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COOL NOTES IN AN INVISIBLE WAR: THE USE OF RADIO AND MUSIC IN THE COLD
WAR FROM 1953 TO 1968

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

By

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2019

Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

May 8, 2019

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
SUPERVISION BY Matthew R. Crooker ENTITLED: Cool Notes in an Invisible War:
The Use of Radio and Music in the Cold War from 1953 to 1968 BE ACCEPTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF Master
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ABSTRACT

Crooker, Matthew R. M.A. Department of History, Wright State University, 2019. *Cool Notes in an Invisible War: The Use of Radio and Music in the Cold War from 1953 to 1968.*

The current status of the literature involving radio broadcasts and music from the Cold War delves into either one area of concentration or the other. That is, either historians have little to no mention of radio, or historians explore music without mentioning radio. There are no studies that solely focus on the use of radio and music in combination with one another. This is what the thesis offers to this area of concentration. In addition to examining the use of radio and music in combination with one another, this work delves into radio directly after the conclusion of the Second World War and what its purpose would be as the Cold War progressed. Other areas of concentration are three music genres popular from 1953 to 1968, which helped with subversion against the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states. These three music styles are: jazz, rock and roll, and British pop music with a heavy focus on the Beatles. This thesis will argue that radio and music, in combination with one another, did contribute as a significant factor to the peaceful demise of the Soviet Union in the long term. In addition, both were used as a subversive measure that allowed those behind the Iron Curtain to experience Western culture.

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DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this work to my Dad who always told me that if I put my mind to anything in life, I will accomplish whatever I set out to do. Your words ring true in this thesis. You knew of this project during my first year in graduate school, and I wish you were here in person so I could hear your comments, but I know you were with me in spirit as I wrote this. I love and miss you more than anyone will ever know. Secondly, I would like to thank my Mom for helping me during this process. You have been with me the entire way and have encouraged me. Thirdly, I would like to thank Charles DeMasie and Riza Miklowski. Both of you have made graduate school fun during the tough times and for providing me with critical feedback for this study. Fourth, I would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Winkler for his guidance and comments in writing this piece and for his recommendation of reading *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*. You believed in this idea from the beginning and stuck with me as I wrote this. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Drew Swanson and Dr. Susan Carrafiello. You both have been extremely helpful and made this the best possible product it could be. Additionally, I would like to thank everyone who has doubted this project from when I first conceived the idea. Telling me this was not feasible only motivated me more to prove all of you wrong. I thank you for that. Lastly, this writing is dedicated to those who have a passion for the technological side of the Cold War and adore music as much as I do.

INTRODUCTION

In the words of Chuck Berry, “My heart beatin’ rhythm, And my soul keep-a singing the blues, Roll over Beethoven and tell Tchaikovsky the news.”¹ These lyrics seemed innocent to many listeners who heard “Roll Over Beethoven,” but this song resonated politically with other listeners across the globe. This was especially true within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War with the formation of radio stations in the early 1950s until 1968. When people hear the term Cold War, many immediately think of the constant nuclear threat that persisted between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, there were other factors at work during this time period, including the use of radio broadcasts and music of three genres: jazz, rock and roll, and music of the British Invasion, to change the mindset of people within the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union. Both, in correlation with one another, would be an effective tool for the United States to use against the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1968.

Most historical scholarship on the Cold War pertains to the overarching events that consumed the period from the end of the Second World War until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. These include the Korean War from 1950-1953, the Vietnam War, 1964 to 1973, and the American efforts to contain Communism in a hard power diplomatic manner. Historians have discussed the advent of nuclear weapons by both the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as their use and production by other countries as a deterrent against future conflicts. In addition to the onset of nuclear weapons, there was the creation of intercontinental ballistic missiles that were capable of striking any location in the world. Coinciding with the creation of these new weapons were international political conflicts that could have resulted in their ultimate testing

¹ Chuck Berry, "Roll Over Beethoven Lyrics," MetroLyrics, accessed February 1, 2018. <http://www.metrolyrics.com/roll-over-beethoven-lyrics-chuck-berry.html>.

and use in various scenarios. For example, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of a nuclear holocaust. Lastly, some historians point to Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* as being a crucial factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union during the late 1980s until 1991. With all of these memorable events which occurred in just short of fifty years, there must be a question raised about the contributions made by American and Western allies toward the demise of the Soviet Union. During this span, the government of the Soviet Union had a grasp on all measures of life and controlled what information was released to the public and what was withheld. Therefore, the constant pressure of nuclear weapons did not cause the Soviet Union to collapse. There must have been some type of other inter-workings present, at the time, and used by the United States and its Western allies.

There were other factors at work during the Cold War. One of the most important aspects was the cultural dimension. Part of this cultural element of the Cold War was the use of radio broadcasting to promote agendas. In the case of the United States, it was to promote American ideas and cultural elements to those under Communist rule. This is often missed by scholars when discussing the Cold War for two main reasons. The first is that radio's impact is discounted by observers in the present day as other media, such as the internet, become more prevalent. However, the use of radio was one of the most important, if not the most important, form for the United States and the Western Allies during the Cold War. By using radio, the United States and their Western Allies could promote their own agenda and broadcast information to the other side of the "Iron Curtain." The United States could also project information to counteract radio broadcasts and media coverage that promoted the ideals of the Soviet Union. By using radio and broadcasting the information in a non-censored manner, the United States employed a method known as soft power diplomacy. As Joseph Nye Jr. has argued "the soft power of a country rests

primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).”² The United States effectively used this diplomacy to challenge the Soviet Union on a different front, compared to another approach they practiced during this time in utilizing a hard power diplomatic approach, which includes the military. All of these were served the purpose to achieve a victory over the Soviet Union. Most importantly, “soft power rests on the ability to shape the preference of others.”³ Therefore, radio-based propaganda was the essential tool that United States officials believed they needed to shape the preferences of people behind the Iron Curtain.

Despite the numerous, and sometimes effective, attempts by the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc states to jam radio transmissions, the United States successfully broadcast subversive information. The United States delivered broadcasts that included what listeners wanted to hear and projected programs that focused on the American political agenda. The United States chose to do the former and beamed different programs that suited the needs of the listeners. This included unaltered news updates, political commentaries, and forms of entertainment which provided listeners with a reprieve from the daily politics that were heard from their own state media. Included in the entertainment category was music. As historian A. Ross Johnson has described, the purpose of RFE (Radio Free Europe) and RL (Radio Liberty) “was to provide listeners with an intellectual bridge to Western Europe and the United States and a factual basis for comprehending their own lives and the world around them, so as to preserve

² Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 11.

³ Nye Jr., *Soft Power*, 5.

the independent thinking that the controlled domestic media sought to prevent or suppress.”⁴ In the long term, music, among all of the radio offerings, was one of the United States’ most effective tools in bringing a peaceful demise of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union’s grasp of Eastern Europe.

The musical programming from various radio stations, such as Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberation/Radio Liberty, and Voice of America, attracted listeners of all ages and this is the second reason why the cultural aspect, regarding radio broadcasts, is often overlooked by those discussing the Cold War. The musical programs were intended to target all ages, but it was the youth of the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union who tuned into the broadcasts more frequently to hear the latest Western music. If the Soviet Union could not manage the youth and ensure they believed in the Soviet sponsored agenda, then the Soviet government would begin to suffer as the youth matured into adults. The opinions of this age group ultimately contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union and the loosened grip of the Eastern European states. This means as they aged, these youth challenged the typical Soviet agenda moving forward. Therefore, if the Soviet Union could not deliver the cultural programming desired, that undermined its claims of superiority to the West and this affected future generations.

Following the death of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in 1953, there was a decrease in the control over all aspects of daily life within not only the Soviet Union itself, but within the Eastern European states as well. Eastern European countries could now control and allow what got into their countries from the West. As the 1960s approached, it became evident there was change and the youth held different beliefs than the previous generations before them. By the end

⁴ A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2010), 6.

of the 1960s, the case can be made that the use of radio broadcasts, particularly musical programming, did add to the changing mindset of the Soviet youth, as well as the youth within the Eastern European bloc.

As jazz contributed to the changing beliefs of the Soviet youth after the passing of their leader, the Soviets now had to control the broadcasting of different radio programs. In order to avoid persuasion from the West and the United States, the Soviet Union jammed radio broadcasts. Not only was the aim to prohibit broadcasts about news and political commentary that would conflict with the Communist narrative, but the jamming also concentrated on music broadcasts. The jamming of radio broadcasts included one of the most influential programs of the Cold War, *Music USA*. This jazz program was “ranked as the most popular-to the consternation of Soviet officials, who tried to jam the broadcasts.”⁵ This demonstrates how influential the use of radio and music were, when used in combination with one another. Presumably if the Soviet Union wanted to block the broadcast of musical Western programming from the West and the United States broadcast into the Soviet Union, then the same can be said for the Eastern European states as well.

While the Soviet Union attempted to block jazz, rock and roll was another musical genre for which the Soviet Union and Eastern European states were unprepared. Although created and invented in the United States during the 1950s, it was not long after that the United States and the Western Allies decided to broadcast this new music behind the Iron Curtain. Radio Free Europe became the most influential radio station to broadcast rock music there. The Munich,

⁵ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 24.

Germany location of Radio Free Europe, was the most ambitious in creating rock programs.⁶ This new music gave the United States and its Western Allies another genre to use against the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states.

The Eastern European states were greatly affected by rock and roll because the youth were intrigued by this new music. Olaf Leitner's "Rock Music in the GDR: An Epitaph" detailed how "rock music...made it to the GDR [German Democratic Republic] via Western media at the beginning of the rock 'n' roll age and was imitated with enthusiasm."⁷ Nicholas J. Schlosser's *Cold War on the Airwaves: The Radio Propaganda War Against East Germany* described the importance of radio in the Cold War, but also demonstrated how vital music was to the effort made by the Western side. Schlosser aligns with Leitner and solidified his argument about the impact rock and roll had on Eastern Europe, including Eastern Germany. Schlosser contended that at the start of the 1960s, "it had become apparent that German listeners had an appetite for the newest popular music coming from the United States."⁸ Schlosser further elaborated that "the GDR's Communist leadership saw rock-and-roll and other Western pop music as overly commercial, degenerate, and a threat to the construction of a socialist system in East Germany."⁹ Although not explicitly mentioned, the youth in East Germany were the targeted group when playing rock and roll music during the broadcasts.

⁶ Timothy Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 86.

⁷ Olaf Leitner, "Rock Music in the GDR: An Epitaph," in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 21.

⁸ Nicholas Schlosser, *Cold War on the Airwaves: The Radio Propaganda War Against East Germany* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 165.

⁹ Ibid.

The youth of Poland was the focus of different radio stations, and they experienced a culture change parallel with East Germany. For example, as Tom Junes has explained, “youths preferred to listen to jazz and dance the boogie or the rumba rather than take part in the officially promoted recreational evenings featuring traditional dance.”¹⁰ The music in Poland contributed to cultural change because “the popularization of jazz over the airwaves also brought the sound of rock and roll to the Polish public, and soon a fledgling Polish rock scene emerged, with Polish bands imitating this youthful American style of music.”¹¹ Therefore, these two forms of music from the West shaped the popular opinion of the youth moving forward.

The third musical genre on the airwaves was the pop sound of the British Invasion. Incorporating the melodies of American music such as blues and rock and roll, British bands started to play American hits. A short period of time after playing jazz and rock and roll tunes over the radio, British pop was broadcast over the Iron Curtain. One of the most influential bands for Soviet listeners was the Beatles. Radio stations broadcast their songs intentionally into the Soviet Union to give listeners a whole new genre of music to anticipate in their broadcasts.

The combination of jazz, rock and roll, and British pop music resulted in shaping different viewpoints within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, music needed radio in order to reach the masses. Although there were different methods of obtaining Western music, through smuggling when crossing different borders from Western Europe into Eastern Europe, it was radio which played the powerful mediator. Listeners could tune their shortwave radios to

¹⁰ Tom Junes, “Facing the Music: How the Foundations of Socialism Were Rocked in Communist Poland,” in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc: Youth Cultures, Music, and the State in Russia and Eastern Europe*, ed. William Jay Risch (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 231.

¹¹ Junes, “Facing the Music,” 231.

hear new music being broadcast from the big three radio stations, and other radio stations, such as Radio Luxembourg. The various authors mentioned thus far have argued for the importance of either radio or music. However, no scholar has yet deliberately delved into how both of these methods worked in conjunction with one another. Furthermore, no assertion has been made about how music, via radio, was one of the unique ways the United States and Western allies were able to bring the Soviet Union down, along with their Eastern European influenced sector. Therefore, this thesis argues how radio broadcasts, among the various musical programs played a key soft power subversive role, and that anecdotal evidence suggests it must be considered from the beginning of the Cold War as a successful component in the containment to collapse of the Soviet Union and empire. The thesis proceeds chronologically beginning with the formation and urgency of establishing radio stations. The second chapter investigates jazz and Willis Conover's *Music USA* program, primarily. Following jazz, the third chapter examines rock and roll, and the fourth chapter and final genre is British pop, featuring the Beatles.

Until now, there have been no efforts in the literature to show how the use of radio broadcasts and music worked in conjunction with one another. No author has covered the years of 1953-1968, specifically, to follow the change and trickle-down effect Joseph Stalin's death had on the Soviet Union, with specific focus on the openness and prohibition of music that resulted following his death. After this event, the Eastern European states, and the Soviet Union, were definitively impacted by music broadcasts. This thesis will provide a fresh perspective on the Cold War that would have otherwise gone unnoticed in the academic community, particularly that of Cold War historians, and specifically historians who concentrate on the cultural aspect of the war. Lastly, this study utilizes recent declassified sources that were put onto the internet within the past decade and searchable via the Freedom of Information Act Reading Room.

CHAPTER ONE: CREATING A NEW PEACEFUL WEAPON FOR INFLUENCE

The after effects of World War II were profound within Europe due to the destruction created by the war. The weakened countries to be recruited under the realm of the emerging super powers in the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union, respectively, had commenced. This new conflict persisted for the next half century until the eventual fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, before the demise of the Soviet Union, there were many encounters waged on different fronts, one being the utilization of radio to promote each side's agenda. During this time, the United States and Soviet Union battled to promote their ideas across Europe and elsewhere via hard diplomacy or soft diplomacy. George F. Kennan in 1947 developed one of the first strategies to prevent the Soviets from promoting their agenda abroad. He was the first person within the Truman administration to create a policy to combat possible Soviet advances in the post Second World War world, which became known as containment.

The utilization of hard power diplomacy and soft power diplomacy helped in implementing the use of containment. Regarding hard diplomacy, one of the first major conflict zones where this transpired was in Korea in 1950. During the latter portion of President Harry S. Truman's administration and into the first year of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration, the conflict waged until a stalemate agreement concluded the war. North Korea remained a Communist power, and South Korea remained a democratic ally of the United States. Another major conflict the United States had to contend with was the ongoing involvement in the Vietnam War. These examples of hard diplomacy, which involved the use of military power, show how the United States tried to promote their containment policy on countries which were under the risk of Soviet intervention and Communist ideals.

The hard diplomacy methods discussed for promoting American principles abroad while attempting to stop the Soviet Union from upholding their own ideals was a strenuous and costly process for the United States. Americans grew weary of what the United States did to popularize their ideals in foreign countries, resulting in pushback from the public. Therefore, there had to be a new adaptation of the containment policy which George F. Kennan drew up, especially during and after the Korean conflict. The new modifications would attempt to garner public support, while avoiding the public backlash that resulted from the hard diplomacy measures taken. The new and safer option in the war against the Soviet Union was the soft diplomacy route.

Soft diplomacy had many benefits compared to hard diplomacy. First, it was far less likely to have someone get killed compared to hard power diplomacy. Secondly, the United States could also create a new front against the Soviet Union in safer and peaceful ways, rather than by using military force and creating another possible global conflict. Third, the soft power diplomacy strategy was more appealing because there were various ways the method could be implemented. Plus, if strategists took the right course, the countries targeted would want to have more of what was being offered, such as cultural ideas. Soft power diplomacy would soon prove to be the more effective option against the Soviet Union in the ongoing decades.

