹³ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009.

progressive and controversial Taganka Theater, including the well-known actor-bard V. S. Vysotskii.¹⁰⁹⁴ Leningrad cafes were oriented less toward jazz, focusing more on prominent avant-garde poets, painters, and other members of the progressive cultural intelligentsia. An abstract-style painter reportedly painted the tiles of Leningrad's famous "Saigon" cafe.¹⁰⁹⁵ Likhodeev, at the Leningrad club conference in early 1962, observed that traditional cultural figures, such as V. P. Solov'ev-Sedoi, would not come to and perform at youth cafes. Instead, Likhodeev stated that he and others like him would come, for instance N. V. Bogoslavskii, a prominent cultural figure who liked the atmosphere of youth cafes, the "laughing and making witty comments."¹⁰⁹⁶ Still, some smaller youth cafes had challenges in attracting a steady stream of cultural figures.¹⁰⁹⁷

Gradually overcoming initial organizational problems, youth cafes by mid-1962 appeared slated for rapid growth. The cafes acquired more support from the leadership, the cultural and food bureaucracy, and the cultural intelligentsia. Young people clamored for more youth cafes, not only in major cities but also in smaller towns and even rural settings. This resulted from the positive depiction of cafes in the Komsomol press and other media. For instance, the "Blue Flame" (*Goluboi Ogonek*) television program drew on the Moscow "Youth Cafe" format and adapted it for broadcasting, garnering

¹⁰⁹⁴ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Viktor Toporov, "My vypivali kazhdyi den'," *Pchela* 6 (October 1996), <http://www.pchela.ru/podshiv/6/drink.htm> [Accessed March 28, 2011], and Krivulin, "Nevskii do i posle velikoi kofeinoi revoliutsii."

¹⁰⁹⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 33.

¹⁰⁹⁷ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 37.

widespread popularity in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁹⁸ According to *Moskovskii komsomolets*, besides the youth cafes already established in Moscow in March 1962, twenty more aimed to open their doors in 1962, a number built specifically as youth cafes.¹⁰⁹⁹

Nonetheless, the swing toward a hard-line approach in late 1962 and early 1963 slowed the development of the youth cafes, bringing into the open previously submerged tensions between the goals of young cafe activists and the Soviet leadership. These fractures are illustrated by an internal report from the Komsomol Propaganda Department. According to this document, although the cafes had spread widely across the Soviet Union by late 1963, they suffered from a series of problems, especially in Moscow. For example, it censured a November 1963 evening at “Youth Cafe,” where the orchestra “played only jazz music and Jewish songs and dances.” From the stage, one heard remarks such as “a simple Soviet Jewish hairdresser will now perform a national Jewish dance” The same month, in “Aelita,” a member of the cafe council distributed poetry that defended Y. A. Yevtushenko from official criticism, while making accusations of anti-Semitism in the USSR, including the claim that “anti-Semitism comes from the ‘top.’” The “*Eksprompt*” (Impromptu) and “Youth Cafe” held exhibits of abstract art. “Youth Cafe” showed foreign films that the cafe council head borrowed from foreign embassies on his own, without going through appropriate channels. Frequent visitors to the cafe included illegal traders in western goods and “loose women.” The document accused the head of the council of “Youth Cafe” of “sexual depravity,” most

¹⁰⁹⁸ Valentina Shatrova, “Tot samyi ‘Goluboi Ogonek’,” *“Zhurnalists”* 5 (May 2008), 49. For more on Soviet television, see Kristin Roth-Ey, “Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2003).

¹⁰⁹⁹ “Rozy i shipy,” *Moskovskii komsomolets*, March 28, 1962, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1096, l. 35.

likely a reference to homosexuality, and also denounced other members of the council for drunkenness and theft.¹¹⁰⁰ At the February 1964 Moscow city Komsomol conference, the keynote speaker also associated “Aelita” and “Youth Cafe” with immorality, drunkenness, hooliganism, and religion, which “provided the soil for bourgeois ideology to plant the seeds of nihilism, apolitical attitudes, and a petit bourgeois [*meshchanin*] understanding of happiness and freedom.”¹¹⁰¹ This and other attacks led to the ouster of some cafe council heads, for instance the manager of “Aelita,” and the toning down of jazz in some cafes, including Kiev’s “*Mechta*” (Dream) cafe, along with other activities associated with western cultural influence.

Still, most youth cafes continued to play American-style jazz and provide a western atmosphere, if to a lesser extent than previously. Moreover, other cafes opened up, if more slowly than planned. In December 1963, the Krasnopresnenskii neighborhood Komsomol praised the recent establishment of the “*Aist*” (Crane) youth cafe.¹¹⁰² That same year, the Gorbunov House of Culture received censure for failing to establish its planned “*Globus*” (Globe) youth cafe.¹¹⁰³ The most famous youth cafe in Leningrad, “Saigon,” opened its doors in September 1964.¹¹⁰⁴ Besides this, likely inspired by the “Blue Flame” television program, clubs organized youth cafe-like events termed “To the Flame,” for instance at the “Red Star” House of Culture and also the house of culture at

¹¹⁰⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 32, d. 1055, ll. 135-37.

¹¹⁰¹ TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 15, d. 188, l. 50.

¹¹⁰² TsAOPIM, f. 667, op. 4, d. 1, l. 31.

¹¹⁰³ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 9.

¹¹⁰⁴ Toporov, “My vypivali kazhdyi den’.”

Moscow's "Trekhgornaia Manufaktura" factory.¹¹⁰⁵ Interviews with cafe activists and jazz enthusiasts illustrate that most did not perceive a substantial break associated with 1963.¹¹⁰⁶ Consequently, I suggest that the brief hard-line swing in 1963 and 1964 had much more impact on Soviet cultural elites than it did for young cultural activists in amateur arts. This enriches the historical narrative that so far focused on elite cultural policy and did not sufficiently examine the broader Soviet official cultural field.¹¹⁰⁷

State-Sponsored Popular Culture during the Early Brezhnev Years, 1964-1968

The first four years after the coup against Khrushchev and the rise to power of the Brezhnev leadership constitute an ambiguous and contradictory period. Many members of the cultural intelligentsia hoped that Brezhnev would reverse the antagonistic stance adopted by the Khrushchev Kremlin toward daring forms of artistic expression in its last years. The Brezhnev authorities soon sorely disappointed writers who hoped for more openness and freedom of expression by placing the authors A. D. Siniavskii and Iu. M. Daniel on trial for their writings published abroad. A major propaganda campaign against Daniel and Siniavskii accompanied the proceedings, underlining the role of this episode as a show trial that signaled a new course and contributed to the increasingly gloomy mood among writers.¹¹⁰⁸

¹¹⁰⁵ TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 398, l. 20, and TsAGM, f. 718, op. 1, d. 406, l. 44.

¹¹⁰⁶ V. E. Sadykhov, born 1946, interviewed February 24, 2009; A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009; and V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

¹¹⁰⁷ An example of a focus on cultural elites is Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 193-225.

¹¹⁰⁸ Mark Sandle, "A Triumph of Ideological Hairdressing? Intellectual Life in the Brezhnev Era Reconsidered," in Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 135-64; Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (New York: Cambridge

Yet the mid-1960s marked a shift toward more tolerance for jazz. Prominent newspapers, such as *Izvestiia* (News), carried articles that expressed support for developing this music. Moscow Radio established a weekly half-hour segment on Soviet jazz. For the first time, “Melodiia,” the state’s recording enterprise, produced records of current Soviet jazz bands. Fans of this music received the support to establish more jazz clubs. Jazz enthusiasts gained the opportunity to have their commentary on jazz published in the Soviet press and even foreign jazz periodicals, most notably the famous Polish magazine *Jazz*.¹¹⁰⁹

The tolerance for jazz reflected the Brezhnev Kremlin’s emphasis on appealing to youth aspirations for fun cultural consumption options. It likewise responded to the growing popularity of rock’n’roll in the Soviet Union. Slowly gaining from the end of the 1950s, rock music witnessed explosive growth with the wave of Beatlemania in 1963-64. Perceiving jazz as much less potentially subversive than rock’n’roll, the Brezhnev leadership decided to endorse the first while rejecting the second, at least in its western format. Soviet officials did permit the formation of official VIA (*vokal’no-instrumental’nyi ansambl’*) groups in the mid-1960s that played popular music and jazz, with some rock elements. Some jazz musicians also incorporated aspects of rock music, although the large majority rejected it.¹¹¹⁰

University Press, 1978), 331-52; and Denis Kozlov, “‘I Have Not Read, but I Will Say’: Soviet Literary Audiences and Changing Ideas of Social Membership, 1958-66,” *Kritika* 7.3 (Summer 2006): 557-97.

