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Foreword

This is not just a book of excellent, eccentric Cold War history—this book is vital for the present. We all need to understand the phenomenon of Seva Novgorodsev if we want to start thinking seriously about how to challenge the likes of Russia and China in the information space. Seva, as readers of this book will discover, is one of the great hidden heroes of the Cold War, wielding a weapon as potent as any missile: rock music. A Soviet dissident, he became a DJ on the Russian Service of the BBC. He introduced the most underground music to his loyal audiences. It transformed their minds, inspiring them with the dream of being as free as the music Seva played. Dictators know that culture is crucial, that is why they seek to control, fund, and censor it. Seva was, in his own way, as important as Gorbachev or Reagan in ending the Cold War.

—Peter Pomerantsev

Preface

In his 1946 "Long Telegram," American diplomat and historian George Frost Kennan cited the infamous words of Red Terror mastermind Joseph Stalin from nearly two decades earlier: "In [the] course of further development of international revolution there will emerge two centers of world significance: a socialist center . . . and a capitalist center."[1] As the atomic dust of World War II settled and relations between the East and West turned frosty, the communist-capitalist split Stalin foretold became reality.

Hoping to erode heathen socialism, Western radio broadcasters such as the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Deutsche Welle (DW), and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) tuned their agendas to the holy crusade, launching Western music, culture, and ideas to reach the unreachable. For decades, invisible air wars raged over the breadth of the USSR and Eastern Bloc with the Soviet authorities aggressively jamming transmissions. Despite such earnest obstruction, the West ultimately appeared to conquer all as the Soviet system collapsed at the end of 1991.

Understandably, as the West's focus shifted to the Middle East during the Gulf War, international broadcasting came under financial scrutiny and underwent subsequent cutbacks by governments.[2] Nevertheless, by failing to maintain a diplomatic voice in the former Soviet sphere, decades of fastidious Western diplomacy have been undone in the current age of information and cyber warfare.[3] Perhaps, *soundcraft* in general, which here means the strategic use of aural media

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1 "George Kennan's 'Long Telegram,'" February 22, 1946, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives and Records Administration, Department of State Records (Record Group 59), Central Decimal File, 1945-1949, 861.00/2-2246, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116178.

2 The high costs of funding Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, for example, are delineated in a number of Cold War-era US congressional reports. Notably, according to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Report No. 92-851 dated June 12, 1972, the bill S. 3645 "is to amend section 703 of the US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 to authorize an appropriation of $38,520,000 in fiscal year 1973 for continued government funding of [RFE/RL]."

3 The Western broadcasters' Russian services all terminated shortwave broadcasting by 2011 (VOA earlier than the BBC, though both switched to and have maintained an online presence that, while being essential, is not necessarily reaching the audiences that were once reached during Cold War operation levels). RFE/RL remains strong, but as a surrogate operation.

and mediums like radio in statecraft and warcraft, so easily fell to the wayside because international broadcasting was never fully appreciated, much less understood, by the general public. What exactly did the catch-all phrase "win hearts and minds" mean and look like in practice? To what extent did Western radio diplomacy impact broader society in communist spaces and how did this impact change government policies and politics? Naturally, it is easier to examine the relationships between those who govern rather than to understand the intricacies and the countless micro-interactions of everyday citizens. But the most influential, change-making group in any international relations setting is the citizenry itself—listeners are the reason radio was so successful as a mechanism of change and reconstruction during the Cold War.[4] Radio carried out *perestroika* in listeners long before Gorbachev's *perestroika* became a policy. Former VOA Russian Service director Mark Pomar articulated that what made the Soviet listener—and even more so the Russian listener—different from others during the Cold War was the desperate need to connect with those beyond the Iron Curtain: "It didn't matter what station it was, it was a Voice from out there."[5]

This study attempts to unpack the developed intimacy between the listeners and the "voices" themselves, including those émigrés who were wrangled into a pair of headphones for the all-consuming purpose of driving back communist ideology with Western music and culture. The DJs who broadcast to the USSR had, in many ways, the most impact on the erosion of the Soviet mentality, for they had the ear of the younger generations who in turn made the difference in the twilight years of the USSR.

