UC Santa Barbara

UC Santa Barbara Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Sonic Terror: Music, Murder, and Migration in the USSR

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/65h2r1nq

Author

Birch, Alexandra

Publication Date

2024

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Sonic Terror: Music, Murder, and Migration in the USSR

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Alexandra Birch

Committee in charge:

Professor Adrienne Edgar, Chair

Professor Harold Marcuse

Associate Professor Mhoze Chikowero

Professor Kiril Tomoff, University of California, Riverside

June 2024

The dissertation of Alexandra Birch is approved.

_____

Kiril Tomoff

_____

Mhoze Chikowero

_____

Harold Marcuse

_____

Adrienne Edgar, Committee Chair

June 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout this diverse and multidisciplinary research, I have had excellent guidance and support from a number of academics and colleagues. Adrienne Edgar has fully transformed a violinist into an historian, and eternally grateful for your endless support with countless drafts, applications, and most of all for always being the most receptive and patient mentor. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Harold Marcuse for encouraging my comparative work on genocide, Mhoze Chikowero for always suggesting new ways of approaching music and sound with the greatest deference to creators, and to Kiril Tomoff for musically and academically evaluating my work. It is my most sincere pleasure to work with all of you.

I am ultimately telling others' stories, so I am extremely grateful to the living composers and surviving families with whom I worked. Thank you to Laurent Zaderatsky and his lovely family for being in touch with all my questions about his grandfather and for meeting in Paris. To Mikhail Nosyrev (Jr.) thank you for sending all of your father's music for violin, and being so receptive to questions. Thank you to Inessa Dvulzhinaya for sending me Edi Tyrmand's score and for your own excellent scholarship on music and the Holocaust in Belarus. Also, thank you to Yuri Khanon for trusting me with his work *Bitten Pictures*, to Lera Auerbach for being so helpful with background about her pieces, and to Roman Stolyar for sending me *Free at Last* to premiere. My most sincere thank you goes to those who can never be named. Thank you to the composers and musicians, the families and intellectuals forever lost to the whirlwind of the Nazi and Soviet camps – it is for you that I humbly try to write a piece of your story.

I was able to start the research for *Sonic Terror* as a Kennan Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2022, which gave me valuable access to their archives as well as the Library of Congress and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. As always, thank you to the fantastic librarians at USHMM: Megan Lewis, Elliott Wrenn, Liviu Carare, and Vincent Slatt who are an endless font of resources and kindness in otherwise dark research and a separate thank you to Bret Werb for sharing your research and suggesting new directions in scholarship of music and the Holocaust. The majority of this dissertation was written as a Research Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Advanced Holocaust Studies in Austria. It is my humble honor to continue the work of Simon Wiesenthal and be supported by this institution, giving voice to composers and individuals from the Holocaust. I am extremely grateful for the flexibility of a year to write and research, excellent methods seminars with my colleagues, and want to extend a special thank you to Éva Kovács and Marianne Windsperger for organizing everything with the fellowship and delightful research conversations, and to Stephen Naron for assisting with permissions and access of the Fortunoff Archive. Throughout this year, I was also a non-residential fellow of the USC Shoah Foundation, which granted me vital access to the Visual History Archive. My research on Tashkent benefited substantially from a workshop on Art and Literature of the Holocaust in the USSR at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, a conference on Music and the Holocaust at the Wiener Library in London, and a grant from the Moshe Mirlashvili Center

for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union from Yad Vashem. My research trip to circumpolar Finland to work with the Saami people was funded by a Visual, Performing, and Media Arts Award from the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at UCSB and a grant from the Arctic Research Institute of North America. My trip to Kazakhstan was supported by travel funds from the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute and a Graduate Travel Grant from UCSB, and I would like to thank Gavin Slade at Nazarbayev University for the invite to speak about this project and for invaluable information locating sites of the Gulag in Kazakhstan. My research in Tashkent was generously supported by a Sharon Abramson Research grant from the Holocaust Education Foundation at Northwestern University and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UCSB. Finally, thank you to Maciek Zabierowski at the Auschwitz Jewish Center where I was a fellow during my Masters for his assistance with sound recordings at Auschwitz Birkenau.

Lastly, a sincere thank you to my friends and family. I am so glad to have met and worked with all my friends at UCSB, particularly Sasha Noi and Abylay Stambayev and everyone in our *kruzhok* for early conversations about this project and an ever-vibrant exchange of ideas and materials. To my pianist friends, Chika Nobumori at UCSB and Jui-Ling Hsu from ASU, thank you for years of friendship and joining me on my latest recordings for this project. To my dear and best friend, Dani Shraibman, thank you for joining me on any and all recordings of the recovered music I find, and for hundreds of voice notes and conversations while I'm writing on this difficult and often emotionally taxing material. To my mom Jodie Birch and Buz Slade, thank you for always believing in and supporting my abstract research and coming to conferences and events all over the world. Finally, to my three beautiful children, thank you Zara, Lev, and Nina for trapsing after your mom across the Steppe and circumpolar North, for your bright curiosity with the cultures we encounter, and for patience and maturity beyond your young years.

VITA OF ALEXANDRA BIRCH
June, 2024

EDUCATION

-PhD History (Modern Russia), UC Santa Barbara – ABD May 2023, Anticipated 2024
Committee: Adrienne Edgar, chair, Harold Marcuse, Mhoze Chikowero, Kiril Tomoff
Dissertation: Sonic Terror: Music, Murder, and Migration in the USSR.
Exam Fields: Soviet Detention and Ethnicity, the Holocaust in the USSR and Comparative historiography of the Gulag and Holocaust, Sonic Violence, Music and Colonial Power, and Public History/Musicology.

-DMA (Doctoral of Musical Arts) Arizona State University – Fall 2017
Committee: Katherine McLin, chair, Sabine Feisst, Russell Ryan
Dissertation: Balancing Mathematics and Virtuosity: A Performer's Guide to Sofia Gubaidulina's *Dancer on a Tightrope* (Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 2018).
Exam Fields: Violin Pedagogy and Twentieth Century Russian repertoire for the violin,
recovered music, Music since 1950, and the Chamber music of Beethoven

-Master of Music, Violin Performance – Arizona State University Fall 2015
Committee: Katherine McLin, Robert Oldani, Russell Ryan

-Bachelor of Music, Violin Performance – Arizona State University Spring 2014 (Cum Laude)

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Columbia University: Harriman Institute, New York, NY
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow 2024-2026

World ORT Music and the Holocaust Website, London, UK
Content Director and Guest Author from March 2024

Simon Wiesenthal Institute for Advanced Holocaust Studies, Vienna, Austria
Research Fellow 2023-24
"Music and Mizrachim: Weinberg and Yudakov in Tashkent"

University of California Santa Barbara
Instructor of Record, Graduate TA, Reader: Fall 2020-Spring 2024

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC
Alexander Grass Memorial Fellow (Postdoc) 2018-19
Musical Stolpersteine and Soviet Memories (see publications)

Arizona State University – Tempe, AZ
Graduate TA: Spring 2015-Spring 2017
Please request additional performance CV.

PUBLICATIONS

Birch, Alexandra. *Hitler's Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024, Forthcoming.

Birch, Alexandra. "This is Saamiland : An alternative history of Solovki and the White Sea." *Europe Now*. February, 2023.

Birch, Alexandra. "Score Review: Kompozitor's Critical Editions of Alfred Schnittke's works for the Violin." *Tempo*, Fall 2022.

Birch, Alexandra. "They were drinking, singing, and shooting: Music and The Holocaust in the USSR," in *The Journal of Perpetrator Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 1, https://jpr.winchesteruniversitypress.org/8/volume/4/issue/1/.

Birch, Alexandra. "Victor Ullmann Before Theresienstadt: Musical Commemoration." In *Microhistorical Perspectives of the Holocaust*. Eds. Hannah Wilson and Christian Walke. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2023.

Birch, Alexandra. "From 'Tsar Ducks' to Kashchei the Deathless: Anti-Corruption Symbols in Russia Today," NYU Jordan Center, *All the Russias* blog, https://jordanrussiacenter.org/news/from-tsar-ducks-to-heartless-emperors-symbols-of-anti-corruption-in-russia-today/#.Yebyi_7MLIX.

Birch, Alexandra. "Balancing Mathematics and Virtuosity: A Performer's Guide to Sofia Gubaidulina's Dancer on a Tightrope" Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 2018 and Basel: Mitteilungen Paul Sacher Stiftung, 2018.

Birch, Alexandra. "Music's Link to Memory" in Reflections: The Auschwitz Jewish Center Journal, 2016. 7-10.

Recordings

Birch, Alexandra. *Vnye: Music for Solo Violin.* Firebird Records, 0003, 2021, CD.
Birch, Alexandra and Neilson Chen. *Musical Stolpersteine*. Firebird Records 0002, 2020, CD.
Birch, Alexandra and Dani Shraibman. *Soviet Memories*. Firebird Records 0001, 2019, CD.

SELECTED HONORS, AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS

-Arctic Institute of North America Grant in Aid Award, "This is Saamiland", 2024
-Center for Middle Eastern Studies Research Fellowship UCSB, Summer 2024
-Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, UCSB Grant: This is Saamiland, 2024
-2023-24 Academic Senate Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, UCSB, Nominee
-GSA Travel Grant for Nazarbayev HANSR conference in Kazakhstan, Fall 2023
- USC Shoah Foundation and VHA Archive non-residential fellow 2023-24
-Yad Vashem and Moshe Mirlashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union Grant for outstanding scholarship, September 2023.
-Ann Rappaport Paper Prize for outstanding research on Modern Europe 2023.

-Van Gelderen Memorial Award, UCSB 2023.
-Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, UCSB Grant: Zaderatsky's Violin Concerto 2023
-Kennan Fellow at the Wilson Center, Washington DC: Modern Russia, Summer 2022
-UC Grad Slam, UCSB Finalist: GULAGSound: Vsevolod Zaderatsky's Violin Concerto
-Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, UCSB Performance Grant, Complete Beethoven Sonatas
-Title VIII recipient for University of Illinois summer research lab, associateship.
-United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Alexander Grass Memorial Fellow 2018 (Postdoc)
-Title VIII recipient (US State Department Funding) for Armenian Language at ASU Melikian Center and Yerevan 2017
-Auschwitz Jewish Center Fellow 2016, Publication winner
-ASU Special Talent Award (Full doctoral funding) 2016-17.
-Chabad Lubavitch Grant for Research and Preservation of the Shoah 2015
-Hillel Kalin Research Grant 2015
-ASU Special Talent Award (Full Masters Funding) 2014-15
-Frazer Award for Judaism and the Arts –2015, Music as Resistance to Genocide

ABSTRACT

Sonic Terror: Music, Murder, and Migration in the USSR

by

Alexandra Birch

The history of the Soviet Union can be defined by periods of atrocity, genocide, and warfare. The Soviet Gulag, the Holocaust, and the civilian and military engagement in World War Two produced unfathomable mass death in sites across the entire USSR for a half-century. To gain an instant, immersive, and humanizing understanding of these atrocities, this dissertation presents eight case studies of music and sound from representative sites or repressed composers. Within each case study, the overlaps between Nazi and Soviet violence clarify the colonial designs of these Twentieth-Century empires where Imperial models of subjugation and conquest continued in nominally anti-Imperial regimes. Music prioritizes the experiences of repressed individuals and functions as an alternate ego document, narrating a dangerous and erased history. Sound and recordings of soundscapes creates a new archive of knowledge, immersing historians in sites as they existed rather than as documented in written documents by perpetrators.

To pivot from Imperial Russia to the USSR, I begin with a study of the indigenous Saami people, their sonic knowledge and representation of space, and the first Gulag on the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea. An indigenous reconception of this space reveals the impacts of the Gulag on the wider regions in which they were situated, and the intersecting impacts of the Gulag and the Third Reich on indigenous communities. In Chapter 2, I discuss the infamous Gulag of the Siberian Far East – Kolyma – and the violin concerto of Vsevolod

Zaderatsky I recovered from his family. In Chapter 3, I look again at sound to understand the vast space of the Gulag in Kazakhstan, an extractive enterprise run by the same Soviet companies who originated at Kolyma. Chapters 4,5, and 6 all directly address the Second World War including the fate of Soviet evacuees and those who survived the Holocaust within the Soviet Gulag, the complicated memory and commemoration of clandestine fighters (Partisans) and Soviet POWs, the blockade of the city of Leningrad, and postwar antisemitism leading to the artistic denunciations of late Stalinism. After the war, I present a final composer, Mikhail Nosyrev and his experiences in the artistic Gulag, Vorkuta. Nosyrev's history, and his *Capriccio* for violin reveal the impacts of the Gulag after release, and the lingering effects of political repression into the 1960s and 70s. Finally, I examine three contemporary classical composers: Yuri Khanon, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Lera Auerbach and how legacies of atrocity linger in Russian and diasporic consciousness. These compositions and recorded sound provide an emotional and connected look at the intersecting terror of the Third Reich and USSR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF IMAGES

Introduction

In the fall of 1952, Vsevolod Zaderatsky finished the final notes of his Violin Concerto, a work resplendent with orientalist flair and virtuoso cadenzas for the instrument. As I discussed performance possibilities and recording this dazzling concerto over lunch with the composer's grandson in sunny Paris, we acknowledged that we were a world away both geographically and psychologically from the tragedy and repressions which beset Zaderatsky's life, and how to best bring this work to contemporary audiences. Zaderatsky was born to an intellectual family in the Russian empire, served in the First World War, was arrested twice and ultimately sent to the Gulag in Magadan, evacuated to Kazakhstan during the Second World War, and eventually lived out the remainder of his life in relative obscurity, still composing, at home in Ukraine. What does Zaderatsky's uncompromising aesthetic in a single piece reveal about his unbreakable spirit in the Gulag? How does the meaningful restitution and performance of a suppressed composer's works address the tragedy and mass death within the USSR, without also listing grim body counts or impossible prison conditions? Finally, besides working with musical compositions, what can sound illuminate about sites of atrocity, and can sound prioritize other understandings, other knowledge systems to address mass death? This research combines my original recordings of soundscapes of the Gulag and Holocaust in the USSR with five CDs of music I recovered and perform. Together, these recordings and sound provide an instant, humanizing understanding of these sites, and reveal the entangled intersections between Soviet and Nazi atrocity.

The arts, broadly conceived, are central to understanding flashpoints of trauma and limit the scope of atrocity study to a humanizing and individualized framework.

Conceptually, this moves beyond gruesome body counts or torture lists proving which autocratic regime was more evil and instead centers the experiences of marginalized and persecuted individuals. Sound and music do not offer a detailed history of each site. Instead, sound and music instantly create an immersive and humanizing experience of the Gulag and the Holocaust, an understanding of space, or a deeply emotional connection to the composers interned. The origin point of each section is some type of recorded sound or a musical score I recovered by working directly with the composer or surviving family members (Nosyrev, Zaderatsky, Tyrmand, Khanon), or by making field recordings of sites of atrocity (Indigenous settlements in Finland, the Gulag in Kazakhstan, Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland). Soundscapes offer a sensorial hint of atrocity: landscapes, scenery, sights, and what was heard.[1]

Recent Holocaust scholarship has expanded to consider the plights of new victim groups like the disproportionate fatalities of Soviet POWs, the plight of evacuees, and the topographies of genocide including analysis of soundscapes.[2] One revealing aspect of these topographical analyses is how large these atrocity sites are, and how sites of transit and labor are part of the penal nexus. The I.G. Farben factory at Auschwitz-Monowitz (Auschwitz III) was part of the Holocaust, and the vast network of labor sites across Kazakhstan including the nuclear test site P1 at Semipalatinsk are part of Karlag, the Gulag.[3] This expanded look at

---

[1] Alexandra Birch, "Treblinka: A Forest Portal to Hell," in *Hitler's Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide in Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024).

[2] Tim Cole, *Holocaust landscapes* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016). Karel Berkhoff and others have discussed these expanded victim groups, this is done most substantially and within this imperial framework in: Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010).

[3] Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, "Topographies/topologies of the camp: Auschwitz as a spatial threshold," *Political Geography* 30, no. 1 (2011): 3-12 and Gavin Slade and Laura Piacentini, Alena Kravtsova. Ghosts of the Gulag: Negotiating Spectres of the Penal Past in Northern Russia, *The British Journal of Criminology*, Volume 64, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 17–33, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azad013.

sites requires new modes of analysis, of which sound is one possibility. Comparative work on genocidal topographies has typically appeared in sociological analyses or studies of comparative carcerality. This work on sound provides a more intimate and human engagement with these sites in comparison. Opening sites to wider scope also means greater local interaction with sites of atrocity, and a more blurred line between Hilberg's categories of victims, perpetrators, and especially bystanders.[4] Because the camps of the Gulag and the Holocaust in the USSR covered such dramatically large territories of the USSR, understanding the impacts on local populations is a vital part of the analysis, and again sound provides a humanizing and immersive look at the seeping poison of these atrocities beyond a clearly defined wall of a prison

A. The Soviet Century, of atrocity?

The Soviet Union confirmed its imperial designs through atrocity and violence if not in its anti-imperial Communist ideology. Some points of chronological division are essential and deeply engrained across post-Soviet society like the Revolution, Great Patriotic War, and Soviet collapse in 1991, but other dates like the terror-famines in Ukraine and Kazakhstan of 1930-34 or the 1948 assassination of the Yiddish theatre actor and violinist Solomon Mikhoels remain regional or ethnically specific catastrophes in the collective memory. The proof of the USSR's empire-making is not only in its territorial expansion and militaristic foreign policy, but critically in its nationality policy including detention.[5] Considering the periodization of the USSR through atrocity recenters those most marginalized by the Soviet

[4] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1993).
[5] Ronald Grigor Suny, "The empire strikes out: Imperial Russia,'national'identity, and theories of empire." In *A state of nations: Empire and nation-making in the age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

state including non-titular nationalities, prisoners and those in the penal nexus of the Gulag, indigenous communities, and communities eradicated by the Terror or ecological disasters including radioactive trauma. This catastrophic periodization provides comparison between the Soviet and international perspectives of shared events including the Holocaust and focuses analysis of victims rather than bureaucracy. I apply colonial theories of sound and cultural (re) armament to both the USSR and the Nazi Holocaust, considering both as colonial empires. This accepts an imperial read of the USSR, and engages with new Holocaust literature viewing genocide in the Soviet borderlands as a conflict of empire.[6] This imperial read is essential to understand the violence of the USSR and the intentional destruction of communities and people in a colonial model.[7] I highlight indigenous music and folk song, music outside the boundaries of the formalities of the classical tradition, and present sound, song, and notated music as equally valid sonic experiences. I selected pieces and musical phenomena representing a sampling of sites and ethnicities. This avoids reducing the entirety of the system to a single site of atrocity, a singular ethnic focus of victims, or even a single decade.

B. Musical Testaments and Humanizing Scores

This study of the Gulag and the Holocaust uses music and sound to create an instant, human understanding of unimaginable terror. Looking at the totality of these tragedies reveals overlaps and avoids reducing tragedies to a single site or emblematic person. In

[6] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010). And more generally on empire including the Holocaust: Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds. *Shatterzone of empires: coexistence and violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman borderlands*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.

[7] For example, to understand the psychological as well as physical violence of the USSR it is worth contrasting Soviet analyses with other postcolonial literature: Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2013) and Franz Fanon, *Concerning Violence* (New York, Penguin, 2008).

addition to the recovered music, the two main functions of sound considered are music as an ego document or testament, and sound within a hierarchical framework to understand spaces (soundscapes).

Soviet musical testaments are equally significant to the emblematic literary works which narrated generations of trauma, exile, and the whirlwind of oppressive bureaucracy. Emblematic literature from Dostoyevsky to Solzhenitsyn to Pasternak narrated generations of trauma, exile, and a whirlwind of oppressive bureaucracy from the late Imperial period through the end of the USSR. Culture, including literature, scholarship, and the arts was bent to the Socialist message as another avenue of conveying state power. Resultingly, the arts became a field where the hegemony of the state could be gained or lost, and this tension was cast as a sharp divide between a bourgeois intelligentsia and a proletarian Bolshevik party. [8] This friction was heightened during points of atrocity. Artistic sanctions like the *Zhdanovshchina* in 1948 were inextricably linked to the Terror, the War, and Soviet antisemitism.

Music as a testament has been used when considering crimes too horrible to voice, or to articulate in writing and other words.[9] As scholars of gulag and Holocaust literature have shown, writing a witness-based documentary account of a historical event, particularly one of collective trauma, involves difficult negotiations between personal reflection and historical representation, memory and forgetting, autobiography and fiction.[10] Music and oral histories

---

[8] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 2, 119.

[9] Musicological research has been done on the intersection of trauma and other detention including: Suzanne G. Cusick, "Music as torture/Music as weapon," In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 379-391. Routledge, 2020. Consider also “voiceless” traumas: Bessel A. Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, eds. *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*, Guilford Press, 2012.

[10] Leona Toker, "Toward a Poetics of Documentary Prose from the Perspective of Gulag Testimonies," Poetics Today 18, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 187-222.

both contain elements of narration and abstraction necessary to mediate in historical research. I reject the reductive idea, however, that difficult or painful sounding music necessarily represents some repressed or difficult exposure to trauma.[11] Music is abstract in nature, wherein hidden meaning and knowledge can be articulated and signaled to one group, while another listener only hears the piece superficially.[12] Music may also be encoded in such a manner to even write messages to those who are musically literate and viewing the score – messages only readable by viewing the written notes and not hearable to listeners. [13]With this sort of cryptic meaning, symbols of ethnicity or community can also be buried in scores, like hidden signifiers or even commemoration used by the composer to discuss events. In this way, music voices trauma, writing meaning far greater than an affective expression into musical texts. Critically, this study primarily presents non-vocal music; specifically music without text. This is a key distinction, looking at the scoring itself, and separately sound, rather than doing a textual analysis.

To recover scores from the Gulag and the Holocaust, I worked with a combination of archival sources and directly with families. For Holocaust composers including Edi Tyrmand, Suleiman Yudakov, and Mieczyslaw Weinberg, I first worked with their histories in the archives of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. In the case of Weinberg, his music is published but his time in Tashkent is the unknown part of his history. For Tyrmand, I worked with the Belarussian musicologist Inesa Dvuzhilnaya who knew the composer to receive a

[11] Maria Cizmic, *Performing pain: Music and trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[12] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York, NY: *Hill and Wang*, 2013).
[13] Bach, for example, signed his own name into music using the German system where musical notes have a corresponding letter in the alphabet. Shostakovich borrowed the same technique, signing DSCH (D-Eb-C-B) into many of his pieces, and playing on spellings of Stalin's name in increasingly extreme transpositions as he musically described the dictator's face in the second movement of his Tenth Symphony.

copy of Tyrmand's score and associated sources not available outside of Belarus. I found Yudakov's score in an unrelated collection of Central Asian music held by the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) and paid a colleague to make me a copy. Similarly, I worked directly with the families of Vsevolod Zaderatsky and Mikhail Nosyrev to receive copies and recordings of their scores. I'm particularly grateful to Zaderatsky's family including his grandson Laurent, for their time and graciousness meeting me in France, and for a wealth of documents and photos. In the final chapter, I worked directly with the living composers Lera Auerbach and Yuri Khanon both to gain their impressions about their work and to receive copies of the scores. I'm the first violinist to play Khanon's work *Images Mordues* after lengthy discussion with the reclusive composer. Finally, composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev are clearly not lost to the Gulag or the Holocaust, but their music hasn't been utilized in combinations with soundscapes or active memorial projects. Including these canonical composers with Tyrmand or Zaderatsky also makes the recovered music intelligible to a classical music audience, and is legitimacy-making. This is also critically important to any of the "recovered" composers, who were all professional musicians and would have rather been recognized for their artistic contributions than for their time in the Gulag.

The ability to add an applied component to this research brings it out of the academy and to a far wider audience while simultaneously diversifying the archives of atrocity studies and of classical music. Music is a living art form and contains within these hidden and community-encoded signifiers. This is a way to bring esoteric research back to the very people affected by violence, and to engage with communities on their own terms, by preserving and promoting internal and prized knowledge. While I've been writing, I've also

been practicing these pieces, living every day for many hours with the works of these composers, and connecting to something deeply important about their personal and professional lives. Each of these scores is incorporated onto full-length albums which contain other representative works in the same style or periodization as the recovered score.

C. Soundscapes

Although this is fundamentally a project examining sound and music, it is not musicological in its analysis. There are no musical scores to read, and the recorded soundscapes and music function as a separate supplement to hear the musical examples described in each chapter. Sound and its production are actions attached to political action, reassertion, and cultural re-armament.[14] Like other forms of indigenous refusal, sound is another means by which communities can be rendered voiceless.[15] Refusal to engage in an ethnographic project can also compromise or at minimum complicate legal and other indigenous sovereignty. The disciplines of history and anthropology therefore are intertwined with a longer engagement with Western settler colonialism wherein research benefits from writing about native lives. Building on Arjun Appadurai's "scapes" theories of globalization, soundscapes are a more microcosmic version of "mediascapes".[16] Ochoa Gautier considers such a soundscape in her landmark book *Aurality*, but adds the additional consideration of power into documenting these scapes.[17] Her perspective-driven approach is also vital to atrocity studies, as the point of emanation for sounds, and the documentation of this sound

[14] Mhoze Chikowero, *African music, power, and being in colonial Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015) 19-56 and 239-274.
[15] Audra Simpson, *Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
[16] Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy," *Theory, culture & society* 7, no. 2-3 (1990): 295-310.
[17] Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

often skews towards perpetrators rather than victims.[18] Ochoa Gautier also critically uses sound and notated music as a documentary source in the historical archive. This is the major contribution of her work, how we can go beyond typical documentation of sound – notated music and recording – to read against the grain and provide a more complete picture of the entire historical scene, the aforementioned soundscape.

To capture soundscapes, I worked with several fundamental priorities. First was a respect for sites of the dead and local and cultural traditions about recording and entering sites. Where possible, as in my recordings of Solovki/Saamiland, I worked with the living Saami people, rather than trying to access the deadified sites of the Gulag in Russia. As such, my recordings of Solovki are of the Saami people in circumpolar Finland. These are the grandchildren of the indigenous community who left Solovki and because the latitude is similar, the sound recordings capture a similar Arctic "scape" to Solovki, but resplendent with living knowledge of the Saami. In Kazakhstan, my priority was capturing the pervasiveness of the Gulag in the Kazakh Steppe. I covered a 1500km square area in six days, accessing sites of the Gulag (KARLAG and ALZhIR) and the related nuclear test site in the Semey region. Finally, my sound recordings of Auschwitz-Birkenau are in collaboration with the Auschwitz Jewish Center and Maciek Zabierowski. With permission from the site, this is the first sound recording taken of the ruins of the two trial gas chambers at Birkenau (Little White House, Little Red House) and the field of ash where the Soviet POWs are interred.

[18] Simply put, more people have heard a bullet shot than one approach and lived to document it. Alexandra Birch, "'They were drinking, singing, and shooting': Singing and the Holocaust in the USSR," *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 4, no. 1 (2021).

I address sound separately from notated music specifically in the chapters on the Second World War, Kazakhstan, and Solovki. This provides an indigenous and local perspective of the Gulag in these spaces rather than a Soviet or perpetrator driven analysis. Sound studies can build on postcolonial literature to diversify the archive and consider other sounds which may not have been prioritized in existing documents.[19] Sound should not be disregarded as nonmusical, silent, or nonlinguistic based on preconceived Western paradigms of space. Because it is inherently perspective driven, sound also provides insight into scenes themselves, helping to reimagine situations and locations. This is critically useful in atrocity spaces to reimagine the impacts of sites on the surroundings, to reconstruct destroyed sites like abandoned concentration camps or sites of the Gulag, and to create an immersive understanding of atrocity sites emphasizing senses rather than explicit violence.

In critically reading sonic testimony, we must consider vocality or the emanation point of the sound – was it something spoken or uttered from a person, whose voices are missing from the scene, from whose perspective is the location documented, and what subjectivities affect the understanding of the soundscape. The supporting historical context for the sound and music comes from recorded testimonies, diaries, memoirs, letters to family, and new interviews. Like the recentering of the project from a Russo-centric geographical perspective, the focus on firsthand accounts of affected peoples centers the narrative on those prosecuted. In the case of the field recordings, they are ambisonic, or non-directional recordings, which remove much of the perspective-driven issues in capturing a site, and can be incorporated into the text and a variety of digital platforms. My ambisonic recordings were all taken with

[19] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015) 31-70.

explicit permission, and with careful attention to capturing the living practices of the indigenous communities with which I worked as well as with respect to sites of the dead like at Auschwitz-Birkenau and at Karlag.

D. Structure

A case studies approach makes sense of the interactions of millions of people with the Gulag or the Holocaust by using a single personal history. Considering a composer a "Gulag composer" or "Holocaust composer" is reductive, and foregrounds their victimization and identity created by perpetrators over their skill as professionals. If someone was evacuated to Central Asia and thusly survived the Holocaust, but were then accused of sabotage at a *kolkhoz* in 1943 and sent to a labor camp in Uzbekistan, are they a Holocaust or Gulag survivor? Such distinctions also risk prioritizing one victimization over another – Weinberg as a Holocaust survivor vs. a survivor of Soviet antisemitism, Zaderatsky as a Gulag survivor rather than an evacuee, for example. Eliminating a sole classification of one ethnicity or one victimization reveals the overlap of atrocities in the USSR, how those in the Gulag were evacuated with Holocaust survivors or time in the Gulag meant shelter from the Holocaust, how the Terror from the 1930s informed denunciations in the 1970s, or how the duplicitous reasons for arrest and detention were layered with ethnic and nationalistic language. All the composers selected are Soviet, including the discussion of post-Soviet composers who all critique the fallen USSR. Combined with oral histories and supporting archival documentation, the musical and sonic artifacts add an immersive layer to each microhistorical case study. Chapter one begins with the earliest site of the Gulag, Solovki, reconceived from the perspective of the indigenous Saami people, Chapter two presents the violin concerto of Vsevolod Zaderatsky as an example of detention in Kolyma (Siberian Far-

East), Chapter 3 returns to a soundscape analysis this time of the Gulag in Kazakhstan, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 all examine the Second World War beginning with evacuees to Central Asia in Chapter 4, continuing to look at Partisans, the blockade of Leningrad, and the fate of Soviet POWs in chapter 5, and returning to Tashkent in Chapter 6 to understand the impacts of the War on postwar antisemitism including the artistic denunciations of the late 1940s. In Chapter 7, I present Mikhail Nosyrev's *Capriccio* for Violin as an example from the "artistic" Gulag in the north, Vorkuta, and look at the lingering effects of the Gulag on this composer into the 1960s. Finally, to understand how atrocity and these repressed themes are represented today, I contrast the work of Lera Auerbach, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Yuri Khanon who incorporate the issues of the Gulag and Holocaust in contemporary classical music.

Solovki, or the Solovetsky Islands, are arguably the most notorious site of the Gulag in the Western imagination. The history of the islands is typically told beginning in the 1400s with the arrival of Christian ascetics or as part of a border history between Russia and Finland. The islands were the original subject of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* before he extended the metaphor of isolated islands to the totality of the penal nexus with archipelagic points of detention across Siberia existing nearly a century. However, from Christianization to Sovietization, the history of Solovki often overlooks the Saami, the first inhabitants of the space. The same Saami who left Solovki in the late 1800s for the Kola Penninsula and eventually Finland, were also displaced by the Nazi destruction of Lapland in 1944. There is substantial literature on Solovki as a Gulag,[20] but this chapter specifically considers the impacts of the Gulag and Sovietization on the Saami on Solovki and in the

[20] Roy R. Robson, *Solovki The Story of Russia Told Through its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

White Sea region through my fieldwork and recordings of the displaced Skolt Saami in circumpolar Finland. This fieldwork reveals the dual environmental impacts of the USSR in Kola and the Third Reich in Lapland. Sound recordings of Saami ritual and life at the same latitudes of the Gulag prioritizes the living knowledges of this community and cultural restitution over recordings of deadified spaces of carcerality. This bridges the transition from Imperial to Soviet, and reveals that the point of the Gulag is actually a small example of larger violence throughout the entire region. Conceiving of the Gulag as pollutive or epistemecidal establishes wider ramifications for the system as it developed out of this camp. Detention was not only tried on Solovki to reform or eliminate dangerous prisoners, but also as a colonization and Soviet assertion of space.

The first Gulag score with which I seriously worked was the violin concerto of Ukrainian pianist-composer Vsevolod Zaderatsky sent to me by the composer's grandson. Zaderatsky was denounced for supposedly imperialist leanings during the Terror, and unfortunately served a hard labor sentence in the Siberian Far East, and was never fully rehabilitated. Zaderatsky's denunciation and detention make an excellent case study of an individual in Kolyma – a camp with similar mystique to Solovki because of the writings of Varlam Shalamov. Unlike many of his contemporaries who achieved partial rehabilitation or brief periods of promotion, Zaderatsky's work remains completely unknown. His writing reflects an atypical fortitude of spirit in continuing to compose while under non-artistic forced labor in Kolyma, and an aesthetic unbent to the strictures of Socialist Realism. I met and worked with the family of Zaderatsky in France, and have insight into his compositional process and priorities in the Violin Concerto from the final year of Zaderatsky's life. Zaderatsky's personal triumph of writing his *Preludes and Fugues* for piano and continuing

to compose post-Gulag immerses us in one Gulag history, rather than the countless numbers of people sent to the Gulag in Kolyma. Furthermore, Zaderatsky's life reveals the overlaps between the Gulag, Terror, and both World Wars, more than a "Gulag composer" he was also a veteran of the 1st World War, a survivor of Dzerzhinsky's Red Terror, a Gulag survivor, an evacuee during WWII and a "dissident" composer of the late 1940s and 50s.

The Gulag in Eastern Siberia was a test of the integration of extractive enterprise with forced penal labor on a large scale. The productivity of the Dalstroy company in mining gold and Uranium in Magadan was then modeled in Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan. Returning to soundscapes, I have made more than thirty original sound recordings of remote sites of the Gulag in Kazakhstan to have a better understanding of Karlag, the primary Gulag in Kazakhstan, and its subcamps and sites of labor. This situates the Gulag in Kazakhstan in the history of the Gulag in the USSR, and in Kazakhstani history, understanding that the Gulag was preceded by the famine *Asharshylyk* and followed by the radioactive contamination at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. [21] In addition to considering the physical destruction and extraction of the Gulag, the long legacy of detention in Karaganda left cultural and spiritual wreckage like on Solovki. A spatial analysis of the camp, reveals the ways violence seeped sonically from the walls of the prison, again the overlaps between WWII and the Gulag, and the spiritual drain of the camp on the surrounding community. My sound recordings complement other contemporary mapping projects on the Gulag in

[21] *Environmental degradation and denomadization are inextricably linked to the Terror in Kazakhstan from the disastrous sedentarization campaigns of the 1930s to the destruction of the Aral Sea:* Sarah Cameron, *The hungry steppe: Famine, violence, and the making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

Kazakhstan to instantly immerse the reader in the space of the Steppe and to understand the imposition of the USSR on Kazakhstani land.

With the outbreak of World War Two for the USSR in 1941, many sites of the Gulag were converted or expanded into production for munitions and the war effort. Passport laws like the changes in 1939, 40, and 41 left tens of thousands of citizens in the Soviet border regions of Ukraine and Belarus with unclear citizenship status or sent to the Gulag for refusing Soviet passports.[22] There is sizeable overlap between Holocaust survivorship and Gulag survivorship in the USSR, and evacuation and survival in the interior was complicated by postwar antisemitism. Jewish double victimization under Hitler and Stalin links the contemporaneous atrocities of the Holocaust and the Gulag and Stalinist Terror. I look specifically at wartime evacuations to Tashkent, focusing first on the motivations and history of transit to Central Asia and interactions with the existing community of Bukharian Jews. Viewing this transit through the lens of the established Bukharian community is particularly significant in recasting larger narratives of the Soviet Jewry in the historiography. A study of sound and evacuation, reveals the overlaps between the hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens evacuated, Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust in the Gulag, and the intellectuals and western Soviets like Weinberg and Mikhoels who established bastions of Yiddish theatre in exile. Within a longer continuum, it is worth considering the East as a historic path to safety, both in the Soviet and Jewish mindsets, and the eventual role of evacuation in shaping postwar antisemitism.

---

[22] Oleg, Budnitskii, David Engel, Gennady Estraikh, and Anna Shternshis, eds., *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, Jews in the Soviet Union vol. 3. (New York: New York University Press, 2022) 33.

Where flight and evacuation capture the uncertainty and early days of the Great Patriotic War, to provide a more complete history between flight and liberation I separately present three important cases of the Soviet experience during the War. Looking at Partisans, Soviet POWs, and the Blockade of Leningrad emphasizes the Nazi war of total destruction against the USSR where the categories between civilian and soldier, and Holocaust victim or civilian casualty are blurred. I first incorporate two of the most canonical figures of classical music, Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev along with a partisan Holocaust survivor. Rather than the 7th Symphony of Shostakovich, I cast a darker and more personal tone over his impressions of the war with an analysis and new recording of his E minor piano trio. Dedicated to Ivan Sollertinsky, the trio also obliquely addresses the Holocaust and Shostakovich's relationship with Moisei Beregovski, as an introspective and initial commemoration of the Holocaust from 1944. Prokofiev's First sonata for Violin and Piano is the same scale as the Shostakovich trio. I incorporate a soundscape, my own recordings of graves of the Soviet POWs at Auschwitz-Birkenau with the abstract "leaf blowing through a graveyard" motif of Prokofiev's sonata into a combined commemorative work for the millions of murdered Soviet POWs. Finally, I discuss Partisans and armed Jewish survival in Belarus with Edi Tyrmand's *Elegaic Improvisation* written in explicit memory of the Holocaust and her service in the Partisan brigades.

Returning to Tashkent to understand liberation and life in exile connects survivorship and valor from the Great Patriotic War to postwar antisemitism. How did the Bukharian community process and accept the new arrivals from the Western USSR to Tashkent? Furthermore, how did evacuation of intellectuals including Mieczyslaw Weinberg, Suleiman Yudakov, and non-Jews like Nikolai Myaskovsky contribute to their postwar repression?

Music like that by Bukharian composer Suleiman Yudakov offers a synthetic perspective of the experiences of Western Soviet Jews and their interactions with Central Asian counterparts as exiles and Bukharians negotiated late Stalinism in the wake of the Holocaust. This chapter draws equally on field work in Uzbekistan and oral histories. The written synthetic work of Suleman Yudakov, a piece for violin and piano, is combined with the published scores of Mieczyslaw Weinberg he wrote in Tashkent and Nikolai Myaskovsky's Violin Sonata he wrote in evacuation to Georgia. Together, these works function as ego documents, covertly preserving elements of Yiddish culture which were carefully evacuated and saved during the war, but still presenting them abstractly in music due to the dangers of postwar antisemitism and increasing suspicions rooted in the unvalorous slur that "the Jews fought the war from Tashkent."

Finally, Mikhail Nosyrev's experiences in the Gulag in Vorkuta (Komi Republic) and continued in exile are a fascinating case study of the types and caliber of artists trapped in the penal nexus. Nosyrev's life links several important themes and brings them forward into the 1950s and 60s. He was an excellent violinist, denounced by a jealous colleague in Leningrad after living and working through the Blockade. Sent to Vorkuta only in 1944, he is one example of how Soviet terror, detention, and "re-education" vis a vis the Gulag continued to operate after the Terror of the 1930s, even throughout the War. He was one of the first inmates in Vorkuta, a correctional labor camp which became heavily associated with the arts and a post-Gulag cultural anchor in Komi. I focus on Nosyrev's *Capriccio,* a shorter concert work for his instrument, the violin, which he composed between the Gulag and his post-detention exile. Vorkuta as a camp also links to the earlier chapters, made notorious for its cultural production and a notable uprising in 1953. Nosyrev's work gives us insight into the

re-educative priorities of the camp, what daily life was like for interned artists, and importantly, what restitution and rehabilitation was possible even into the 1960s for former inmates. Where virtuosity privileged Nosyrev in detention allowing him to serve a less physically demanding sentence in an artistic camp, it could have also been what condemned him by attracting jealousy. This is reflected in the *Capriccio*, where virtuosity is used structurally to indicate sections. Nosyrev's work is an important dyad to Zaderatsky as musical bookends of the worst years of the Gulag.

Where did terror, warfare, repression, the Gulag, and the Holocaust leave classical music by the collapse of the USSR? More importantly, how are these themes addressed now, and how do contemporary composers address these historic issues while dealing with emigration and the current political repressions of the Russian Federation? In the final chapter, I address three living composers: Sofia Gubaidulina, Lera Auerbach, and Yuri Khanon and how their work directly confronts the USSR and the Russian Federation today. Each emblematizes a specific generation of the late and (post) Soviet: Gubaidulina who left the USSR in the early 1990s after years of establishing networks in the west and official censure in the 1970s, Lera Auerbach who has spent the majority of her career outside of Russia, and who works substantially with musicians in the post-Soviet diaspora, and Yuri Khanon who remains in the Russian Federation, with an intense loathing and apathy to the government and rightful suspicion of his artistic colleagues. I have the privilege of premiering Khanon's *Images Mordues* from 1984, and have worked closely with both Lera Auerbach and Yuri Khanon about their viewpoints on art and politics while writing this modern response to Soviet oppression. This contemporary conversation is essential, and

demonstrates how unmourned Soviet traumas are addressed today, and what Gulag ghosts preside over classical music.

I. "These lands are our children": Saamiland, Solovki, and Indigenous Legacies of the White Sea Region

The history of the Solovetsky Islands (Solovki), a polar archipelago in the White Sea, has been mythologized and narrated almost to the point of abstraction. Accounts of the islands focus on pre-Soviet Russian Orthodoxy and the establishment of monasteries, while Soviet histories emphasize the Gulag detention system in the 1920s and 30s occupying the very same monastic complexes. These paradigms feature a Russo-centric understanding of the territory as an occupied and penal space. However, the coastal regions of the White Sea, Kola Penninsula, and Gulf of Bothnia are not exclusively European territory, they are home to the Saami.[1] Differing epistemologies and documentation strategies of circumpolar peoples are entirely excluded in the Russian perspective of Solovki as a penal place– the islands were neither founded nor discovered with the Orthodox colonization of the 1400s, nor with the Soviet imposition of the Gulag. Also, the impact of Solovki and the environmental destruction of the Gulag on Kola and beyond didn't cease in 1933 with the closure of the camp. Russia and its Soviet continuation operated on imperial and colonial frames of statecraft.[2] Russia's primitivist treatment of indigeneity to bolster claims to legitimacy and power is reflexive and like a mirror revealing primitive conceptualizations of Russian, not indigenous, consciousness.[3]

---

[1] In anthropological writing, the preferred transliteration is Saami rather than Sámi (Saamiland etc), favoring a orthography toward an approximation of Saami language and away from Norwegian. Robert Paine, *Herds of the Tundra A Portrait of Saami Reindeer Pastoralism* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), xi. Consider the Saami language: sää'mǩiõll or the homeland sää'mjie'llem.

[2] Ronald Grigor Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National" Identity, and Theories of Empire," in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[3] Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

An indigenous understanding of Solovki situates the point of the Gulag in a wider-reaching regional history of violence and colonization of the circumpolar North. Like an exploding round, the shrapnel of colonial destruction of the Saami people includes the displacement from Solovki, the further exile across the Kola peninsula and environmental destruction, the Saami arrival in Finland near lake Inari, and the destruction and mining of this new place of Finnish refuge by the retreating Nazis in 1944. The Saami who fled Solovki and subsequently Kola in the late 1800s ended up in the Petsamo region and other border communities between Finland and the USSR. These were the exact communities devastated by German retreat, where the coastal communities of Petsamo (Eastern shores of Lake Inari) were completely destroyed and then land mined making return almost impossible. Finally, Russian radioactive export to Kola and Finnish hydroelectric damming in this region continues, wreaking environmental and cultural damage on the Saami from 1945 to the present.[4] Saamiland precedes Modern Finnish and Russian occupation of the region, and their coastal settlements, cultivation of ecosystems, establishment of religious practice, and development of craft – particularly with metal were expropriated by premodern European settlement. A microcosmic history of Solovki in the White Sea provides a new interpretation of the region – an indigenous rather than hegemonic history of Russo-Finnish circumpolar territory. In contemporary context, this offers a more nuanced understanding of circumpolar environmental racism and the ways in which such imposed borders materially affect indigenous peoples. Finally, in the interwoven history between Soviet and Nazi hegemony in

[4] Ronny Bergman and Alexander Baklanov, *Radioactive sources of main radiological concern in the Kola-Barents region* (Stockholm, Sweden: FRN, 1996).and about Hydroelectric Dams near Inari and Reindeer destruction: Veli-Pekka Lehtola, trans. Linna Weber Müller-Wille, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War: Evacuation and Return of the Sámi and Finland During and After the Second World War* (Aanaar, Inari Finland: Kustannus Puntsi Publisher, 2019), 219.

the region, Saami perspectives of the Gulag and the War should be seen in the emotional histories of other indigenous people globally, which are often reliant on oral histories and community knowledge and lost in military histories.[5]

It is vital to situate the Gulag on Solovki within this larger history of destruction and violence against the Saami community. With the destruction of colonization, Christianization, the Gulag, war, environmental destruction, and radioactivity, the contemporary focus of the Saami is on a process of remembering (*mu'štred*), a slowly changing process with the absorption of outside influences and renewal of traditional knowledge (*árbedientu*) and language.[6] The land of the Saami, from the Russian region across Finland into Norway is a spiritual place full of sacred places, particularly islands, and a close association with nature. Rather than engaging directly with the deadified site of the Gulag or the mass graves left by the Germans in Finland, I have made contemporary sound recordings of living sites of memory, sacred sites and practices, and important aspects of Saami culture in Inari, Finland. These recordings capture the practices of several Saami communities, but with a focus on the Skolt Saami who fled from the USSR to this region and returned after the second displacement and evacuation from Nazi occupation. These recordings contribute to the repatriation of artifacts, archives, and recordings which translate ancestral knowledge into contemporary language and practice. This practice of "new forms of memory" or the adaptation of traditions and language to a new era has sparked renewal of traditional

[5] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, xvii.
[6] "Spiritual Sites" table and translations, *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024. This museum was created by the Saami community in Inari, and the small exhibits are rich with information primarily in Saami and Finnish, and many with English translations. For copies or further information, curators of these exhibits may be contacted at kirsi.ukkonen@metsci.fi. These sources work with living artifacts of the Saami and have substantial oral histories embedded, and therefore provide an excellent indigenous history of the Petsamo and Inari areas of Saami settlement.

knowledge and cultural heritage.[7] The act of knowing (*Siltteed*) provides a connection to ancestors and the historical experience of the community rather than prioritizing perpetrator or colonial narratives of this territory.[8]

A. Imposed Monasteries and Saami Labyrinths on Solovki

The nomadic Saami arrived at the White Sea coast in roughly the year 1000 C.E.[9] Originally from near the Ural Mountains as evidenced by markers in their language, climate warming and crop failure from 1100-1350 forced migration around the polar region and coincided with Nordic consolidation of power through compelled Christianity.[10] Colonization began on coasts and moved inward across fjords, so movement from Solovki to Kola and inward across Finland is the historic path of flight from Christianization continuing in the 15th-17th centuries (Figure 1).[11] The Saami are also historic sea-farers, with fishing including through the ice as a secondary animal economy to reindeer pastoralism.[12] Contrary to colonial classifications between coastal and interior populations, the primary division between Saami populations is linguistic, and based on how much of the language remains after external colonization.[13]

---

[7] "Ancestral Knowledge" and "New Forms of Historical Memory" exhibits, *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[8] "Árbedientu," *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[9] For ease, I refer to dates in the accepted Western system of CE and BCE. However, I have excluded structural markers of time like "Medieval, Bronze Age" etc. in favor of a decolonized history separate from European markers. The Saami "stone" and "mammoth" ages for example operate on a different timeline and have different associated language, like the 8 primary seasons of the year.
[10] Noel D. Broadbent. *Lapps and Labyrinths: Sami Prehistory, Colonization, and Cultural Resistance* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2010), 15 on language, 149, 162.
[11] Harald Gaski, "Indigenism and cosmopolitanism: a pan-Sami view of the indigenous perspective in Sami culture and research," *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 9, no. 2 (2013): 113-124.
[12] Recording taken of Saami boats in the water with ice, near Inari Finland/lake Inari in March 2024.
[13] Robert Paine, "Trails of Saami Self-Consciousness," *Anthropologica* 29, no. 2 (1987): 169–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/25605229, 170-71. For example, Norwegian classifications divide Saami by Sea, River, Lake, Forest, and so on, where Saami cultural policy today is focused on building traditional values and self-identify as one unified ethnicity.

Image 1.1: Maps of Saami Travel in the 1600s with Solovki pictured

On Solovki, three orthodox ascetics arrived in the 1400s: Savvati, Herman, and Zosima who built the monastic complexes which stand to this day.[14] These ascetics and the subsequent 400 years of Christian colonization of the islands were considered an export of dangerous, Thaumaturgist, or magic working, elements to an uninhabited northern periphery. Thaumaturgy and magic working within Christianity continued to be treated with suspicion by the Orthodox church until the Revolution, with its claims to be able to affect the natural world, harm animals and people, and to cast spells.[15] Colonization of Solovki should be situated in Russian colonization of the White Sea region, including the Kola Penninsula. Spiritually, the shamanistic beliefs of the Saami were widely expropriated into Christianity, most notably with the construction of Christian sites on Saami sites of sacrifice and bear ritual.[16] There are nine essential traits of the Saami religious practice applicable to all sects

[14] See this Russian website which has suggestions of books on individual saints, and a comprehensive discussion of Christianity on Solovki : https://www.solovki.ca/saints_11/11_60.php#.
[15] Christine D. Worobec, "Witchcraft beliefs and practices in prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian villages." In *Witchcraft in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 47-69.
[16] Broadbent, *Lapps and Labyrinths*, 214.

across time: animated nature personified by gods, Reindeer herding and cultivation practice represented by specific guardians, power and danger were associated with specific locales, Gods were worshipped in the form of unusual stones, cliffs, or wooden idols, cults and rituals had utilitarian motives like herding, there was no priesthood and every family had drums for spiritual needs, the drum was the primary instrument, the most distinctive Saami practice involves bears, and there were many specific female taboos at ritual sites. [17] The unusual rocks or wooden outcroppings are called *sieida* and *selta*, and are reflected in place names – the *Sieidisuálui* stone, for example, is particular to islands, and even with Christianization of these sites, their meaning, character, and purpose are preserved within Saami language.[18] We know the Saami were the original inhabitants of Solovki because of the *sieida* stones on both Bolshoi Zayatsky and Anzer Island in the archipelago and the presence of larger stones within the labyrinths particular to Saami practice. These stones are large, and often resemble animals, integrating the sacred within the landscape. Because they were so integral to Saami culture, Christian priests destroyed *sieida* stones early to "uproot old worldviews".[19]

Music and sound are of supreme importance to the Saami people. The roots of all Saami art including film go back to ancient rock and Shamanistic drum painting.[20] The Shamans or *Noaidi* sought answers in the community by entering an inactive trance state induced by playing a ritual drum, allowing the soul of the *Noaidi* to move as a spirit animal and reveal unseen fractures.[21] A recording of one such drum from Siida shows that the strikes of the drum are deeply resonant, with a lingering pitch, almost a tone rather than percussive

[17] Ernst Manker, *Lapparnas heliga ställen: kultplaster och offerkult I belysning av Nordiska museets och landsantikvariernas fätundersökningar,* Vol. 13, Geber, 1957, 10-11.
[18] "Sacred Table of Sites," *Siida Museum,* Inari: Finland 2024.
[19] Ibid.
[20] "The Spiritual Experience of the North," *Siida Museum,* Inari: Finland 2024.
[21] Sound recording of Shaman Drum taken near Siida museum.

hit, after the strike. The head of the drum, ornamented and made from reindeer hide shows the integration of pastoralism into the ritualistic traditions, and the essential integration of nature into the spiritual. Recorded outside, the drum blends sonically with the natural environment. The drum, ornamented with pictures with community significance has been incorrectly interpreted as "devilish astronomy" a map, or even "pagan scribbles" and instead functions as a holy book used by the *Noaidi* to seek a solution for the whole community rather than for personal benefit.[22] Music is also intrinsically linked to community development, as even the way the Saami call livestock is musical, with a "jingling coaxing" language which forms the basis of Saami *Leu'dds* or songs.[23] These *Leu'dds* then become a part of the linguistic heritage of the Saami, preserving poetry through short *leu'dds* about animals and husbandry, or longer epic mythical *Leu'dds* about places and origins of the people.[24]

Accepting these principles of Saami religion, and the reality that the archipelago was not uninhabited when the monastic Orthodox order arrived, how were the Saami Christianized on Solovki? The most evident colonization is spatial – monasteries were quite literally constructed on top of areas which were sacred to the Saami. Labyrinths on the island were constructed on top of circular bear burial sites or the foundations of circular homes.[25] The labyrinth was a symbol of death and dangerous journeys, a trepidatious path through life

[22] "Noaidi and Goavddis, Shaman Drum," *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[23] Sää'mjie'llem, The Skolt Sámi Homeland, "The Skolt Sámi in Finland," https://samimuseum.fi/saamjiellem/english.
[24] Sää'mjie'llem, The Skolt Sámi Homeland, "The Skolt Sámi in Finland," https://samimuseum.fi/saamjiellem/english. There are some recordings of these available, and excellent modernizations of them in Saami film as at the Siida cultural center and presented in the Long Nights of Film annually in Inari.
[25] Recording of the center of a Labyrinth in Inari, Finland, 2024 where you can hear a plethora of arctic birds, and water.

itself, and intended to confuse evil Gods from the kingdom of the dead. Christians built their own labyrinths to ward off environmental dangers and heathenism. The recording of the center of a labyrinth at Inari near the Juutua River captured a plethora of wildlife, including Arctic birds and a hum of spring bugs rising in the background like a musical drone. The vibrancy of the soundscape indicates the spiritual and carefully chosen location of these labyrinths, with the natural sound of water providing backdrop for the natural world to "speak". Given the Saami veneration of nature, the animalian voices of birdsong and chirping insects contribute to the sacredness of the site. In the White Sea region, the proximity of labyrinths to circular sacrificial sites reflects the Christianization of Saami practice.[26] Sacred sites of concentrated power, like lakes, points and peninsulas, capes, and caves Christian descriptions condemned Saami practice as heathens with healing practices that were primitive, or as simplistic people of nature in harmony with the world.[27] As of 2006, there are only 1600 Saami people left anywhere in Russia and many of the Slavic varieties of their language, like those spoken by the Skolt Saami who fled to Finnish Petsamo have been completely eradicated.[28] The thaumaturgist colonizers, magic-working Christians, predicted their epistemicidal theft in their assessment of the island as uninhabited. This language was echoed well into the late 1800s when the last of the Saami fled Solovki toward Kola and eventually into Finland, accompanied by destructive ecological policies. In Finland, this language and violence continued. Consider the Guovdageaidnu Uprising of 1852, where more than twenty Saami were killed by a local police chief and shopkeeper, and had their

[26] Broadbent, *Lapps and Labyrinths,* 184, 211-14.
[27] Stein R. Mathisen, "Constituting Scholarly Versions of a Sámi Folk Medicine Research Practices in the Colonial Contact Zone," in *Idioms of Sámi Health and Healing*, (Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2015), 2.
[28] Jorn Madslien, "Russia's Sami fight for their lives," *BBC News* (Lovozero, Russia), December 21, 2006, Accessed June 3rd, 2022, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6171701.stm.

houses burned. This incident is remembered as part of the "Saami struggle against colonialism" and the struggle to maintain traditional rights of the Saami *Siida* structures of self-government in Finland.[29] In both Finland and Russia, the remaining sites of churches and monasteries stand on Saami sacred ground with labyrinth edifices connecting Christian and indigenous worlds of the dead.

Image 1.2: Solovetsky Monastery indicated with a cross, the primary center of the Island and proximity to a Labyrinth and numerous powerful geographic features for the Saami.

[29] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, 3.

Image 1.3: A Skit/Church where there is also clearcut forest and evidence of labyrinth creation near the major divide between two islands. This is a spiritually significant and literal bridge between two islands of the archipelago.