¹¹⁰⁹ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 275-77.

¹¹¹⁰ On Soviet rock’n’roll, see Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, 65-106; Risch, “Soviet ‘Flower Children’”; Yngvar B. Steinholt, *Rock in the Reservation: Songs from the Leningrad Rock Club, 1981-86* (New York: MMMSP, 2005); Sabrina P. Ramet, “Rock: The Music of the Revolution (and Political Conformity),” in Sabrina P. Ramet, ed., *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 1-14; Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Block: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 50-65;

An open-minded approach toward jazz proved conducive to renewed leadership support for youth cafes. The Komsomol TsK explicitly blessed these institutions with a 1966 resolution that called for the creation of youth cafes in rural regions. The TsK praised the work of extant rural youth cafes in Vologda and Volgograd oblast and in Latvia, and noted that that “many Komsomol organizations do not pay sufficient attention to the creation of these youth cafes.” The decree highlighted the need for Komsomol cells to “develop the practice of organizing youth cafes” in food establishments in rural areas.¹¹¹¹ This resolution acknowledged the transformation of youth cafes from an experimental and daring institution to a regular and normal component of Komsomol work, not only approved by but also promoted from the top.

Many new youth cafes began to function as a result of that endorsement. In Voronezh, the “*Rossiianka*” (Russian Woman) cafe, built specifically as a youth cafe from the start, featured a modern architectural style heavy on glass, aluminum, and concrete.¹¹¹² According to the head of its council, O. V. Cherniaev, the cafe’s program consisted mainly of jazz performances. He specifically linked the organization of this cafe to the Komsomol TsK’s directive on the need to establish youth cafes.¹¹¹³ The

Thomas Cushman, *Notes From Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 17-88; Artemy Troitskii, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Winchester: Faber and Faber, 1988); and Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was no More*, 158-237. For rock’n’roll in Yugoslavia, see Sabrina P. Ramet, “Shake, Rattle, and Self-Management: Rock Music and Politics in Socialist Yugoslavia, and After,” in Sabrina P. Ramet and Gordana P. Crnkovic eds., *KAZAAM! SPLAT! PLOOF! The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 173-97. For rock’n’roll in East Germany, see Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock’n’Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2007), and Thomas Fuchs, “Rock’n’roll in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-61,” in Wagnleitner and May eds., “*Here, There and Everywhere*,” 192-206.

¹¹¹¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, l. 2.

¹¹¹² For a description of this cafe, see “Istoriia s geografiei.”

¹¹¹³ O. V. Cherniaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009.

history department at MGU created a youth cafe.¹¹¹⁴ The 1967 SGU university-wide Komsomol conference supported the physics department Komsomol's efforts to open one youth cafe.¹¹¹⁵ Other youth cafes appeared in Saratov as well.¹¹¹⁶ Although a careful search of the Komsomol archives did not reveal statistical data on the number of youth cafes, the evidence overall shows that cafes became increasingly prevalent throughout the USSR, and accessible for working-class young people in large cities, as well as small town and even rural youth.

This expansion, resulting from top-level support, came with a price: the Komsomol hierarchy now had more influence over youth cafes than previously, lessening the role of grassroots enthusiasts. Consequently, some of the special spirit of the first wave of youth cafes was lost, disenchanting some visitors. The Saratovite Ryskin stopped going to youth cafes after his initial excitement, as the "air of freedom" he enjoyed so much began to dissipate.¹¹¹⁷ Moreover, Komsomol officials began to use cafes to host informal "drunken bashes" (*p'ianki*) for Komsomol cadres, for instance in "Blue Bird" as Kleinot described.¹¹¹⁸ The access to alcohol, food, modern decor, tables and chairs, jazz music, a dance floor and other benefits of Komsomol-run youth cafes undoubtedly made them an attractive place for such private Komsomol activities. These cafes, therefore,

¹¹¹⁴ TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 109, l. 231.

¹¹¹⁵ GANISO, f. 652, op. 1, d. 31, ll. 27-28.

¹¹¹⁶ "Prikhodite!" *Leninskii put'*, January 30, 1965, and "'Mezon-kholl,'" *Leninskii put'*, September 11, 1965.

¹¹¹⁷ M. I. Ryskin, born 1938, interviewed June 1, 2009.

¹¹¹⁸ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

represent the antecedent to the corruption of Komsomol-managed organized cultural activities in the 1970s as identified by Sergei Zhuk.¹¹¹⁹

The tolerant attitude toward jazz in the mid-1960s also paved the way for the Komsomol to organize jazz festivals. Prominent jazz musicians from all over the Soviet Union and other socialist states, came to these festivals to perform before appreciative audiences. The jazz festivals originated in the Baltic states during the late 1950s. The first ones in the Soviet heartland took place in Moscow's "Youth Cafe" in 1962, with five jazz groups performing for over three hours. Another occurred the same year in Leningrad. However, the Khrushchev leadership's more orthodox approach toward the cultural sphere from the end of 1962 put a temporary stop to the further organization of festivals in the non-Baltic regions.

The Brezhnev administration's flexible approach toward jazz in the mid-1960s resulted in a major jazz festival organized in 1965 by the Moscow Komsomol, with the cooperation of the Union of Soviet Composers in the "Youth" hotel. This large event involved sixteen bands performing over three days, with many of the best Soviet jazz players competing for the festival's top prizes. *Newsweek* even published a story about this festival. This Moscow festival led to a series of oblast-level jazz festivals organized by the Komsomol in Novosibirsk, Voronezh, Donetsk, Riga, Khar'kov, Kuibyshev, and other cities.¹¹²⁰ Saratov held a number of festivals, starting in 1965.¹¹²¹ In Garanian's

¹¹¹⁹ Sergei Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 291.

¹¹²⁰ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009; N. I. Butov, born 1944, interviewed February 16, 2009; O. V. Cherniaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009; Kozlov, "Kozel na sakse," 174-74; and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 282-85.

¹¹²¹ I. P. Zhimskii, born 1936, interviewed May 27, 2009, and L. A. Figlin, born 1938, interviewed May 25, 2009.

words, jazz festivals represented “major events,” with tickets “impossible to get,” and the audiences loved the performances.¹¹²² The evening concerts of the 1967 festival in Talinn took place in the Palace of Sports and had up to 3,000 audience members.¹¹²³ These festivals depended on soft-line local Komsomol and Party officials. A jazz enthusiast and festival organizer in Donetsk, V. A. Dubiler, confirmed this, and gave the example of how a new hard-line Party city committee leader in Donetsk forbid a jazz festival.¹¹²⁴ Cherniaev, who organized jazz festivals in Voronezh, also accentuated the importance of supportive officials.¹¹²⁵ Furthermore, the festivals offered the Komsomol financial profit. Dubiler described how he had to provide a portion of the festival ticket sales to the Komsomol’s budget in order to gain support for the organization of the festival.¹¹²⁶ Still, orthodox administrators refused to support jazz festivals despite their revenue potential, making the support of sympathetic soft-line officials vital for these events.

The festivals provided jazz musicians with exiting opportunities to travel the country and perform, with the Soviet government picking up the tab for their travel and providing lodging, although the musicians received no or minimal payments for the performance itself. Most important, they had the chance to meet other jazz musicians and learn about and from each other. At the festivals, jazz enthusiasts from different cities formed networks centering on jazz. Dubiler established contacts with other jazz enthusiasts by writing letters to them. The festivals offered him the opportunity to build

¹¹²² G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

¹¹²³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 146, l. 4.