Among the many DJs who broadcast to the USSR, two personalities stand out due to their prolificacy as broadcasters and ability to capture the imagination of Soviet youth. The first and earlier of the two DJs, American Willis Conover, was the beloved host of the jazz hour on VOA starting in 1955. Despite broadcasting in English, he became a "father" figure to young Soviets, influencing government-persecuted *stilyagi*—Russia's first hipsters and consumers of American jazz and fashion.[6] The second is the BBC's Seva Novgorodsev,[7] who like VOA's

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4 Just one anecdotal example: a VOA listener named Roman moved to America because he'd been listening to rock DJ Bill Skundrich in the mid-'80s and felt so compelled by this "voice" that he left the USSR as soon as he could (Bill Skundrich in conversation with author, January 2021).

5 Mark Pomar in discussion with author, February 6, 2019.

6 Charles Paul Freund, "The DJ Who Shook the Soviet Union with Jazz," *Newsweek*, August 9, 2015, https://www.newsweek.com/dj-who-shook-soviet-union-jazz-360935#:~:text=Voice%20of%20America%20DJ%20Willis,The%20Wall%20Street%20Journal%20notes.

7 Per Seva's preferred transliteration.

Conover is little known in the West but legendary in the USSR. Bearing greater significance for his impact on the youth towards the end of the Cold War, Seva himself grew up listening to Conover's voice religiously and undoubtedly built his own style with the baritone "voice of jazz" in mind. But while much has been documented about Conover's life and legacy,[8] few in the West have studied Novgorodsev's BBC career and more importantly his prominent role in the cultural education and spiritual edification of Russian youth as a Soviet émigré, jazz musician, *stilyaga*, and member of the Russian intelligentsia.[9]

Born in Leningrad on July 9, 1940, Seva Novgorodsev served as presenter for the BBC Russian Service for nearly four decades from 1976 until his retirement in September 2015. Considered a sage of rock 'n' roll,[10] Seva introduced banned Western popular music and culture into the Soviet Union and, according to international relations scholar Paul Sheeran, was *very* influential in the pre-*perestroika* era particularly.[11] Seva developed a unique style of presenting that satirized Soviet technical verbiage, subverting the USSR's carefully constructed defense systems with untranslatable-to-English wordplay while largely avoiding politicisms. The Central Committee of the Communist Party viewed him as an ideological saboteur and spent millions of rubles jamming his signals and undermining him in state-controlled media. Despite the 1978 murder of fellow BBC presenter Georgi Markov[12] and KGB *rezidenty* in London monitoring him, Seva remained on the air for thirty-eight years, garnering well over twenty-five million

8 See Terry Ripmaster's *Willis Conover: Broadcasting Jazz to The World* (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2007), as well as several other books on VOA that include Conover, such as Alan Heil's *Voice of America—A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Chapter 13 is devoted to Conover and his jazz hour.

9 Seva has been written about by Russians in Russian, but in the West there are very few books or articles. See the very notable piece by Kristin Roth-Ey—"Listening out, Listening for, Listening in: Cold War Radio Broadcasting and the Late Soviet Audience," *The Russian Review* 79, no. 4 (October 2020), https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/russ.12285—about Seva's impact on Soviet youth. A great contribution to understanding the Russian intelligentsia of the postwar generation is Vladislav M. Zubok's *Zhivago's Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), assessing the cultural aesthetics of the 1950s and '60s under Khrushchev's Thaw, and the way in which Khrushchev created confusion among the Soviet apparatchiki, the *stilyagi* (who were labeled cultural "deviationists"), and the intelligentsia (both the official Soviet variety and anti-Stalin "beatnik" variety) with his rollercoaster attitude towards art and artists of all kinds.