B. GULAG

The most famous account of the Gulag in Western consciousness is Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* where he connects the literal archipelago of Solovki - the first Gulag – thematically and linguistically to the network of remote camps across the USSR.[30] As one of the earliest camps, it maintained a dark mystique, as a threat for authorities to send those who failed to comply with initial economic or cultural reforms to "Solovki or even further!"[31] Soviet detention followed Imperial models, exporting undesirable and dangerous peoples to "uninhabited" Siberian remote locales.[32] In a letter from the commissioner for the organization and construction of Cheka camps, the purpose of the northern colonies was explicitly delineated: the isolation of a dangerous and harmful

[30] GULAG is an acronym for Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei or "Chief Administration of Camps" typically applied to the entire Soviet system of detention.
[31] Oral History Interview with Mikhail Rozenshteyn, US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accession 2020.21055, RG-90.121.0055, Accessed 8/29/2023.
[32] Sarah Badcock, *A Prison Without Walls?: Eastern Siberian exile in the last years of Tsarism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

element of society in forced labor detention as a preventative measure.[33] The prescription made was that prisoners, a "parasitic ulcer" should be kept in "complete territorial isolation from the rest of society" and that these spaces were uninhabited and specifically for extraction.[34] Solovki eventually became part of a "decentralized" penal network across the white sea region, wherein prisoners had to stay in the Murmansk region (from Kola to Arkhangelsk) and were transferred from camp to camp.[35] Across the seventy-year history of the Gulag, indigenous communities were intentionally used to support the detention system and local environments were destroyed with the physical camp structures and spiritual incursion of the violent dead.[36]

Referring to the spaces as colonized or extractive is not a retroactive post-colonial read of the USSR as an imperial system. Rather, the language in constructing the Gulag on Solovki specifically refers to resource extraction, to conquest of these territories, the imposition and use of slave labor, and the prescriptive rather than presumptive destruction of any existing communities in these uninhabited polar spaces. The function of the camp was clarified to the chairman of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky: "while pursuing purely political goals, goals of an economic nature were simultaneously pursued; namely, the widest use of

[33] Zapiska polnomochennogo po organizatsii I ustroistvu lagerei VChK predsedatelyo VChK F.E. Dzerzhinskomu ob ustroistve severnykh kolonii VChK, 24 Jan. 1922, TsAFSB Rossii f.1 op. 6, d.28 p. 3.
[34] Zapiska polnomochennogo po organizatsii I ustroistvu lagerei VChK predsedatelyo VChK F.E. Dzerzhinskomu ob ustroistve severnykh kolonii VChK, 24 Jan. 1922, TsAFSB Roccii f.1 op. 6, d.28 p. 4-5.
[35] Telegram from the secretary of the Murmansk region to L.P. Beria, Osobaia Papka L.P. Berii, 1947 god, Arkhiv noveishei istorii Roccii, Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD-SSSR 1946-1949 gg, GARF f. 21914, d. 180, L. 157-161, July 15, 1947 and d. 180, l. 185.
[36] Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Local legacies of the GULag in Siberia: Anthropological reflections," *Focaal* 2015, no. 73 (2015): 99-113. And on the Eveny and Eastern Siberia: Olga Ulturgasheva, "Ghosts of the Gulag in the Eveny World of the Dead," *The Polar Journal* 7, no. 1 (2017): 26-45. And: Alexandra Noi, "The Ex-prisoners of the Gulag in the modern Siberian Expeditions," in *Invisible Labour in Modern Science* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2022), p. 81-88.

the exhaustible riches of the northern region."[37] The same memo also asserted that the only way to sufficiently "exploit" this territory was through the "presence of forced settlement and colonization of this region."[38] The word "exploitation"/ эксплуатация and "colonization"/ колонизация are used throughout the correspondence about the establishment of Solovki including in descriptions of the four types of work: "exploitation of the forests," "exploitation of the subsoil" or making bricks, "organization of the fur and fish trade" and "year-round cultivation of the land" which was to be plowed for cattle farming and cheese production. This land was seen as "an endless land with completely unused opportunities" in which the lack of population is also mentioned. Kola was also considered "unexplored" but full of worthy materials for mining as of 1932.[39] The existence of local peoples is briefly acknowledged, dismissively that "less than 1/5th of them are employed by the state or in socially useful work."[40] Indeed in a field manual to the region, there is not a single mention about the people of the region, nor their stewardship of nature. Even a pictured Skolt Saami home is identified only as "Laplander Dwelling".[41] A recording of a Skolt Saami dwelling reconstructed in Inari is again resplendent with natural life including birdsong and the home protected the recorder from the oppressive wind. From the establishment of the Gulag, the mindset was extractive and recommends not only a brutal prison and forced labor system, but the intentional destruction, exploitation, and colonization of indigenous circumpolar territory.

---

[37] Zapiska polnomochennogo po organizatsii i ustroistvu lagerei VChK predsedatelyo VChK F.E. Dzerzhinskomu ob ustroistve severnykh kolonii VChK, 24 Jan. 1922, TsAFSB Roccii f.1 op. 6, d.28 p. 4.
[38] Ibid.
[39] B.M. Kupletskii, *Materialy k petrografii vodorazdela mezhdu oz imandda i Belym Morem v raione kandalaksha-Kolvitsa* (Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1932), 105-120.
[40] Zapiska polnomochennogo po organizatsii I ustroistvu lagerei VChK predsedatelyo VChK F.E. Dzerzhinskomu ob ustroistve severnykh kolonii VChK, 24 Jan. 1922, TsAFSB Roccii f.1 op. 6, d.28 p. 4-5.
[41] G. Krepo, *Laplandskii Zapovednik* (Moscow: Komitet po zapovednikam pri prezikitsme VTsIK, 1937) 26. Also, a recording of bird song outside of a reconstructed Skolt Saami dwelling in Inari, Finland allows one to envision the arctic environment of these homes and communities.

The Solovki Gulag was operational from 1923-1933, with a peak of 71,800 people interned and at least 7,500 dead.[42] On Solovki, an early trial camp for Soviet profitability from detention, there are intersections between Christian spaces then used as detention and violent spaces. The primary camp was housed in the Soviet-closed and repurposed Solovetsky Monastery – pictured in Figure 1 in close proximity to Saami sacred sites with repurposed bear burials as labyrinths.[43] Two hills on the tiny islands – only about ten miles long and five miles wide – were where prisoners were sent to die. Sekirka, marked by an infamous staircase, was formerly a sacred site of sacrifice for the Saami, a pilgrimage and reflection site for monks, and a brutal execution site of the Gulag where half-dead prisoners were pushed down 365 stairs strapped to logs.[44] Spiritually, Christian colonization stole sites and practice eradicating the Saami and forcing them farther on migration to Kola and into Finland, and Christian sites were eradicated by the new religion – Sovietization, with a repurposing of the sacred to the brutal. Neither Christian nor Soviet were original to Solovki, and the edifices to the dead from labyrinths and mystical interpretations of Christianity to unburied prisoners and tortuous staircases are physical reminders of an unwelcome and foreign incursion on Saami space. The very stone commemorating the Gulag in Moscow was taken from Solovki, and is the very sort of flat, coastal stone that would have been integral to bear rituals in pre-Soviet Saami ritual.[45] The aforementioned labyrinth recording was taken

[42] M.B. Smirnov, *Sistema ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 1998).
[43] Roy R. Robson, *Solovki The Story of Russia Told Through its Most Remarkable Islands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 215.
[44] Robson, *Solovki,* 226-228.
[45] Marina Obrazkova, "Victims of Stalinist Repressions Remembered at Moscow Ceremony," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, October 30, 2014, Accessed June 10, 2022, http://rbth.com/society/2014/10/30/victims_of_stalinist_reepressions_remembered_at_moscow_ceremony_4.

from the center of a labyrinth like where one of these stones might have been placed on Solovki and reveals the diversity of Arctic natural life in these sacred spots, including bears. Even in the scarce recognition of the Gulag, there is no acknowledgement of the effects on indigenous communities or intentional subjugation and epistemicide of the prison from the walls out. The literature on Solovki also does not link the Gulag sufficiently to radioactive dumping, and broader Soviet colonization of the Arkhangelsk White Sea region, including Kola, although there were clearly links between the prisoners assigned there, and historic colonization of the region.

To understand Solovki "from the walls out" is to reconsider the Gulag as a fixed point on one of the islands. The literature on Solovki largely refers to the Gulag from its site of memorialization, the primary monastery building on the largest island of the archipelago. However, the reduction of Gulag sites to prison buildings is erroneous. These prisons were a complex network of economic extraction, scientific colonization, land cultivation, and large-scale infrastructure projects. The buildings of the Gulag, including the Solovetsky Monastery (Savvatievski Monastery) were always intended as part of a broader penal colonization of the region. Of the prisoners assigned to "Solovki" in September 1923, some went to this "hermitage" monastery particularly if they had committed political crimes. However, the majority of prisoners went to other parts of the archipelago and the region including: Muksolma, the smaller island to the East, the Kemi transit point in Karelia, and the Arkhangelsk transit point on the coast. An additional 2,717 men and 335 women also went to these areas and the Kemsky checkpoint in Karelia (173), the northernmost island in the Solovetsky archipelago, Anzersky Island, the two Hare Islands on which there are only small churches, Kond-island which is also marked as uninhabited, and several separate buildings

separate from the monastery on the Solovetsky Island.[46] The expansion across the region from the central penal nexus repeatedly emphasizes the harsh conditions and the need to spread prisoners widely to maximize industries like logging and furring, as well as to maintain the basic resources for the camp with acquiring food, repairing buildings, collecting firewood, and doing simple crafts.[47]

Consider the supposed Arkhangelsk fur trade, which was linked to Solovki, for example. Where furs are seen as a symbol of the North, the animals raised and killed by Gulag prisoners were actually an invasive species of muskrat from Czechoslovakia introduced to the Solovetsky Islands and then spread by hand across the north in 1928.[48] The beavers killed for fur hats were brought from the Minsk province and released, and the reindeer trails of the Saami were intentionally disrupted both on Solovki and in Kola for logging operations.[49] The labor-agricultural-colonization model of camp is a substantial difference between the Nazi concentration camp model and the Soviet Gulag system. Nazi extermination camps had associated work sites as was the case with the IG Farben site at Auschwitz-Birkenau, but work was typically contained near the exterminitive nexus, or the sections of the camp intended for extermination and work were separate. The Gulag contained no discovered factories of death like the selection-gassing-cremation process of the Nazi death camps in Poland, and instead followed a model of exterminitive labor providing a

[46] V.D. Fel'dman, "Doklad Kollegii GPU nachal'nika iuridicheskogo otdela GPU V.D. Fel'dmana o rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Severnykh lagerei GPU," in *Solovetskie Lageria osobogo naznacheniia OGPU: Dokumenty TsA FSB Roccii I GAOPDF Arkhangel'skoi obolasti*, TsA FSB Rossii, f.2 Op. 1, D. 54, l. 37-45.
[47] Fel'dman, "Doklad Kollegii GPU nachal'nika iuridicheskogo otdela GPU V.D. Fel'dmana o rezul'tatakh obsledovaniia Severnykh lagerei GPU," 40.
[48] G. Krepo, *Laplandskii Zapovednik,* 45-46.
[49] Ibid., 52-53, 67.

closer parallel to the Nazi Soviet POW camps, or concentration camps like Mauthausen. Labor in the Gulag was presumed fatal in many cases, including Solovki.

Spatially, the distinction between death camp and extermination-labor camp is extremely significant to approach the after-effects of violent imposition. At the extermination camps of the Third Reich, memorialization since the 1980s has indicated, conserved, and often fenced mass graves, crematoria, destroyed gas chambers, and sites of medical experimentation or mass death.[50] In the Gulag, death was a pervasive and globalizing feature in the work assignments, barracks, brutal torture of prisoners, and detention and torture holding cells. As such the uneasy dead, brutally murdered prisoners often succumbing to hours of dehumanization and torture lie across the former sites of the Gulag, their bodies making up the struts of a road, lining the White-Sea canal, and in the water and forest of Solovki.[51] Furthermore, how can epistemic and environmental destruction like the introduction of invasive species, destruction of civilian homes, and decimation of local practices, like reindeer trails be quantified, acknowledged or memorialized? The violence of the Gulag on Solovki extended far beyond the walls of the Solovetsky Monastery and its impacts beyond the 1933 closure of the camp.

The imposition of death on the Saami from the Gulag and later the German imposition of death from the Saami who fled the White Sea region is a direct affront to Saami practice and beliefs around the dead. In Saami tradition, everything is assigned a soul, and

[50] Consider for example the Block 11 memorial at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial museum which keeps visitors away from the execution wall of the yard with a large memorial plaque, the *lazarett* or mass immolation pit at Treblinka which is entombed with black basalt, the demarcated grave of the Soviet POWs at Birkenau, and many other examples from the National Socialist camps.
[51] G. Wescott, "The Road of Bones to the coldest place in the world," in *Russian Life* 40, no. 3 (1997): 12-21 and Aglaya K. Glebova, “Picturing the Gulag,” in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16 no. 3 (2015) 476-478.

this is affiliated with a need for reciprocity and respect of nature.[52] Violence and danger come from improper veneration and treatment of the dead, not only corporeal violence in the visible world. In the spiritual world, it is believed that evil Gods lie in wait for the Saami. It is important to lead them astray and cause confusion, which is why the labyrinth is a potent and important aspect of ritual practice.[53] One event where it is especially important to confuse evil spirits is during pregnancy, which is why labyrinths are connected to bear ritual stones (*Sieida*), which are a physical connection to the divine female *Akka*.[54] These evil Gods come from the kingdom of the dead, *Jábmid áimbu*, and are not to be crossed. The counterpart to the kingdom of the dead is *Sáivu*, or paradise after death, where the dead live as they did on earth in harmony with the reindeer.[55] Violent dead, like those murdered and tortured in the Gulag, interact between the living and spiritual realms as they did on earth, as a spiritually violent hauntology. Crises in the community are directly caused by a disturbance in balance between the visible and these two other worlds, and can only be mediated by a shaman.[56] However, colonization cost the Saami their valuable abilities to mediate, as they gave up beliefs in old Gods with a feeling of betrayal as colonizers stole offerings without retribution, and Christianity was violently imposed.[57] By the colonization of the 20th century, with the Gulag, WWII, and radioactivity destroying communities, the Saami no longer had access to artifacts or knowledge systems to address the mass death which was imposed on their land.

---

[52] "Sacred Table of Sites," *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[53] Gaski, "Indigenism and cosmopolitanism," 120-24.
[54] "Sacred Table of Sites," *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[55] Gaski, "Indigenism and cosmopolitanism," 113-118. Interesting that *Jábmid áimbu* is also the kingdom of (forbidden) knowledge. To deal with the realm of the violent or evil dead is difficult and dangerous, and was a carefully guarded community practice.
[56]"Noaidi drum," *Siida Museum*, Inari: Finland 2024.
[57] Gaski, "Indigenism and cosmopolitanism," 119.

The eradication of the Skolt Saami from Solovki and the wider White Sea region is also directly linked to the Second World War and the subsequent rapid, forced modernization of the community in Finland. The migration of the Skolt Saami to Finland after the Second World War coincided with the reduction of Gulag prisoners in the White Sea region and Murmansk and their reassignment to other camps. The colonization department of the Murmansk railway included administration of Lapland from 1929, the latter phase of Solovki, and called for a destruction of the "Lapland nature reserve" from 1935 which ecologically pressured Saami migration inward and also toward Lake Inari. The Kola Peninsula was even referred to as "Russian Lapland" by the mid-1930s, acknowledging the demographic and regional difference of the region, but still assigning Soviet oversight and claims to the land. [58] By July of 1948, memos were reaching Beria to reduce any new prisoners by more than 75% and to reallocate prisoners out of Murmansk.[59] Even with the closure of the Gulag as a prison, the monastery building remained the site of the Arkhangelsk region police headquarters through the War.[60]

C. Mined and Devastated: German Retreat from Saamiland in the Lapland War (1944)

As early as the 1600s, the Saami continued their migration off Solovki and to the coastlines of the White Sea and into the Kola Peninsula. We are certain the Saami inhabited Solovki, both from the place names in the Saami language which remain, the construction of characteristic labyrinths, and the mention of their people in the Christian writings from the

[58] G. Krepo, *Laplandskii Zapovednik,* 5, 9.
[59] "Osobaia papka," L.P. Berii, 1949 god, Arkhiv noveishei istorii Rossii, Seria T. IV. "Osobaia papka" L.P. Berii*: Iz materialov Sekretariata* NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M., 1996, d. 211, l. 368.
[60] Osobaia papka," L.P. Berii, 1949 god, Arkhiv noveishei istorii Rossii, Seria T. IV. "Osobaia papka" L.P. Berii*: Iz materialov Sekretariata* NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M., 1996, D. 213, L, 259.

1500s-1800s. In the final years of World War One, the Saami territories between Murmansk and Finland were split by the peace of Tartu, which split the Suo'nn'jel territory, and halved the reindeer territories of the associated Saami *siida* units.[61] By the 1930s, the Saami were believed to have left Solovki entirely for Finnish and Kola coastal settlement when the Gulag was active, leaving only archaeological traces of their labyrinths and homes. During the Second World War, the majority of Saami lived between Finland and the USSR, with the Skolt Saami on the Soviet side of the border, predominantly in an area known as Petsamo, and other Saami minorities living in Finland as far south as Rovaniemi. This meant that any Saami remaining closer to the coast in Kola or on islands in the White Sea, had relocated to Petsamo by 1939. However, a largely oral tradition of historical documentation, along with destroyed archives of indigenous knowledge means that the exact migration patterns from the 1800s to 1945 are incomplete, with limited published indigenous scholarship.[62]

The Second World War in Finland is directly linked to the Winter War of 1939-1940, and is aptly referred to as the Continuation War or the Second Soviet-Finnish War. In Finland, the Continuation War and subsequent Lapland War of 1944-45 have a more complicated narrative because of the Finnish entanglement and support of Nazi Germany than the glorious victory in the Winter War of 1939-40.[63] During the Winter War, the Sä'mmlaž or Saami from the Kola Penninsula, fought for the USSR against their brethren Saami in Finland. When Finland associated with Nazi Germany during World War Two, Finnish Saami again joined the military against the Sä'mmlaž who were part of the Soviet

[61] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, 8.
[62] Ibid., xix. Lehtola discusses this as one of the myriad problems in understanding the Saami in WWII.
[63] Oula Seitsonen and Vesa-Pekka Herva, ""War junk" and cultural heritage: viewpoints on World War II German material culture in the Finnish Lapland," p. 170-171.

Army. These Sä'mmlaž ended up fighting across the USSR as far as the German, Czechoslovak, Polish, and Balkan Fronts. The Saami who are a people of peace were entangled with the armies of much larger states, absurdly fighting across imposed borders and guiding armies utterly unfamiliar with the territory.[64]

Violence against the local population of Petsamo was not confined to the Lapland War when Germany and Finland were no longer allies. The Saami were depicted as a simplistic, uneducated although Christian population, who knew only about nature and their own ways.[65] Saami children were bribed with bon bons from the soldiers, and the Saami took part in the German enterprise by selling reindeer products including meat to the troops.[66] The Germans, like the Soviets viewed Saamiland as an uninhabited, open frontier perfect for the relocation of their Military Penal Camps (*Feldstraflager/ Waldlager*) from Germany where derelict members of the *Wehrmacht* were subject to punitive and exterminitive labor. These camps were also used to house Soviet POWs, and both groups were subject to starvation, "mishandling" and murder from 1942-1944.[67] There were more than 100 POW camps across Lapland with more than 30,000 prisoners of war.[68] The mistreatment of these prisoners occurred across Petsamo and the territories of the Saami not yet evacuated.[69] The camps were

[64] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, 29-31, 34.
[65] *Kinder aus Lapland*, German Educational film: daily life in Lapland, USHMM, accession 2002.189.1, RG-60.3646, Film ID: 2585.
[66] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, 39.
[67] "3 Ermittlungsakten Jahrgang 1959" and "15 Ermittlungsakten Jahrgang 1971," in the Records of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Bundesarchiv), B 162, Accessed USHMM 2011.99, RG-14.101M, B162, 21063, AR 652-59, 1955, 1959 and 9352 AR-Z 11/71 (1941-1943), 1972.
[68] Oula Seitsonen, and Vesa-Pekka Herva, "Forgotten in the wilderness: WWII German PoW camps in Finnish Lapland," In *Archaeologies of internment*, pp. 171-190 (New York, NY: Springer, 2011), 172.
[69] Recording inside an anti-tank ditch at a known former site, the "Bridge Camp" where Soviet POWs were held and now part of the Outdoor Museum of Siida in Inari, Finland. Such anti-tank ditches across the former USSR were used by the occupying Wehrmacht for the mass execution of Jews and POWs, and this site is also demarcated in the forest in Inari to not cross, although not explicitly listed or known as a mass-grave.

part of a larger terror apparatus of the Germans in Finland, as recalled by the righteous gentile Heinz Drossel who remembered marching into a village with a dead Jewish child who had been beat to death by soldiers hanging on a door and Germans shouting antisemitic slogans at the locals. He also recalled walking into the forest in Lapland north of Rovaniemi and coming to the edge of a cliff to see a pit filled with Jewish bodies, and seeing a German soldier shoot and kick a 6-year old boy into the pit.[70] In German POW camps in Finland, Soviet POWs of Jewish origin, and other "intolerable" elements were segregated and killed, and "locals" were also part of the murders of camp prisoners in Inari.[71]

A recording taken from inside one of these antitank ditches shows two important things about the environment. First is the notable cold and high wind, even in early April and with recording equipment to help mediate wind. This emphasizes the difficulty of the Germans working in the region, and in contrast with the silent recording of the Skolt Saami house made from wood and reindeer hide, shows the woefully inadequate knowledge of the territory compared with indigenous settlement of the Arctic region. Along this antitank ditch were plywood homes constructed by the Germans for temporary use, and these sorts of ditches were also the type used for the mass execution of civilians and POWs. The second feature of this recording is the sound of birdsong and the silence of the surroundings, an eerie capture of abandoned space near a large contemporary town. This is a reminder of the "War Junk" the destroyed environment, where even a short 3km walk from a city there is not the sound of passing cars or conversation, as large parts of this territory were destroyed in retreat.

---

[70] Oral History Interview with Heinz Drossel, USHMM, Accession 2007,102, RG-50.030.0517, May 14, 2007, Accessed April 1, 2024.

[71] "16 Ermittlungsakten Jahrgang 1972, Investigations against G. Müller due to suspicions of murder September 1942," in in the Records of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Bundesarchiv), B 162, Accessed USHMM 2011.99, RG-14.101M, 29864, AR 1.434/72 1972-73 and 9352 AR-Z 11/71 (1941-1943), 1972.

This recording is now the sound of the dead, a possible graveyard left behind from the "Bridge Camp" and the ruins of Nazi occupation of Saamiland.

Although Finland had fought alongside Nazi Germany throughout World War II, in September of 1944, the Moscow Armistice called for Finland to break ties with Nazi Germany and expel any remaining soldiers. This led to a separate conflict, according to Finland, as the Wehrmacht had anticipated this turn and had already planned a retreat to Norway.[72] The Germans were "disillusioned" with their Former Finnish allies prompting a scorched earth policy in their retreat.[73] Current limited scholarship of the Lapland War focuses on the Finnish collective memory of "the Germans burning down Lapland" but with limited attention to the complicated relationship between Finland and Germany during the Continuation War. The Saami and their land are often an afterthought in the consideration of how the military presence affected the Finns, despite the killing of thousands of cattle and reindeer, presence of camps and military "war junk", and critically the imposition of thousands of improperly buried or treated dead on Saami land, including Saami compatriots.[74] Thousands of Saami were also evacuated during this area including all of the Sä'mmlaž from the Petsamo region where they had relocated from the former USSR. The departure was sudden, with limited time for civilians to evacuate. One Saami recalled, "you have two hours to pack whatever you can carry and move! What should I bring, what should I bury in the ground? Will we ever be able to return?"[75] The descendants of those who left Solovki, were chased across Kola by Russian colonialism of the coasts, fought for the USSR,

[72] Vesa Nenye, Peter Munter, Toni Wirtanen, and Chris Birks, *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941-45* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016), 278-280.
[73] Seitsonen and Herva, "War Junk," 173.
[74] Oula Seitsonen and Vesa-Pekka Herva, ""War junk" p. 174-181, on page 180 the "Sámi and their land" is literally in parentheses, an afterthought to questions of Finnish-German relations.
[75] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War*, 45-71, 59.

and were now evacuated from Petsamo from German aggression, to return to destroyed villages burned to the ground by the retreating Wehrmacht. The Saami became refugees in their own country, to only find destroyed villages and livelihoods after the Lapland War.[76]

Austrian General Lothar Rendulic was given an unambiguous task in the Lapland War: to burn all of northern Norway and Finland to the ground. In this retreat, the Germans burned at least 20,000 dwellings, 5000 barns, and 27 churches and chapels while destroying lighthouses, telephone poles, fences, and bridges. They also sank boats and slaughtered livestock, cut fishing nets to fine ribbons, ate everything edible left in homes, and burned barns full of hay to ensure complete destruction of the livelihoods of the civilian, primarily Saami population.[77] The coastal communities, like those of the Skolt Saami around lake Inari were the most devastated, like in Álaheadju County where not a single trace of the 1,865 dwellings remained after the war. [78] In Inari, only a single potato cellar and a flagpole remained.[79] The destruction of Saami communities occurred after the German Army no longer found the Saami useful to the war effort with things like providing the German Army with reindeer meat. The Saami were largely identified by costume and were intended to be sent to reservations after they fulfilled their military functionality so as to not pollute the pure Germanic race.[80] By 1944, the Germans began to kill the Saami in retreat, as evidenced by the murder of 2000 "Lapplanders" by the SS in Northern Finland near Petsamo in 1944.[81]

---

[76] "A peaceful people beset by war," *Siida Museum,* Inari: Finland 2024 and Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War,* 78.
[77] Ibid., 81.
[78] Ibid., 88.
[79] "A drowned Land," *Siida Museum,* Inari: Finland 2024 and the same image courtesy of the museum appears in Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War,* 141.
[80] Ibid.,91-92.
[81] "15 Ermittlungsakten Jahrgang 1971," in the Records of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Bundesarchiv), B 162, Accessed USHMM 2011.99, RG-14.101M, 29658, AR 670/71, 1971-1973.

D. Radioactivity in Kola and a Drowned Land

The environmental degradation of Saamiland in the Kola peninsula didn't end with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. A 1998 Swedish study running from 1996-1998, the earliest years of the Putin administration in Russia, revealed the presence of precarious nuclear resources in the Kola peninsula. This study specifically mentioned the emanation of radioactivity from a sunken nuclear submarine in 1989 near Bear Island, weapons testing on Novaya Zemlya, and the contamination of the Siberian River Ob.[82] A dominant pathway of environmental and biological transfer was determined via reindeer, and "food-chains that are expected to be of a particular importance – especially for certain population groups."[83] The perception of risk is also noted at the end of the study, that 'certain populations' need to be aware of these radioactive concerns, and yet may have varied encounters with them given their continued inhabitance of the spaces.[84] From this scientific study, we can infer that radioactivity is a substantial and continuing concern in Kola, part of Saamiland and just to the north of Solovki. Some of the language highlights the specific effects on the Saami without naming them explicitly as an ethnic group – the impacts on herding and biological risk of reindeer pastoralism, the direct proximity of emanating radiation to Bear Island, an ancient site eponymously named, and the acknowledged pollution of rivers bringing both the scientific pollution of radioactivity and the spiritual pollution of death in its wake.

Saamiland in Finland continued to be exploited after World War Two. First, the return of local populations was complicated by devastated roads and waterways, where walking off narrow paths could mean walking directly into a landmine. How could children and livestock

---

[82] Ronny Bergman and Alexander Baklanov, *Radioactive sources of main radiological concern in the Kola-Barents region* (Stockholm, Sweden: FRN, 1996).
[83] Bergman and Baklanov, *Radioactive Sources,* 16.
[84] Ibid, 70.

be kept from dangerous military material left over? The fear of mines was well founded, with a 40 meter stretch of road containing more than 42 trip mines and "jumping Johnnies" and box mines (32 and 70 respectively) littered throughout the forest along the same stretch.[85] This works out to more than 3 mines per meter along one sample stretch of road between Avvil and Aanaar, leaving only a narrow path less than a meter wide to return home.

Second, the building of dams, including the Lokka and Porttipahta reservoirs in Sompio were an environmental disaster which drowned or made inaccessible ruins of homes destroyed in the War. Extensive areas of the forest were clear cut, and reindeer herding was also severely affected.[86] Because there were no official, legal protections in place, "there was no reason to put in place economic and social development work toward special status for Lapps" according to the State Committee on the Provence of Lapland.[87] This is despite the 1751 agreement where the reindeer herding Saami were supposed to be guaranteed rights and land.[88] The Sä'mmlaž were acutely aware of the fate of indigenous people under Soviet rule, particularly the collectivization of reindeer under the *kolkhoz* system, which reinforced postwar refuge in Finland.[89] The postwar period was a period of tremendous assertion in Saamiland, where the Saami focused on forms of self-government including the establishment of their own parliament in Inari: Sajos. Still, the Saami are often seen as "a troublesome Indigenous people" and have been subjected to the reeducative methods of residential schools and theft of artifacts until the present period.[90] The majority population often overrides Saami rights, and things like the compulsory education act prioritize a "better

[85] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War,* 142.
[86] Ibid., 219-20.
[87] Ibid., 218.
[88] Gaski, "Indigenism and Cosmopolitanism," 117.
[89] Lehtola, *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War,* 158.
[90] "Scholl replaces home as a teacher," *Siida Museum,* Inari: Finland 2024.

education" over the knowledge of traditional skills, crafts, and nature from parents, including education exclusively in Finnish.[91] Environmental destruction is linked directly to community destruction for the Saami whose culture is linked directly to natural cycles and a nomadic heritage. Saami cultural policy today is focused on building traditional values amidst ecological catastrophes.[92]

Unfortunately, environmental racism in Saamiland persists into the current political reality. In a 2006 report, the interviewed Saami reported fatalistically on resilience of their culture in the wake of widespread decimation of their herding practices, substantial unemployment, and increasing reliance on alcohol. [93] Significantly, the 'invisible borders' between Russia, Finland, and Sweden are mentioned along with their corresponding impositions and effects on indigenous practice. The litany of environmental destruction is detailed from coal mining to isotopic radiation to gas transport and pipelines crossing Saami territory. At one protest in 2018, the Finnish Sámi Youth Group and Greenpeace came together against a railroad through the Lappi Reindeer-Herding District (Finland) and featured their red line banner "No Consent No Access" in the center of a Labyrinth-style concentric fence while wearing traditional clothing.[94] This is naturally rich land – a gold mine in reindeer herding territory from 1998 was highlighted in this article, but similar Ore mines were protested in 2013 and again in 2022.[95] Ore mining as well as radioactive

---

[91] Ibid.
[92] Harald Gaski, "The Sami People: The" White Indians" of Scandinavia," *American Indian culture and research journal* 17, no. 1 (1993).
[93] Madslien, "Russia's Sami fight for their lives," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6171701.stm.
[94] Photo at Siida Museum, article: Inger-Elle Suoninen, "Protesters in Finnish Sápmi Draw Red Lines Against Railroad to Arctic Ocean," in *The Barents Observer*, September 10, 2018, Accessed 4/5/2024: https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/life-and-public/2018/09/finnish-sapmi-draws-red-line-against-railroad-arctic-ocean.
[95] Ibid., and Liz-Marie Nilsen, "Sámi protest against British mining company," *Survival International News* (Online, Berlin, Madrid, Paris, London, San Francisco), September 3, 2013, Accessed June 3rd, 2022, https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/9529. And Euractiv, "Thunberg protests against Sweden iron ore

pollution is highly destructive; in 2014 the extraction of nickel in facilities on the Kola peninsula exceeded pollution controls repeatedly by nearly seven times the allowed volume.[96] These heavy metals and radioactivity have affected reindeer herds, and radioactivity is another turning point in Saami culture. Chernobyl is discussed with great significance and metameaning, where reindeer pastoralism disappears in favor of an agricultural cum industrial world, where Chernobyl is not just an accident, but an embodiment of history.[97] Stigmatization continued where reindeer meat was rendered unclean or full of radioactive contaminant from the 1980s to present.[98] With herding practices and available natural resources forcing 100,000 Saami into different areas around the White Sea and Gulf of Bothnia, the effects of modern environmental issues are no longer exclusively a Russian imposed problem. Rather, the artificial and European borders drawn through indigenous land have consequences on the allocation of the rich natural resources in the region, and the effects of environmental catastrophes.

In the White Sea, radiation from 2019 from abandoned barges and/or weapons testing swept from near Kola to Arkhangelsk, passing Solovki. This radioactive pollution remains concealed from the local residents, ambiguously described in the foreign press, and denied in the Russian realpolitik.[99] This continues with the Kola peninsula now receiving radioactive

---

mine on Sámi land," *Euractiv.com AFP* (Online, Brussels), February 6th, 2022, Accessed June 3rd, 2022, https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/thunberg-protests-against-sweden-iron-mine-on-sami-land/.

[96] Charles Digges, "Kola Peninsula nickel production facilities issues itself license to continue to pollute, continuing month of grave air code violations," *Bellona* (Oslo, Norway), June 2nd, 2014, Accessed May 20th, 2022, https://bellona.org/news/industrial-pollution/2014-06-kola-peninsula-nickel-production-facilities-issues-license-continue-pollute.

[97] Robert Paine, "Trails of Saami Self-Consciousness," 181.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Mike Eckel, "U.S. Concludes White Sea Radiation Explosion Came During Russian Nuclear-Missile Recovery," *Radio Free Europe* (Prague, Czech Republic), October 12th, 2019, Accessed May 25th, 2022, https://www.rferl.org/a/u-s-concludes-white-sea-radiation-explosion-came-during-russian-nuclear-missile-

waste from Southern Russia for storage and decontamination. This sets a dangerous precedent for Kola to continue to be an expensive and isolated dumping site. [100] As with open ore mining, the transfer of materials to "uninhabited" Kola, is a pejorative understanding of the circumpolar north. Kola, and the surrounding White Sea are not uninhabited. Like the Christian missionaries who arrived to "abandoned" Solovki, the reading of the coastal White Sea as uninhabited and abandoned is predictive – an understanding of a space to be colonized, penalized, and irradiated without regard for a preexisting Saamiland.

E. Conclusion

With new borders cutting through the circumpolar north, and an increasingly antagonistic Russia on the geopolitical stage, it is worth considering the legacy of these spaces and the entire circumpolar north from a non-hegemonic and non-European perspective. To understand the contemporary issues in the circumpolar north, requires a return to the origins of the system and the beginning of contemporary problems from the Gulag and World War II. The existence of circumpolar land and peoples do not spring forth when they are defined by a colonizing Russia or when the natural resources become valuable. The circumpolar region is generally not discussed as a "world system" in which resources are exported between a periphery and a core.[101] However, what if the reverse is true in the Russian context – the circumpolar north is where toxicity and danger is sent: from threatening ascetics to imperial power, to prisoners to reeducate and Sovietize, and now dangerous radiation. The export of spiritual and physical toxicity to the White Sea region

---

recovery/30213494.html#:~:text=A%20State%20Department%20official%20says,apparently%20crashed%20during%20a%20test.

[100] Thomas Nilsen, "Kola Peninsula to get radioactive waste from Southern Russia," *The Barents Observer* (Kirkenes, Norway), May 31, 2021, Accessed June 1st, 2022, https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/nuclear-safety/2021/05/kola-peninsula-get-radioactive-waste-southern-russia.

[101] Broadbent, *Lapps and Labyrinths*, 24-25.

reveals the Russian attitude to Indigenous communities: intentional environmental racism and genocidal eradication of material practices like herding, and an epistemicidal disregard of sacred sites, praxis, language, and peoples. As the foundation and first trial of the Gulag, and indigenous reimagination of the space reveals the impacts of Soviet carcerality far beyond the walls of sites. This impact is also not restricted to Soviet creation nor continuation, as the USSR proved its imperial designs through its violence. The mechanisms of interaction with the indigenous community and destruction of Kola related to Solovki are another theatre of "Bloodlands" or "Shatterzones" as is discussed with regard to Ukraine in the Second World War.[102]

Solovki is a template for understanding the intersections between the Gulag the Holocaust and the Second World War. The intended or negligent consequences of the Gulag spread to the decimation of reindeer herds and irradiation of indigenous land. The environmental destruction of the Gulag continued the Christianized violence of the previous colonizers of the North, both in Russia and Scandinavia, and forced the nomadic Saami people again into migration. Like subsequent Gulags in Central Asia (Karlag) and the Siberian East, Solovki is not an isolated site in the monastery building. Sound helps us conceptualize the space while offering credence to the living traditions of the Saami rather than documenting the deadified spaces of penal atrocity. Sound offers a living reassertion of the Saami tradition, not the Soviet or Nazi impositions on their space.

[102] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010) and Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds. *Shatterzone of empires: Coexistence and violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman borderlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).

II. Vsevolod Zaderatsky in Magadan – Not a Day without Writing, an Arduous Path to the Stars

Throughout the 1930s, the Soviet Union expanded the Gulag system, from early experiments building on imperial models like Solovki to large Siberian camps directly linked to Stalin's Five Year Plan and economic production. Simultaneously, the assassination of Sergei Kirov in 1934 was the spark which kindled a record number of arrests, executions, and deportations collectively referred to as the Great Terror or Ezhevshchina. The Terror was one point of dramatic increase in prisoner populations in the Gulag, and is the era which has been narrated in the testimonies of Ginzburg, Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, and Akhmatova. Kolyma, a mining camp on the eastern Siberian coast on the sea of Okhotsk became synonymous with the Gulag and historically became a template for futile penal hard labor as a component of Soviet resource extraction and management.[1] Culturally, the Terror coincided with contraction and centralization of artistic institutions. In music, for example, the competing factions of representation for composers had centralized into the Composer's Union, the dominant force in Soviet music by the early 1940s. These artistic unions were still subject to ideological censorship from the Communist Party, but intended as bureaucratic management of artists by fellow artists. Their charge was building a powerful Soviet classical music regime on the powerful imperial models of the "Five" and Tchaikovsky a generation prior.[2]

Literature from the 1930s has already created insight into the human conditions of the Gulag. A microcosmic history of a single composer in the Gulag – Vsevolod Zaderatsky –

[1] Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A history* (New York: Doubleday Books, 2003), 86-103.
[2] Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers 1939-1953* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 13-63. The Five or the Mighty Handful refers to a canonic group of Russian imperial composers who studied with and include Mily Balakirev, Cesar Cui, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Modest Mussorgsky, and Alexander Borodin.

tells the story of one individual's journey through phases of Soviet terror and through artistic bureaucracy. Microcosmic histories of atrocity are significant to conceptualize the incomprehensible scale of mass death and to prioritize individual experiences over perpetrator records. In a wider context, Zaderatsky's experiences in Kolyma overlap with the experiences of composers who returned from the Holocaust or other artists interned in the Gulag, and reveal a complex negotiation between individuals working with an abstract art form, and the strictures of Soviet artistic organs. The experiences of composers in the 1930s also created a legacy of terror in Soviet artistic policy which carried into the denunciations of 1948 and even 1979. In the case of Zaderatsky, his microhistory coupled with musical works composed in the camp and after his return to Ukraine provides an emotional and affective understanding of detention and the failure of the Gulag to Sovietize this composer.

A. Biography

Vsevolod Zaderatsky was a Soviet composer caught in the "whirlwind" of the Gulag, whose music remains relatively undiscovered due to his political repression. Born December 21st, 1891 in Rivne, Ukraine, Zaderatsky was the son of one of an engineer and financier of the Ukrainian railways and had an intellectual and bourgeois upbringing. He and his three sisters Zenaida, Elena, and Vera were polyglots, studying French, Russian, Ukrainian, and German in school. Vsevolod graduated from his secondary education in 1910 in Kursk and continued on to Moscow to pursue studies law and music with notable imperial musicians including Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Sergei Taneev, and Alexander Scriabin. His final exam from 1916 was even validated by Cesar Cui before he departed for military service in the First World War. During his studies, in 1915-16 he even gave weekly piano lessons to

Aleksei, Tsar Nikolai II's son. He was married for the first time in 1914 to Natalia Passechnik, and had his son Rostislav September 10, 1915.

Image 2.1: Zaderatsky's three sisters outside their home in Rivne. Courtesy of the Zaderatsky family.

During the First World War, he was called to service, and wife and son evacuated to Novosibirsk. Zaderatsky served in Denikin's Volunteer Army, initially because of Zaderatsky's interactions with his father and railway development in Ukraine. His service was loosely tied to this family association with railways, as Mai-Maevsky's divisional command of the Volunteer Army in a "railway war" used the dense lines of the Donetsk

Basin to launch his offensive. [3] Zaderatsky did not continue with Denikin's army in their evacuation to Crimea, and recalls that when the civil war broke out, he had to leave the Whites after Denikin's officers were executing Red prisoners without trial.[4] He did mention this military service well after his time in the Gulag, when he applied to Lviv conservatory in 1949, and didn't distance himself from perceptually imperial or White military service.[5] It seems that Felix Dzerzhinskii, the head of the Cheka personally interceded when White officers were executed in 1920 as part of his "Red Terror" where thousands of "enemies of the people" and deserters from the Red Army were shot. After hearing Zaderatsky play the piano all night at a field headquarters, Dzerzhinskii asked that the pianist be released.[6] While Zaderatsky was serving, his first wife and son evacuated to Novosibirsk and eventually left to Western Europe. From 1920-1926, Zaderatsky was exiled to Ryazan, south of Moscow, where he taught piano and directed a local orchestra.

In 1926, Zaderatsky was arrested for the first time for "anti-Soviet agitation", presumably tied to his military service.[7] During his imprisonment, all of his compositions, including all of his student compositions, and all of his writings and short stories were destroyed. This was devastating to the composer who attempted suicide in prison, and even upon release in 1928 remained severely depressed as he returned to Moscow. [8] It was from

---

[3] Dimitry V. Lehovich, "Denikin's Offensive," *The Russian Review* 32, no. 2 (1973): 173–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/127681.
[4] Laurent Zaderatsky, "Vsevolod Petrovitch Zaderatsky: Le sens d'une vie," at Vsevolod Petrovitch Zaderatsky.com, September 27, 2009, Accessed January 25, 2024: https://www.vpzaderatsky.fr/elements-biographiques/vsevold-petrovitch-zaderatsky-le-sens-dune-vie/, p. 4.
[5] Laurent Zaderatsky, "Repères Chronologiques," at Vsevolod Petrovitch Zaderatsky.com, August 17, 2011, Accessed January 25, 2024: https://www.vpzaderatsky.fr/elements-biographiques/reperes-chronologiques/.
[6] Zaderatsky, "Le sens d'une vie," p. 4.
[7] The family cites the reason as "Tsarist sentimentality," which falls under a larger umbrella of actions which would weaken the USSR: the official language being "anti-Soviet agitation."
[8] Ibid.

this first arrest that Zaderatsky lost all civil rights in the USSR.[9] His first two compositions after release were his first and second piano sonatas, showing a return to and comfort in his own instrument. This return to the piano became a theme of Zaderatsky's processing trauma and detention.

Zaderatsky received official authorization to remain in Moscow in 1929, and this was his most fruitful compositional period. He joined the ASM, the Association for Contemporary Music (Assotsiatsiia Sovremennoi Muzyki). Briefly rivalled by the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) both organizations were dissolved by 1932 in favor of the creative unions, specifically the Composer's Union.[10] The political climate became increasingly dangerous between Stalinism and the 1934 murder of Kirov which created suspicion in every official Soviet institution. Zaderatsky was ordered to leave Moscow in 1934, and settled in Yaroslavl where he worked at the school of music as a professor. He also met his second wife, Valentina Perlova whom he married the same year and had his son, Vsevolod Vsevolodovich in 1935.[11]

In 1937, Zaderatsky was arrested again on absurd charges of anti-Soviet behavior for playing the music of "fascist composers" Wagner, Beethoven, and Strauss on his recitals.[12] He was sentenced to ten years in Kolyma, but freed after serving two years of hard labor. During his detention, he was the first composer since Bach to compose a set of *Preludes and Fugues* for piano, nearly twenty years before Shostakovich. He accomplished this even

---

[9] Zaderatsky, "Repères Chronologiques," p. 2.
[10] Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers 1939-1953*, 13.
[11] Zaderatsky, "Repères Chronologiques," p. 2. Vsevolod Vsevolodovich Zaderatsky is also a musician: a musicologist and pianist, professor at Moscow Conservatory, and honored by the Russian government as an "Honored Art Worker of Russia" and a Laureate of the State Prize of the Russian Federation.
[12] Zaderatsky, "Le sens d'une vie," p. 5. His family cites these recitals as the final proof of his "anti-Soviet" behavior, the charge of his 1937 arrest, but we are missing details or the full original arrest record. This was also apparently relayed to the composer or discussed in mocking fashion throughout his arrest and in the camp.

without an instrument, and against extraordinary odds in the camp. Unable to write officially or perform these pieces in the camp, Zaderatsky carried fragments he composed home, and finished the entire cycle before the outbreak of WWII.

During the Second World War, Zaderatsky was evacuated to Merki in Kazakhstan. After the war, he was still prohibited to live in any major cities because of his Gulag background, so he moved to Krasnodar and Zhytomyr and later to Yaroslavl, where he was the only member of the Union of Composers in the city as of 1946. Ultimately, the family settled near Lviv by 1949, after being condemned again in 1948 at the congress of the Composer's Union. The violin concerto is from the last period of Zaderatsky's life in Lviv, composed in 1952 and barely finished before his death in January, 1953. The work is a spectacular piece for violin and orchestra, a romantic concerto in the model of Tchaikovsky or Glazunov full of sentimentality and imagined musings of a constructed Russian Orient. Zaderatsky and his works were never fully rehabilitated, and his music remains largely forgotten. Efforts led by Jascha Nemtsov, a pianist originally from Magadan, have created a resurgence around Zaderatsky's compositions, but it is also important to work with Zaderatsky's entire oeuvre, not only the piece composed under the inhuman conditions of the Gulag.[13]

B. Kolyma

Under Stalin, the most notorious region of detention was Kolyma, or Magadan, both in far-Eastern Siberia near the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Strait. Camps spread north from the port city of Magadan, through the surrounding forest as far north as Pevek on the East Siberian Sea. This site remained one of the most valuable and developed in the Gulag

[13] Jascha Nemtsov, *Zaderatsky Preludes and Fugues for Piano* (Berlin: Rundfunk, 2015), 2 CDs, PH15028.

with an entire network of camps still open in 1963 around the widest part of the Kolyma River near Vetrenyi and Obo roughly 280 kilometers north and west of Magadan.[14] Dozens of these ITL sites were directly managed by the Dalstroy company for the extraction of various minerals, and primarily gold.[15] The documents of Beria continually mention the economic imperatives of Dalstroy and the "particularly dangerous prisoners" which were sent there. [16] From the late imperial period through the revolution, there were repeated requests for increases in the penal budget in Magadan and the surrounding areas including in 1884, 1917, and 1920 for more guards, staff, and resources. Magadan is specifically mentioned as the penal nexus of the entire region including Kolyma, and the Gulag in this region is a direct continuation of existing mining and extraction infrastructure already established using penal labor.[17]

The use of the Siberian east for detention and reformative labor was not a Soviet creation, but built on the imperial system of *katorga* which exiled criminals to a vast "prison without walls" in eastern Siberia.[18] One of the most infamous projects from the late imperial period (1898-1909) was the Amur cart road built by prison labor (Амурская Колёсная дорога/ *Amurskaia Kolesnaia doroga*) stretching from Chita to Khabarovsk along the

[14] Ilya Udovenko, Gulagmap.ru, Gulag History Museum/muzei istorii GULAGa.
[15] Dalstroy is typically romanized as such in the existing literature on the Gulag in Magadan. Headquartered in Magadan, Dal'stroi/Дальстрой is also known as the Far North Construction Trust (Главное управление строительства Дальнего Севера/ГУСДС Glavnoe upravlenie stroitel'stva Dal'nego Severa/GUSDS) established in 1931 to manage gold and mineral extraction and later road construction and other industries in the Siberian Far East. It is the name Dalstroy which appears in the correspondence of Beria and Yezhov, and the name referenced by survivors in their testimonies secondary to the subcamp name where they were interned.
[16] L.P. Berii, "Osobaia papka," 1949 god, *Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg*, GARF f. 21914, d. 208, l. 229-231.
[17] *Vladivostokskii komitet popechitel'nogo o tyor'makh obshchestva g. Vladivostok*, RGIDV (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv dal'nego vostoka)
[18] Sarah Badcock, *A Prison Without Walls?: Eastern Siberian exile in the last years of Tsarism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

modern Chinese border to the southern side of the Sea of Okhotsk.[19] Exile to labor was an established practice by the Soviet period, and projects like the Amur cart road provided a template for Gulag labor like the Kolyma highway. The town of Magadan was constructed under the auspices of Dalstroy, initially only reachable by a ship from Khabarovsk, geographically and tangibly connecting the labor of the late-Imperial exiles to the new labor of Gulag prisoners.[20] By 1932, the expeditions began exploring outward from Magadan, ultimately resulting in more than eighty camps across the region for mining, forestry, and fishing. Eduard Berzin, the first Cheka officer in charge of Magadan was removed and executed in 1937, the year Zaderatsky arrived, replaced by Karp Pavlov and more ominously Naftaly Frenkel in BAMLag, the Baikal-Amur railway camp to the south. Frenkel, trained as a commandant in Solovki and at the White Sea Canal, was already a formidable figure, credited with systems like a direct exchange of prisoner rations for food, and for turning brutality into economic profit as was done at Solovki.[21] The prisoner population at Kolyma expanded in 1946 with the end of the Second World War and an influx of prisoners of war and those accused as collaborators flooding the camp for a minimum of five-year sentences.[22] This also coincided with the extraction of Uranium ore at sites including Butugychag, the most infamous uranium ore mine of the Kolyma complex.[23] From 1947-1953, Lavrentii Beria began considering Kazakhstan a more fruitful site for mining uranium, given the higher

---

[19] Badcock, *A Prison Without Walls?,* 123-148.
[20] Tomasz Kizny, *Gulag: Life and Death Inside the Soviet Concentration Camps* (Buffalo, NY: Firefly, 2004), Chapter 5 (Kolyma). Solzhenitsyn also discusses the unique trauma of ships to the Gulag in the opening of the second part of the *Gulag Archipelago*: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag GULAG* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1973), part 2, 589.
[21] Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A history*, 51. Frenkel is also mentioned by name in the second volume of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag GULAG* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1973).
[22] Robert Conquest, *Kolyma: The Arctic death camps* (New York: Viking Press, 1978) 220-229.
[23] Anatoly Zhigulin "On Work" in *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories Of Soviet Incarceration and Exile*, Gheith, Jehanne M., and Katherine R Jolluck, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57-69. Zhigulin also mentions Butugychag by name in his famous poem Black Stones.

quality of ore the proximity to the P1 test site at Semipalatinsk, and began allocating workers to the Central Asian mines rather than to Dalstroy.[24] With the death of Stalin, mass prisoner amnesty began across the USSR from 1953-1956 including in Magadan, and Dalstroy was officially liquidated in 1957. However, given the economic significance in the area, resettlement laws prohibiting prisoners from returning to major cities or regain full civil rights, many prisoners remained in the Magadan region, with new prisoners arriving under a modified status until at least the early 1970s.[25]

Kolyma became perhaps the most evocative Gulag site in Soviet consciousness, synonymous with brutal winter conditions, sickly mosquito-infested swamps in summer, and deadly gold mining. The setting of both Ginzburg's second volume of her Gulag memoirs and Shalamov's *Kolyma Stories* have created strong and evocative images of the Gulag based on the brutality in Kolyma. For those interned, Kolyma was a place where suffering knows know geographical border, where men became beasts, and where one had the sense of "balancing on one leg next to an abyss," but this desperation also created urgency for some of the artists interned to preserve fragments of humanity.[26] The "road of bones" where prisoners collapsed in route stretches from Yakutsk to Magadan is described in Shalamov's book *Kolyma Stories* and was the path for more than a million prisoners sentenced to forced labor in the Siberian Far East.[27] After a number of escapes of violent prisoners, the surrounding

---

[24] L.P. Berii, "Osobaia papka," 1947 god, *Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg*, GARF f. 21914, d. 175, l. 321-323. Beria wrote, "it is better to use prisoners in the mines in Central Asia" and later in the same correspondence said any not needed or unable to complete this work should be executed.
[25] Consider the Russian historian Andrei Amalrik sentenced to hard labor in 1970: John Keep, "Andrei Amalrik and '1984'," *The Russian Review* 30, no. 4 (1971): 335-45.
[26] Anastasiia Yakubek and GTPK Magadan, "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm. *Youtube,* https://youtu.be/8b4oyFEHrcA?si=VDRQzjDbM0MHNbQE.
[27] Andrew Higgens, "Along Russia's 'Road of Bones' Relics of Suffering and Dispair," *The New York Times*, November 22, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/22/world/europe/russia-stalin-gulag-kolyma-magadan.html and Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy* (London, UK: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1978).

population refused to go to the election of the supreme Soviet of the USSR until the prisoners were removed or there was better security preventing them from interacting with local communities.[28] This also points to the degree to which prisoners were terrorized, as they became violent and increasingly desperate to obtain food and safety and attempted to escape from transit and work details. For those who arrived by ship to the Dalstroy ITL sites in the 1940s, many came by ship: the *Djurma* between Vanino and Magadan. On this ship, 6-8000 prisoners per journey were harassed by overseer criminal prisoners, much like the Kapo system in the Nazi concentration camp, and the dead were callously tossed into the freezing waters.[29] For those who died in the camp, the vast majority were given shallow graves near the camp or in neighboring valleys next to mines. Those working with radioactive materials like at Butugychag were first autopsied to study the effects of radiation on humans.[30]

Life throughout the Dalstroy camps was brutal and unlivable where days ran into the next, and countless fellow prisoners died daily. The passage of time was further complicated by the psychological terror of six months of daylight followed by six months of polar night.[31] Dead friends meant the potential of an extra ration of bread, not a life to be mourned.[32] The clothing and rations were so hazardous that they provided a clear risk to health, those with

---

[28] Sovnarkoma SSSR, organami pechati I prokuuratury o razoblachenii antisovetskikh zagovorov o narusheniiakh Ustava sel'skokhoziaistvennoi arteli o zaderzhke v vydache zarabotnoi platy i druugim voprocam, Stalin to Molotov, GARF f. 8131, op. 37, d. 111, Osobaia perepiska c TsKVKP(b).
[29] Jens Alstrup, "A Special Place in Hell," for *Human Rights in Ukraine: The Information Portal of the Karkhiv Human Rights Protection Group,* 11 September, 2017, https://khpg.org/en/1505150837. And Abe Grossblat, Interview 59246, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, December 21, 1995, Accessed January 2,2024.
[30] Alstrup, "A Special Place in Hell." This practice of observing the effects of radiation on both animals and people continued in Kazakhstan, where dead animals were taken to secret laboratories to study, and Orphanages of irradiated children in the Semey region became case studies in radioactive cancers. Togzhan Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan gave up the Bomb* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022), 141, 268-275.
[31] Leib Dimerman, Interview 13556, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, December 21, 1995, Accessed January 2,2024.
[32] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy,* 15.

tuberculosis lay next to healthy prisoners in the barracks, and the food situation was catastrophic where the rations were only sufficient for 60% of prisoners.[33] The barracks were barely identifiable as such, with no blankets on the beds, and only a small central stove to approximate warmth – sleep would be impossible without the utter fatigue of the daily labor.[34] Like the confiscation of personal belongings in the Nazi concentration camps, tens of thousands of fur coats were piled in Magadan from arriving prisoners who were then outfitted with an inadequate *fufaika* quilted coat for -40 degree Celsius weather.[35] Unlike the Nazi hierarchy, in Kolyma, there seems to be a lack of ethnic distinction, wherein all prisoners were classed by their crimes and socialist failures. A supervisor at one of the Dalstroy plants in Kolyma when Zaderatsky was there recalled a lack of ethnic awareness in the camp, that "Jewishness was not an issue" and that he made a good salary every six months.[36] This points to internal hierarchies in the Gulag among those serving political sentences as criminals, and those like this supervisor, who were taken under civilian guard as Polish citizens. Prisoners serving for treason, espionage, terrorism, counter-revolutionary activity and sabotage do seem to be separate from those for sexual or violent crimes, but according to their jailers all had a "criminal attitude" which contributed to their misery.[37] For all prisoners, punishments were swift and frequent, with a separate punishment and isolation

[33] Statistic according to Limakov in this correspondence from Stalin to Molotov from Feb. 1938, Sovnarkoma SSSR, organami pechati I prokuuratury o razoblachenii antisovetskikh zagovorov o narusheniiakh Ustava sel'skokhoziaistvennoi arteli o zaderzhke v vydache zarabotnoi platy i druugim voprocam, GARF f. 8131, op. 37, d. 111, Osobaia perepiska c TsKVKP(b).
[34] Abe Grossblat, VHA-USC 59246.
[35] Slavomir Rawicz, *The Long Walk* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2010) chapters VI and VII and Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy*, 381.
[36] Jacob R. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2433), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[37] Sovnarkoma SSSR, organami pechati I prokuuratury o razoblachenii antisovetskikh zagovorov o narusheniiakh Ustava sel'skokhoziaistvennoi arteli o zaderzhke v vydache zarabotnoi platy i druugim voprocam, A. Vypinsky to Ezhov, GARF f. 8131, op. 37, d. 111, Osobaia perepiska c TsKVKP(b).

cell where prisoners were put for the slightest offense.[38] Work was a false promise, as to toil and to die were synonymous in the camp - a functional doom for these "enemies of the people" - to extract something for the USSR in their death.[39]

Zaderatsky was somewhat fortunate to serve in the Dalstroy camps before they were converted to radioactive mining in the mid-1940s. He was arrested in 1937, released in July of 1939, and had returned to his family in Yaroslavl by 1940. In addition to his musical accomplishment in the camp of writing the *Preludes and Fugues* for piano, several things stand out about his time in the Gulag. From his release card, we can see that he was working in Sevvostlag/*Севвостлаг* and also referred to as SVITL Dalstroy. This was the primary camp based within the city of Magadan. Originally, the camp was in the Nagaev bay, but 1937 was a pivot year where the camp was moved from Srednikan to Magadan where it remained active until 1953.[40] The camp at Magadan was an early version of the Dalstroy mines which spread throughout the region, primarily mining minerals including gold, tin, copper, and uranium, but also providing labor to agricultural, forestry, and fishing operations. These minerals were mined by hand, with prisoners working with heavy sieves and tumbling through rocks searching for gold and other minerals.[41] Working with tools rather than one's bare hands was a rare luxury, an incredible hazard given the evolution of these camps into uranium and radioactive graphite handling by the early 1950s.[42]

---

[38] Anastasiia Yakubek, "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm.
[39] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy,* 502.
[40] I.V. Udovenko, "Deiatel'nost' OGPU-NKVD-MVD na Krainem Severe: zoloto Kolymy" accessed from gulagmap.ru and Yandex document download.
[41] The difficulty of working with these sieves is recalled in nearly every testimony of those who worked on gold in Kolyma, consider Viktor Berezin, Interview 45743, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 12th, 1998, Accessed January 12, 2024 who had to separate gold by hand for "those at Dalstroy" and Abe Grossblat, VHA-USC 59246.
[42] Mordechai Braun, Interview 34148, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, September 29, 1997, Accessed January 12, 2024.

Zaderatsky was under attack in the Gulag physically as well as mentally. Artists, especially pianists and string players protect their hands at great expense, taking care with gloves and even caution around cutting one's nails. Shalamov never wrote about the horrors of the mines, but did detail the specific impact on his hands, of "permanently bent fingers" from the frost and holding a heavy pick.[43] Mining by hand was especially detrimental for an artist who uses their hands as an instrument in their work. Zaderatsky's feat of writing a piece for the piano is especially poignant, playing an envisioned instrument at night, trying to move his hands over imagined keys, while futilely working with a callous-making sieve every day, breaking down the hands of a concert pianist. The photo on the composer's release card compared with his pictures from the early 1930s are a shock, and the severe impact of the Gulag on his health is evident.[44] The social interactions as well as the labor were a daily challenge for him to preserve his humanity and spirit in the Gulag. The combination of political prisoners with dangerous criminals also had a toll on Zaderatsky – a sharp contrast to his elegant and cultural upbringing in a professional family in Ukraine, followed by a classical conservatory education and the cosmopolitanism of Moscow. Kolyma was a place for extremely dangerous people, and one had to live in tight and trying quarters with "ruffians" as another survivor recounted. An artist like Zaderatsky, Leib Dimerman said "living under one roof was difficult, an impossible environment as an actor, harsh people in a harsh setting."[45]

[43] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy,* 483.
[44] Anastasiia Yakubek "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm.
[45] Leib Dimerman, VHA USC: Interview 13556.