Regarding soft power diplomacy, there were measures taken by the Soviet Union to prevent Western influence following the Second World War. In 1946, under the direction of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, policies were established to prevent Soviet citizens from being influenced by the West and this became known as Zhdanovshchina. Although the policies were intended for daily publications, the focus soon changed to other sectors including music and

theatre.¹² This policy went as far as targeting Dmitri Shostakovich, a Soviet composer, because his music “was criticized for the un-Soviet formalism of his compositions.”¹³ Therefore, the Soviet Union, especially Stalin, were aware of the effects soft power diplomacy through culture and music could have on citizens shortly after World War II.

The soft diplomacy effort would effectively utilize a new branch of warfare on a much broader scope and became known as psychological warfare. This method, used during the Truman administration, helped the United States gain an advantage over the Soviet Union. As John Lewis Gaddis mentioned in *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*:

Kennan saw the Soviet challenge as largely psychological in nature, his recommendations for dealing with it tended to take on a psychological character as well: the goal was to produce in the minds of potential adversaries, as well as potential allies and the American people, attitudes that would facilitate the emergence of an international order more favorable to the interests of the United States.¹⁴

Therefore, the United States had to gain a psychological advantage over the Soviet Union to persuade people to think of the United States positively, compared to the Soviet Union. There were multiple ways the United States could implement such an effort due to the fact that they were ahead of other countries, including the Soviet Union, in terms of technology and the economy. The United States could exploit their own advantages to persuade individuals to look to the United States for help. One example of this policy was the Marshall Plan, which provided economic aid to Western Europe to help in the rebuilding process.

¹² Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 333.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.

The United States had more technological advantages over the Soviet Union from the beginning of the Cold War, but were not used right away. While the Truman administration started to channel funds to war-torn Western Europe, the administration also focused on something else that would benefit the United States later on. The administration continued to use Voice of America and approved of two new radio stations. Although Voice of America served as a medium to broadcast information overseas during the Second World War, two new radio stations would target specific areas within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The first radio station approved for construction was Radio Free Europe, specifically targeting the countries of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania and started broadcasting in 1950. The second radio station constructed was Radio Liberation/Radio Liberty and began broadcasting in 1953. Compared to Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty targeted the Soviet Union specifically. These radio stations, in addition to Voice of America, were used as the newest technological weapons in the United States' arsenal against the Soviet Union.

While the Cold War was still in its infancy, there was already a notion of getting behind the Iron Curtain that would not involve using hard power diplomacy. In 1949, there was a committee formed tasked with presenting information to citizens of Eastern Europe, and was called the National Committee for Free Europe, Inc. This was a private organization which was to be financed by private donations, and was the earliest move in forming Radio Free Europe. There were three purposes of this committee:

To find suitable occupations for these democratic exiles..., to put the voices of these exiled political leaders on the air, addressed to their own peoples back in Europe, in their own languages, in the familiar tones, [and to] bring the leaders exiled leaders into a broad contact with American life.... Our idea is to enable these proven champions of democracy to see with their own eyes how freedom and democracy are working out in

the United States.... I have no doubt that as we go along other activities will be added to our program....¹⁵

The last line of the third purpose was critical moving forward because although this committee wanted exiled political leaders to discuss what the true facts were, compared to the censored facts the Soviets advocated, the new members later helped draw in a network of regular listeners to the daily broadcasts from these radio stations.

In addition to crafting the policy of containment, George Kennan was instrumental in determining the utilization of radios against the Soviet Union. In *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, Arch Puddington, a former administrator, writer, and deputy director of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, highlighted this. Puddington mentioned there was “an internal RFE memo from 1949 [which] refers to Kennan as the ‘father of our project,’ and Kennan was personally acquainted with most of the men who were officially associated with the FEC [Free Europe Committee] and RFE.”¹⁶ In addition, a booklet from February 15, 1949 titled “SPECIAL TEXT NO. 8: STRATEGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE,” described the nature of psychological warfare. Radio, as it is highlighted in the booklet, was described “as the most effective medium of long-range, strategic psychological warfare, both during the preliminary “cold war” period and during the war

¹⁵ The Acting Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Offices, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1949, Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union, Volume V, eds. William Z. Slany and Rogers P. Churchill (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1975), 176.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v05/d176> [accessed 1 February 2019]

¹⁶ Dewitt C. Poole to Joseph Grew, February 16, 1949. Noting Kennan’s intention to retire from government service, Poole writes, “Since George was the original father of our enterprise we shall certainly lose something from his departure from government,” quoted in Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 8.

itself.”¹⁷ The document also detailed how radio plays an essential role in appealing to the emotions of listeners stating that “in radio activity, the emotional tone is more important than logical argument” and continued that “people listen badly and many of the impressions received are unconscious rather than conscious.”¹⁸ The booklet outlined three cardinal principles when dealing with radio and using it as a key component of psychological warfare:

- a. Audience must be won by a warm friendly approach which will disarm the listener’s suspicions and make him feel that the broadcaster is his friend and ally.
- b. Emotional tone is just as important – if not more important – as the logic of the arguments presented. Voice effects and sonic accompaniments must be selected and molded with this consideration in mind.
- c. Unconscious impressions received by the listener are as numerous and important as those received consciously. This is much more true of appeals to the ear alone than it is of printed matter and constitutes the chief difference between the radio approach and the leaflet-newspaper approach.¹⁹

Lastly, although Kennan and many others realized the Soviet weakness, another document that recognized radio stations as a medium against the Soviet Union and Eastern European states was NSC 68, issued in April 1950. As Puddington noted, NSC 68 “called for ‘programs designed to build and maintain confidence among other peoples in our strength and resolution, and to wage

¹⁷ “Special Text No. 8 Strategic Psychological Warfare,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP78-03362A000400050001-9, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78-03362a000400050001-9 date accessed February 1, 2019]: 77.

¹⁸ “Special Text No. 8 Strategic Psychological Warfare,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP78-03362A000400050001-9, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78-03362a000400050001-9 date accessed February 1, 2019]: 78.

¹⁹ “Special Text No. 8 Strategic Psychological Warfare,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP78-03362A000400050001-9, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78-03362a000400050001-9 date accessed February 1, 2019]: 79.

overt psychological warfare calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance.”²⁰ Therefore, by July 4, 1950, the United States debuted Radio Free Europe and began broadcasting into Eastern Europe to appeal to the masses in the Soviet influenced bloc.

The intention of Radio Free Europe was self-explanatory and fell under the general guidelines of NSC 68 to an extent. Robert T. Holt explained of Radio Free Europe and the use of psychological warfare that “greater emphasis was placed on the systematic analysis of the target countries and in the planning of programs and program schedules that would better implement the basic policies of the organization.”²¹ Having the intention of targeting specific countries, especially Eastern Europe, and producing programs specifically for a desired country, A. Ross Johnson also defined the purpose of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Johnson noted the function of these radio stations as “preserving [the] capacity for independent thought and, at least on a limited basis, discussion would prevent the authoritarian governments in the Soviet sphere from fully consolidating their power over the societies they ruled.”²²

After the introduction of Radio Free Europe and its early broadcasts into Eastern Europe beginning in 1950, its sister station, Radio Liberation/Radio Liberty, started broadcasting on March 1, 1953. Gene Sosin, an early staff member at Radio Liberty, stated how “the funds for Radio Liberation were distributed to Amcomlib, which was formally incorporated on January 18, 1951, in the state of Delaware as the ‘American Committee for Freedom for the Peoples of the

²⁰ Ernest R. May, ed, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*. (New York: St. Martin’s, 1993), 29, 35, 74, quoted in Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 11.

²¹ Robert T. Holt, *Radio Free Europe* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), 15.

²² Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, 6.

USSR, Inc.”²³ He described how the American government created a front to avoid drawing attention to who was behind the master planning of Radio Liberty. Sosin detailed it as “the façade of a private company [which] was supposed to establish greater credibility for the Radio as an independent voice rather than as an official arm of the U.S. communications network that included Voice of America.”²⁴ He continued that “Radio [Liberty] became the most powerful medium of communications to penetrate the Iron Curtain, influencing millions of Russians, Ukrainians, and other ethnic groups in the major populated areas of the Soviet Union.”²⁵ These statements clearly indicate what the purpose and objective audience was of Radio Liberty. Additionally, he argued that radio and its utilization was the most powerful medium the United States could use to penetrate the Iron Curtain.

Both Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, became a potent and irreplaceable combination after the initial years of broadcasting information inside the threshold of the Iron Curtain. Paul B. Henze has argued, “It took time for the impact of broadcasts to become evident.” He also indicated that “for several years the reactions of the communist regimes provided stronger evidence of the effectiveness of broadcasting than information from any other source.”²⁶ Therefore, the United States had found an effective way of using soft power diplomacy against the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states.

²³ Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider’s Memoir of Radio Liberty* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 2.

²⁴ Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty*, 2.

²⁵ Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty*, xiv.

²⁶ Paul B. Henze, “RFE’s Early Years: Evolution of Broadcast Policy and Evidence of Broadcast Impact,” in *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: A Collection of Studies and Documents*, ed. A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), 9.

Although the United States found an alternative for delivering information and other content to those within the Soviet Union and the Eastern European bloc, the Soviet Union realized they were under attack by this new method from the United States. The Soviet Union devised a strategy that limited Western broadcasts piercing through the Iron Curtain, and this was radio jamming. During Voice of America's early radio transmissions in the Cold War, the Soviets responded by quickly building radio jammers, and these interfered with the broadcasts.

These jamming efforts were of great concern to Voice of America before the first broadcast signals from Radio Free Europe in 1950. On March 24, 1950, W. Park Armstrong Jr. sent R. H. Hillenkoetter, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a detailed outline of what was at stake and how to combat the situation. Armstrong minced no words stating "Soviet jamming, however, has seriously reduced the effectiveness of VOA broadcasts." Armstrong added how "vigorous efforts are being made to penetrate this jamming, and in this connection Congress has appropriated over [redacted] for the increase of radio facilities."²⁷ One of the most important points made in the letter is that the State Department stressed how "to make these efforts effective, the Department of State has a critical need for all possible intelligence on Soviet jamming operations and techniques."²⁸ Although the outline focused on Voice of America, the implementation of radio jamming was the same with Radio Free Europe broadcasts as well.

The jamming of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe described by the people who lived in Eastern Europe are mentioned in a report which detailed the extent of Soviet jamming in

²⁷ "Intelligence Support for the Voice of America with Regard to Soviet Jamming," General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP80R01731R002600310002-2, CIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80r01731r002600310002-2 accessed February 5, 2019]: 12.

²⁸ Ibid.

Hungary. According to the document, all programs the author attempted to listen to were jammed. It stated that “on many occasions at 9 pm the programs were jammed to such an extent that they could not be heard at all.”²⁹ Furthermore, “during 1951 I listened to Radio Free Europe approximately eight times... I could not understand too much of the broadcasts because the jamming was most disturbing.”³⁰ Another report described the situation in Czechoslovakia and characterized the reactions of the individuals who listened to the broadcasts. There was a suggestion of what Voice of America should do to attract more listeners to the radio station. Additionally, the “jamming of VOA broadcasts is quite strong, but, most programs can be heard and understood, including the news, which is most important.”³¹ It is important to note that jamming by the Soviets and their Eastern European counterparts persisted during this time. Though there were moments listeners could hear broadcasts without interference, the jamming of Western radio broadcasts was apparent throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

With obstructing Western broadcasts by the Soviet Union, the United States conceived of an idea to prevent the Soviets from jamming their radio transmissions. The plan was to build numerous radio bases to overpower the radio jamming efforts by the Soviets. This original plan, devised under Truman’s administration, was that the “network that ringed the Soviet Union would penetrate the Soviet electronic curtain with multiple signals and overwhelm its jamming

²⁹ “Comments Regarding VOA and Radio Free Europe,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP82-00047R000300160009-1, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp82-00047r000300160009-1 date accessed February 5, 2019]: 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Slovak Reaction to VOA Broadcasts,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP80-00810A001400310007-5, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80-00810a001400310007-5 date accessed February 5, 2019]: 3.

transmitters through concurrent deployment of massive power at close range.”³² The intended plan was international in nature, and funded by the United States to combat Soviet efforts. For example, “American officials preferred the ring plan’s approach to this cold war dilemma for several reasons: it promised greater effectiveness, [and] minimized the difficulties of obtaining broadcast frequencies in Europe’s densely crowded radio spectrum...”³³ With the plan established to start construction, there were difficulties in building such a radio ring that would have combatted the Soviet jamming efforts. As a result, the ring of radio was never built. Furthermore, “The ring plan had to be well conceived and well executed to navigate dramatic changes in the American political landscape under way by the spring of 1951. Yet it was not.”³⁴

Although Voice of America’s ring of radio never came into existence, the use of radio during this time needs emphasis. The Truman administration had a plan that would have overwhelmed Soviet jammers, and the Soviets feared how much damage radio could cause against them and in Eastern Europe. Therefore, this could have been one of the most important weapons used against the Soviets, but instead was cancelled. In addition, “without a strong lobby, a firm institutional footing, or an overriding defense rationale, the ring plan could not withstand the violent political forces unleashed both at home and abroad at the beginning of the cold war.”³⁵ This decision contributes to the point that radio was an important medium used against the Soviet Union in the early years of the Cold War, but instead was not chosen due to the lack of support to implement the project.

³² Timothy Stoneman, “A Bold New Vision: The VOA Ring Plan and Global Broadcasting in the War,” *Technology and Culture* Vol. 50, No. 2 (Apr., 2009): 316, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40345609>.

³³ Stoneman, “A Bold New Vision,” 320.

³⁴ Stoneman, “A Bold New Vision,” 339.

³⁵ Stoneman, “A Bold New Vision,” 342.

With Voice of America already in use and Radio Free Europe in its infancy during the Truman administration, the administration of president Dwight D. Eisenhower sought to improve upon what the previous administration had already accomplished from Radio Free Europe. Eisenhower, who was also a member of the FEC when it was introduced, expanded on what his predecessor achieved and added Radio Liberty during his first term. Not only did Eisenhower and his administration realize the importance of radio in battling the Soviets and the Eastern European states, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also knew how crucial this medium was to sway the Cold War into American favor. During this period of time under President Eisenhower and the CIA, psychological warfare ramped up to combat the Soviets.

Under the direction of Allen W. Dulles, also a member of the FEC in its formation, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty became of utmost importance and one of the key media for using psychological warfare. The United States and Allen Dulles moved forward with this strategy, although there were differences between Kennan and Dulles. For Kennan, he “had seen possibilities for undermining Soviet rule in Eastern Europe” and he “sought to accomplish this, though, by exploiting latent but inescapable differences within the international communist movement.”³⁶ Regarding Dulles, he was “more interested in having communism generally in that part of the world overthrown.”³⁷ As Charles Bohlen testified to Congress secretly in 1953, Soviet people had “very few radio sets and the Soviets are very efficient in jamming our programs.”³⁸ Although this was one testimony, it showcased the work to be done if the broadcasts were not

³⁶ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 154.

³⁷ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 154.

³⁸ “Summary of Testimony of Mr. Charles E. Bohlen,” February 24, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1953-1954, Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean*, Volume VIII, eds. David M. Baehler, Evans Gerakas, Ronald D. Landa, and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1988), 24.
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v08/d24> [accessed 12 February 2019]

penetrating into the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. Plus, after the Voice of America ring of radio fell through, the United States and the CIA, had to overcome jamming in another way.

Since this ring of radio plan fell through during the Truman administration, and Eisenhower assumed power and saw what the Soviets were doing to jam broadcasts, his administration sought other alternatives moving forward. The “New Look” strategy, as described by Gaddis, was an option that closely resembled psychological warfare, and this option was covert operations. Covert operations was described by “the National Security Council in 1954 as ‘all activities ... so planned and executed that any U. S. Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the U.S. Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.’”³⁹ Kennan was instrumental to these actions and it was at his suggestion that these actions be carried out by the CIA.⁴⁰ Eisenhower’s administration preferred using covert operations because “making containment work more efficiently at less cost tended to place a premium on covert activities which were, after all, relatively inexpensive.”⁴¹ Therefore, this new option the Eisenhower administration approved of was the most logical one. Clearly, since the ring of radio option from the previous administration did not get Congressional funding, covert operations received the go-ahead to attempt to achieve the same objective of influencing citizens within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. That means using radio as a form of psychological warfare and covert operations was the perfect method.