¹¹²⁴ V. A. Dubiler, born 1941, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹¹²⁵ O. V. Cherniaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹¹²⁶ V. A. Dubiler, born 1941, interviewed February 22, 2009.

on these initial written contacts and establish direct relationships. He invited jazz musicians from across the Soviet Union and abroad to visit Donetsk jazz festivals, and they invited him in turn to theirs.¹¹²⁷ Cherniaev similarly recalled that jazz festivals facilitated jazz-related exchanges and networks in various Soviet cities.¹¹²⁸ Kuznetsov greatly enjoyed going to and performing at these festivals in different cities.¹¹²⁹

Furthermore, jazz festivals enabled Soviet jazz enthusiasts forming relationships with foreign jazz musicians. Garanian and other elite Soviet jazz musicians, at least those that authorities perceived as not likely to embarrass the USSR, visited jazz festivals in eastern European states, establishing international jazz networks.¹¹³⁰ Dubiler's extensive network included foreign jazz musicians and specialists.¹¹³¹ Foreign jazz musicians came to Soviet jazz festivals and jammed with local jazz players in youth cafes and jazz clubs.¹¹³² As the Komsomol developed its international tourism enterprise, "Sputnik," it also brought foreign visitors to youth cafes. Kleinot recalled that "Youth Cafe" served as a frequent destination for Komsomol-organized group excursions for foreign tourists, who listened to jazz and drank wine in the unique atmosphere of this and other youth cafes.¹¹³³ Having Soviet jazz musicians go to eastern European jazz festivals, inviting foreign jazz players into the USSR, and the western-style atmosphere of cafes all aimed

¹¹²⁷ V. A. Dubiler, born 1941, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹¹²⁸ O. V. Cherniaev, born 1946, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹¹²⁹ A. A. Kuznetsov, born 1941, interviewed February 21, 2009.

¹¹³⁰ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009, and G. A. Garanian, born 1934, interviewed February 4, 2009.

¹¹³¹ V. A. Dubiler, born 1941, interviewed February 22, 2009.

¹¹³² Starr, *Red and Hot*, 271.

¹¹³³ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009.

to achieve the leadership's goal of presenting the Soviet Union as an appealing alternative to the western way of life in the eyes of foreigners. The socialist version of a modern consumer society was presented as having the glamor of a western consumer society without the social problems associated with individualism and class struggle, a message aimed at advancing the Soviet way of life in the Cold War's cultural battle.

The new leaders also tried to satisfy youth by providing more traditional organized cultural activities. The Komsomol leadership continued to promote the organization of amateur arts and the construction of clubs. As a result, by the end of the 1960s, the Soviet Union had over 133,000 club institutions and 700,000 amateur circles.¹¹³⁴ The Komsomol TsK passed a resolution in 1966 on strengthening work where young people resided. It paid a great deal of attention to adolescents (*podrostki*), calling for more interest-based clubs targeted at them.¹¹³⁵ In part, this focus on adolescents resulted from the growing proportion of this age group in the Soviet population.¹¹³⁶

Likewise, aesthetic upbringing remained a priority. Pavlov's keynote address at the Fifteenth Komsomol Congress in 1966 articulated the need for Komsomol cells to "inculcate elevated artistic tastes among youth," helping them "choose the right aesthetic perspectives," and "fight against vulgarity and poor tastes."¹¹³⁷ The Komsomol TsK's 1966 decree stressed that, as a result of improvements in the organization of cultural leisure where youth lived, adolescents expressed more "appropriate" cultural desires than

¹¹³⁴ *XVI s''ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuz Molodezhi: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1971), 56, and V. K. Krivoruchenko, *XIV – XVI s''ezdy VLKSM* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1989), 134-35.

¹¹³⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 121, ll. 3-4.

¹¹³⁶ *XV s''ezd vsesoiuznogo leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuz molodezhi*, 43-44.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

previously, such as wanting to participate in noncontroversial amateur artistic collectives.¹¹³⁸ Moreover, the Komsomol continued to use state-sponsored popular culture to manage youth free time, which had particular importance due to the shortening of the workweek and corresponding growth of leisure.¹¹³⁹ The Komsomol TsK specifically emphasized activities for misbehaving adolescents, censuring several oblast Komsomol organizations in March 1967 for “serious problems” in organizing adolescent leisure, especially in the evenings, and on Sundays and holidays, when adolescents “commit the highest number of crimes.”¹¹⁴⁰ According to another TsK decree, “the right organization of adolescent leisure” had “a telling impact on their attitude to work and study.”¹¹⁴¹

The Komsomol hierarchy also began to stress militarized leisure activities. In doing so, it helped enact the Brezhnev leadership’s efforts to co-opt the memory of World War II and use it as a new legitimating basis of authority.¹¹⁴² For instance, in the context of the renewed celebration of the Soviet victory in World War II, the Komsomol TsK enacted a decree in 1965 establishing all-union tourist trips to sites of major Soviet battles.¹¹⁴³ The Komsomol organized militarized sports games, such as “Zarnitsa,” where

¹¹³⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 121, l. 5

¹¹³⁹ *XVI s’ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzu Molodezhi*, 29.

¹¹⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 163, l. 56.

¹¹⁴¹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 121, l. 5.

¹¹⁴² On these efforts by the Brezhnev leadership, see Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 95-157, and Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 129-52.

¹¹⁴³ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 98, ll. 134-35.

youth competed in military skills.¹¹⁴⁴ The Komsomol TsK adopted a decree on the Komsomol's collaboration with military preparation organizations, and another on improving Komsomol sport and athletics activities.¹¹⁴⁵ A February 1968 TsK resolution called for "the further growth in the role of the Komsomol in the preparation of youth for the protection of the socialist Motherland."¹¹⁴⁶

An increased emphasis on youth discipline and downgrading of initiative accompanied such militarization, all policies that recalled the state's approach toward young people during the late Stalin years. If Khrushchev's speech at the 1958 Thirteenth Komsomol Congress made developing grassroots initiative an important priority, Brezhnev's speech at the Fifteenth Komsomol Congress in 1966 spoke of youth activism only in the context of labor and economic development.¹¹⁴⁷ Pavlov's speech at the congress did not list strengthening youth initiative as one of the Komsomol's main goals. Instead, he underscored discipline: "the most important goal in the current conditions is the further strengthening of the Komsomol and its discipline, the unity of its ranks."¹¹⁴⁸ The Komsomol changed its by-laws in 1966, embodying its shift in course, explicitly accentuating disciplined behavior: "the Komsomol needs to constantly improve the organization and conscious discipline among its ranks." Other editions to the by-laws promoted militarism and patriotism. One called for strengthening the might of the Soviet

¹¹⁴⁴ L. K. Baliasnaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 216, l. 19.

¹¹⁴⁵ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 137, ll. 16-20, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 146, ll. 16-25.

¹¹⁴⁶ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 188, l. 67.

¹¹⁴⁷ For the relevant sections of Khrushchev's speech, see N. S. Khrushchev, "*Vospityvat' aktivnykh i soznatel'nykh stroitelei kommunisticheskogo obshchestva*," 33-40. For Brezhnev's speech, see *XVI s'ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi*, 16-31.

¹¹⁴⁸ *XVI s'ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi*, 89-90.

army. In another alteration, the phrase “the Komsomol accepts young men and women” was changed to “the Komsomol accepts young people devoted to the Soviet Motherland.”¹¹⁴⁹ Oblast Komsomol conferences emulated such themes in their proceedings.¹¹⁵⁰

The focus on discipline and militarization reached its culmination with the Warsaw Pact’s invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This decision resulted from the Brezhnev leadership’s refusal to countenance the Czechoslovak efforts to build a liberal version of “communism with a human face.”¹¹⁵¹ Fears of subtle “western” propaganda undermining Warsaw Pact relations and subverting socialist youth, especially as enacted through US President Lyndon Johnson’s foreign policy, also motivated the Soviet Bloc assault on what came to be known as Prague Spring.¹¹⁵² For the USSR’s youth policy, the invasion meant a decisive rejection of youth social activism, as the Kremlin feared that young people would adopt a similar outlook to the Czechoslovak soft-liners. Thus, the new First Secretary of the Komsomol E. M. Tiazhel’nikov, speaking at the 1971 Sixteenth Komsomol Congress, failed to list youth grassroots activism as an important goal. He instead stressed the “strengthening of Komsomol discipline,” along with youth militarism and the struggle with western propaganda. His speech devoted little space to amateur arts and clubs, in comparison to sports and military preparation, showing the

¹¹⁴⁹ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 131, ll. 38-39.