Image 2.2 and 2.3 Vsevolod Petrovich Zaderatsky from 1933 and V.P. Zaderatsky immediately after his release from the Gulag.

Zaderatsky had an incredible memory and was able to retain an enormous number of compositions he had learned previously allowing him to work on the *Preludes and Fugues* for piano without reference scores or an instrument. He was known in the camp as a storyteller for his brilliant oration which also drew from his exceptional memory, and this impressed the guards sufficiently to give him a notebook and old telegraph forms on which to compose providing he wouldn't write letters. [46] The Preludes and Fugues for piano of Zaderatsky were composed on scrap paper like old Telegraph paper, often using found charcoal or graphite from his daily work in the mines.[47] This is also extraordinary, as all use of documents relating to *Glavzoloto* or the surrounding camps were strictly regulated including the destruction of commodity books, receipts, or telegraph paper.[48] Music was a refuge for Zaderatsky, a place of familiar return to "forget the limitations of the northern

[46] Ibid.
[47] Laurent Zaderatsky, "Biography," VP Zaderatsky Website, September 27, 2009: https://www.vpzaderatsky.fr/elements-biographiques/vsevold-petrovitch-zaderatsky-le-sens-dune-vie/. There are also pictures of these clandestine scores in the film "Ya svobodin" produced by the archivist A. Yakubek from Magadan.
[48] According to Order No. 12130 on March 16, 1937: Sovnarkoma SSSR, organami pechati I prokuuratury o razoblachenii antisovetskikh zagovorov o narusheniiakh Ustava sel'skokhoziaistvennoi arteli o zaderzhke v vydache zarabotnoi platy i druugim voprocam, From the Prosecutor of the USSR A. Vypinsky, GARF f. 8131, op. 37, d. 111, Osobaia perepiska c TsKVKP(b).

palette."[49] Again, like writing the first and second piano sonatas immediately after his incarceration from 1926-1928, Zaderatsky turned to his primary instrument, the piano, in Kolyma. In the Preludes and Fugues, we also see Zaderatsky's veneration for past generations of composers, notably JS Bach, and his self-inclusion in this long classical tradition.

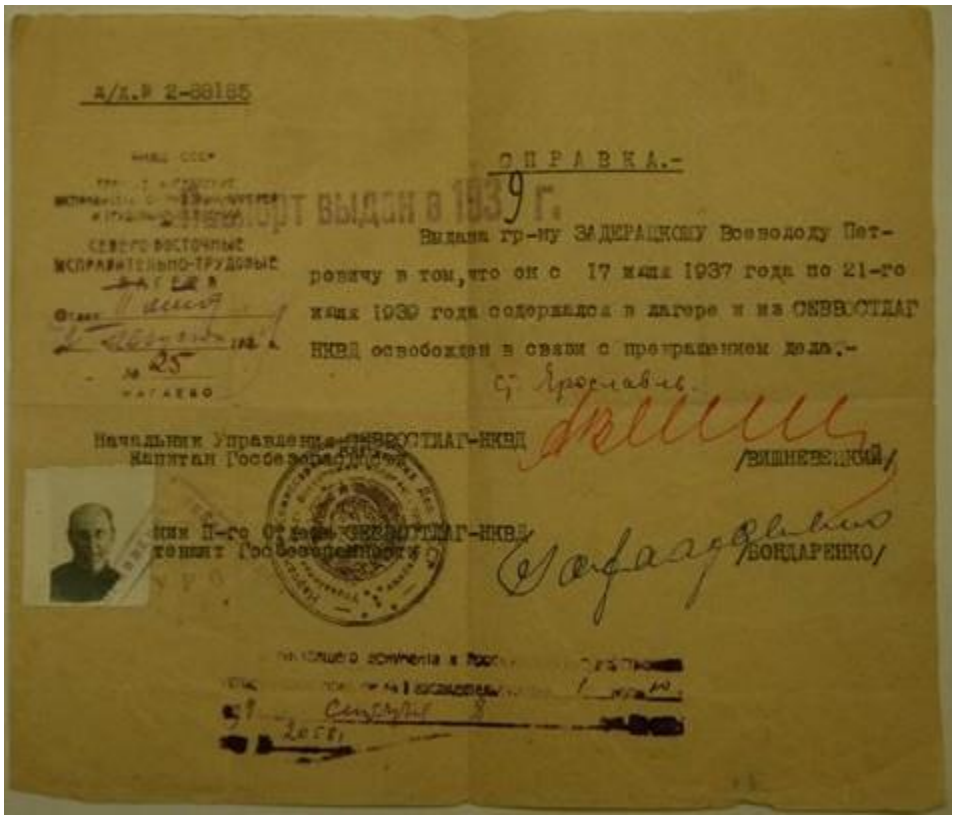

Image 2.4: Zaderatsky's release card from the Gulag, courtesy of Laurent Zaderatsky.

C. Zaderatsky's reception and Gulag compositions

Returning prisoners from the Gulag faced substantial economic challenges as they were marked as enemies of the state and forbidden from resettling in major cities. One had "no right to live near big cities, no right to vote, it was like the sentence was 40 years not

[49] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy*, 117.

20."[50] Khana Torgovnikova who survived both the Holocaust and Kolyma, returned to Dnepropitrovsk and found both anti-Jewish exclusions at employers with quotas, and was required to live many kilometers from the city center, granted no exception with one small child and pregnant with another.[51] Viktor Berezin had served hard labor after working his way east after the invasion of the USSR. When he returned to Kyiv, he needed to settle outside the city, but was unable to find his previous friends or family who had all been murdered in the Holocaust while he was in the Gulag.[52] Mordechai Braun worked in Kolyma mining for gold for Dalstroy exactly like Zaderatsky. He described several options to return, or one could elect to stay a minimum of 100 kilometers from a major city, or some people elected to stay in Siberia or closer to the Gulag. For example, some people chose to go to Ufa between Kazan and Kazahstan or remain in sites of the Gulag like *lagpunkts* where one could be redesignated as a "special settler."[53] The Gulag didn't end even when camps were dissolved, and continued to have implications for surviving prisoners, and for the landscapes and peoples surrounding the Gulag. As evident from Mordechai Braun's testimony, hundreds of thousands of displaced Gulag prisoners, chose to remain in the novel regions of Siberia and Central Asia rather than return to their home republics hundreds of kilometers away from their home cities. This created problems beyond the clear Sovietizing and cultural impact of thousands of non-Siberians moving on Siberian territory: these de-convoyed prisoners also brought black market activity and criminality to Siberia when allowed to move more freely.[54]

---

[50] Ibid.
[51] Khana Torgovnikova, Interview 6709, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, November 29,1995, Accessed January 22,2024.
[52] Viktor Berezin, USC VHA: Interview 45743.
[53] Mordechai Braun, VHA USC: Interview 34148.
[54] Wilson T. Bell, "Was the Gulag an Archipelago? De-Convoyed Prisoners and Porous Borders in the Camps of Western Siberia," *The Russian Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 116-141.

Clearly, not all Gulag prisoners were violent or even criminals in the traditional sense, but it is worth noting the lingering impacts of the Gulag including freed prisoners on indigenous spaces.[55] As Magadan was an early trial of industry, Dalstory shifted their material production particularly of uranium to Kazakhstan by the early 1950s, and Magadan also became the template for prisoner management. The early imposition of released prisoners to Siberian land was repeated in Kazakhstan, where the camps covered millions not thousands of hectares of territory, and prisoners remained in *lagpunkts* and agricultural settlements of the Steppe camps.

For Gulag prisoners, resettlement requirements also made involvement in professional life and related unions almost impossible. Zaderatsky faced precisely this issue and it is a contributing factor in the reception of his music today. Immediately upon release, while he transited back to Ukraine, he worked at a regional theatre in an administrative/transit camp and continued to compose fragments of new works on craft and wrapping paper.[56] Although a graduate of Moscow Conservatory, he never was allowed to return to Moscow, Leningrad, or Kyiv after 1934, and was similarly denied entry to the Association for Contemporary Music until the end of his life. Resultingly, his music was not published until the 1970s in a small personal publication in Ukraine, and he has not had a brief resurgence or interest in his work like that experienced by his contemporaries Nikolai Roslavets or Aleksandr Mosolov who were officially rehabilitated after bending to a more Sovietized aesthetic.[57]

---

[55] Olga Ulturgasheva,"Gulag Legacy: Spaces of Continuity in Contemporary Everyday Practices," *Laboratorium.Zhurnal sotsal'nykh issledovanii* 7, no. 1 (2015): 5-14.
[56] Anastasiia Yakubek, "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm.
[57] Laurent Zaderatsky, "Biography," VP Zaderatsky Website, September 27, 2009: https://www.vpzaderatsky.fr/elements-biographiques/vsevold-petrovitch-zaderatsky-le-sens-dune-vie/.

However, unlike Roslavets or Mosolov, Zaderatsky did not dramatically change his compositional style after the Gulag, nor did he adhere to the strictures of Socialist Realism. Following WWII, he continued to distance himself from past associations of his music with formalism or "contemporary" music. He wanted his works to sound coherent, like something which belonged in classical music.[58] Even as a performer, the recital of Strauss and Wagner for which he was arrested speaks to a deep romanticism and sentimentality, rather than an experimentation with twelve-tone or modernist compositions. He advocated for a recognizable classical aesthetic and did not lean into contemporary aesthetic guidelines either with the experimental music of the West like twelve-tone composition or with the promoted guidelines of modernity under Socialist Realism. I argue that it was Zaderatsky's unbendable aesthetic, a commitment to contemporary classical music following the imperial not Soviet models which was more dangerous than a stamp of rehabilitation from the Gulag. Aesthetically his music fits within Soviet paradigms for tonal and understandable works, and even incorporates sampling of orientalist melodies as in the violin concerto, reminiscent of composers like Rimsky-Korsakov who were heralded as models for Soviet composition. Rather, Zaderatsky's self-conception and continued family narrative of his life, cast his melodic and romantic writing as something anti-Soviet, not quite dissident, but a composer from a bygone era, one of ballet and leaning toward Western Europe rather than a Socialist composer including the folksongs of the myriad Soviet Republics.

How can something like the Gulag actually be heard in a concerto? First, certain phenomena could be directly mimicked musically including the knocking of prisoner communication, howling wind, sounds of water, the crackle of fire, and so on. More

[58] Anastasiia Yakubek, "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm.

abstractly, the musical system wherein notes correspond to a letter of the alphabet can be used to inscribe names and places in a type of musical cryptogram.[59] Composers later in the twentieth century, including Sofia Gubaidulina, Edison Denisov, John Cage, and Pierre Boulez also built pieces on complicated mathematical permutations, where significant numbers dictated the construction of the work. These cryptic constructions using spelling or numbers can be expanded into entire works via matrices like the twelve-tone compositions of Arnold Schönberg, and therefore further transformed by inverting or playing themes in retrograde (reverse). This music can either sound tonal and pleasant or difficult and unrecognizable to the listener based on the composer's shaping of the cryptogram and resulting harmonies. Not all music which is difficult to listen to expresses a traumatic or dark subtext, but there is a connection between music which is physically difficult to play, complicated or unrecognizable to hear, and a processing of trauma.[60] The final expression of the Gulag which might be anticipated after years of reeducation and brutal labor to ideologically convert former prisoners, is the complete conversion of a composer's style to one in the idioms of Socialist Realism. In the case of Zaderatsky, this would mean that pre-Gulag experiments into futuristic composition and atonality would be gone, in favor of patriotic or more comprehensible melodies to be utilized for Soviet messaging. However, this is not the case for Zaderatsky's *Preludes and Fugues* which are harmonically complex and rhythmically innovative, or for any of the post-Gulag compositions. Zaderatsky's *Violin Concerto* also reveals no nod to the Gulag with sonic fragments of folk music from Siberia,

[59] Many composers have done this with their own names to create a musical motif on which to construct entire works including J.S. Bach (BACH becomes Bb-A-C-B where B natural represents "H") or Dmitri Shostakovich (DSCH became D-Eb-C-B wherein Eb becomes Es/S and B natural again represents "H").
[60] Maria Cizmic, *Performing pain: Music and trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) 67-97.

prisoner knocking, or other onomatopoeic representations of Gulag sound in music. The section titles of the *Violin Concerto* contain no reference to the Gulag, much less a hidden cryptogram in the notes themselves. The Gulag is completely eschewed in Zaderatsky's compositions. Music was a place of refuge separate from the life of detention – music for Zaderatsky was not testimonial nor political, but something removed to preserve beauty and fully explore the range of possible compositional techniques.

Image 2.5: Zaderatsky Composing in 1947, Image courtesy of the family.

D. Zaderatsky's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1953)

Zaderatsky continued to compose throughout the Gulag, and held the quote "Nulla dies sine linea, Per aspera ad astra" or "Never a day without writing a line, an arduous path to the stars" as a personal talisman and motto. Scholarship on music and the Holocaust typically rejects a redemptive arc, where composers derived a source of strength or humanity within genocidal conditions from writing music.[61] This is the most appropriate read of music in the camps, either the Holocaust or Gulag, as attempts to paint individual survival and coping strategies as sufficient or humanizing against the Nazi or Soviet death factories often reads as insensitive, generalizing, and problematic. These attempts can be seen as further repressing

[61] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: confronting life in the Nazi ghettos and camps* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

artists who were unable to cope with genocidal conditions through art. However, there are notable artists and authors who used their camp experiences in art and for whom art directly contributed to their survival including the pianist Alice Herz Sommer who survived Terezín, the violinist Alma Rose who was murdered at Auschwitz, the pianist Władisław Szpillman who survived the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Soviet authors Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Varlam Shalamov who lyrically documented the Gulag.[62] Zaderatsky belongs to this category: an artist who took solace in composition, and continued to compose every day, against extraordinary odds in the Gulag.

Zaderatsky composed his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* frantically in the last year of his life from 1952-1953. It is unclear if Zaderatsky was trying to appease the musical governing bodies after yet another rebuke of his music in 1948 at the Composers' Union, or if he was working on a piece firmly in his own style. The piece is a showcase for violin, an instrument which was deeply politicized and valued with violinists and pianists from the USSR winning international competitions and as an element of cultural diplomacy.[63] However, beyond a composition for the violin which has always been a virtuosic concerto instrument, there is no indication in the text of the music that this work was intended to pass Soviet censorship. Even the *Preludes and Fugues* from the peak of Soviet censorship composed in the Gulag bear resemblance to Skriabin more than Socialist Realism.[64] Zaderatsky wrote tonally adventurous music rather than approachable ditties even in the Gulag, where there was a promise of bread or reduced labor for producing socialist

---

[62] Kellie D. Brown, *The Sound of Hope: Music as Solace, Resistance and Salvation During the Holocaust and World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020).
[63] Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
[64] Jascha Nemtsov, *Zaderatsky Preludes and Fugues for Piano* (Berlin: Rundfunk, 2015), 2 CDs, PH15028.

glorification. Therefore, it seems that the promise of acceptance in the Composers' Union would be a weak incentive to sacrifice compositional integrity in the *Violin Concerto*. The piece is clearly a work showcasing the violin. In the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* there are musical elements which have a longer heritage in Russian music, particularly Russian music for the violin – even the movement titles are in French, evoking the French-Russian intellectual exchange of the 1800s. Like innovation of the *Preludes and Fugues* in structure, the *Violin Concerto* also has curious and creative divisions of sections, thematic use in each movement, and use of extended techniques and extremely difficult writing for the violin soloist.

The *Violin Concerto* was composed in a fragmented fashion. The first two movements were written while the composer was on vacation in Kolomyia near Moldova in the summer of 1951: *Poème de Printemps* and *Melodie orientale*. The third movement, *Rondo Capriccioso*, was drafted only in 1953, but only for violin and piano. The entire work was orchestrated later with prompting by the composer's son by Leonid Hoffmann, while B.D. Kaskiv from the Lviv Academy of Music edited the violin part.[65] Because of the many versions of this work, the reduction for violin and piano is likely closest to what the composer originally intended, especially given that he was a pianist. There is an argument for performing the work with piano rather than with full orchestra for the sake of authenticity if the work wouldn't lose the grandeur of being performed with orchestra. The fragmentation of writing the concerto over a period of time and having many hands and artistic perspectives on revised editions is evident in the structure of the work. Each movement is broken into

[65] H. Blazhkevich-Chaplin forward to Vsevolod Zaderatsky, *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (L'viv: Spolom, 2003).

several sections of distinct themes with completely distinct characters. These sectional divisions don't follow structural expectations of concertos from earlier periods, like the Tchaikovsky violin concerto. Instead, this sort of writing is reminiscent of Glazunov's violin concerto from 1904 or even more similarly Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* or *Scheherezade* pieces which feature the violin, but integrate the solo instrument more fully into the sound of the orchestra.

The first movement, *Poème de Printemps* (Spring Poem) opens with a fanfare in the orchestra, and a very brief introduction before the violin enters almost immediately with the same theme. Immediately, in both the violin and orchestra parts, there is tremendous rhythmic variation creating dynamism for the listener, but also making it slightly difficult to parse out themes and countermelodies upon the first hearing. Without transitions, the first movement jumps between a dialogic fanfare between violin and orchestra, a *scherzando* melody for the violin against a jocular and very simple orchestral background, and an expressive *cantabile* contrasting chant which typically leads back to one of the faster themes by increasing the harmonic texture or the rhythmic variation in the chant. One challenge is the dramatic character changes between each of these sections, without large difference indicated by the composer in either tempo or volume, so each theme must be approached carefully to not have the sense of slamming from one section to the next. The *scherzando* interjections of the violin are the only theme which really indicates "spring," recalling birdsong or other melismatic songs from nature. In the model of romantic concertos, there is an extensive *cadenza* for the violinist toward the end of the movement. In the *cadenza* and in the passagework of the movement, it is evident that Zaderatsky was not a violinist and did not work with a violinist in writing difficult virtuosic elements. The flourishes and chords are

not idiomatic for the instrument, and occasionally create unnecessary technical difficulties. The movement finishes brilliantly, incorporating some of the rhythmic uncertainty from the opening, in a dazzling *coda* for the violin against repeated motifs from the primary themes in the orchestra part.

The second movement *Melodie orientale* of the *Violin Concerto* is a stunning elaboration of Orientalist themes with dramatic and repeated *cadenzas* throughout for the violin. Like Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* and *Scheherezade,* the structure of the work, and the degree that the violin interacts with the orchestra are used to heighten the feeling of the "other" or to create a narrative framework – in *Scheherezade* and Zaderatsky's violin concerto, the violin comments on the statements made by the orchestra. Curiously, the orientalism which Zaderatsky most prominently utilizes sounds like music of eastern Siberia, Mongolia, or even China rather than the popular orientalist choices recalling Central Asia or an imagined folk culture of the Russian steppe. The running figures for the violin often use pentatonicism and chromaticism, vacillating between scales used in different parts of the imagined orient Zaderatsky depicts. This movement is easily the most idiomatic for the violin as it sings in the best ranges for the instrument over a rich but not overpowering orchestral texture. Jazzy rhythms are coupled with sliding chromatic movement in one of the primary themes, and the ornaments from the cadenza are also within a dance-like theme against the orchestra. The movement has no singular tempo marking throughout, and although it's slower than the outer two movements, it's not a typical slow movement of a romantic concerto. The violin and orchestra have substantial interplay, in exchanging gestures and dancing together in moments of wit and levity. The *cadenzas* for the violin emerge out of this

texture, spectacularly featuring the instrument and allowing Zaderatsky to show his skill at writing for strings.

The use of orientalism in the second movement, a non-specific but evocative use of ornaments, trills, drones, and specific scales is very much in the imperial model. Although regional melodies and ethnographic collections were to be used in Soviet music, local themes employed in works of Socialist Realism were intended to convey the message of socialism in a manner intelligible to local communities. Music was a valuable part of *korenizatsiia* or nativization, and composers like Aram Khachaturian were successful with taking Armenian national music and themes (*Gayane*) and packaging them in a socialist framework.[66] This is not what Zaderatsky has done in the second movement of the *Violin Concerto*. These themes are not sourced from a specific or intentional region of the USSR, nor used to convey something socialist. This is the imagined orient, written in French, and juxtaposed against the occident of the other two movements – of European spring in the first movement, and the Italianate *Rondo Capriccioso* of the third.

Finally, the third movement of Zaderatsky's *Violin Concerto* is a vibrant romp to the end of the piece, with sparse orchestration and a feeling of perpetual motion for the violinist. The violin and orchestra again exchange little gestures within the exuberant violin scales, and it is in this movement, that the exchange between violin and orchestra feels more feasible with a pianist than with an ensemble. Similarly, some of the accompaniment feels like the dialogue between a pianist's hands, not something which would be played by a full ensemble. This was the only movement where Zaderatsky had no hand in the orchestration, and it still

[66] Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 313.

feels most settled in the piano reduction. Like the final movements of many large concertos for the violin – Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart 5th - there are short violin *cadenzas* where the instrument is completely alone to elaborate on the returning rondo theme but with virtuosity unhindered by an orchestral accompaniment. In this movement Zaderatsky continues to experiment with timbral changes for the soloist including the use of *sul ponticello* or playing on the bridge, just as he used a mute to change between colors in the first movement. The returning *Rondo* theme is continually interrupted, not only by elaborating episodes, but also a contrasting slower theme. The exuberant *Rondo* ultimately wins out and both the violin and orchestra finish the piece in a dramatic and difficult coda.

Without any biographical information, Zaderatsky's *Violin Concerto* musically feels like a work from the end of the 1800s, and correctly reflects his education at Moscow Conservatory and his work with composers like Cui and Taneyev. The composer's Gulag sentence was ultimately traceable to a crime of the aesthetic – programming "fascist" composers like Wagner or Beethoven on his personal recitals. If Kolyma was meant to reeducate Zaderatsky, to convince him of a Soviet aesthetic and create an artistic commitment to the strictures of Socialist Realism, it failed abysmally. Zaderatsky continued to compose in detention, to preserve his musical thoughts and work without a piano, without paper, and with tremendous damage to his hands and his psyche. The *Violin Concerto,* a piece from the final year of his life is a refutation of Soviet aesthetic. It's a masterful concerto in the model from the 1800s, and a final statement of Zaderatsky's compositional integrity and commitment to beauty in music.

E. Conclusions

Outside the town hall in Magadan is a single bust as a monument to Eduard Petrovich Berzin. Listing only his name, presumably he is remembered as a Soviet functionary, one of the heads of Dalstroy who brought heavy industry to Magadan, rather than as the brutal commandant of murderous camps across the region. By contrast, the Mask of Sorrows, a brutalist sculpture of a face, is outside of the city, on a surrounding hill like those where prisoners would have worked. Physical memorialization is indicative of priorities in memory, and commemoration of victims of Soviet repression is inadequate. There is a debt to the dead, and a need to understand and mourn the victims of the Gulag.[67] To intellectually conceive of the hundreds of thousands dead and unaccounted for, unmourned, and unburied at Magadan or any site of the Gulag is nearly impossible. A singular case study of survival is testament to the human will under inhuman conditions and reveals the impact of the Gulag on one individual. Case studies, like Zaderatsky's *Violin Concerto*, provide insight into the human condition of the Gulag and its aftermath. Such analysis speaks to the immensity of intellectual loss during *Ezhevshchina* and the tremendous impact of detention on creative output and individuals. Forgotten materials can be reincorporated into classical fields, like music, and doing so provides a more comprehensive picture of the Soviet century – from the mighty and patriotic composers to those who struggled and died under communist rule.

Zaderatsky was both a Ukrainian and a Soviet composer, but mentally aligned as a Russian composer in the imperial model until his death.[68] His formative youth with an international education, love of French and foreign languages, and a gentle incorporation of

---

[67] Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013) 110-134.

[68] Personal Interview with Laurent Zaderatsky, September 10, 2023, Paris, France. It is this personal sentiment combined with his family's narration of his life which cements his status as a non-Sovietized composer, that his continuation of imperial traditions was contra to his experiences in the Gulag.

music as a humanistic discipline in his education was what was the most formative to the composer. This is the aesthetic in Zaderatsky's compositions, especially the *Violin Concerto*: a romantic sentimentality of the *fin de siècle* infused with Russian orientalism. Practically incorporating this piece into contemporary performances, particularly as a representative work of Ukrainian music requires engagement with these Romantic ideals. Unlike Roslavets or other Ukrainians who more completely bent to Soviet demands and had brief periods of promotion, Zaderatsky maintained his ideals personally and artistically. Performing Zaderatsky's work today is presenting a piece of bourgeois anti-Soviet music. Even the preparation of the piano reduction of the violin concerto was part of a larger project to promote Zaderatsky's music to the world as a representative of Ukraine.[69] This *Violin Concerto* reclaims artistic space, both as a work by a Ukrainian composer, but more significantly as a work by an anti-Soviet composer. As such, programming this piece with compositions from the turn of the century makes sense and situates Zaderatsky among his peers: Cui, Taneev, and those who immediately proceeded him, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Zaderatsky's Violin Concerto is not an ego document of the Gulag, and instead is a refutation of new Soviet requirements. Instead of a soundscape or musical interpretation of camp life, it is a testament to Zaderatsky's character and aesthetic preferences, of his rigorous classical upbringing rich with French and literature and the sentimentalities later described as bourgeois, and of unyielding artistic creation, unchangeable even by hard labor in Siberia. Zaderatsky's piece, along with the *Preludes and Fugues* composed in the Gulag is an aesthetic reaction, a preservation of humanity, and a retreat into familiar professionalism and

[69] Forward to Vsevolod Zaderatsky, *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (L'viv: Spolom, 2003).

skill to process unimaginable trauma of detention. Zaderatsky is not simply a Gulag composer, an artist to be remembered for his repression. Instead, despite repeated efforts to destroy his music and spirit, he refused barbarism and his love for music and to share it, and his courage and will to survive are what triumphed.[70] The Violin Concerto is not a testament to the Gulag, but rather to what the Gulag failed to extinguish, what repression, reeducation, hard labor, forced resettlement, and political isolation could not change.

[70] Zaderatsky, "Le sens d'une vie," p. 5.

III. Hearing the Devastated Steppe: Sound and the Legacy of the Gulag in Kazakhstan

Russian conquest of Kazakhstan began in the 1500s with conflicts between territory-seeking Cossack soldiers and the hegemonic control of the existing Khanates. The Kazakh people openly resisted colonialism in a series of uprisings throughout the 1800s, an early determinate of subjects who would also be resistant to the imposition of Soviet modernity.[1] Natural resources, human capital and land were valuable to the Tsarist and Soviet empires alike, and the nomadic economy and social organization of Kazakhs pressed some Kazakh elites to argue for territorial autonomy within the Russian Empire, a minority opinion continued into early Soviet negotiations.[2] The destruction of the Kazakhstani Steppe and the making of Soviet Kazakhstan are most evident in four key points: the terror and targeting of Kazakhstani intellectuals including the Alash party, the hunger-famine Asharshylyk, the Gulag, and the radioactive poison of the Semipalatinsk test site. In the language of the Soviet authorities and the implementation of policies, there is distinct overlap between these individual events and collectively, they reveal the extent of Soviet destruction and terror. The famine in Kazakhstan claimed more than 1.3 million lives, and the Gulag had one of the largest territorial areas by hectares outside of the Siberian East (Eveny land). The societally destructive outcomes of the famine were coupled with spatial and environmental destruction of the steppe in the Gulag. The large territorial imposition on the steppe combined with the immense loss of life is difficult to conceptualize. Sound provides one modality to immersively understand the Gulag with a focus on the experience of those interned. Together with mapping projects, sound creates an affective and emotional concept of Gulag spaces.

---

[1].Dave Bhavna, *Kazakhstan-ethnicity, language and power* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 5.
[2] Bhavna, *Kazakhstan*, 29-40.

The Gulag and famine are inextricably linked. Both were part of a transformation of Kazakhstani people into obedient Soviet citizens and gaining control over "politically uncontrollable nomads."[3] The language of collectivization applied to Kazakhstan immediately, where the central family and community figure, a wealthy person called *bai* was used by the Soviets as a shorthand for wealthy landowner or someone to be targeted in collectivization.[4] Stalin directly conflated the social control of the *bai* with deportation and the Gulag, and used similar language of denunciation as was found in the denunciation of Ukrainians during Holodomor. In a letter to Yezhov from July 13, 1937 Stalin referred to the "420 Kulak-Bais" who were subject to execution.[5] Using similar language in correspondence with a regional bureaucrat Pinhasik and Yezhov, Stalin wrote on July 14th, 1937 "the kulak-bai of semi-feudal lords" were subject to execution and later conflated the traitorous actions of the "kulak-bai" with that of counter-revolutionary, anti-Soviet Trotskyist "special settlers" in the same region.[6]The Bolsheviks understood and implemented terror and catastrophe to political means. The greater the crisis, the more compliant citizens would become. As Robert Kindler and Sarah Cameron have highlighted, hunger famine was uniquely destructive, not only in the elimination of individuals, but in the destruction of the nomadic family unit.[7] The

[3] Robert Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden: Herrschaft und Hunger in Kasachstan* (Hamburg: Hamburger edition, 2014), 160.
[4] Directly parallel language was used in Ukraine a year later in the Holodomor, calling even minor land or tractor owners *kulak* to be targeted for collectivization or arrest. In Kazakhstan, animal pastoralism was specifically targeted as the primary economy with sedentarization campaigns, while in Ukraine, the chief export of grain was the targeted crop.
[5] Stalinskii plan po unichtozhenio Naroda: Podgotovka i realizatsiia prikaza NKVD no. 00447 "ob operatsii po repressirovaniyo byvshik kulakov ugolovnikov I drugakh antisovetskikh elementov," RGASPI f. 17, op. 166, d. 576, l. 18.
[6] Stalinskii plan, "iz karagandy TsK VKP, RGASPI f. 17, op. 166, d. 576, p. 21, l. 64.
[7] Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 169-181.

famine was part of a process of Sovietization, wherein Moscow used terror to integrate Kazakhstan into the USSR, of social disintegration with hunger.[8] The terror was not restricted to execution and famine, and a large number, perhaps 70% of the *Bai* were deported or subject to forced labor during the Terror.[9] Naturally, the effects of the famine reached urban centers like Almaty, Karaganda, and Astana, but the target of Soviet collectivization measures was taming and controlling a perceptually wild steppe. Furthermore, Stalin's Five Year Plans and the mining of the Karaganda coal basin is directly linked to the Gulag – using dekulakized and western special settlers to advance economic goals of the USSR in Central Asia.[10] Sedentarization destroyed the fundamental unit of Kazakh society, materially decimated the population through famine, and psychologically created an unparalleled crisis making the population controllable by the new state.[11]

To understand geography is to understand Soviet terror in Central Asia. Gavin Slade and Laura Piacentini now map the Gulag in Kazakhstan and build on their previous research showing that the Gulag and sites of penalty and torture remain interactive ruins with locals engaging with the Gulag and the remaining objects.[12] The colonization of the steppe was physical in the destruction of animals, people, and through irradiation, but also psychological as Etkind suggests.[13] I agree with Slezkine, reading a reflective savagery into

---

[8] Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden,* 312, 239. and Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 7.
[9] Stalinskii plan, "Iz alma-aty TsK VKP," RGASPI f. 17 op. 166 d. 576, l. 69. In an estimate from Stalin to Yezhov, 1123 people were counted as "Bai" near Almaty of which 305 were executed and 818 were deported to forced labor.
[10] Ekaterina Kuznetsova, "The Winds of Time Dry out the Grass of Oblivion," in *Stalinism in Kazakhstan: History, Memory, and Repression*, eds. Zhulduzbek Abylkhozhin, Mikhail Akulov, and Alexandra Tsay (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021), 91.
[11] Kindler, *Stalins Nomaden,* 135-160.
[12] Gavin Slade, Laura Piacentini, Alena Kravtsova, Ghosts of the Gulag: Negotiating Spectres of the Penal Past in Northern Russia, *The British Journal of Criminology*, Volume 64, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 17–33, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azad013.
[13] Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2013).

Russian motives of conquest, and further suggest that the colonization of the USSR was also a spiritual destruction. Ulturgasheva details the ways that the Gulag was a spiritual incursion for the Eveny people in their Siberian territories, and I suggest that there is a similar spiritual incursion of violent death from the Gulag in Kazakhstan.[14] The imposition of death was not an accident, a catastrophic failure of Soviet policy, but rather repeated attempts to poison the Steppe via the "black cloud" of hunger famine, psychological terror, the imposing prisons of the Gulag, and the invisible poison of radiation from Semey. A fantastic local historian from Karaganda, Popov told the microhistories of individuals including government officials and special settlers in the grassland mountains of Saryarka to show how the stories of the Gulag, famine, and terror intersect and the contradictions within bureaucracy which determined life and fate for individuals.[15] As Cameron emphasizes, "the spectrum of violence under Stalin was broader than previously believed" and this violence continued in the psychological detriment to Kazakhstani people and the ongoing psychological terror from the Soviet destruction of culture, family, and community.[16]

Maps of the Gulag in Kazakhstan fail to capture the impact of the camps and typically show disparate dots, single points across the entire country from Atyrau in the West to Karlag in the center. A comparison of the geography reveals that the Gulag is not a separate event from the famine nor the nuclear imposition of the 1940s-1990s. The Gulag in Kazakhstan continued to expand with another site inside Karlag called Spassk during the Second World War and didn't end with the death of Stalin, with production expanding at

[14] Olga Ulturgasheva, "Ghosts of the Gulag in the Eveny World of the Dead," *The Polar Journal* 7, no. 1 (2017): 26-45.
[15] Yu. G. Popov, *Poznanie Saryarki: cherez puteshestviia, ssylki, laggeria* (Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013).
[16] Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe,* 15.

Karlag through the 1950s.[17] The famine, Gulag, and nuclear testing form a continuous pattern of resource extraction and destruction targeted at the entire Steppe from Atyrau to Semey. This is how the Gulag is contextualized in contemporary Gulag memorial sites in Kazakhstan and the National Museum in Kazakhstan, which open with the repressions of hunger and Kazakh intellectuals before discussing the Gulag and which mention the radioactive dangers of Semipalatinsk after the Gulag had ended. The Gulag is not a single point – neither an isolated chronological event in the longer durée of the Soviet history of Kazakhstan, nor a physical point easily confined by a prison fence on a map. Decentralized memorialization, like the *Stolpersteine* in Europe, show the magnitude of atrocity on spaces, and create microhistorical memorials to individuals or singular sites not typically associated with atrocity.[18] A sampling of points across Kazakhstan creates a sonic memorial of the camp and the entanglements of the Gulag with other destruction including radioactive damage. The imposition of the Gulag must be studied in the continuum of Kazakh colonialism by the USSR including the famine and nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk. These spaces are vast with tremendous regional diversity and varying impacts of destruction.

A. Sonic Conceptualization

Sound helps to envision remote spaces and locales, creating a sense of the vast nature of the Steppe and the spaces of Soviet imposition. Sound is one mechanism to understand the spaces of the Gulag as a supplement to mapping projects and lyric or narrative testimony. Even today, the steppe is not fully transected by highways, and most of these sites remain in isolated areas without heavy traffic. As Slade and Piacentini discovered, there is a process by

[17] Wladislaw Hedeler and Mainhard Stark, *Das Grab in der Steppe Leben im Gulag: Die Geschichte eines Sowjetesichen Besserngsarbeigslagers 1930-1959* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningin, 2008), 230, 127.
[18] *Stolpersteine* or tripping stones are a form of Holocaust memorialization adopted in many cities in Europe, wherein small paving stones are set outside of victims' former homes and businesses as micro-memorials.

which locals repurpose and reincorporate the penal past, distancing themselves from the specter of the Gulag by reclaiming spaces and objects.[19] When we listen to contemporary sound recordings, we can hear a duality: the site or sounds which were important to Gulag prisoners like high wind or blowing reeds by a lake, but we can also hear the quotidian sounds of Kazakhstani life – dogs, passing cars, and neighbors. Through these recordings, we hear the reclaiming of space, that next to a former *lagpunkt* isolation cell there is now a thriving village, or where prisoners used to harvest reeds for survival, the abandoned lake is now so populated it is almost impossible to access. The sound of daily life reveals that the prescription for an uninhabited Steppe assumed by the Soviet government was unsuccessful, and that these spaces remain inhabited and living sites, not frozen museological sites of atrocity or a vast cemetery consigned only to the dead. Furthermore, to understand the daily life of the Gulag is to understand its horrors. As Etkind argues, the logic of the Gulag was not in labor or production but in a combination of daily extrema from freezing temperatures to labor to separation from one's family which caused overwhelming pain.[20] The proximity of atrocity sites to ordinary life is also a reminder of the level of imposition of the Gulag and Soviet atrocity on the Steppe. This proximity also reveals that the sounds of violence from the Gulag – screams, shouts, gunshots, forced labor, even the imposition of Russian language from the authorities – would have become part of the *belliphonic* or ordinary violent sound world of these villages.[21] Sites of the Gulag were placed throughout thousands of hectares of

[19] Slade, Piacentini, Kravtsova, Ghosts of the Gulag: Negotiating Spectres of the Penal Past in Northern Russia, 30-33.
[20] Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013) 28, 82, 105.
[21] I discuss violent sound and soundscapes in the introduction at length, but Daughtry's term *belliphonic* describing the violent sounds of war fits here: J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to war: Sound, music, trauma, and survival in wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

land across the Steppe. It is impossible to mark every grave, every execution site, and every site of torture. This is an inconceivable imposition of violence on Kazakh people and space.

In the documentation of atrocity, written documents favor the perpetrators, who were able to execute preset plans leaving paper and archival evidence. Envisioning a scene from written documentation often means hearing the perspective of perpetrators.[22] With literacy rates after WWI in rural Kazakhstan around 10%, it is also critical to consider means of analysis which don't rely on a written archive.[23] Sound, even a contemporary rather than historic recording, captures the soundscape, the world as it was heard by prisoners in the Gulag. Prisons are clearly places of corporeal violence, of physical detention. Sound is not an imagined space, but rather a corporeal interaction with a site of corporeal violence. Finally, sound and music were integral parts of the lives of the educated Soviets who were deported to the Gulag, both western Soviets and Kazakhstani intellectuals. Sound centers prisoners' priorities of communication and kinship – from knocks to making a Gulag home, to hearing the wind described in countless memoirs. This method for experiencing the sonic element of the Gulag aims to provide a fractional interaction with the reality of the penal nexus rather than an economic or practical analysis of the thousands of dead or millions of resources produced by prisoners.

Finally, lyric poetry and prose were a vital act of resistance in the Gulag, by which prisoners preserved their high culture from before arrest and their own internal Gulag

---

[22] Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and knowledge in nineteenth-century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015) and specifically as it relates to hearing genocide: Alexandra Birch, "'They were drinking, singing, and shooting': Singing and the Holocaust in the USSR," *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 4, no. 1 (2021).
[23] Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe,* 8.

languages. [24] The most evocative lyric rendering of Gulag testimony comes from a survivor of Magadan, Varlam Shalamov, who failed to draw a meta meaning or moral redemption about suffering among his "semicorpse" peers that Solzhenitsyn details in *Cancer Ward, One Day in the Life of Ivan Desinovich,* and *The Gulag Archipelago.*[25] Shalamov's descriptive and poetic short stories are bleak and at times grotesque: an answer to his ecstatic and nostalgic poetry. Shalamov and Solzhenitsyn paint a senseless, horrifying, and emotional description of the Gulag but they are not strictly testimonial and parallel literary descriptions of the Holocaust like *Night* by Elie Wiesel or *Treblinskii Ad* by Vasily Grossman. In Karlag, like other camps, the ability to create poetry, music, and art was essential to survival and in addition to preserving one's own identity, these arts were also testimonial documents about detention.[26] Unlike literature or notated music, sound is an immersive and documentary preservation of the site, not an aesthetic interpretation. In atrocity studies, interpretation and aestheticization are dangerous and can invite denial. Sound provides an additional documentary supplement to memoirs, a way of envisioning the spaces graphically described by Shalamov, Ginzburg, and Solzhenitsyn. One of the most emblematic sounds of Russian carcerality is knocking as communication (*perestukivanie*) dating from the 1870s.[27] Knocking became a "technology of the self" a mechanism for humanizing expression and documentation of penal spaces. This communication style was so synonymous with prison

[24] Alexander Etkind, "Introduction" in Alan Barenberg and Emily D. Johnson Eds. *Rethinking the Gulag: Identities, Sources, Legacies* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2022).
[25] Varlam Shalamov, *Kolymskie rasskazy* (London, UK: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1978), and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag GULAG* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1973), and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Rakovyi korupus* (West Germany: Poset/Samizdat, 1966), and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha* (Moscow: Novy Mir, 1962).
[26] N.T. Zhumadilova, *KARLAG: Tvorchestvo v nevole* (Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013).
[27] Nicholas Bujalski, ""Tuk, tuk, tuk!"A History of Russia's Prison Knocking Language," *The Russian Review* 81, no. 3 (2022): 492-93.

communication, that the knowledge which helped overthrow Tsarist autocracy returned to Soviets detained under the new state, as was the case with Evgeniia Ginzburg.[28] Sound is still highly emotional, and even in silence, one can envision the pervasive wind or the cold isolation of a cell. Therefore, sound is a sort of documentary aesthetic, a way of conveying space, even terror, to scholars a world away and chronologically removed from the Steppe and the Gulag.

B. KARLAG and ALZhIR: An Overview of Space

Karlag, one of the largest labor camps of the Gulag system is synonymous with the Gulag in Kazakhstan. It derives its name from the regional and administrative capital of the camp in the Karaganda region (Karaganda Corrective Labor camp or Karagandinskii ispravitel'no-trudovoi lager'). Karlag alone spans nearly three hundred kilometers from north to south and two hundred kilometers from east to west or approximately 1,780,650 hectares of territory and was opened in 1931 as a combination of pasture and forced collectivization, labor and coal mining, and other extractive labor.[29] Although the camp derives its eponymous name from Karaganda, it is more correct to think of it impacting the Karaganda region, rather than simply Karaganda the city. Beria considered the Karaganda region uninhabited like his rationalization of selecting Semipalatinsk for nuclear testing. When discussing the need for new houses in 1947 for coal miners and metallurgists advising the Gulag in Dolinka, he said houses must be built as there are "no settlements."[30] ALZhIR was a subcamp of Karlag for the Wives of the Traitors to the Motherland, and was the largest women's camp in the history

[28] Bujalski, "Tuk,tuk,tuk," 493, 509.
[29] T.K. Allaniyazov, N.T. Zhumadilova, Zh.M. Baimurynov, and B. A. Zhunisova, *Karlag. Ocherki istorii Karagandinskovo ispravitel'no-trudovogo lagerya OGPU-NKVD-MVD SSSR (1931-1959)* (Almaty: Poligrafkombinat, 2012).
[30] L.P. Berii, "Osobaia papka," 1947 god, *Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg*, GARF f. 21914, d. 183, l. 35-41.

of the Gulag. [31] The memorial museum to Karlag is inside the building of the former administrative center in the town Dolinka, 40 kilometers from Karaganda, where ALZhIR is 37 kilometers from the capital Astana. Other sites of the Gulag in Kazakhstan include Guryevsky ITL in Atyrau on the Caspian Sea which was open only in 1943 with the hopes of using prisoners to construct an oil pipeline which was ultimately unsuccessful. Due to climate changes in the Caspian Sea and rising water, islands of this ITL have been submerged. The Aktobe ITL/Aktobinskii ITL was a mining camp for essential minerals for the metallurgical industry also in western Kazakhstan, but north of the Caspian Sea, and was operational from 1940-1946.[32] Between the camps on the Caspian Sea and the penal nexus at Karlag in Karaganda was another camp tied to a city – Kengir in Dzezhkazgan. Kengir was also primarily a mining camp, and the proximity of the Karsakpai copper mine to the Kengir river made catastrophic changes to the cartography and ecosystem of the river still visible today as topographic shifts.[33] Spassk, or camp 7099, was a prisoner of war camp linked to Kengir through the same administrative organs, another *Stepnoi lager'* or StepLag: correctional labor camps of the Steppe for political prisoners run by the predecessor of the NKVD the MVD.[34] Still today, Spassk is near a military installation, and its primary associations are with the prisoner surge from prisoners of war in the late 1940s. Outside of the Karlag system in the central and north-east parts of Kazakhstan, there were two additional camps: the Stepnyak camp which later operated solely out of the Zholymbet-

[31] I left ALZhIR in this capitalization as it (like GULAG) is an acronym for the **A**kmolinskii **L**ager' **Zh**ën **I**zmennikov **R**odiny or Akmolinsk Camp for Wives of Traitors to the Motherland.
[32] M.B. Smirnov, *Sistema ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 1998).
[33] Zh.O. Ozgeldinova, E.M. Khamzin, Zh.T. Mukaev, A.A. Zhanguzhina, Zh.F. Ten'kedaeva, and M.A. Alagudzhaeva, "Assessment of anthropogenic load on the landscapes of the Kengir River," In Gubrometeoropogiia I ekologiia no. 1 (2020), 27-36.
[34] N.O. Dulatbekov, *Karlag. Ocherki istorii Karagandinskogo ispravitel'no-trudovogo lageria OGPU-NKVD-MVD CCCR* (Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013), section on Spassk.

ugolnaya mine, and the Maikainski camp also intended for mining, specifically gold.[35] Although these camps were not part of Karlag, all focused on mining, for the Kazzoloto trust and other large mining initiatives as part of Stalin's Five Year Plan. While mining was one part of Karlag, it was the primary focus of the Gulag in Kazakhstan, and as such, these sites should be considered part of the network of camps across the entire country.[36]

C. Gulag Sound

Like Solovki, accessing the sites of the Gulag in Kazakhstan is complicated. Karlag is made up of a large network of possible locations including barracks, *lagpunkt* subdivision centers of the camp, isolation and torture cells, unmarked and marked graves, and administrative buildings of the Gulag. Since and even during the Gulag, this space remained inhabited and operational. There are people living immediately next to isolation cells of *lagpunkts*, in former barrack spaces, and even next to mass graves.[37] The first step in selecting sites for sound recordings is to see what was important to prisoners, and what provides a clear conceptualization of space and the region. The memorial museum at Karlag in Dolinka is in a former administrative center with imagined sets of the Gulag experience interspersed with authentic artifacts. I made recordings around Dolinka and at worksites within a 150km radius which more accurately capture the Gulag than recording in a reconstructed museum. This process was more extensive, but more accurate and contains recordings from across the Kazakh Steppe, from the Semey region and throughout the

[35] N.O. Dulatbekov, *Special Camps in Kazakhstan: Stepnoy, Peschaniy, Lugovoy, Dalniy* (Almaty, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2015).
[36] Kuznetsova, "The Winds of Time Dry out the Grass of Oblivion," in *Stalinism in Kazakhstan: History, Memory, and Repression*, 93-95.
[37] Nearly a thousand miles from Karagandy, Murat Baiguzhayev found a mass grave of NKVD victims in the courtyard of his home in Zhanalyk north of Almaty. "'56 Rastrelyannykh!' Pensoner povedal o strashnoi nakhodke pod Almaty," *Tengri News*, 26 March 2020, https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/56-rasstrelyannyih-pensioner-povedal-strashnoy-nahodke-403400/.

Karaganda region. There are no recordings from the administrative building, as the notable sound from the time of the Gulag was music from the club for administrators of Russian folk songs for functionary perpetrators.[38] Instead, these sonic examples highlight four primary sites indicative of the experiences of prisoners and their sound world: Karlag and *lagpunkts* near Samarka, ALZhIR the women's camp near Astana which was also part of the Karlag complex, Termitau and work sites, and separately the western edge of the Semipalatinsk test site near abandoned villages linking the Gulag to the radioactive test site. I standardized simple recording concerns like where to place a microphone as these are not musical compositions, but captures of historical soundscapes. I selected recording site based on maps from 1997 held by the Karlag Memorial, sites shared by Gavin Slade and his GIS mapping of the Gulag in Kazakhstan, and the GulagMap.RU project overlayed and carefully found with contemporary maps of Kazakhstan.[39] I used the correspondence of Beria from 1944-1949 to find the village names not "cleared" near Semipalatinsk and located each village on road maps to account for any changes from 1865, 1985, and 2015. Although I was able to access 80% of the sites I selected, weather and radioactivity are also factors in accessing abandoned buildings, and I had to abandon a site of a former labor barrack which required offroad vehicle access and recordings of the western ridge of the Semipalatinsk site when I deemed radioactive exposure was too high.

The first recordings worth note are the two sound recordings from the Mamochkino cemetery near Dolinka. Three kilometers to the south and east of the Karlag memorial, the Mamochkino cemetery is a grim reminder of the children of the Enemies of the People

[38] Kuznetsova, "The Winds of Time Dry out the Grass of Oblivion," 106.
[39] As mentioned later, some of these sites are inaccessible large portions of the year due to weather or for Semipalatinsk, radioactivity. Further research is needed to take sound recordings at Espe which is a truly desolate site of a *lagpunkt* Kos-shoky or at the short-lived Gulag north of Astana, Stepnyak.

imprisoned in the Gulag. Two and three-year-old children were transferred away from Karlag to state "orphan asylums" where often their records or any knowledge of their parentage was lost. There are no archives with the liquidation of Karlag of newborns, maternity records, or often even of arriving children. Children were assigned the names of those who registered them, not their parents, and death records often only show executions, not what happened to these children.[40] Many graves in this cemetery have only first names and ages, and the cemetery reflects the tragically high mortality rate of children in the Gulag in Kazakhstan.[41] Birds can be heard as small punctuations – thieving magpies bickering rather than friendly songbirds. Occasionally, a large truck passes on the nearby highway about 500 meters away. The birds are much more present in the second clip, particularly at the end in a brief respite from the wind and are accompanied by increased roadside noise. The most notable feature, however, is the obliterating wind even in early November which distorted and covered all other audio even with a shielded recorder and use of appropriate outdoor ambisonics equipment.[42]

[40] N.O. Dulatbekov, *Mamochkino Molasy* (Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2015) 5.
[41] Dulatbekov, *Mamochkino Molasy*, 65. Kazakhstani estimates based on surviving records say that approximately
[42] Mamochkino Recording 1, 2.

Image 3.1 and 3.2: A "Stalin Crib" exhibit at the Dolinka (Karlag) Museum with artifacts of children imprisoned in Karlag with their parents and the view of the Steppe looking out from the *Mamochkino* cemetery near Dolinka where these children are buried.

Two recordings were taken from the train tracks near the "gate to Karlag" where prisoners arrived first to the Steppe and were met by sheepdogs in columns of five before entering their scattered, low, adobe barracks in the surroundings of Dolinka.[43] In both recordings you hear distant dogs, both from a nearby house and from farther neighbors. Dogs are represented in many recordings, now barking as pets rather than the ominous companions of NKVD guards. In the first recording, you can hear the faint crack of ice and melting snow from small bushes and shrubbery around the train tracks and a faint murmur of high wind. Cars and the faint sound of a diesel engine can also be heard and approximates the sounds prisoners would have encountered of heavy machinery, mechanical punctuations of sound in an open, desolate, and foreign Steppe. It's interesting how sound mirrors the visual. The pervasive wind and endless silence are like the open grassland of the Steppe and

[43] Kuznetsova, "The Winds of Time Dry out the Grass of Oblivion," 94.

surroundings, and the punctuations are what prisoners would see and hear: dogs, engines, distant birds, all against the backdrop of an unknown, unending, and unnerving silence.[44]

Image 3.3: the "Gate to Karlag" from where you can walk to train tracks where Gulag prisoners arrived. These tracks are still operational, and lingering is inadvisable.

An eerie clip of what initially seems to be silence helps us envision an isolation cell in a camp-village near Samarka. Part of the Volkovskoe subcamp and within the Volkovskoe village, this recording is from the inside of a building which was formerly an isolation or torture cell and is now a ruin within a small village. Approached from Asyl and Molodetskoe, this site and village camp are roughly 48 kilometers from the Gulag administrative center in Dolinka where the Karlag memorial museum is housed. In this recording, the high wind present on the open Steppe or the Mamochkino cemetery is muted, the present recorder and past prisoners were shielded by at least the heavy walls of a cement barrack cell. A mechanical sound like traffic can be distantly heard in the village in the latter half of the recording. The stillness of the site seems uneasy – an oppressive silence recalling the torture of isolation and feeling like a recording of the stillness of night but taken midafternoon in a

[44] Karlag 1,2 recordings.

populated village. Initially punctuating the silence is slight movement and breath, a silence so absolute one can only hear yourself breathe. The captured surrounding sound of the village and distant mechanical movement is a reminder that these tortures, the punishments of the Gulag, were part of ordinary villages across the Steppe.[45]

Image 3.4: An Imagined/Reconstructed isolation cell at the Karlag Memorial

In contrast to the unnerving quiet of the isolation cell, a recording taken from the greater *lagpunkt* specifically near the turn onto the open Steppe at Asyl shows the extent of the high wind on the open sites of labor where miners and agricultural laborers worked. The wind is total, and any passing cars, even from a distance of more than 100 meters completely overwhelm any sound, communication other than shouts over the wind would have been impossible. You can hear several brief interruptions of magpies calling to each other in the spaces between the wind and cars. The squabbling magpies, an ominous omen of death, enjoy congregating near cemeteries, former mines, and graves, living up to their negative literary associations with death and far-removed from the *Bayterek* or great Eagle typically associated with Kazakhstan. There is a sharp contrast between this recording and the

[45] Lagpunkt bunker recording.

isolation cell with the removal of the wind, but the silence of the *lagpunkt* cell is not calming any more than the sounds of birds in the wind are a charming recording of nature.[46]

Image 3.5: The turn off paved roads to Asyl near the Samara *lagpunkt*.

At ALZhIR, the primary site is a memorial, with a small museum and several displays outside of a reconstructed barracks or prisoner home, and a guard watch tower. One display which is not a reconstruction, is a boxcar, one of "Stalin's Wagons" manufactured in Odesa in 1927 for the transport of prisoners to ALZhIR, Karlag, and other Gulags across the USSR. Prisoners called these cattle cars "teplushka/теплушка" and they were shared by more than 70 prisoners who slept on the bunks and attempted to keep warm with a small central stove on the long journey to Central Asia. Forty wagons a day or more arrived to the Karaganda-Ugolnaya station filled with prisoners to work in the mines and assigned to different branches of the Karaganda Gulag including ALZhIR.[47] The recording from the boxcar has knocking, the sound of my taps on various parts of the wood and bunks, which is occasionally covered

[46] Samarka 1 recording
[47] L.P. Berii, "Osobaia papka," 1947 god, *Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg*, GARF f. 21914, d. 176, l. 75. Chebanov, the deputy chief of the Karaganda railway confirms these numbers in a memo to Beria.

by the high wind. This is the only recording where I had any intervention, and it is to mimic and provide an example of the knocking communication listed so significantly by Ginzburg as prisoner communication amongst Gulag women.[48] This knocking is one of the most emblematic sounds of the Gulag, and a significant form of prisoner communication where they had their own symbols and signatures, and an entire knocked alphabet. This knocking designed by women is significant, showing their agency and innovation in communication, and affirms the critical role of art, sound, and testimony in prison survival.[49] The tapping, including on boxcar walls that Ginzburg preserved in her memoirs speaks to the human need to communicate and the solace in breaking isolation from other prisoners in an otherwise isolating and foreign environment like prison or the Steppe.[50] Ginzburg's testimony conveys the desperation of seeking contact. This contemporary sound recording helps envision the boxcar, surrounded by the pervasive wind of the Steppe, knocks which only carry so far in the wind, and at the end of the recording, a faint cry of a distant child visiting the memorial, like those removed from their arriving mothers or consigned to the same fate of Gulag misery seventy years ago.[51]

[48] Eugenia Ginzburg, *Journey Into the Whirlwind* ((Boston: Mariner, 2002). Ginzburg discovers this knocking communication when in prison shortly after her arrest and uses it on trains, and as communication in camps.
[49] Judith Scheffler, *Wall Tappings: An International Anthology of Women's Prison Writings, 200 to the Present* (New York: Feminist Press and the City University of New York, 2002), xiii.
[50] Scheffler, *Wall Tappings,* 125.
[51] Boxcar recording.

Image 3.6: The Boxcar at the ALZhIR memorial.

Also from ALZhIR/Karlag is a recording from a worksite approximately 50Km south of ALZhIR which was stationed by women. The only marked sound in the recording is a passing truck – there were no buildings, no structures, merely open steppe. When I move in the recording you can hear the crack of ice and later the crunch of snow so hard it sounds like Styrofoam – a brutally cold place to work given that these recordings were taken in the first week of November. Like the other recordings, wind is the most prominent sound, but completely missing are any sounds of animals or other people. Without the sound of the modern highway, women would have worked for hours collecting reeds, making clothing, or doing crafts while being prohibited from speaking to one another, without birdsong, neighbors, or even the noises of domesticated animals. The horses and other animals of the Steppe were only evident closer to Astana, not at this site, and the silence punctuated only by overseers or the sounds of labor would have further contributed to the psychological degradation and isolation of the forced labor on the steppe.[52]

[52] AlZhIR near worksite recording.

For women in ALZhIR, blowing reeds and the trip to the nearby lake Zhalanash were a part of their daily existence. Sofia Solunova's memoirs are indicative of their experience and how they made sense of it, a bridge between actual experience and lyric memory. Furthermore, the women of ALZhIR were largely educated, and their culture is evident in their language and poetics which lack references to a criminal subculture. [53] Solunova's memoirs and one poem specifically mention the sound through the reeds at Zhalanash and the necessity to collect these reeds for survival – both to burn and on which to sleep. This is echoed in the permanent exhibition at the ALZhIR memorial, where the artistic rendering of a 3D map of the camp specifically shows reeds/*kamyshi* with bundles of picked reeds stacked against the diorama wall. In the barrack house at the ALZhIR memorial, there are bundles of these reeds against the wall, staged as though being burned, and used as mattresses. In the memorial, these reeds are integrated into the bricks shown which made the prisoner buildings and in all of the models. The daily task of journeying to the lake was a five to eight kilometer trip each way, often in subzero temperatures at the nearest points of access. Today, the lake has private residences on the side of the city Akmolinskiy where the ALZhIR memorial is located, and a classified Kazakh military installation to the south which blocks the road and further continuation around the lake.[54]

[53] Steven Barnes writes extensively on the poetics of the language of AlZHIR in his forthcoming book *Gulag Wives: Women, Family, and Survival in Stalin's Terror*.
[54] Three Zhalanash recordings.