Shortly after President Eisenhower assumed the presidency, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin passed away in March of 1953. This revelation was featured on both Radio Free Europe and

³⁹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 155.

⁴⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 155.

⁴¹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 155.

Radio Liberty, to provide this news to listeners in the Soviet controlled countries and the Soviet Union itself because they wanted to report it before state media said otherwise. Not only was his death announced over the airwaves, this turn of events presented an opportunity for the Eastern European states to loosen the stronghold Stalin had over them. Therefore, the Soviet Union was now in a crisis over what to do after the death of Stalin. The era of the thaw and de-Stalinization commenced shortly thereafter with Nikita Khrushchev becoming the new Soviet Premier. This event also sparked a moment for the United States to begin the use of covert operations and its psychological warfare campaign against the Soviet Union. The time had come to implement these new tactics to the United States' advantage.

Since the use of covert operations received the go-ahead moving forward in the Cold War by President Eisenhower, and was the newest weapon for the United States' soft diplomacy arsenal, there needed to be an effective plan to use radio as a covert weapon, since Stalin passed away. Utilizing radio as a covert weapon since it was cheaper than using military force, meant that radio programs needed to appeal to individuals. An initial thought of using radio as a covert and psychological weapon appeared in a memorandum dated July 11, 1950, drafted by Admiral Earl E. Stone, the Director of the Armed Forces Security Agency, to Rear Admiral L.C. Stevens, of the United States Navy. In the memorandum, Stone argued "the State Department should obviously assume full responsibility for the actual VOA broadcasting and for providing [the] necessary broadcasting facilities, and adequate broadcasting program material of types most likely to receive favorable psychological reaction."⁴² Therefore, there were new programs that

⁴² "Comment on Voice of America (RE NSC 66).," General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP80-01446R000100130016-6, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80-01446r000100130016-6 date accessed February 12, 2019]: 1.

appealed to listeners in the coming years such as news programs, political commentaries, and entertainment programs. Most of these programs drew in a wide audience who tuned in daily. The programs that became one of the greatest influences within the early years of the Cold War were music programs. These were broadcast predominantly by Voice of America, but were followed by Radio Free Europe and other Western media outlets such as the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and Radio Luxembourg. Even though political commentaries and news programs were preferred by individuals, musical programs also drew an audience that allowed them to listen to new music hits that made them want to listen to more songs. Therefore, music had an impact that was equivalent to the impact of news and political commentary programs.

One of the most important musical genres that found massive appeal during the early stages of the Cold War was jazz. Jazz music ultimately impacted individuals' listening opinions and what they sought to hear weekly. However, jazz was not the only influential musical genre. Rock and roll music soon affected the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states. Lastly, the music from British bands who found success in the United States in 1964 would have an impact on the Soviet influenced states, and the Soviet Union as well. In the coming chapters, a close examination will show why each musical genre made a significant impression within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The examination of each genre of music, will demonstrate the impact each had on individuals, especially the youth. The examination of the youth is critical because there were generational stereotypes, and with the help of music, the stereotypes would break and would cause a concern for Nikita Khrushchev. The musical programs, and the music genres associated with the various programs, would become the greatest, and most potent covert weapon the United States had to offer in its soft diplomacy arsenal.

CHAPTER TWO: AMERICA'S DISK JOCKEY AND MOVING THOSE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

The use of radio during the Cold War to influence the Communist public was something extraordinary for both the United States and the Soviet Union to consider. The United States knew they had a viable weapon they could use to target Eastern Europe as well as the Soviet Union. Since the Soviets used their jamming to combat the radio broadcasts, the United States had to configure radio programming that would attract the attention of listeners within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Additionally, while news and political commentary broadcasts were the essential pillars of information during the early usage of radio in the Cold War, there had to be other programs to interest listeners behind the Iron Curtain. The other major radio programs of importance in the beginning of the Cold War were music programs. American jazz music became the musical genre that broke through and created a following within the Soviet controlled states and the Soviet Union itself. Voice of America was one of the few and most important radio stations producing musical programs that appealed to listeners on the other side of the Iron Curtain. One of the critical programs that received air time was *Music USA* hosted by American disk jockey Willis Conover. Conover's expertise and distinct sound appealed to those who tuned in daily to listen to jazz records that were broadcast. *Music USA* became an essential radio program that benefitted the United States in the early years of the Cold War and continued throughout the rest of the 1950s and into the 1960s. To understand the importance of *Music USA*, first, an explanation of Voice of America's jazz program needs to be put into context. Secondly, the context provided will indicate how vital this radio program was for the American effort during the Cold War, especially from 1955-1968.

In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted a provisional intelligence report to determine the potential of radio within the Soviet Union. The report contained highly

descriptive information about the Soviet Union from postwar developments, receiving equipment within the Soviet Union, and what the conditions and regulations were for listening to radio broadcasts. The United States established what the Soviets wanted to hear over the radio and what programs they considered most important. Within the report, there are statistics provided concerning the kinds of programming the Soviet population listened for. News was first and the second most sought after program was any information about the West. The report indicated that Soviet listeners wanted to know “the attitude of the West toward the USSR, truth on the real strength of foreign Communist movements, and the strength and activities of the West.”⁴³

In addition to news and anything concerning the West, the third real concern of the Soviets dealt with entertainment and music. The report highlighted that both “programs were of insignificant value to most people, or were not of sufficient consequence to risk detection of listening.”⁴⁴ The latter part of the previous sentence is notable because this was the reason why music became a vital weapon in the United States’ arsenal moving forward in the Cold War. The United States could then use music as a subversive method that could influence the Soviet public. If an individual listened to a music program broadcast over radio, the odds of being caught were not as high compared to political commentaries or news from Western broadcasts because political broadcasts were deemed dangerous by Soviet officials. The United States could then use music as a subversive method to influence the Soviet public because they feared less punishment for listening to the music broadcast on the radio. Further evidence showcases this:

⁴³ “Foreign Radiobroadcasting Reception Potential in the USSR,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP79-01093A000700040008-0, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79-01093a000700040008-0 date accessed February 14, 2019]: 148.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The above information pertains to all strata of the Soviet population. Evidence indicates, however, that the better educated groups usually listen to the programs more objectively to discover if the US interests are founded on purely selfish motives. It has also been indicated that the “Bourgeoisie,” meaning the beneficiaries of the regime among the Russian civilian population, were more interested in entertainment programs than foreign political information.”⁴⁵

This demonstrates that entertainment programs, including music, were of use to individuals of the “Bourgeoisie” since these individuals valued entertainment and music programs more than the political programs that were broadcast. Additionally, this was how the United States could target those who supported the Soviet Union and undermine their ideology. This revelation indicates the consequences for Soviet citizens listening to the radio broadcasts penetrating the Iron Curtain and getting through the jamming efforts of the Soviet Union. If a listener tuned into a radio program that contained music during this time, the odds of them being punished for listening to a music program would not be great. In comparison, a listener who listened to a political commentary feared punishment because those broadcasts discussed alternative news that conflicted with Soviet propaganda. Overall, this meant listening to music was now a method that allowed a listener to tune into Western radio stations without fear of punishment.

One of the music programs broadcast over the airwaves in the early years of the Cold War was *Jazz Club USA*, presented by Voice of America starting in 1952. Leonard Feather hosted *Jazz Club USA* and was a jazz critic from England. Although Feather’s radio show began in 1952, it did not survive on the airwaves for more than a year. There is evidence that music was something listeners in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union did not want to hear while listening

⁴⁵ “Foreign Radiobroadcasting Reception Potential in the USSR,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP79-01093A000700040008-0, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79-01093a000700040008-0 date accessed February 14, 2019]: 148.

to radio, particularly from Voice of America. For example, a CIA information report from May of 1952 discussed Voice of America broadcasts into Czechoslovakia, made specific references to entertainment programs and music. The report detailed how “it was a good idea to weed out almost all music as well as drama from the VOA schedule. To believe that programs for youth should consist only of jazz music and sports news is a mistake.”⁴⁶ Therefore, Voice of America believed there was no real interest in jazz that piqued listeners interests. Since Feather’s radio show did not last, this might have contributed to the reason why music was deemed insignificant to those in Czechoslovakia in 1952, and the Soviet Union in 1954.

Even though there was an attempt to broadcast jazz music to the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, it was not until the mid-1950s that Voice of America broadcast another jazz program globally, including to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Credited for the new radio music program, *Music USA*, Gene King and John Wiggin “thought the Voice was acting a bit stuffy, and they invented ‘Music U.S.A.’ as an experimental program.”⁴⁷ The new radio show, *Music USA*, hosted by American Willis Conover, debuted on January 6, 1955. Conover played records from his own collection and conducted interviews with popular jazz musicians on the program until his death in 1996. In addition to his interviews, *Music USA* was broken up into two different sections during the course of its two-hour long broadcast time. As described in a *New York Times* article:

⁴⁶ “Voice of America Broadcasts to Czechoslovakia,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP82-00047R000100410009-5, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp82-00047r000100410009-5 date accessed February 18, 2019]: 8.

⁴⁷ Dana Adams Schmidt, Special to the *New York Times*, “World Jazz Fans Rocked by ‘Voice,’” *New York Times*, November 13, 1955, accessed February 18, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspaper: The New York Times.

The first hour is devoted is devoted to popular dance music. The second hour is pure jazz, carefully distributed among three schools of jazz. They are known to experts as: 1. The traditional or Dixieland and Chicago style, exemplified by Louis Armstrong. 2. Middle-era jazz, of which Artie Shaw and Mr. Goodman are exponents. 3. Modern or progressive jazz, as produced by Dave Brubeck and Mr. Gillespie.⁴⁸

Conover's jazz program was not only a hit in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but appealed to listeners around the world. For example, within the first year of broadcasting this new jazz program, "it reached an estimated 30 million people in eighty countries – a number that would more than triple, to 100 million, over the next decade."⁴⁹

Conover's tremendous impact on listeners was shown through the "mail [that] came in from all over Europe, Africa, and Asia, including countries behind the Iron Curtain."⁵⁰ The *New York Times* reported that "more than 2,500 fans [that] have written for them, in twenty languages."⁵¹ The sheer number of listeners that tuned into Conover's program was further supported by the amount of fan letters received by Voice of America. Therefore, this experimental program envisioned by King and Wiggin, became an influential and hit program after the initial broadcasts. From all the letters received while listening to *Music USA*, a common theme developed complaining about the listening time of the show. There were "listeners' complaints that *Music USA* was aired at the 'craziest hours'" and specified that "VOA responded by broadcasting the show all over the world each evening at peak listening hours, at slots just before and after the evening news."⁵² This time slot for broadcasting *Music USA* represents the importance of jazz to people all over the world, in addition to having listeners hear the news, and

⁴⁸ Dana Adams Schmidt, "World Jazz Fans Rocked by 'Voice,'" *New York Times*, November 13, 1955, accessed February 18, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspaper: The New York Times.

⁴⁹ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 14.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Dana Adams Schmidt, "World Jazz Fans Rocked by 'Voice,'" *New York Times*, November 13, 1955, accessed February 18, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspaper: The New York Times.

⁵² Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 14.

the same can be argued for those in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Although the placement of *Music USA* changed to appease listeners, there were still hurdles for the broadcasts that made it difficult to pierce through the Iron Curtain. The radio jamming efforts of the Soviet Union were still prominent during this period, and it took a couple more years before the jamming efforts subsided from the scale they were at during the early to mid-1950s. The reduction of radio jamming was due to the influence of Nikita Khrushchev during the thawing phase of the Soviet Union, and his lessening of the grip Joseph Stalin once had on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself.

Another aspect that attracted listeners to Willis Conover and *Music USA* was how he presented the value of jazz. Conover was conscious about refraining from using “overt pro-American or anti-Communist propaganda.”⁵³ Therefore, Conover would not be advocating for American democracy or its ideals. Instead, the perspective of Conover and Voice of America members was that jazz was the most important component of the propaganda campaign itself.⁵⁴ Jazz also went against the traditional thoughts and structure of society that was taught in the Soviet Union, such as folk and traditional music. For instance, “jazz represents something that is entirely different from their traditions.”⁵⁵ The traditions typically found in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were ballet and classical music, not jazz.⁵⁶ In addition, jazz as considered by Conover was “a cross between total discipline and total anarchy. The musicians agree on tempo,

⁵³ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 16.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ William F. Ryan, “Willis Conover: Nightspots of Washington and the World – The Seismic Jazz Underground,” *Virginia Country*, 14, no. 1 (1989), 68. See also Lawrence Elliot, “The World’s Favorite American,” *Readers Digest* (July 1985), 94, quoted in Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 16.

⁵⁶ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 18.

key and chord structure but beyond this everyone is free to express himself.”⁵⁷ Jazz could also be described as “the music [which] stirred souls in countries where it was officially considered ‘decadent’ or ‘forbidden fruit.’”⁵⁸ Also, “Conover believed that people who were denied freedom in their political culture could detect a sense of freedom in jazz.”⁵⁹ There is a uniqueness to jazz because of “the unstructured character of jazz in itself represented freedom for many.”⁶⁰ Lastly, Conover’s “*Music U.S.A.* became an essential ingredient in the story of how popular music from the West found its way into the ears and hearts of Soviet citizens who resisted the culture imposed by their leaders, and chose the ‘sound of surprise.’”⁶¹

The sense of freedom Conover hints at is characterized by those who listened to his *Music USA* radio program. An example that exemplifies this statement comes from world renowned Polish pianist Adam Makowicz. Conover’s belief in the freedom that jazz music brought to listeners resonated with Makowicz. Makowicz reflected in 1996, after listening to Conover’s program on a shortwave radio as a teenager with a group of people in the mid-1950s:

We were hooked! From then on, every night at 11 p.m. sharp, we were turned to shortwave to await, with anticipation, what would follow the famous ‘Take the ‘A’ Train’ theme, and the announcement *This is Music USA – Jazz Hour*. Willis spoke to us distinctly and slowly, so that even those of us who knew very little English could understand... That music, open to improvisation, coming from a free country, was ‘our

⁵⁷ Anonymous, “Who Is Conover? Only We Ask,” *New York Times Magazine* (September 13, 1959). For a fascinating contemporary discussion of the relationship between jazz and democracy, see Stanley Crouch, “Blues To Be Constitutional: A Long Look at the Wild Wherefores of Our Democratic Lives a Symbolized in the Making of Rhythm and Tune,” 154-165, in O’Meally, *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture*. See also *ibid.*, 117-119 (O’Meally’s introduction to Part 2), quoted in Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 16-17.

⁵⁸ Alan L. Heil, Jr. *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 290-291.

⁵⁹ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 16.

⁶⁰ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 177.

⁶¹ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 33.

hour of freedom': music we had not known before; it was our hope and joy which helped us to survive dark days of censorship and oppression.⁶²

Another example that exemplifies how influential *Music USA* was to young people in Poland was in the case of Ryszard Horowitz, a Polish jazz enthusiast. Horowitz in a 2018 documentary, *The Jazz Ambassadors*, gave an interview about how significant Conover was not only to himself, but to others in Poland. He explained how “Willis Conover of the Voice of America was our hero. He had this, uh, extremely silky voice and spoke slowly, knowing that he was talking to foreigners, and he use, um—the, uh, theme song uh, Ellington, ‘Take the A Train,’ that was his jingle, you know, so this thing set in my mind, you know, forever.”⁶³ Horowitz emotionally explained how important it was to him watching Duke Ellington perform for the first time in person after hearing him play on Conover’s program. These examples showcase the importance of Conover’s music program to the youth living in an Eastern European country.

Following Conover’s debut year in 1955, his *Music USA* program became more popular with listeners across the Iron Curtain as the Cold War progressed. While his show was in its infancy, the Soviet Union continued jamming Western broadcasts that were trying to pierce through their defenses. There is detailed information from 1956 about how radio broadcasts were received on the ground behind the Iron Curtain from various Western radio stations. The document specifies the different radio frequencies which resulted in either good or bad reception. Regarding short-wave broadcasts, the survey stated “short-wave transmissions of the VOA, RFE,

⁶² Adam Makowicz, “Willis Conover Remembered” (manuscript, September 1996), quoted in Alan L. Heil, Jr. *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 290.