10 In many interviews given in recent years, Seva openly admits to not liking rock music. Fans were aware of his preferences.

11 Paul Sheeran, *Cultural Politics in International Relations* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2001), 94.

12 A DJ for the BBC's Bulgarian Service, Markov hotly slandered his government over the air from London. See "Ricin and the Umbrella Murder," CNN.com, October 23, 2003, http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/01/07/terror.poison.bulgarian/.

listeners worldwide and fostering the growth of the Russian community in the UK from a mere forty at his arrival in London to four hundred thousand by 1991. He was awarded the Member of the British Empire in 2005 by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to broadcasting and retired from the BBC on September 4, 2015.

Having wisely saved all of his listener letters, he donated the vast sum to the Hoover Institution in 2015.[13] Despite postal unreliability and KGB censorship, the volume of this mail from the USSR is staggering and speaks to, as RFE/RL's audience research director R. Eugene Parta put it, "the Hidden Listener" behind the Iron Curtain.[14] Using these invaluable letters in addition to articles, interviews, videos, radio transcripts on seva.ru courtesy of the BBC, an incredible catalogue of membership cards from the rock information fan club NORIS,[15] and Seva's own autobiography, this book explores the far-reaching impact of Seva's broadcasts and the music he popularized through the BBC Russian Service, which operated on a miniscule budget in comparison to its competitors Radio Liberty and VOA Russian Service.[16] But most important are the interviews conducted with late Soviet-era listeners who willingly shared their stories either in person during 2019 or through email. A representative selection of these listener responses is included in this book as their stories are vital to understanding the cultural and spiritual value of radio—and Seva himself—to former Soviet citizens.

Seva did not aim to topple any regime or otherwise propound the righteousness of capitalism.[17] For the majority of his audience, Seva provided perspective, experience, and camaraderie, speaking to listeners on their level and

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13 Because Seva was in fact interested in the intellectual and spiritual nature of his audience, he collected all the letters from his listeners and accumulated so many that they took up an enormous amount of space in his apartment. "When the management . . . asked me, 'what would be the best name to give this huge collection of letters,' I recommended calling it 'The evolution of the Soviet youth's mentality during the '70s and '80s'" (Dmitri Tolkunov, "Seva Novgorodsev," *All Andorra*, April 29, 2019).

14 R. Eugene Parta's *Discovering the Hidden Listener* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2007) contains surveys and interviews conducted in the Soviet from 1972–90, which gauge the effectiveness of Western broadcasters, with emphasis on Radio Liberty for which he worked.

15 NORIS stands for (in Russian) Independent United Rock Information Syndicate.

16 Per the BBC Russian Service's own purview, Radio Liberty was its primary competitor, not so much VOA's Russian Service. *The Sunday Times* reported in 1985 on the grim financial situation of the BBC, stating that VOA had ten times more money than all of the other sections of the BBC World Service put together. Despite this resource imbalance, Soviets who listened to VOA and Radio Liberty on a normal basis would listen religiously to Seva because, as one Russian émigré in the late '80s put it, his was the only program that felt "genuinely Russian" (Nick Higham and Nigel Horne, "Bloc-buster Tactics," *The Sunday Times*, November 3, 1985).

17 Roth-Ey, "Listening out," 576.

extemporaneously, as if with a friend. As will be shown in the previously unheard recollections of listeners, a distinct commonality surfaced in their accounts, which points to a shared experience of the late Cold War generation[18]—those who felt alienated and unable to express themselves discovered in Seva's programs comfort, entertainment, and most importantly spiritual liberty. Seva circumvented what seemed so permanent and monumental—the Soviet Union, the American threat, the bipolar world order—and opened a bright public space for discourse, connection, and change.