Images 3.7 and 3.8: The reeds by Lake Zhalanash and Lake Zhalanash in November 2023.

A large focus of the memorial and the portrayal of women in ALZhIR is material culture: the "womanly" artifacts like embroidery, decorations, and the official sewing factory of the camp. The reeds used for mattresses and burned for meagre warmth paint a different picture of the material culture as it was lived. Rather than a welcoming home, with a soft bed with embroidery, the reeds are a reminder of the harshness of the lived conditions, reeds not embroidery on which to sleep. For women, their "bitter tears at nights, in anxiety about the fates of their children were not heard by the chief, nor the hard convoy of the camps."[55] The reality of material culture was of "grey, cold objects which mirrored the position of life," where pictures of loved ones were like "islands from another world" and where the general feeling was "a place of the soul's bondage."[56] Hearing the reeds, shaken only by the ever-present wind of the Steppe immediately evokes the realities of ALZhIR's material culture – not a soft sentence of embroidery and gentile feminine tasks, but rather a harsh survival in a completely foreign Steppe for interned Western Soviets. Another recording, from the

[55] Quote used in the ALZhIR memorial within a poem next to the reeds, translated from Russian.
[56] Quote from the ALZhIR memorial on the outside reconstructed Barrack, translated from Russian. Note the poetics even of the descriptions which recall the archipelagic language of Solzhenitsyn or the greyscale world of Mandelstam.

reconstructed adobe-straw barrack at the ALZhIR memorial complex had the recorder completely shielded by the building itself. In this recording, one can still hear the wind, like an ever-present hum and reminder of the frigid outside in the backdrop. What is also telling, is the contemporary excavation or mechanical work in the neighboring town on the recording. The sounds of the camp would be inescapable in a building without insulation or paned windows. Naturally the barracks were not welcoming homes, but the constant invasion of sound also recalls the constant cold and the persistent reminders of detention.[57]

Images 3.9 and 3.10: A reconstructed Barracks at the ALZhIR memorial and ALZhIR embroidery made by S. Malinovka in commemoration from 1989.

D. Radioactivity

The Gulag and Famine are not the only lingering legacies of Soviet imposition in Kazakhstan. Contemporary with the Gulag was the construction of the nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk and the radioactive pollution of the Steppe. Between the farthest East labor sites of Karlag and the farthest West villages affected by radioactive fallout directly from the Polygon, there is only a distance of roughly 80 km. Linked to the labor of the camp, the

[57] ALZhIR barracks recording, cut final 10 s.

"Polygon" or nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk derives its name from Semey, the eponymous capital city of the region. Togzhan Kassenova has revealed the extent of weapons testing in this region, including nearly a century of cancerous disease and destruction for local Kazakhstanis, hundreds of nuclear orphans across the Semey and Karaganda regions, corollary increases in suicide, and continued demands for reparations from Moscow.[58] Serhii Plokhy correctly framed the mismanagement of the Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine as a continuation of Soviet catastrophe, failure of (imposed) Soviet science, extractive hunger-famine methods, and above all, a disregard for Ukrainian and military life.[59] The taming of the Semipalatinsk region originated in the imperial period, where Russian incursion in Kazakhstan was intentionally developed to target and disrupt nomadic life.[60] In Stalin's vision, the region was dangerous, with "particularly hostile and active kulak-bais" and it was submitted by Stalin to Yezhov in 1937 as a region for "destruction of the people or repression."[61] The nuclear history of Kazakhstan parallels the negligence in Ukraine and intersects directly with the history of the Gulag in Karaganda, the famine and destruction of the *bai* during Asharshalyk and a disregard for Kazakh people and epistemology.

At Semipalatinsk, 17.7 megatons or 1000 times the payload used at Hiroshima was initially detonated at the P1 test site in the Polygon.[62] The test site encompasses the P1 test facilities, but also research sites, and plutonium mining in the Delegen Mountains. The total

[58] Toghan Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan gave up the bomb* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022), 5, 66,171.
[59] Serhii Plokhy, *Chernobyl: History of a tragedy* (London: Penguin UK, 2018).
[60] Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe,* 16.
[61] Stalin to Yezhov, Stalinskii plan po unichtozhenio Naroda: Pod gotovka I realizatsiya prekaza NKVD No. 0447 "ob operatsii po repressirovaniyo byvshik kuulakov ugolovnikov I drugakh antisovetskikh elementov" RGASPI f. 17, op. 66, d. 576 p. 17 doc. 60.
[62] Sergey Lukashenko, Introduction, *Aktual'nyevoprrosy radioekologii Kazakhstana,* issue 3, vol. 1, 2011 (Kurchatov Institute of Radiation Safety and Ecology), 8.

area is over 80,000 square kilometers. According to low estimates, 1.5 million people were exposed to fallout including locals in the region and prisoners selected for radioactive labor.[63] The fallout has also created a humanitarian crisis for children of the region, who are still disproportionately abandoned to overtaxed nurseries and who face complex illness due to radiation exposure.[64]

Lavrentii Beria specifically utilized the prisoners from the Gulag in his management of the Polygon and requested an initial allocation of 16,000 Karaganda prisoners to a "special site" near Kurchatov in 1947.[65] In June 1949, he transferred another 2000 people to the site, and later in the same month he personally signed and submitted a request to the Gulag Ministry of Internal Affairs to allocate 2500 people specifically in August and September for the first tests to the Semey test site.[66] Construction 790 immediately north of the Irtysh River and south of Semey was operational from 1951-53 and planned in the same correspondence of Beria from 1949. Site 790, which is also listed as an ITL and under the administration of construction camps was given the highest level of security classification in 1952.[67] Beria did order the creation of a fire brigade for the protection of the site itself, and repeatedly urged the completion of the test site throughout 1949.[68] However, there is no mention in any of Beria's documents or management of the Polygon site between 1946 and 1949. Beria made

---

[63] Wudan Yan, "The nuclear sins of the Soviet Union live on in Kazakhstan," in *Nature* no. 568, p. 22-24. Doi:10.1038/d41586-01034-8, Accessed January 8th, 2024.
[64] Jerome Tyler, "The World's Worst Radiation Hotspot," in *Independent*, Thursday, September 10, 2009, accessed January 14, 2023, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-worlds-worst-radiation-hotspot-1784502.html.
[65] "Osobaya papka" L.P. Berii, 1946-1949 god, Arkhiv noveishei istoriii Rossii, L.P. Berii: Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M, 1996, d. 182, l. 35-41, September 24, 1947.
[66] "Osobaya papka" L.P. Berii, 1946-1949 god, Arkhiv noveishei istoriii Rossii, L.P. Berii: Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M, 1996, D. 146, l. 27-28 and d. 248, l. 198.
[67] Ibid., Site 790
[68] Beria "Osobaya papka" d. 242 l. 340-41 and d. 242, l. 323-329 for example where Kurchatov is specifically mentioned with emphasis on protecting the "installation."

no attempt to evacuate or notify the surrounding villages on the Western Steppe toward Karaganda, the villages surrounding the eventual Plutonium mines of the Degelen Mountain complex, nor to notify local authorities in Kurchatov. Furthermore, Beria intentionally kept prisoners in the test area of Semipalatinsk, explicitly delaying even those in transit such as a prisoners of war from "leaving Eastern Kazakhstan" until at least November 1st, 1949 after the first weapons tests were complete.[69]

Research is slowly opening on the test site from the Semey side, including Kazakh interviews of scientists from Kurchatov and a joint American-Kazakh-Russian project to secure the plutonium in the Degelen mountain mining complex in the South-Central part of the site.[70] There has been little attention to the villages on the Western or Karaganda side of the complex. It is not only the urban centers of Kurchatov and Semey which were affected, but also these villages like Ayryk, Aktasty, Karasu, and Myrzhik which are within 50km of the known test sites of the polygon. In my field research, a low-range dosimeter achieved the maximum reading of five Roentgen inside a car at the fork in the road between Karasu in the direction of the Plutonium mining and continuing toward Aktasty and Ayryk which are within 30km of the P1 explosion site. This reading indicates approximately 5,000 chest x-rays with 25 Roentgen being the threshold for changes to the blood. At this point, field recording became unstable with static upon playback and with an unusably short battery life to capture

[69] Osobaya papka" L.P. Berii, 1946-1949 god, Arkhiv noveishei istoriii Rossii, L.P. Berii: Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M, 1996, d. 248, l. 202.
[70] David E. Hoffman and Eben Harrell, "Plutonium Mountain: Inside the 17-Year Mission to Secure a Legacy of Soviet Nuclear Testing," Report for the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2013.

further sound. This is catastrophic radiation, comparable with that within the Chernobyl exclusion zone.[71]

Due to the difficulties approaching the site including radiation exposure, I do not have recordings from Semipalatinsk. There are still several things which are revealing about the sound of the area. The villages on the western side of the Polygon are essentially abandoned, and one can pass through more than an hour of driving without seeing inhabited homes. There is a specific silence that surrounds radioactive death. After the immediate tests, Beria and the others watching said that there was a "heavy dead silence after the bomb" followed by dogs howling after several minutes and all animals had fallen silent several moments before detonation.[72] This silence is still present when in the abandoned villages of the western Polygon and is punctuated only by occasional dogs and the underlying anxious hum of the hum while closely monitoring one's own dosimeter.

E. Religious Imposition, Cultural Destruction

Considering the sounds of the Gulag also provides a humanistic perspective on the incomprehensible tragedy of the Steppe. Listening to these sites is experiential not statistical. Like Ulturgasheva argued about the spiritual incursion of the Gulag to indigenous Siberians, so the Gulag in Kazakhstan was destructive to the culture, religion, and lifestyle of the people of the Steppe. Sound provides one entry point to the cultural destruction of the steppe, and prioritizes the experience of these carceral ruins over written documentation of the Gulag authored by perpetrators. Practically, there are two realms to Islam in Kazakhstan – the

[71] Plokhy, *Chernobyl* 322-340. These reading made further field research in the area unfeasible and recording outside the vehicle similarly unfeasible. Although continuation to Degelen or even to the P1 site is possible, particularly from the Kurchatov side, it's inadvisable.
[72] Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe*, 24-26.

supranational and local practice, and religion has been an important mechanization for modernization after independence.[73] The assumption that Kazakhstan is monolithic, either ethnically or religiously is false – a Eurasian identity promoted by President Nazarbayev or a singular ethnic identity prescribed by the USSR. [74]One of the primary self-identifications in Kazakhstan today is a Sunni identity just behind citizenship and a "shared common history".[75] Given the violent nature of Soviet engagement and Kazakhstani religious self-identification, it is vital to look at the spiritual and cultural impacts of the USSR as well as economic and material destruction.

The religious and cultural practices of the Steppe near Karaganda are a synthesis of thousands of years of shamanistic practice and Islam. Hanafi Islam, a judicial-Sunni branch of the religion, was adopted with traces of the folk: *Kok Tengry* became Allah, the negative or dangerous spirit of the earth became a *Djinn* or *Shaitan*, and practices like ancestor worship and respect for the land were preserved and incorporated into Islam.[76] Ancestor worship, deriving from Tengriism (local religion), Zoroastrianism, and Shamanism is the practice most notably retained through the Islamization and subsequent Sovietization of Kazakhstan, and most characteristically practiced among tribal Kazakhs.[77]

---

[73] Bauyrzhan Eskaliyevich Moldagaliyev, Murat Smagulov, Bakhitzhan Menlibekanch Salershinov, Ayazhan Sagikyzy, "Synthesis of Traditional and Islamic Values in Kazkahstan," in *European Jourrnal of Science and Technology,* October 2015, vol. II no. 5, 228.
[74] Scott Spehr and Nargis Kassenova, "Kazakhstan Constructing Identity in a post-Soviet Society," p. 135-151 published February 8, 2012, *Asian Ethnicity* vol. 13, 2012, issue 2: https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2012.638802.
[75] Dina Nazdibayev Sharipova, "Perceptions of National Identity in Kazakhstan: Pride, Language, and Religion," in *The Musim World* 110.1 (2020) 89-106.
[76] Moldagaliyev, Smagulov, Salershinov, Sagikyzy, "Synthesis of Traditional and Islamic Values in Kazakhstan," 218, 220, 221.
[77] Maral Kaynar, Zada Sakhizhanova, "Pre-Islamic beliefs of the Kazakhs and the Spread of Islam in Kazakhstan,"111.

The destruction of the *bai* was a horrifying destruction of the central component of family life, as Cameron suggested. However, a *biy/bai* was not simply a paternal or central figure of a family or community, but rather a judge, a wise man with a title to match derived from the Turkish "to rule" or "to know". Within Kazakhstani society, these *bai* led essential cultural practices and created guidance including responsibility for one's relative, avoidance of corporeal punishment, and compensation for theft. These are practices which were reinforced with the adoption of Hanafi Islam where the emphasis on justice corresponded with existing Kazakh societal values.[78] Faith was key to good governance by regional leaders and these ancestral obligations are arguably reflected still in national and civic identity today in Kazakhstan, where religion reinforces a Durkheimian framework of a "social and moral society."[79]

Consistent with the destruction of the *bai* in the famine, the targeting of the Semey region for radiation exposure, seems equally intentional and malignant. The Kazakhstani intelligentsia, the Alash party who declared the Kazakh autonomous state, were based in Semipalatinsk.[80] Furthermore, Semipalatinsk is a treasured location of Kazakh culture and consciousness, a hallmark of nomadic culture, of openness but not uninhibitedness. It is also the ancestral home of Kazakhstani intellectuals including the great nationalist poet, the Abai after whom the region has been renamed.[81] The destruction of Semipalatinsk has been framed in Kazakhstan including in the national museum as a continuation of Soviet violence

[78] Moldagaliyev, Smagulov, Salershinov, Sagikyzy, "Synthesis of Traditional and Islamic Values in Kazakhstan," 223-24.
[79] Laura G. Yerekesheva, "Functions of Religion and Dynamics of Nation-Building in Kazakhstan and Uzbeikistan," in *The Muslim World* and Kaynar, Sakhitzhanova, "Pre Islamic beliefs of the Kazakhs," 115.
[80] Cameron, *Hungry Steppe,* 10.
[81] Ibrahim (Abai) Qunanbaiuly was a Kazakh Poet and Hanafi philosopher from Semipalatinsk (1845-1904). Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe,* 13-15.

including the deportation of intellectuals, destruction of nomadic life and animals, and violence against children with radioactive exposure.[82]

Another commonality between Asharshylyk, the Gulag, and Semipalatinsk is the disregard for traditional death practice and the imposition of an improperly treated dead. In the traditional beliefs of Tengriism, there was a central understanding and acceptance of oneself in nature and as a spiritual keeper. The imposition of death on the land is twofold, an infliction on the space, on nature, and an improper reverence for the dead and previous generations. According to Tengriism, ancestral obligations existed for seven generations, and any evil offends both the ancestors and Tengri. Recalling the Kazakh *shezhire,* or genealogical poetic tradition, at the wake, all dead relatives are also mentioned during Quran readings. Care in the land of the dead means not breaking kinship. [83] There is a veneration of bad and good spirits and caution around visiting places with bad spirits.[84] With countless sites of violent death from the Gulag, death and theft of children, mass graves of those who starved, and the horrific impacts of nuclear radiation from Semipalatinsk, the evils and perceived spirits of death can't be avoided in the Steppe. At Karlag, the memorial books are incomplete, and an open book stands in the museum with requests from distant family to find deceased children, forgotten family members, and prisoners of war in dozens of languages.[85] Gulag prisoners were treated as barely more than names – the dead were not respected nor

[82] Consider a pamphlet looking at the effects of testing in the Polygon which also explicitly mentions the deportations of the Alash party members: *Semipalatinskii ispytatel'nyi polygon: Sovremennoe sostoyanie* (Kurchatov, 2011).
[83] Kaynar, Zakhizhanova, "Pre-Islamic beliefs of the Kazakhs," 112-115.
[84] Ibid., 114.
[85] Consider one memorial book published by Bolashaq where students grapple with the memories of Karlag: N.O. Dulatbekova, *Karlag: pamiat' vo imia budushchego* (Karaganda: Bolashaq, 2014).

buried, and shallow graves are across the USSR, or in the case of Kolyma and the White Sea Canal, the dead physically comprise the infrastructure from Gulag labor.[86]

The treasured animals of the Steppe are now deformed and spectral horrors around the Semipalatinsk site. Unrecognizable, the grotesque effects of radiation on animals have contributed to the associated mental health crisis in the Semey region.[87] The animals immediately impacted by testing were also horrifyingly destroyed, where "the dismembered bodies of animals covered the ground" and were removed by scientists to study those affected by nuclear war. Animals were intentionally encouraged and placed across the blast zone to gauge the effects of the bomb.[88] The disregard for Kazakh people extends to a disregard for the ecology of Kazakhstan, where these tests have almost completely eliminated the saiga antelope and the wild sheep "arkhar" which are only now slowly returning.[89] Traditionally, fire was for cleansing evil spirits and ritual protection from the evil eye, along with the ritual slaughter of animals.[90] The treatment of animals and the devastation of the testing at Semipalatinsk is an inversion of this practice and respect for animals and the land.

In this context, of spiritual imposition, sound allows us to hear actual spaces of destruction. In doing so, the Soviet records about the resources extracted or those deported to the Steppe are not the priority. Instead, the spaces and atrocity are documented, like a sonic memorial of what occurred, without disruption and in deference to these being spaces of mass violence.

---

[86] Etkind, *Warped Mourning,* 172.
[87] Kassenova, *Atomic Steppe*, 66.
[88] Ibid., 12, 26.
[89] Ibid., 5.
[90] Kaynar, Sakhitzhanova, "Pre Islamic beliefs of the Kazakhs," 114.

F. Conclusions

To appropriately contextualize the Gulag in Kazakhstan, it should be situated within the longer continuum of Soviet violence including the Asharshylyk genocidal famine, the Terror and destruction of the Alash party, and the nuclear contamination at Semipalatinsk. Like the Soviet testaments about Solovki in the north and Kolyma in the East, primarily literary memoirs remain documenting the experiences and trials of detention in Karlag, ALZhIR and the other camps of the Kazakh Steppe. While memoirs paint an important and affective picture of the Gulag, they interpret and document the experiences of individuals in the Gulag. Sound provides an emotional and immersive connection to space without additional interpretation or intervention. However, Sound is not a created document of perpetrators, and allows for an understanding of Gulag spaces through an experiential lens mirroring those who were trapped in Soviet detention.

The selected contemporary sound recordings give us a sense of the immensity of the Kazakh Steppe, and the nearly two million hectares of space allocated to the Gulag, and destroyed by mining, resource extraction and mass death. The atrocities of the Gulag are not limited to the physical destruction, but also include the spiritual incursion of destroyed indigenous practices, the elimination of the traditional family unit in combination with the famine, and the imposition of improperly buried and unmourned dead. The Gulag and other Soviet atrocities in Kazakhstan are a direct affront to Islamic and indigenous practice of the Steppe. Sound provides one modality for addressing this spiritual warfare – to hear the actual spaces, creating a quasi-memorial in sonic form. There is also a process of refusal, to allow the spaces to speak for themselves, and to document the impacts of the Gulag, imagining the

impossible conditions and daily interactions of inmates with the local populations. Sound is a supplement to current mapping projects reconsidering the Gulag in Central Asia, and the enormous territories of detention, not single camps. In combination with the site at Semipalatinsk, the extent of Soviet terror and subjugation is clear – nearly every house on the Steppe is next to a site of violence or radioactivity.

IV. To the "City of Bread"? Holocaust Evacuation to Tashkent and Survival Within the Gulag

With the outbreak of World War II in the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of civilians immediately sought refuge in the Soviet interior. Considering evacuation from the Holocaust relationally to the Gulag reveals that the apt comparison is not to Europe's many refugees as Akhmatova suggested in her *Poem without a hero*.[1] Wartime displacement wasn't referred to as removal, but as "flight" in Soviet documentation.[2] As Manley discusses at length, there is a distinction between internal Soviet refugees and a more universalized refugee experience. The internal Soviet refugees were evacuees, and belonged to a distinctly chaotic category of evacuation. [3] A comparison between the transit of Soviet evacuation and the forced movement of Jews during the Holocaust further links the victim groups. In both cases, there was uncertain language about travel vaguely "East" to the unknown republics of the Central USSR and to the death camps of the *General Gouvernment.* The Jews who survived in evacuation to Central Asia also had the memory of Soviet deportations to Siberian detention, the Gulag, and to Russian camps from which few returned.

The composers Mieczyslaw Weinberg, Suleiman Yudakov, and Nikolai Myaskovsky all were evacuated as part of the Soviet intelligentsia between 1941 and 1942. Soviet citizens were evacuated not according to levels of danger, but rather material value to the state, alongside military equipment.[4] Refugee policy was to help the country prepare for defense, so theatres evacuated and in exile were an additional benefit – a Sovietizing element in the

[1] Anna Akhmatova, *Poema bez geroia* (Moscow: Samizdat Publication, 1976)
[2] GARF f. a-259, op. 40 d. 3028, p. 82-83.
[3] Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 7.
[4] Zvi Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 233.

republics far from Moscow and an acceleration of *korenisatsiia* policy.[5] Intellectuals were not evacuated for benign humanitarian concerns, but rather as part of a process of Sovietization, and to remove perceptually untrustworthy Jews from the Western USSR. Therefore, to understand these composers' specific experiences and musical responses, it is necessary to first understand the motivations and experiences of Soviet evacuation during the Second World War. Holocaust and wartime evacuation had substantial overlap with the history of the Gulag, Soviet definitions of ethnicity and post-war antisemitism, and Jewish intellectual history preserved in exile.

Unlike testimony of the death marches, evacuation to Central Asia does not feature sound as a critical demarcation along the journey. There are several reasons for this, the first being that the journey to Central Asia was the beginning of years in exile and a difficult survival process, where the transit was a component of traumatic exile. In the case of the death marches, it was a final fracture, where sound was remarkable in signifying the end of the Holocaust. Foreign languages at Buchenwald, Dachau, and Bergen-Belsen or relentless allied bombardment powerfully represented freedom to the *musselmänner* who struggled to distinguish between days in the impossible final days of the war. By contrast, foreign voices in Tashkent were not so foreign to arriving Soviets, including Poles who had been living on the Russian side of the border or those who arrived to Tashkent after stints in the Gulag. Critically, these arriving Western-Soviet Jews depicted their transit as a welcome refuge, even a salvation, away from the Germans and away from the possibilities of further time in the circumpolar north or Siberia to a warm "city of Bread"[6] The most powerful sonic

[5] GARF f. 8418, op. 2, d. 99, p. 23.
[6] Numerous testimonies refer to Aleksandr Neweroff (Skobelev)'s book *City of Bread* which was published in 1923 and widely circulated, painting Tashkent as a city of plenty.

signifier listed in testimonies was language. Russian was not unfamiliar to those who evacuated, as those who were able to flee often had some prior connection to the Soviet Union or were on the fortuitous side of the border. Like the testimony from death marches, evacuation is described as utter chaos – of constant movement, the unique terror of night, and the uncertainty of the beyond. Language was an important sonic signifier indicating arrival points and allies along the journey.

The evacuation history of Tashkent often largely ignores the experiences of Central Asian Jews, notably the Bukharian community, who interacted with these new interlocutors. Polish Jewish evacuation has largely been integrated into Polish diasporic history, not broader Jewish or Soviet historiography.[7] Research by Albert Kaganovitch and Atina Grossmann reinforces the patriotism and military service of Bukharians and their willingness to host and welcome Ashkenazim, particularly where they saw religious commonality. Bukharian reactions directly counter the antisemitic idea that "Jews fought the war from Tashkent" and show the importance of Jewish military service from Central Asia. Furthermore, welcoming refugees and providing financial and material support for religious evacuees in Tashkent and Samarkand contributed to Jewish solidarity movements and preservation of culture during the onslaught of the Holocaust. These local and individual preservation efforts, to welcome a Chabad family or help with an Ashkenaz wedding coupled with more official support like the relocation of the Yiddish theatre to Tashkent and the evacuation of intellectuals including Akhmatova and the composers Weinberg and Yudakov.

[7] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust,* 13.

The testimonies from evacuees paint an experiential picture of their lived experiences and decision making to go to Central Asia. This is the focus of this analysis rather than a focus on different place names or idioms given that the recorded testimonies are almost exclusively in second or third languages for survivors. I have intentionally included testimonies from all Jewish evacuation, not exclusively Polish testimony, and relied most heavily on testimony in either a language of perceived perpetration and alienation (Russian) or testimony in survivors' native languages – Yiddish, Russian, German. Testimonies rather than evacuation records highlight experiences including sound and sensorial perceptions of evacuation, and their negotiations with antisemitism and for survival.

A. Walking like human corpses: Gulag prisoners or evacuees?

Jewish survivors of the Gulag in the 1930s and 40s have been overshadowed by or repainted as Holocaust survivors. In comparative memory politics, the sentiment shared by Julius Margolin and others is that "Hitler killed so many Jews, that there is no need to add to his count the victims of Stalin."[8] This prioritization of victimhood was echoed in the specific definition of the Holocaust as murder in camps of Jewish victims which has been heavily contested, challenged, and complicated since the 1990s. Before this changing emphasis on additional victim and perpetrator groups, the *Historikerstreit* in German discourse of the 1980s raised questions about the *Ursprungsmächte* or originating powers behind concentration camp systems of destruction. Ernst Nolte and others rejected Holocaust exceptionalism and claimed that the Nazi camp system was reactive and had a model in the

[8] Julius Margolin, Podróz do krainy zeków (Wolowiec, Poland: Czarne, 2013).

earlier crimes of the USSR.[9] Approaching these erroneous and simplified claims of Nazi apologists with more nuance and adding the expanded victim groups of the Holocaust including refugees and Soviet POWs reinforces theoretical understanding of the Holocaust as imperial fracture as Timothy Snyder articulated in *Bloodlands*.

Therefore, to study evacuation specific to the Holocaust, it is vital to include the perspectives of survivors victimized both under the Gulag system and in flight from the Nazi Holocaust. This comparison also supports Eliyana Adler's argument that the decision to flee was based on numerous factors including gender and psychological proximity to previous wars. Complicating this was Jews who survived because they were in the Gulag, or Jews arrested and sent to the Gulag while in evacuation. Adding to Adler's claims about the myriad factors leading to flight, was the fear of the KGB and arrest held by Jews who had already dealt with the USSR. Jews knew the threat of pogroms from the Imperial period and of the Russian-Soviet penal system which nobody survived.[10] Facing these real dangers was often not preferable to the abstract danger of the advancing Germans who were perceptually civilized. Indeed, some of the same Jews fleeing to Tashkent by 1942 were departing not from Poland, but from the Gulags of the 1920s and 30s. Finally, even after initial flight, evacuees continued to interact with the Gulag as rampant corruption in Tashkent and the necessity of black-market trade for food often meant Jews were sent on to labor camps for

[9] Ernst Nolte, "Marxismus und Nationalsozialismus," in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983): 389-417.
[10] Zlata G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1492), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

theft before the war had concluded.[11] One "had to take their chances with the black-market - do whatever to survive!"[12]

Within the testimony here of those who survived both the Holocaust and the Gulag, the only common point is evacuation. This shows the difficulty of classifying "Gulag survivors" and "Holocaust survivors" among evacuees. For example, a Polish-Jew arrested between 1937 and 1939 spent the first years of the war in the Gulag, but also survived the Holocaust while losing any family still in Poland. Often these former prisoners continued on in evacuation, and joined established networks in Central Asia. The inverse was also common, Jews who were initially evacuees, before participating in black-market activities or other minor infractions which earned them time in the Gulag until or beyond the end of the war. What is revealing in these testimonies is not parsing out who is the "truest" survivor, but to note the parallels in the camp systems, the link between evacuation and detention in the USSR, overlaps in Holocaust perpetration and Gulag hierarchies, and the descriptions of the Gulag which recall the larger extractive and destructive purposes of Soviet carcerality.

Israel M. described the situation succinctly: "Either the Jewish people were deported by the Russians when they occupied Poland to Siberia and they were in labor camps, or the people who ran away voluntarily came to the southern part of Russia, the exact opposite, which was very hot."[13] There were three categories of people in the USSR: people who would be in prison, people in prison, and people who would soon be in prison.[14] Hyman K. was born in Kishiniev and accused of theft and sent to a Russian prison with his parents,

---

[11] Hilda Busch, Interview 33714, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 28, 1997, Accessed February 13, 2024.
[12] Bernard Organek, Interview 52285, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, June 13, 1990, Accessed February 16, 2024.
[13] Israel M. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1273).
[14] Bernard Organek, VHA-USC.

"deep into Russia where the Germans would not dare go." After he was freed, he made his way to Tashkent via. Saratov, but the Gulag was his initial evacuation out of the eventual German zone.[15] Leopold S. was clear that he was sent to the Gulag in Arkhangelsk as a "punishment from the communist party" and hinted at antisemitic motivations for their deportation and exceptionally grueling forced labor on the Jewish high holidays.[16] Being born in Germany or "speaking Yiddish" was an excuse to be sent to a Soviet labor camp, like Selina H's father and brother who were sent to hard labor in Siberia from Bialystock and never returned.[17] Peter G. was also arrested in the Soviet zone in 1939 because he didn't speak Polish or Yiddish, only German and French. He eventually signed a coerced statement he was escaping illegally and was sentenced to five years of hard labor.[18] Leopold S. who was doing hard labor in Arkhangelsk recalled seeing Gulag prisoners from the region walking like "human corpses" and was afraid to even look at them. He also echoes other Gulag punishments and labor practices in his testimony and is reluctant to categorized his forced labor as the same as the Gulag prisoners with whom they shared work. Upon his release he was able to go anywhere in the USSR, and left in 1941 for warmth in Central Asia.[19]

In Holocaust testimony which overlaps directly with the Gulag, there is a clear intersection between Soviet terror and Holocaust perpetration. Matthew T. from Tavian, Poland evacuated via Ukraine, and said that people had to decide if they would "flee west to

[15] Hyman K. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4400).
[16] Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[17] Selina H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2521), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[18] Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 760), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[19] Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).

escape Stalin" or that "to be sent to Siberia is how people survived," that it "could be a blessing."[20] He also said that the Ukrainians welcomed the Germans because they had such a hard time under Stalin with hunger, starvation, and churches confiscated. Later, when he was in Tashkent, he says that the *kolkhoz* where he worked was where Stalin used to send the peasants to pick cotton as a punishment. [21] Meyer G. who was sent to a labor camp after his evacuation to Yangiyul in Uzbekistan, mentions the hierarchy among prisoners, that he was sent to the camps "along with the people who were specifically taken in 1937."[22] For those who survived both the Holocaust and Gulag, we get a sense of Sovietization and the impacts of reeducation – a double eradication of a Jewish self, first in the Holocaust or evacuation and then in Sovietization. Solomon S. who built a custom oven for *matzah* for Passover when in Tashkent said that after his time in Siberia, he became an avowed communist, and that the Soviets never touched religion – everything was just to be equal under a Socialist system.[23] By 1940, the gamble for many Soviet Jews was a death sentence under National Socialism, but with a hope of outliving their executioners, or life in prison under the Soviets.[24]

In the testimonies which specifically address both evacuation and extensive time in the Gulag, we see hints of the methodology of Stalinist terror in the camps which existed across the system. Ada R. spoke about the methodologies of the Gulag in Central Asia, and how those evacuating the Holocaust ended up in and interacting with these same networks.

---

[20] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[21] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).
[22] Meyer Galler, Interview 52318, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, December 13, 1989, Accessed February 8 ,2024.
[23] Solomon Scharf, Interview 2866, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, May 28, 1998, Accessed January 20, 2024.
[24] Oleg Budnitskii, David Engel, Gennady Estraikh, and Anna Shternshis, eds. *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, Jews in the Soviet Union vol. 3 (New York: New York University Press, 2022), 33.

Her father was arrested by the NKVD as a "political prisoner," not as a Jew, and she and her family were arrested later and sent to a Siberian *kolkhoz* specifically for women and children as family of an 'enemy of the people' to work on sheep pastoralism. The methodologies of survival in camps were also similar, as Bernard O. considered his job as a prison camp tailor a light sentence, and continued his secondary economic activities by sewing secret pockets into clothes to help others steal bread. This eventually led to his deportation with his brother to a more demanding labor camp – ITK 13 in Western Siberia. [25] Meyer G. was transferred from a collective farm in Yangiyul, Uzbekistan, to Aktubinsk in Kazakhstan where he lived in immense barracks with no heating, tried to avoid typhus, and his food during forced labor was "constantly on bread."[26] Leopold S. left Poland with his brother in 1939 via Lvov where they picked up another brother. He was eventually stopped by Russian authorities and sent to the Arkhangelsk oblast where he worked on abandoned villages to make them more habitable for Russian settlement in the north.[27] Peter G. also did hard labor in Arkhangelsk and spoke of the difficult survival tasks including gathering straw, and of the brutally cold boxcar journey to the camp.[28]

In these testimonies of Holocaust survivors who first survived the Gulag, we see indications of the Soviet system, and its terroristic and economic functions. From forced confessions, to Yiddish and non-Russian languages as cause for denunciation, the mechanisms of Soviet arrest established in the 1920s are echoed in these testimonies. Furthermore, the Gulag tasks including a continuation of agriculture extraction and

[25] Bernard Organek, Interview 52285, VHA-USC.
[26] Meyer Galler, Interview 52318, VHA-USC. The rations of bread were not typically accompanied by protein or fat rich foods, and the bread was old, stale, and/or especially manufactured for laborers with low quality ingredients.
[27] Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).
[28] Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT. 760).

settlement on *kolkhozes*, brutal mining conditions, the Russian settlement of the polar north in Arkhangelsk, and the imposed pastoralism on the steppe all parallel previous or subsequent Gulag activity from Solovki to Karlag to Magadan.

B. The Mythic Steppe – Flight and Bukharians in the Jewish Zeitgeist

Decisions to leave Poland and the Western USSR were made quickly in a panicked uncertainty. This was further complicated by gender and class dynamics, as well as memory of previous wars and if the advancing Germans or Soviets were more perceptually dangerous.[29] Evacuees left family behind, and often were the sole survivors of Polish and Ukrainian families. Fritzi S. said "young people had to save themselves, so we went to the trains" on July 2nd, 1941 narrowly missing the arrival of the Germans on July 5th who killed all of the Jews in the city with Ukrainian collaborators inside the kosher slaughterhouse.[30] Repeated testimonies point to the warmth of Tashkent and refuge in the "city of bread" due to the publication of the aforementioned book by Neverov which was popular in the 1920s.[31] Polish Jews specifically referenced the formation of Anders' army in exile and the desire to join and transit via Iran to Palestine. Although a small minority joined this branch of the Polish army in exile, most were discouraged by humiliating patriotism tests from lower-ranked Polish officers keeping them in Tashkent and Central Asia.[32]

In addition to personal decisions to continue to Tashkent, official mechanisms pushed people further east. From 1939, the Soviets realized that they had an enormous Jewish refugee problem dating from the Tsarist Pale of Settlement, and the Soviet Friendship Treaty

---

[29] Eliyana R. Adler, *Survival on the Margins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020) 15-30.
[30] Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).
[31] Atina Grossmann, Mark Edele, Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 186.
[32] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust,* 187.

which created a new demarcation line along the Bug river. The decision to send Jews to the interior from 1939 was thusly part of a larger and elaborate set of rules on who could go and where, or "passportization" ostensibly to clarify refugees' legal status.[33] Theoretically, the evacuation was meant to be organized with "spontaneous self evacuation" heavily discouraged.[34] There was a large overarching plan in 1942: intellectuals were specifically evacuated from March-July of 1942 to Kursk then onward to Saratov, and the Tatar ASSR and more intellectuals were evacuated from July-September of 1942.[35] In Ukraine, men, tractors, draught animals, and grain were evacuated first, whereas the Tatar evacuations sent children eastward first.[36] The Georgian republic wanted to send arriving evacuees onward to Central Asia, for example.[37] The initial zone of evacuation was to central Russia, but then the evacuation council expanded the possible areas to include Siberia, Central Asia, and Kazakhstan with the export of "Sovietizing elements" an added benefit.[38] Documents and being on the Soviet side of the border with the outbreak of war were also enormously decisive – could one even flee? Felix F. who worked in the Yiddish theatre, was caught trying to return to his family in Poland from Moscow, but he had a Soviet employment card and was sent back to the USSR and ultimately evacuated.[39] Gilda Z. told her father she wanted to run to Russia with her youngest brother, and was given the option by "White Russians" to take the Soviet passport and continue on to Brest Litovsk or go back to Poland.[40] For Evelyn E.,

---

[33] Budnitskii, Engel, Estraikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 8-9 discussing the Pale of Settlement and treaty of 28 September 1939, and 31 on passportization.
[34] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 48-54.
[35] Glavnoe Pereseincheskoe Upravlenie pri Soviete Ministrov RSFSR fond A-327, RG-22.027 M. Accession 2011.18. The composer Nikolay Myaskovsky was part of this second wave and was evacuated to Kabardino-Balkaria from April-July of 1942.
[36] Iz istorii Velikoi otechestvennoi voiny: nachalo voiny." In *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 7 (1990), 207.
[37] GARF f. A-259, op. 40 d. 3037, p. 20.
[38] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 43-44.
[39] Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).
[40] Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030).

she happened to be visiting her grandparents with whom she evacuated for Shabbat, and they lived on the Soviet side of the border.[41]

The histories which focus on Polish-Jewish exile pay limited attention to Jewish experiences and local interactions in Central Asia, the importance of solidarity with Central Asian Jews, and the possibility of other historical mythologies about Tashkent beyond the single book by Neverov. Eisenstein described the evacuation as a "journey into the unknown," but there are historical mythologies about both the steppe and Central Asia which lingered in Soviet and Jewish consciousness.[42] The perception of a warm, welcoming, Jewish Central Asia has origins in the Purim story which approximates the persecutions of Xerxes I in the 4th century CE ultimately resulting in a diasporic community of Persian-speaking Jews in Central Asia.[43] Certainly, panicked Polish and Western Soviet Jews didn't plan an exile to Tashkent based on Central Asian Jewish flight in the 4th Century. However, the mythos of this region as a place of plenty, of warmth, and not completely foreign is not exclusively traceable to a book from the 1920s. Why did Jews choose the warmth of Tashkent over the colony allocated to them in Birobidzhan? Anders' army wasn't the most geographically expeditious path to Iran nor to Israel from the Western USSR. Finally, when Jews arrived in Tashkent, their interactions with Bukharians weren't as "intermittent" as the Polish testimonies suggest.[44] Religious Jewish interaction in Tashkent and across Uzbekistan was a significant solidarity movement which continued through the Soviet destruction of evacuated Jewish institutions and even into the post-Soviet diaspora with strong ties between Chabad-

[41] Evelyn E. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1791).
[42] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station,* 119.
[43] Michael David Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 396.
[44] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust,* 201.

Lubavitch and the Bukharian community. Combined, the motivations of Jews to evacuate specifically to Tashkent combined with the Bukharian and local preservations of Jewish culture create a more complete picture of Jewish life in exile.

Another reason for considering Central Asia for refuge could have been the lingering legacy of Birobidzhan. Masha Gessen introduces Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Region of the USSR as another option, another possible locale for flight deeply engrained in the Soviet Jewish mindset.[45] Birobidzhan was established in 1931, becoming the center of the Jewish autonomous region by 1934 optimistically solving one ethnicity problem of Jews in the USSR – the Jews had a distinct language, ethnicity, and homeland, but their homeland Israel was outside Soviet geographical borders.[46] The region still has Yiddish as its official language, and intellectuals like the writer Dovid Bergelson (1884-1952) promoted Birobidzhan as a possible New Soviet Homeland, an ideal escape from antisemitism.[47] Tashkent was directly linked to Birobidzhan culturally with exchange between the Yiddish theatres in both locations.[48]

The description of Tashkent as a city of warmth seems to mean both the climate and the welcoming safety of the Soviet interior in testimonies. David S. discussed the literal cold of his initial evacuation to a transit camp and the "extreme Polish antisemitism" before taking a train to Tashkent "where it was warm." He described more than the climate saying that

---

[45] Masha Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan, Russia's Jewish Autonomous Region* (New York, NY: Knopf, Doubleday, 2016), 24.
[46] Robert Weinberg, Stalin's Forgotten Zion Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Jewish Homeland: An Illustrated History, 1928-1996 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), Introduction.
[47] Oral History Interview with Meir Tzoref, Accession Number: 1995.A.1272.334, RG Number: RG-50.120.0334, Tape no. 1, 2:25:02, Accessed November 11, 2023, USHMM.
[48] Records of the Jewish Anti-Fascist committee from the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) RG-22.028 Accession 2011.17, Folder 4.

Tashkent was full of "beautiful places, nice, warm, just like Iran." [49] Tashkent was "like a paradise" with "beautiful bazaars with food, with fruit."[50] Leopold S. initially mentioned the book *Tashkent: City of Bread* when leaving Arkhangelsk, but continued on to Ferghana past Kazakhstan where stations had "mountains of grain" because it was a "Silk Road city [where] they grow mulberry trees there."[51] Central Asia generally registered as a land of plenty and refuge. Joseph L. continued onward from Ufa, not sure that Tashkent was "tropical, but it was hot" to search for accommodation away from mosquitoes and where there was an "overabundance of fruits: sweet melons, marmalades, and juices."[52] Bianca B. went south because of the climate, fruits, to the "magic city of Samarkand" and because there "everything will be beautiful."[53]

Evacuating Jews were aware that there was a Jewish population in Tashkent. Anna S. from Minsk decided to go to Tashkent "because it was warm, and they had food and clothes" but also because "many Jewish people were in Tashkent. The Jewish population there is very different than in Minsk."[54] This survivor wasn't referring to the evacuated Polish population, but rather to a knowledge that Jews already were in Central Asia. When pressed she said, "It's the same religion, they call us *Ashkenazik*; they are different in many ways" and clarifies to the interviewer that they're "from Bukhara".[55] David S. knew Tashkent was like Iran before he evacuated, and about his time in Samarkand said, "There are lots of Jews there [in

[49] David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[50] Alexander Ameisen, Interview 51752, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, September 12, 2001, Accessed February 14, 2024.
[51] Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).
[52] Joseph L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 891), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[53] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).
[54] Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).
[55] Ibid.

Bukhara], actually they were the first ones there. They look like Arabs, and these countries are mostly Muslim, but Bukhara is in Uzbekistan, but not Muslim."[56] Matthew T. addressed possible avenues out of Poland including Chicago and the growing Zionist movement under Pilsudski, but then mentions flight east to Central Asia and Siberia as a possibility under the Soviets "where there were already Jewish cities".[57]

Furthermore, the discussion of Tashkent wasn't just about its literal warmth and welcoming feeling, but conversations often situated the city in a longer historical continuum. The recurring pattern for Jewish flight seems to come from a combination of hope for success with a diminished fear of Soviet reality.[58] Fritzi S. from Romania described the climate as "like Israel" while Israel M. from Poland said Uzbekistan was "near Persia" and full of "old, old, cities" referring to Samarkand.[59] Israel M. mentions this proximity to Iran again later, and that travel to Israel was possible via Iran.[60] The continuation to Iran and then Palestine was not only mentioned in the context of Anders army, but as a viable path to safety, as Ben S. remembered, "after Stalingrad, we decided and wanted to go to Tashkent, first because Tashkent was the city of bread and it's close to Iran and we could maybe continue to Palestine."[61] Peter G. was able to do this by bribing a train conductor to go "somewhere warm" before continuing to Palestine in 1946 as a Polish citizen.[62] Joining the army was not the goal of this transit to Palestine, and I suggest that this continuation along a

[56] David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082).
[57] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[58] Budnitskii, Engel, Estraikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 111.
[59] Israel M. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1273) and Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ben S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1344).
[62] Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 760).

geographically inefficient route to Tashkent, Iran, and then Israel has a lingering connection to Jewish survival and historic displacement from Israel.

C. Walking Among the Bombardments

The transit to Central Asia was intensely traumatic and continued only under immense duress. To secure transit on a train was essential to survival, and Jews often found spaces according to comparable Soviet rank and privilege.[63] Anna S. describes the bombardments and the difficulty going to Uzbekistan as railways were completely destroyed. When describing a bombardment of the trains, she broke down nearly seventy years after the event detailing how there were "bodies and body parts" everywhere, and that these devastating events were the horrific punctuation of an already exhausting journey.[64] When Fryda B. evacuated as a ten-year-old child, her mother died in route, and she remembered the horror of digging her mother a shallow grave with her bare hands. She had to do the same and bury her sister not a week later; recounting both brought her to tears more than 60 years later.[65] Movement was often a combination of any travel which was possible – trains as far as one could go before continuing on foot or swimming rivers. The confusion of night was compounded for several arriving groups by a solar eclipse in the fall of 1941.[66] The trains primarily went to the front, not to the interior, and would stand for days to avoid bombardments, while moving by foot was safest at night.[67] There was no determined schedule to the trains, and evacuees describe "hitching from one train to another" amidst

---

[6363] Budnitskii, Engel, Estraikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 105.
[64] Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[65] Fryda Bland, Interview 45743, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 12th, 1998, Accessed January 12, 2024.
[66] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597). There was a solar eclipse September 21st, 1941 and this survivor arrived "in the fall" around the holidays.
[67] Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).

bombardments with the ability to go to various cities dependent on their status with the *Komsomol.*[68] What is pervasive in the testimonies of those who made it to Tashkent was the drive to continue to Central Asia. Even in the chaos of transit, where evacuees were able to find jobs and more stability along the way, Central Asia represented perceptual safety beyond promised warmth. Descriptions of transit reveal that the interim stops in the Western USSR, even with associated jobs, still had associated danger and antisemitism.

Sound was mentioned in several testimonies as an additional horror of transit. The constant bombardments of trains are usually described as fleeing from burning trains or the miracle of not being hit. However, the sounds which are recalled many years later in testimony are those which reflect family networks and community. Michael S. remembered the horrible and endless crying of a boy at an interim station before Tashkent, crying searchingly "mama, mama, mama" when he was separated, and how that sound remained with him for the rest of his journey.[69] Similarly, Renata L. cried remembering her little brother's plaintive voice every night on the journey and in Tashkent asking just for "a little piece of bread" in Yiddish, his small voice filled with "unbearable sadness."[70] Night was also a time of peril and uncertainty. Renee S. walked endlessly, and was unable to rest as the "coyotes were screaming in the dark of night, like babies."[71] Secrecy of evacuation was often paramount. In Makhachkala, Jews wrapped the hooves of horses in thick fabric so they wouldn't make noise when they continued on toward Central Asia in the night.[72]

---

[68] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349) and Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).
[69] Michael Silver, Interview 24712, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, December 6, 1996, Accessed February 12, 2024.
[70] Mary Ludner-Kaletsky, Interview 54486, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 16, 2000, Accessed February 8, 2024.
[71] Renee Stern, Interview 25239, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, January 30, 1997, Accessed February 10, 2024.
[72] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 159.

Language was an important signifier of safety along the route. Listening for familiar language was an indicator of community and safety and kept groups of Jews together along the journey. Abraham L from Sinyavka near Baranovichi said that he began working east in the USSR by "following groups of people who spoke Yiddish."[73] At every station, people would ask the trains in a mix of languages, if there were any wounded or dead, and this was a possible exit from the trains to a hospital and recovery along the route.[74] Jewish refugees gathered at synagogues along the way, alerted to a possibility of somewhere to sleep or a night of safety by other Yiddish-speaking travelers. As Fritzi S. walked from Sadagura Romania to Tashkent, he "heard German, Russian, Ukrainian, every language" and traveled with a group of 20-25 people who all spoke Ukrainian and Yiddish.[75] Members of the Yiddish theatre gathered around Mikhoels on the train, and sang Yiddish songs like a choir throughout the journey to Tashkent.[76] Hearing language also helped Jews distinguish between Polish and Jewish refugees.[77] Remaining silent among Polish speakers could also be a survival method like Michael S. who heard Poles singing on arrival to Tashkent and didn't join to reveal he was Jewish.[78] In Ukraine, Peter G. continued on his journey after he worked for several weeks in a coal mine before finding out that the Ukrainians in Donetsk were

[73] Abraham L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2004), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[74] Esfira Golubchansky, Interview 52366, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, October 4, 2006, Accessed February 13, 2024. This was the case for Esfira who was able to remain in Tashkent because she was taken to a hospital with freezing legs.
[75] Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).
[76] Antonia Klokova and Jascha Nemtsov eds. *Julian Krein: "Notizen aus meinem Musikalischen Leben"* (Weisbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 259.
[77] Ben S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1344), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[78] Michael Silver, Interview 24712, USC-VHA.

referring to him and his compatriots as "zhyd." Hearing this racial slur pushed him to "try Asia" as Jews weren't "wanted in Europe."[79] Anna S. said that "people saw we were Jews and did not want us."[80] The desire for community among evacuees and continued antisemitism propelled refugees onward as Europe – both Fascist and Soviet – remained dangerous. When Leopold S. arrived to Tashkent, he recognized a famous Polish singer by her voice, who told him to run away and seek refuge away from the lice and Typhoid. It was the comfort of a familiar and famous voice which encouraged him on to Dushanbe and ultimately to Ferghana.[81] Some evacuees even encountered people they knew from home, like Esfira G. who was called by name from someone who recognized her from Odessa when she arrived to Tashkent.[82] Central Asians also noted the effects of familiar language as a welcome sign of safety. Fatima Ibragimova sang Central Asian folk songs in Soviet army hospitals and "soldiers were so happy, with many singing in Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek, that they cried."[83]

D. Life in Tashkent

Tashkent was not the "city of bread" refugees were expecting, and typhus combined with impossible living conditions and dysfunctional food and housing distribution systems forced many refugees on further to collective farms or other cities in Uzbekistan. Some had hints before arriving, like Rachel L. who was told she was going somewhere called "the hungry steppe" when she was herded onto a train in Belarus.[84] Discrimination against

[79] Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1918).
[80] Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).
[81] Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).
[82] Esfira Golubchansky, Interview 52366, VHA-USC.
[83] Testimony of Fatima Ibragimova, Bukharian Lens Project, *Youtube,* Manashe Khaimov.
[84] Rachel Lewin-Liberow, Interview 31941, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, May 28, 1997, Accessed February 8, 2024.

refugees was initially largely resource driven and generally xenophobic, not specifically antisemitic.[85] The hunger which affected refugees was shared by the local population and by evacuating non-Jewish Poles and Russians. Evacuees were aware that "the Uzbeks were hungry themselves – they were resentful" and that "they didn't have enough rice to eat, so they wouldn't give us rice."[86] Matthew T. said that Tashkent was a disaster with nothing to eat, people stealing in order to have enough food, and "black bread in hot water instead of even a cup of tea."[87]

Because Soviet authorities had restrictions on resettlement to major cities, Tashkent was not necessarily the final stop for many evacuees. However, for those too weak to continue from the long journey, a brief stint in the hospital in Tashkent often meant that they remained in the city for some time with their traveling compatriots or were assigned to nearby collective farms upon discharge. Mary L. was initially in the hospital before being brought out by her engineer husband to a communal apartment – her privileges both in the hospital and on release guaranteed by her husband's valuable job.[88] Renata B. was able to exchange gold for good food and remain with her mother because her mother was immediately taken to the hospital when they arrived to Tashkent.[89] Again, in this testimony, there was not only a medical necessity to remain in Tashkent but a hint of corruption or privilege from evacuees who still managed to retain a substantial amount of gold by this point in their journey. Sala M. was quarantined with a temperature on arrival with concerns about typhus along with her mother and sister. She subsequently thought her mother was

[85] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath,* 151.
[86] Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030).
[87] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).
[88] Mary L., Interview 54486, VHA-USC.
[89] Renata Breit, Interview 5016, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 17, 1995, Accessed February 12, 2024.

poisoned and killed by hospital officials, so she left with her sister to live with another Jewish couple who fed them and gave them clothes.[90] Louis K. was concerned about being arrested by the KGB after seeing his uncle arrested prior to the war, and when he was in Tashkent, he went with the other Polish children to a Russian orphanage after being released from an initial stint in the hospital to not bring attention to his Jewish identity.[91]

Life was particularly difficult for evacuated women. Most of the women in exile were widows and almost all had small children.[92] The loss of children along transit and in the harsh winters and poor living conditions was noted by most survivors with great emotion: "we lost so many children".[93] Khava Irs from Latvia gave birth outside in -40 degree weather because nobody would let her in a house. In Nizhnie Kumashki, a refugee Bukhanova gave birth in a stable, and in Pikhtulina, Fruma Belinson and her four children were tossed out on to the street in freezing temperatures.[94] When the grandfather of Evelyn E. died in evacuation from refusing to eat non-Kosher food, her grandmother was responsible for burying him in a *tallit*. Faced with the unimaginable burden of raising a small child alone, the grandmother repeatedly put her in an orphanage to survive before they returned together to Poland in 1946.[95]

Shortages of food and basic supplies meant that almost all evacuees had to have secondary incomes or trade on the black market to survive. This carried sizeable risk of arrest and deportation to labor camps, hence a sizeable population of people who were evacuated

---

[90] Sala Mydlak, Interview 19231, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 27, 1996, Accessed February 10, 2024.
[91] Louis Kadlovski, Interview 39796, VHA-USC.
[92] Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).
[93] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).
[94] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 152-53.
[95] Holocaust Testimony of Evelyn E. (HVT 1791), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

then arrested for sabotage and theft. Morris W. arrived to Samarkand and was allocated work in a factory, before being accused of sabotage and deported to a labor camp near Dzhambul.[96] Renee S. helped a young couple with their children as an ersatz nanny, before the husband was arrested for selling Tsarist gold coins (Nikolashka) and sent to forced labor. Renee then turned to black-market jobs selling stolen sugar and bread to help support herself and the children.[97] Esther G.'s mother did the same for her, and bought food on the black market to survive. She had greater success with Uzbek people than with Russian people, and they preferred to trade with Muslims, although they lived with Russians.[98] David S. bought and watered-down alcohol to sell on the black market or to trade to *kolkhozniks* for food.[99] Solomon S. said that among the disease, malaria, and food shortages in Tashkent "the only way to survive was to steal where you work. All of Russia was stealing." He acknowledged the risks of black-market distribution, that everything had to remain secret, but said that anyone who survived was doing it.[100]

Bukharian-Ashkenaz interaction was therefore limited by two primary factors. First, as Kaganovitch suggests, there were religious and cultural reasons which fostered Jewish solidarity and led to Orthodox Bukharians offering refuge to Ashkenazim. Second, concerns over resources and disease meant that Bukharian-Ashkenaz solidarity was greater outside of the initial arrivals and urban integration in Tashkent and was more common in interactions in Samarkand and other cities to which refugees continued. Bukharian Jews across Uzbekistan

---

[96] Morris Winter, Interview 28839, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 25, 1997, Accessed February 13, 2024.
[97] Renee Stern, Interview 25239, VHA-USC.
[98] Esther Goldfarb, Interview 58079, VHA-USC.
[99] David Steiner, Interview 26961, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 12, 1997, Accessed February 13, 2024.
[100] Solomon Scharf, Interview 2866, VHA-USC.

largely preferred to house religious Jews first because they were concerned about denunciation to Soviet authorities from the arriving Ashkenazim for keeping Jewish practices in the home. Arguably, how could evacuees practice as religious Jews in exile? Material concerns for safety and food made religious adherence a low priority for many evacuees who were "too afraid to even close their eyes at night."[101] Bukharians feared repressions like those from 1937-39 and increasingly guarded community practices from Shabbat to *kashrut* to life-cycle events like *brit milah* as secret rituals not to be shared outside of protected knowledge spaces.[102] Communism and Judaism were antithetical, and any public displays of ritual were dangerous.[103] Bukharians were also concerned with non-religious Jews bringing non-kosher products into their homes or corrupting children with secular influence.[104] It's also possible that because Tajiks and Uzbeks distanced themselves from refugees, so did Bukharians who were suspicious of Russian and Polish Jews.[105] Still, as Manley correctly points out, Jews were more welcomed by earlier refugees or Bukharians than by fellow, antisemitic evacuees.[106] However, religious solidarity also echoes a larger divide in the survivor community between religious and secular survivors. Those who were religious and maintained elements of ritual practice in evacuation or in camps, largely credited their survival to an unwillingness to break Jewish law. In its extreme, secularism has been cited as a "reason" for the Holocaust by fringe rabbis, and as a warning to children and young people

[101] Renee Stern, Interview 25239, VHA-USC.
[102] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 182, 186.
[103] Alexander Ameisen describes his *chuppah:* a very quick wedding where four people helped him then immediately ran away as it was still dangerous: "a communist is not a Jew." Alexander Ameisen, Interview 51752, VHA-USC.
[104] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 182, 186.
[105] Ibid., 185.
[106] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 230.

to not stray from the religious path.[107] In survivor testimonies, some of this sentiment is echoed, that their "purpose was to survive as religious Jews, not just to survive" and that to "go with the stream, would have meant annihilation."[108]

Bukharian collective memory is that they helped Ashkenazim during the war, and the relationship between religious Ashkenaz movements like Chabad-Lubavitch and the Bukharian community were strengthened during the war.[109] Rena Yeliazarova from Panjakent near Samarkand said that her father saw taking in Jewish refugees as a "religious obligation" and remembered inviting religious Ashkenazim to their home for holidays "like they became part of the family."[110] Markiel Gavrilovich Kulangiev's family housed four Ashkenaz families in their house in Samarkand where they "lived very amicably" and Sofia Davidovna Pavlanova and Amnon Davidovich Abramov housed Jewish evacuees in Ferghana including two medical students and provided them with jobs in a food warehouse.[111] Aniuta L. lived for ten years in Tashkent, and said that the worst conditions were from non-Uzbeks and remembered the Kashgir and Bukharian Jews being religious and full of kindness – "where the Bukharian Jews Went, European Jews went," with a large yard and two holidays a year.[112]

---

[107] Recently, this has been espoused by the "Rabbi" Yosef Misrachi: that "only sinners" died in the Holocaust – a clear and direct affront to the memory of the victims and to those who made necessary compromises to survive. Less offensively, the Holocaust is held up in religious communities constantly as a warning – don't have dogs like the Germans, the X community started dressing immodestly or sending children to secular school, and look what happened to them.

[108] Rachel Lewin-Liberow, Interview 31941, VHA-USC. In a later part of the interview, she says a cousin without a large family "wasted her years" not being religious, that anything other than orthodoxy is a shame.

[109] Ibid., 181. For example, Eight Chabad families lived in Avram Aminov's courtyard during he war.