⁶³ *The Jazz Ambassadors*, directed by Hugo Berkeley (Thirteen Productions LLC and Antelope South Limited and Normal Life Pictures, 2018), accessed February 26, 2019, Amazon Prime.

and the BBC are frequently getting through to all areas of the Bloc countries covered in this survey on at least one of their frequencies even though some of them are heavily jammed.”⁶⁴

The year after Conover debuted in 1956, Soviet jamming was only so effective. There is evidence in a telegram which provided information about Voice of America broadcasts in the Soviet Union which came from Louis Fischer. The telegram described Fischer as a “well-known writer and Soviet expert” who had “arrived here following twenty-four day visit to Moscow... Information based mainly on conversations he had with about twenty close friends he had known in pre-war days.”⁶⁵ Two important points from the telegram about Voice of America, radio jamming, and jazz included, “1. Voice broadcasts can be heard easily outside Moscow and with special devices even in Moscow.” And “4. American jazz of course is delight of Russian youth.”⁶⁶ This example offers how radio broadcasts penetrated into the Soviet Union and could be heard even in Moscow. Based on Fischer’s conversations with his friends, jazz, especially American jazz, was delightful to the Russian youth. The Russian youth were listening to Conover’s *Music USA* because of their interest in jazz music. Plus, if the broadcasts from Voice of America were heard in Moscow, there was a stronger likelihood for Soviet citizens of all ages to listen to Conover’s program and begin liking jazz, due to the population size in Moscow.

⁶⁴ “Scientific Intelligence Research Aid – A Survey of Reception of International Broadcasts to the European Soviet Bloc Based on Reports of Listeners Behind the Iron Curtain from July 1955 Through March 1956,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP78-01634R000300070001-1, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78-01634r000300070001-1 date accessed February 22, 2019]: 9.

⁶⁵ Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Volume XXIV*, eds. Ronald D. Landa, Aaron D. Miller, and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 61. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v24/d61> [accessed 22 February 2019]

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Thus, jazz and Conover's show were becoming an effective method of changing the viewpoints of Soviet citizens.

The impact of jazz music on Soviet citizens testifies to the effectiveness of Conover's *Music USA*. In fact, there is a difference in opinion before and after Conover's music program began playing over the airwaves. A "Provisional Intelligence Report" completed by the CIA in December 1953 about the "Foreign Radiobroadcasting Reception Potential in Poland," detailed the type of programming the Polish people wanted from Western radio broadcasts. The report indicated that "music is not very well received. This may be because music may be heard on Polish radiobroadcasting and running the risks involved in foreign radiobroadcast listening are not considered worth-while."⁶⁷ This demonstrates how prior to 1955, music that was not sufficiently different, was not appealing to listeners in Poland. After 1955, in the case of Makowicz and the group of people that listened to *Music USA*, that position changed. Therefore, Voice of America's *Music USA* started to pique the interest of listeners and made music more appealing to them. This perspective also coincides with the viewpoint of the youth in the Soviet Union. The effect of Conover's program began to have an almost immediate effect on listeners behind the Iron Curtain by making music more appealing to them as they listened to his show.

Toward the latter part of the 1950s, jazz music and Voice of America's *Music USA* began to rise in popularity and resonated with listeners across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The reason for this is the decline of radio jamming. For example, there was an instance in 1957 in which a meeting was held that discussed radio jamming. Stated within the meeting "the Polish

⁶⁷ "Foreign Radiobroadcasting Reception Potential in Poland," General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP79-01093A000400120001-1, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79-01093a000400120001-1 date accessed February 22, 2019]: 29.

government is disturbed by Radio Free Europe broadcasts in Polish, which deal exclusively with questions of Polish internal politics.” The document continued, “Mr. Rapacki stated that the Polish government would see nothing wrong with broadcasting of propaganda dealing with the achievements of the United States and defending American policies. He said that Poland stopped all jamming a year ago, including jamming of Radio Free Europe.”⁶⁸ This example exemplifies how radio infiltrated the Iron Curtain and Poland halted their jamming efforts. Also, if the jamming efforts stopped in Poland in 1956, it further demonstrated that the *Music USA* program was able to be heard by everyone in Poland, or any kind of radio program for that matter.

Another piece of evidence that reveals how jazz music was highly appealing in Poland, particularly to the youth, comes from an information report in November of 1957. One point of the report stated that “jazz is the only kind of music worth transmitting and should be continued due to the keen interest and enthusiasm of Polish youth. There is no need to worry about giving the impression of cultural poverty; the Polish people know better.”⁶⁹ The CIA concluded that jazz music was highly sought after by the Polish youth. This aligns with Adam Makowicz’s statement concerning the impact *Music USA* had on he and his friends when they heard it on the radio. Lastly, this observation proves that if Poland stopped jamming radio broadcasts, those

⁶⁸ Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, October 16, 1957, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Eastern Europe, Volume XXV*, eds. Edward C. Keefer, Ronald D. Landa, and Stanley Shaloff, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1990), 271. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v25/d271> [accessed 25 February 2019]

⁶⁹ “Changes in Polish Public Opinion Since October 1956 and Their Relevance for Western Broadcasters,” General CIA Records Collection, doc. CIA-RDP80T00246A038600190001-3, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80t00246a038600190001-3> date accessed February 25, 2019]: 5.

broadcasts, including Conover's *Music USA*, allowed the youth to listen more freely and at an increased rate.

Regarding the influence of *Music USA* in Poland in 1957, a report was completed in 1958 about university life through the scope of a student living in the Soviet Union. Included within the document was the use and effectiveness of radio broadcasts from the West. Additionally, there was mention that "radio broadcasts emanating from outside the USSR supply the student with a great deal of his information about America and the West."⁷⁰ Furthermore, the discussion indicated that Voice of America was "difficult to hear because of jamming, contains many programs of interest and enjoys a wide audience."⁷¹ One of the topics the report detailed are the attractiveness of cultural programs, including jazz. The report described how "if the student could choose what he would like to hear, he would prefer more cultural subjects' ... Jazz has a continuing appeal, as does by contrast objective news commentary which does not avoid or sugar-coat the unpleasant."⁷² At this time, jazz was still finding its appeal, and an assumption can be made that the jazz was being heard from Conover's program, in spite of continual jamming from the Soviet Union. Plus, the cultural aspect would be in close relation with jazz music since there were different artists being played during each of Conover's programs.

In addition to Poland's revelations, and the student's story from 1958, the Soviet Union scaled back their jamming efforts of Western broadcasts. In 1959, there were discussions within

⁷⁰ "The Student in the USSR," General CIA Records, doc. CIA-RDP80T00246A042500700001-2, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80t00246a042500700001-2> date accessed February 25, 2019]: 12.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "The Student in the USSR," General CIA Records, doc. CIA-RDP80T00246A042500700001-2, CIA FOIA Reading Room, [<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80t00246a042500700001-2> date accessed February 25, 2019]: 13.

the Soviet Union of rescinding their jamming efforts and allowing Western broadcasts into the country. There was dialogue of what was tolerated and permitted in radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union. An inquiry about jamming radio broadcasts into the Soviet Union, Khrushchev stated “what broadcasts would be heard in the Soviet Union was entirely an internal matter and that it was none of our business.”⁷³ In recalling Khrushchev’s statement, American Henry Cabot Lodge continued “if we persisted in an unreasonable attitude there would be no end of jamming. As a matter of fact [Khrushchev] had been ready to reduce jamming on selected items – not merely artistic – but speeches and debates.”⁷⁴ The initial response from Khrushchev portrays how the jamming efforts by the Soviet Union were not working as well as they had in previous years. This admission from Khrushchev regarding the easement of jamming was unprecedented. The reduced jamming of artistic broadcasts, including speeches and debates, suggests that the grip was loosening under Khrushchev. Lastly, when Lodge mentioned that “not merely artistic” broadcasts would be reduced in jamming, an assumption can be made that Voice of America’s *Music USA* was included in this statement since jazz was artistic that would have been censored during this time, and especially under the tight grip of Stalin’s policies.

Before Khrushchev made this revelation to Lodge about the possibility of reducing jamming in the Soviet Union, there was a report from the KGB that could have contributed to the reduction of Soviet Union radio jamming. The 1959 report titled “On the State of Jamming anti-Soviet Radio Programs of Foreign Radio Stations,” discussed an internal review about the state

⁷³ Memorandum of Conversation, September 18, 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region, Soviet Union, Cyprus* eds. Ronald D. Landa, James E. Miller, David S. Patterson, Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 115. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p1/d115> [accessed 25 February 2019]

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

of jamming in various cities in the Soviet Union. The study found that “materials demonstrate that as a result of poor jamming, the programs of the radio station Voice of America were listened to in the majority of controlled locations.”⁷⁵ The report also mentions the various times listeners could hear the different Voice of America and Western radio broadcasts. The times listed were widespread throughout the day, so much so, that a listener could tune in during the early evening and listen, and could also do the same late at night and have no disruption. This report may have led to Khrushchev mentioning later in the year that there was a possibility of reducing radio jamming simply because the Soviet Union could not effectively maintain jamming efforts. This circumstance could be considered a sign of Soviet weakness. In any case, the reduction of jamming allowed all Western broadcasts to penetrate into the Soviet Union. Most importantly, *Music USA* during this time was broadcasting into the Soviet Union, and Conover’s program could be heard in Poland before this as well.

In addition to the increased interest of jazz and cultural programs, from university age students and the scaling back of radio jamming by the Soviet Union, music programs became more appealing to the youth. This was evident at a Benny Goodman concert in 1962. American ambassador at large, Llewellyn Thompson, detailed Khrushchev’s reaction to the performance, and his perception of jazz overall. Thompson observed how “with exception of [Alekssei] Kosygin’s wife, however, Presidium members had no understanding of jazz and K told me afterwards that he did not dance and did not understand jazz but admired skill of musicians.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ “KGB Report, 'On the State of Jamming anti-Soviet Radio Programs of Foreign Radio Stations',” May 19, 1959, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Obtained by Michael Nelson. Translated by Volodymyr Valkov. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121546>.

⁷⁶ Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, May 31, 1962, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume V, Soviet Union*, eds. Charles S. Sampson and John Michael Joyce (Washington: United States Government Printing Office,

He proceeded to detail the “change in attitude toward jazz during 5 years I have been here is remarkable and K’s presence last night will doubtless be great boon to jazz lovers here.”⁷⁷ One of the most important revelations was how the “significance of event is that despite their own lack of understanding and even dislike of jazz music, Soviet leadership has yielded to popular pressure, particularly of Soviet youth. This is probably most striking evidence that public opinion is beginning to play some role in Soviet affairs.”⁷⁸ The significance of Thompson’s statement shows how jazz changed society as a whole within the Soviet Union, as perceived by him.

In addition to Thompson’s observations, it is noticeable how jazz music had become a tool for the youth to change the ways in which the Soviet leadership handled possible censorship situations. If the youth were able to sway public opinions, from Thompson’s perspective, then the idea of music being used as an influence is realistic. Also, if jazz music was starting to become more accepted within Soviet society, and to the point that Khrushchev himself went to a Benny Goodman concert with the American ambassador at large, this proves how the Soviet ways of life and policies changed. Most importantly, if jazz music became more widely accepted in the Soviet Union, Conover’s *Music USA* must have had a part in this.

Due to the popularity of Conover’s *Music USA* from its inception at the beginning of 1955, the United States State Department sponsored jazz tours by the end of the year. These State Department jazz tours were not specific to the Soviet Union, as they occurred globally and

1998), 199. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d199> [accessed 25 February 2019]

⁷⁷ Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, May 31, 1962, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume V, Soviet Union*, eds. Charles S. Sampson and John Michael Joyce (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1998), 199. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v05/d199> [accessed 25 February 2019]

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

featured various jazz musicians. The first to travel on behalf of the State Department was Dizzy Gillespie in 1956. A *New York Times* article detailed the journey of his “eighteen-piece band [and play] in concerts in Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia.”⁷⁹ Other jazz musicians chosen to tour on behalf of the State Department were Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck. Armstrong in 1957 was to perform in the Soviet Union, but his performance got cancelled. The reason was because of the incident in Little Rock, Arkansas involving desegregation. As noted from September 19, 1957, “Trumpet player Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong said last night he had given up plans for a Government-sponsored trip to the Soviet Union because ‘the way they are treating my people in the South, the Government can go to hell.’”⁸⁰ With Armstrong turning down the opportunity to go to the Soviet Union, it would not be until five years later that Benny Goodman would go to perform, as described by Thompson.

In 1958 Dave Brubeck, detailed his tour which included “Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Turkey, India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.”⁸¹ Brubeck described the influence of jazz in Poland, and recalled a conversation with a Polish man concerning how influential jazz was on him. Brubeck mentioned how the man “went on to say how much jazz had become the symbol of freedom in Poland, particularly through the broadcasts of the Voice of America, and he wound up by telling me, ‘Your very presence indicates that we have more freedom now than we had two years ago.’”⁸² Brubeck’s

⁷⁹ “Gillespie Starts Tour Today,” *New York Times*, March 23, 1956, accessed February 27, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁸⁰ “Louis Armstrong, Barring Soviet Tour, Denounces Eisenhower and Gov. Faubus,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1957, accessed February 27, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁸¹ Dave Brubeck, “The Beat Heard ‘Round the World,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1958, accessed February 27, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁸² *Ibid.*

experience proves that Voice of America was an effective medium that influenced the mindsets of the Polish people and other Eastern Europeans. Also, this example strengthens the argument that jazz and *Music USA* was an impactful radio show which represented freedom to listeners. His tour of Poland, along with various sponsored State Department tours, demonstrate the popularity of jazz across the world, including the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the other parts of the world, music was attainable through regular purchases. However, Conover's program became the gateway for which listeners listened to music from the West behind the Iron Curtain.

Coinciding with Dave Brubeck's example from Poland about the effectiveness of Voice of America, further evidence demonstrates how jazz and Conover had a major part in changing attitudes of listeners toward jazz music within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. An example from 1959 outlined the impact Conover had on the youth and viewed as "a social event," and that "clubs meet regularly to hear his program." Likewise, "A Down Beat correspondent at the World's Fair in Brussels last summer found that 'every Russian youth I met listened to Willis Conover's nightly show. I got the impression that all young people listen to the show. In Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Bucharest and Warsaw, it was the same.'"⁸³ The example characterizes the show's influence on young people, and further symbolizes the youth appeared to be interested in Conover's show.

Voice of America and Willis Conover's show influenced the changing attitudes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1960. The United States wanted to develop efforts to interact more with Eastern European countries and develop relations with them. These relations

⁸³ John S. Wilson, "Who is Conover? Only We Ask," *New York Times*, September 13, 1959, accessed March 1, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

would be based “particularly in the cultural, information, economic and technical fields, as a means of exerting greater U.S. influence upon future developments in these countries.”⁸⁴

Furthermore, there would be more emphasis on how this could be accomplished by using radio broadcasts. Revealed in 1960, “while U.S. foreign-language broadcasts, officially and privately sponsored, are heavily jammed in urban areas, they can be heard in suburban rural areas.

English-language and music programs are not jammed.”⁸⁵ Regarding how English language and music programs were not jammed, another point should be noted. There were times before 1960 when the Soviet Union reduced jamming based on the relationship they had with the United States. These programs often included those transmitted in English and other languages not typically understood by Soviet citizens.⁸⁶

Despite the revelation, there were still jamming efforts being done by the Soviets, although the jamming efforts were not as effective as the KGB noted a couple months prior in 1959. The United States was still under the impression that radio programs, especially those in a foreign language, were still under constant jamming from the Soviets. If radio broadcasts were in English or were musical in nature, then they would not be subject to jamming from the Soviets. This implies that *Music USA* was not subjected to jamming at any point because his program was broadcast in English, and featured jazz music. This example portrays the importance of *Music USA* since it was not subjected to any sort of jamming, it was accessible for listeners and allowed

⁸⁴ “Report on Soviet – Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe (NSC 5811/1), July 27, 1960, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume X, Part 1, Eastern Europe Region; Soviet Union; Cyprus*, eds. Ronald D. Landa, James E. Miller, David S. Patterson, Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 30. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p1/d30> [accessed 5 March 2019]

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Wilson P. Dizard Jr., *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2004), 75.

them to listen to a Western broadcast without the worry of the program being jammed. Furthermore, this aligned with Khrushchev's statement that he was ready to reduce jamming on selected aspects of broadcasts that were "not merely artistic." Therefore, a possibility arises that *Music USA* was not jammed prior to 1959, despite general jamming efforts of the Soviet Union, and this contributed to the popularity of jazz because it was one of the few things they could get. This is why Willis Conover became a household name within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union by the end of the decade and the beginning of the next.