18 The majority of contributing respondents are born in the 1960s and early '70s.

Introduction: Radio, Rock 'n' "Role"

"It all started with 'Rock Around the Clock,'" recalls Seva Novgorodsev with a smile, alluding to the moment the 1955 quintessential hit by Bill Haley & His Comets crackled from shortwave radios all over the Soviet Union. This is early rock 'n' roll; this is the West. And *this*, Seva implies, is where the fall of the USSR really began: on the air, one voice, one song, one word at a time, presenting an incorporeal threat to the regime, to the Soviet way of life.[1]

As with the USSR's demise, there is no single explanation for why Seva made the substantial impact he did. Seva was not a career radio man as VOA's Willis Conover was, nor did he enter the studio with a voice curated for the microphone. He was raw. Untrained. Of course, talent and hard work factored into his quick rise to popularity; however, with the airwaves drowning in voices, talent and hard work alone were not enough to vault him to the top. Historian Kristin Roth-Ey candidly questions why Seva and his programs on BBC, particularly *Rok-posevy*, even drew the audiences that they did:

> After all, by the time the show hit the airwaves in the late 1970s, Soviet mass culture had struck its own cautious *modus vivendi* with Western popular music. The state-owned record label, *Melodiya*, released compilation albums of Western pop and rock artists. Central Soviet radio and television ran shows that featured them, and the Komsomol organized dances with their music. The Soviet press carried some current information about the Western music scene; the most important and popular source was the Komsomol monthly, *Rovesnik*, but it was possible to find informed commentary in other publications as well. Between official, state-sanctioned sources, cross-border leakage from other countries, and the black market, Soviet music fans in the late '70s and early '80s were not starved of sustenance.[2]

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1 Radina Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), 109.

2 Roth-Ey, "Listening out," 567.

Hence, there had to be other lubricating factors—environmental, cultural, and political—that made Seva's programs *and* him, as a personality, resonate.

The first factor was timing. Like Conover, who had entered the ether at a tumultuous time for the Soviet people—right after the death of Stalin and during the peak of jazz's popularity—Seva went on air just as rock permeated the Soviet space and inspired government censorship. Information about rock music was such a valuable commodity in Russia that Western radio—and thereby Western voices—became an intrinsic and integral part of people's everyday lives.

The second factor was the Cold War-era BBC itself, which had accumulated credibility with listeners worldwide as a trustworthy source of news and programming that, by and large, strove to be free of bias. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even at the height of the Cold War, the corporation was considered by Soviet people of varying persuasions as acceptable to listen to (i.e., not anti-Soviet) while other Western broadcasters, particularly Radio Liberty, were not. This trust made the BBC a somewhat neutral space on the airwaves where Seva could gather a diverse and broad range of listeners—party members and leather-fetishizing metalheads alike. Moreover, the BBC's austere editorial policies forced Seva to craft the esoteric kind of Bolshevik-speak that made him so popular in the first place, understood by the Soviet masses but lost on the *apparatchiki*—and the BBC censors.

The third factor was the political fluctuations in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s, which bore a direct relationship to the use of radio frequency interference to obstruct reception, commonly referred to as jamming. Jamming—the intangible force that affected virtually every Soviet citizen, though not evenly—was a powerful determiner of who listened to whom. Not merely the obstruction of a signal, jamming was a felt presence. It was an indicator of the Kremlin's mentality, the vicissitudes of international relations, and the vagaries of Soviet domestic politics. RFE/RL, then, received most of the attention while the BBC for years dwelt near the bottom end of the Comintern's spectrum of concern, though a favorite written complaint from Seva's listeners was how difficult it was to hear him, at least before all jamming ceased near the end of the '80s. But Seva wasn't jammed ubiquitously—nor could he have been—and oftentimes merely shifting the radio from one side of the room to another yielded the desired results.