[110] Manashe Khaimov and Daniel Allen, "Bukharian Lens Project 2014 – JCCA's Bukharian Teen Lounge," *Youtube.com,* July 3, 2014: youtube.com/watch?v=atQSrR_Yv8A, accessed November 17, 2023.

[111] Manashe Khaimov, "Bukharian Lens Project, " *youtube.* Markiel Kulangiev Z''L is the great grandfather of the author's children and served honorably as an army engineer building canals during and post-war in addition to hosting Ashkenaz refugees. His focus on education, a strong work-ethic, and Jewish unity was passed to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

[112] Aniuta Leibman, Interview 40816, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, April 28, 1998, Accessed January 21, 2024.

Growing Jewish solidarity and national self-awareness led to synagogues being opened in fifty-three districts of the USSR between 1943 and 1947 with new Bukharian synagogues in Stalinabad in 1943 and Bukhara in 1945.[113]

Despite the prevailing Bukharian collective memory of helping many Jews, attitudes to Ashkenazim were actually varied. [114] Irwin L. said that the locals in Tashkent wouldn't even let them too close because they were full of lice and Berry G. also avoided disease in Tashkent and continued to Samarkand "where they spoke Jewish."[115] The attitude toward Uzbeks was largely positive: that in Tashkent "we were surrounded by wonderful people, Uzbek people, who were very conscientious, very friendly, and very hospitable."[116] Most failed to acknowledge that there were even Jews in Central Asia prior to arrival. Anna S. says that initially she saw Bukharians and "thought they were Uzbeki, but they didn't' want to show that they are Jewish. I think they had a synagogue but it wasn't official."[117] Adel R. said that mostly Muslims live in Tashkent: "they're like the Arabs, the same thing."[118] Bianca B. echoed the separation of Bukharians, and that they were first identifiable by their Bukharian Kippah. She said Bukhara was "like a ghetto, not because they were separate from Muslims, but because they were really Kosher." For this evacuee, the Bukharians shared with her only some bread and two eggs, but otherwise was not helpful, and she and her family had "no connection whatsoever to Bukharians – all the Polish Jews kept together."[119] I also

[113] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 180.
[114] Ibid., 184.
[115] Holocaust Testimony of Betty G. (HVT 4150), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library and Holocaust Testimony of Irwin L. (HVT 2755).
[116] Donia Meiler, Interview 37009, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, October 14, 1997, Accessed February 10, 2024.
[117] Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).
[118] Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, VHA-USC.
[119] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).

suggest that the most immediate identification of Jews would have been language rather than dress or custom, given the danger of openly practicing Judaism in the USSR and during the war. For Jews immersed in Yiddish culture in the Western USSR, Russian and Bukhori speaking Jews would not have registered as Jews without some identifiable overlap in religious practice. Aniuta L. says as much, that "in Uzbekistan, it's customary to speak your own language, only for Russians was Yiddish a problem, like how Uzbeks spoke Uzbek."[120] Farsi-based Bukhori would have been unrecognizable to Yiddish speakers, with an entirely different set of cultural practices of Judaism (*minhag*).

E. "The Jews should have been abandoned to Hitler": Antisemitism in Exile

By August of 1942, official mentions of antisemitism made it to Lavrentii Beria, and locals even wished Hitler would exterminate the Jews to help solve housing issues in Central Asia.[121] A large influx of largely poor, Polish-Jewish refugees helped fuel postwar antisemitism in the non-metropol USSR, while simultaneously, evacuations of intellectuals like Mikhoels bolstered Jewish solidarity and interests until the postwar liquidation of Jewish institutions.[122] Attitudes to Jews were worse in evacuation than to other refugees, and many people in the Eastern regions had never seen Jews, particularly the stereotypical Hassids from the Western USSR.[123] Kaganovitch divides this antisemitism into two categories: first that Jews were disloyal or untrustworthy or lacking in patriotism and second that Jews participated in institutions of power which ergo led to failures of domestic policy in the USSR.[124]

---

[120] Aniuta Leibman, Interview 40816, VHA-USC.
[121] BG Kostyrchenko, ed., *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism v SSSR: Ot nachala do kul'minatsii 1938-1953* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2005), 33.
[122] Fitzpatrick, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 133-161.
[123] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 154.
[124] Ibid.

Simcha S. served in the Soviet army before being demobilized because he wasn't a Soviet citizen in 1939. He was deemed untrustworthy according to Stalinist policy and sent to Central Asia in 1941.[125] Matthew T. attempted to join the Red Army after two people from Kishnev tried to steal his cotton, but the army wouldn't take him with a Jewish passport. He later changed his passport for a Polish passport at the first opportunity. [126] Although a number of sites along the way were army organizational centers, like Poltava, the experience of many evacuees was that the government wouldn't take Jews "as they didn't trust them" and they continued on to work on collective farms. Jews returned to Poland the way they evacuated, on cattle cars with as much food as they could take, often on a multi-week journey to homes where they were no longer welcome.[127] Even when Jews were able to join the Red Army, they were faced by tremendous antisemitism, and often had to join different divisions to find one where they were safe.[128] Some Jews served in all Jewish battalions and even assigned religious meaning to their service. Shamuel Manievich Abramov from Samarkand served alongside two brothers both of whom were killed in an entirely Bukharian squad. Gavriel Yusupovich Kalantarov was completely surrounded while serving in a mixed Jewish-non-Jewish unit and used religious Jewish language to describe his salvation from that situation. Boris Rafaelovich Ishakov saw the draft at nineteen as *pkuah nefesh* or that to save

[125] Simcha S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1407), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[126] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).
[127] Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, VHA-USC.
[128] Ben S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1344).

one life is to save the world. Solomon Ishakovich Yusupov remembered being treated and helped by locals as a soldier of the Red Army, not even recognized as a Jew. [129]

Outside of the military, Jews faced antisemitism from their Polish and Western Soviet compatriots with whom they were evacuated. Felix F. said that in Central Asia, he encountered antisemitism because there Jews were blamed for the war, and he was frequently called "Abrahamic" as a slur while living in Tashkent. He remembers being denied positions because his passport had Jewish rather than Polish ethnicity. [130] When Michael G. encountered a Pole en route back home to Poland, he posed as a fellow Polish soldier and asked what happened to the Jews. The soldier casually replied, "oh, we killed them all" and described the Holocaust in graphic detail before advising Michael G. to continue to the American zone.[131]

By 1949, 230,700 Jews had repatriated to Poland, despite it being a vast graveyard of stolen homes, murdered families, and former concentration camps. [132] Throughout the war, there were several possibilities for repatriation to Poland or to claim either Polish or Soviet citizenship. Notable were the 1943 Polish break with the Soviet government after the exposure of Katyn, and the 1946 final orders for Polish repatriation under Stalin.[133] Polish Jews who survived in exile were in many ways stuck in a liminal state, as neither victims nor

---

[129] These four testimonies come from the "Bukharian Lens Project" from 2014 directed by Manashe Khaimov with a goal of linking previous generations to new generations of teens emphasizing the heroism of Bukharians and survival during WWII.
[130] Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).
[131] Michael G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1880), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[132] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 201.
[133] Paul Allen, *Katyn: Stalin's massacre and the triumph of truth* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010). Repatriation remains a contested term, and is one being reclaimed in Polish consciousness, as it was also the euphemistic Soviet name given to mass-deportations of Poles eastward.

survivors, unable to fully process their own difficult experiences of evacuation while grieving the complete destruction of their home communities and families.[134] Acceptance of Soviet passports was also an unknown, like for Bernard O. who "heard a little about Katyn in Tashkent" but who ultimately refused Soviet papers and was arrested and sent to the Gulag for a lack of any current documents.[135] Gilda Z. and her friend who was posing as her husband also were sent to the Arkhangelsk oblast for hard labor when they refused Soviet passports and asked to return to Poland during evacuation.[136] Felix F. also describes the clear choice to accept a Soviet passport: "if not accepting Soviet citizenship it was back to Poland or put on a cattle car to Siberia labeled as 'enemies of the people.'"[137] Simcha S. "correctly" chose the Soviet passport when offered and went to the Russian interior to work alongside Gulag prisoners as a mine worker.[138] By June of 1940, 70-78,000 Jews had been sent to the Gulag or the "Soviet hinterlands" for refusing Soviet passports.[139]

Despite the difficulty of evacuation, both in transit and in life on collective farms, a number of survivors credited the Soviet government with their survival and laid the responsibility of the Holocaust squarely with the occupying Germans and had more difficulty disentangling Soviet and local perpetration. For many the red star and triumph over the swastika was a sign of hope, and even Stalin remains a nostalgic figure for many.[140] When

---

[134] John Goldlust, "Neither 'victims' nor 'survivors': Polish Jews reflect on their wartime experiences in the Soviet Union During the Second World War," in *Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1939-1959): History and Memory of Deportation, Exile and Survival,* eds. Katharina Friedla and Markus Nesselrodt (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2022), 214-235.
[135] Bernard Organek, Interview 52285, *Visual History Archive,* USC Shoah Foundation, June 13, 1990, Accessed February 16, 2024.
[136] Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030).
[137] Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).
[138] Simcha S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1407).
[139] Budnitskii, Engel, Estraikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 33.
[140] Rita H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT. 2012). Fryda Bland received a kiss on the cheek from Stalin postwar in Moscow at a meeting of workers, and credited him with both victory and Jewish survival in her testimony: Fryda Bland, Interview 55083, VHA-USC.

David S. returned to Lublin, having heard about the Holocaust, he said for the Polish, "when the Bolsheviks were there, from the first and second World War, they kept [antisemitism] under control, but when the Germans came, it all came out, blossoming again."[141] There was continued danger after the war – Stalinism in the USSR, increasing Soviet antisemitism, and unrepentant perpetrators in Poland and Ukraine. When Adel R. returned to Poland, entire trains of returning Jews were denied entry to major cities because "entire trains of Pollacks somehow recognized we were Jews and said 'you mean there are still Jews? Where did they come from?'" before denying them entry. He later found out that her sister was raped and killed on the spot by Polish neighbors, that her father was tortured as a communist and subject to unspeakable horrors, and her entire family was eventually sent to Majdanek after "the Poles gave them to the Germans."[142] Louis K. was helping his brother find his wife and children in Poland, when "Pollacks said that *they* had shot them right outside the house."[143] Adel and others repeatedly echoed that the poles "were just as bad as the Germans," that "the Poles were rotten," and that they had no home to which to return in 1945.[144]

Antisemitism during evacuation continued into the immediate postwar period across the USSR and for those who returned to Poland. The Yiddish institutions like the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Yiddish Theatre came under immediate threat for dissolution by 1946 for their ethnically specific and non-Soviet priorities. By 1948, ideological threats to Jewish institutions became violent, notably with the assassination of Solomon Mikhoels. The

---

[141] David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082).
[142] Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 2, 1997, Accessed January 21, 2024
[143] Louis Kadlovsky, Interview 39796, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, March 19, 1998, Accessed February 8, 2024.
[144] Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, VHA-USC. And Louis Kadlovsky, Interview 39796, VHA-USC. Kadlovsky also saw the material aftermath of the Holocaust near Sosnowicz where there were mountains of shoes and glasses from Jews who had been killed.

same institutions which provided solidarity and a Jewish renaissance in exile were subsequently targeted under *Zhdanovshchina* and official denunciations of Jewish individuals built on harmful tropes from the war.

F. A Survivor of the Gulag or of the Holocaust? Conclusions

Evacuation transit from the Holocaust is complex. Rather than simply seeking refuge, survival was deeply intertwined with Soviet carcerality – either as the mechanism of initial movement for those arrested pre-war, or a perpetual threat during evacuation jeopardizing the abilities to obtain adequate food and shelter. Survivor self-identification of victimization was similarly complex with recognition among a community of similar refugees of hardships in exile but without the same subscription to "survivorship" like those who survived camps.[145] Evacuation narratives understandably focus on the evacuees, but there was also sizeable interaction once arriving in Central Asia with Bukharian Jews and the establishment of Ashkenaz Jewish institutions in exile. As such, the story of evacuation is perhaps told in three parts, first of transit, then of life in exile including intersection with the Gulag, and finally in negotiation of postwar antisemitism and dealing with the knowledge of the Holocaust. Dissecting dynamics within transit to Tashkent provides insight into priorities of evacuees once they arrived – survival strategies, community and family structures, solidarity and identification with local populations (or not), and the long reach of Soviet bureaucracy in Central Asia. These themes from a history of transit provide context to postwar fears of both the USSR and Nazi Germany, and of the dangers of being Jewish even in relative safety. In the artistic realm, preservation mechanisms of hidden community knowledges remained

[145] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 200.

private, concealed, and cryptic in the postwar, as 1945 marked the end of Hitlerite, not all antisemitism.

Wartime evacuation became a part of post-war antisemitism, with pervasive ideas like "Jews survived the war in Tashkent." Artistic actions like *Zhdanovshchina* were entangled with the postwar political climate and targeted ethnicity as well as political dissidence. The postwar USSR rebuilt from the Second World War with a glorious victory, which meant it was essential to dispel the sentiment that the "Jews and their Bolshevik henchmen" had safely lived out the war in exile, while valorous draftees "died at the front to defend kikes."[146] Evacuation seems to be tied to anti-Sovietism; a counternarrative to the state glorification of the Great Patriotic War. As such, there was a corollary suspicion for intellectuals who were evacuated versus those who served. As evidenced in postwar artistic products, returning artists and composers grappled with the complexities of survivorship and evacuation while simultaneously navigating a hostile political climate in the last decade of Stalinism.

[146] Budnitskii, Engel, Estraikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 114.

V. A Leaf Blows through the Graveyard of the Eastern Front: Partisans, POWs, and Crimes against Soviet Citizens during WWII

The Great Patriotic War and Holocaust in the USSR are inescapably linked. After Nazi Germany breached the non-aggression pact on June 22, 1941, their war against the USSR was one of total elimination and destruction with the ultimate added goal of mining the Soviet Union for its vast resources of food, coal, and human capital. The destruction of the USSR was racially motivated, the destruction of the Soviet state was a military and ideological goal of Nazi Germany. The Bolshevism of the USSR wasn't only a counter socioeconomic philosophy to that of the Third Reich, but one thought to be controlled by and filled with Jewish influence, from Karl Marx to "Stalin and the Jews behind him."[1] The idea that the war against the Soviet Union was a preventative, even defensive strategy of Nazi Germany against Judeo-Bolshevist influence transcended propaganda and filtered down to the central beliefs and actions of ordinary soldiers of the *Einsatzgruppen* and *Wehrmacht* soldiers.[2] As the war progressed, a fear of partisan attacks combined with a combined ideological hatred of Slavs and Jews fueled the Holocaust, destruction of villages, and murder of POWs creating a path of destruction across the occupied territories of Belarus, *Reichskommisariat* Ukraine, and the Baltic countries.

[1] Yitzhak Arad quotes Joeseph Goebbels' speech of June 5,th 1941 as one example of the Judeobolshevik propaganda war unleashed prior to Barbarossa. Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 67.

[2] Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, 68. And Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), Ch. 17. The Einsatzgruppen were paramilitary death squads dispatched in the initial phase of the Holocaust, committing mass shootings and progressing along with the German Army (Wehrmacht).

Examining the blurred categories of Holocaust and wartime atrocities, I investigate three key phenomena emblematic of the Soviet experience during WWII.[3] First is the emergence of clandestine fighting battalions: Partisans/*Partisany* and the primary survivorship of Belarussian Jews in these units. These units provide insight into the gendered experience of warfare on the Eastern Front for both Axis and Allies highlighted by Alexievich and Lower.[4] Critical discussion of these units challenges the myth of a resistance-less slaughter during the Holocaust, while complicating the Nazi narrative of Judeobolshevism where Jews were equated to enemy communists, and violent or resisting Partisan Jews which they used to justify the massacres of the *Einsatzgruppen* as military actions.[5] Sound and music were important parts of partisan life, as famously highlighted by the Bielski brothers who were musicians and the film *Defiance* (2008) as well as by the partisan songs in the song collections of Schmerke Kaczerginski who demonstrated the inclusion of Partisan songs filled with *Kontrafakt* or the integration of Soviet popular song into Partisan songs.[6] In addition to sonic testimonies from the partisan brigades, I present a post-war composition for violin and piano, *Elegaic Improvisation* by Edi Tyrmand who was one of many woman fighters in Belarus. Analysis of this postwar composition reveals important aspects of antisemitism within the partisan units, lingering antisemitism and

[3] I interchangeably use WWII and the Great Patriotic War in this chapter, tending toward "Great Patriotic War" which is the Soviet moniker when discussing aspects of Soviet nationalism and pride.
[4] Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II* (New York, NY: Random House, 2017) and Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Berlin: Mariner, 2013).
[5] Anika Walke, *Pioneers and partisans: An oral history of Nazi genocide in Belorussia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[6] Bret Werb, *Yiddish Songs of the Shoah: A Source Study Based on the Collections of Schmerke Kaczerginski,* PhD Ethnomusicology Dissertation (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2014), 179-194.

negotiation of the Holocaust postwar, and the preservation of songs and *Yiddishkeit* in music beyond ethnographic collections like Kaczerginski's.

Another key element of the Soviet experience in the Great Patriotic War was clearly military service. With more than 34,000,000 soldiers serving between 1941 and 1945, unfortunately, the USSR also had conservatively 5,700,000 POWs in Nazi captivity with 57% or 3,300,000 deaths.[7] Soviet POWs are newly considered as a possible extension of Holocaust victims as the persecution and mass murder of Soviet POWs set the framework for the mass murder of the European Jewry. One enormous problem with the study of Soviet POWs is the lack of knowledge around their deaths and de-centralized burial sites across the former USSR. I propose an alternative memorial detached from a particular site and linked to larger iconography of the USSR and affective memory. The First Violin Sonata of Sergei Prokofiev was composed during the war and has a brooding and depressive character throughout. A particular theme, utilized in the first, third, and fourth movements, musically paints a leaf blowing wistfully through an unnamed graveyard. One of the most striking sites of the murder of the Soviet POWs is an open field where 12-15000 bodies and ashes are interred at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II). I combine my own contemporary sound recordings of the wind through the grass at one of the only known burial sites of the Soviet POWs and the early gas chambers of Soviet POWs at Auschwitz II with a new recording of Prokofiev's First Violin Sonata. This creates a living memorial to the Holocaust, addressing

[7] Brandon M. Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in WWII through Objects* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019) 1. Schechter confirms the total men serving. Conservative estimates of Soviet POWs both taken prisoner and killed come from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, most compellingly discussed in: Geoffrey P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Soviet POWs' experiences at Auschwitz rather than Jewish memory of the site, and utilizes the wartime composition of Prokofiev like a musical "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier".

The most emblematic destruction of civilians in the USSR not directly connected to the Holocaust is the blockade of the city of Leningrad for 872 days from 1941-1944. Within the horror of the blockade, frost and hunger became the primary concerns for citizens. To understand the siege is to understand intense, corporeal trauma. As evidenced by Lidiia Ginzburg's memoirs of the "besieged human" it was the body, the individual, under assault as well as the city.[8] Sound is one common element in the testimonies of the Blockade, along with the embodied experiences of hunger and cold. The sonic language of the state, of both the Soviet and Nazi war machines was the relentless sound of artillery, bombing, and the click of the loudspeaker. I present Shostakovich's E minor Piano Trio as an antithesis of this sonic language, not the appropriately named and presented 7th "Leningrad" symphony, partially as it's impossible to capture an accurate contemporary soundscape. This introspective work provides a link between Shostakovich's personal experiences during the war, a private commemoration for a friend, and one of the earliest artistic acknowledgements of the Holocaust.

Certainly, these large elements of the war are not unique to the USSR. I don't suggest that the actions of Partisans in Belarus dramatically differed from the French Resistance, or even partisan and resistance movements in the General Gouvernment. Similarly, I don't minimize the impact of the Blitz for Britain compared with the Leningrad Blockade for the Soviets. However, particularities like the treatment of the Soviet POWs did have a racialized element not seen outside of the Eastern front and provide a pivotal link between the War and

[8] Lidiia Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2014).

the Holocaust. Furthermore, in death counts, the war in the USSR had the highest fatalities of any theatre. Sound isn't meant as an intellectualization of catastrophe. Rather, for partisans, sound and music were integral parts of the social framework and a preservation of Jewish thought like that articulated by evacuated composers. For Soviet POWs, a new and dedicated recording serves as new memorialization of a lesser-understood victim group of the Holocaust, combined with a site recording of the most notorious death-camp. Finally, reconsideration of the Leningrad Blockade through the unexpected Trio rather than 7th Symphony of Shostakovich, provides insight into the effects of the war on postwar censorship and acceptable narrations of the Great Patriotic War.

A. A Violin from the Forest: Soundscapes and Music of Soviet Partisans

By 1942, hungry, disappointed, and terrorized civilians had been deprived of their rights by the advance of the *Wehrmacht* and witnessed the total destruction of their villages and fellow civilians. The related anti-German hostility fueled the partisan movement, which despite the difficulties of the winter of 1942, continued to develop across the USSR and Poland into a constant threat to the German war effort.[9] The continued extermination of Jews was under the justification of anti-partisan necessity, and as Heinrich Himmler recorded in his diary after a meeting with Hitler on December 18, 1941: "Jewish question/to be exterminated as partisans."[10] This was further confirmation of Himmler with Hitler, not a new policy direction, that Jews, communists, and partisans were directly linked and indistinguishable for extermination. This is most clearly evidenced by the number of mass shootings of Jews which had already occurred by December, 1941, notably the massacre at

[9] Megargee, *War of Annihilation,* 143-144.
[10] Heinrich Himmler, *Der Dienstkalender 1941-2* (Hamburg: Hamburger Beiträge zur Social-und Zeitgeschichte, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek: https://d-nb.info/955495202/04).

Babi Yar in September, before the increase in partisan activity and organization across the USSR. It was only after these mass-shootings, where terrified and sole survivors organized in the wake of the advancing *Einsatzgruppen* for survival and eventually for revenge. The testimony from the last decade from Yahad in Unum is extraordinary, as it reveals the local effects of these shootings, the involvement and trauma of the local population, and adds a third perspective to both victim and perpetrator perspectives of the Holocaust in the USSR.[11] For the purpose of situating Tyrmand's work within the Holocaust in Belarus, the testimonies reviewed here are only from Belarus and show both the impact of German terror on Jews and Soviet citizens alike, and the intersection between Nazi terror and the organization of Partisan brigades.

The initial phase of movement to the Partisans occurred as the Germans swept rapidly through Belarus and the other occupied territories of the USSR. Initial *Aktionen* or mass shootings of mobile killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) collaborated with local police, and branched out from major urban centers to every small village in route. Before ghettos were created in these cities, Jews and others surviving the initial *Aktion* took the chance to flee to the forest, where clandestine fighting brigades of partisans began to form. Bielski, Kovner, and other notable leaders who managed to escape and form battalions early, helped other Jews flee the ghettos to join the brigades.[12] The template for this already existed in Poland, where resistance to the Nazi occupation had existed since 1939. When entering a village, the

[11] Yahad in Unum is a documentary organization headed by Father Patrick Desbois originally committed to interviewing the last surviving witnesses, largely bystanders, of the Holocaust in the USSR. They have since branched into other genocide research including of the Yazidis in Iraq, and the testimonies in this chapter come from their extensive fieldwork in Belarus.

[12] Allen S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 833), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. This witness specifically mentions Bielski's involvement (the brothers, unclear which one) in Belarus.

Germans didn't distinguish and "thought everyone in the neighborhood was a Russian soldier, so they shot all of the villagers along with the Jews."[13] Allen S. who fought as a partisan describes the destruction of Belarus along with the Holocaust: "what they did in those [first] six weeks, is beyond description. Village after village, the only thing that you've seen were chimneys, the houses burned down, the people taken away to concentration camps."[14] Partisan brigades were not a Jewish phenomenon, comprised of Soviets, Jews, Roma, and anyone else who could be targeted by the Germans. Although locals could distinguish villagers and Jews who were executed, both were often combined in the initial *Aktionen* of the *Einsatzkommando.* Partisans were seen by the Soviet authorities and by locals as a valorous fight contributing to the Red Army's success, and as such are remembered favorably in bystander testimony as resistance.[15]

In Kurenets, a punitive SS detachment arrived on January 14, 1942, where men, women, and children were shot, including at least nine children under the age of 12. By September 12, 1942, the town was sealed and 600 more people were killed including at least 200 burned alive, who were left strewn across the streets with burning bodies for days as a warning to locals. Between the two *Aktionen,* most of the Jews and non-Jews of the town fled to partisan units, and the remaining murders from September were a final warning to anyone who considered joining the clandestine resistance.[16] On June 13, 1942, a similar punitive

[13] Witness Interview no. 513, Grigory S., yahadmap.org/#village/surazh-vitebsk-belarus.470. This same testimony highlights a second shooting of partisans hiding in the forest on August 12, 1941, but the initial shooting of civilians swept in Jews and "villagers" alike.
[14] Allen S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 833).
[15] Being a partisan also gave some survivors early access to find out what happened to their families. Vladimir S. who was "certified" as a partisan found out that his mother and baby brother were evacuated to Siberia from Leningrad, while his other two brothers died on the front and his grandfather starved. Vladimir S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3743), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[16] Soviet Extraordinary Commission file for Kurenets, RG-22.002M, F. 7021, op. 83, d. 38.

Aktion was taken in Verkhovye as part of anti-Partisan fear, where 18 Jews were shot in front of all inhabitants who were gathered in the village square, then several communists were selected from the crowd and also shot.[17]

In the initial action in Sirotino, Belarus, "all the Jews and communists were taken away and shot" including a young Jewish partisan the bystander remembered in particular. Everyone was shot "family after family," and the young men were not in the initial execution columns but killed separately. In the execution of families, elder Jews were forced to burn Torahs and *S'ferim* (holy books) in front of the religious community and when boarding trucks to the execution site were required to pay a mocking "transport to Israel" fee.[18] Similar testimony is recounted in hundreds of sites across Belarus and *Reichskommisariat* Ukraine, but there are several important points. Young men, the perceived combatants in warfare were executed separately and secretly from the publicly executed columns of civilians. Jews, Partisans, and Communists are indistinguishable in bystander memory, and presumably in the mindset of the perpetrators. Public humiliation, like the burning of sacred materials, or a young girl who was "finished off by the local police" later in the same bystander testimony were public and violent intimidation tactics. The intimidation of locals also extended at numerous locations to the involvement of bystanders in the horror of execution and its' cleanup. Anna Sh. From Postavy said that the Jews stood calmly knowing that they were going to be shot into a huge pit: "they were real patriots, they didn't cry or moan." She says that she was required to watch this horrible scene, including the shooting with everything

[17] The number 18 was selected as a slight at the Jewish attribution of life to the letter "chai" which carries a value in gematria of 18. Testimony of Witness no. 508 Dimitry G: yahadmap.org/#village/verkhovye-ruba=Vitebsk-belarus.481.
[18] Testimony of Iefrossina K. from Yahad in Unum: yahadmap.org/#village/sirotino-vitebsk-belarus.457.

overseen by an SS officer. After the shooting "we were forced to cover the pit; people groaned and the ground groaned. I can't even describe a horror like that." As she tried to pickup a sock and bury it before she realized it was a child's foot, the Germans relaxed and drank alcohol while supervising.[19]

The second *Aktionen* of the Germans typically came in retreat in 1943, from which any remaining survivors joined partisan brigades to push the last of the Germans out of Belarus. For partisans and survivors of the initial shootings, both the break of the Leningrad blockade and the victory at Stalingrad were definitive points of demarcation in the war, to continue fighting and encourage partisan activity.[20] In Glubokoye, after the first Aktion, Jews returned to the ghetto under the guise that the Germans would keep them safe, where about 3500 people lived for 11 months. In July or August of 1943, instead the Germans murdered almost everyone, first surrounding the ghetto with machine guns, then dumping flammable liquid from a plane which killed the remaining 1000 people. Any Jewish escapees immediately joined the partisan units in the forest.[21] In Kosyukovichi near Mogliev in Belarus, many Jews had already left prior to 1943. The discovery of Jews and Partisans when the Germans returned in retreat was synonymous. However, in the same testimony, it is also clear that the executions did not differentiate between combatants or perceived violent partisans and civilians. In the columns of execution, there were 148 children, 85 elderly people, and 265 women and when the grave was exhumed by locals, all the children under 5 had their spinal columns broken prior to being shot.[22] According to the same bystander in

[19] Testimony of Anna Sh., May 12, 2016, Yahad in Unum: yahadmap.org/#village/postavy-pastawy-vitebsk-belarus.1386
[20] Allen S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 833).
[21] Soviet Extraordinary Commission Files, Glubokoye, RG 20.002M f. 7021. Op. 92, d. 212.
[22] Witness Leonid B. in the Soviet Extraordinary Commission Files, RG 22.002M f. 7021-88, d. 38.

testimony from 2013, the "communists and partisans" were executed by policemen and German soldiers. The partisans were screaming, "we die for Stalin" and were executed with their families – "the grave was breathing for days."[23] In this isolated testimony, the murderous conflation of Jews and Partisans is evident, as is the attribution of military intent to civilians – for what toddlers are able to "die for Stalin"?

Within Partisan brigades, there were a multiplicity of ethnicities, and a certain lawlessness within the camps. The ethnic diversity combined with extreme parity did sow division and disorganization among partisan groups, however.[24] Alexander B. from Vilna who remembered fighting in the Partisans with Aba Kovner said that "there were no written laws. There were different groups, some were even antisemitic. In Lithuania, leaders weren't thrilled about the disproportionate number of Jews in partisan brigades, for example.[25] This even escalated into further violence against Jews who joined Partisan units. In Belarus, a group of armed Jews were organized in the ghetto and taken to the forest under the premise of a special mission, but they were instead taken individually and shot by Soviet partisans so that only their weapons returned with the perpetrators to the partisan unit.[26] The only thing that was clear to everyone, was that no one should attack the communities that were living in the nearby villages, because they were helping us."[27] Partisans were every gender and age, Alexander B said "women were also fighters in our resistance; I was always fighting with my

[23] Witness no. 637 Leonid B. June 15, 2013 Yahad in Unum: yahadmap.or/#village/kostyukovichi-mogliev-belarus.653.
[24] Alexander B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3374), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[25] Abram Zelenikow, Interview 27584, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 11, 1997 , Accessed March 20, 2024.
[26] Vladimir S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3743), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[27] Alexander B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3374).

wife."[28] The units were comprised not only of fighting men, but women, children, older people, even people who couldn't possibly fight.[29] Women in partisan units, like women in the Red Army were at the same or increased peril compared to their male counterparts. On June 29, 1941, Günther von Kluge ordered that all women in any uniform were to be shot.[30] Children were also a part of partisan brigades, and subject to brutal treatment and execution the same as adults if they were shot. Valdimir D. was 15 years old when he was captured in 1943, and was taken with other children to give blood to be used for German soldiers at the front.[31]

The truth and driving force for many partisans was revenge, where they scarcely cared about anything else.[32] In Aba Kovner's testimony at the Eichmann trial, he said that when Nazis were captured by partisans, for each blow, partisans would say or sing the name of their loved ones murdered or people that they saw die.[33] In Kovner's testimony, there is the obvious element of revenge, physically enacted, but also the importance of vocality and song in expressing revenge. Physical violence wasn't sufficient, but rather naming and giving voice to the murdered and valorous dead was part of the practice of exacting revenge against each individual Nazi. It is also worth noting the context, as Kovner added this statement of revenge to his testimony against Eichmann, voicing his personal and community triumph over the entire system of Nazism. Poetry and song were essential elements of survival, with

---

[28] Ibid.
[29] The implication in this testimony is that these non-fighting people were responsible for other functions within brigades including procurement of weapons and food and morale. Allen S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 833).
[30] Megargee, *War of Annihilation,* 59.
[31] This testimony is repeated in many of the partisan children in: Svetlana Alexievich, *Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of WWII* (New York, NY: Random House, 2019). This testimony comes from Yahad in Unum's interviews in Belarus: Vladimir D. b. 1928: yahadmap.org/#village/ulla-vitebsk-belarus.476.
[32] Allen S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 833).
[33] Minutes of Session no. 27, Attorney General of the Government of Israel vs. Adof Eichmann Crimincal case no. 40/61.11/4/1961, Accessed in the Eugene Davidson Special Collection in the UCSB Library box 5 MSS 185, 2022. Testimony of Aba Kovner from the Jewish Partisans in Vilna.

Abraham Sutzkever seen as the narrative of the partisans, and spiritual and physical survival were firmly intertwined.[34] Songs also were a "musical call to arms," emphasizing Jewish heroism over passivity, and optimal for group singing.[35] Partisan songs drew heavily from ghetto song and also from Soviet popular music, incorporating elements of urban folklore, *blatnaya pesnya*, and thusly were attractive to Soviet and Jewish audiences alike.[36] *Blatnaya pesnya* or balladic songs satirically depicting the criminal subculture were particularly fruitful to mine as a source, as they already contained a sardonic tone, were familiar and popular songs, and appealed to the rebellious and criminalized sentiment amongst partisans. This music has a special status and a social priority in contrast with other human manufactured sound – shouts, signals. For example, partisans who surrounded villages called larger numbers of weapons and fighters across clearings to project a larger show of military strength than was present. Sound served as warning and anticipation, as bravado. Instruments were a part of the partisan experience, most notably accordions, flutes, violins and other easily transportable and damage-resistant instruments. In studying social structures of partisans, it is worth considering not only the factual presence of songs, calls, signals, and recreational music, but also the function of these sounds and how they contributed to community development. Finally, in postwar compositions or responses, it is interesting to see how these wartime sonic elements are incorporated into published music – a form of sonic testimony and possibly commemoration.

---

[34] Abram Zelenikow, Interview 27584, VHA-USC.
[35] Bret Werb, *Yiddish Songs of the Shoah: A Source Study Based on the Collections of Schmerke Kaczerginski* (PhD Ethnomusicology Dissertation. Los Angeles: UCLA, 2014), 179, 181, 185.
[36] Werb, *Yiddish Songs of the Shoah*, 184-5.

Edi Tyrmand had connections herself to the Partisan movement, and briefly fought alongside them before evacuating to Kazakhstan for the remainder of the war by the end of 1942. Her *Elegaic Improvisation* for violin and piano was her private commemoration of her own family, her personal traumatic experiences in the war, and her inability to officially voice these issues in the anti-Semitic postwar Soviet Union. In Belarus, "The Holocaust" is presented primarily in national compositions mourning the war for the entire USSR, not only Jewish death, and part of a larger "Great Patriotic War" narrative. The word "Holocaust" only began to appear on individual works in Belarus in 1996, and typically these works were still reserved for private performances.[37] I received this work from Belarussian musicologist and pianist Inessa Dvuzhilnaya in 2018 who knew Tyrmand when I was working at the US Holocaust Museum, and am the first performer to play or record this piece outside of Belarus. This work, a highly abstract piece for violin and piano, is interesting as it doesn't sonically mimic or directly address any sounds or musical quotations of the Partisans nor of the Holocaust in Belarus. Still, creeping and displaced elements of the work, notably the use of dissonance where one expects virtuosity and resolution, combines with the extramusical program notes and intent of the composer to make this an unsettling personal piece of commemoration of the Holocaust.

Composed for the common chamber music combination of violin and piano, the structure of this piece is completely open without an indication of time as in many scores. The piece also interestingly features two cadenzas, areas for virtuosic expansion, for violin

[37] Inessa Dvuzhilnaya, "The Holocaust in Music: Composers from the former Soviet Union," in *Partituren der Erinnerung Der Holocaust in der Musik*, Ed. Bela Rasky and Verena Pawlowsky, Holocaustforschung des Wiener Wiesenthal Instituts fuer Holocaust Studien VWI, Band I, (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2015), 101-106.

and piano separately. This is an uncommon practice, and only appears in two other pieces for violin and piano across the Western art music canon – Liszts' *Die drei Zigeuner* and Shostakovich's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1968). It is not coincidental that Tyrmand mirrored Shostakovich with her compositional structure – both alluding to the tragedy of Shostakovich's sonata, his personal elegy as one of his final compositions, and his compositional status as the father of Soviet music. Tyrmand's piece also holds the postscript of being a fantasy of a cantor and a klezmer musician interacting.[38] Tyrmand's piece has several notable features of a commemorative work. First, the use of violin is simultaneously using a "Jewish" instrument and an instrument dear to the Soviet state. Outside of instrumentation, Tyrmand's piece eponymously refers to an unnamed tragedy – an Elegy up to the listener's interpretation. The piece contains musical gestures like a rising 7th – a musical interval associated with Jewish music but little other musical connection to Jewish materials or sonic representations of war. As one possible commemorative tool, this piece by Tyrmand is a striking piece of classical music, used to abstractly express the horror at the combined destruction of Belarus and the Soviet Jewry. Partisans were both clandestine fighting brigades exacting vengeance to liberate Belarus alongside the Red Army and battalions of Holocaust survivors from mass shootings. Even in the dedication, of an open "Elegy," the tragedies of the Holocaust and crimes during the Great Patriotic War are indistinguishable and inseparably linked.

[38] Inessa Dvuzhlnaya was the first musicologist to discover the music of Tyrmand and bring it to an international audience. She discusses this piece and other composers from the Holocaust in the USSR in her text: I.F. Dvuzhil'naya, *Tema kholokosta v akademicheskoi muzike,* (Grodno, Belarus: Grodnyenskie gosudarstvennie univyersitet imeni Yanki Kupali, 2016) 63-64.

B. Soviet POWs

With the breach of the non-aggression pact with the USSR, Hitler's "Hunger Plan" for the Soviet Union was predicated on a quick summer victory after the invasion of June 22, 1941, followed by the starvation of 30 million people with the destruction of Soviet cities and industry.[39] The Reich's plan of starvation was unsuccessful much like the speed of their invasion, but the moral precedent for the total destruction of the USSR and its civilians was established in the consciousness of the *Wehrmacht*.[40] In the case of soldiers, Nazi Germany claimed it had no obligation to humanely treat Soviet POWs because the USSR had not ratified the 1929 Geneva Convention, nor committed to the 1907 Hague Convention on the rules of war. Still, the vast difference in number of casualties between Soviet POWs at a 57% fatality rate in captivity versus an approximate 3.6% fatality rate of all other allied POWs in German captivity points to the racialized war of annihilation against the USSR and the treatment of Slavs as a subhuman race.[41] Brutality was a condition of engagement for the soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* who shot many soldiers as they attempted to surrender, and executed groups of Soviet soldiers after they surrendered.[42] According to Nazi ideology, Soviet POWs and Partisans were part of a larger Bolshevik menace backed by a Jewish conspiracy.[43]

---

[39] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010) 155-187.
[40] Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 187. And Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 144-145.
[41] Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 142. And The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Nazi Persecution of Soviet Prisoners of War," in *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-persecution-of-soviet-prisoners-of-war.
[42] Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 59.
[43] Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 119.

The numbers of POWs initially were staggering: by July 11, 1941, there were more than 360,000 Soviet POWs in custody, and by August 5th, this had jumped to 774,000 POWs. By July 24th, General Eduard Wagner ordered that "politically intolerable and suspicious elements, commissars, and agitators," be identified and transferred to camps where they should be dealt with according to "special directives" i.e. shot.[44] More than 3.1 million Soviet soldiers were taken captive as prisoners of war with estimates of total captives by 1945 as high as 5.8 million soldiers, and most died before reaching German concentration or POW camps. Prisoners often had to walk hundreds of kilometers from the front to camps in the General Gouvernment, while they received minimal rations of as low as 700 calories a day or less and were then responsible for the creation of camps if they survived the grueling march.[45] Treatment of Soviet POWs was a trial run for the methodologies of the Holocaust. The infamous Nazi death camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek were initially constructed by Heinrich Himmler for Soviet POWs, repurposing Polish army barracks in the case of Auschwitz, and were only converted for the mass murder of the European Jewry after the Wannsee Conference of 1942.[46] While most POWs were shot or died of hunger in transit to camps, Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, began experimenting with gassing POWs with Zyklon-B first in the gas chamber of Auschwitz I in 1941, then in the "Little Red House" and "Little White House" in the spring of 1942 near the eventual four gas chambers

[44] Megargee, *War of Annihilation,* 60
[45] Ibid. 61-2.
[46] Nikolaus Waschsmann, *Kl: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2015) Chapter II.

of Birkenau (Auschwitz II).[47] By February of 1942, two million of the 3.3 million Soviet soldiers in German custody had already died from starvation, exposure, or shooting.[48]

Prokofiev's *Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 1* is explicitly connected to the Second World War, but not necessarily the plight of the Soviet POWs. The first movement opens with a creeping line in the piano, which is later echoed in two voices in the violin. The brooding theme doesn't really progress, but hovers uneasily in the lower register for both instruments, and brief moments where the melody seems to open and develop more returns to other iterations of the initial melancholy statement from the piano. The melody recalls a dark nocturne, but the contour of the melody with the interjections of the violin creates a sense of unease and instability. The violin returns with these melodies combined for a single instrument later in the first movement, and there is a moment of total calm and beauty between both the violin and upper melody of the piano. This stasis is interrupted by startling and powerful octaves in the lowest register of the piano. This stark interruption by the piano is the moment which Prokofiev told pianist Lev Oborin that it "should sound in such a way that people should jump in their seat, and people will say 'is he out of his mind?'"[49]

A significant motif appears in the closing of the first movement and again at the end of the fourth which comprises the primary thematic material of the entire third movement. Prokofiev described the running scales for the violin as "wind passing through a graveyard"

---

[47] Auschwitz is large compound with several sub-camps and areas including Auschwitz I (Germanization of "Oświęcim) with the Polish-army barracks, the notorious sign "Arbeit Macht Frei" and the blocks for torture and medical experiments. Auschwitz II or more appropriately Birkenau, is the site of the railway arrivals, where most murders by gas and subsequent cremation occurred, and takes its name from the Germanization of Brzezinka, the town. Other associated locations of murder and forced labor in the surrounding immediate area include Monowitz/Monowice (Auschwitz III) and the I.G. Farben plant. Auschwitz website, Holocaust Encyclopedia.

[48] USHMM Holocaust encyclopedia.

[49] Pianist Boris Berman recalls this conversation with his teacher Oborin in an interview, Barney Zwartz, "A Masterclass in Prokofiev," *The Age*, July 5th, 2008, Accessed March 18, 2024: https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/a-masterclass-in-prokofiev-20080705-ge77er.html.

against which bell-like chords softly chime in the piano.[50] In the case of the third movement, this was curiously prophetic, as the movement was played at Prokofiev's own funeral by Samuil Feynberg at the piano and David Oistrakh on the violin.[51] The third movement expands on this motif of the wind through a graveyard, with an opening, meandering statement which recalls a leaf aimlessly blowing on the wind. The sparkling piano is answered by the same statement by a muted violin, and the dark tone of the instrument combined with the exchange of these meandering statements blends into a poignant lyrical melody for the violin which eventually opens into the upper registers of the instrument and allows the violinist and pianist to sing together.

In contrast to the abstract and beautiful wind through a graveyard created by Prokofiev, I present my sound recording of an actual wind through two graveyards of the Soviet POWs at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Together with the sonata, I propose these recordings of the site and my new recording of the sonata as a modest sonic memorial for the Soviet POWs. Like memorialization to an unknown soldier, this sonic and musical memorialization lacks the specificity of naming individual names or units, but serves as a general commemoration. Unlike an anchored site like the tomb to the unknown soldier in Moscow, this abstract commemoration links the physicality of a site of mass death – Auschwitz - to an imagined Soviet sound world of Prokofiev. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet POWs were shot outside of camps or died of exposure and starvation prior to reaching formal sites of detention. I chose Auschwitz-Birkenau as a site to record because it is an emblematic site of Holocaust memory, but not necessarily of Polish or Soviet POW commemoration, and

[50] Harlow Robinson, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography* (Lexington, MA: Plunkett Lake Press, 2019), Part III, 18.
[51] Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 388.

because the murder and medical experiments on the Soviet POWs at Auschwitz were the template for the mass-murder of Jews and Roma at the same site. These recordings are not taken from within a gas chamber, including at the Little White House where the recording is from next to, not within the perimeter of the ruin.[52] The combination of an abstract artistic work and contemporary sound recordings contains the authenticity of an historical site with the ability to still interpret and emotionally connect to the commemoration.

The two sound recordings from Birkenau are from the "Little White House" a site of gassing for Soviet POWs and a large open field and burial site which is already a symbol of all the POWs killed. The mass grave contains both bodies and ashes. Because of cremation, discard of ashes into the river, and incomplete record keeping of the Germans, we do not know the final resting site of all of the POWs murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Sound is a critical modality to understand the space of Auschwitz-Birkenau and to provide an abstract commemoration for the Soviet POWs who do not have a singular final resting place. The burial site, the "ash pond" of the Soviet POWs contains "only" 12-15000 people of the 1.1 million people murdered there, and yet is the size of a large open field of at least one square kilometer, without accounting for other burial sites at Auschwitz, nor the ashes dumped into the river. These are not small sites, and just as it is impossible to conceptually understand 10,000 or 100,000 murdered dead, it is also impossible to fully imagine the open immolation pits or the industrious gas chambers, what each small mountain of ash at Auschwitz contains. A sonic capture of this space provides an understanding of how large and inaccessible these

[52] Historical authenticity, particularly around Auschwitz is of paramount importance. The only remaining gas chamber not as a ruin at Auschwitz is at Auschwitz I near the postwar execution site of Hoess, and was not primarily used for Soviet POWs. Additionally, I personally refuse to record within a former gas chamber, as it seems academically self-serving. As the intention is to remember the dead or create something positive, this borders on the territory of *Loeg l'rash,* the halacha of not doing a mitzvah in front of the dead, to essentially create a commemoration in a site of mass death.

spaces are, while immersing the listener in a site of violence. The Prokofiev sonata is a contrast, containing a beautiful melody of violin scales representing a leaf blowing through a graveyard, where in these recordings you can hear the wind blow through the tall grass where 15,000 POWs are buried. The abstraction of classical music with an uneasy and undefinable sound recording, also captures the unease of millions of Soviet POWs who fell or were shot without any marked grave or site of remembrance. Finally, the eerie contemporary soundscape at the ruin of the Little White House is nearly silent, where barely bugs nor wind disturb the trial sites of gassing at the most infamous Nazi death camp.

C. Leningrad

One of the costliest sieges in history, the blockade of the city of Leningrad cost 1.5 million lives and lasted over 875 days. The primary goal of Army group north was to take Leningrad as one of three key strategic goals of Operation Barbarossa.[53] The siege of Leningrad also directly intersects with the plight of Soviet POWs, detained Partisans, and even concentration camp inmates who they were taken to Leningrad to help the artillery advance on a mission of predetermined death through starvation and exposure.[54] The siege and targeting of civilians is one of the clearest points of genocidal murder of Soviet citizens in WWII outside of the Holocaust and has even been classified as a separate genocide in contemporary scholarship.[55] Leningrad became a symbol of the symbol and suffering of Soviet citizens, where after poor and stalled evacuations, Soviet propaganda stressed the importance of each home functioning like an individual fortress, the valor of not fighting the

[53] Richard Bidlack and Nikita Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade 1941-1944 a New Documentary History from the Soviet Archives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 172.
[54] Benjamin S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4056), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[55] Bidlack and Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade*, 1, 36.

war from the rear, and that every citizen should contribute to the war effort: a city of heroic defenders, not starving, begging civilians.[56]

Sound during the Leningrad Blockade was a multifaceted experience, both privately experienced and quietly significant in the isolation of bombardments and survival, and paradoxically so loud and totalizing that it became a consistent background sound, almost of comfort. The blockade was announced over the radio, Molotov's address was important for the epoch, but also personal, a loudspeaker announcing one's fate.[57] Over the more than 400,000 radios in the city, citizens were informed of the "attack by German fascist forces," the beginning of the radio becoming a primary source of information, a source of hope for help, and something emotionally resonant for Leningraders.[58] Daily, Lidiia Ginzburg would wake ten minutes before broadcasts and listen to the sound of the communal radio in the corridor.[59] Anna K. described the pervasive noise, the "permanent bombing and noise" against the backdrop of localized sounds like that of rainwater hitting empty bowls; a blessing to have water, but only a drink without food.[60] The bombardment was truly constant, where in the first twenty days, there were at least 12 night air raids and 11 daytime raids from the 6th of September, 1941.[61] There were more than 359 of these air raid alarms by 1942; a constant cacophony of confusion and fear.[62] This sound was also a constant rearticulated terror, like at a children's home, where two girls who weren't dying, suddenly

---

[56] Lisa Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad 1941-1995, Myths, Memories, Monuments* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47-52.
[57] Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka*, 6.
[58] Olga Berggol'ts, "Govorit Leningrad," in *Stikhi proza* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1961), 369.
[59] Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka*, 4.
[60] Anna Kosyrev, Interview 55734, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, April 28, 1999, Accessed March 20, 2024.
[61] David M. Glantz, *The Siege of Leningrad 1941-1945: 900 Days of Terror* (London, UK: W&N, 2004), 21-41.
[62] Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad*, 79-80, quotes an unnamed diary.

passed immediately following an air-raid alarm, where "their death must have been connected to their fear of death."[63]The "iron sky" as described by Nikolay Tikhonov's poetry read on the radio became a model to turn pain into unity, moral purpose, sacrifice, and survival.[64] Ivan Zhilinskii noted the number of air raid alerts rather than experienced bombardments, along with his daily food intake and the temperature. He also mentions the significance of the radio, that when it stopped working on January first, it was "as if being cut off from the world."[65] People began listening to the loudspeaker as part of their routine, and forgetting that they were expecting the sound of the broadcast, they would hurry to put a kettle on the stove, when the "sound would suddenly burst out of the loudspeaker, filling all rooms of the flat, inhabited or not."[66] Ordinary sounds, like the empty bowls described by Anna K. or the "nervous clicking of the loudspeaker, the search for galoshes in the dark" described by Ginzburg, now mingled with the quotidian "constant barrage of anti-aircraft guns and police whistles," and were punctuated by the "screams of people who've gone crazy mentally with hunger," where "no language can describe, no words can describe the suffering of the people dying of hunger in the dead city."[67] As Ginzburg said, the danger from bombing paled in comparison to death by malnutrition.[68]

Kirschenbaum hints at the importance of sound in poetry in her excellent analysis of Berggol'ts poetry and its effect in martialing heroism among Leningraders. Poetry is not simply read, even silently, but the sound of the poetry and meter of the verse is critical to the

---

[63] Bidlack and Lomagin, *The Leningrad Blockade*, 325.
[64] Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad*, 65.
[65] Ivan Zhilinskii, "Blokadnyi dnevnik," *Voprosy istorii* 1996, no. 5-6, p. 24.
[66] Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka,* 6, 28.
[67] Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka*, 16, 29
about barrage of aircraft guns, and Anna Kosyrev about the cries of hunger in: Interview 55734, VHA-USC.
[68] Ginzburg, *Zapiski blokadogo cheloveka*, 31.

form and genre. Even quiet or silent recitation of poetry provided an antithetical rhythm, a calming sound against the unpredictable yet relentless calamity of bombardments. According to Galina Ozerova, Bereggolts' poetry was "so simple, that [the poems] would be stuck in your mind, the rhythm just sunk into your head" and how later "they started reading Olga Berggolts verses on the radio, I clearly remember how splendid that was, how they fit our mood. They really took us out of that animal brooding with food."[69] Silence in place of the bombardments, as well as silence of the mind, without the calm of repeated poetry or a similar salve, gave way to pure psychological and emotional terror, as one could leave the apartment and encounter only "bodies with pieces cut away (cannibalism)."[70]

There were three victories for Leningraders: the 18th of January, 1943, the Soviets cracked the blockade, and the 27th of January, 1944 the blockade was fully lifted. These combined with the 9th of May, 1945, the complete victory of the USSR and Allies over Nazi Germany. As with the announcement of the invasion and subsequent encirclement of the city, most Leningraders learned of these developments from the radio.[71] Liberation of the city was also directly signified by sound, first of the radio and later of the arrival of Soviet military trucks which came at night to collect the thawing bodies for mass graves.[72]

At the outbreak of WWII, Shostakovich attempted to enlist in the Red Army, but was declined due to his poor eyesight. He remained in Leningrad even through the beginning of the siege and volunteered with the fire brigade of the Conservatory before being evacuated to Samara (Kuybyshev).[73] The Seventh Symphony, subtitled "Leningrad" is Shostakovich's

---

[69] Ales Adamovich and Daniil Granin, *Blokadnaia Kniga* (St. Petersburg: Pechatnyi dvor, 1994), 73.
[70] Anna Kosyrev, Interview 55734, VHA-USC.
[71] Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad*, 73.
[72] Anna Kosyrev, Interview 55734, VHA-USC.
[73] Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 2006), 171.

most emblematic wartime composition, with the first two movements composed in Leningrad and the remainder of the piece finished in evacuation. Shostakovich returned to a besieged Leningrad on the 9th of August, 1942 to premiere the work, with German guns less than 10 kilometers from the conservatory hall and tremendous duress for the performers who had remained in Leningrad.[74] For Shostakovich, Leningrad wasn't only associated with the terror of the siege and evacuation, the terror of war, but also the terror of Yezhov and the 1930s. Shostakovich was from Leningrad, and completed his formal education at the Leningrad (Petrograd) Conservatory under Alexander Glazunov.[75] Shostakovich lived through the terror of the 1930s in Leningrad, and his denunciation for the fourth symphony and "redemptive" fifth symphony was part of the artistic climate of negotiation with an unpredictable and censorious Soviet government. The climate of the 1930s for Shostakovich was echoed by Akhmatova in her *Requiem*, a mood of torpidity (*otsepeniye*) where relatives would gather outside of the prison gates to learn the fate of loved ones arrested.[76] In scholarship on Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, there is a similarly revisionist and uncomplicated narrative of a powerful composer returning to the besieged Leningrad to conduct a heroic symphony against all odds. Even in contemporary sentiment, the poet Berggolts said about Shostakovich, "this man is more powerful than Hitler!"[77]

Shostakovich's 7th Symphony was part of the resilience of culture in the city, of maintaining norms like sharing meals or maintaining connections to a pre-famine, pre-

[74] Brian Moynahan, *Leningrad: Siege and Symphony: The Story of the Great City Terrorized by Stalin, Starved by Hitler, Immortalized by Shostakovich* (New York, NY: Grove/Atlantic, 2014), Overture.
[75] Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A life* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17-20.
[76] Richard Taruskin discusses the reception and contemporary lionization of Shostakovich in "Public Lies and Unspeakable Truth: Interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony," in *Shostakovich Studies,* ed. David Fanning (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 39.
[77] Moynahan, *Leningrad Siege and Symphony,* overture.

blockade self. Cultural performances continued in order to maintain civilization.[78] Rather than another reading of the symphony, the E minor piano trio provides a contrasting look at Shostakovich and the response to war as a Leningrader, and as a Soviet citizen who already lived through two decades of terror. As McCreless suggests, the extramusical content of the trio is "virtually indisputable" and is a work fundamentally about death: both a private experience and understanding and a more universalizing commentary.[79] More importantly, an affective rendering like Shostakovich's Trio, which hints at elements of tragedy, of nocturne, and of Jewishness is an imagined dream compared to the real sounds of bombs and death in Leningrad. Here, Shostakovich's Trio, not even linked to the Blockade as substantially as the 7th Symphony, is resistance to the overtaking and obliterating sonic language of violence and bombardment, and is an elegant and poignant piece of art. In the 7th Symphony, the *Largo* slow and introspective sections, even of the longest, third movement are immediately contrasted with sections that are unabstractly marked "Risoluto" or resolutely. The colossal ninety-minute work closes with a defiant and triumphal march to the end, marked by a slight fatigue for both the taxed performers and the audience with a moderate tempo and relentless emphasis of the tonic key by the martial brass and percussion.

The Trio is an emotional opposite to the glorious symphony of Shostakovich. Composed initially for the private commemoration and funeral of Shostakovich's friend Ivan Sollertinsky in 1944, Shostakovich then expanded the commemorative meaning of the work to include the victims of the Nazi death camps about which he learned in the same year.[80]

---

[78] Adamovich and Granin, *Blokadnaia kniga,* 288-91.
[79] Patrick McCreless, "The cycle of Structure and the Cycle of Meaning: The Piano Trio in E minor op. 67," in *Shostakovich Studies,* 113-137, here: 120-121.
[80] McCreless, "The cycle of Structure and the Cycle of Meaning," 128.

The Trio links Shostakovich's personal anguish to the anguish of the war and the Holocaust. In the "Leningrad" symphony, there are glimpses into Shostakovich's calm and concern like the plaintive violin writing of the first movement, but the overall sentiment is a prescription for Soviet triumph.[81] By contrast, the trio is a musical synthesis of private commemoration, war commemoration, and a discussion of Jewish victimization. Not addressed in other analyses, Shostakovich was one of the first composers or intellectuals including Vasily Grossman (*Treblinskii Ad,* 1946) to commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust specifically for Jews in a Soviet political climate of the Soviet Extraordinary Commission and a desire to claim retribution for all "peaceful Soviet Citizens."[82] Shostakovich articulated in the Trio the wartime horror of the Holocaust decades before it was possible to discuss the Holocaust in the USSR, and even before his explicitly commemorative works like the 13th *Babi Yar* Symphony. In 1944, Shostakovich also advised the PhD thesis of Moisei Beregovskii, the folklorist and ethnomusicologist from Ukraine.[83] The incorporation of Jewish themes in the trio was not an abstract or imagined borrowing, but rather an intentional and informed inclusion from Shostakovich's personal associations with Jewish musicians including Beregovskii and his closeness to the tragedy of the Holocaust. As a wartime composition, the Trio is more of an artistic negotiation than the 7th Symphony. Rather than a large-scale and

---

[81] Consider the solitude and sentimentality of the concertmaster solos as well as the difficulty of the delicate wind solos for performers who physically had their lungs taxed by months of starvation and cold.

[82] The Soviet Extraordinary Commission, or the Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Atrocities of the German Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices and the Damage They Caused to Citizens, Collective Farms, Public Organizations, State Enterprises and Institutions of the USSR began collecting data on the destruction of the USSR in hopes of material claims for restitution in 1942. The language used on these documents as well as early Holocaust memorials, like at Treblinka, was the murder of "peaceful Soviet citizens" obfuscating Jewish and Polish victimization and focusing on a larger grand narrative of Soviet destruction at the hands of Hitlerite fascists. Consider: Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, 541–2.