As Willis Conover's popularity increased within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1950s and into the 1960s, led to the creation of another jazz program to vie for listenership. This new radio program was broadcast in all Russian and titled "Eto Dzhaz," which translates to "This is Jazz." It was broadcast by Radio Liberty in the early 1960s. As Gene Sosin, a member of the staff at Radio Liberty's formation, described the program, "We felt that our program would attract more listeners, especially youth, who would get into the habit of listening to Radio Liberty and absorb its more serious political and ideological fare."⁸⁷ Sosin detailed the jazz program as "a weekly half-hour program that included the best of modern American jazz and interviews with top performers."⁸⁸ This format was practically the same as Willis Conover's because Conover played jazz records in much the same way and also interviewed jazz artists on his program. The only noticeable differences between "Eto Dzhaz" and *Music USA* was that "Eto Dzhaz" was broadcast weekly for a half hour, while *Music USA* was broadcast for two hours a day, six days a week. This also demonstrates the importance of jazz from the viewpoint of Voice of America to dedicate a two-hour timeslot to jazz, while Radio Liberty only dedicated a half

⁸⁷ Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty*, 102.

⁸⁸ Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty*, 103.

hour while trying to accomplish the same feat that Conover had already accomplished. The second difference was that “Eto Dzhaz” was broadcast in all Russian, while *Music USA* was broadcast in English. The difference in languages between the two programs reveals jazz music’s appeal behind the Iron Curtain. The noteworthy takeaway is that if Radio Liberty began to broadcast jazz and targeted the youth, this further groomed the youth into listening to Radio Liberty, not to Voice of America, creating a competition for listenership.

The revelations from Dave Brubeck and Llewelyn Thompson about the popularity of jazz within Poland and the rest of the Soviet Union in 1958 and 1960, respectively, are important. The different radio programs from Voice of America and Radio Free Europe further solidify the importance of jazz over the airwaves. A 1964 memorandum highlighted the popularity of jazz in the Soviet Union and discussed different programs the United States used to influence Soviets. There were three programs the USIA was responsible for and they were: Voice of America, The Exhibits Program, and Amerika Magazine. Several notable Voice of America moments happened in 1963. The first was that “the VOA has been unjammed in the Soviet Union since June 19, 1963 for reasons still somewhat unclear to our Embassy.”⁸⁹ This makes it appear that radio, specifically Voice of America, was overcoming the previous jamming efforts of the Soviet Union. An assumption can also be made that the jamming efforts the Soviets put forth were not effective in the 1960s, as documented previously, which resulted in the decision to stop jamming Voice of America. Therefore, the United States started to overcome Soviet jamming efforts.

⁸⁹ Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency (Wilson to the Director (Rowan), Washington, June 1, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XIV, Soviet Union*, eds. David C. Humphrey and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 34. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v14/d34> [accessed 5 March 2019]

The second revealing statement from the 1964 memorandum was in relation to jazz music. The memorandum states:

The news is most popular for VOA listeners as well as BBC listeners. Jazz on VOA is next although I [Wilson] observed an interesting phenomenon here. Russian jazz fans, and this includes a great many of the young intellectuals, complain that VOA's music programs are outdated and not up to the latest being played in New York's most far – out joints. For this they are turning to Radio Luxembourg. It would seem that the avid Russian fan, like his American counterpart, has a passion for being up with the very latest.⁹⁰

This statement solidifies the argument that jazz was a popular music genre within the Soviet Union. In addition, the statement does not specifically mention *Music USA*. However, with jazz music being associated with the discussion of Voice of America, there is a high probability that Conover's show was the leading reason why jazz music was second behind the news for listening to Voice of America. Another important part of the statement was about Voice of America's music programs being outdated and how the youth turned to Radio Luxembourg to listen to the newest music available from the West. This indicates how there was a change in listening among the youth during the 1960s, and how the Soviet youth sought out new music. Although new alternative music genres were played on radio broadcasts, this did not diminish Conover's influence since he still played jazz for those who were accustomed to his show, as well as some mainstream popular music.

Regarding the revelation of music on Voice of America's program becoming outdated, there are transcripts from Conover's show which demonstrate that he began to incorporate more

⁹⁰ Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency (Wilson to the Director (Rowan), Washington, June 1, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XIV, Soviet Union*, eds. David C. Humphrey and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 34. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v14/d34> [accessed 5 March 2019]

popular mainstream music into his broadcasts in the latter part of the 1960s. However, he continued his typical show format by playing popular songs during the first hour, and jazz songs in the second half of the show. For instance, on April 3, 1968 he chose the songs that were associated with the 1967 Grammy Awards during the first hour of the show. Noteworthy songs from the selection include two songs by Glen Campbell which were “Gentle On My Mind” and “By The Time I Get To Phoenix,” as well as, “Up Up And Away” by Fifth Dimension and Bobby Gentry’s “Ode To Billie Joe.”⁹¹ On another show from September 6, 1968, and again during the first hour, he chose other tunes that were popular. For example, Conover selected Louis Armstrong’s “What A Wonderful World,” Dionne Warwick’s “Do You Know The Way To San Jose,” and an alternative take of Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass’s “This Guy’s In Love With You” which was performed by Stanley Turrentine for this specific broadcast.⁹²

With the change in Soviet listening, and the Soviet youth determining that Voice of America’s music programs were becoming outdated, in a general sense, an assumption can be made that the youth wanted to hear the newest music of other genres, compared to the new jazz records. That new form of music from the United States was rock and roll. Debuting in the 1950s and into the 1960s, rock and roll began to have an effect on the youth of the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union once it appeared on radio broadcasts. Rock and roll also impacted Soviet and Eastern European society once it was broadcast in many of the same ways that jazz was through Voice of America’s *Music USA* hosted by Willis Conover.

⁹¹ Willis Conover. Music USA Playlists, Program 4843-A, First Hour, April 3, 1968, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library. (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc107/m1/51/> accessed March 22, 2019).

⁹² Willis Conover. Music USA Playlists, Program 4999-A, First Hour, September 6, 1968, University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library. (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc107/m1/128/> accessed March 22, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE: ROCKIN' THROUGH COMMUNISM WITH PSEUDONYMS

Willis Conover's *Music USA* program heard over Voice of America influenced and inspired many people behind the Iron Curtain, as evidence has shown. With his daily playing of popular music and especially jazz music, Conover had an influence on those who otherwise would not have been able to listen to the music of the West. In addition to jazz, rock and roll was another important music genre that had a significant impact on the people in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states. Rock and roll originated in the United States, and this shaped why that music genre was so greatly sought behind the Iron Curtain. With its creation in 1955, rock and roll changed the musical landscape in the United States. This became the newest musical genre to influence the people of the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union. To interpret rock and roll within the Eastern European sphere and the Soviet Union, a close examination is needed to understand rock and roll and how Americans perceived the new music. Secondly, a discussion of the effects of rock and roll will be closely examined in Eastern Europe. Following that point, one of Radio Free Europe's most successful radio programs, *Teenager Party*, will be analyzed to detail how influential of a program it was to youth listeners. A conclusion can then be reached that reveals the significance of rock music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Rock and roll in the United States got underway after the debut of a 1955 movie *Blackboard Jungle*. This movie featured "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and His Comets, and this song was a catalyst for creating rock and roll. As Richard Aquila argued in *Let's Rock!: How 1950s America Created Elvis and the Rock & Roll Craze*, "in 1955, 'Rock Around the Clock' became the primary vehicle for introducing hundreds of thousands—if not

millions—of white youths to rock & roll” and “by the end of 1955, rock & roll had arrived.”⁹³ The emphasis on this example is that within one year, rock and roll created a tremendous impact on the youth in the United States.

Before rock and roll took on a whole new meaning for those in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states, this new musical genre held a different meaning for the youth, rather than the older generations in America. For example, Dr. Francis J. Braceland, a psychiatrist, “described ‘rock-and-roll’ music today as a ‘communicable disease’ and another sign of adolescent rebellion.” He also stated that “rock-and-roll [was] a ‘cannibalistic and tribalistic’ form of music.”⁹⁴ This meant rock and roll music would have the same viewpoint attached to it when played in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in later years.

In 1957, the effects of rock and roll in the global context began to settle in. Robert W. Dowling, who was the International Exchange Program chief and the American National Theatre and Academy chairman, went to Poland and Czechoslovakia and noted this. At first, he illustrated the popularity of jazz, and according to him the two countries wanted that music. However, one of the critical revelations documented was the intrigue with rock and roll. As stated in a *New York Times* article:

Warsaw is mad for rock ‘n’ roll, he said. The people regard it as American, he noted. He explained that for ten years there have been few visitors from the West in both Communist countries but the people have had access to phonograph records and listened to American music on the radio.⁹⁵

⁹³ Richard Aquila, *Let’s Rock: How 1950s America Created Elvis and the Rock & Roll Craze* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 54.

⁹⁴ “Rock-and-Roll Called ‘Communicable Disease,’” *New York Times*, March 28, 1956, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁹⁵ “Cezchs and Poles Rock to U.S. Jazz,” *New York Times*, February 25, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

Although there is no specific mention of what radio station broadcast rock and roll, or jazz for that matter, the people in Poland and Czechoslovakia had the ability to listen to either music genre over shortwave radio, that is from Voice of America or others in 1957. Dowling stated that the people in these two countries “get the feeling of the originality and vitality of American jazz, and they like that extra punch.”⁹⁶ The article highlights two different items. The first is that rock and roll made it through the Iron Curtain and into at least two Eastern European countries by 1957. The second item noted is that rock and roll was an appealing and popular music genre, along with jazz. Most importantly, there was access not only to records, but rock and roll was listenable on radio, even though the Soviet Union had jammers in place attempting to block Western radio signals.

There was another example in Bulgaria. Harrison E. Salisbury reported in September of 1957, “it is possible to hear American style rock ‘n’ roll almost everywhere in Bulgaria, with the possible exception of remote villages. In many places the tunes are sung in English with the original lyrics, and played from arrangements straight from Tin Pan Alley.”⁹⁷ Salisbury also described how “the rock ‘n’ roll rage is sweeping Bulgaria in spite of stern ideological proscriptions. The craze thunders forward despite the regime’s repressive efforts, which are half-hearted, apparently as a result of the primacy the regime is giving to the establishment of easier living conditions.”⁹⁸ Salisbury’s reaction to the events in Bulgaria provide a picture of what life was like in Bulgaria in 1957. Plus, his description of the regime in Bulgaria confronting rock and

⁹⁶“Czechs and Poles Rock to U.S. Jazz,” *New York Times*, February 25, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁹⁷ Harrison E. Salisbury, “Rock ‘n’ Roll a Bulgarian Fad Despite Stern Ideological Edicts,” *New York Times*, September 24, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

roll music clearly demonstrates that the Bulgarian government was not ruling like it once had under Stalin's control less than five years before. Also, the handling of this craze by the government showcases that rock and roll was slowly becoming more accepted during this time, whether the government could enforce their own rules or not.

In addition to Salisbury's discussion of the Bulgarian government and their handling of rock and roll, he described the reaction of the youth to rock and roll in Sofia. He detailed how "all the students insisted that Sofia young people did not care for rock 'n' roll."⁹⁹ However, that was not exactly the case as mentioning that "a commentary on the accuracy of these opinions was provided only a little more than a fortnight ago during a visit by a Czechoslovak swing orchestra to Sofia. The band specializes in Glenn Miller arrangements. Clamorous youngsters at the Sofia Summer Theatre took up a chant: 'Rock 'n' Roll, rock 'n' roll!'"¹⁰⁰ Salisbury also included details about what occurred after the chant stating "finally the orchestra leader yielded and swung into a rendition of 'Rock Around the Clock.' The crowd took up the beat with a roar." This represents how much rock and roll meant to those in Bulgaria, and even more so, the band knew how to play rock and roll tunes and knew what rock and roll was. He mentioned later on in the article how "other students scoffed at their Communist youth associates. They said that rock 'n' roll was the universal passion of Bulgarian youngsters."¹⁰¹ Salisbury clearly described the scenario that unfolded in Bulgaria in September of 1957 with his own observations, which shows further proof of the impact on the youth in Bulgaria.

⁹⁹ Harrison E. Salisbury, "Rock 'n' Roll a Bulgarian Fad Despite Stern Ideological Edicts," *New York Times*, September 24, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Salisbury wrote an additional five more articles the following month, this time regarding other Eastern European countries, in addition to more commentary on Bulgaria. In the first of the five articles, written in October 1957, the article showcased the changes that started to unfold. It begins with the description of an event taking place in Warsaw, Poland, but then the focus switches to Sofia, Bulgaria and the events that unfolded there. The article mentioned how “in Sofia the crowds were shouting ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll! Rock ‘n’ Roll!’ and forming a human wall to protect their comrades when the police tried to interfere.”¹⁰² Rock and roll music made it to the other side of the Iron Curtain within a relatively short time span upon the conception of this new music genre. Also, this indicates that the crowds that took part in Sofia wanted more rock and roll. Lastly, this correlates to Salisbury’s previous statements about how rock and roll was making its way through Bulgaria.

In the second article, Salisbury noted the use of radio and music, respectively.¹⁰³ Salisbury highlighted music as a pivotal tool the United States could use against Eastern Europe. One of the most significant statements made in the article was about the media. Salisbury mentioned that “United States radio and television draw tens of millions to common attractions each night. The circulation of United States periodicals is global. No wall is so high that United States music cannot hurdle it.”¹⁰⁴ The statements made by Salisbury, in the course of two months, implies that music has no bounds and there would be nothing to stop any music genre

¹⁰² Harrison E. Salisbury, “Diversity in East Europe Replaces Stalinist Rigidity,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

¹⁰³ Salisbury also notes the reactions to radio after the 1956 uprising in Hungary. It is important to mention that Radio Free Europe encouraged the uprising against the communist controlled government.

¹⁰⁴ Harrison E. Salisbury, “Fount of Amity in East Europe Is Largely Untapped by the U.S.,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1957, accessed March 7, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

from crossing over into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Therefore, music from the West had the ability to change within Eastern Europe from Salisbury's point of view. Lastly, the new wave of rock and roll music from the United States had a tremendous impact on those within Bulgaria specifically.

The influence of rock and roll in 1958 was felt in other countries across the world, particularly behind the Iron Curtain. In Poland for example, "after a frantic year or two of rocking and rolling Poland is tapering off into a slightly calmer stage of a craze that no political screening could filter out of Eastern Europe."¹⁰⁵ In addition, "two years ago, when the first barricades against Western music, Western styles and Western influence of any kind began to tumble, Poles plunged into a frenetic effort to be as Western as they could. Jazz and rock 'n' roll were important elements in this reaction."¹⁰⁶ Lastly, there was "reduced appeal of rock 'n' roll [that] is due to the fact that nobody tries to ban it any more."¹⁰⁷ This viewpoint aligns with Salisbury's description of rock and roll in Bulgaria and the effect the music had on those who listened. Also, the description of Poland proves there was a strong following from those who listened to both, jazz and rock and roll. One of the revelations is that rock and roll was becoming stale in the eyes of the Polish people who listened to the new music genre, but it might have been because there was a need for a new kind of music from the West.