¹¹⁵⁰ For example, the Moscow city Komsomol’s meeting in 1966: TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 16, d. 295, ll. 77-78.

¹¹⁵¹ Mike Bowker, “Brezhnev and Superpower Relations,” in Bacon and Mark Sandle eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, 90-109.

¹¹⁵² Mitchell Lerner, “‘Trying to Find the Guy Who Invited Them’: Lyndon Johnson, Bridge Building, and the End of the Prague Spring,” *Diplomatic History* 32.1 (January 2008): 77-103.

shift in priorities.¹¹⁵³ The meetings of lower-level Komsomol cells illustrate similar trends.¹¹⁵⁴ Jazz music also suffered in a brief period of official censure.¹¹⁵⁵ Not so for societal management from below, which did not gain top-level endorsement until M. S. Gorbachev came to power.¹¹⁵⁶

This turn away from grassroots activism in the late 1960s had a powerful impact on those organized cultural activities that relied on youth enthusiasm. Speeches by Komsomol leaders paid less and less attention to youth clubs and cafes, especially those intended for young people beyond their teens.¹¹⁵⁷ The attempts by some top-level Komsomol officials to create a national association that would unify adolescent-oriented clubs went nowhere.¹¹⁵⁸ In the central Komsomol bureaucracy, the separate archival folders devoted to initiative-based cultural institutions in the mid-1960s disappeared by 1968, underlining the move away from these organizations.¹¹⁵⁹ According to a Soviet-era historian of the Komsomol, such wariness resulted from the fears at the time that

¹¹⁵³ *XVI s''ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1971), 36-39, 56, 72.

¹¹⁵⁴ The Saratov city Komsomol conference in January 1968 illustrates how these themes grew paramount even before the invasion. See GANISO, f. 4529, op. 17, d. 1, ll. 196-97. So does a July 1968 meeting of the Saratov Ball-Bearing Plant Komsomol. See GANISO, f. 654, op. 1, d. 68, ll. 30-31. In Moscow, the city Komsomol conference held in March 1968 shows similar themes: TsAOPIM, f. 635, op. 17, d. 50, ll. 43-71. For a post-invasion conference, see the 1969 MGU university-wide Komsomol meeting: TsAOPIM, f. 6083, op. 1, d. 147, ll. 216-26.

¹¹⁵⁵ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 289-90.

¹¹⁵⁶ For the Gorbachev years, see A. G. Borzenkov, *Molodezh' i politika: Vozmozhnosti i predely studentcheskoi samodeiatel'nosti na vostoke Rossii (1961-1991 gg.)*, *Chast' 2* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 2002), 166-67.

¹¹⁵⁷ For Pavlov's speech at the 1966 XV Komsomol Congress, see *XVI s''ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi*, 52-83. For Tiazhel'nikov's speech at the XVI Congress, see *XVI s''ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi*, 33-74.

¹¹⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 67, d. 127, ll. 139-42.

¹¹⁵⁹ These files included: RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 68, and RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 141.

associations based on youth voluntarism and enthusiasm would slip out of Komsomol control.¹¹⁶⁰

At the grassroots level, this led to growing pressure against the more daring and controversial initiative-based collectives. From the mid-1960s, the “Archimedes” studio at MGU faced a shifting landscape. Iu. V. Gaponov, the head of the studio, related that a hard-line faction took control of the physics department’s Party committee. This coincided with a weak-willed Komsomol secretary, who did not offer serious opposition to the Party committee’s efforts to reform the structure of the physics department Komsomol in a fashion that seriously undermined the Komsomol’s organizational capacity. As a consequence, there was no “Physicists Day” in 1965, one of a number of victories for the militant Party officials. Despite the administration’s strong support for the compromise-oriented Komsomol secretary at the 1966 physics Komsomol conference, a core group of physics students decided to fight back by electing a new Komsomol secretary who would stand up for the students. V. Gertsik, a member of “Archimedes” and later a prominent poet, recalled that he, Gaponov, and others strategized in the dormitories about how to agitate their fellow students and what to say at the election conference itself. They managed to achieve their goals, and were rewarded with a renewed “Physicists Day” in 1966, along with the staging of the “Archimedes” opera at its conclusion.¹¹⁶¹ This revival proved brief, however, as the hard-line members of the administration and Party committee gained more authority and placed increasingly stringent restrictions on the members of this artistic collective. In 1969, the ideologically

¹¹⁶⁰ Krivoruchenko, *XIV – XVI s’ezdy VLKSM*, 139-40.

¹¹⁶¹ Iu. V. Gaponov, interviewed April 29, 2009, and V. Gertsik, born 1946, interviewed November 10, 2008.

militant faction gained enough power to forbid the celebration of “Physicists Day” and the staging of the “Archimedes” opera, and banished the “Archimedes” studio from MGU altogether.¹¹⁶²

Other controversial enthusiast-based cultural institutions shared similar fates. The MGU administration expelled the youth theater “*Nash dom*,” (Our Home) that same year.¹¹⁶³ In 1968, Novosibirsk authorities closed down the “*Pod integralom*” (Under the Integral) youth cafe for its controversial program, with the performance of the controversial bard A. A. Galich serving as the final straw. A report sent to the Komsomol Propaganda Department expressed regret over the fate of this “wonderful experiment,” while recording that young Akademgorodok scientists still had access to several jazz clubs, such as “*Specter*” (Spectrum).¹¹⁶⁴ The late 1960s also marked the peak of jazz festival fever. No subsequent festivals reached the scale of Tallinn’s in 1967, at first because of the more wary stance of the Komsomol authorities to jazz festivals, and later because of the growing popularity of rock’n’roll among youth.¹¹⁶⁵

Former Komsomol officials confirm the more challenging environment for youth initiative in cultural leisure organization. According to Butov, the official line switched from the need to support youth grassroots initiative in the 1960s to expressing wariness over the possible consequences of doing so in the 1970s. As a high-level Komsomol

¹¹⁶² S. K. Kovaleva, *Ty pomnish’, fizfak? Neformal’nye traditsii fizfaka MGU* (Moscow: Pomatur, 2003), 98, and S. K. Kovaleva, interviewed March 3, 2009.

¹¹⁶³ Costanzo, “Amateur Theaters and Amateur Publics in the Russian Republic, 1958-71.”

¹¹⁶⁴ RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 24-31. For more on “Under the Integral,” see Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), and Borzenkov, *Molodezh’ i politika*, 170.

¹¹⁶⁵ V. E. Kleinot, born 1941, interviewed February 14, 2009, and Starr, *Red and Hot*, 286.

cultural official, he frequently struggled against administrators from other Party-state bodies who, when seeing youth doing something they disapproved, “sat there at the top and waved their hand and forbid it.”¹¹⁶⁶ Baliaskaia also admitted that “not very wise Party functionaries” used “forceful directives,” which put youth off.¹¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the end of the 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the growing systematization of cultural leisure activities, as both Baliaskaia and Butov related. This systematization constituted part of a broader effort by the Komsomol from the mid-1960s onward to create a cohesive system of youth upbringing. The Komsomol, trade unions, MOC, and schools worked together to organize youth free time, with such activities increasingly in the hands of professionalized specialists.¹¹⁶⁸ While supplying more opportunities for youth leisure, this systematization and professionalization posed a further challenge to young enthusiasts who wanted to organize their own innovative cultural activities.

Conclusion

The late 1950s witnessed a new departure in the Khrushchev Kremlin’s attempt to build a socialist version of a western consumer society in the context of the Cold War. The leadership realized that the didactic-oriented aesthetic upbringing campaign, along with traditional and stodgy amateur activities, failed to reach many young people and attract them to state-monitored spaces where they would be exposed to communist time. This was especially true for those it wanted to reach most, youth who moved away from

¹¹⁶⁶ N. I. Butov, born 1944, interviewed February 16, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁷ L. K. Baliaskaia, born 1927, interviewed April 5, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁸ Krivoruchenko, *XIV – XVI s’ezdy VLKSM*, 133.

engaging with the system. By the end of the 1950s, high officials such as Karpinskii came to understand that censorship could not successfully compete on the Cold War cultural front's new battleground of leisure, pleasure, and consumption. Not only that, the hard-line policies of late 1956 and 1957, in particular the attacks on jazz and western dancing, undermined the Khrushchev administration's goal of acquiring social legitimacy through satisfying popular desires. An orthodox approach to state-sponsored popular culture likewise proved incompatible with strengthening youth leadership from below.