[83] Lyudmila Sholokhova, "Moisei Iakovlevich Beregovskii," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, accessed March 25th, 2024: https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Beregovskii_Moisei_Iakovlevich#suggestedreading.

extremely public addressing of the Great Patriotic War, the trio is a private commemoration, and thusly can address topics not yet suitable for Soviet public performance, like the Holocaust.

D. Conclusions

Sound and music provide a narrow window into understanding the human conditions and complicated memories of the Great Patriotic War in the USSR. Considering the war separately from the Holocaust from the Soviet perspective reveals the overlap and entanglement between memory and victimization of the war and specifically victims of the Holocaust. While groups of intellectuals and Jews fled and were able to establish institutions in relative safety, other paths to survivorship included enlistment in the Red Army, clandestine service in Partisan brigades, and evacuation to cities like Leningrad which turned out not to be a refuge at all. The narrative of the Great Patriotic War in the USSR was that of Field Marshall Zhukov's victory in Berlin, the technological fury of the Katyusha missiles or "Stalin's Organs," of the Victory Banner over the Reichstag (*Znamia Pobedy nad Reikhstagom*), and of the mournful but righteous liberation of all of the death camps in Poland. In victory and celebration, the unvalorous and brutal murder of POWs, the essential role of Partisans, and the additional Slavic-targeted violence of the Holocaust and civilian death are overshadowed and intentionally suppressed.

For Soviet citizens, an intellectual divide emerged out of the Great Patriotic War between private and public commemoration. Commemorative acts, like Shostakovich's triumphal return to Leningrad to premiere the 7th Symphony reflected the glory of the state and the triumph of intellect and will over the Fascist war machine. However, the language of those who survived the Leningrad Blockade was not that of victory and success, but often

depicts a desperate voice calling for help with no answer. Similarly, pieces like Edi Tyrmand's *Elegaic Improvisation* were consigned to a drawer until long after the end of the USSR as it addressed the failures of the USSR to anticipate the rapid onslaught of war in Belarus, the devastating consequences for civilians, and the mass murder of Soviet Jews in the Holocaust by Bullets. Shostakovich's *Trio* addresses the tragedy of the Holocaust before it became impossible to do so, and Prokofiev's First Violin Sonata painted a grim and foreboding picture of the war without explicitly addressing any aspects of violence or catastrophe.

The combination of sound and uncommonly commemorative works here, is a challenge to accepted narratives of commemoration. How does Shostakovich's private commemoration for his friend which incorporated Jewish themes as he heard about the Holocaust compare with intentional preservation of Yiddish folklore from exiled Jews to Central Asia? Survival like that of Edi Tyrmand who was both a partisan and an evacuee is a direct refutation of Jews cowering in Tashkent or going peacefully to slaughter in Belarus. Partisans had an assertive and powerful path to survival, and like evacuees were often sole survivors from their family. Both Soviet POWs and the casualties of the Leningrad blockade reveal the crimes of Nazi Germany which extended beyond Jewish victimization, and provide contextualization and understanding of the cult of personality around Stalin who led the USSR to an allied victory, and to postwar Soviet suspicion and a desire for revenge.

VI. Weinberg, Yudakov, and Myaskovsky: Evacuation and postwar antisemitism

Within the expansion of Soviet historiography to consider POWs and Partisans, there is increasing attention to the plight of evacuated Soviets as a dimension of Holocaust survival to understand postwar antisemitism. Experiences of the Holocaust and evacuation also directly linked to *Zhdanovshchina* with postwar attention on the Jewish Antifascist Committee and a contraction in cultural institutions. Although Soviet records dramatically overstate the numbers of those evacuated, conservative estimates from the Russian Red Cross still place evacuation numbers as high as six or seven million people.[1] The focus was not specifically evacuating Jews, and the targeted evacuation of artists and musicians was a priority within a longer history of Soviet arts and international cultural diplomacy. [2] Entire Soviet institutions of culture were evacuated to Tashkent including the Yiddish theatre, and every composer ultimately denounced in 1948 was evacuated in some capacity during the war. In Holocaust historiography, Moisei Beregovsky and Schmerke Kaczerginski both created explicit collections of Yiddish and Jewish culture in the USSR and Poland – Beregovsky primarily prewar and Kaczerginski postwar. However, pieces composed during the war including those by Weinberg, Myaskovsky, and Yudakov show a lyric rendering of trauma during or through the experience of war. In addition to preserving cultural remnants, they transform folk music elements into descriptive classical works which reflect prewar

[1] In the first Western monograph, Rebecca Manley challenges these statistics that are as high as 25 million: Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 50. The examination of the Red Cross documents can be found in: Vadim Dubson, Toward a Central Database of Evacuated Soviet Jews' Names, for the Study of the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Territories, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 26, Issue 1, Spring 2012, Pages 95–119, https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcs013.

[2] Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War 1945-1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

memories, wartime subjectivities and influence, and postwar repressions. The suppression of these works reveals the entanglement of Soviet antisemitism with cultural restrictions and links the Soviet experience of the Holocaust including evacuation to denunciation and artistic terror.

Mieczyslaw (Moshe) Weinberg is a familiar figure in Soviet music, best known in Holocaust studies for his opera *The Passenger* which features an unnamed concentration camp. Lesser-known is Weinberg's time in Tashkent, and the effects specifically on his violin writing from this period. I contrast the first of Weinberg's sonatas for violin and piano (1942) with a work by a Bukharian-Jewish composer, Suleiman Yudakov from the same period in Tashkent and the violin sonata of Nikolai Myaskovsky composed in exile to Georgia. In doing so, I explore aspects of the musical culture in Tashkent between 1942 and 1953 for the prewar inhabitants of the city and their evacuated interlocuters and the impacts of evacuation on composition. In the case of Yudakov, a synthetic influence of Soviet-Ashkenaz music and Central Asian musical practice came together in one piece, Weinberg nodded to Mikhoels and the music of the Yiddish Theatre, and Myaskovsky integrated Georgian folksong into his sonata. In evacuation, these classical composers bridged different cultural spaces, making evacuation a common thread in classical pieces. How did the Ashkenaz communities of evacuated intellectuals interact with Central Asians, and what artistic works emerged? These exchanges filter into music along with Ashkenaz influence creating truly unique sound worlds and cultural synthesis. I discuss Yudakov's Westernization of Central Asian idioms and the influence of *shashmaqam* and other forms on Weinberg's violin writing. All three works were composed in the 1940s but not premiered until much later, and in Weinberg and Myaskovsky's case, they were explicitly prosecuted during *Zhdanovshchina*. As reinforced

by a case study of these three composers, *Zhdanovshchina* was entangled with both evacuation and postwar antisemitism and began with the victory of the Red Army in 1945.

In addition to focusing on exiled artists, I also complicate the evacuation itself. First, the phases of Western Soviet evacuation, and specifically Jewish migration East mirrors other historic paths to safety. Flight to Central Asia, for example is a longer "Yiddishization" or perhaps "Jewishization" extending from Bukharian flight from Persia to Uzbekistan in the 8th century CE to Soviet encouragement of relocation to Birobidzhan. Transit to the East was also a presumed traumatic experience with Imperial Russian prison deportations and the *katorga* system of labor to Siberia and Central Asia which directly preceded the Gulag. The Holocaust and related evacuation can therefore be considered alongside the contemporaneous atrocities the Gulag and Stalinist Terror. The assumption that Jews were evacuated to Soviet regions without Jews is incorrect, and ignores centuries of displacement to the Imperial and Soviet interior. Similarly, the view that "Jews fought the war from Tashkent" has been thoroughly criticized and mirrors other pejorative assumptions about Central Asia which continued through the Soviet Afghan war.[3] This negative combination of antisemitism with evacuation was felt during the war and immediately postwar by the members of the Yiddish theatre and Jews in evacuation who tried to serve in the Red Army and contributed to postwar antisemitic violence including the Night of the Murdered Poets.[4] Both asylum seeking

[3] Jelena Subotić, *Red Star Yellow Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019). Consider also the "traitorous" language assigned to Central Asian Muslims in the Soviet Afghan war from a contemporary source: Alexandre Bennigsen, "Mullahs, Mujahidin and Soviet Muslims," *Problems of Communism* 33(6), 1984, pp. 28-44. This has been further extended in the research of Marlene Laurelle.

[4] Consider that in 1946, the Yiddish theatre countering this narrative when they emphasized the "battle readiness" of their members: GOSET Fond 2307, accession 2005.405, RG-22.011M, Reel 8 March 1946. The indictment of the writers ultimately murdered in 1952 also highlights their evacuation as a key element of their "un-Soviet" behavior: Indictment in the JAC case, Document no. 10, 4/3/1952, TsA FSB.

migration and distressed transit are reflected in Jewish epistemology and cultural preservation.

I challenge the "mercurial" diasporic nature of the Jewish community in creating these synthetic works and instead argue for the durability of cultural preservation and *Yiddishkeit*.[5] As such, evacuation and migratory narratives should be analyzed along parallel testaments of other migratory communities including the treatment of Romani musicians in the Holocaust, *Shezhire* genealogical tradition of the Qazakh *Bai* or the transfer of shamanistic knowledge by the Saami.[6] Works like Weinberg's *Sonata for Violin* narrated the Holocaust as it occurred with composers somewhere between victims and survivors. Similarly, classical compositions like those composed postwar by Yudakov and Weinberg weren't ethnographic collections or preservations of folklore, but intentional, created pieces which are abstracted, analogous to a novel or poem rather than oral history. This reframing situates Jewish wartime musical works not as Soviet artifacts, but as negotiation of Jewishness against yet another imposed and foreign state. In the affective lens of music, scores serve as an alternate ego document, containing evidence of preservation of culture, intentional representation regionalisms encountered in exile, and individual testament to family histories or community experiences. Nikolai Myaskovsky's sonata which incorporates folk elements from a community of Georgians serves as counterpoint to Yudakov and Weinberg who utilized materials from internal Jewish knowledge in their compositions. Composers like Mieczyslaw Weinberg parallel authors like Vasily Grossman who made as

[5] Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).
[6] I address Kazakh *shezhire* alongside the sonic impositions of the Gulag in this book, and have written separately on the Roma and autoexoticism of European classical music including in the epilogue and Chapter 4 of *Hitler's Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide in Europe*. See also Gyorgy Szomjas-Schiffert, *Singing Tradition of the Lapp Shamans* (Budapest: Kiado, 1996), 56.

substantial a contribution to documenting the Jewish experience in the Soviet period as they did to Soviet classical music culture.

Tashkent is an excellent microcosm to study many of these musical elements across time with Jewish transit pre-war to Birobidzhan, an existing and historic community of Bukharian Jews, substantial wartime evacuation through the city, and postwar returning Gulag prisoners. Viewing this transit through the lens of the established Bukharian community is particularly significant in recasting larger narratives of the Soviet Jewry. The impacts of the Holocaust on Central Asian Jewry including the Bukharian community are almost completely unexplored.[7] How did the Bukharian community process and accept the new arrivals from the Western USSR to Tashkent? Music, like that by Bukharian composer Suleiman Yudakov offers a synthetic perspective of the experiences of Western Soviet Jews and their interactions with Central Asian counterparts. In the piece I present here, *Eastern Poem* by Yudakov, there is even a critical shift in the music itself indicating the impact of Western intellectuals on his composition and his repackaging of Central Asian idiom in a classical work. Linking to larger trends, viewing atrocity, duress, and detention from a Central Asian perspective removes the Russo-centric approach and re-centralizes the periphery. Music in this re-centered paradigm is an important document, containing the epistemology of the Jewish community, not exclusively the knowledge of the hegemonic state. Music and sound provide excellent insight into the social interactions between the Ashkenaz community under duress, and the Mizrahi communities of Tashkent.

[7] Albert Kaganovitch, Manashe Khaimov, and several others have worked within the community, but the dominant narratives remain war and veteran histories and macro-Soviet issues rather than an understanding of secondhand Holocaust trauma.

This analysis of classical music specifically discusses composers who had arrived to safety in exile. Although all three pieces were composed during the war, they all hold publication dates immediately after 1945 and none were premiered until post-1965 because of Soviet censorship. For comparative rigor, these two Jewish composers, Yudakov and Weinberg are contrasted with the Russian/Soviet exile, Nikolai Myaskovsky. Myaskovsky was denounced alongside Shostakovich and Prokofiev in 1948 under *Zhdanovshchina* and so his music has a similar repressed and unknown status as Weinberg's even if the repressions were from different motivations. It is vital to distinguish between soundscapes of the Holocaust and transit and music making and this analysis builds on the previous discussion of social networks and sound in communities in the previous chapters. As such, an extremely important aspect of Weinberg, Yudakov, and Myaskovsky's work was their ability to compose in relative safety. This chapter addresses these synthetic works once Western Soviet Jews began interacting with Bukharians in Tashkent, the influence of the Yiddish theatre in exile, and the necessity of musical composition for working through trauma and cultural preservation. These works reflect traumatic experiences, but were not composed during corporeal threat to the composers. Indeed, none of these three pieces which originated in exile, were premiered until long after the war. Therefore, the negotiations of these composers provide us insight into the traumas of the Holocaust, and also their complicated engagement with the Soviet state.

Finally, each of the selected composers had postwar difficulty with the USSR due to ethnic reasons and under the specter of *Zhdanovshchina*. I argue that *Zhdanovshchina* was not purely antisemitic, and agree with Figes' that Zhdanov's denunciation grew out of the victory of the Red Army in 1945 and was an artistic return to the glorification of the Soviet

state.[8] Within this understanding, the ethnic specificity of the Holocaust as a Jewish rather than Soviet tragedy was forbidden. As such, although *Zhdanovshchina* wasn't singularly antisemitic, it paralleled contemporary denunciations and contractions from the Stalinist government which were specifically aimed at Jews including the 1948 "Doctors' Plot" and the 1952 "Night of the Murdered Poets". Antisemitism was a component of *Zhdanovshchina,* so for Weinberg, his association with Mikhoels who was murdered in January, 1948, denunciation was inescapable. I argue that all three composers' exile shaped their eventual denunciations or postwar negotiations with the USSR, and that "anti-Soviet" elements in art and music included the reference or mention of anything Jewish. Together, the three composers, Yudakov, Weinberg, and Myaskovsky provide three case studies of evacuation and a fraught reception history to follow. Their pieces are also fantastic works of classical music, which like the writing of Vasily Grossman, offer an affective and emotional look into the impacts of the war, Holocaust, evacuation, and Soviet Terror.

A. Walking in Fields of Broken Bricks

Music is particularly important to process the experience of evacuation as one of survivorship and to voice traumas which could not be articulated in words. The postwar music of Myaskovsky, Yudakov, and Weinberg is written on two levels – a personal working through of trauma and a public, performed, negotiation with larger artistic policy. Like the writing of Vasily Grossman, Varlam Shalamov, or Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the lyric rendering of trauma, and narrative rather than testimonial or legal descriptions was a vital part of processing the war and the Holocaust. [9] In the Soviet context, the layered

[8] Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 492.
[9] Eva B. Revesz, "Poetry after Auschwitz: Tracing Trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann's Lyric Work," *Monatshefte* 99, no. 2 (2007): 194-216.

victimization of Nazi and Soviet antisemitic violence was specifically articulated in lyric and abstract formats to voice inarticulatable trauma and dangerous ethnically-specific victimhood.[10] Music parallels philosophical fields and through its abstract nature, shows a "working-through" process of how to represent and depict trauma.[11] The music of evacuees is both the music about a traumatic event and the music created during a traumatic event, and in the case of all three composers here, music which continued to be a negotiation of ongoing trauma and repression.

Theatre and music were ways of working through the trauma of the Holocaust while also reclaiming Jewish life. Rita H. describes returning to Łodz and gathering with other actors to "make some order out of chaos."[12] As Bianca B. said, "there are no words for this": the enormous, articulatable trauma of the Holocaust which she described only in fragments.[13] In Tashkent they "heard about the victory at Stalingrad, [but] never heard about the camps. We[knew] it must have been dreadful there, but we couldn't dare talk about it. We only found the whole thing out later."[14] The nameless mass graves, conflicted hatred of Polish neighbors, and guilt of survivorship complicated an impossible trauma. The euphemistic language of genocide, of "something happening in Germany", the bits of information hidden in the reports of the glorious Red Army victories in *Pravda* contributed to a similar inarticulability

[10] Julia Kolchinsky-Dasbach, "Lyric Witness: Intergenerational (re) collection Of The Holocaust In Contemporary American Poetry," UPenn, PhD Dissertation, (2021).
[11] Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical witness and Holocaust representation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 11-40.. Wlodarski contrasts Schoenberg and Adorno's *Survivor from Warsaw*, for example.
[12] Rita H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2012), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[13] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[14] Hilda Busch, Interview 33714, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 28, 1997, Accessed February 13, 2024.

of trauma in Soviet testimony.[15]Adel R. said that she "never heard in Tashkent what goes on in Europe, what goes on in Germany, what goes on with the Jews" and speaks to her naivete as she found out about the Holocaust: "certainly everyone couldn't be gone."[16] Additionally, survivorship in Central Asia was complicated and differed from surviving the camps. David S. felt that to be in Central Asia was already to be free, and couldn't fully understand what liberation meant until he returned to his home in Austria and saw the destruction after the war in 1946.[17] Repatriation and return to the Western USSR and Poland meant confirming rumors of the Final Solution that exiles hoped was Soviet propaganda.[18]

To voice this inarticulatable trauma, Jews turned to arts including theatre and music in the immediate postwar period. Felix F., a Polish Jew who worked in the Yiddish theater his entire life including in exile in Ashkhabad and Tashkent, specifically detailed the impact of theatre, music, and Yiddish language postwar in articulating these voiceless traumas. When he performed in Belz in 1946, "people fought for tickets, so hungry to hear a Jewish word" before Soviet authorities started saying that they only could perform in Russian or Polish. When he returned to Warsaw, he "was walking among fields of broken bricks" looking for people or familiar landmarks around his home. He was again asked to perform but initially declined: "how can we dance on a cemetery" before being persuaded to perform for children so that they could accept their Jewishness. He felt that theatre and music were ways for children to bring happiness to their lives, and to reclaim an element of Jewishness that didn't

[15] Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).
[16] Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 2, 1997, Accessed January 21, 2024.
[17] David Steiner, Interview 26961, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 12, 1997, Accessed February 13, 2024.
[18] Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 202.

mean "that to be a Jew means to be killed."[19] Working in the Yiddish theatre and composing also was a relatively economically privileged position. Salaries for orchestra members were between five and seven hundred roubles a month, or 8400 roubles annually, a small fortune given that a residence for a family of five in Tashkent cost between 150 and 300 roubles and even prominent composers only made slightly more -750-800 roubles a month.[20]

"Every Century has its own Middle Ages. Let's continue our Renaissance."[21] Natalia Vovsi, the daughter of Solomon Mikhoels saw the Yiddish theatre and continuation of Jewish cultural life abroad as a preservation of culture, a rebirth of what was being destroyed in Europe. Vovsi spoke in her memoir about the artists thrown to the "abyss" by the Russian Revolution, not yet knowing the horrors of the Holocaust and what news awaited returning refugees in the mid-1940s. Jews carried sonic fragments of *Yiddishkeit* into evacuation like they carried physical vestiges of culture like Joseph L. who evacuated from Oswiecim and carried his *Mezuzah* from his childhood home through the entire war.[22] The theatre was a vital source of community for refugees, like "clergy – the spiritual leaders," but also vital for disseminating Soviet propaganda which filtered into libretti and staging of productions.[23] Soviet gestures toward Jewish cultural sensibilities in Yiddish were usually a smokescreen for propaganda and to inculcate state norms.[24] The language of the Yiddish theatre was that of Perets and Sholom Aleichem and the music of Weinberg and others writing theatre pieces

[19] Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[20] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 167. And Records of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre (GOSET), f. 2307 reel 4, accession 2005.405, RG-22.011M Orchestra Salaries from September 1942.
[21] Natalia Vovsi, *Moi otets Solomon Mikhoels: Vospominanie o zhizni I gibeli* (Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 1977), 3-4.
[22] Joseph L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 891), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.
[23] Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).
[24] Oleg Budnitskii, David Engel, Gennady Estraikh, and Anna Shternshis, eds. *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, Jews in the Soviet Union vol. 3 (New York: New York University Press, 2022), 25.

was not simply diegetic background music, but an integration of Yiddish culture into classical performance and compositional techniques. Like Kaczerginski said in his forward to *Dos Gesong fun Vilna Geto*, "songs sung by Jews in the ghettos, death camps and partisans units, in which they poured out of their sad hearts, will be of great significance for writing the history of Jewish martyrdom and struggle…song, wit, sharp jokes continuously accompanied and surrounded the Jews: when they went to work, when standing in line for a bowl of soup, when being led to the slaughter, and when heading into battle."[25] Weinberg's music reflects a delicate balance of community preservation and professional negotiation.

Even while in Tashkent, to speak Russian or Polish with a "Jewish" accent was dangerous, and Jews were subject not only to patriotism exams to join the army, but this accent could make routine tasks dangerous in exile.[26] This process of a dangerous voice, an emanation of the self which could betray ones safety makes the use of voice in Yiddish theatre and the creation of voiceless Yiddish artistic works more poignant. Preservation of Jewish folklore in non-textual formats like the violin of Mikhoels in Weinberg's work or the transformed *ghijak* in Yudakov's piece were able to articulate Jewishness where it was not yet possible to vocalize. Weinberg, Yudakov, and Myaskovsky's music isn't *kontrafakt* or repurposed Soviet patriotic songs with a satirical Jewish overlay of text, but rather an incorporation of exile and Jewishness into classical works, something relatively natural in exile, but subversive and even dangerous by the time these works were premiered.[27] Weinberg and Yudakov represented two different Jewish communities and experiences, while Myaskovsky depicted Russian exile rather than the Soviet front.

---

[25] Shmerke Kaczerginksi, *Dos Gesong fun Vilna Geto*, Introduction, trans. Stephen Naron.
[26] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and Its aftermath*, 157.
[27] Consider Bret Werb's analysis of the ways in which Soviet songs were Yiddishized during the Holocaust: Bret Werb, "Fourteen Shoah Songbooks," *Musica Judaica* 20 (2013): 39-116.

All three works, *Eastern Poem* and the two sonatas of Weinberg and Myaskovsky represent something other than the official war narrative of the USSR.

Survivors in exile had difficulty expressing what happened to their families. Many, like Rita H. who was evacuated with the Yiddish theatre thought that certainly "my family will survive, they will find a way to escape all of these horrors"[28]. Rita spoke about her family in the present-continuous tense still indicating a sense of unresolved grief – how could she have survived? In contrast to testimonies from camps or from those who dealt directly with perpetrators, there is a grief in the explanation, that she thought her "family was safe in Vilna" in 1941. About the death of her family, she states, "there was only Ponar" referring to the mass execution site of Ponary where the Jews of Vilnius were murdered. She explicitly doesn't use the words "death" or "murder": an unwillingness across testimonies to name exactly what happened to family members in an unimaginable catastrophe. Gilda Z says only how her mother and other family members were "taken away" but doesn't mention murder, and Fritzi S. remembers only how two people came to tell her "the fate of her family" but without graphically detailing the "fate."[29] Many survivors in exile didn't know the extent of the Holocaust, they knew Jews were evacuated "but hadn't heard anything about killings."[30] When David S. returned to Poland with his brothers, he delays saying, "we heard already that there was a big slaughter" and keeps saying "we heard, we never believed you know, we heard" barely able to articulate the enormity of the Holocaust and his familial losses.[31] Matthew T. similarly describes visiting his hometown of Kielce, that he "had no idea about

[28] Rita H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2012), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.
[29] Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030), and Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).
[30] Hyman K. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4400), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[31] David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

the camps or [his] family" and says his family was sent to Auschwitz or Treblinka. He never directly articulates that his family was murdered or are dead and uses the obfuscating language of perpetrators in his grief.[32] Some couldn't vocalize what happened at all, Abraham L. was prompted by his interviewer about his family "were they murdered?" and can only nod, before saying that "the news came from a former neighbor in a letter."[33]

The ability to continue to perform and compose in exile was highly privileged and speaks to the level of talent of Weinberg, Yudakov, and Myaskovsky. Their status was among the other evacuated intellectuals of the USSR including Akhmatova who were sent to Tashkent and whose artistic merits allowed them to work in relative safety from the Holocaust and the front. The traumas of the war didn't end suddenly in 1945, and these pieces articulate a longer evacuation trauma which continued for those who survived.[34] Still, their individual stories mirror thousands of other testimonies: Weinberg's sole survivorship in his family and postwar issues from his entanglement with the Yiddish theatre, Yudakov's negotiations of Central Asian and Jewish identity during the war, and Myaskovsky's evacuation rather than military service and postwar suspicion. To create a cultural renaissance was also an assertion of community knowledges to be used within the Jewish community. Works like those by Weinberg, Myaskovsky, and Yudakov can be understood on two levels – a cultural preservation intelligible only to those with insider knowledge, and as a professional product utilizing their evacuation for new compositions.

---

[32] Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[33] Abraham L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2004), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
[34] Consider in the same testimony (Matthew T, HVT 2349) his description of a Jewish child hid with Polish neighbors who later became an alcoholic "like many others who were hidden in Poland," and the need to work through these traumas including in abstract methods.

As such, their representative works from this period read as an alternative ego document alongside contemporary testimony, articulating elements of trauma not yet possible to voice in the late 1940s.

B. Suleiman Yudakov's Eastern Poem (1946)

Suleiman Yudakov was a Bukharian Jewish composer born in the fertile Ferghana valley in Uzbekistan in Kokand in 1916. He was placed in an orphanage as a child, where even at a young age, he was acknowledged as a superb musical talent and was able to notate his natural surroundings in written music.[35] As a teenager, he was accepted into the *Rabfak* or worker's educational facility at Moscow Conservatory as a flautist. While at Moscow Conservatory, Yudakov transitioned into the composition program, where he ultimately became a student of the great Reinhold Gliere. With the outbreak of war, Yudakov returned to Central Asia, where he worked between Dushanbe with the Tajik State Philharmonic and Tashkent until 1946. He was able to work with ease in Tajikistan given the linguistic overlap between his native Bukhori based in Farsi and Tajik rather than in Uzbek which is Turkic. Naturally throughout his life he professionally utilized Russian, but given his upbringing before being required to learn Russian in a Bukharian orphanage, Yudakov's primary language was Bukhori. Yudakov moved permanently to Tashkent in 1946 where he lived until his death in 1990.

Compositionally, Yudakov's primary claim is to the national anthem of the Tajik SSR which is still part of the modern national anthem. His sampling of ethnographic materials was in line with the guidelines of Socialist Realism – Nationalist in form, Socialist in content

[35] Dmitry Feofanov ed., "Yudakov, Solomon Aleksandrovich," *Biographical Dictionary Of Russian/Soviet Composers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), 608.

– and was popular in 1944 when it was written.[36] Yudakov won the Stalin Prize for the Tajik national anthem when it was adopted in 1946 with lyrics by Abolqasem Lahouti. Although the lyrics have been changed to remove mentions of Stalin, the language changed between Tajik and Russian, the music remains the same, pointing to an enduring quality in Yudakov's music, and how he captured something recognizably Tajik which stands even thirty-one years after Soviet collapse. During the war Yudakov was evacuated from his studies in Moscow back to Tashkent from where he eventually continued to Dushanbe and spent the remainder of his career in Central Asia. Yudakov's notable works are similar to the Tajik anthem, banal in title or form, and contain significant regional cultural messages. These pieces include the opera "Syn" or "Son" in Russian, in which the libretto was about the Maratha (Indian) hero Farzand rather than a prototypic Slavic *bogatyr*/hero like Ilya Muromets, or the "Dancing Suite" for two pianos which contained again ethnographic sampling of Tajik regional dances. "Eastern Poem" from 1946 is from this same period of Yudakov's compositions and specifically contains idioms from the Bukharian *shashmaqam* ensemble adapted for the western violin.

Yudakov's "Eastern Poem" for violin and piano initially appears to be a standard concert work. There are numerous pieces for violin and piano from the Classical era to present with the same scoring, and with virtuosic elements to showcase the violin against a simple piano background. Yudakov's piece initially seems to be yet another ten-minute concert piece, a simple transcription or exoticist interpretation of Central Asia for Western Classical music audiences.[37] However, as Hooker and others have pointed out, what does it

[36] Marina Frolova Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 303.
[37] Lynn Hooker, "Turks, Hungarians, and Gypsies on Stage: Exoticism and Auto-Exoticism in Opera and Operetta," *Hungarian Studies* 27, no. 2 (2013): 291-311.

mean to be "exotic" and for whom? Can the exotic, or an orientalist other be represented from the inside culture looking outward? This "autoexoticism" is not the exotic of Stravinsky – a Russian national abstractly sampling a presumed primitive other of the Steppe.[38] Neither is Yudakov's writing the distorted view of the Orient contained in compositions by Imperial composers like Rimsky-Korsakov or Borodin. This authenticity is important, as the Eastern element of Yudakov's Eastern Poem is one outside of a binary and oppositional definition of Occident and Orient.[39] Furthermore, in the context of the Holocaust and postwar antisemitism, Yudakov lyrically articulated the folklore of a specific, non-Ashkenazic Jewish tradition, preserving and disseminating it as a Central Asian work. The exoticism of Yudakov is layered with hidden community knowledges of *shashmaqam* only recognizable to Bukharians, intersections with Ashkenaz practice only recognizable to other refugees, and vague Central Asian idiom which was the perceptual 'exotic' element making the work publishable. In this short work for the violin, Yudakov captures Central Asian elements and articulates them in a manner intelligible for the West.

Bukharians have their own version of the western violin, called *ghijak* played similarly to the Chinese *erhu* – vertically and on the lap. Unlike the *erhu*, *ghijak* is of a similar size to the violin, without the extended neck, and sometimes even replaced with violins in traditional ensembles but still played in the vertical manner. This instrument is one possible instrument in the Uzbek and Bukharian *shashmaqam* ensemble. Although it does not rise to the prominence of the drum and the voice, *ghijak* is an important instrument and is

[38] Stravinsky's "autoexoticism" is in reference to the ballet *Rite of Spring* wherein he depicts primitive Russia. However, this folklore is arguably not his culture, but rather an urban, cosmopolitan view of the pagan Siberian rites commodified to shock the Parisien audiences.
[39] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1978).

used most extensively in Ferghana, Yudakov's birthplace.[40] Yudakov didn't remain in Tashkent throughout the war, and was in Samarkand and Ferghana where there were more intersections between the Bukharian and Ashkenaz communities for cross-cultural developments in music. It is also worth note, that Bukharian religious practice, like other Jewish tradition, often excludes the voice in favor of purely instrumental music which is considered more modest and halachically appropriate.[41] In doing so, wind instruments like the *duduk* borrowed from Armenian musical tradition or the *ghijak* become increasingly prominent in the ensemble to replace the melodic lines of the voice. In the repeated testimony of Bukharian interaction with Ashkenazim, there is an emphasis on exchange only with religious Ashkenazim and Bukharian households, including at community events like weddings and circumcision. Festive music from the Bukharian side would have included these non-vocal instrumental ensembles, and they were certainly influenced by the effects of Yiddish theatre and proficient Klezmer or Western Ashkenaz musicians.

National and religious self-awareness among Jews in Central Asia was partially heightened by wounded Jewish soldiers who had seen the Holocaust in Poland and brought this news to field-hospitals in Tashkent. As seen in the Bukharian-Polish interactions, the primary social engagement was religious, with increasing numbers of people gathering for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah by 1943 and 1944.[42] *Shashmaqam* is not an ensemble for religious services or sacred events in the Bukharian schedule. Yudakov's influence to use the

[40] Alexander Djumaev, "Musical Heritage and National Identity in Uzbekistan," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 14, no. 2 (2005): 165–84. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184517.
[41] Consider Theodore Levin's discussion of the musical instruments of Central Asia and the entanglement with religious practice. Theodore Levin, Saida Daukeyeva, and Elmira Köchümkulova, eds. *The Music of Central Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 26. Halacha is the corpus of Jewish law derived from the Torah and the basis of the Talmud.
[42] Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 179.

western violin, is therefore from his conservatory training and only tangentially related to the influence of the violin used by Western Soviet Jews in social events like weddings. There was substantial exchange between educated and wealthy Bukharians and Poles at social events like *brit milot* (circumcisions) and weddings. This piece is something flashy, a concert work for the violin, and one which would be programmed either in Yudakov's conservatory world post-war or at one of these more secular but still cultural events in Central Asia. The Bukharian traditions of virtuosity on instruments like the *darbuka* and *ghijak* are here for the violin, and would be extremely appropriate in a social setting. Finally, Yudakov never specifies that this piece of music is Jewish, but rather "Eastern". The incorporation of all of these themes and regional elements might be recognizable for internal community consumption, but for publication and performance this piece was intended for the stage and to be recognizable to a classical audience outside of Central Asia.

The first element of "Eastern Poem" which is striking is the use of the modern violin. There are several possible interpretations for this. Yudakov certainly had contact both in Dushanbe and in Tashkent with Klezmer musicians, members of the Yiddish Theater, and Western Soviet classical musicians. The switch of using the western violin, writing a notated piece of music vs. *shashmaqam* which is passed in the aural tradition, and writing the piece as a concert work for the stage rather than social gatherings all point to the influence of Western Soviets on Central Asian musical culture. This work was also composed in 1946, as the USSR pivoted from the War into international projects. Such a work, ethnographically sampling, and written for the dominant competition instruments of the USSR – violin and piano – would have been highly appealing and is consistent with the popularity of

comparable works like Aram Khachaturian's violin concerto from 1940 or Myaskovsky's Violin Sonata of 1944.

The work opens with bell-tone chords at the piano, unusual sonorities with quartal or dissonant harmonies added to tonal writing for the piano. This unusual sonority captures aspects of the introductions in *shashmaqam* ensemble which often features quarter tones and other dissonance impossible to reproduce on an equally tempered instrument like the piano. The violin part is the most interesting, as it has melismatic runs and dramatic virtuosic cadenzas reminiscent of Rimsky Korsakov's *Scheherezade*. However, unlike Rimsky Korsakov's imagined Persian singing, Yudakov precisely articulates the style of vocal or *ghijak* elision popular in the Bukharian community. In doing so, Yudakov combined the influence of his youth in Ferghana with Western Soviet techniques both from conservatory and evacuation to market or promote a unique concert work in the new style of Socialist Realism. As such, these representations of Central Asia are not a sampled Orientalism, but an agentive assertion of Bukharian-ness and Jewishness in a concert work for the violin. This piece is an excellent example of hidden influences and negotiation of regional idiom and assertion with official state strictures for the arts.

C. Mieczyslaw Weinberg's Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 1 (1943)

Mieczyslaw Weinberg was born in Warsaw in 1919 to a musically inclined family. His mother and father were both closely associated with the Yiddish Theater in Moldova and Odesa respectively before marrying and continuing their work in Warsaw. With the outbreak of war, his family fled to Minsk where Mieczyslaw studied piano and composition at the conservatory. Weinberg was evacuated to Tashkent, but unfortunately the remainder of his family were deported first to the Lodz ghetto and then to the Trawniki transit camp where

they died. Weinberg was brought to Tashkent by the violinist Solomon Mikhoels, the dedicatee of this first sonata for violin and piano and Weinberg's father-in-law.[43] The particularities of Weinberg's evacuation to Tashkent are still unknown: his name does not appear on the evacuation cards of the Kurbanov collection, for example, but we know that Mikhoels certainly helped Weinberg leave Minsk, and that the other members of the Minsk conservatory were evacuated to Tashkent.[44] Like Grossmann's assertion that Polish-Jewish exile has largely been remembered as part of the Polish diaspora, Weinberg has a similarly complicated placement – as a Polish composer, Jewish composer, and Soviet composer.[45]

Postwar, Weinberg met Dmitri Shostakovich through Mikhoels who became an important artistic inspiration and personal protector, ultimately interceding on Weinberg's behalf when his daughter was targeted by the NKVD.[46] Shostakovich's influence is the most marked and clear influence in Weinberg's compositions including the First Violin Sonata, many of which borrow the style of writing for strings, the dramatic orchestral scoring, and characteristic Soviet incorporation of ethnic and regional music. The Twelfth symphony of Weinberg is explicitly dedicated to Shostakovich, and a number of other pieces like the Sixth Piano Sonata and Cello preludes directly quote Shostakovich.[47] His music is accessible, in

---

[43] L. D. Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg: Po stranitsam zhizni cherez dokumenty vospominaniya i issdedovaniya,* (Moscow: Buki Vedi, 2019), 48. And Meiczyslaw Weinberg, *Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 1* (Vienna: Universal, 1947).

[44] Mikhoels'(born Vovsi) daughter Natalia primarily wrote about social settings and her father with very little on Weinberg in her memoir about this period, but her recollections create a sense of the intellectual scene and interactions with the Yiddish theatre: Natalia Vovsi-Mikhoels, *Moi otets Solomon Mikhoels: Vospominanie o zhizni I gibeli* (Moscow:Vozvrashchenie, 1977).

[45] Grossmann addresses this paradigm in the introduction of *Shelter from the Holocaust*. Daniel Elphick centers Weinberg as a Polish composer, for example, in analysis of his string music: Daniel Elphick, *Music behind the Iron Curtain: Weinberg and His Polish Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[46] Verena Mogl, *Juden, die ins Lied sich retten «-der Komponist Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-1996) in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Waxmann Verlag, 2017).

[47] This influence shouldn't be considered unidirectional, however, as Shostakovich also drew from Weinberg's compositions. Oleg Sobolev, *"*Mecheslav Vainberg: Glossari*,"* in *ART-1*, 15 May, 2014.

that melodic statements are clear and often highly tonal, but modern with its orchestration and explorations into polytonality. Weinberg's music has received less attention than Shostakovich or Prokofiev, but has gained attention with a revival of his opera *The Passenger* based on the book by Polish Auschwitz survivor and diarist Zofia Posmysz in 2006. Weinberg's music points to a larger symptom of Jewish representation in Soviet music – compositions which addressed the Holocaust as a Jewish catastrophe, even obliquely as in *The Passenger,* were often consigned to a drawer under Soviet censorship. In the case of Weinberg, his success was clearly hindered by his associations in the 1940s with Mikhoels and being targeted under *Zhdanovshchina* in 1948.

Weinberg's personal biography mirrors the evacuation narrative of many, and his postwar denunciations were a similarly magnified version of Soviet antisemitism. In Tashkent, he was fortunate to share a room with A. Klumov, a virtuoso pianist killed at the front in 1944 to whom Weinberg's first piano sonata is dedicated. Klumov and Weinberg fought typhus together and disinfected their living space, and Klumov taught Weinberg Russian.[48] The intellectual circles around the Yiddish theatre remained highly insular, with all Yiddish and Western Soviet Jews performing in the orchestra, for example.[49] Weinberg and others were tasked with creating a theatre and cultural life in miniature in Tashkent, like one might find in Bialystock or Vilna before the war.[50] Weinberg's Violin Sonatas no. 1 and 2 respectively were heavily influenced from his time in Tashkent and come from the period of 1943 when he returned to Moscow. They are among other chamber compositions including

[48] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg,* 49.
[49] Records of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre (GOSET), fond 2307, 2308, Accession 2005.405, RG-22.011M.
[50] Records of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee from the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), fond 8114, folder 4, 328-330, RG-22.028M, Accession 2011.17.

two string quartets, a quintet, and three cycles of "Children's Notebooks" which became the piece *Jewish Songs*. Weinberg incorporated the Jewish aspects of his childhood and Tashkent in these works – of his father's violin, klezmer instruments, and the Yiddish Theatre.[51] The first sonata is dedicated explicitly to Mikhoels, and the second to his father, arguably the two most important violinists in Weinberg's life.

Weinberg, and others, were able to take sonic fragments into exile. The First Violin Sonata has an unusual form, particularly in the first movement as it's not in the expected Sonata form. The themes contain Shostakovichian flair, with stark gestures exchanged between the violin and the piano, and with large timbral ranges employed for both instruments – the violin for example fully utilizes pizzicato, a mute, and a full range of expressive dynamics. This range is predictable and found in many other works of Weinberg, most substantially paralleling the E minor piano trio of Shostakovich composed in the same year (1943). The primary theme of the first movement of Weinberg's sonata returns several times, not as to be expected in sonata form, but often transformed, and most notably rhythmically accelerated into something more hectic and frenzied. This first theme seems to contain several important points of influence. First is the clearly virtuosic influence of Mikhoels. Composed for him, the gestures are schmalzy, theatrical, and tonal – dramatic melodies which would fit in the diegetic music of the theatre. For example, the opening theme has a similar but not identifiable structure and melodic closure to the melody in the play *Tevye the Milkman* which starred Mikhoels. In the original play, the theme plays as the deeply religious Tevye mourns or disowns his daughter for her marriage to the Ukrainian

[51] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg,* 82.

Fedye.[52] Rather than reading a narrative parallel into Weinberg's writing for the violin, the better interpretation is a use of a similar theme to pay homage to Mikhoels and a moment of his exceptional, deeply emotional acting. The fragmented aspect of the melody and its persistent, almost obsessive return reads as a significant theme to which Weinberg keeps returning, but is interrupted. The lack of closure of the theme and rhythmic freneticism emphasizes the importance of this primary melody but also creates a sense of unease. Similarly, in the second movement, the beautiful melody which opens the piece appears in fragments by its third statement – the lower soulful registers of the violin are punctuated by high punctuations which create a stark contrast against the simple creeping counterpoint of the piano. I am inclined to read the fragmentation in the sonata as testimonial – preserving familiar elements of *Yiddishkeit* alongside the tonal elements of his academic training in classical music rather than an incomplete understanding of thematic writing.

The opening melody of the second movement is also striking – a plaintive expressive melody which appears in two complete statements and has a romantic sentimentality. The third movement has short energetic gestures which recall the opening of the fanfare music of *King Lear* on an exuberant dance. The displaced rhythm in the third movement which is exchanged between the violin and the piano creates a clear dialogue, evocative of the style of Yiddish theatre where lines are reinforced by music, rather than consistent diegetic music underneath spoken text. Similarly, the violin *pizzicato* underneath the piano melody recalls the punctuation of a *pizzicato* accompaniment under the steady beat of lyric text like the

[52] Consider the Maurice Schwartz version of the Sholom Aleichem play: The National Film Registry, *Tevye The Milkman*, 1939, Uploaded August 2nd 2023, Youtube, Accessed December 14, 2023: https://youtu.be/wv_Nzjr1OYc?si=3Q4gCFOA_XtLzg8p. This classic Yiddish work is what ultimately was transformed into the Broadway/Cinematic version – Fiddler on the Roof.

poetry of Shalom Aleichem. This aesthetic, coupled with the dedication to Mikhoels shows an intentional engagement with Ashkenaz Jewish culture and musical preservation even in exile. There don't seem to be direct quotes from the Yiddish theatre Rather than sampling Bukharian or other ethnomusics from Tashkent, this Sonata could have been composed in Moscow or Minsk and is similar to Weinberg's other works and Shostakovich's chamber writing. The characteristic themes of each movement do return, and in all three movements are transformed, reinvented, and ultimately attain closure – in the case of the second movement, the entire third movement provides closure. Finally, there is a running style of octave and other difficult interval writing for both instruments which in later works (*The Passenger* 1967, eg) indicating a running train. This running figure appears here in the First Violin Sonata more than two decades before *The Passenger* potentially as an early trial of this sonic documentation or literal soundscape representation of the many trains of evacuation.

Weinberg discussed the disparate impacts of 1948 – that Shostakovich "suffered some fear" but by contrast was sent almost immediately on tour representing the USSR. He understood immediately the antisemitic connections of Zhdanovshchina to the Doctor's Plot as he and Mikhoels were part of "Jewish nationality to which the accused belonged."[53] Weinberg saw the year like a "Sword of Damocles" and his immediate impression, that he was essentially blacklisted except for work in the theatre.[54] The Yiddish theatre noted repressions and the coming dissolution as early as 1943, filling a play "I will live!" with Mikhoels with "Soviet themes" and clarifying that musical performances (*muzikal'nyi*

[53] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg,* 93.
[54] Ibid., 20.

spektakl') were cultural classical performances.[55] By 1946 the committee on art began to question the state of the Yiddish theatre's repertoires citing "cosmopolitanism" and choices of Jewish materials.[56] Antisemitism reached Tashkent largely because of Soviet intervention, as highlighted in numerous evacuee testimonies. This was not a wartime phenomenon, but a noticeable increase in the immediate postwar directly linked to political and cultural actions in Moscow – "antisemitism increased after the doctor's plot, from both Russians and Uzbeks, and definitely in the Red Army."[57] Friends and locals who had been helpful during evacuation suddenly called Jews "German spies" and "Jew thieves" echoing the language of denunciation in the immediate aftermath of the war.[58] Antisemitism in Central Asia was inextricably linked to evacuation, as the dominant perspective was that there were no Jews in Central Asia (to hate) prior to Holocaust evacuation. This speaks to the integration of the Bukharian community into Uzbek society linguistically and culturally, and to the overlaps in Soviet antisemitism: "the Jews fought the war from Tashkent" and antisemitism which initially targeted the caricature of a Western, Ashkenaz, educated Jew.

Weinberg had to juggle theatre and essential or survival composition with his aspirations and training as a serious composer. In both instances, we can see the conflation of theatre work and a lesser artistic exile – themes echoed later for the composer Mikhail Nosyrev who was exiled to Syktyvkar after the Gulag and for Weinberg, the taint of Yiddish theatre driving him out of the classical realm for many years. Although many of Weinberg's

---

[55] GOSET Records Fond 2307, RG-22.011M, Plan of the 1943 Theatre.
[56] GOSET fond 2308, reel 8, folder 39.
[57] Orion Baram, Interview 37390, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, October 20, 1997, Accessed February 8, 2024.
[58] Mary Ludner-Kaletsky, Interview 54486, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 16, 2000, Accessed February 8, 2024.

serious works were still performed in the 1950s, including the Sonata for Violin and Piano no. 2 with David Oistrakh, the first Violin sonata with its dedication to Mikhoels remained .[59]

D. "1948 isn't historical, it's hysterical!" - Myaskovsky's Sonata for Violin and Piano

Nikolay Myaskovsky was born near Warsaw as a citizen of the Russian Empire. He initially pursued military service before deciding to become a composer where he studied with Anatoly Lyadov, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and eventually Reinhold Glière at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Myaskovsky was heavily influenced by these three teachers as well as by the music of Tchaikovsky and Skriabin and his most famous pieces are his 21st symphony, cello sonatas, and violin concerto.[60] Myaskovsky served from 1917—1921 in the Red Army and was impacted by shell-shock and a number of family members who were murdered for Tsarist tendencies shortly after the revolution.[61] Like the composers Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturian, Myaskovsky was evacuated to the Caucasus – the Kabardino-Balkar region in 1941.[62] After returning to Moscow, he was denounced, seemingly mistakenly, alongside Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Aram Khachaturian as part of *Zhdanovshchina,* Andrei Zhdanov's eponymous cultural constrictions and repressions post-war. Myaskovsky repeatedly declined official repentance, despite invitations to speak at the Composers' Union including by Tikhon Khrennikov and was only posthumously rehabilitated after his death in 1950. Myaskovsky's denunciation was puzzling, a rebuke of an otherwise celebrated Soviet composer and teacher.[63]

---

[59] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg,* 21.
[60] Gregor Tassie, *Nikolai Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 21-47.
[61] Patrick Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky: A Composer and His Times* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2021), 105-140.
[62] Tassie, *Nikolai Myaskovsky,* 223.
[63] Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky,* 418-435.

Myaskovsky's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* comes from the last decade of his life and originated with his exile to Kabardino-Balkar and his inspiration with local folk music. He certainly continued to compose in exile including this sonata, and accommodations were made including the establishment of artistic theatres and concerts in Kabardino-Balkaria and the surrounding North Caucuses.[64] He was frustrated with the work, finding it "difficult, intractable, and much of it too ambiguous," while working directly with David Oistrakh to make changes.[65] The piece seems to reflect Myaskovsky's frustration with the form and the instrument. It is in two movements rather than a characteristic three or even four movements like the contemporary works by Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Medtner. Both movements have characteristic lyrical themes, and the second movement is a large theme and variations on a peaceful folk song. However, the themes remain underdeveloped in the work. The transition between keys is often abrupt and poorly executed with incomplete harmonic writing and closure which doesn't plague Myaskovsky's other writing, including the violin concerto. Furthermore, the form itself doesn't serve either instrument. Written as a sonata for violin and piano, rather than the reverse as composed by Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms, it should feature the violin as a virtuosic and brilliant instrument.[66] Instead, the violin remains muddled in unforgiving middle registers and with themes which don't quite open or feel

[64] Glavnoe Pereselncheskoe Upravlenye pri Soviete Ministrov RSFSR, Fond A 327, Folder 25 1942, RG 22.027M.
[65] Tassie, *Nikolai Myaskovsky*, 269.
[66] More than a semantic detail – the "violin" sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms among others are written as "Sonata for Piano and Violin" implying that the mastery in the composition is as a piano sonata with an accompaniment and additional ornamentation by the violin. This reflects the mastery of these composers who were all pianists, and pivots by the end of the 1800s with sonatas by composers like Faure, Franck, Strauss, and finally the Soviet composers like Prokofiev and Shostakovich who featured the violin as an equal or even greater interlocuter to be accompanied by the piano.

satisfied, nor which use the full range of the instrument. The virtuosic gestures, like the brilliant scales in the second movement for the violin, or the pervasive trills in the piano accompaniment are either not-idiomatic for the instruments, too slow to be dazzling, or not approached in a manner to create excitement for the listener. The tragic opening of the theme and variations in the second movement is sparsely accompanied, bordering on a *recitativo*, and the dialogue between throughout the sonata lacks the dynamicism of late Romantic sonatas. The second movement combines aspects of an introverted or singing second movement typical to sonata form with an exuberant final movement while not fully capturing either sentiment. Still, the lyrical writing of this piece, combined with a sensitive and romantic development of folk themes makes it a highly-programmable work for modern performers, and the sonata has largely been overlooked due to Myaskovsky's biography.

Nikolay Myaskovsky's denunciation alongside Prokofiev and Shostakovich in 1948s unclear at best, and a seeming error of Zhdanov's wide-reaching and poorly informed policies. The descriptions of his works included charges of "individualism, decadence, pessimism, and formalism."[67]He had largely renounced dissonant or "formalist" experiments like his writings from the 1920s and 30s, and had focused on tonal if non-textual compositions. Apparently, however, it was this focus on the instrumental rather than the vocal which led to his denunciation and therefore directly connects *Zhdanovshchina* to the first violin sonata and his evacuation.[68] Perhaps, with the strong inclusion of folk music, Myaskovsky celebrated his evacuation too exuberantly in the Violin Sonata rather than glorifying the front and the triumph of the Red Army. Myaskovsky's sonata seems to be a

[67] Ibid., 275.
[68] Patrick Zuk, Nikolay Myaskovsky and the Events of 1948, *Music and Letters*, Volume 93, Issue 1, February 2012, Pages 61–85, https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcr144. Myaskovsky's works were also published by Universal Music during this time, indicating how widely-received and innovative his music was.

perfect example of Socialist Realism – it incorporates regional Kabardino Balkar themes in an accessible and politically acceptable manner – in a sonata for the violin and piano. It's tonal, and contains none of the mysterious or unsettling sonority of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto (1947) nor his Violin Sonata (1968) or even the brooding first Violin Sonata of Prokofiev from 1946.[69] After numerous revisions by Myaskovsky, he brilliantly transformed the regional Balkar theme in the second movement of the sonata - seemingly a hallmark of *korenisatsiya,* making the regional understandable in a Soviet format. Myaskovsky's sonata is so lyrical and singing, that at times it's almost trite. There is certainly nothing in the sonata to indicate the charges of formalism – so what in this sonata contributed to his denunciation? Like the layers of Soviet denunciation, Myaskovsky captured extramusical not musical issues in this sonata. The second movement is a *piacevole* peaceful description of his evacuation, not a glorious depiction of the Red Army nor a modern, angular depiction of the war like Prokofiev wrote in his Violin Sonata. Second, the piece was dedicated to and premiered by a Jew, and even the mighty Oistrakh was not immune from antisemitism.

As such, there are two possible reads of Myaskovsky's Violin Sonata in relation to his denunciation. First, the piece was explicitly dedicated to David Oistrakh, arguably the greatest violinist of the USSR, but also a Jew. [70]Among the antisemitic attacks of the late 1940s, even Shostakovich delayed the premiere of his 1947 Violin Concerto because of the dedication to Oistrakh until 1955.[71] Myaskovsky also explicitly incorporates themes from his evacuation in the lyricism of the piece, notably the theme and variations second movement

[69] Prokofiev similarly delayed the premiere of his first violin sonata, which was also dedicated to Oistrakh, ultimately winning the Stalin Prize for his 1st Sonata in 1947 before his denunciation in 1948. Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 277-278.
[70] Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky*, 425.
[71] This delay is well-known and coincided with Shostakovich's own denunciation alongside Myaskovsky in 1948. The op. 77 violin concerto formally holds the opus 99.

which is built on a Kabardino-Balkar folksong.[72] Unlike Shostakovich, Myaskovsky didn't delay the premiere, and the Violin Sonata was premiered by David Oistrakh and Lev Oborin on April 29, 1947, only eight months before his denunciation in *Pravda*. Myaskovsky wasn't only affiliated with Oistrakh, but a growingly dissident and unacceptable circle. The same year as the sonata, Myaskovsky also wrote six romances for the voice dedicated to Mira Mendelssohn, for example.[73] He didn't understand why he was denounced, nor how these charges could be levied at his music. In fact, Myaskovsky wrote directly to Weinberg about his failure to acknowledge guilt. He said the denunciation "wasn't historical, it was hysterical!"[74] His involvement in *Zhdanovshchina* was a synthesis of several Soviet priorities – he was too tied to Jewish and impolitic actors, he didn't gloriously narrate the Great Patriotic War and instead featured his own evacuation experiences, and aesthetically wrote Romantic apolitical music which no longer fit with Soviet cultural mandates by the mid-1940s.

Myaskovsky was only rehabilitated after his death and remains an obscure composer of the Soviet generation. He was respected among his colleagues, even called the "Father of the Soviet Symphony" given his extensive composition in this genre.[75] Weinberg thought Myaskovsky was a great composer, one of the generation who "saved the culture off Russia from destruction by barbarism and amateurism."[76] Denunciation means that Myaskovsky remains basically unknown outside of his native country, with little written about this

[72] Nikolay Myaskovsky, *Violin Sonata op. 70* (Moscow: Muzgiz 1948).
[73] Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky,* 382.
[74] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg,*19.
[75] Tassie, *Nikolai Myaskovsky,* 83.
[76] Nikitina, *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg*, 18.

composer who so thoroughly interacted with and influenced Soviet music until 1950.[77] The violin sonata is tied to Myaskovsky's evacuation and to *Zhdanovshchina* and is a worthy piece for recovery and performance alongside the parallel Soviet sonatas about the war, including Prokofiev's 1st Violin Sonata. Finally, Myaskovsky's sonata addresses an experience missing from the Great Patriotic War narrative – evacuation. Through the incorporation of themes from the Kabardino-Balkar region, Myaskovsky lyrically painted his experience of the war in exile.

E. Conclusions

What can we hear in music to understand Soviet exile during the Holocaust? Expanding Holocaust historiography to include the experiences of refugees links the Holocaust and Soviet repressions and provides a more complete understanding of the Holocaust in the USSR. Weinberg and Yudakov dialogue offer two different looks at Tashkent – advocacy from an internal position and assertions of Central Asian Jews and preservation or Yiddish culture "abroad" or relocated internally within the USSR. This, contrasted with Myaskovsky, a non-Jewish Russian intellectual refugee complicates our understanding of evacuation and the hierarchies and priorities among evacuees including professional necessity to compose, Orientalist or regional representations being advantageous or dangerous, and preservation of Jewish culture in exile under an increasingly hostile and antisemitic Soviet authority. The selected works are representative of Weinberg, Yudakov, and Myaskovsky's exile and the delayed premiere of all three also link these composers to

[77] Zuk's monograph is one of the first and certainly the most thorough. He addresses the lack of any historiography on Myaskovsky in his introduction: Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky*, xviii.

their postwar difficulties and the rise of antisemitism and Stalinist repressions in the late 1940s.

All three composers continued to compose postwar and had careers shaped by their evacuation and negotiations with the Soviet state. Understanding evacuation and Holocaust narratives as an element of *Zhdanovshchina* adds nuance to Stalinistic repression. *Zhdanovshchina* was inextricably linked to other antisemitic restriction including the "Doctor's Plot" and the Night of the Murdered Poets, but was not an artistic constriction which exclusively targeted Jews. Instead, the inclusion of antisemitism along other politically motivated denunciation reveals the danger of antisemitism and ethnic denunciation as a reason for political denunciation – that Jewishness was suspicious and contrary to Soviet-ness. This ethnic focus in repression is significant in *Zhdanovshchina* as it continued in the ethnic tone of denunciations beyond the Thaw including those in 1979 by Khrennikov. Furthermore, grappling with denunciation and danger in an abstract art like music, means reading seemingly banal inclusions like a Georgian folk song or allusion to the theatre as a negotiation, a potentially fateful inclusion in a musical piece. This fear, of artistic censorship including the most abstract and oblique inclusions in music was a commonality for composers from the Gulag to the Holocaust, to denunciation long after the death of Stalin.

Music was not simply some grand humanizing arc during the Holocaust, as Gilbert and others have rejected[78]. Furthermore, categorizing music as a portable art of "mercurial people" relies on antisemitic views of Jewish music in the classical canon. Rather, music is an indication of the cultural preservation and professionalism of composers in exile. The

[78] Shirli Gilbert, Music in the Holocaust: confronting life in the Nazi ghettos and camps (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

fortitude of all three composers is testament to their compositional strength to produce music under extraordinary duress including evacuation, the Holocaust, and the threat of Soviet arrest. Music is also oblique, with many possible interpretations and influences. This makes music an imprecise ego document, but also critically allows professionals to express their situation, evacuation, and professionalism in their most skilled modality and to articulate traumatic themes not-yet addressable in more legalistic and formal testimonies. With linguistic and ethnic diversity, music and emotional experiences of recitals open difficult conversations about trauma, commemoration, and exile.