Including the perspective of rock and roll within Poland and the staleness that arose, rock and roll was becoming a potential threat to the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European states. A North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) journal from October 1958 even

¹⁰⁵ Sidney Gruson, "Poland: Waning, but Still Strong," *New York Times*, April 20, 1958, accessed March 12, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

speculated about how to utilize it. Timothy Ryback mentioned that “the NATO journal *Revue militaire Générale*, advanced the theory that jazz, rock, and other modern dance music could be employed in the war against Communism.”¹⁰⁸ This NATO journal “suggested that Soviet-bloc youths’ obsession with Western rock and pop could be exploited to erode the ideological commitment of young people.”¹⁰⁹ Lastly, the journal detailed how “Soviet leaders understand this danger so well, that they have banned all forms of this barbaric music from their territory.”¹¹⁰ The significance of this statement shows how leadership from NATO realized the potential music had on those behind the Iron Curtain, especially on the youth. Most importantly, the craze had already commenced in the Eastern European countries. Lastly, the NATO journal contradicts the statement that rock and roll was not banned, when indeed, efforts were made to have citizens in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe resist rock.

Regarding jazz and rock and roll, there was a noticeable difference between the two. As Arch Puddington noted “the pragmatism that communism displayed in its acceptance of jazz did not, however, extend to the newest American fashion: rock and roll.” He continued that “rock musicians were vilified in the regime press of the satellites (less so in Hungary and Poland), much as jazz had been during Stalin’s time.”¹¹¹ This statement reveals that jazz became more accepted after Stalin’s death, and demonstrates that Conover’s *Music USA* might have attributed to the loosening of policies in the Eastern European states. This further led rock and roll into taking the same path as jazz did during Stalin’s reign and faced opposition. This viewpoint contributes to the other first-person accounts from those who visited Eastern Europe after the

¹⁰⁸ Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 137.

debut of rock and roll because there was a notable difference in the craze for rock and roll. Also, there was a change occurring within the Soviet bloc that rock and roll would not be tolerated as much as jazz was.

With the standpoints of the Eastern European countries that rock and roll was not permitted in the same manner as jazz, it was only a matter of time before rock and roll began broadcasting over the airwaves. Radio Free Europe began broadcasting rock and roll in 1958, and no country became more enthused about this music than Hungary. The reason for the popularity of rock music in Hungary is due to two Hungarians who worked for the radio station, Charles Andras and Géza Ekecs. As Puddington explained, “the two Hungarians were impressed by rock music’s power over Western youth and soon talked over the possibility of launching a program to introduce rock to the young people of Hungary.”¹¹² Also, Andras made a comment to Ekecs about how rock music broadcast over another radio station, the American Armed Forces Network, was influencing his daughter and creating issues with her.¹¹³ With the evident influence of rock and roll music on the youth, especially in the case of Andras’s daughter, Radio Free Europe shortly after debuted their program, *Teenager Party*.

Teenager Party soon became a popular music program for Radio Free Europe, hosted by Ekecs under the pseudonym “Laszlo Cseke.” The program “aired once a week (with two repeats) for thirty-five minutes a program.”¹¹⁴ Testifying to its popularity, the program was on the airwaves into the 1980s. In addition, Ekecs had “borrowed the top-forty format popularized by

¹¹² Discussion of Ekec’s disc jockey program taken from interviews with Géza Ekecs and Charles Andras, quoted in Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 137.

¹¹³ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 137.

¹¹⁴ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 137.

American rock stations.”¹¹⁵ The foundation of *Teenager Party* was crucial, because American aspects were put into its format. Since the program aired weekly instead of daily, like Conover’s *Music USA*, it gave listeners in Hungary something to look forward to. Plus, if there was a change in rock music within a week, the change was noted within the program, and would provide more variety each week.

With the anticipation of listening to the newest rock hits on *Teenager Party* each week, the program gained a large following of listeners in the ensuing years. As Puddington noted “as *Teenager Party* gained in listenership, the other RFE language sections added disc jockey programs, some of which became important fixtures in the station’s program mixture.”¹¹⁶ Radio Free Europe bosses realized how important rock and roll music was to youth listeners behind the Iron Curtain, and decided to incorporate it into their broadcasts. Lastly, this radio program differed from Conover’s because his program targeted everyone who was interested in jazz.

The incorporation of rock into broadcasts is significant, but more importantly, music became a critical aspect of radio programming in the 1960s. For example, during a typical Saturday broadcast on the Radio Free Europe program, *Voice of Free Poland*, during the 1962-1963 winter season, there were thirteen instances in which music would be featured in a twenty-four-hour period. Although there were numerous times in which music was heard over the airwaves, the music ranged from jazz, to opera music, and request music. Also, some of the broadcasts would be played more than once in another timeslot, to give listeners a second or even a third chance to listen to programs they might have missed previously.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 138.

¹¹⁶ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 139.

¹¹⁷ Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain: The Radio Free Europe Story* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963), 49-51.

The incorporation of music into Radio Free Europe's radio programming yielded positive results. Radio Free Europe's broadcasts of rock music and other genres, in the 1960s, generated fan mail which started to come in from all areas of Eastern Europe. With the triumph of *Teenager Party* in the Hungarian language, the success continued into the 1960s in other languages as well. Evidence supports this because there was fan mail from Eastern Europe, and this is noteworthy because other areas of Eastern Europe would listen to *Teenager Party*, and send in their feedback of the show. Puddington mentioned that "letters addressed to 'Uncle Laci' poured in from all over Europe, from Hungarians living in Yugoslavia, Slovakia, and Romania, from Hungarians working in Moscow and East Germany, as well as from Hungarian proper."¹¹⁸ Also, Hungarian listeners did not have full trust in their own mail service because there were multiple attempts to send fan mail to Ekecs, and it was quite possible to have only one of those letters make it.¹¹⁹

Additionally, there were other letters sent to Radio Free Europe regarding music as a whole, which included jazz and rock and roll. The Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department in 1965 analyzed the effectiveness of Radio Free Europe. They concluded that "Radio Free Europe has played an important part in these developments and is a vital factor in bringing about changes in the countries of East Europe."¹²⁰ When the report mentioned developments and bringing changes, this meant that Radio Free Europe was instrumental in providing accurate information to listeners behind the Iron Curtain, and lessening the grip the Soviet Union had on its satellite states. The report indicated the methods used by Radio Free

¹¹⁸ Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 140.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, ([Munich], [1965?]), 5.

Europe were working to bring these changes. One of the startling revelations from the report is the amount of fan letters received by Radio Free Europe. The report described “in 1964, a total of 1,374 letters were received. Barring unforeseen events, around 10,500 letters from behind the Iron Curtain should be received by RFE in 1965.”¹²¹ The result in the increased number of letters to Radio Free Europe was in direct correlation to the increased playing of jazz and rock and roll.

With Radio Free Europe playing the two music genres, the two music styles gained a popular following which increased the fan letters. The reason for the rise in letters to Radio Free Europe is further solidified by the research report. The report attributed both jazz and rock and roll for the rise in letters because it mentioned that “in the case of Czechoslovakia, the newly instituted jazz and hit parade program drew immediate and considerable mail response. To a lesser extent, this was true of the Rumanian letters as well.”¹²² Furthermore, the report stated:

The predominance of students among letter writers, and their youthful age in general is due to jazz and hit-parade programs on the Rumanian, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak broadcasting schedules. On these programs, listeners are invited to write to the program editors-the disc jockeys-and request particular records to be played.¹²³

The music programs broadcast by these languages, and in Hungarian, such as Ekecs’s *Teenager Party*, encouraged listeners to write into the station. The report highlighted this noting that “about nine in every ten letters sent from Hungary and Czechoslovakia referred to one or the other of the two jazz and hit-parade programs broadcast to the two countries: ‘Teenager Party’ and ‘Good Afternoon’ on the Hungarian schedule, and ‘Afternoon Get-Together’ and ‘Trailer’

¹²¹ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 27.

¹²² Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 29-30.

¹²³ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 31.

on the Czechoslovak schedule.”¹²⁴ The letter campaign as described by the report, indicated the subversive measures taking place. The listeners wanted their voice to be heard, and their selections of songs to be broadcast over the airwaves. This allowed them to have a say in the music broadcast when they otherwise had little opportunity to voice their opinion. Most importantly, this was one of the ways in which listeners behind the Iron Curtain could reject government authority.

The result of the heightened volume of letters sent to Radio Free Europe is a clear indication that both, jazz and rock and roll, were influential programs in each of the respective languages, Hungarian and Czech. A clear example is from a partial letter written and cited in the report. Quoted in the letter:

Dear Uncle Cseke;

My father often turns off the set when the *Teenager Party* is on. He likes the news or some other good program. Naturally, what we young people like is good music.... Please play two discs for ‘Clarinet Andy’, one is....

Full Name, Address¹²⁵

This letter represents the influence music had on listeners in many different ways. The first is that music is what the youth wanted. Secondly, the motivation is clear in the letter that made the listener write to Ekecs because the writer wanted to hear specific songs on *Teenager Party*. Thirdly, the letter represents how fan mail were sent to the recipient. There is no specific name mentioned from the individual who is sending the message, so that there is no retribution from the sender to the writer or their family. Additionally, the letter is addressed to Uncle Cseke,

¹²⁴ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 31-32.

¹²⁵ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 32.

which was Ekecs's alias while being the disc jockey of *Teenager Party*. In 2011, Ekecs did a phone interview with Paul Glader in which there is a detailed description of how Ekecs would want fan mail and written requests. As explained by Glader:

Ekecs instructed young listeners who wrote to him, airing their song requests and their thoughts on democracy, to use code names instead of real names. He would announce their code names on the air when playing the songs they requested. He sometimes played a list of songs a teen requested so they could record an entire mixed tape.¹²⁶

Most importantly, these examples demonstrate the lengths listeners would go in order to hear a favorite song they had heard previously over the airwaves. Also, they risked the possibility of getting into trouble because they did not have access to songs otherwise. In addition, Ekecs himself would strive to protect the entities of his listeners by announcing only the code names that were written in the letters. There was no mention of personal information over the airwaves that would have endangered the listeners' families or themselves.

Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm, a writer from Poland, recalled her experience of listening and writing to a Radio Free Europe broadcast program, *Rendezvous at 6:10*, which broadcast rock and popular music. The program was a "fifty-minute show [that] ran Monday through Saturday and included a hit parade and news from the pop music scene."¹²⁷ She mentioned that "these daily broadcasts were great!... The hourlong program ended with 'listeners' choice' -they played recordings as requested by their listeners."¹²⁸ In describing the process of writing letters to the disk jockeys on *Rendezvous at 6:10*, Ziolkowska-Boehm stated

¹²⁶ Paul Glader, "How A Cold War DJ Showed The Power Of Rock And Roll," *Forbes*, August 26, 2016, accessed March 13, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2016/08/26/how-one-cold-war-dj-showed-the-creative-power-of-rock-and-roll/#54e4f4583439>.

¹²⁷ Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*, 86.

¹²⁸ Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm, *Melchior Wańkiewicz: Poland's Master of the Written Word*, trans. Agnieszka Maria Gernand (Landham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 174.

in *Melchior Wańkiewicz: Poland's Master of the Written Word*, “Again and again, they gave new addresses to which you could send cards, and stressed that if you sent them at once, they would reach them. After a few days, it was said, such an address was intercepted and the mail was confiscated.”¹²⁹ She also detailed the way she would write her letters noting that “I knew I shouldn’t use my first or last name, so I signed those cards with the name Magdalena, as I particularly liked it at the time. Some of them-three, I think-were intercepted.”¹³⁰

In fact, when Ziolkowska-Boehm was in high school, she came under investigation from an intercepted letter she wrote to Radio Free Europe in 1967. As she noticed once obtaining the file on her years after the incident, “Section 3 of KMMO in Łódź started an ‘operational case’ on me, codenamed ‘Teenager.’”¹³¹ The situation was a serious matter, as she detailed her experience describing the event from her file. In the document there is mention of her alias, Magdalena, and there is more descriptive language of what she wrote about and that she had been called into the headquarters with her father to discuss what she wrote. For example, the document stated that her letter “extolled RFE’s program, praised its objectivity, and at the same time accused our media of partiality and lack of objectivity.”¹³² Furthermore, “on 27.07.1967 talks were conducted in the headquarters building with the said citizen and her father. In the talks, the citizen fully confirmed the fact of writing the letters, explaining that she had wanted to hear her favorite melodies in ‘listeners’ choice.”¹³³ This highlights how listeners were risking the possibility of punishment by their respective governments during this time to hear requested music. This also added pressure onto Eastern European governments because they had to continually seek out and

¹²⁹ Ziolkowska-Boehm, *Melchior Wańkiewicz*, 174.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Ziolkowska-Boehm, *Melchior Wańkiewicz*, 175.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

intercept the letters to figure out who was writing them. Additionally, Ziolkowska's story demonstrated how Eastern European governments still did not permit rock and roll music within their countries, and would not tolerate fan mail either.

Ignoring the possibility of getting caught, listeners continued sending mail to Radio Free Europe to request music or comment on their favorite shows and their respective programs. As measured in the report conducted by Radio Free Europe's Research Department, in Czechoslovakia a total of ninety-three out of 111 percent of the letters received were about *Afternoon Get-Together* and *Trailer*. The Polish letters constituted twenty-three out of 125 percent of the letters in reference to music with Song Club and "Music." Lastly, the Hungarian letters made mention of music programs *Teenager Party*, *Good Afternoon*, and *Musical Messages* in ninety-four of 111 percent of letters.¹³⁴ These statistics solidify how important the music programs were to those who wrote into the station, especially in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, since they were the most referred to programs in the listeners' letters.

In addition to the letters sent at the end of 1964 and into 1965 to Radio Free Europe, it is abundantly clear that the music programs were the most effective thus far and 1966 was no different. Ryback noted this describing, "A flood of letters from all five countries of Eastern Europe revealed an astonishing identity of tastes among teen-agers in this area and their contemporaries in Britain and America: the same idols, the same songs, the same bands."¹³⁵ This statement demonstrates the desire for rock music behind the Iron Curtain which was still relevant in the mid-1960s. The fan letters also demonstrate that the music programs were impacting the

¹³⁴ Radio Free Europe Audience Research Department, *The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe*, 32.

¹³⁵ Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc*, 86.

youth within Eastern Europe. Lastly, the fan letters were an instrumental tool and represented a way of being heard behind the Iron Curtain. The letters were a perfect representation that contradicted the rules established by the Soviet Union regarding rock and roll music earlier in the decade, when rock and roll made its way into Eastern Europe.

The voyage of rock and roll from the United States to Eastern Europe within two years represents the significance the music had on the youth. Although the music was viewed as rebellious after its formation in the United States, it was only a short period before those behind the Iron Curtain would be able to get a sample of the United States' new craze that swept the nation. The new music eventually affected the Eastern European states, regarding Bulgaria first to a great extent, and the rest of the Eastern European countries followed suit. The most important country that took rock and roll to heart was Hungary with the broadcasts of *Teenager Party* with Ekecs as the host. Soon after, other native language speakers of Radio Free Europe created their own music programs that would appeal to the youth moving forward and into the 1960s. The fan letters that followed in the 1960s created a vivid depiction of how influential the music was to them on a wider scale with risking the possibilities of themselves and their families getting into trouble and facing possible retribution in some sort of capacity from the state governments. With the influence of rock and roll that has been described on the countries of Eastern Europe, and coinciding with the effectiveness of jazz on Voice of America, there is one more genre of music that impacted those behind the Iron Curtain. That new genre created by the British bands that were coming to America during the height of the rock and roll fan letters to Radio Free Europe. The songs produced by British bands and imported into the United States during the 1960s became known as the British Invasion. Soon British pop would invade Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as well.

CHAPTER FOUR: BRITISH POP AND THE SOUND HEARD WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

Jazz from Willis Conover's *Music USA* broadcast over the Voice of America beginning in 1955 had a tremendous impact on those who tuned into his daily program. In addition, rock and roll broadcasts over Radio Free Europe had a similar effect toward the latter part of the 1950s, and into the 1960s as a result of the high volume of letters received by Radio Free Europe from listeners who wanted to hear their favorite tunes. With these two genres of music establishing the precedent for influencing listeners, especially the youth, the formation of a new music genre created another wave of influence that would last for the duration of the 1960s. The creation of this new music began after listening to hit songs from the United States. Most importantly, as the British bands started to journey to the United States to play their music, this resulted in the era known as the British Invasion. In addition to the United States experiencing the British Invasion, the Soviet Union and its Eastern European bloc were experiencing a British Invasion of their own. Therefore, an examination is needed to investigate the effects of British pop music on those behind the Iron Curtain.