These factors informed the Khrushchev leadership's change in strategy in mid-1958, when the Kremlin decided to compromise with western popular culture, permitting official discourse to depict listening to some American-style jazz and occasionally engaging in western-style dances as acceptable to model young communists. Grassroots activism received even more support than previously. In both areas, top-level officials overrode the opposition of hard-line administrators to endorse the activities of soft-line cadres. This policy denoted a further move away from despotic power and greater emphasis on infrastructural power elements in the Khrushchev leadership's governing style.

Youth cafes embodied the new course on youth cultural activities. Young cafe activists, mostly lower-level Komsomol cadres, enthusiastically invested a great deal of time and energy into establishing these institutions. Cafes played bop and cool jazz, and often featured western dancing, abstract art, foreign movies, and even visitors from abroad. The Komsomol's endeavor to create a modern feel to the cafe style reflects the

Soviet authorities' growing attention to the importance of consumer design.¹¹⁶⁹ At first largely limited to well-educated young urbanites in large cities, these cafes eventually served broad swaths of youth throughout the USSR. Furthermore, youth cafes were explicitly perceived as a western form adopted for the Soviet Union's environment by local Komsomol enthusiasts. This makes them represent the kind of conjugation of native and global that Yves Cohen and Stephen Lee call attention to in their investigation of circulation, meaning how external patterns are combined with and adapted to local needs, creating innovative hybrid forms.¹¹⁷⁰

The Kremlin intended the youth cafes to be capitalist in form but socialist in content, promoting communist construction through getting young people into official settings of communist time, advancing aesthetic upbringing, and eliciting grassroots initiative. This did not match the main aims of the soft-line cafe enthusiasts, who primarily valued the atmosphere of *obshchenie* in the cafes, seeing intimate and personal interactions between individuals in a relaxed and unconstrained setting as the ideal sphere of public life, one conducive to building a soft-line vision of communism, as expressed by Likhodeev. Such divergent emphases led to conflicts between the cafe activists and the many orthodox-oriented officials in the club network during the first years of the cafes, as well as the Khrushchev leadership when it adopted a more hard-line policy in late 1962 and early 1963, censoring western popular culture. Each cafe constituted its own unique space that melded private and public elements, combining individual and

¹¹⁶⁹ Susan E. Reid, "Making Oneself at Home in the Soviet Sixties," paper presented at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies national convention, Los Angeles, CA, November 18-21, 2010, and Crowley and Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism."

¹¹⁷⁰ Yves Cohen and Stephanie Lin, "Circulatory Localities: The Example of Stalinism in the 1930s," *Kritika* 11.1. (Winter 2010): 11-45.

semi-private obshchenie around cafe tables with the public setting of a Komsomol-run establishment.

After coming to power, the Brezhnev administration opened more room for American-style jazz and recent western dances and permitted some rock music elements in the VIA groups. The mid-1960s witnessed the flowering of domestic jazz festivals and tours by jazz bands, and even visits by Soviet musicians to foreign jazz festivals, all of which contributed to the formation of jazz networks and exchanges. This, together with the appearance of official jazz radio programs, records, studies of jazz, and the mushrooming growth of jazz clubs and youth cafes, served to further legitimize jazz.

The growing state tolerance for jazz from the late 1950s onward irrevocably changed the Soviet jazz scene, as jazz moved closer to the mainstream, although still seen as excessively western by many. Many amateur jazz musicians now joined professional ensembles in state agencies and played jazz-style variety music commercially, while performing for minimal payments in youth cafes and at jazz festivals to appreciative audiences. Other jazz enthusiasts chose to not make jazz their full-time career, although many pursued jazz during their free time as promoters, critics, amateur musicians, or simply avid fans, who now could follow jazz through officially-sanctioned sources. The jazz enthusiast alternative youth culture gradually transformed into a professional cultural milieu and a jazz fan community.¹¹⁷¹ The jazz festivals, touring bands, and other forms of jazz exchanges helped integrate the Soviet jazz music community, which expanded from

¹¹⁷¹ For more on fan communities, see Simon Frith, "The Cultural Study of Popular Music," in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler eds., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 174-86; John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Essex, Pearson Education Ltd., 2009), 223-25; and Eckhardt Derschmidt, "The Disappearance of the Jazu-Kissa: Some Considerations about Japanese 'Jazz-Cafés' and Jazz-Listeners," in Sepp Linhart and Savine Frühstück eds., *The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 285-302.

semi-underground local scenes in each city to a national and even international scale. These jazz activities, together with youth cafes, enabled official discourse the opportunity to depict the USSR as a modern and progressive socialist alternative to domestic and foreign audiences, one with the attractive features of a western consumer society and without its faults.

Despite the accomodation with jazz, the Brezhnev Kremlin also pursued a number of more hard-line policies already from the start. Youth leisure organization grew increasingly militarized, focusing on sports, patriotic activities, and military preparation, with less attention paid to state-sponsored popular culture. Within the sphere of organized cultural activities, top-level policy deemphasized youth initiative and spontaneity, while underscoring youth discipline to leadership by the ideologically conscious vanguard—the Party. The growing professionalization and systematization of youth cultural leisure reinforced this trend. By downscaling youth grassroots leadership and offering largely ready-made cultural consumption options, the Brezhnev leadership moved away from the Khrushchev approach to building a socialist consumer society. Instead, it adopted a different model, where the emphasis lay on satisfying youth consumption wants while getting them into officially-monitored spaces, shaping their tastes, and instilling discipline and patriotism. The Brezhnev Kremlin put aside a central goal of the Khrushchev administration—developing grassroots initiative—and thereby retreated from the aim of activating youth for communist construction.

The year 1968, therefore, brought to a close not only the Thaw but also what might be called the “socialist sixties.”¹¹⁷² An analysis of organized cultural activities for

¹¹⁷² Scholars have begun to pay attention to the socialist sixties as a discrete historical epoch in the Soviet Union and other socialist states. See Diane P. Koenker, “Mad Men in Moscow: Sex and Style in the Soviet

young people suggests that the period from 1958 to 1968 can be treated as a distinct period, defined by the predominance of the model of a socialist consumer society described above. The growing prominence of consumption, the attention paid to young people, and the innovative efforts at reforming social structures connect the socialist sixties to developments around the globe.¹¹⁷³ This suggests intriguing parallels between socialist and capitalist contexts during this period, perhaps unsurprising due to the rise in contacts and exchanges across the Iron Curtain.

1960s,” paper presented at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies national convention, Los Angeles, CA, November 18-21, 2010; Reid, “Making Oneself at Home in the Soviet Sixties”; and Julie Hessler, “The Soviet Reception of Exhibits and Performances from the Third World,” paper presented at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies national convention, Los Angeles, CA, November 18-21, 2010. Also see the contributors to a workshop organized by Diane Koenker and Anne Gorsuch on “The Socialist 1960s: Popular Culture and the City in Global Perspective,” Urbana-Champaign, IL, June 24-26, 2010. For an earlier work that treats the Soviet sixties as a distinct period, see P. L. Vail and A. A. Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988).

¹¹⁷³ Jeremy Varon, Michael S. Foley, and John McMillian, “Time is an Ocean: The Past and Future of the Sixties” *The Sixties* 1.1 (June 2008): 1-7.