VII. Dangerous Virtuosity: Vorkuta and Mikhail Nosyrev's *Capriccio* for Violin and Orchestra

Born in 1924 in Leningrad, violinist Mikhail Nosyrev had a prolific career as a violinist, conductor, and composer. He graduated from Leningrad Conservatory in 1941, and was able to continue working as a musician through the Second World War and the Leningrad blockade as a highly in-demand and virtuosic performer. Unfortunately, Nosyrev's skill attracted jealous attention, and it was likely his conservatory teacher who denounced him to the NKVD.[79] Nosyrev was one of the first prisoners sent to the artistic Gulag Vorkuta after his arrest in the Komi Republic. He was never fully rehabilitated in his lifetime despite repeated appeals to join the union and ultimate approval in 1967. After the Gulag, Nosyrev remained in exile, first in the capital of the Komi Republic, Syktyvkar until 1958 before continuing to Voronezh in Southwestern Russia where he spent the remainder of his life.[80] Nosyrev's life was shaped by terror, detention, and exile, but he remained a musician and practitioner throughout. His surviving compositions contain musical elements which narrate his experiences and reveal the impacts of detention on his compositional process. Nosyrev's music also reveals a working-through process of balancing theatrical elements with serious classical virtuosity. Both were dangerous for Nosyrev, as theatrical elements revealed his professional pause as a composer trapped within the Gulag and classical virtuosity was seen as the sort of self-obsession and virtuosity which contributed to his initial denunciation. As both a virtuoso violinist and one of the most famous composers interned in the Gulag, Nosyrev's music is worth special attention. Performing and rehabilitating these works

[79] "Music Under Soviet Rule: Nosyrev Chronology," Mikhail Nosyrev Website (Family managed), Accessed 8/9/22, www.nosyrev.com/chronology.
[80] "Biography: Nosyrev Chronology," Mikhail Nosyrev Website (Family managed), Accessed 8/9/22, www.nosyrev.com/biography.

including the *Capriccio* for violin revoices a lost generation of Soviet virtuosity lost to the whirlwind of the camp system.

Few composers within the Gulag continued to compose or work artistically while detained. As Inna Klause discovered, between 1920 and 1950, only about two percent of prisoners participated in the music and theatrical life of the camps despite the foundation of numerous camp theatres in the same period.[81] Most musicians were subjected to the same physical labor as their peers, or were in constant fear of losing extremely rare and coveted theatre positions in the camps.[82] The organization of the Gulag was based on reeducative labor and bodily punishment.[83] However, music remained a key feature of cultural reeducation, where literature, music, and sport were essential to convey aspects of Soviet society. Such cultural presentations in the camps were intended to be consumed as a community – to present a unified, official, party line to inmates.[84] Nosyrev's compositions from Vorkuta fall into this category, featuring banal plays for the stage with new Socialist messaging, or heroic epics and fairytales. The use of culture to reeducate intersected with the larger trend of the 1920s and 30s to create a New Soviet People, wherein the political enlightenment of communism was bolstered by cultural enlightenment.[85] As Klause correctly highlights, there has been more substantial discussion of literature and theaters within the

[81] Inna Klause, *Der Klang des Gulag: Musik und Musiker in den sowjetischen Zwangsarbeitslagern der 1920er- bis 1950er-Jahre (*Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).
[82] Vsevolod Zaderatsky for example worked in hard labor near Magadan, and only returned to compositional life after his sentence: Jascha Nemtsov, "„Ich bin schon längst tot ": Komponisten im Gulag: Vsevolod Zaderackij und Aleksandr Veprik," *Osteuropa* (2007): 315-339.
[83] Sobraniye uzakoneniy i rasporyazheniy rabochego i krest'yanskogo pravitel'stva. Moscow: Yuridicheskoye knigoizdatel'stvo; 3 June 1919; 20:257–61.
[84] Such events even contained contemporary news in an entertaining way for prisoners: Ispravitel'no-trudovoy kodeks RSFSR. Izdaniye VTsIK. Moscow: Kreml'; 1924:20.
[85] Rauzen M. Kul'turno-prosvetitel'naya rabota. In: Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Ėntsiklopediya, vol. 13. 1973:599.

Gulag and only minimal consideration of music as part of cultural reeducation.[86] Pieces from the camps were typically not newly created scores, but recycled dramas and pieces artists already knew. New compositions needed to adhere to strict aesthetic and textual guidelines to meet the standards of Socialist Realism – intelligible art accessible to the masses and packed with Socialist content.[87] However, music is often abstract, but still is non-fictional account if using musical works like an alternative ego document. Particularly in the case of something like Nosyrev's *Capriccio,* there is not an intended narrative program to the music. Rather, it is a sonic read of the time into when it composed. A tremendous amount of training is devoted to representing composers' intentions as they appear on the page – this is as true for Nosyrev as it is Beethoven. New compositions within the camps were also rare, even in clandestine settings, given the draining and traumatic daily existence unconducive to creative output.

Klause divides music from the Gulag into two categories – the official music of reeducation which was encouraged and sanctioned by the authorities and clandestine music created by prisoners for themselves. However, her analysis omits several important points about sound and music creation in the camps. She has highlighted instances of forced singing, but largely maintains that music and artistic creation was beneficial to those interned.[88] Literature on music in the Nazi camps, including model camps like Theresienstadt with substantial artistic life, largely rejects this humanizing arc of music as a vestige of

[86] Consider the extensive publications of memoirs from Ginzburg to Shalamov but no musical score collections exist, especially of classical music.

[87] Marina Frolova Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007),302-305.

[88] Inna Klause, "Music and 're-education'in the Soviet gulag," *Torture: Quarterly Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture* 23, no. 2 (2013): 24-33.

humanity for prisoners.[89] Still, music for professionals was a salvation in camps, and offered a path to less-dangerous labor even if through grotesquely compelled artistry.[90] Combined with the postmodernist read of enactments of power against the body, musical sadism and music as a tool of warfare and genocide has come to the forefront of camp scholarship. Music and sound are enactments of sadism and power in camp, warfare, and genocidal settings. [91] Considering sound separately from music and the impacts of sound on trauma and creative output is vital. As Martin Daughtry coined, the sounds of warfare are "belliphonic" – violent, traumatic, pervasive sound which contributes to the larger trauma of war on the individual. This belliphonic texture is a world of violent sound, a sensory overload which creates lingering sonic trauma and perceptions of the space.[92] I have suggested that sound is a totalizing and immersive experience like pervasive smell, from which one could not escape in camp and atrocity settings, a *Gesamtwalttätigklang* (complete violent sound).[93] Within this violent sound world, music is not a humanizing attachment to the outside, but part of a violent soundscape. This is particularly poignant for professional musicians interned, as their passion, skill, and artistry are twisted into a macabre pastiche of violence where the familiar sound of the violin or orchestra join other violent sounds in a daily existence like gunshots or torture. Music is also compelled and the musical profession becomes another labor within the camp, albeit less physically brutal than mining or other tasks. It is worth considering this

---

[89] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: confronting life in the Nazi ghettos and camps* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[90] Kellie D. Brown, *The Sound of Hope: Music as Solace, Resistance and Salvation During the Holocaust and World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020) 9-21.
[91] Suzanne G. Cusick, "Music as torture/Music as weapon," In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 379-391. Routledge, 2020. And Alexandra Birch, "'They were drinking, singing, and shooting': Singing and the Holocaust in the USSR," *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 4, no. 1 (2021).
[92] J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to war: Sound, music, trauma, and survival in wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[93] Alexandra Birch, "Treblinka: A Forest Portal to Hell," in *Hitler's Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide in Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024).

trauma to artists, where their pre-detention lives, Gulag experiences, and post-detention careers all were the same profession. I argue that this is profoundly distressing to performers as, like Nosyrev, they needed to negotiate their post-Gulag identity while carrying out the same tasks from the camp. Furthermore, Nosyrev's incorporation of anything related to the theatre or his compositions in the Gulag was cause for further dismissal of his works post-Gulag, adding insult to the injury of detention. His compelled work in the theater halted a promising composition career, as his postwar unsuccessful applications to the Composers' Union mentioned the gaps in his training and the "stamp of unfinished academic work".[94] Even banal sound, like the music of the theatre, had a profound impact on composers, and halted compositional progress was detrimental to post-Gulag career prospects while the affect and aesthetic of the theatre was a reminder of daily life in the camp.

Composition and performance were irrevocably transformed for musicians interned in the camps. As such, although we are left with few compositions from the Gulag, traumatic affects remain encoded in pieces written after detention, like Nosyrev's fragmented composition of the *Capriccio*. Not every composer interned had the same experience of detention or the same reaction or representation in their compositions. Vsevolod Zaderatsky, for example was not able to continue performing while in the Gulag, and his post-detention music does not contain these theatrical elements. Unlike Nosyrev, Zaderatsky was arrested for political reasons, so Zaderatsky's highly difficult violin concerto isn't a negotiation of virtuosity or a representation of the self in the same way as Nosyrev. Nosyrev's engagement with virtuosity and theatrical elements is intentional and is a professional articulation of a

[94] Retsenzii na proizbedeniya kompozitora Nosyreva M. I., RGALI f. 2490 d. 425 p. 7-12 Review by G.I. Litinsky.

personal trauma. The theatre in Vorkuta was not a positive continuation of his compositional and artistic training, but rather a caesura in an illustrious career. Reviews of Nosyrev's music show how negative the impact of exclusively working in the theatre rather than on creative or purely artistic projects was on his composition. G. Shantyr noted that "Nosyrev is a craftsman, but can [only] fulfill specific tasks related to the theatre and ballroom" and that in his compositions, "the author is more connected to the stage than the composition; natural given his work with the theatre."[95] Nosyrev wished to be taken seriously as a classical composer, but his reception post-Gulag was that of a "background" theatre music composer. Music, like literature, can contain lingering fragments of trauma, and in instrumental music they are even more cryptically buried in the text of the musical notes.[96] For Nosyrev, his indication of trauma in music is not necessarily a literal depiction of violent sound, but rather the inability to shake the practical elements of theatre composition from his concert works.

Nosyrev's works remain basically unknown and reflect his technical proficiency as a violinist and a conductor. They contain lush orchestration and difficult writing for both the violin soloist and the string sections of the orchestra. Nosyrev was equally adept as a performer and composer, and analysis of his *Capriccio* for violin (1957 – exile) reveals elements of "structural virtuosity" or difficult elements for the violin at structural points of sectional division in the work. Because his instrument was the violin, this score is especially deserving of analysis, as he was most clearly able to express his artistic intent through his primary instrument. Nosyrev also wrote a concerto for the violin in 1971. On closer inspection, the closer Nosyrev was to his period of detention, the more theatrical and

[95] Otzyv o sochineniyakh M.I. Nosyreva, RGALI f. 2490 d. 4. 425 p. 23-24 Review by G. Shantyr, 1967.
[96] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012).

narrative his concert works. This is reflected in his two appeals to join the Union of Composers, wherein his first works reviewed: *Poem, Skazka,* the *Capriccio* for Violin, and *The Ballade of a the Dead Warrior* were rejected with a note about their ”low professional level” in 1964, but his Symphony and dramatic Poem “The Unforgettable” were positively received by Shostakovich and the regional reviewers in 1967.[97] Nosyrev negotiates his post-Gulag identity in the Capriccio by including theatrical elements recalling incidental music from the stage, composing the piece over a period of several years and in fragments, and most significantly negotiating virtuosity and deploying it as a limited compositional technique. The elements of the Gulag which lingered in Nosyrev’s writing were not violent sound: gunshots, shouts, or knocking, but still reflected his time in Vorkuta. The schmalzy, dance-like, and even narrative characteristics of theater composition are what remain in the *Capriccio* and to a lesser extent the 1970s violin concerto.

The structure of the *Capriccio* seems to have been composed in fragments while in transit across Komi and contains virtuosity and theatrical elements in a telling biographical setting. This fragmentation is indicated by virtuosic division and links together dramatic and theatrical themes which at times seem unresolved. What does Nosyrev’s biography or lyric rendering of the camp in the *Capriccio* reveal more generally about artists in the penal nexus? Rather than a fragment of humanity or identity formation, music for Nosyrev was vital to survival. His virtuosity and skill were not something from outside detention, but rather a constant element from the Blockade to the Gulag to exile to rehabilitation which allowed him to exist. Elements like the aforementioned “structural virtuosity” or the

[97] Vypiska iz protokala No. 11 zacedaniya Sekretariata Soyuza kompozitorov RSFSR, VG Fere and A.A. Kholodin’s comments on Nosyrev’s appeal to join the Composer’s Union in 1964, RGALI 2490/4/425/14-15 and Vypiska iz protokala No. 13 zasedaniya Sekretariata Soyuza kompozitorov RSFSR, S.. A Balasanyan, V.G. Fere and others reconsider Nosyrev’s music in Voronezh 1967, RGALI 2490/4/425/22.

theatrical elements lingering from camp compositions indicate more than musical intent. In Nosyrev's post-Gulag aspirations, balancing his identity as a former Gulag inmate meant negotiation of the virtuosity which sent him to the Gulag in the 1940s and balancing the reeducation of the Gulag without revealing too much of an unprofessional theatrical style. Analysis of this and other post-detention music reflects biographical information about Nosyrev and how he internalized detention and exile.

A. Vorkuta

In May 1931, a small band of prisoners guided by their Cheka overseers and indigenous and Russian geologists left Ukhta in the Komi republic, traveling nearly 100 miles above the Arctic circle, where they opened a small base for exploring the region and extracting materials.[98] This small center expanded into a substantial prison by 1932 becoming one of the most important camps in the Gulag system and housing over 73,000 prisoners at its peak in 1951.[99] As Barenberg has correctly highlighted, by 1943 there were as many people in the "company town" of Vorkuta as in the camp, and the camp was directly linked to the economic development of the region.[100] This region of the Gulag network was primarily concerned with selecting prisoners to build railroads, dealing with "heavy water" from weapons testing, and mineral and timber extraction.[101] In 1936, there was a Trotskyist uprising at Vorkutlag, an event which reverberated across the Gulag system and was even

---

[98] L. Domburs, "Gulag'a karte: padomju Socialisiko Republiku Savieniba, Riga: Bierdriba "Rigas Memorials," 1993.

[99] This number is according to Memorial (https://www.memo.ru/) and corroborated by the documents of Lavrenti Beria on the region if the data trend and numbers of prisoners continued to increase post-war. Indeed, with the increase of Polish and other POWs, Vorkuta could have even exceeded the conservative estimate of 73,000.

[100] Alan Barenberg, *Gulag town, company town: Forced labor and its legacy in Vorkuta* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), Introduction, particularly, 4. Barenberg's primary argument is about the inextricable nature of the camp from the surrounding Siberian territory.

[101] "GULAG" in *The First Comprehensive Self-Authenticated documap of forced labor camps in Soviet Russia* (New York: Plain Talk, 1997) accompanied by a commission from the US Senate Judiciary Committee.

noted by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in the *Gulag Archipelago*.[102] This revolt was remarkable in its demands to separate political from violent criminals and advocating for basic standards of working conditions like eight working hours and rations regardless of performance. The charge of Trotskyism leveled at workers speaks more to the necessity for Soviet ideological indoctrination in Vorkuta, than the organization of the prisoners around a specific political leaning. One prisoner, Igor Khoroshev, confirmed this pointing to the disorganization of the Trotskyists and estimating the number of true ideologues to be about 500 men.[103] Regardless, the strike was a success with rations no longer directly tied to work, at least according to the NKVD. There were two subsequent uprisings in 1942 and 1953 which led only to the death of those who revolted.[104] Vorkutlag remained one of the most significant camps and took on new prominence during the Second World War first supplying Leningrad with essential coal, and later as a primary recipient camp of POWs.[105] The multinational nature of the camp was combined with an ideologically diverse population. The reeducative model of culture in the camps was particularly applicable to Vorkutlag where Trotskyists, Poles, German POWs, and a plethora of Soviet ethnicities could be indoctrinated in Soviet thought. This also mirrors the change in prisoner composition, where by the 1950s civilians equaled dangerous prisoners in the camp.[106]

---

[102] Leonards Latkovskis, "Baltic Prisoners of the Gulag: Revolts," *Lituanus - Lithuanian quarterly journal of arts and sciences*, Accessed 6 September 2021. And Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 319. Although Vorkuta (City) and Vorkutlag (camp) can appear synonymously in this period, Vorkutlag is more accurate in describing the camp rather than the subsequent civilian town.
[103] Paul Kellogg, *Truth Behind Bars: Reflections on the Fate of the Russian Revolution* (Edmonton, Alberta: AU Press, 2021).
[104] Leonards Latkovskis, "Baltic Prisoners of the Gulag: Revolts," *Lituanus - Lithuanian quarterly journal of arts and sciences*, Accessed 6 September 2021.
[105] Sistema ispravitel'no-trudnovikh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960: compiled by M.B. Smirnov, edited by N. G Okhotina and A.B. Roginskogo, 1998.
[106] "Vorkuta ITL," on *Karta Sovietskikh lagerei,* https://gulagmap.ru/camp111.

In 1943 the theater was founded at Vorkuta by M.M. Maltsev with B.A. Mordvinov as the director who was a former principal of the Bolshoi Theater.[107] The theater was specifically built with an attached club building to make performances more social. Maltsev called it "the theater behind barbed wire," and the great practitioner Konstantin Stanislavski said that Vorkuta "could only exist in the Gulag system that had sent uncountable people into the zone of everfrost and barbed wire."[108] The theater was intended for camp performances in the reeducation model. This was not meant to be a respite for artistic prisoners; many like Nosyrev were separated from their valuable instruments when they were arrested and had their documents destroyed.[109] Prisoners in Vorkutlag and other nearby camps of the Komi region had the opportunity to attend theatrical performances containing appropriate Socialist content. Theatrical and musical indoctrination was utilized to instill further psychological and ideological reform of prisoners who were also subject to hard labor. The primary function of Vorkutlag and nearby Obskii ITL were to connect the Chum-Salekhard-Igarka highway ("The Great Northern Railway") and produce related products like timber for tracks, and the camps' function bringing Russian arts to the circumpolar North was of secondary importance. However, given the large number of women and even young children at Obskii, indoctrination and ideological conversion was certainly considered. Because children had to remain with their mothers until two within the Gulag system, it was vital to raise them

[107] Vorkutinskii gosuudarstvennii dramaticheskii teatr. *Drama severnikh shirot*, 70 year publication of the Theater, 2013.
[108] Stanislavski was quoted in the same pamphlet about the 70 year anniversary of the Theater although he was never there himself.
[109] The only surviving piece we have from before the Gulag of Nosyrev's is the *Andante* for piano. His other compositions including his student works were destroyed. It is unlikely that other compositions are attached to his arrest record unless they contain especially dissident language. This is the case with Zaderatsky, for example, where the text of one of his songs was considered pro-Tsarist. Prominent musicians, like Sergei Prokofiev, also had documents and scores destroyed during the arrest process. Consider the arrest of Lina Prokofieva: Simon Morrison, *Lina and Serge: The Love and Wars of Lina Prokofiev* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2013).

"correctly" with socialist values, both to create a generation of converted citizens, but also to export these values to the polar north, alongside Socialist infrastructure and mining. [110] Young children also lived at Ukhta, where there was a sizeable "children's colony" despite the camp's extraction and refining of heavy metals including radium.[111] Although these camps in the far north of the Komi republic originated as geologic sites and points along the new railway construction, the diversity of the prison population, particularly by the 1940s when the theatre at Vorkutlag was founded, necessitated ideological reinforcement in addition to imposed hard labor.

The theater at Vorkutlag further anchored the camp in the region, and after the camp was closed in 1962, the theater remained open with continuous productions. In the 70th anniversary volume, the majority of the history focuses on beautiful images of the restoration of the building today, and the diversity of their plays, most of which have sizeable musical components, and even some which are associated with prison subcultures like Puss and Boots. However, the continuation of the theater as an anchor for the surrounding community, broadly conceived, reveals the impact of the Gulag and imposed ideology on the space. There has been substantial and ongoing upkeep to the theater in Vorkuta far exceeding the time of the camp. Interestingly, the theater was transferred to the control of the regional government of the Komi republic in 1956 before the camp was closed. The limited focus on the Gulag in the publications on the theater reveals their desire to remain "a golden location for arctic theater" and to distance themselves artistically from the atrocities of the camp and forced, if

[110] Ispravitel'no-trudovie lagerya v Komi AO-Komi ASSR (1929-1960 gg). Istoricheskaya Spravka (Moscow – GARF).
[111] N. A. Mozorov, "Abstract," *GULAG in the Komi region* 1929–1956 (Yekaterinburg: Ural State University after A. M. Gorky, 2000) 1- 36.

artistic, labor. Stanislavski echoed the significance of the theater for the region saying, “but such a theater existed, and so made an impact on the layered history of the gulag and on the whole national culture.” Although great art was reproduced in the space, and great artists were interned in Vorkutlag, it is a cultural hub permanently tainted by detention.

As Stanislavsky alluded, there are two commentaries on the function of a theater within a camp system. First is the question of detaining artists at all, and what is the purpose of putting musicians and actors in labor camps? Second, is the production and quality of artistic labor produced in the camps. Both ideas interrogate the role and the function of the arts at a national level both as a source of pride and as a threat to governmental hegemony. The detention and targeting of artists was not unique to the Soviet model. Consider Joeseph Goebbels championing a “Romanticism of Steel” wherein the heritage of National Socialism was inextricably linked to cultural heritage and resulted in wildly particular aesthetic edicts from the Third Reich’s ministry of culture.[112] Under Pol Pot, artists including musicians, poets, and visual artists were explicitly targeted for genocide in the early days of the regime because the danger posed by ideological influence was far greater than their individual scope through their art.[113] Vorkutlag wasn’t really an analog to the Nazi camps, even Theresienstadt which served as the largest and most-staged Nazi façade camp for the Red Cross inspections. The two most significant differences are that Vorkuta was never intended as an antechamber to an extermination camp, and that the arts were genuinely intended for the prison population and reeducation not as a pacifying lie to the international community. Certainly egregious

---

[112] Rüdiger Safransky, *Romantik: Eine deutsche Affare* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2007), 242. And Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, ideology, and economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich chambers of music, theater, and the visual arts* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ of North Carolina Press, 1993).

[113] Yoseph Yapi Taum, "Collective Cambodian memories of the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge regime," In *Fifth Annual Conference of the Asian Scholarship Foundation. Bangkok*, pp. 25-26. 2005.

human rights offenses were committed within the Gulag and in Vorkuta, but Vorkutlag was neither an extermination camp (*Vernichtungslager)* for systematic extermination nor a public facing façade for Western inspection like Theresienstadt. Virtuosity under such conditions was a dangerous assertion of self: a fixation on one's own skill rather than Socialist reeducation. Also, the idea that prisoners were successfully reeducated and had internalized the Socialist education was sometimes promoted via musical fraud, wherein prisoners were listed as the writers of songs with correct content that were actually composed by renowned and interned composers.[114]

Virtuosity and skill both provoked Nosyrev's arrest and likely were his lifeline in Vorkutlag. Upon graduation from Leningrad Conservatory, he immediately became a soloist of the Radio Orchestra and the conductor of the Leningrad Musical Comedy Theatre until his arrest in late 1943. A prodigiously talented artist, his ability to securely work throughout his entire education as a soloist speaks to the depth of his talent even under duress. Mikhail Nosyrev's early career was shaped by the Leningrad blockade where he was not only able to maintain a job as a violinist, but as a concert soloist for two years – a highly virtuosic and in demand performer. In September 1943 it seems that this virtuosity attracted jealousy and problems as he was likely denounced by his former conservatory teacher to the NKVD. He was sentenced to death by firing squad on the 30th of September, 1941, and his sentence was commuted to ten years in the Gulag on the 31st of December the same year.[115] Nosyrev was sent to Vorkuta in January of 1944 to serve a ten-year term. Again, his talent seemed to

---

[114] Consider these songs written by Aleksandr Rozanov: RGALI: F. 1702 (Glavnaya redaktsiya zhurnala "Novïy mir"), op. 9, ed. 89, l. 28–9.
[115] "Biography," Mikhail Nosyrev Website (Family managed), accessed 5/17/2023: http://www.nosyrev.com/biography.

benefit his survival as he was almost immediately assigned the concertmaster position of the theatre orchestra in the camp and also asked to compose for the ensemble, play piano, and conduct. Vorkuta's vibrant artistic and theatre culture consisted primarily of musicals and works which could involve the maximum number of intellectual prisoners in productions. The theatre released a seventy-year historical volume in 2013 where the majority of interviews were from the current company about contemporary shows and renovations with only three pages on their institutional Gulag origins. Consistent with the theatrical stage productions on which Nosyrev primarily worked – his individual compositions from Vorkuta include a Fantasia on Russian Folk songs and *Skazka* – a symphonic poem based on fairy tales. The two outlier compositions from this period are concert works, a Sonatina in three parts for piano completed in 1950, and the *Capriccio* for violin started in Vorkuta and finished in Syktyvkar. In 1952, the theatre within the Gulag started transferring artistic control to the government of the Komi republic with the Komi ministry of culture completely taking over the theatre at Vorkuta by 1956. Nosyrev left Vorkuta in 1954 after serving his full term and was exiled in Syktyvkar until 1958. It is in Syktyvkar where he worked as the conductor of the Komi Drama Theatre where he finished the *Capriccio* for violin. The work wasn't premiered until 1957 when Nosyrev moved to Voronezh with his family.

Voronezh was Nosyrev's most prolific period compositionally from 1958 until his death in 1981. He was never fully rehabilitated in his lifetime, but rather posthumously in 1988. Nosyrev applied for union membership after the premiere of the violin concerto, and was rejected the first time but reconsidered after a "positive assessment by Shostakovich"

and finally admitted and fully approved on the 26th of December, 1967.[116] Even when Nosyrev was finally admitted to the union, there seemed to be a mark of professional jealousy or of personal criticism couched in professional remarks about his works. G. Shantyr wrote that Nosyrev "had mastered the craft of orchestral writing" but that he still had "meagre musicality, dull themes, and insufficient temperament" when expressing doubts about his membership.[117] In Nosyrev's first application, the critique was even harsher, that even despite the "colorful sound and dramatic compositions" his music was of a "low professional level" and that "he and his works do not meet the requirements outlined in the union chapter."[118] Another review by G.I. Litinsky didn't recommend an immediate rejection, but cited Nosyrev's time "living in the periphery" and that he should take advantage of living in Syktyvkar to do further training before reapplying.[119] These criticisms transcend commentary on his music, and imply that there is something unprofessional about Nosyrev and his temperament. Litinsky even mentions Nosyrev's geography in his rebuttal - the periphery to which he refers is the Gulag, not the Komi republic, given that he thought Nosyrev could improve his compositions in a few years with regional training. Coupled with slights about his theatre training, it was his gulag time and associated work in the theatre which raised questions about his professionalism. The pieces Nosyrev selected the first time all contain marks of this theatre training or the Gulag including *Skazka* and *Four Pieces for Piano* which were composed in the camp and the Violin *Capriccio*. The support of

[116] Vypiska iz protokola No. 13 zacadaniya Sekretariata Soyuza kompozitorov RSFSR. RGALI f. 2490 d. 4, 425, 22. And his approval signed by Shcherbakova: Telegrammy v g. Voronezh tov. Massaletinovu K. I. predsedatelyo Voronezhskogo otdeleniya Soyuza Kompozitorov SSSR, RGALI f. 2490 f. 4, 425 p. 25-26.
[117] G. Shantyr, Otzyv o sochineniyakh M.I. Nosyreva, RGALI f. 2490, d. 4, 425 p. 23-24.
[118] Kharakteristika na Nosyreva M.I. by N. Sakova RGALI f. 2490 d. 4, 495 and Vypiska iz protokala No. 11 zasedaniya Sekretariata Soyuza kompozitorov RSFSR, RGALI f. 2490 d, 4, 425 d. 14-15.
[119] G.I. Litinsky on Nosyrev, Retsenzii na proizvedeniya kompozitora Nosyreva M.I., RGALI f. 2490 d. 4, 425 p. 7-12.

Shostakovich in 1967 was not merely artistic, but seemingly a character reference. In Shostakovich's request for reconsideration, he respectfully refers to Nosyrev by the title "comrade" in addition to his initials, and states that Nosyrev is not only a "gifted composer" but "quite professionally trained" and recommended that the committee listen to three works: Nosyrev's *Symphony*, *Ballade for a Dead Warrior*, and *The Unforgettables*. Shostakovich's formidable presence in Soviet classical music is coupled with a reference that Nosyrev is not merely a composer, but a serious classical one to whom the committee should give credence.[120]

B. Structural Virtuosity

The quality of music produced in Vorkuta was important. Virtuosity, the showy, technical mastery of an instrument was a dangerous assertion of self. Composition, performance, and even physical presentation or gestures can be virtuosic. The "New Soviet Person"(novy Sovietsky chelovek) mastered his feelings, his affective outpouring to best promote the message of Socialism.[121] Virtuosity as an aesthetic is completely antithetical to this and is fundamentally a Romantic outpouring of emotion combined with skill. Virtuosity involves first a fixation on the self to attain technical mastery: of an instrument, of a compositional style, playing a specific technique, or even presenting oneself dramatically on stage. Virtuosity was an important tool to show Soviet excellence. The Russian schools of training violin and piano, for example, are based in a rigorous technical training. This training produced dazzling performers like David Oistrakh, Viktor Tretyakov, and Sviatoslav

[120] Otzyv o sochyneniyakh M.I. Nosyreva by D. Shostakovich, 1967, RGALI f. 2490 d. 4, 425 p. 29-30.
[121] John Haynes, *New Soviet man: gender and masculinity in Stalinist Soviet cinema* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003).

Richter who dominated concert stages globally and were cultural emissaries of the USSR.[122] However, there is a limited focus on virtuosity in Soviet musicological scholarship. There are three reasons for this: first, virtuosity is fundamentally an enactment by performers and therefore something difficult to capture in writing. Soviet composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev were primarily concerned with balancing their artistic aims with the strictures of the state, not with exploring 'virtuosic' or different techniques from the theoretical side of composition. Finally, the model of virtuosic performer-composers from the Romantic period (1803-1914) like Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt is not echoed in classical music in the USSR. Interestingly, the closest model to virtuosity of a performer-composer in the USSR are the ballade singers like Vladimir Vysotsky who virtuosically used text and the grain of their voices to express the affect of the *samizdat*.

Virtuosity in classical music of the Soviet period was primarily expressed through individual performers playing Romantic works of the previous century. There is also an important consideration that virtuosity of the classical music variety is a Western advancement, a technology and aesthetic valuation of a certain type of skill on recognizable Western instruments. Virtuosity fit in a nested Orientalism of the USSR wherein modernity – both aesthetic and technological – was presumed Russian and Western and these modern and Western instruments and styles then were used to create art under Socialist Realism.[123] Socialist Realism was meant to be "nationalist in form and Soviet in content" and materially was the sampling of ethno-musics from the Soviet republics to package the Socialist message in a format which would be intelligible to the average lay worker.[124] However, as Edward

[122] Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
[123] Marina Frolova Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism*, 330.
[124] Ibid., 338.

Said defines, this view of the non-Russian republics is still fundamentally extractive and creates a romanticized inclusion of an essentialized culture within classical music.[125] The inclusion of a *bayan* (folk accordion) or a recognizable melody assumes the dominance of classical music over other ethnic music. As such, virtuosity means Western virtuosity, and the virtuosity of Soviet musicians abroad was most notably the virtuosity of assumed classical idioms. There Soviet acknowledgement of instruments like the plucked string instrument *domra* and accordion (*bayan)* are mostly relegated to the realm of pure folk music with exceptions for these instruments' inclusion in classical pieces. As such, Soviet virtuosity was a delicate consideration for performers in two ways. Performers had to balance their own career advancement and desirability with their desire to be a worker of Soviet artistic life and not showcase a virtuosic obsession with self. I argue that Nosyrev's considerations of virtuosity is further complicated by a desire not to seem theatrical or influenced by his Gulag compositions and to integrate virtuosity without *schmalz* into a serious concert work for the violin.

Nosyrev attempted to balance clear virtuosity and skill with his practical desire to be a model Soviet. His virtuosity was evident, as from his earliest experiences he was able to continue working, even playing violin concertos as a desirable soloist during the Leningrad blockade. Virtuosity served Nosyrev in the Gulag where he was able to work as a violinist, conductor, and composer creating attractive and Sovietized works for the guards and prisoners alike. Upon release, he was able to secure multiple professional positions first in Syktyvkar and later in Voronezh before he was rehabilitated. In the absence of an ego

[125] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

document like a diary, we see how Nosyrev tempered his own skill, which was perhaps his most dangerous tool given that it led to his denunciation, and simultaneously his saving grace from hard labor in his compositions for the violin. In Nosyrev's documents submitted to the Union for consideration, he listed the *Capriccio* as the only virtuosic or concert work for any instrument, alongside his large compositions like the *Symphony* and several of his Gulag compositions but without dates.[126] A performance of Nosyrev's *Capriccio* today captures fragments of how he practiced it and composed it in the 1950s. A true window into his identity as a performer and as an individual, virtuosity was an element of negotiation for Nosyrev, a daily dynamic to consider when performing and composing.

Virtuosity in Nosyrev's work takes the form of Structural Virtuosity. All classical compositions have formal structures typically indicated by thematic and tonal resolution. The ways performers and audience members hear the themes of a piece are based on complicated interactions like how far the composer moves away from the home key of the piece. Generally we like to hear themes and familiar gestures repeated throughout the work, and when they're transformed or interrupted, our ear anticipates their return. The ultimate compositional tool is closure, where themes, keys, and materials feel complete both at the micro level of the phrase and the macro level of entire movements or pieces. Structures of classical music include Sonata form – appropriately used for Sonata first movements, but also most concertos – binary form with equal parts, rondo form with a repeated theme and episodic digressions, and many others. Structural virtuosity is where major sections of the piece are emphasized by elements of virtuosity. A cadence or movement to a subsequent

[126] Vypiska iz protokola No. 6 zasedaniya Sekretariata Soyuza kompozitorov SSSR, RGALI ff. 2490 d. 4, 425 31-36.

section might be marked by a series of difficult scales, an idiomatic technique particularly difficult for the selected instrument, or even compositional virtuosity wherein the composer demonstrates their skill in a particularly novel way.[127] Structural virtuosity was most popular among phenomenal performer-composers like the pianists Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Franz Liszt or the violinist Nicolo Paganini who wished to demonstrate their skill at their instrument and write music which was difficult as well as beautiful imbued with plenty of flair in performance.

C. Nosyrev's Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra

Nosyrev's *Capriccio* is perhaps his most diverse and biographically reflective piece. In this short composition, we have a more complete picture of his virtuosity as a performer and his proficiency as a composer in the years following detention until the end of his life. The *Capriccio* is a short concert work of about thirteen minutes for a solo violinist and orchestra, and also exists in an arrangement for violin and piano. Unfortunately, we are missing all of his student works composed prior to his arrest and detention, so the earliest compositions we can comparatively analyze are the *Sonatina in Three Parts* and *Skazka* both from the Gulag. In working with the composer's son, he sent me the complete violin part and piano score for the *Capriccio.* Although there is one existing recording of the piece, there is not a formal publisher, and the piece has not been recorded for violin and piano nor with other similar short concert works for the violin. The *Capriccio* was composed in Vorkuta, finished in Syktyvkar and practiced there by the composer, and premiered in Voronezh. We can hear each of these stages, and a recall of the camp in the music. Nosyrev composed

[127] Susan Bernstein, *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century: Performing Music and Language in Heine, Liszt, and Baudelaire* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 41.

incidental music in Vorkuta as his job was to write music for the stage while serving as concertmaster and conductor of the orchestra. His few original compositions like *Skazka* (Fairytale) and *Fantasia on Russian Folk Songs* from the camp are also highly narrative. The primary theme 22655of the *Capriccio* reflects this Gulag period heavily influenced by diegetic theater music and the folk songs of Socialist Realism. The melody is plaintive and simple with some transformations which are almost cinematic. This primary melody is occasionally broken with a spritely interjection of a folk dance. Although Nosyrev departs from both of these primary idioms – the opening of the *Capriccio* for example is a stark, lonely violin – he returns to these elements as the basis of the work. The soundscape of Vorkuta did not explicitly influence the writing of Nosyrev's *Capriccio*: the lyrical themes give no hint of knocking, shots, shouts, or other violent sound. Instead, it reads like the melodies of the camp theater pulling him back as he journeyed to Syktyvkar, or less sentimentally, return as a cycle of traumatic recall. Part of the violence Nosyrev experienced was a dislocation of his professionalism from the conservatory to the Gulag, wherein the theatre of Vorkutlag, not the clang of a mine is what he musically depicts from the camp. These fragments of a lyrical folk melody are that, fragments. They are hooked together by sweeping orchestral gestures or more importantly by somewhat unrelated virtuosic outbursts for the violin. These virtuosic outbursts are also important, as they reveal Nosyrev's personal skill on the instrument, and indicate how much he was willing to demonstrate that skill on stage before again returning to the more acceptable lyrical theme.. Although there is not an explicitly stated extramusical narrative in the *Capriccio*, there is a feeling of return, wherein the primary themes of the piece continuously reappear and are transformed for the listener to hear something new. The fragmentation within the work also parallels Nosyrev's biography,

where the end of his detention, transit to Syktyvkar, and finally establishment in Voronezh seems to appear in brief pieces of melody all combined to make one work. The *Capriccio* contains material from all three major compositional periods of Nosyrev's life: his conservatory pre-detention writing, the influence of the theater, and the fragmented writing during chaos and transit. Nosyrev seemed to compose short fragments of this work – twenty measures at a time – and linked them into a cohesive work when he was able. For the listener, the lack of thematic return creates a feeling of no closure. Even within sections, themes abruptly end and sharply transition to the next idea. Overall the piece has the feeling of a series of character statements all linked together.

Like Romantic cyclical piano works, Nosyrev's pieces often have theatrical or thematic links throughout and a sort of narrative drama. Consider as a template Robert Schumann's *Carnival,* song cycles rewritten for piano like the Franz Schubert-Franz Liszt *Schwanengesang,* or Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. In each, short character pieces are linked together in a larger narrative framework telling a single story. Nosyrev's *Capriccio* follows this model, but in a smaller scale as it is far shorter at thirteen minutes than the aforementioned piano works. In Nosyrev's pieces which were originally for theatre or ballet like *The Unforgivable*, *Ballad of a Dead Warrior*, *The Song of Triumphant Love* based on Turgenev*,* and *The River Don Cossacks* the narrative elements within the music are explicit – *leitmotiven* assigned to characters, diegetic music for stage action et cetera. What is interesting is how these narrative elements appear in concert works like the *Capriccio*, *First Symphony*, *Nocturne* for flute, and *Piano Sonatina*. In incorporating these narrative elements, Nosyrev resembles Richard Strauss who was famous for his writing programmatic music – instrumental music with a clear extramusical narrative like his tone poem *Don Juan.* Strauss

also utilized these colorful musical elements evocative of places, moods, and people in his non-programmatic works like the *Violin Sonata.* Nosyrev does something similar in the Capriccio, where theatrical gestures or dramatic ascents for the violin continuously reappear, connecting themes for the listener, unifying a piece which was composed in fragments, and elaborating on each new iteration with flashy virtuosity. The illumination of each theme with increasingly virtuosic elements is how Nosyrev employed structural virtuosity in the Capriccio. Because the work doesn't have a particularly evident form (like Sonata form in the Concerto or a clear Rondo form), virtuosity is used to heighten thematic return and something exciting for the performer and listener alike appears at the transition to each new section. Although this narrative or theatrical connection might have been criticized in Nosyrev's initial appeals to the union, in the larger scheme of violin writing it's highly compelling. The *Capriccio* is a fantastic character piece for the violin, with ample flair from Nosyrev's time in the theatre, and virtuosity well-balanced with often fragmented treatment of the themes. In this way, Nosyrev's structural virtuosity is not only violinistic, but compositional virtuosity, creating compositional complexity and technical difficulty simultaneously.

There are several links between the composition of this work and the GULAG. First, are the romantic and theatrical elements of each statement. The romanticism doesn't recall Tchaikovsky or Glazunov explicitly, but rather something influenced by that tradition and a more comical and lighthearted composition from the theatre or ballet. When violin is combined with orchestra there is something truly cinematic and narrative about the writing, with the two parts in dialogue. At times, the violin solo line weaves in and out of the orchestral part, buried in the orchestral texture and highly interactive with the string sections

of the orchestra. The individual expressive elements of virtuosity, combined with the cinematic romanticism of the piece and fragmentation is intriguingly linked to elements of Socialist Realism. The themes are romantic and cinematic, they don't explicitly recall folk melodies, and are so displaced that they would be very hard to understand by a 'lay' audience – a hallmark of 'acceptable' compositions.[128] It is this reason why Nosyrev included the piece in his second list of works for the union, and the only concert work. Still, beautiful Romantic melodies are not atonal and combined with the technical skill of the violinist would be interesting to any audience – certainly more intelligible and exciting to a Soviet public than more esoteric 20th century compositions. However, it is also possible that the elaboration of virtuosity made the repetition of the thematic elements too difficult for listeners to follow and therefore too formalist for listeners. Throughout the work when the melodies reappear they are often rhythmically or tonally displaced in a way that they might be unrecognizable for the listener. The first Romantic melody appears several sections later but in a totally different metre and broken between the violin and orchestra lines. The same original melody also appears for one measure at the very end of the work, but is almost completely covered by the orchestra. Still, the fragmentation of the work and repetition of the themes facilitates the comprehension of these themes even transformed. The audience has a chance to hear and understand each theme several times in a performance and becomes increasingly enchanted with them.

Within wider violin literature, Nosyrev's *Capriccio* is a significant and easily programmable piece. Again tapping into Romantic model and speaking to Nosyrev's virtuosity, there are a number of short character pieces for the violin on which this *Capriccio*

[128] Frolova Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism*, 327.

is modeled. These include the exoticism of the French Georges Bizet in his *Carmen Fantasie* and *Zigeunerweisen,* Camille Saint-Saens *Havanaise* and *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso,* Tchaikovsky's *Valse Scherzo* which was wildly popular in the USSR, Henryk Wieniawski's wildly popular concert pieces like *Souvenir de Moscou,* and even works from the early twentieth-century including Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane* or Fritz Kreisler's showpieces for the violin. Because Nosyrev's *Capriccio* is similar in length and difficulty to these more canonical standards for the instrument it is highly programmable and an excellent addition to modern concert programs. Including Nosyrev complicates the legacy of Soviet music beyond a conflicting but often appeasing relationship of composers like Shostakovich and especially Prokofiev.[129] Soviet music includes those composers in the camps and their works even after release which were not championed nor officially published without rehabilitation. In the *Capriccio*, the violin lines weave in and out of the orchestra reflecting both Nosyrev's humility and joining the collective and his virtuosic individual assertions. Perhaps this is an abstractive read of music, but for performers their dynamic on stage and interactions with their primary instrument are enormously linked to their self-perceptions and identity formation. Nosyrev's engagement with virtuosity as a testament of the Gulag was not explicit nor intended as a biographical document. However, the fragmentation of the work coupled with the intentional negotiation of virtuosity is certainly intentional. The way Nosyrev wrote for his own instrument is thusly revealing of his private and public identities and even a mirror for his interactions as an individual with larger systems like the camp or the state.

[129] Richard Taruskin, "Art and politics in Prokofiev," *Society* 29 (1991): 60-63.

D. Conclusion

The existing archive of Gulag music often supports only the official narrative. Composers from the Thaw were able to retroactively publish works in the West with publishers like Sikorski, but those from the Gulag, especially those never rehabilitated simply didn't have publishing access. Nosyrev was readmitted to the composers' union only after the appeal of Shostakovich on his behalf and his scores are still only published by an associated family publisher. The reincorporation of these works into contemporary recordings and performances provides a living, contemporary engagement with the Gulag. Traumas linger, like the Gulag, Nosyrev's experiences in the Leningrad blockade, and his life in exile shaped his compositional output and how he negotiated professional music-making in the USSR. The response to trauma is multifaceted and not contained only at the point of the traumatic event, and banal sonic influences like characteristic theatre compositions might indicate something more sinister like Nosyrev's livelihood in the penal nexus.[130] Some analyses equate music which is difficult to hear to music which addresses difficult topics and situations, wherein trauma is physically embodied through painful performance and painful listening is passed to the audience.[131] In the case of classical performers, the mastery of the self on stage is near absolute and doesn't allow for indulgent performances of a painful self. Rather, elements like virtuosity which reveal the artist's skill are more compelling as they show different professional interactions on stage, with an orchestra, and even as a composer. Difficult elements acquired through years of study still had to be utilized in a way consistent

[130] Bessel Van der Kolk explicitly dealt with traumatic recall, an important framework for working with testimonial and ego documents: Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *Psychological trauma* (American Psychiatric Pub, 2003).

[131] Maria Cizmic, *Performing pain: Music and trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

with Soviet aims and strictures of Socialist Realism. In the case of Nosyrev, this virtuosity had to be balanced with a desire to appear serious and be re-recognized as a classical composer rather than as a prisoner who had his training interrupted by detention. Instead of a pure ego document, like a diary, musical compositions are a pure articulation of the self but ultimately viewed by a public audience. They are critically important as they reveal how composers like Nosyrev fashioned themselves within Soviet society.

Works like the *Capriccio* and the Violin Concerto of Nosyrev not only represent reassertion of a repressed individual but contain musical features which outline his biography. Ethnic Russian nationals like Nosyrev reveal the extent of political and intellectual suppression which wasn't limited to ethnic minorities. Targeted originally for his talent, he was never rehabilitated in his lifetime. The picture of Soviet classical music is incomplete without these composers and virtuosity should not be exclusively relegated to the artists championed by the state. As musicians today perform rediscovered works, we are decolonizing a canon of music cultivated and defined by the Soviet government. It was not only aesthetic considerations which created "Soviet music" but also the erasure and removal of dissident and problematic composers and individuals. These are not commemorative works as we think of memorial concerts and sympathetic remembrance of atrocity. These pieces were not merely lost, they were suppressed along with the composer who made them. As such, performance is not a pacifying acknowledgement of atrocity and detention, but a reassertion and re-claiming of musical space. Perhaps most significantly, these works commemorate forgotten composers as they lived. Nosyrev's music is not meant to re-live in academic pages but also virtuosically on stage. I discuss Nosyrev not as a victim or because

of his persecution, but because of his artistry. This revoicing of the GULAG creates a more comprehensive study of Soviet music and a personalized look at the effects of repression.

Conclusion: From Auerbach to "Z": (Post) Soviet Aesthetics, Fractures, and Gulag Echoes

On August 19, 1991, Soviet television played a continuous loop of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* while tanks rolled into Moscow during a failed military coup which ultimately precipitated the complete fall of the USSR four months later. *Swan Lake* was an ominous symbol, also played while the Soviet government delt with the death of Leonid Brezhnev in 1982, and again with the deaths of his successors Yuri Andropov in 1984 and Konstantin Chernenko in 1985. [1] The end of the Soviet empire was heralded by an imperial ballet. [2] The post-Soviet period is now over, extending from 1990-2022 replaced by a new Russian Empire under Vladimir Putin. However the legacies of the Gulag, Holocaust, Terror, and Great Patriotic War continue to return in the iconography of post-Soviet society. The inability to grapple with trauma fully, to speak openly about the atrocities of Stalin in the late Soviet period has led to a warped mourning or a bizarre nostalgia compelled by an incomplete reckoning with the past.[3] Consider, when the primary challenger to Putin's regime, Aleksei Navalny was murdered in prison in 2024, thousands of people laid flowers on the Solovetsky Stone which commemorates the Gulag in Moscow.[4] The incomplete commemoration of Soviet atrocity remains a topic in contemporary music from the Thaw to present, always in

---

[1] Charles Maynes, "In 1991 Soviet Citizens Saw Swans on the TV and Knew it meant Turmoil," *NPR*, accessed February 19, 2024, https://www.npr.org/2021/08/19/1029437787/in-1991-soviet-citizens-saw-swans-on-the-tv-and-knew-it-meant-turmoil

[2] Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 171-197.

[3] Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013) also Svetlana Alexievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets* (New Delhi, India: Juggernaut, 2013).

[4] Radio Free Europe/RL, "Defying Authorities, Russians Pay Tribute To Navalny; Hundreds Detained," *Radio Free Europe,* February 18, 2024, Accessed February 19, 2024, https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-navalny-mourning-arrests/32824593.html.

political dialogue with cryptic and morphing cultural restrictions from the Soviet and now Russian state.

The Thaw and relative openness of information didn't mean that atrocities ceased. In 1960, there were still more than 270,000 prisoners in the Gulag, even as the system was officially being dismantled.[5] An official pardon for all remaining prisoners in the Gulag only came from Gorbachev in 1986, with a final order to close all prisons. [6] Discussion of the Gulag was relegated to the *samizdat*, and the legacy of Soviet terror, famine, and detention was addressed only in whispers, as new concerns about a failing economy, Chernobyl, and the Soviet Afghan war occupied the minds of citizens. Aesthetic subversion, hidden messages, and artistic materials for resistance were of paramount importance, and it was this era of secrecy and whispers of the past in which the post-Soviet generation of composers came of age. Today, more people internationally know artistic dissidents like Mariya Alyokhina from the band Pussy Riot than the former defense minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu. This speaks not only to the staying power of the arts and the appeal of activist-artists against a tyrannical regime, but also to the weakness of the Russian military in Grand Strategy. The arts continue to be a nagging point of control for the Russian Federation, a product over which they desperately hope to export and regain control like the powerful classical musicians who represented the USSR in the 1940s and 50s. However, for the USSR, the defections of the 1970s-90s, the *samizdat* publications of literature and circulated recordings, and the defiance and international acclaim of artists who fled were

[5] M.B. Smirnov, *Sistema ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960* (Moscow: Zven'ya, 1998).
[6] Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A history* (New York: Doubleday Books, 2003) 454-458. Consider Nosyrev's post-Gulag appeals to the Composers' Union well into the 1960s and 70s. His final successful appeal was only accepted in 1968, when Gubaidulina was working within the very same union as a composer of film and children's music having recently graduated from Moscow Conservatory in 1961.

ultimately uncontrollable and chipped away at Soviet legitimacy. Tikhon Khrennikov's denunciation of seven composers in 1979 was an indication that the Composers' Union could no longer control these composers or their work, and was an artistic parallel to other late-Soviet fracture or stagnation under Brezhnev.[7] The resistance that ultimately destroyed the USSR, lay in the small, everyday deeds of Soviets that gradually weakened the state including artistic production which undermined official messaging. [8] Today, Putin can't control Russian artists abroad, and Russian composers writing in the diaspora have a unique cultural role to address repressions of the past and articulate current atrocities of the Russian Federation. These artists address topics like the Holocaust directly, they create musically commemorative spaces, and they evoke Imperial and Soviet aesthetics, often satirically, to grapple with repressed topics. I discuss three of these composers: Sofia Gubaidulina who was born and worked most of her career in the USSR, Lera Auerbach who emigrated to the USA as a teenager from Soviet Ukraine, and Yuri Khanon who was born in and remains in Russia today. These composers and their work show the lingering effects of atrocity, the openness, or not, to address topics in the West or obliquely in the Russian Federation, and how repressed topics remain a sensitive and vital element of classical music today. In these compositions, we see the integration of sound in addition to music, an outpouring of emotion and compositional fury which is no longer contained in defined musical articulation, but which aggressively comments on the past.

[7] Ibid., 420.
[8] Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom if only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.

I am hesitant to list these or other composers as post-Soviet. This casts the lives of artists in relationship only to a violent and imposing regime, and although their lives are shaped by the collapse of the USSR, they should be considered along their own chronologies of artistic output or creative self-definition, not the collapse or endurance of a colonial state. Perhaps we should toss the entire label of post-Soviet just as post-colonialism has been called "totally bogus."[9] When does something stop being referentially Soviet or Stalinist? Using these composers' timelines as they see their own narrative removes the power of Sovietization. Furthermore, many post-Soviet composers lived in the USSR for many years, or were dramatically affected by repression like Gubaidulina's fear of her father's arrest in the 1930s, her own denunciation in the 1970s, and her eventual emigration to the West. As such, it is worth considering Khanon in his student period until the late 1980s, his openness and public performances of the early 90s, and his reclusive writing of the last thirty years. Auerbach and Gubaidulina have clearly periodized works based on their compositional developments. However, post-Soviet remains a helpful chronological term to demarcate works composed under Soviet censorship requirements and those composed in the West.

The generation of composers with substantial professional careers post-1991 fall into three primary categories: those who continued illustrious Soviet careers after immigration to the West in the early 90s, those who primarily trained in the diaspora but often with other exiles, and those who remain in the Russian Federation. Here, I contrast Lera Auerbach who immigrated to the West in 1991, with Sofia Gubaidulina who emigrated to Germany in 1992, and Yuri Khanon who remains in Russia. Auerbach is an extraordinary pianist and composer

[9] Gayatri Spivak, 'Neocolonialism and the Secret Agent of Knowledge,' *Oxford Literary Review* (Special issue on Neocolonialism), 13 (1991), 224.

who frequently performs her own pieces and works collaboratively with soloists at festivals like Verbier and as an artistic representative at Davos for the World Economic Forum. In her work with soloists, she writes extensively for the violin with four concertos for the instrument and countless chamber works for musicians including Vadim Gluzman, Philipe Quint, Hillary Hahn, Leonidas Kavakos, Vadim Repin, and Gidon Kremer. Similarly, Gubaidulina has worked extensively with the violinist Gidon Kremer, who has long supported her work since the premiere of the dedicated violin concerto *Offertorium*. In contrast, I discuss Yuri Khanon, a composer and multi-disciplinary artist and thinker, who remained in the Russian Federation. Khanon is also a pianist, and he and Auerbach have overlap in their approach to the arts through composition, visual art, and writing. However, Khanon remains reclusive, antagonistic and suspicious of his contemporaries, and a provocateur. His music is part of a larger approach to artistic thinking and philosophy. The comparison of the two composers illuminates what ideas and aesthetic choices remain durable through Soviet collapse, how dissidence and resistance are articulated today, and how music differs between those who emigrated and those who remain within a sanctioned and increasingly repressive Russian Federation.

More illuminating than a composer's Sovietization are the aesthetics which remain durable across classical music and the common elements in the compositions of these new composers. Generally, timbral experiments that branched into visual art or non-musical performances of experimental sound and electronics were not supported in the USSR. Khrennikov referred to performance art as "circus stunts rather than pieces of music." [10] This

[10] Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 486.

did not mean that any innovation was forbidden, as many Lenin prize winners employed serialist, atonal, pointillistic, dissonant, and indeterminate techniques in their compositions. Rather, the integration of a modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* of art, visual, sonic, projection and so on was considered pushing normative boundaries too far. [11] As head of the Union of Composers, Khrennikov stressed the importance of composers reaching the people, that art for art's sake, a modern outcry of formalism, was not in favor of the people and cited the important relationship between politics and culture. [12] The first and notable point of intersection with these three post-Soviet composers as examples, is the influence of dance, philosophy, mathematics, and visual art on their compositions. They incorporate the arts broadly into their work and refute the limits of the late-Soviet aesthetic. This is important, given that the topics that they address with this expanded musical aesthetic were similarly forbidden.

Auerbach is a prolific ballet composer and visual artist and works in tandem with choreographers and the theater in true *Gesamtkunstwerk* fashion. Auerbach is also a truly renaissance artist in music, the visual arts, and poetry with success as a performer, published books of poetry and scores with Sikorski, and visual art exhibits around the world. According to Auerbach, her work is "interconnected as part of a cohesive and comprehensive artistic world view."[13] Pieces including *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* can be seen as a product of this comprehensive world and aesthetic viewpoint and should also be situated in a larger discussion of Soviet and post-Soviet aesthetics. She often takes stories like *The Little Mermaid* and transforms them to a post-Soviet dream world with the infusion of a political

[11] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, 489.
[12] Ibid., 621.
[13] Lera Auerbach, *Biography*, Lera Auerbach Website, https://leraauerbach.com/index.php/biography/, accessed December 3, 2020.

commentary or environmental statement. Khanon works more in aesthetic theory than composition, with his magnum opus *Khanograf* addressing humanity through the arts. Gubaidulina also works interdisciplinarily, tying music to religious function, that life is "staccato" and art is "legato." She draws a parallel between similar sounding words connecting "legato" to "religio" and asserts that art is the re-legato, the "re-ligio" of connecting to God in a broken life. [14] According to her, art is a unifying feature across borders and eras, "For me, the most important thing is not nationality, but humanity as a whole." [15] In these compositions, we see a reliance on extended techniques – ways to incorporate sound and multimedia which haven't been previously used, but also non-musical techniques including projections, art, and dance. This all expands the compositional palette, and allows these composers to write significant text into their works, powerfully evoke commemorative symbols, and communicate significant topics with a wider audience in the arts than only in classical music.

Finally, in the USSR, composers worked with specific violinists who could champion their work on the international stage given the status of the performer.[16] For composers like Nosyrev and Zaderatsky, virtuosity became a negotiation and a survival mechanism after the Gulag. For Weinberg who wrote for Mikhoels or Shostakovich who wrote for Sollertinsky, relationships with specific musicians was also a mechanism of private commemoration. Performers in many ways had more liberties than composers whose music could be associated with dissidence or a political meaning. Performers, rather, were able to present

[14] Michael Kurtz, *Sofia Gubaidulina: A Biography* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 96.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition During the Early Cold War 1945-1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 114.

what was on the page without as much peril to themselves. As the Soviet Union opened, this relationship became heightened as well. These performers, particularly those like the violinist Gidon Kremer who spent substantial time in the West, championed works by Soviet composers and made immigration possible. In the post-Soviet realm, there has been a resurgence of the diaspora community, similar to that found in Paris after the revolution. In the post-Soviet diaspora, composers continue to work with those with whom they shared both life experiences and language. Performers as advocates, and intentional performer choice by composers also reflects the use of music as something extramusical: commemorative, community knowledge transfers, shared virtuosity, or shared oppression. This is manifested in relationships like that between Igor Stravinsky and the violinist Samuel Dushkin, Lera Auerbach and Vadim Gluzman, and Sofia Gubaidulina and Gidon Kremer.[17] Although not geographically concentrated, the advent of social media and globalization has tied the post-Soviet diaspora together. Finally, a small point is that ethnic minorities in the USSR often worked with other ethnic minorities even if prominent performers or musicians. Shostakovich, often highlighted for dissidence worked with Oistrakh, whose Jewishness didn't seem to count as much as his virtuosity. Gubaidulina, Tatar, worked exclusively with Kremer, a Latvian Jew. This is also true for Auerbach with Soviet Jewish origins working with Gluzman and Repin both with Jewish and Israeli backgrounds.