The music from British bands influenced the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union around the same time as the British Invasion in the United States. Géza Ekecs, the disk jockey for Radio Free Europe's Hungarian music program, *Teenager Party*, noted the significance of British music in an interview with Paul Glader. Ekecs mentioned the most requested songs and recalled that "Surfin' Bird" by the American band, The Trashmen, was extremely popular, and the second song most in demand was "House of the Rising Sun" by the British group the Animals. In describing "House of the Rising Sun," Ekecs detailed how he could not understand why that song made an impact on his listeners. He stated, "I don't know why, it's a ballad. It is not rock and roll. It is more high culture music. It's between pop and

classical.”¹³⁶ Noted by Ekecs, the songs were among the popular music of the time, and included a song from a British group. The importance of this is that the Animals were one of bands who came to the United States during the formative years of the British Invasion. This indicates that British music was an important aspect of listeners’ lives during the same time period the United States was experiencing the invasion themselves on the radio, and on television.

Aside from being an influential group to Hungarian listeners, and before their success in coming to America in 1964, the Animals were not the only British band who found prosperity behind the Iron Curtain. For example, there are many first-person testimonies about the effect of the Beatles. In an interview with Leslie Woodhead, a British documentary filmmaker and author of *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin: The Untold Story of a Noisy Revolution*, Woodhead met with retired FSB colonel and former Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov. Prior to the interview, Woodhead pondered if he would have the opportunity to question Ivanov about his experience with the Beatles. However, to Woodhead’s delight the response from Ivanov was “anything for the Beatles.”¹³⁷ Also, with the timing of the interview, was shortly after Paul McCartney performed in Russia in 2003 and documented Ivanov’s feeling mentioning that before the interview “he was already gushing on about McCartney’s Red Square concert.”¹³⁸

Woodhead then began questioning him about his experience with the Beatles. Ivanov recalled that he “remembered it well. It was 1963, and I was ten. I turned on the radio, and I heard ‘Love Me Do.’ Radio Luxembourg played it ten times in a row. I got interested, and I

¹³⁶ Paul Glader, “How A Cold War DJ Showed The Power Of Rock And Roll,” *Forbes*, August 26, 2016, accessed, March 13, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2016/08/26/how-one-cold-war-dj-showed-the-creative-power-of-rock-and-roll/#54e4f4583439>.

¹³⁷ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 152.

¹³⁸ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 153.

asked my mum about them. Surprisingly, she knew and she told me they were the Beatles.”¹³⁹ His recollection signifies that he heard them over the radio from a Western radio station. Also, his statement demonstrated that the older generation, like his mum, knew of the Beatles is an important revelation because it would appear that his mother listened to Western radio. Lastly, he was not shunned by his mother for tuning into a foreign radio station.

Ivanov told another story about what life was like after hearing the Beatles. As Ivanov described, “I remember that time in Leningrad when we had Beatlemania. If you walked down the street, you could hear Beatles music through the windows of every house you passed.”¹⁴⁰ Ivanov’s statement is revealing because this came at a time when rock and roll was not allowed to be played since the Soviet Union considered rock music an enemy of the state, especially since authorities monitored letters sent to rock and roll programs such as *Teenager Party*. The apparent openness of playing the Beatles is a startling revelation because this demonstrated that many people were listening to Western radio for their musical needs, and this would also provide a safe assumption that Soviet citizens were obtaining their news from the broadcasts as well.

The openness of playing the Beatles was something that was unprecedented since rock and roll received a ban within the Soviet Union, and rock music was deemed as a threat compared to jazz. However, in due time, the effects of the Beatles began to be felt in the Soviet Union, and additional policies were established to prohibit this new band from affecting those in the Soviet Union. This is significant because “this was at a time when the Kremlin’s cultural commissars were working to stamp out the decadent English group.”¹⁴¹ Ivanov solidified

¹³⁹ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 153.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Woodhead's standpoint mentioning that "of course, there was Communist Party ideology, and there was real life. The Party said the Beatles were a negative influence. But propaganda was one thing. Real life was totally different."¹⁴² Ivanov's opinion is noteworthy because as a member of the Russian government at the time of the interview, he acknowledged that efforts by the Soviet Union were not effective. The reason being was that real life was different from the Communist ideology and propaganda efforts put forth by the Soviet Union.

One of the lasting effects the Beatles had on Ivanov was that he learned English from listening to their songs. As he recalled with Woodhead: "You know, I really began to learn English through Beatles lyrics. I remember 'A Day in the Life' from the *Sgt. Pepper* album: 'Woke up, made my bed, dragged a comb across my head.'" Ivanov continued "that was the first time I learned what the word *comb* means. There's no end of this."¹⁴³ In addition, Ivanov recalled how it was the Beatles who inspired him to learn how to speak English. In the 2003 documentary, *Paul McCartney in Red Square*, he noted that "Beatles songs motivated me greatly to start and study English."¹⁴⁴ This is comparable to Adam Makowicz, the Polish pianist, who also learned English in much the same way. The only difference between their stories is that Makowicz learned English from Conover's show, while Ivanov learned from lyrics in songs. Their stories are similar because it was the musical aspect that brought each of them to listen to radio stations.

In addition to the comments made from Ivanov, there is further evidence of the effect the Beatles had on other Soviet citizens in the 1960s. Donald J. Raleigh, author of *Russia's Sputnik*

¹⁴² Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 154.

¹⁴³ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 155.

¹⁴⁴ "Paul McCartney In Red Square (Live 2003) Full Concert (HD)," YouTube video, 3:01:07, posted by "Rene Price," October 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYILypCBXXI>.

Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives, interviewed eight people who grew up in the Soviet Union in a town called Saratov. He selected these eight individuals from the same school and graduating class of 1967 from School No. 42.¹⁴⁵ Raleigh highlighted the isolation of the city mentioning that “like much of the country, Saratov was physically off limits, that is closed to foreigners from ‘capitalist’ countries and thus to many direct outside influences until 1990.”¹⁴⁶ With the isolation of the city until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Raleigh asked the interviewees various questions about their lives in the Soviet Union before and after its collapse. Although the questions varied, the focus here will be on the questions pertaining to their lives in the 1960s with radio and music. Raleigh does document that there were members of the graduating class he interviewed who listened to foreign radio broadcasts. As noted, “Members of the Class of ’67 who listened to foreign broadcasts did so because of their fascination with Western music, or because it gave them something to boast about among their peers.”¹⁴⁷ However, they also faced the reality of getting into trouble for listening to foreign broadcasts. As described by Raleigh:

The state frowned upon, and sometimes even persecuted, those who listened to ‘the paid instrument and servant of Wall Street’ and other Western broadcasts, revealing the growing gulf between the regime and many of its citizens, who saw nothing subversive about Voice of America, the BBC, and/or German Wave, the three broadcasts to which most of the Saratovites recalled listening.¹⁴⁸

Although they were removed from any direct outside contact with the West, the broadcasts from the radio stations were influential on them. Most importantly, they did not see any reason not to

¹⁴⁵ Donald J. Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 7.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, 19.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

tune into the radio stations during this time. Thus, this created a rift between the state and its citizens.

With the influence of foreign radio stations, whether the Soviet government liked their decision or not, the residents Raleigh interviewed elaborated about each of their experiences with listening to the broadcasts and the music. Raleigh interviewed Arkadii Olegovich Darchenko about foreign radio broadcasts and he listened to the broadcasts around the time he was in tenth grade and thereafter. Darchenko added that he and his classmates were no longer afraid to listen to the foreign stations because they were not from the previous generation, like their parents were. He believed that it was good to talk about different opinions about what they heard about.¹⁴⁹ Raleigh then asked Darchenko about Western music, and there being more Western music than the Beatles to which Darchenko responded:

Yes, of course. By then there was everything. The fact is that good music appeared already while we attended school, already at school. Well, I don't know anyone from our generation who doesn't love the Beatles. Even now, I ... I still have the Beatles' greatest hits. We grew up on them. Then there were the Rolling Stones, who also, well, by then we had everything. Generally, we liked all of it.¹⁵⁰

A second person Raleigh conducted an interview with was Aleksandr Vladimirovich Trubnikov. Raleigh posed a question to Trubnikov about Western music and if he had been intrigued with it, and he answered that everyone was interested in the music. He added that "but simply put, it was really hard to listen to it. Once again, this wasn't Moscow. That is, they didn't jam it, but the quality was practically, well, it was often the tenth copy of a tape recording. I also remember how they used to rail the Beatles." He later stated that:

¹⁴⁹ Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*, 133-134.

¹⁵⁰ Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*, 139.

Moreover, I even understood what they were singing about, unlike those [laughing] who didn't go to the English-language school. I really liked them. And everything else that we were able to get our hands on. But the extent of this, well, all of this was to all intents and purposes banned. I don't know about elsewhere, but in Saratov it was practically forbidden. If they had caught us with a copy of a tape, say, of the Beatles at a school party, we would have been in deep trouble.¹⁵¹

Noteworthy from the second interview is the mention of having a copy of a tape with Western music on it, such as the Beatles. This is in addition to listening to music on Radio Luxembourg.

Another person interviewed, Gennadii Viktorovich Ivanov, also discussed with Raleigh her experience with the Beatles. He asked her what kind of music she listened to and she replied, "naturally, I listened to the Beatles." She went further in her explanation stating that she "like[d] listening to music from, let's say, those years when I was in eighth or ninth grade."¹⁵² Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Konstantinov, another person interviewed by Raleigh, answered a question about the West in a cultural sense, including music. Konstantinov's response was that they had an interest in Western music, and also described that there were tapes of rock music that floated around. He did put emphasis on the fact that the Western music enticed them even though it was not allowed.¹⁵³

Konstantinov's recollection of rock music being on tapes coincides with another interviewee of Raleigh's, Natalia Valentinovna Altukhova. She remembered the Beatles and said "they were already on tapes. I first made them on [homemade] recordings made from chest X-rays that showed people's ribs. We played them and listened to them. It was really interesting. Later, when they began to perform officially in mass media, say on television or over the radio, I

¹⁵¹ Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*, 237.

¹⁵² Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*, 256.

¹⁵³ Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*, 38.

was sometimes amazed at how clear they sounded. Even the words were comprehensible!”¹⁵⁴ One of the revelations made by Altukhova was that she had access to homemade records from chest X-rays and heard them before they were aired on the radio. This is remarkable because the recordings from X-rays were made from the music playing on Radio Luxembourg. Later on, in the interview, she mentioned how the Beatles had not reached her until the mid to late 1960s. She stated how “there were no Beatles yet. That was only on the sly, in the later grades, closer to 1965 or 1967. But we didn’t have them before then. It was 1965, I think, when they brought the Beatles to me on the sly on the chest X-ray film that I mentioned before.”¹⁵⁵ This method of hearing the Beatles could be argued as an act of subversion, since there were methods of obtaining Western music and getting it by officials.

The testimonial of Altukhova about her experience with chest X-rays received confirmation by another interviewee, Natalia Aleksandrovna Belovolova. Raleigh asked Belovolova about her interest in the Beatles to which she replied “and I still am [interested]. We made recordings on used chest X-rays. I recall the bell-bottomed trousers too.” She further mentioned that this was around the time they “were already about sixteen at the time. You know, this wasn’t out in the open, but something we did outside of school.”¹⁵⁶

The significance of the above responses from the interviewees showcases the effect Western music had on their experiences growing up in the isolated town of Saratov. Most importantly, the music of the Beatles had a tremendous impact on each of their lives in some capacity. Their experiences also demonstrate that all levels of the Soviet government held a grim

¹⁵⁴ Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, 65.

¹⁵⁵ Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, 69.

¹⁵⁶ Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, 166.

view of those who listened to the Beatles, and there were possible severe consequences for listening to the British band, or any kind of British band for that matter.

The statements made from Raleigh's interviews with the students who went to the same school, and were of the same age, provides context that music was important to them while they were growing up. Their stories also align with others who grew up around the same time in the Soviet Union. Soviet citizens who heard the Beatles over Radio Luxembourg were exposed to potential risks if they bought Beatles records on the black market as stated by Ryback:

Listening to Radio Luxembourg and catching a Beatles tune off of there, could have consequences for their job, for their education. Trying to buy a Beatles album somewhere on the black market could have led to arrest. Attending a concert where Beatles songs were being sung could have consequences for people in that society that we can't even imagine. And I think when you live in a situation like that you end up developing, I think, a much more intense relationship with the music.¹⁵⁷

There was a constant threat to those who pursued the option of listening to the Beatles from the Western radio station, Radio Luxembourg. If they decided to obtain records on the black market, the consequences of doing so would result in actions that no one could fathom. Therefore, the risk was worth the reward in obtaining the records, or tuning into foreign radio stations to hear Beatles songs. Lastly, the account of the possibilities provided a glimpse into subversive measures used to get past Soviet regulations.

In seeking out illegal records, there was a method employed to create bootlegged records. As explained in the 2009 documentary made by Woodhead, with the same name as his book, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, "in the mid-sixties, ingenious Beatles fans found a way to make their own bootlegs. Their secret weapons were street side recording booths, where

¹⁵⁷ "Paul McCartney In Red Square (Live 2003) Full Concert (HD)," YouTube video, 3:01:07, posted by "Rene Price," October 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYILypCBXXI>.

homesick soldiers could make sound letters for their moms. After-hours, fans would turn up with tapes of Beatles songs illicitly recorded from Radio Luxembourg.”¹⁵⁸ Masha Oleneva continued stating “it could do the recording of little songs at the beginning they did it on the used x-rays, which they collected from trash in the Medical Institute or in clinics or hospitals and so there was the machine with the needle which was scratching grooves on this x-rays.”¹⁵⁹ The statements from Woodhead and Oleneva feature a unique way in which Soviet citizens created their own bootleg records. The revelation from Woodhead about prerecorded Beatles tunes originally broadcast from Radio Luxembourg signifies that Soviets listened to Western radio to hear Beatles music. Additionally, the use of radio to listen to Western broadcasts demonstrate the need for music from the West, and this was a subversive method utilized by the Soviet people to get their fulfillment of the newest music offered from the other side of the Iron Curtain.

The statements from Ryback and Woodhead, including Woodhead’s interview with Masha Oleneva, about the risks taken from the Soviet citizens to listen or obtain Beatles music, align with Artemy Troitsky. He is an author and sociologist, who also commented in the 2003 documentary about the risks taken. He described how there were:

Funny and strange ways to get the Beatles music into the Soviet Union, lots of albums have been smuggled into the country. At the black market, they costed [sic] a lot. Average monthly wage in the Soviet Union at that time was one hundred and fifty rubles a month and one new Western long-playing album costed from fifty to eighty rubles, so this was one half of an average monthly wage. Still gets, but, those albums and cherish them, and you know, they were really like religious objects.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ “How The Beatles Rocked The Kremlin Part 1/4,” YouTube video, 15:17, posted by “Andy McCormack,” April 19, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sw6OCDiKLQ>.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ “Paul McCartney In Red Square (Live 2003) Full Concert (HD),” YouTube video, 3:01:07, posted by “Rene Price,” October 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYILypCBXXI>.

Troitsky's recollection of purchasing Beatles and Western music demonstrates the lengths Soviet citizens would strive in order to get records from the West. Most importantly, this statement aligns with how significant certain music was to citizens, if they were willing to spend the equivalent of half their income, sometimes more, on black market records.

In addition to the risks of obtaining black market records at expensive rates, the same methods were still being applied in 1967. The 1967 album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, by the Beatles not only "triggered their interest in the English language," for Ukrainians but by the end of August 1967, the "album was available in Dnepropetrovsk in its original vinyl form for a price of 60 to 100 rubles."¹⁶¹ These examples enhance why the Soviet people preferred to have music from the West than anything else during this time in the 1960s, and were willing to spend most of their monthly income on Western music. Notably, this is another act of subversion against the Soviet Union.