Conclusion

Many Soviet youth deeply enjoyed organized cultural events. They found pleasure and meaning in them, investing their time, energy, and emotions into state-sponsored popular culture. Some had a great deal of fun participating in conformist mass cultural activities oriented toward political propaganda and cultural enlightenment, such as Stalin-era choruses and universities of culture. Some of these young people were true believers, and such activities reinforced their faith. Others lacked better options for amateur theater, music, singing, and acquiring cultural knowledge. For them, “singing Bolshevik” bred political apathy and doubt. Most Soviet youth probably fell somewhere between these two ends of the spectrum. At the same time, a large segment of young people enjoyed more controversial activities in the sphere of state-sponsored popular culture. This included not only western music and dancing, but also acceptable criticism of Soviet reality, for instance, in the “Archimedes” opera and in debates at youth initiative clubs and youth cafes. These contributed to the development of a civic spirit and provided the basis for the growth of civil society under Gorbachev.¹¹⁷⁴ Skillfully maneuvering within the confines of the mass cultural network, young people who organized and participated in these activities played with and stretched the boundaries of the permissible in a fashion familiar to the young in any society. The confidence of these

¹¹⁷⁴ For how club spaces served as a crucial base for civil society in the Gorbachev years, see A. G. Borzenkov, *Molodezh' i politika: Vozmozhnosti i predely studencheskoi samodeiatel'nosti na vostoke Rossii (1961-1991 gg.)*, *Chast' 2* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 2002), 166-67.

youth in undertaking such testing of the limits within clubs and other cultural institutions illuminate youth socialization into the official cultural system. At the same time, it was expressed in a fashion at odds with the diary writers who sought to write themselves into the Soviet political and cultural order in a fully conformist fashion during the 1930s.¹¹⁷⁵ In other words, I argue that young people's willingness to challenge state cultural policy in "acceptable" ways, ones that they knew did not carry the risk of outside punishment, could testify to youth integration into and comfort with Soviet society, as opposed to necessarily expressing hidden resistance to its tenets. My study consequently opens the curtain on the everyday public cultural leisure activities of the vast majority of young people who did not openly deviate from the Soviet mainstream. In doing so, it questions the vision presented by Oleg Kharkhordin of Soviet official collectives as inherently coercive and repressive, with Soviet people drawing meaning, pleasure, and self-definition only from nonofficial and fully private settings, such as the home, family, and friendship cliques.¹¹⁷⁶

These findings indicate that state-sponsored cultural activities provided substantial room for youth agency. The fact that many young people found pleasure in partaking of cultural consumption offerings within clubs speaks to their agency since, according to Arjun Appadurai, consumption, pleasure, and agency are inextricably intertwined qualities: "where there is consumption, there is pleasure, and where there is pleasure there is agency."¹¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the voluntary and enthusiastic youth

¹¹⁷⁵ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 4-5.

¹¹⁷⁶ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 279-302.

¹¹⁷⁷ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7.

engagement with organized cultural activities, particularly in the years after Stalin, further underscored how state-sponsored popular culture provided space for the development of youth agency and autonomy. Millions of young people willingly performed in and helped organize amateur cultural activities that reflected the top-level cultural policy at the time. This demonstrates that, for a substantial proportion of Soviet youth, individual agency was not at all incompatible with conforming to cultural events fully sanctioned by the Kremlin. My conclusion questions much of the current writing on Soviet youth agency that emphasizes agency as inherently resistant.¹¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, while some expressed conformist agency, others knowingly engaged in cultural activities within the mass cultural network that departed from the cultural policy at that time, most frequently western music and dancing. Their actions challenged the prescribed cultural norms advocated by the leadership, while still remaining within the broader official Soviet cultural field, since they took place in club establishments. Sometimes, the same young people enjoyed both conformist and nonconformist organized cultural activities, easily crossing the boundaries set by official discourse, which suggests that the politics of popular culture mattered less to them than the aesthetic pleasure they received. Others more clearly associated their participation in organized cultural activities with their political outlook. These findings on conformist and nonconformist youth agency and the ambiguities involved therein suggest that we should be wary of using fixed subject

¹¹⁷⁸ See, among many, Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1-9; Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivisation and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 45-66; and Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 227-350. However, for other examples of conformist agency in the Soviet context, see Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-26, 38-70, 87-120; Igal Halpin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 1-38; and Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*.

positions, such as Alexei Yurchak's "svoi," in analyzing youth identities.¹¹⁷⁹ Instead of thinking in terms of fixed categories of subject positions, a more productive heuristic tool might involve envisioning a spectrum of constantly changing positions that range from conformism to nonconformism. Individual agency emerged when young people adopted positions along this spectrum, choices mediated by the structures of official culture, the social background of individuals, their exposure to alternative sources of knowledge, as well as the contingency of personal preference.

The availability of a spectrum of diverse positions within the Soviet cultural mainstream resulted from major tensions between hard-line and soft-line policy approaches to organized cultural activities. From the early Soviet years, those inclined toward ideological militancy struggled with those favoring pluralism and tolerance over divergent visions of the correct path to an ideal communist future. In state-sponsored popular culture, these battles centered over whether to stress political propaganda or entertainment; disciplined obedience to an ideological conscious vanguard or the initiative and spontaneity of the masses; rejection or acceptance of western popular culture; and finally, the use of harsh coercion or club activities to deal with juvenile "delinquency." Many officials stood close to the center of the spectrum on these issues, while others pushed for either a more soft-line or more hard-line course, with the Moscow House of Folk Art exemplifying the latter.

¹¹⁷⁹ Alexei Yurchak presents the subject position of "svoi" as referring to those who believed in communism overall and faithfully reproduced official discourse, while reinterpreting its meaning to accommodate their own: Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 77-125. For other criticism of the subject positions deployed by Yurchak, see Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3-25.

Top-level cultural policy resulted from a combination of conflicts between those favoring either ideological militancy or pluralism, along with domestic and foreign developments that convinced moderates to support one or the other at various times. My conclusions here challenge recent accounts of state policies in the Thaw, most notably Miriam Dobson's. She cast doubt on the impact of hard-line versus soft-line rivalries to argue that officials changed their outlooks due to an evolving mixture of optimism and anxiety.¹¹⁸⁰ While she correctly identified optimism and anxiety as central to Thaw policymaking, I contend that struggles between militant and pluralist-oriented cadres had just as much significance to shaping cultural policy and the everyday cultural reality of youth in clubs, best illustrated by the 1962 club worker conferences. These and other examples of extensive debates within official rhetoric by young and older advocates of western popular culture, youth initiative clubs, youth cafes, and other daring cultural forms undermines Yurchak's notion of the growing irrelevance of public discourse for everyday youth lives after 1953.¹¹⁸¹ Moreover, if the struggles for hegemony within capitalist popular culture overwhelmingly revolve around social class, my investigation, while fully acknowledging the role of class, emphasizes that in the Soviet context ideological differences over perspectives on the future communist society played a large part as well.¹¹⁸²

¹¹⁸⁰ Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 156-85, and Dobson, "Contesting the Paradigms of De-Stalinization: Readers' Responses to One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," *Slavic Review* 64.3 (Fall 2005): 580-600.

¹¹⁸¹ His argument may better describe the 1970s and 1980s than the Thaw: Yurchak, *Everything was Forever*, 36-76.

¹¹⁸² On capitalist contexts, see Tony Bennett, "Introduction: Popular Culture and the 'Turn to Gramsci,'" in Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer, and Janet Woollcott eds., *Popular Culture and Social Relations* (Philadelphia:

The battles between hard-line and soft-line advocates suggest the lack of cohesion within the Party-state and the consequent difficulties in enacting central policies. Certainly, the leadership's stance played a defining role in setting the terms of cultural policy on a broad scale and in determining the official discourse's expression of what constituted appropriate and recommended cultural activities. This public rhetoric demonstrates the shifting definitions of the New Soviet Man and Woman over time, with model young communist citizens having greater scope to practice a wide variety of cultural forms and to engage in grassroots activism during more tolerant periods. Nonetheless, top-level cultural policy and its accompanying discourse did not fully determine state-sponsored popular culture at the grassroots level where state policy met everyday experience. Local cultural officials, such as club managers, had significant scope to adopt more or less flexible cultural policies than the Party line at the time. On the one hand, these divergent positions resulted from the individual ideological perspective of cultural officials. On the other hand, systemic incentives facing those managing cultural institutions, namely the need to meet financial plan demands, established conditions that sometimes weighed against the Kremlin's explicit desires, generally in a more moderate direction. The Soviet leadership obliged club directors both to fulfill financial plans, based on fee-paying customers, and to enact the Party's recommended cultural program, with different control agencies often responsible for ensuring each of these goals.¹¹⁸³ This arrangement set the stage for inevitable conflicts in

Open University Press, 1986), xi-xix, and Stuart Hall, "Popular Culture and the State," in Bennett, Mercer, and Woolcott eds., *Popular Culture and Social Relations*, 22-49.