A. Lera Auerbach – Ballet for a Lonely Violinist and T'Filah (2002)

Lera Auerbach is one of the most preeminent post-Soviet composers and pianists. Born at the 'gateway to Siberia' in Chelyabinsk, she continued early music study in piano at the Juilliard School and Hannover University of Music. Among her compositions are many

[17] I'm honored to perform and premiere Khanon's work for this reason.

large-scale works for orchestra, orchestra and choir, opera, and notably ballet. In *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* and *T'filah* (Prayer) there are three important sub-genres to the Soviet aesthetic: music for the violin, music for the ballet, and the musically distorted (addressing the Holocaust). All form an artistic heritage and basis for this work and are important in discussion of where Auerbach's writing falls in the broader post-Soviet canon. Auerbach personally is one of the most prolific post-Soviet composers. She also continues the legacy of women composers and pianists from the generation before her including prominent names such as Sofia Gubaidulina, Elena Firsova, and Galina Ustvolskaya. Auerbach, born in 1973 was born into this period of openness and Soviet collapse. Being from Chelyabinsk, she is familiar with the environmental destruction of the Soviet nuclear system[18], personally knew those who fought in both the Great Patriotic War (WWII) and the Soviet Afghan War, and generally came of age during Soviet collapse.

Although building on the heritage of Russian ballet and the aesthetic lineage of ballet reductions for the violin or violin and piano, Auerbach doesn't write a fairytale narrative for the violinist. Instead, she links the piece explicitly to the Holocaust as a commemorative work to accompany the introspective *T'filah*. In this context, the aspect of loneliness from the title is important, as the violinist stands alone on the stage, a solitary dance, perhaps as a sole survivor as the first movement suggests. Given these unique criteria, where do *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* and *T'filah* fit in Auerbach's oeuvre? Both are composed and dedicated to the violinist Vadim Gluzman, and are virtuosic works for the instrument. *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* is a dance and honors the tradition of reductive writing. *T'filah* is simply entitled

[18] Chelyabinsk, the 'gateway to Siberia' has a train line which includes transfer of radioactive materials to farther in Siberia as well as to Murmansk, with nearby Lake Karachay a dumping ground for nuclear weapons waste and even some of the materials from Chernobyl.

prayer, and is a plaintive offering for the violin with an explicitly commemorative associated program. *T'filah* is the composer's reaction to the Holocaust, to the eternal question of the human code of values, and the definition of good and evil. [19] *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* is not a reduction of a specific work for the violin, but rather comes from Auerbach's ballet style and has an intense compositional connection with both dance and the visual. As such, the piece is meant to be performed almost as a theatrical work for the instrument with extended techniques, virtuosic flourish, and an evaporative ending. The gestures of the work are dramatic and captivating for an audience beyond the music. In this way, the performer is transformed from the recorded age of technical perfection back to a violinist dancing through the work with great artistic flourish and substantial technical demands.

The relationship of Auerbach with virtuoso Gluzman is evident as the piece is difficult but idiomatic for the instrument. There are aesthetic considerations specific to Soviet thought as well. The knocking theme of the fifth movement evokes the language of the Gulag and the repetitive frenzy of the third movement serves as an antithesis to the calm of *T'Filah* commemorating the Holocaust. This movement, *Kein Ausweg* (III) is the center and climax of the cycle, and has the frenzied sense of escape associated with other wartime commemorative works like the Shostakovich E minor piano trio – as often described: a doomed dance for the dead. The movement marking 'ossessivo' can translate as obsessive or as "haunting" contributing to the sense of doom or fate in the movement. The fourth movement, *Imaginaerer Dialog/Imaginary Dialogue* effectively utilizes a strategy of two voices like the first movement to create a literal dialogue. The penultimate movement *Quaelender Gedanke/Worrisome Thought* employs an extended technique for the violin – *col legno* knocking. The meaning is

[19] Lera Auerbach, *Program Notes: Tfilah*, Unpublished, Interview with the Composer September 14, 2018.

represented literally – a worrisome thought knocking to come in. In Soviet thought, there are other associations specifically with knocking patterns. Knocking as a worry alludes to the knock of the Soviet secret police, and knocking was also a means of communication in the Gulag system.[20] The non-musical incorporation of sounds is an inserted soundscape, a reproduction of atrocity and violent sites in a contemporary classical work. Finally, the piece closes in movement VI with *Frage/Question.* The movement is only two lines long and is an ad lib of a few repeated notes climbing to the highest register for the violin. The overall arch of the piece decays from the *Kein Ausweg* third movement to this questioning ending. The pairing of the *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* with the soulful *T'filah* carries some of the connotation of Holocaust commemoration to the *Ballet* particularly given that both were dedicated to Vadim Gluzman. The unresolved sentiment of *Ballet for a Lonely Violinist* following the frenetic third movement is an excellent example of the ways the Gulag, Police, the Holocaust are addressed in post-Soviet classical music, and how these works function as contemporary commemorations. Still, the closure of the work in a question, illuminates some of the incomplete mourning associated with these events. For the listener, composer, and performer, there is a sense of unease: with the event, the dead, the topic, and with the performance of commemoration, where silence and ominous knocking on the violin closes the piece.

B. "I am engaged in Provocations and Deception" Yuri Khanon and Bitten Pictures (1984)

Yuri Khanon is not simply a composer, but a philosopher, filmmaker, botanist, visual artist, and pianist, integrating music into a far wider *Weltvorstellung*.[21] As he says, he is like

[20] Evgenia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (Berlin: Mariner Books, 2002), 72.
[21] Khanon is the grandson of actor and composer Mikhail Savoyarov, and uses the penname Khanon from his birth name Yuri Feliksovich Soloviev-Savoyarov. He spells Khanon as ХанонЪ using the pre-Soviet letter

beads of mercury, and doesn't mix with anyone. He considers his philosophy and approach to the arts unique, uninfluenced, and often contradictory to established idiom and stylistic norms.[22] Consider Khanon's enormous work, *Nietzsche contra Khanon*, wherein five late books of Nietzsche are rewritten with the aim of increased vibrancy and clarity to the philosophical thought along with an extensive treaty *Khanograf* on the ethics of aesthetics.[23] Khanon has a tenuous relationship with the state, with his professors at conservatory, and with many contemporary collaborators including choreographer Aleksei Ratmansky over illegal use of Khanon's music without copyright permissions. Khanon is a living example of Etkind's *Warped Mourning* – a composer who mourns the dead while living among them, unable to reconcile aesthetic ethics with an intolerable state. He says that life in Russia is "insanity, total theft, caudillo, and victorious fascism" a "dead country where everyone eats as if they were dying."[24] He categorically rejects the Putinist regime, without "a single decent word to say," that "everything is like the Gulag from where I'm writing to you," and even writes without caution or deference to the "Vokhrovsky nonentities"/FSB interference who could monitor his Russian email server.[25] He says that to live in Russia is "intolerable" even incomparable to the "moronism" of the 1970s in which he grew up.[26] His subjectivity and ability to address themes is one of antagonism, to assert, to shout, and to provoke while still within a difficult and oppressive system. His representation of difficult themes in his writing is not intentionally

tverdyi znak. Khanon is also similar to "Canon" creating a play on words "Canonical Khanon" for his corpus of work.

[22] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, Feb. 8, 2024.

[23] Yuri Khanon, *Nietzsche kontra Khanon* (2009) and "Ethics in Aesthetics," Accessed February 26, 2024, http://khanograf.ru/arte/%D0%AD%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0_%D0%B2_%D0%AD%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B5.

[24] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, Feb. 8, 2024.

[25] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, Feb. 19, 2024.

[26] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, Feb. 5, 2024.

abstract, but he is reclusive, and his work is dense. This often cloaks his intended meaning behind layers of philosophical thought, requiring deep introspective work on any of his musical compositions.

Images Mordues, *Bitten Pictures,* or *Pokusannie Karpenki*, is a work of Khanon's from his student period (1984), now forty years old, without a premiere. Dedicated ironically to Leonid Brezhnev, this three-movement work is a short battle between violin and piano with three distinct and characteristic scenes. The piece is mocking "to the extreme," and the two instruments are at odds the entire work, but the violin is meant to eventually drown out the piano.[27] The piece contains a hint towards its political sentiment, the dedication Leonid Brezhnev, that finally "the king is dead!"[28] Behind the violin is also the sound of warfare, with the chaos of the piano mirroring the background chaos of the Lebanese War (1983-85).[29] Perhaps less obvious than the political inscription is the use of silence against the chaos of the violin. The music should "completely crumble in places"; an experiment of the composer to make fun of time itself with perpetual motion and fervent action between the instruments slamming into sections of total silence.[30] This is exacerbated by the *attacca* marking running each movement directly into the next without a place for pause for either the performers or the audience. The violin and the piano attack each other and are unhappy with everything, including the listeners. Again, we see the sort of extramusical incorporation of dialogue and performance between performers which Auerbach intends for a solo instrument. Here, the extramusical sounds are not intentionally evocative, but become increasingly violent throughout the work and are outbursts unable to be contained in musical expression.

---

[27] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, March 1, 2024.
[28] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, March 4, 2024.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

In the first scene, “Yowling Monsters” the violin and piano are repeatedly instructed to drown each other out, “kill each other,” “hit him!” and create an intense amount of noise. There are extended techniques for the piano, where the pianist must strike the lid of the piano, emphatically interrupting the violin: “Scoundrel!” the pianist decries with his strike after the end of the second statement. This movement immediately parodies two important elements of classical music – the four-bar phrase or melody, and the cadenza. Here, there are four bar phrases throughout, often with a one measure extension or elision, but rather than being answered with a corresponding melody in the piano or in another voice, they are rudely interrupted by total silence, or by the knocking smacks from the pianist on the lid. The mocked cadenza is a tremolo note rather than an area of spectacular virtuosity for the violin. When I clarified with the composer, he intended for this to be mocking: the violinist is actually meant just to tremolo and hold a single note, it is not an indication of a single note (as in Mozart, for example) on which a violinist should write their own cadenza based on the material prior.[31] In addition to the dedication to Brezhnev, the commentary in the longest statement of frenetic notes for the piano is “a lot of noise in the security council” followed by a caesura marked “1981” alluding to martial law in Poland. Silence is again the composer’s “mocking” and a way of linking music to politics. The second scene, “Poor Outcast” is theoretically marked at the same tempo as the first, but feels more relaxed, with its initial indication of “too sluggish” and “dying” and also with the color change of a mute added to the violin. There is none of the freneticism of the first movement, nor the competition between the instruments. Rather, both violin and piano are in a lugubrious stasis, although at odds rhythmically, where the violin

[31] Personal Correspondence with the Composer, March 1, 2024.

typically plays in two note groupings against the triplets in the piano. Again, the pianist uses extended techniques, this time "blowing" in the rests rather than defiantly smacking his hand on the instrument.

Images Mordues closes not with a whisper, but with a bang, literally a "terrifying blow" from the pianist. The third scene "The Triumph of Methuselah" the extreme tempo and antagonism between instruments returns from the first movement, with the violin "hysterically" ascending through short punctuations after a "nightmarishly fast" repeated figure against the "renegade" piano. The little monster drawing, one of Khanon's totems from the first movement also returns in the margin as both instruments "break free from their chains" and dramatically accelerate to a unison chord. The piece uneasily closes with a loud tremolo for the violin, like a "trembling creature" but both instruments have one final answer to each other: a "bang" pizzicato for the violin and a "terrifying blow" for the piano.[32] Because of this movement, I love to incorporate this work onto contemporary performances, particularly in support of Ukraine. Methuselah, or "the man of the Javelin/sword" seems an excellent nod to the use of Javelin missiles in Ukraine. To perform this work with a "terrifying blow" to cement the triumph of the third movement, is an artistic triumph alluding to a hopeful triumph against Putinism.

C. Sofia Gubaidulina's Dancer on a Tightrope (1993)

Finally, Sofia Gubaidulina's *Dancer on a Tightrope* was composed in 1993 after Gubaidulina's emigration to Germany. The last work discussed, it is also the most abstract, without any explicit references to atrocity or the previous century, but rather an aesthetic refutation of what came before and a new modality for composition in the post-Soviet period.

[32] Yuri Khanon, *Images Mordues,* p. 3.

Commissioned by the Library of Congress[33], it is an excellent twentieth-century composition, virtuosic, and an easily programmable work for violin. In the same year, Gubaidulina also transferred all of her sketches to the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel and served as Composer in Residence at Mozarteum, in Salzburg. [34] Composed for Gidon Kremer, it's an example of Gubaidulina's leaning westward, her compositional innovations after years of working on film scores and other composition for survival in the USSR. *Dancer on a Tightrope* comes from Gubaidulina's self-stated "middle period" of composition marked by a fascination with rhythm and numbers. [35] Valentina Khlopova, indicates five expression parameters in Gubaidulina's music which are present in *Dancer on a Tightrope*: articulation and methods of sound production, melody, rhythm, texture, and compositional writing. Kholopova also assigns a consonant or dissonant function to each parameter resulting in ten possibilities total. [36]Gubaidulina's use of rhythm as a structural device, is self-referentially called "The Rhythm of the Form," [37] This is linked not only to mathematically precise ratios to indicate the Trinity as in *Offertorium* but also the use of the Fibonacci and Riemann series after being inspired by Gennadi Aigi's poetry and Pyotr Meshchaninov. [38]

Dancer on a Tightrope uses the Fibonacci series to divide the entire work, from the number of beats in each section (divided by eighth note, not by beats in the measure) creating an off-centered work, like the displaced spiral created when plotting the Fibonacci series. At

---

[33] *Dancer on a Tightrope* was commissioned by the Library of Congress and premiered there in 1993 there by pianist Ursula Oppens and violinist Robert Mann according to Sikorski's Catalogue of Gubaidulina's works: Sikorski, *Sofia Gubaidulina List of Works and Biography* (Hamburg, Germany: Sikorski, 2016).
[34] Kurtz, *Sofia Gubaidulina: a Biography*, 272.
[35] Dmitri Smirnov, "Sofia Gubaidulina: From Where I Sit," *Gramophone*. Vol. 79, (2001) 23.
[36] Philip A. Ewell, "The Parameter Complex in the Music of Sofia Gubaidulina," *Music Theory Online,* vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2013): 4.
[37] Lukomsky, "The Eucharist in my Fantasy," 34.
[38] Ibid.

each expressive point where Gubaidulina has ended a section of Fibonacci numbers she also inserts a virtuosic element for the violin or the piano – most distinctly two large cadenzas for each instrument – and in her sketches indicates these expressive continuations with different colors of pencil to indicate shifts in style.[39] These divisions are compositionally virtuosic wherein a complex structure exists under the entire work of mathematical calculations and precise divisions of time which can't be heard by the listener or which could easily be ignored by a performer. Gubaidulina, utilizes spirituality in the form of religious symbols, numerological representations of Christ and the Passion (*Offertorium*), allusions to key Christian figures in titles and numerology (*Mary and Martha*), and the allegorical use of mathematical sequences (*Dancer on a Tightrope*). [40] Her use of numbers in particular is linked to color, and she "chooses rhythm in the broad sense in order to clarify [her] subconscious and not damage its essence. [41]The piece also uses the aforementioned structural virtuosity employed by Nosyrev and Liszt with dramatic gestures for the violin, interior and prepared playing of the piano, and large cadenzas at structural points indicating division throughout the work. The piece is not an easy or approachable listen, but is instantly evocative of the balancing dancer Gubaidulina hoped to evoke, particularly in the ominous use of a glass played over the inside strings of the piano creating an uneasy metallic creaking like that of a tightrope.[42]

[39] Alexandra Birch, *Balancing Mathematics and Virtuosity: A Performer's Guide to Sofia Gubaidulina's Dancer on a Tightrope* (Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 2017 and Basel: Paul Sacher Stiftung, Mitteilungen, 2017).
[40] Ibid., 163 – 75.
[41] Lukomsky, "Hearing the Subconscious: Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina," 30.
[42] Sofia Gubaidulina, *Dancer on a Tightrope for Violin and Piano* (Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 1993).

D. The Artistic End is a Bang, not a Whisper

Like the end of Khanon's *Bitten Pictures* with a sharp bang to the piano, works in the post-Soviet period are intended to challenge, to give voice to what was unspeakable a generation prior, and to assertively challenge existing hierarchies. The fractures of the Gulag, the Holocaust, and the Second World War are being addressed directly in classical music today. These works are also performances, not static artifacts for a museum. This gives diasporic and non-Russian artists the chance to engage with these topics themselves, to learn and analyze virtuosic compositional strategies and complicated layers of subtext and meaning as they perfect contemporary works. This is vitally important, as the traumas of the USSR are no longer behind an artistic or other Iron Curtain. Rather, these works allow performers to freely engage with atrocity topics, to use these works for current commemoration and advocacy, and to understand many generations of suppressed and silenced Soviet musicians. The sonic artifacts from atrocities return as echoes in post-Soviet compositions: a worried knocking by a performing violinist rather than a Cheka agent, a Yiddish prayer in excerpt without context rather than the vibrant *T'filah* of Vilna or Riga or Kyiv, or horrifying bangs on a piano rather than the ceaseless bombardments from warfare.

Composers of the late USSR captured pressing political sentiments and social issues in elements of their experimental compositions from the 1960s-1990s while beginning to address atrocities which occurred when they were children. It is on this generation that the post-Soviet diasporic and openly riotous generation of composers built their desire for total freedom of expression and integration of all art forms into music. For contemporary composers, their music is not simply music, but something agentive, something commemorative, or something political. This is a possibility for why these composers work

across the arts, not only in music: to have a full set of artistic tools and possibilities to address the most complex aspects of the human condition. These contemporary answers to Soviet atrocity can be combined with recovered works or actual soundscape recordings. This provides a contrast between music from the era, from atrocity, with composers working through these topics with both geographical and emotional distance. Grappling with the past is not merely an historical activity, but a pervasive thread in the arts and activism. From Zaderatsky to Weinberg to Auerbach, composers provide us a look at the human condition in extraordinary duress. The incorporation of sound into their works reinforces how vital sound is to understand atrocity spaces, and how it instantly evokes a sense of space and place including the Gulag. Their music contains examples of preservation, documentation, and testimony of a century of Soviet violence.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

Abylkhozhin, Zhulduzbek, Mikhail Akulov, and Alexandra Tsay, eds.. *Stalinism in Kazakhstan: History, Memory, and Repression*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021.

Adamovich, Ales and Daniil Granin. *Blokadnaia Kniga*. St. Petersburg: Pechatnyi dvor, 1994.

Adler, Eliyana R. *Survival on the Margins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020.

Adler, Nanci. *Keeping Faith with the Party: Communist Believers Return from the Gulag*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

Alexievich, Svetlana. *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets.* New Delhi, India: Juggernaut, 2013.

Alexievich, Svetlana. *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II.* New York, NY: Random House, 2017.

Alexievich, Svetlana. *Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of WWII*. New York, NY: Random House, 2019.

Allaniyazov, T.K. N.T. Zhumadilova, Zh.M. Baimurynov, and B. A. Zhunisova. *Karlag. Ocherki istorii Karagandinskovo ispravitel'no-trudovogo lagerya OGPU-NKVD-MVD SSSR (1931-1959)*. Almaty: Poligrafkombinat, 2012.

Allen, Paul. *Katyn: Stalin's massacre and the triumph of truth*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy." *Theory, culture & society* 7, no. 2-3 (1990): 295-310.

Applebaum, Anne. *Gulag: A history*. New York: Doubleday Books, 2003.

Applebaum, Anne. Ed. *Gulag Voices an Anthology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Ayres, Tammy, and Dylan Kerrigan. "The Gaols of Guyana: Hauntology and Trauma in the soundscape of Prison." *LIAS Working Paper Series* 4 (2021).

Badcock, Sarah. *A Prison Without Walls?: Eastern Siberian exile in the last years of Tsarism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. "Local legacies of the GULag in Siberia: Anthropological reflections." *Focal* 2015, no. 73 (2015): 99-113.

Barenberg, Alan. and Emily D. Johnson Eds. *Rethinking the Gulag: Identities, Sources, Legacies.* Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2022.

Barenberg, Alan. *Gulag town, company town: Forced labor and its legacy in Vorkuta*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Barnes, Steven A.. *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies.* New York, NY: *Hill and Wang*, 2013.

Bartov, Omer, and Eric D. Weitz, eds. *Shatterzone of empires: Coexistence and violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman borderlands*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Bell, Wilson T.. "Was the Gulag an Archipelago? De-Convoyed Prisoners and Porous Borders in the Camps of Western Siberia." *The Russian Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 116-141.

Beer, Daniel. *The house of the dead: Siberian exile under the tsars*. New York: Vintage, 2017.

Beer, Daniel. "Penal Deportation to Siberia and the Limits of State Power, 1801–81." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 3 (2015): 621-650

Bennigsen, Alexandre. “Mullahs, Mujahidin and Soviet Muslims.” *Problems of Communism* 33(6), 1984. pp. 28-44.

Bergman, Ronny and Alexander Baklanov. *Radioactive sources of main radiological concern in the Kola-Barents region*. Stockholm, Sweden: FRN, 1996.

Bernstein, Susan. *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century: Performing Music and Language in Heine, Liszt, and Baudelaire*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Dave, Bhavna. *Kazakhstan-ethnicity, language and power*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2007.

Bidlack, Richard and Nikita Lomagin. *The Leningrad Blockade 1941-1944 a New Documentary History from the Soviet Archives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

Birch, Alexandra. *Hitler’s Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide in Europe.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2024.

Birch, Alexandra. "'They were drinking, singing, and shooting': Singing and the Holocaust in the USSR." *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 4, no. 1 (2021).

Birch, Alexandra."This is Saamiland: An Alternative History of Solovki and the White Sea." *Europe Now*. Spring 2023. https://www.europenowjournal.org/2023/02/21/this-is-saamiland-an-alternative-history-of-solovki-and-the-white-sea/.

Birch, Alexandra. *Balancing Mathematics and Virtuosity: A Performer's Guide to Sofia Gubaidulina's Dancer on a Tightrope.* Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 2017 and Basel: Paul Sacher Stiftung, Mitteilungen, 2017.

Bouteneff, Peter C., Jeffers Engelhardt, and Robert Saler, eds. *Arvo Pärt: Sounding the Sacred*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2020.

Braun, Joachim. *Jews and Jewish Elements in Soviet Music: A Study of a Socio-national Problem in Music*. Tel Aviv: Israeli Music Publications, 1978.

Brown, Kellie D.. *The Sound of Hope: Music as Solace, Resistance and Salvation During the Holocaust and World War II*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020.

Browning, Christopher R.. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Collins, 2017.

Budnitskii, Oleg, David Engel, Gennady Estraikh, and Anna Shternshis, eds.. *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*. Jews in the Soviet Union vol. 3. New York: New York University Press, 2022.

Bujalski, Nicholas. "'Tuk, tuk, tuk!'A History of Russia's Prison Knocking Language." *The Russian Review* 81, no. 3 (2022): 491-510.

Cameron, Sarah. *The hungry steppe: Famine, violence, and the making of Soviet Kazakhstan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018.

Chikowero, Mhoze. *African music, power, and being in colonial Zimbabwe*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Cizmic, Maria. *Performing pain: Music and trauma in Eastern Europe*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Cohal, Dragoș Mihai. "Arvo Pärt. Tintinnabuli style, religious implications." *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series VIII: Performing Arts* 16, no. 1 (2023): 15-30.

Cole, Tim. *Holocaust landscapes*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

Coogan, Michael David. *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Conquest, Robert. *Kolyma: The Arctic death camps*. New York: Viking Press, 1978.

Cusick, Suzanne G. "Music as torture/Music as weapon." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, pp. 379-391. Routledge, 2020.

Daughtry, J. Martin. *Listening to war: Sound, music, trauma, and survival in wartime Iraq*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Digges, Charles. "Kola Peninsula nickel production facilities issues itself license to continue to pollute, continuing month of grave air code violations." *Bellona* (Oslo, Norway). June 2nd, 2014. Accessed May 20th, 2022. https://bellona.org/news/industrial-pollution/2014-06-kola-peninsula-nickel-production-facilities-issues-license-continue-pollute.

Dixon, Gavin. *The Routledge Handbook to the Music of Alfred Schnittke*. London: Routledge, 2022.

Djumaev, Alexander. "Musical Heritage and National Identity in Uzbekistan." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 14, no. 2 (2005): 165–84. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184517.

Dubson, Vadim. Toward a Central Database of Evacuated Soviet Jews' Names, for the Study of the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Territories. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 26, Issue 1, Spring 2012. Pages 95–119, https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcs013.

Dulatbekov, N.O. *Mamochkino Molasy*. Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2015.

Dulatbekov, N.O. *Special Camps in Kazakhstan: Stepnoy, Peschaniy, Lugovoy, Dalniy*. Almaty, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2015.

Dulatbekov, N.O.. *Karlag: pamiat' vo imia budushchego*. Karaganda Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2014.

Dulatbekov, N.O. *Karlag. Ocherki istorii Karagandinskogo ispravitel'no-trudovogo lageria OGPU-NKVD-MVD CCCR*. Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013.

Dvuzhilnaya, Innessa. "The Holocaust in Music: Composers from the former Soviet Union." in *Partituren der Erinnerung Der Holocaust in der Musik*. Ed. Bela Rasky and Verena Pawlowsky, Holocaustforschung des Wiener Wiesenthal Instituts fuer Holocaust Studien VWI, Band I. Vienna: New Academic Press, 2015.

Dvuzhil'naya, I.F.. *Tema kholokosta v akademicheskoi muzike.* Grodno, Belarus: Grodnyenskie gosudarstvennie univyersitet imeni Yanki Kupali, 2016.

Elphick, Daniel. *Music behind the Iron Curtain: Weinberg and His Polish Contemporaries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Etkind, Alexander. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience.* New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2013.

Etkind, Alexander. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Ewell Philip A. "The Parameter Complex in the Music of Sofia Gubaidulina." *Society for Music Theory*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2013). Accessed December 31, 2016.

Fanning, David, ed.. *Shostakovich Studies*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Fanon, Frantz. *Concerning Violence*. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Fay, Laurel E. *Shostakovich: A life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Feofanov, Dmitry ed."Yudakov, Solomon Aleksandrovich." *Biographical Dictionary Of Russian/Soviet Composers*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989.

Figes, Orlando. *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Friedla, Katharina and Markus Nesselrodt eds.. *Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1939-1959): History and Memory of Deportation, Exile and Survival.* Berlin: DeGruyter, 2022.

Frierson, Cathy, and Simeon Vilensky. *Children of the Gulag*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Frolova Walker, Marina. *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Gaski, Harald. "Indigenism and cosmopolitanism: a pan-Sami view of the indigenous perspective in Sami culture and research." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 9, no. 2 (2013): 113-124.

Gaski, Harald. "The Sami People: The" White Indians" of Scandinavia." *American Indian culture and research journal* 17, no. 1 (1993).

Gentes, Andrew A.. *Exile to Siberia, 1590-1822*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Gentes, Andrew A.. *Exile, Murder and Madness in Siberia, 1823-61*. New York: Springer, 2010.

Gentes, Andrew A.. "'Licentious girls' and frontier domesticators: Women and Siberian exile from the late 16th to the early 19th centuries." *Sibirica* 3, no. 1 (2003): 3-20.

Gentes, Andrew A.. "Sakhalin's women: the convergence of sexuality and penology in late imperial Russia." *Ab Imperio* 2003. no. 2 (2003): 115-138.

Gessen, Masha. *Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan, Russia's Jewish Autonomous Region.* New York, NY: Knopf, Doubleday, 2016.

Gheith, Jehanne M., and Katherine R. Jolluck, eds. *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories OF Soviet Incarceration and Exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Gibson, James R. "The Significance of Siberia to Tsarist Russia." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 14, no. 3 (1972): 442-453.

Gilbert, Shirli. *Music in the Holocaust: confronting life in the Nazi ghettos and camps*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Gilles, Richard Louis. "Valentin Silvestrov and Putin's War in Ukraine." *Tempo* 77, no. 304 (2023): 7-20. https://doi.org/10.1017.S0040298222001140.

Ginzburg, Eugenia. *Journey Into the Whirlwind.* Boston: Mariner, 2002.

Ginzburg, Eugenia. Ian Boland, Trans. *Within the Whirlwind.* Boston: Mariner, 1982.

Ginzburg, Lidiia. *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka*. Moscow: Eksmo, 2014.

Gitelman, Zvi. Ed. *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Glantz, David M. *The Siege of Leningrad 1941-1945: 900 Days of Terror*. London, UK: W&N, 2004.

Goncharenko, Nikolai. "Notii po Sovietskii Estetike." *Leonardo* 6, no. 3 (1973): 257-60. Accessed December 3, 2020. doi:10.2307/1572648

Gregory, Paul R., and Valery Lazarev. *The economics of forced labor: The Soviet Gulag*. Vol. 518. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2013.

Grossmann, Atina, Mark Edele, Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds.. *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.

Grossman, Vasily. Translated Robert and Elizabeth Chandler, Edited by Robert Chandler and Yuri Bit-Yunan. *Stalingrad*. London: Harvill Secker, 2019.

Grossman, Vasily. *Treblinskii Ad*. Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo narodnogo komissariata ovorony, 1945.

Hartley, Janet M. *Siberia: A history of the people*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Haynes, John. *New Soviet man: gender and masculinity in Stalinist Soviet cinema*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003.

Hedeler, Wladislaw and Meinhard Stark. *Das Grab in der Steppe Leben im Gulag: Die Geschichte eines Sowjetischen "Besserungsarbeitslagerrs" 1930-1959*. Paderborn and München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008.

Hilberg, Raul. *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945.* New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1993.

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Hooker, Lynn. "Turks, Hungarians, and Gypsies on Stage: Exoticism and Auto-Exoticism in Opera and Operetta." *Hungarian Studies* 27, no. 2 (2013): 291-311.

Jakobson, Michael. *Origins of the gulag: The Soviet prison camp system, 1917-1934*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Kaganovitch, Albert. *Exodus and Its Aftermath: Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Interior*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022.

Kassenova, Togzhan. *Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan Gave up the Bomb.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022.

Keating, Jennifer. "Place, Power, and Experience in Tsarist Exile." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 19, no. 4 (2018): 849-860.

Kellogg, Paul. *Truth Behind Bars: Reflections on the Fate of the Russian Revolution*. Edmonton, Alberta: AU Press, 2021.

Kennan, George. *Siberia and the Exile System*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 reprint from 1891.

Khlevniuk, Oleg V. *The history of the Gulag: from collectivization to the great terror*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Kindler, Robert. *Stalins Nomaden: Herrschaft und Hunger in Kasachstan*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS Verlagsges, mbH, 2014.

Kirschenbaum, Lisa. *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad 1941-1995. Myths, Memories, Monuments.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Kizny, Tomasz. *Gulag: Life and Death Inside the Soviet Concentration Camps.* Buffalo, NY: Firefly, 2004.

Klause, Inna. *Der Klang des Gulag: Musik und Musiker in den sowjetischen Zwangsarbeitslagern der 1920er-bis 1950er-Jahre.* Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.

Klause, Inna. "Music and 're-education'in the Soviet gulag." *Torture: Quarterly Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture* 23, no. 2 (2013): 24-33.

Klokova, Antonia and Jascha Nemtsov eds. *Julian Krein: "Notizen aus meinem Musikalischen Leben".* Weisbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018.

Kolchinsky Dasbach, Julia. "Lyric Witness: Intergenerational (re) collection Of The Holocaust In Contemporary American Poetry." UPenn, PhD Dissertation, (2021).

Kostyrchenko, BG. ed.. *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism v SSSR: Ot nachala do kul'minatsii 1938-1953*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2005.

Kotkin, Stephen. *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Kupletskii, B.M. *Materialy k petrografii vodorazdela mezhdu oz imandda I Belym Morem v raione kandalaksha-Kolvitsa.* Leningrad: Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1932.

Kurtz, Michael. *Sofia Gubaidulina: A Biography*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.

Latkovskis, Leonards. "Baltic Prisoners of the Gulag: Revolts." *Lituanus - Lithuanian quarterly journal of arts and sciences*. Accessed 6 September 2021.

Lehovich, Dimitry V. "Denikin's Offensive." *The Russian Review* 32, no. 2 (1973): 173–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/127681.

Lehtola, Veli-Pekka. trans. Linna Weber Müller-Wille. *Surviving the Upheaval of Arctic War: Evacuation and Return of the Sámi and Finland During and After the Second World War*. Aanaar, Inari Finland: Kustannus Puntsi Publisher, 2019.

Levin, Theodore, Saida Daukeyeva, and Elmira Köchümkulova, eds.. *The Music of Central Asia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.

Lewin, Moshe. *The soviet century*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2005.

Lower, Wendy. *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields.* Berlin: Mariner, 2013.

Lukomsky, Vera, and Sofia Gubaidulina. "'Hearing the Subconscious': Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina." *Tempo* no. 209 (1999): 27 – 31.

Lukomsky, Vera and Sofia Gubaidulina. "My Desire is Always to Rebel, to swim against the Stream." *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 36, No. 1 (Winter 1998): 5 – 41.

Lukomsky, Vera, and Sofia Gubaidulina. "'The Eucharist in my Fantasy': Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina." *Tempo* no. 206 (1998): 29 – 35.

Manker, Ernst. *Lapparnas heliga ställen: kultplatser och offerkult i belysning av Nordiska museets och landsantikvariernas fätundersökningar*. Vol. 13. Geber, 1957.

Manley, Rebecca. *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Mar, Tracey Banivanua, and Penelope Edmonds, eds. *Making settler colonial space: Perspectives on race, place and identity*. New York, NY: Springer, 2010.

Margolin, Julius. *Podróż do krainy zeków*. Wołowiec, Poland: Czarne, 2013.

Megargee, Geoffrey P. *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front, 1941*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Miller, Barbara Helen and Earle Waugh, eds.. *Idioms of Sámi Health and Healing*. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2015.

Moldagaliyev, Bauyrzhan Eskaliyevich ,Murat Smagulov, Bakhitzhan Menlibekanch Salershinov, and Ayazhan Sagikyzy. "Synthesis of Traditional and Islamic Values in Kazkahstan." in *European Jourrnal of Science and Technology.* October 2015, vol. II no. 5.

Mogl, Verena. *Juden, die ins Lied sich retten «-der Komponist Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-1996) in der Sowjetunion*. Berlin: Waxmann Verlag, 2017.

Moody, Ivan and Sofia Gubaidulina. "The Space of the Soul: an Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina." *Tempo* no. 266 (2011): 31 – 35.

Morrison, Simon. *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Morrison, Simon. *Lina and Serge: The Love and Wars of Lina Prokofiev.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2013.

Morrison, Simon. *Bolshoi Confidential: Secrets of the Russian Ballet from the Rule of the Tsars to Today*. New York: Norton, 2016.

Moynahan, Brian. *Leningrad: Siege and Symphony: The Story of the Great City Terrorized by Stalin, Starved by Hitler, Immortalized by Shostakovich.* New York, NY: Grove/Atlantic, 2014.

Mozorov, N.A. "Abstract." *GULAG in the Komi region* 1929–1956. Yekaterinburg: Ural State University after A. M. Gorky, 2000.

Nemtsov, Jascha. "„Ich bin schon längst tot ": Komponisten im Gulag: Vsevolod Zaderackij und Aleksandr Veprik." *Osteuropa* (2007): 315-339.

Nenye, Vesa. Peter Munter, Toni Wirtanen, and Chris Birks. *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941-45*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Nikitina, L. D.. *Moisei (Mechislav) Vainberg: Po stranitsam zhizni cherez dokumenty vospominaniya i issdedovaniya.* Moscow: Buki Vedi, 2019.

Nikitina, L.D. *Sovetskaya muzyka. Istoriya I sovremennost.* Moscow: Muzyka, 1991.

Nilsen, Liz-Marie. "Sámi protest against British mining company." *Survival International News* (Online, Berlin, Madrid, Paris, London, San Francisco). September 3, 2013. Accessed June 3rd, 2022. https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/9529.

Nilsen, Thomas. "Kola Peninsula to get radioactive waste from Southern Russia." *The Barents Observer* (Kirkenes, Norway). May 31, 2021. Accessed June 1st, 2022. https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/nuclear-safety/2021/05/kola-peninsula-get-radioactive-waste-southern-russia.

Nolte, Ernst. "Marxismus und Nationalsozialismus." *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983): 389-417.

Obrazkova, Marina. "Victims of Stalinist Repressions Remembered at Moscow Ceremony." *Russia Beyond the Headlines*. October 30, 2014. Accessed June 10, 2022. http://rbth.com/society/2014/10/30/victims_of_stalinist_reepressions_remembered_at_moscow_ceremony_4

Ochoa Gautier, Ana María. *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Ofsjannikov, Mikhail Fedorovich. *Kratikii slovar po estetike.* Moscow: Idvo-Polit, 1953.

Ozgeldinova, Zh. O., E.M. Khamzin, Zh.T. Mukaev, A.A. Zhanguzhina, Zh.F. Ten'kedaeva, and M.A. Alagudzhaeva. "Assessment of anthropogenic load on the landscapes of the Kengir River." In Gubrometeoropogiia I ekologiia no. 1 (2020), 27-36.

Paine, Robert. "Trails of Saami Self-Consciousness." *Anthropologica* 29, no. 2 (1987): 169–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/25605229.

Plokhy, Serhii. *Chernobyl: History of a tragedy*. London: Penguin UK, 2018.

Popov, Yu. G..*Poznanie Saryarki: cherez puteshestviia, ssylki, laggeria*. Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013.

Quinn, Peter. "Out with the Old and in with the New: Arvo Pärt's 'Credo.'" *Tempo*, no. 211(2000): 16-20. https:doi.org/10.1017/S004029820000735X.

Rauzen M. Kul'turno-prosvetitel'naya rabota. In: Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, vol. 13. 1973:599.

Rawicz, Slavomir. *The Long Walk.* Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2010.

Revesz, Eva B. "Poetry after Auschwitz: Tracing Trauma in Ingeborg Bachmann's Lyric Work." *Monatshefte* 99. no. 2 (2007): 194-216.

Robinson, Harlow. *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography.* Lexington, MA: Plunkett Lake Press, 2019.

Robson, Roy R.. *Solovki The Story of Russia Told Through its Most Remarkable Islands*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Roeder, John. "Transformational Aspects of Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Music." *Journal of Music Theory* 1 April 2011. 55 (1): 1–41. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/00222909-1219187.

Safransky, Rüdiger. *Romantik: Eine deutsche Affare.* Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2007.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

Savoy, Bénédicte. *Africa's Struggle for Its Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022.

Schechter, Brandon M.. *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in WWII through Objects*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019.

Scheffler, Judith, ed. *Wall Tappings: An International Anthology of Women's Prison Writings, 200 to the Present.* New York: Feminist Press and the City University of New York, 2002.

Schmelz, Peter J. *Such freedom, if only musical: Unofficial Soviet music during the Thaw*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Schmelz, Peter J. *Sonic overload: Alfred Schnittke, Valentin Silvestrov, and polystylism in the late USSR*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Schwartz, Boris. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Seitsonen, Oula, and Vesa-Pekka Herva. ""War junk" and cultural heritage: viewpoints on World War II German material culture in the Finnish Lapland." In *War & peace: conflict and resolution in archaeology: proceedings of the 45th Annual Chacmool Archaeology Conference, November 8-11, 2012*. Chacmool Archaeology Association, 2017.

Seitsonen, Oula, and Vesa-Pekka Herva. "Forgotten in the wilderness: WWII German PoW camps in Finnish Lapland." In *Archaeologies of internment*, pp. 171-190. New York, NY: Springer, 2011.

Shalamov, Varlam. *Kolymskie rasskazy.* London, UK: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1978.

Sharipova, Dina Nazdibayev. "Perceptions of National Identity in Kazakhstan: Pride, Language, and Religion." in *The Musim World* 110.1 (2020) 89-106.

Sherbakova, Irina. "The Gulag in Memory." In *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, vol. I (Memory and Totalitarianism)*, ed. Luisa Passerini, 103-115. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994

Slade, Gavin and Laura Piacentini, Alena Kravtsova. Ghosts of the Gulag: Negotiating Spectres of the Penal Past in Northern Russia. *The British Journal of Criminology*. Volume 64, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 17–33, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azad013.

Slezkine, Yuri. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Smirnov, Dmitri. "Sofia Gubaidulina: From Where I Sit." *Gramophone*, 2001.

Smirnov, M.B.. *Sistema ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei v SSSR, 1923-1960*. Moscow: Zven'ya, 1998.

Smolkin-Rothrock, V. “The Ticket to the Soviet Soul: Science, Religion, and the Spiritual Crisis of Late Soviet Atheism.” in *The Russian Review* (2014), 73: 171-197. https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.10726.

Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010.

Sobolev, Oleg. *“*Mecheslav Vainberg: Glossarii.*”* in *ART-1*.15 May, 2014.

Sobraniye uzakoneniy i rasporyazheniy rabochego i krest’yanskogo pravitel’stva. Moscow: Yuridicheskoye knigoizdatel’stvo; 3 June 1919; 20:257–61.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *Odin den’ Ivana Denisovicha.* Moscow: Novy Mir, 1962.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *Rakovyi korupus*. West Germany: Poset/Samizdat, 1966.

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *Arkhipelag GULAG*. Paris: YMCA Press, 1973.

de Sousa Santos, Boaventura. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Spehr, Scott and Nargis Kassenova. “Kazakhstan Constructing Identity in a post-Soviet Society.” p. 135-151. published February 8, 2012. *Asian Ethnicity* vol. 13, 2012, issue 2. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2012.638802.

Spivak, Gayatri. 'Neocolonialism and the Secret Agent of Knowledge.’ *Oxford Literary Review* (Special issue on Neocolonialism). 13 (1991).

Steinweis, Alan E. *Art, ideology, and economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich chambers of music, theater, and the visual arts*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Stravinsky, Igor and Robert Craft. *Stravinsky, Selected correspondence*. London: Faber, 1982.

Subotić, Jelena. *Red Star Yellow Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019.

Suny, Ronald Grigor and Terry Martin eds. *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Taruskin, Richard. "Two Serendipities: Keynoting a conference,“music and power.” *The Journal of Musicology* 33, no. 3 (2016): 401-431.

Taruskin, Richard. "Art and politics in Prokofiev." *Society* 29 (1991): 60-63.

Taruskin, Richard. “Non-Nationalists and other Nationalists.”. In *Russian Music at Home and Abroad,* p. 34 – 49. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016.

Taruskin, Richard. “The Birth of Contemporary Russia out of the Spirit of Music (not)”. In *Russian Music at Home and Abroad,* p. 350 – 357. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016.

Tassie, Gregor. *Nikolai Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.

Taum, Yoseph Yapi. "Collective Cambodian memories of the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge regime." In *Fifth Annual Conference of the Asian Scholarship Foundation.* Bangkok, pp. 25-26. 2005.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The fantastic: A structural approach to a literary genre*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975.

Tomoff, Kiril. *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers 1939-1953*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Tomoff, Kiril. *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2015.

Tsenova, Valeria. *Cislovye tajny muzyki Sofii Gubaidulinoi*. Moscow, Russia: Moskovskaya gos. Konservatoria im PI Caikovskogo, 2000.

Ulturgasheva, Olga. "Ghosts of the Gulag in the Eveny World of the Dead." *The Polar Journal* 7, no. 1 (2017): 26-45.

Ulturgasheva, Olga. "Gulag Legacy: Spaces of Continuity in Contemporary Everyday Practices." *Laboratorium.Zhurnal sotsal’nykh issledovanii* 7. no. 1 (2015): 5-14.

Van der Kolk, Bessel A., Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, eds. *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*. Guilford Press, 2012.

Vogl, Josef. *Aufbruch in den Osten: Österreichische Migranten in Sowjetisch-Kasachstan*. Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2019.

Vovsi-Mikhoels, Natalia. *Moi otets Solomon Mikhoels: Vospominanie o zhizni I gibeli.* Moscow: Vozvrashchenie, 1977.

Walke, Anika. *Pioneers and partisans: An oral history of Nazi genocide in Belorussia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Waschsmann, Nikolaus. *Kl: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2015.

Weinberg, Robert. Stalin's Forgotten Zion Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Jewish Homeland: An Illustrated History, 1928-1996. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.

Werb, Bret. "Fourteen Shoah Songbooks." *Musica Judaica.* 20 (2013): 39-116.

Werb, Bret. *Yiddish Songs of the Shoah: A Source Study Based on the Collections of Schmerke Kaczerginski.* PhD Ethnomusicology Dissertation. Los Angeles: UCLA, 2014.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered.* London, UK: Faber and Faber, 2006.

Wlodarski, Amy Lynn. *Musical witness and Holocaust representation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Worobec, Christine D.. "Witchcraft beliefs and practices in prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian villages." In *Witchcraft in the Modern World*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Yan, Wudan. "The nuclear sins of the Soviet Union live on in Kazakhstan." in *Nature* no. 568. p. 22-24. Doi:10.1038/d41586-01034-8.

Yurchak, Aleksei. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Zessin-Jurek, Lidia. "Whose Victims and Whose Survivors? Polish Jewish Refugees between Holocaust and Gulag Memory Cultures." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 36, no. 2 (2022): 154-170.

Zhilinskii, Ivan. "Blokadnyi dnevnik." *Voprosy istorii* 1996. no. 5-6.

Zhumadilova, N.T.. *KARLAG: Tvorchestvo v nevole.* Karaganda, Kazakhstan: Akademiia Bolashaq, 2013.

Zuk, Patrick. Nikolay Myaskovsky and the Events of 1948. *Music and Letters*. Volume 93, Issue 1, February 2012. Pages 61–85. https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcr144.

Zuk, Patrick. *Nikolay Myaskovsky: A Composer and His Times*. Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2021.

Archival

University of California, Santa Barbara
Minutes of Session no. 27, Attorney General of the Government of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann Criminal case no. 40/61.11/4/1961, Accessed in the Eugene Davidson Special Collection in the UCSB Library box 5 MSS 185, 2022.

The Library of Congress
Domburs,, L. "Gulag'a karte: padomju Socialisiko Republiku Savieniba." Riga: Bierdriba "Rigas Memorials," 1993.

Khrushchev, Nikita. *O kul'te lichnosti i yevo posledstiyakh* Warsaw: PUWP, 1956.

The Russia Program: The Bridge

Sovnarkoma SSSR, organami pechati I prokuuratury o razoblachenii antisovetskikh zagovorov o narusheniiakh Ustava sel'skokhoziaistvennoi arteli o zaderzhke v vydache zarabotnoi platy i drugim voprocam, GARF f. 8131, op. 37, d. 111, Osobaia perepiska c TsKVKP(b).

The Russian State Archives of Literature and Art (RGALI)
Fond 1702
Fond 2490 *Soyuz kompozitorov RSFSR 1958-*. Opis 4.

The Russian State Archives (GARF)
Ispravitel'no-trudovoy kodeks RSFSR. Izdaniye VTsIK. Moscow: Kreml'; 1924:19–21.

Ispravitel'no-trudovie lagerya v Komi AO-Komi ASSR (1929-1960 gg). Istoricheskaya Spravka.
f. A-259, op. 40 d. 3028, p. 82-83.
f. 8418, op. 2, d. 99, p. 23.
f. A-259, op. 40 d. 3037, p. 20.

The Electronic Library of Historical Documents
"Osobaia papka" L.P. Berii. 1949 god. Arkhiv noveishei istorii Rossii. Seria T. IV. "Osobaia papka" L.P. Berii: Iz materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1946-1949 gg. M., 1996.

Stalinskii plan po unichtozhenio Naroda: Pod gotovka I realizatsiya prekaza NKVD No. 0447 "ob operatsii po repressirovaniyo byvshik kuulakov ugolovnikov I drugakh antisovetskikh elementov" RGASPI f. 17, op. 66, d. 576 p. 17 doc. 60.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Oral History Interview with Heinz Drossel, USHMM, Accession 2007,102, RG-50.030.0517, May 14, 2007, Accessed April 1, 2024.

Oral History Interview with Mikhail Rozenshteyn, US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accession 2020.21055, RG-90.121.0055, Accessed 8/29/2023.

Kinder aus Lapland, German Educational film: daily life in Lapland, USHMM, accession 2002.189.1, RG-60.3646, Film ID: 2585.

Records of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Bundesarchiv), B 162, Accessed USHMM 2011.99, RG-14.101M

Records of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee from the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), fond 8114, folder 4, 328-330, RG-22.028M, Accession 2011.17.

Records of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre (GOSET), fond 2307, 2308, Accession 2005.405, RG-22.011M

Glavnoe Pereselncheskoe Upravlenye pri Soviete Ministrov RSFSR, Fond A 327, Folder 25 1942, RG 22.027M.

Public Humanities, Exhibits, Museums

Vorkutinskii gosuudarstvennii dramaticheskii teatr. *Drama severnikh shirot*. 70 year publication of the Theater, 2013

Exhibits and Publications of the Siida Museum. Inari, Finland. 2024.

Sheet Music

Unpublished

Khanon, Yuri. *Images Mordues*. 1984. Courtesy of the Composer

Nosyrev, Mikhail. *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. courtesy of the composer's son

Nosyrev, Mikhail. *Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra*. courtesy of the composer's son.

Tyrmand, Edi. *Elegaic Improvisation*. Courtesy of Inesa Dvuzhilnaya.

Yudakov. Suleiman. *Eastern Poem* for Violin and Piano. 1945.

Published

Auerbach, Lera. *T'filah and the Lonely Suite*. Hamburg: Sikorski, 2002.

Gubaidulina, Sofia. *Dancer on a Tightrope for Violin and Piano*. Hamburg, Germany: Sikorski, 1993.

Myaskovsky, Nikolay. *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. Moscow: Muzgiz, 1948.

Prokofiev, Sergei. *Sonata no. 1 for Violin and Piano*. Moscow: Muzfond, 1947.

Shostakovich, Dmitri. *Piano trio no. 2 in E minor.* New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1944.

Silvestrov, Valentin. *3 Postludien*. Mainz: M.P. Belaieff, 1982.

Weinberg, Mieczyslaw. *Sonata no. 1 for Violin and Piano*. Hamburg: Sikorski Verlag, 2015.

Zaderatsky, Vsevolod. *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. L'viv: Spolom, 2003.

CDs and Recordings
Nemtsov, Jascha. *Zaderatsky Preludes and Fugues for Piano*. Berlin: Rundfunk, 2015 2 CDs. PH15028.

Websites and Digital Materials
Auerbach, Lera. *Biography*. Lera Auerbach Website. https://leraauerbach.com/index.php/biography. Accessed December 3, 2020.

Auerbach, Lera. *Program Notes T'filah*. Unpublished Interview with the Composer. September 14, 2018.

Memorial Foundation Website. Memorial International. Memo.ru

Nosyrev, Mikhail. Website about the Composer managed by the family. Accessed 5/17/2023. http://www.nosyrev.com/biography.

"Vorkuta ITL." on *Karta Sovietskikh lagerei.* https://gulagmap.ru/camp111.

Khaimov, Manashe and Daniel Allen. "Bukharian Lens Project 2014 – JCCA's Bukharian Teen Lounge." *Youtube.com*. July 3, 2014: youtube.com/watch?v=atQSrR_Yv8A. accessed November 17, 2023.

The National Film Registry. *Tevye The Milkman*. 1939. Uploaded August 2nd 2023. Youtube. Accessed December 14, 2023: https://youtu.be/wv_Nzjr1OYc?si=3Q4gCFOA_XtLzg8p.

Yakubek, Anastasiia and GTPK Magadan. "Ia Svoboden" Dokumental'nyi fil'm. *Youtube.* https://youtu.be/8b4oyFEHrcA?si=VDRQzjDbM0MHNbQE.

The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe: https://yivoencyclopedia.org/

Zaderatsky, Laurent.Vsevolod Petrovitch Zaderatsky.com. September 27, 2009. Accessed January 25, 2024: https://www.vpzaderatsky.fr/.

Oral Histories
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)

Oral History Interview with Meir Tzoref. Accession Number: 1995.A.1272.334. RG Number: RG-50.120.0334. Tape no. 1, 2:25:02, Accessed November 11, 2023. USHMM.

Yahad in Unum Map and Oral Histories including:
Witness no. 508, Verkhovye Belarus, Accessed 3/19/24
Iefrossinia K., Sirotino Belarus, Accessed 3/19/24
Vladimir D., Ulla Belarus, Accessed 3/19/24
Irina B., Glubokye Blearus, Accessed 3/20/24
Anna Sh. Postavy Blearus, Accessed 3/20/24
Witness no. 637, Kostyukovichi Belarus, Accessed 3/21/24

Holocaust Testimonies. Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. Yale University Library:
HVT-1791 Evelyn E, HVT-2012 Rita H, HVT-1344 Ben S., HVT-4400 Hyman K, HVT-1600 Cypora G., HVT-2004 Abraham L., HVT-2349 Matthew T., HVT-3082 David S., HVT-1597 Bianca B., HVT-2514 Anna S., HVT-2896 Irving D., HVT-1880 Michael G., HVT-308 Uri Z., HVT-461 Harry U., HVT-3031 Mayer Z., HVT-2307 Ada R., HVT-4150 Betty G., HVT-2521 Celina H., HVT-2537 Celine P., HVT-1287 Felix F., HVT-2604 Fritzi S., HVT-3030 Gilda Z., HVT-2755 Irwin L., HVT-1273 Israel M., HVT-897 Joseph L., HVT-4450 Leopold S., HVT-760 Peter G., HVT-269 Samson M., HVT-1407 Simcha S., HVT-1492 Zlata G., HVT-833 Allen S., HVT-4056 Benjamin S., HVT-3620 Gregory K., HVT-1931 Leyba E., HVT-3743 Vladimir S., HVT-3374 Alexander B.

USC Shoah Foundation: Visual History Archive:
Ameisen, Alexander. Interview 51752. *Visual History Archive,* USC Shoah Foundation. September 12, 2001. Accessed February 14, 2024.

Baram, Orion. Interview 37390. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. October 20, 1997. Accessed February 8, 2024.

Berezin, Viktor. Interview 45743. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. June 12th, 1998. Accessed January 12, 2024.

Bland, Fryda. Inerview 55083. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. March 19, 2008. Accessed February 12, 2024.

Braun, Mordechai. Interview 34148. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. September 29, 1997. Accessed January 12, 2024.

Breit, Renata. Interview 5016. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. August 17, 1995. Accessed February 12, 2024.

Busch, Hilda. Interview 33714. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. August 28, 1997. Accessed February 13, 2024.

Dimerman, Lieb. Interview 13556. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. December 21, 1995. Accessed January 2,2024.

Eisenberg, Hinda. Interview 851. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. January 24, 1995. Accessed January 15, 2024.

Furman, Chaya. Interview 52151. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. October 6, 1999. Accessed February 8, 2024.

Galler, Meyer. Interview 52318. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. December 13, 1989. Accessed February 8 ,2024.

Goldfarb, Esther. Interview 58079. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. June 17, 2001. Accessed February 10, 2024.

Golubchansky, Esfira. Interview 52366. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. October 4, 2006. Accessed February 13, 2024.

Grossblat, Abe. Interview 59246. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. December 21, 1995. Accessed January 2,2024.

Kadlovski, Louis. Interview 39796. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. March 19, 1998. Accessed February 8, 2024.

Kozyrev, Anna. Interview 55734. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. April 28, 1999. Accessed March 20, 2024.

Kunis, Sima. Interview 40413. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. February 8, 1998. Accessed February 10, 2024.

Lewin-Liberow, Rachel. Interview 31941. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. May 28, 1997. Accessed February 8, 2024.

Liebman, Aniuta. Interview 40816. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. April 28, 1998. Accessed January 21, 2024.

Ludner-Kaletsky, Mary. Interview 54486. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. June 16, 2000. Accessed February 8, 2024.

Meiler, Donia. Interview 37009. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. October 14, 1997. Accessed February 10, 2024.

Mitchell, Diana. Interview 58031. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. May 20, 2021. Accessed January 21, 2024.

Mydlak, Sala. Interview 19231. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. August 27, 1996. Accessed February 10, 2024.

Organek, Bernard. Interview 52285. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation. June 13, 1990. Accessed February 16, 2024.

Nemirov, Enna. Interview 52569. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. May 14, 2003. Accessed February 12, 2024.

Rosh, Adel. Interview 26469. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. February 2, 1997. Accessed January 21, 2024.

Scharf, Solomon. Interview 2866, Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. May 28, 1998. Accessed January 20, 2024.

Silver, Michael. Interview 24712. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. December 6, 1996. Accessed February 12, 2024.

Steiner, David. Interview 26961. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. February 12, 1997. Accessed February 13, 2024.

Stern, Renee. Interview 25239. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. January 30, 1997. Accessed February 10, 2024.

Torgovnikova, Khana. Interview 6709. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. November 29,1995. Accessed January 22,2024.

Winter, Morris. Interview 28839. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. February 25, 1997. Accessed February 13, 2024.

Zelnikov, Abram. Interview 27584. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. February 11, 1997. Accessed March 20, 2024.

Journalism

Eckel, Mike. “U.S. Concludes White Sea Radiation Explosion Came During Russian Nuclear-Missile Recovery.” *Radio Free Europe* (Prague, Czech Republic). October 12th, 2019. Accessed May 25th, 2022. https://www.rferl.org/a/u-s-concludes-white-sea-radiation-explosion-came-during-russian-nuclear-missile-recovery/30213494.html#:~:text=A%20State%20Department%20official%20says,apparently%20crashed%20during%20a%20test.

Euractiv. “Thunberg protests against Sweden iron ore mine on Sámi land.” *Euractiv.com AFP* (Online, Brussels). February 6th, 2022. Accessed June 3rd, 2022. https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/thunberg-protests-against-sweden-iron-mine-on-sami-land/.

Kendall, Bridget. “Moscow 1991: A Coup that seemed doomed from the start.” *BBC News*

Maynes, Charles. “In 1991 Soviet Citizens Saw Swans on the TV and Knew it meant Turmoil.” *NPR.* accessed February 19, 2024 https://www.npr.org/2021/08/19/1029437787/in-1991-soviet-citizens-saw-swans-on-the-tv-and-knew-it-meant-turmoil.

Suoninen, Inger-Elle. “Protesters in Finnish Sápmi Draw Red Lines Against Railroad to Arctic Ocean.” in *The Barents Observer*. September 10, 2018. Accessed 4/5/2024: https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/life-and-public/2018/09/finnish-sapmi-draws-red-line-against-railroad-arctic-ocean.

Tyler, Jerome. “The World’s Worst Radiation Hotspot.” in *Independent.* Thursday, September 10, 2009. accessed January 14, 2023. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-worlds-worst-radiation-hotspot-1784502.html.