Obtaining Western bootleg records from recording Western radio broadcasts contributed to the downfall of Communism, in addition to jazz and rock and roll. Andrei Makarevich, a musician from Russia and the founder of the music group Time Machine, described the impact of Western music within the Soviet Union. He said that he "knew that the Soviet power would fall. But I thought it will take fifty, sixty years more. It happened much earlier, and I think that rock and roll, and Beatles did a lot for it."¹⁶² The viewpoint from Makarevich represents what others thought in that it was music from the West, including the Beatles, who were the ones that ultimately brought down the Soviet Union.

¹⁶¹ Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 88.

¹⁶² "Paul McCartney In Red Square (Live 2003) Full Concert (HD)," YouTube video, 3:01:07, posted by "Rene Price," October 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYILypCBXXI>.

One person that shares a similar view with Makarevich is Kolya Vasin, a Beatles fan from the Soviet Union, and interviewed by Leslie Woodhead. Vasin after he and some others were introduced to the Beatles, recalled that “after the Beatles, the Iron Curtain was like a fence with holes. That was our secret. We breathed through these holes.”¹⁶³ Woodhead inferred from his conversation with Vasin that the Beatles were significant because “the impulse of a whole generation to defect from a world that had always been built on the assumption that its people shared collective values, hopes, and beliefs slowly gathered the force of an unstated revolution.”¹⁶⁴ The revolution Woodhead alluded to is shared by Makarevich in that it was the Beatles who helped bring a peaceful demise to the Soviet Union starting in the 1960s.

While the subversion tactics were occurring within the Soviet Union by the mid-1960s, the latter part of the 1960s were no different. There were cultural influences on those at universities in the city, mostly from music and radio in 1965. As documented:

The most dangerous fact, however, for these apparatchiks was that all student rooms had obvious signs of capitalist influence, such as audiotapes of ‘beat music’ and pictures of the Beatles and Rolling Stones. In some rooms, students listened regularly to foreign radio stations and recorded foreign music on their tape recorders.¹⁶⁵

According to the statement above, British music had found its way into college dormitories in the mid-1960s, and created an influence that went against the typical rhetoric posed by the Soviets.

¹⁶³ Woodhead, *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, 76.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ DADO [Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovs’koi oblasti] (State Archive of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), f. 9854, op. 1, d. 42, l. 60; f. 22, op. 15, d.39, ll. 59-61, 120. During the 1960s, the term “beat music” (*beat muzyka*) was used in the USSR for Western rock music. Also see how the Dutch used the same words for rock music during the 1960s: Mel van Elteren, *Imagining America: Dutch Youth and Its Sense of Place* (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1994), 118, 130-138, quoted in Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnipropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 66.

Also, having hard copies of music and material from the West proves that college students were participating in subversive methods to listen to their favorite bands from the West. Lastly, conclusion can be distinguished from the description. By this point in the 1960s, technology had advanced to the point where Western music could be heard anywhere at any time. This meant that once a recording was made, it could be listened to as many times as the person wanted.

In addition to authorities finding the likes of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones in university dormitories, there were fan letters, mostly from those under the age of twenty-eight. These letters were sent from within the city to radio stations overseas and in England, and these letters were investigated by the KGB in January of 1968. From the evidence found, “36 percent of all letters were sent to radio stations in Canada, 31 percent to stations in the United States, and 29 percent to stations in England.” Also detailed was how “the KGB analysts noted that 37 percent of these listeners to and consumers of Western radio information asked in their letters for the radio stations to send them records, albums, manuals for fashionable dances, or radio guides with a timetable for different Western radio stations.”¹⁶⁶ Likewise, there was evidence from the letters written that they were not concerned with politics, which amazed KGB officials. In fact, it was the cultural aspect from the West that the writers were more concerned about, and this included music. The statistics and evidence provided indicate there was interest for consuming Western music broadcast by Western radio stations for the listeners within Dniepropetrovsk.

Additional evidence indicates the interest of those in Dniepropetrovsk. A sixteen-year-old student, Evgenii Chaika, wrote letters about his interest in music from the West, including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Chaika said in one of the letters that “it is impossible not to love

¹⁶⁶ Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, 66.

the Beatles [Bitlov]. I have listened to their music since 1963. I want to listen to their song ‘19th Nervous Breakdown’ again. [Apparently, he confused the Beatles with the Rolling Stones.] And I have something else in mind. Please send me chewing gum as well.”¹⁶⁷ Vladimir Dmitriev in a letter “asked radio stations in the United States and England to help him organize correspondence with the citizens of these countries. His main requests were about jazz and rock music records.”¹⁶⁸ The takeaway from both letters is that all three genres of music from the West prospered in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and were represented by the end of the 1960s in letters. Most importantly, the music found its way to create something that made the youth crave Western goods, especially music.

During the end of the 1960s with the interest of all Western styles of music from jazz to rock and roll and British pop, there was evident change some diplomats on both sides realized. Yale Richmond, an American diplomat who “worked on U.S.-Soviet exchanges for many years- at the State Department, U.S. Information Agency, and American Embassy Moscow,” detailed the impact the Beatles and music from the West had on the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁹ He referred to Pavel Palazchenko, Mikhail Gorbachev’s former assistant, about the Beatles, reflecting in retrospect:

We knew their songs by heart....In the dusky years of the Brezhnev regime they were not only a source of musical relief. They helped us create a world of our own, a world different from the dull and senseless ideological liturgy that increasingly reminded one of Stalinism.... The Beatles were our quiet way of rejecting ‘the system’ while conforming to most of its demands.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, 67.

¹⁶⁸ DADO, f. 19, op. 52, d. 72, 1. 25, 11. 25-26, quoted in Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnipropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 67.

¹⁶⁹ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), x.

¹⁷⁰ Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 3, quoted in Yale

The statement made by Palazchenko highlights the significance of the Beatles on those within the Soviet Union. Also, Palazchenko is in agreement that the Beatles were one of the ways in which the Soviet people could quietly reject the Soviet system and the ideologies that were established by the government. The point of view that Palazchenko hints at, but does not say, is that this was their way of subverting the government.

The music from British bands in the 1960s, most specifically from the Beatles, played a vital role that created influence that was unprecedented in the Soviet Union. The creation of expanding black markets for bootleg records to testimonies of those within the Soviet Union during the time have authenticated this from various interviews. These stories range from the recollections of Sergei Ivanov, to those within the isolated Russian town of Saratov that graduated together in 1967, and others. More importantly, the translator and foreign policy aide to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Pavel Palazchenko, further solidified the Beatles and their role in shifting the culture that predated their generation, and gave them something to help reject the Soviet system in their own right. The takeaway is that each of their stories attest to how influential the Beatles were during the time that foreign media was suppressed. In direct relation to the foreign outlets being censored, the Soviet citizens sought out methods to obtain, or listen, to the latest hits from the West, specifically from the Beatles. This included creating records from used X-rays and selling the bootleg records for astronomical prices that equaled more than a half a month of salary to listen to Western tunes. Most of all, the bootleg records sought after by Soviet citizens came from Radio Luxembourg which supports how vital music and radio were in becoming a subversive method against the Soviet Union.

Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 205.

CONCLUSION

The winding down of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s with the emergence of new music genres that formed in the United States, also brought about revelations about who was behind Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. This is due to the CIA being the organization behind both radio stations since their formation. There was outcry from Congress once the truth became public with one member of the Senate, Senator Clifford P. Case of New Jersey, trying to create a ban on the CIA from financing both radio stations in 1971.¹⁷¹ Although there was backlash for the truth behind the operations, “covert C.I.A. funding of the two stations has been an open secret for years.”¹⁷² Therefore, by the time the 1970s approached, the allure of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty had ceased since the secret was now open to those who chose to investigate. For this reason, that is why this study examines the years 1953 to 1968, to enhance the understanding of what the reality of the situation was to those behind the Iron Curtain and not alluding to who was operating the stations.

The use of radio and music from 1953 to 1968 was one tool that proved effective for the United States and Western powers, and brought a peaceful demise of the Soviet Union in a subversive manner. The decision directly after the Second World War to devise a method and deliver information to Soviet controlled countries was a substantive decision that would ultimately create a foundation for progressing in the Cold War. Both sides recognized the importance of radio, even before the formation of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, with the beginnings of jamming radio broadcasts from the Voice of America in the late 1940s. Once the

¹⁷¹ Benjamin Welles, “Ban Sought on C.I.A. Aid For Radio Free Europe,” *New York Times*, January 24, 1971, accessed May 8, 2019, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

¹⁷² Ibid.

1950s began and Radio Free Europe started to broadcast into the Eastern European states, and Radio Liberty into the Soviet Union, respectively, a new battle for influence was under way. These broadcasts would continue well into the 1960s and beyond the scope of this thesis.

Additionally, radio became an effective soft diplomacy tool in the Cold War and allowed for information to go behind the Iron Curtain. With the information being broadcast, despite the radio jamming efforts from the Soviets, it was important to realize what kind of information or programs those in the Eastern European states and the Soviet Union wanted to hear. The most popular program that those individuals wanted to listen to was news, which is understandable due to the censoring efforts of the Soviets during this time. However, the other programs that were in high demand were the music programs from the various Western radio stations, specifically the Voice of the America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and Radio Luxembourg. These radio stations and their music programming interested listeners, and the number of listeners to the music programs would only grow through the middle to late 1950s and 1960s.

The music programs that were broadcast by the radio stations mentioned above were the most pivotal through the mid-1950s and into the 1960s. The reason being is that different genres came from the West during this relatively short period of time. The first music genre which created change was jazz. Jazz became one of the most important music genres globally because of Voice of America. In the early 1950s, the program that broadcast jazz was Leonard Feather's *Jazz Club USA*. Although the program lasted for a short period of time, it would only be a few years later that jazz made a triumphant return to the airwaves with Willis Conover's *Music USA*. Conover's program arguably became one of the most instrumental, and was the first to create a crack within the Iron Curtain. The feedback from the show resulted in a high volume of fan

letters that spanned the globe and showed the impact his program had on those who listened. Some of the important letters came from listeners in Eastern Europe and the personal testimonies from Polish pianist Adam Makowicz and Polish jazz enthusiast Ryszard Horowitz. Both of their recollections reinforce the impression his show made onto them and many others in the middle to latter part of the 1950s.

The statements made from Makowicz and Horowitz about the impact of Conover's show on both of them also aligns with others. The reason for this is because within the same year of Conover's debut on Voice of America, 1955, popular jazz musicians from the United States, sponsored by the State Department, traveled abroad and promoted American ideals. The musicians included in the tours were Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck and Benny Goodman. These State sponsored tours became another tool in the American soft diplomacy arsenal, and piqued the interest of those that attended the concerts. Importantly, the tours would not have been feasible without the launch of *Music USA*. American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewellyn Thompson observed how jazz had affected the Soviet youth, and it was in fact jazz that played a role in swaying public opinion and started to affect the decisions made by Soviet officials. Without Conover playing jazz on *Music USA*, there would have been no ability to sway public opinion. An example that is noteworthy is that English radio programs, and music programs, were not subjected to jamming by the Soviet Union. Thus, this meant that Conover's program would not have been jammed, and since it was not jammed, this gave people behind the Iron Curtain a reason to tune in. Most importantly, these reasons showcase how important radio and music were when they were used in tandem with one another.

Although jazz was spreading through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during this time, another music genre, rock and roll, began to spread as well. Rock and roll was met with

criticism in the United States, but when it made its way to Eastern Europe, there was enthusiasm for the new music, especially in Bulgaria. Soon after, the craze of rock and roll spread to Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. This would result in the potential for rock and roll to become the newest tool in the West's arsenal, as Timothy Ryback mentioned from a NATO journal.

Besides the effectiveness of rock and roll already within Eastern Europe, and the possibility of using rock and roll as a weapon, the radio program, *Teenager Party*, influenced those who listened. The broadcast of this program occurred on the Hungarian faction of Radio Free Europe and hosted by Géza Ekecs. His music program was broadcast in Hungarian, and not English. Although the music featured on the program was rock and roll from the West and in English. *Teenager Party* had a strong following, as demonstrated by the amount of fan mail received from its listeners, and these letters contained alias names which were used to alert listeners that listeners the station received their requests. More notably, due to the popularity of this program, the other native speaking programs of Radio Free Europe began broadcasting other rock and roll programs. One example is *Rendezvous at 6:10*, broadcast on the Polish portion of Radio Free Europe. The effectiveness of rock and roll was due to its broadcasts on Western radio. Radio Free Europe was vital in formatting rock and roll to be broadcast into the other side of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, the use of radio and music were a potent combination that led to listeners wanting more from the West. In addition, with Conover's program on the airwaves, and the rock and roll programs established by Radio Free Europe, this resulted in Eastern Europeans and citizens in the Soviet Union having a selection of music they could choose from. This resulted into having generations adapt to Western radio stations and the programs broadcast, including music shows.

The music programs featured on Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, were influential on those in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but it was not until the 1960s that the music from Britain became some of the most impactful to those behind the Iron Curtain. Ekecs mentioned in an interview that one of the most requested songs from his program was the Animals' "House of the Rising Sun." Although the Animals were a hit to those in Hungary, the Beatles would have a more significant influence on those behind the Iron Curtain, specifically the Soviet Union. The numerous testimonies in different interviews strengthens the fact that the Beatles created something special. Additionally, some individuals have speculated that it was their music that expedited the Soviet Union's collapse in later years.

One of the examples given for why some reason that the Beatles were partly responsible for the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, was due to the black market, and more specifically, the use of bootleg records. The bootleg records created from tape recordings from radio stations, such as Radio Luxembourg, were recorded in recording booths used for soldiers to send messages to loved ones, and were pressed onto old X-rays. This led Beatles fans, and fans of Western music, to spend vast amounts of money in order to own a copy of the newest records, taken from radio transmissions, and the perspective their band had to offer. The cost would often go for more than half of the average monthly income of a Soviet citizen. The cost alone, coinciding with the desire to own these records, demonstrates the impact Western music had on those in the Soviet Union. More evident was the fact that this black market thrived because people wanted to hear the latest hits. Also, the people of the Soviet Union that participated in the black market were acting subversively because of the consequences that came with owning and playing Beatles records.

The music from the British bands, and commonly associated with the British Invasion in the United States, was the final music genre that would create distress within the Soviet Union. Therefore, it was jazz that became the first music genre that helped spur a movement behind the Iron Curtain, and one that helped introduce jazz music to listeners over the airwaves of Voice of America. Additionally, the jazz tours made people in Eastern Europe want more music. With the craving of jazz music, rock and roll was the second music genre that would help sway the Eastern Bloc public into wanting more rock and roll hits, and hearing them over Radio Free Europe. Lastly, British pop music, especially of the Beatles, maintained the status quo of Soviet citizens wanting music from the West, and they would go to any lengths to fulfill their needs.

The research accomplished by other scholars until this point has focused primarily on the function of radio and its purpose during the Cold War. Additionally, there are works that target radio but barely give music the notice it rightfully deserves. There are other published works that hone in on the use of music during the Cold War and the significance music achieved by different musicians. Also, these works do not focus on how the communist bloc heard the songs. However, there is no work from the onset which centers on the use of radio and music working in tandem. The purpose of this thesis is to fulfill the void created by other scholars that has gone overlooked for too long. The depth this thesis delves into provides context to enhance the significance radio and music each have played during the Cold War from 1953 to 1968. Overall, as current literature has indicated thus far, and based on the amount of declassified records available to scholars, radio and music did in fact play a crucial role. Although as time will reveal, the argument could possibly change and further showcase to what extent music and radio had in listeners opinions. Or the argument could sway in the opposite direction and challenge what this thesis argues.

NOTE ABOUT THE USE OF SOURCES IN THIS THESIS

There was an attempt to visit the Lyndon Baines Johnson Archive to fulfill much needed research to help give a more candid perspective from those who worked closely with Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Voice of America during this time period from 1953 to 1968. Particularly, the attempt made was going to focus on November 1963 to December 1968 to determine the interworking of these radio stations and the decisions made about the programming during these years. However, due to the government shutdown that occurred in December of 2018 to January of 2019, the attempt to research at the archive was unsuccessful. Therefore, the sources that are used in this thesis come solely from those collected and scanned for researchers to view online that cannot go and visit the archive otherwise.

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