¹¹⁸³ For another example of such tensions, see Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-10.

cases where the Party line failed to match popular youth desires for club activities. Some club managers, usually the ones already leaning toward a more flexible ideological viewpoint, chose to provide revenue-generating western dances that went beyond the limits set by top-level cultural policy. An understanding of Soviet official culture, thus, cannot be reduced to examining the leadership's cultural policy, but must also encompass the reality of its implementation at the grassroots level.

Such analyses should capture both central and regional contexts.¹¹⁸⁴ Comparing Moscow and Saratov reveals that, during periods of intolerant cultural policy at the top, club institutions within capital cities suffered from more stringent oversight by ideological control organs. Thus, in Saratov and other provincial cities, young people generally had more opportunities for pursuing western popular culture during the crackdown of the late Stalin years. However, when the Kremlin pursued a more soft-line course, capital cities often proved the first to launch innovations, such as youth initiative clubs and youth cafes, with these cultural activities reaching the provinces only after initial experimentation in Moscow and Leningrad. A comparison of different locales also underscores the importance of the individual proclivities of those officials in charge of cultural activities in that area to determining the kinds of activities encouraged therein, highlighting the diversity inherent in the Soviet system.

My examination sheds light on the tensions between consumption and ideology within Soviet official culture. On one level, club managers strove to achieve the financial aspects of the plan and consequently benefit materially, whether through attaining

¹¹⁸⁴ For more on the importance of regional-oriented analysis, see Donald J. Raleigh, "Introduction," in Donald J. Raleigh ed., *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2001), 1-14.

bonuses or keeping their job. On another level, the cultural consumption desires of young people themselves undermined the Kremlin's cultural policies during periods of militancy, illustrating how the agentive actions of individual youth shaped the Soviet cultural field.¹¹⁸⁵ My findings here question Stephen Lovell's conclusion that popular consumption desires played an insignificant role in the provision of official cultural products and services in the USSR.¹¹⁸⁶

A study of organized cultural activities helps underscore the absence of clearly defined and separate Soviet public and private spheres.¹¹⁸⁷ In trade union clubs, youth cafes, and other mass cultural institutions, young people engaged in fun, pleasurable, and deeply meaningful activities often associated with private life, such as *obshchenie* and courting. Concomitantly, these establishments undeniably represented public and state-managed settings, sponsored by the Party to ensure that youth spend their leisure in socialist spaces. Each organized cultural activity can then be said to represent a separate layer in the broader Soviet space, one that combined facets traditionally associated with either the public or private sphere. This mixture of multiple elements parallels recent

¹¹⁸⁵ For how individual youth agency shaped broader historical processes, see Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 113-27.

¹¹⁸⁶ Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 18.

¹¹⁸⁷ Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "Introduction: Mapping Private Spheres in the Soviet Context," in Lewis H. Siegelbaum ed., *Borders of Socialism: Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1-21. For the opposing position, see Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), and Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*, 1-34, 75-122.

work on public and private in western contexts, indicating the need to reassess the concept of “public sphere” altogether.¹¹⁸⁸

Within the socialist public spaces of the Soviet mass cultural network, youth who played and listened to western music and engaged in western dancing during the postwar decades inevitably participated in the Cold War’s cultural front, as part of the larger superpower battle for the hearts and minds of domestic and foreign audiences. Jazz, rock’n’roll, the foxtrot, the twist, the charleston and other cultural activities associated with the US and western Europe had many fans among young Soviet citizens. Militant Soviet ideologues inveighed against western cultural forms for undermining the Cold War struggle and communist construction. Tolerant cultural figures, as embodied by L. I. Likhodeev and V. P. Aksenov, rejected such claims, calling for cultural pluralism and the adoption of western cultural genres if they fit Soviet needs and popular desires. This debate represented a fundamental part of the broader Soviet dialogue about young people and the appropriate path to communism. Therefore, western popular culture had a powerful impact both on discourse and policy regarding young people and on youth everyday life. In part, this resulted from the efforts of western governments to use cultural propaganda to appeal to Soviet youth.¹¹⁸⁹ Such Cold War endeavors played a

¹¹⁸⁸ For work on the public and private in western contexts, see for example Victoria de Grazia, “Introduction,” in Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 1-10. For a more extensive discussion of “public sphere,” see Peter U. Hohendahl and Marc Silberman, “Critical Theory, Public Sphere and Culture. Jurgen Habermas and His Critics,” *New German Critique* 16 (Winter 1979): 89-118.

¹¹⁸⁹ David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 441-67; Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 121-228; and Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 46-136.

central role in the globalization of US culture during the second half of the twentieth century.¹¹⁹⁰

My investigation of organized cultural activities likewise draws attention to the soft-line shift associated with Stalin's death and the ascendance of new leaders to the Kremlin. Soon after March 1953, top officials offered young people a consumerist social contract, increasing the provision of organized cultural activities, making them more entertaining and less politicized, and tolerating a degree of western content, in exchange for youth social support. Likewise, the Kremlin now aimed to use club events to reign in juvenile "delinquency." Not least, the Thaw-era leadership rejected the Stalinist emphasis on discipline and militarism to highlight youth initiative and spontaneity, both to develop youth capacities for self-governance in the communist future and to appeal to youth desires. Doing so inspired enthusiastic participation by young people in the Soviet system, with these youth investing a great deal of their free time, energy, and emotions into club activities, for instance, in youth initiative clubs and youth cafes. This finding disputes Juliane Fürst's claim that Soviet youth from 1945 onward generally shirked the system and focused on subcultures and consumption.¹¹⁹¹ Taken together, such evidence challenges recent scholarship that downplays the significance of Stalin's death and

¹¹⁹⁰ For more on the globalization of US culture as tied to US foreign policy, see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999); Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds., *"Here, There and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture"* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000); and Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

¹¹⁹¹ Specifically, she claimed that from the postwar Stalin years, "despite short flames of new enthusiasm," youth were characterized by "consumption, subcultures and shirking the system." See Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism, 1945-56* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

attributes changes in the mid-1950s largely to broad social developments such as the completion of postwar reconstruction.¹¹⁹²

These reforms during the early Thaw spotlight how, in an effort to win the Cold War competition for the hearts and minds of the population while also advancing communist construction, the post-Stalin leadership attempted to build a socialist alternative to a western modern consumer society. This socialist consumer society would offer the worthy aspects of a western consumer society, including fun entertainment and a progressive feel, without suffering from the problems of class struggle, individualism, or excessive consumerism. The Party-state, furthermore, intended to actively compete with western offerings by presenting Soviet cultural options as superior to and as more refined than supposedly vulgar, unworthy, and inferior western ones.¹¹⁹³ By the late 1950s, the Kremlin decided that it needed not simply to appeal to but also to actively shape young people's aesthetic tastes. It launched the aesthetic upbringing campaign, aimed at socially engineering a population whose cultural preferences fit the Soviet leadership's vision.¹¹⁹⁴ Going beyond previous scholarship on western contexts that has shown how cultural tastes created social status hierarchies, my examination draws attention to how cultural

¹¹⁹² Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 296–336; Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 20–29; and Fürst, Polly Jones and Susan Morrissey, “The Relaunch of the Soviet Project, 1945–64: Introduction,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86.2 (April 2008): 201–07.

¹¹⁹³ In similarity to the policies of the Czechoslovak state after 1968. See Paulina Bren, “Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall ... Is the West the Fairest of Them All? Czechoslovak Normalization and Its (Dis)Contents,” *Kritika* 9.4 (Fall 2008): 831–54.

¹¹⁹⁴ On Thaw-era management of material consumption wants, see Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union,” *Slavic Review* 61.2 (Summer 2002): 211–52.

tastes can also serve as a tool of modern governance and population politics.¹¹⁹⁵ The aesthetic upbringing campaign constituted part of a broader endeavor to instill a Thaw-era version of culturedness, one expanding beyond elites to aim at all youth, and having the Cold War struggle as a key motivating factor along with communist construction. Realizing the failure of didactic aesthetic upbringing activities to reach many young people, at the end of the 1950s the authorities once again endeavored to appeal to youth desires while trying to deal with the challenge of preventing uncontrollably rapid growth of consumption wants, for example in the demands for more youth cafes.¹¹⁹⁶ In sum, the post-Stalin leadership's venture to build a socialist consumer society represented a Soviet "multiple modernity," one marked as unique by a conscious effort of the political leadership to appeal to consumer wants, while trying to elicit initiative from below, to control leisure time, and to shape aesthetic tastes.¹¹⁹⁷ In the process, the Thaw-era Kremlin moved away from the late Stalinist reliance on despotic power and introduced more infrastructural power elements into its ruling style. However, true infrastructural power remained elusive, as illustrated by the top-level efforts to control and manage the population through culture and leisure in the post-Stalin years.

These Thaw-era transformations in the Soviet leadership's youth policies played a central role in the creation of a post-Stalin generation, one with a distinct generational

¹¹⁹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Richard Nice trans. and ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 466-85, and Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 163-68.

¹¹⁹⁶ For more on this challenge, see David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism," in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 3-52.

¹¹⁹⁷ On "multiple modernities," see Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzak Sternberg, "Analyzing Our Time: A Sociological Problématique," in Eliezer Ben-Rafael with Yitzak Sternberg eds., *Identity, Culture, and Globalization* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 3-17.

consciousness. Undeniably, broader social processes that began in the late Stalin years, such as postwar reconstruction and the growth of higher education, contributed to creating this generation. Nonetheless, the fact that the post-Stalin leadership directed official discourse and youth policy to focus on developing youth initiative, to underline the importance of satisfying youth cultural and material consumption wants, and generally to spotlight the role of youth in society proved more essential to creating a sense of unity, cohesion, and shared consciousness among the post-Stalin generation. These ideas, conveyed at the grassroots level of Komsomol and trade union meetings, and in the press, cinema, radio, and other media helped convince many young people of their special and prominent status, their right to have their desires satisfied, and their ability to participate in the system through community activism. The generational consciousness of the post-Stalin generation was further strengthened in the late 1950s by the explicit discussion of generational differences and tensions as part of the hard-line shift. Consequently, unlike what Fürst identified as the last Stalin generation, the post-Stalin generation constituted an active one, with its members ready to press openly for what they wanted and thought they deserved.¹¹⁹⁸ Their willingness to do so expressed itself in youth enthusiasm for and extensive voluntary efforts on behalf of youth initiative clubs and youth cafes. At the same time, the global context of youth activism throughout the 1950s and 1960s locates young Soviet citizens within a worldwide pattern.¹¹⁹⁹ Of

¹¹⁹⁸ On active and passive generations, see Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner, "Introduction," in Jane Edmunds and Bryan S. Turner eds., *Generational Consciousness, Narrative, and Politics* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 1-12, and Edmunds and Turner, *Generations, Culture and Society* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 16-23.

¹¹⁹⁹ On global youth movements at this time, see John Springhall, *Youth Popular Culture, and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Claire Wallace and Sijka Kovatcheva, *Youth in Society: The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West*

course, hardly all youth in the post-Stalin generation demonstrated such grassroots initiative and willingness to publicly challenge traditions; enough did, however, to create a perception of a distinct generation, both among the age cohort growing up after Stalin and in Soviet society as a whole.¹²⁰⁰

With members spanning the last Stalin and the post-Stalin generation, the jazz enthusiast alternative youth culture provides insights on the impact of top-level policy on cultural practices on the margins of acceptability. The late Stalinist censure of jazz as an unacceptably western cultural form in the context of the escalating Cold War struggle made previously fully acceptable conduct illegitimate. This inspired the rise of a counterculture of jazz fans, who united to undertake illegal activities to access the newest forms of jazz and to engage in deceptive practices to play this music. The Soviet leadership's cultural policy, therefore, created deviance, with jazz enthusiasts labeled as "deviant" regardless of whether they consciously sought to oppose the authorities or not. In this, the jazz enthusiast alternative youth culture differed from many other youth countercultures that centered on deliberate and conscious spectacular opposition to the cultural mainstream, whether Soviet *stiliagi* or western Mods and Rockers, *Halbstarken*, or beatniks.¹²⁰¹ The *stiliagi* alternative youth culture provided a much better outlet for

Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); and Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 310-33.

¹²⁰⁰ For the Thaw being associated with and focusing on youth, see L. B. Brusilovskaia, *Kul'tura povsednevnosti v epokhu "otpeleli": Metamorfozy stilia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo URAO, 2001), 169-74.

¹²⁰¹ On *stiliagi* as deliberately oppositional, see Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 220-22. For non-Soviet countercultures, see John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class," in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1975]), 3-59; Michael Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 1-29; Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, "Introduction," in Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris eds., *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (New York: Palgrave

those youth who wanted to express their discontent with the USSR. After Stalin's death, jazz enthusiasts streamed into official organized cultural activities as the new authorities expressed tolerance for jazz, which underlines the lack of oppositional motivation among jazz enthusiasts. These youth eagerly performed within state-monitored spaces and helped organize variety and jazz bands, jazz clubs, youth cafes, jazz festivals, and other state-sponsored cultural activities, further illustrating their focus on aesthetics as opposed to intentional subversion and nonconformism. Many jazz enthusiasts report having believed in a Thaw-era reformist vision of communism when young. This challenges the notion that evidence of socialist youth showing a deep interest in some facets of western culture should be read as a rejection of Soviet reality and preference for a western way of life. In other words, Soviet youth could like both Khrushchev and Coltrane.¹²⁰²

As jazz slowly moved into the mainstream during the 1960s, musicians gained the opportunity to form extensive domestic and international jazz networks, partake in jazz exchanges, and join professional groups where they made a living playing this music. Jazz fans enjoyed jazz music in official venues, listened to jazz on the Soviet radio, purchased state-produced records, garnered information on jazz from jazz clubs, and read pieces on jazz appreciation published in newspapers and magazines. The jazz enthusiast alternative youth culture became transformed into a professional cultural milieu and a jazz fan community, once again as a result of a shift in top-level cultural policy.

Macmillan, 2004), 1-18; and Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹²⁰² John W. Coltrane, a prominent and innovative US saxophonist of the 1940s-60s, played in the bebop, hard bop, and free jazz styles. Just like jazz enthusiasts in the 1950s and 1960s, Soviet rock fans in the 1970s could "be passionate about both Lenin and Led Zeppelin," in the words of Yurchak. See his *Everything was Forever*, 219.

Although jazz received more room in the mid-1960s after the brief chill of the last Khrushchev years, the Brezhnev leadership increasingly deemphasized youth grassroots initiative and stressed discipline and militarism as part of a hard-line shift, which reached its apogee with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Along with this came a growing professionalization and systematization of state-sponsored popular cultural provision for young people. By removing support for youth community leadership in organized cultural activities and other spheres of life, while offering largely ready-made cultural consumption options, the Brezhnev administration retreated from the goal of activating youth. In doing so, it moved away from the Khrushchev model of building a socialist alternative to a western consumer society through satisfying youth desires while shaping youth tastes and leisure habits and eliciting grassroots initiative. We can then equate the “socialist sixties,” 1958 to 1968, with the dominance of this model of building a socialist alternative consumer society. The Brezhnev Kremlin abandoned arguably its most crucial element: getting young people actively involved in the Soviet system. Without soliciting meaningful youth community engagement, without young people having the opportunity to feel like true stakeholders in communist construction, the Brezhnev leadership left itself in an unenviable position. Youth, lacking an appealing means of engaging in communist construction that made them feel like true participants in the Soviet project, grew apathetic and focused on consumerism and nonofficial activities. For the 1970s and 1980s, the heuristic model of more distinct and less porous public and private spheres, as depicted in the traditional narrative, may be more applicable than for the 1950s and 1960s, with further research needed to cast light on this topic. By effectively abandoning the project of building communism, the Brezhnev leadership, I argue, moved toward a

model of a consumer society that hardly differed in any meaningful and attractive fashion from those in western Europe and America. Under Brezhnev, the Soviet Union was forced to compete with western states only in its ability to provide cultural and material consumption products and services. This was a struggle it would find a challenge to win.

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