Lastly, the fourth factor for Seva's popularity was the widespread "masculinity crisis" following Stalin's death and triggered by the Thaw. Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 excoriation of Stalin's cult of personality—until which, for all his faults and heinousness, Stalin had been viewed as the quintessential father role model—left a hole in society. Fathers of the Long Sixties, in general, went from being

men of action and iron to filling office chairs and scientific roles. The motif of the wandering man, who knows neither his purpose nor how to be masculine in this new, commodity-rich, technologically driven society, permeated Soviet movies, music, and writing. As in the film *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears*, men were often portrayed as poor fathers untrained in communication and lacking the ability to show empathy. Consequently, marginalized youth, in need of strong fathers, sought solace, guidance, and information from elsewhere as the Cold War progressed—and even more so as the economy crashed in the 1980s.[3] Seva's life and broad experiences in Soviet Russia predisposed him to be the sort of paternal role model that fit the needs of a disenfranchised generation hungering for spiritual and emotional edification. Soviet men could point to Seva as a shining example of a real Russian *muzhik* who went off to do something unusual, off the beaten path, speaking directly and honestly to his homeland with his own words. And the BBC provided him the platform to do so.

A Very British Sort of Broadcasting

No other Western broadcaster could have been better matched to Seva Novgorodsev's style, listenership, and methods than the British Broadcasting Corporation.[4] By the time Seva was first heard on air in 1977, the BBC had accrued an amazing reputation with global audiences as a broadcaster committed to speaking peace and truth to nations. A 1982 article in *Christian Science Monitor* (*CSM*) quoted an editor at the World Service, Barry Holland, regarding the BBC's commitment to delivering truth. Holland said, "There's a kind of gas in this building," referring to Bush House, the BBC's iconic former headquarters. "Invisible, but very much present. It's an atmosphere, if you like, the ethos of a balanced view."[5] As journalist Peter Pomerantsev wrote concerning this exact statement:

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3 "The '60s masculinity crisis was sort of a precursor or a staged rehearsal for the masculinity crisis in the Soviet Union of the '80s, which was much more dire because the economic situation was much more dire." See Marko Dumančić, "'Frozen by the Thaw': The Soviet Masculinity Crisis of the Long Sixties," in *The Slavic Connexion*, October 9, 2021, podcast, https://www.slavxradio.com/marko.

4 See Andrew Crisell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (London: Routledge, 2002).

5 Peter Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019), 112.

> This gas was a means of gaining credibility. Trust. To project the image of Britain as the sort of place that you could rely on for the BBC trinity of "accuracy, impartiality, and fairness," which in turn was meant to promote what the founder of the BBC, Sir Reith, had called the British values of "reasonableness, democracy, and debate," which in turn was meant to make Britain more admired globally.[6]

The BBC shoved political considerations to the back of the line for this "trinity," never resorting to pillorying and never yielding to editorial pressures. For instance, when VOA started to include two-minute editorials featuring the opinion of the US government, the BBC and its culture shunned the idea for the UK.[7] Despite its relatively miniscule budget, the BBC had the greatest international audience overall at the height of the Cold War: "One Soviet estimate was as many as 40 million regular listeners, but even the VOA itself claim[ed] only 12 million."[8]

One Moscow-based listener appreciated all the Western stations for the provision of "information" but complained about the "unintelligent propaganda" of VOA's programming. In contrast, the BBC was a favorite with her whole family, "loved for its 'balanced approach and objectivity.'"[9] And while this objectivity has resulted in criticism of the BBC for the absence of clear reproof of reprehensible acts and events,[10] the BBC has an undeniable worldwide appeal. As David Willis wrote for the *Christian Science Monitor*, "In many parts of the world, it is easier for the BBC to be accepted than the voice of the United States superpower, although sometimes it works in reverse: Soviet dissidents, for instance, tend to prefer VOA precisely because it is American and thus anti-Soviet."[11]

According to one former staffer who also worked at Radio Liberty, the BBC's structure, selection of staff, and manner of delivery contributed greatly to the corporation's appeal:

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6 Ibid.

7 David K. Willis, "How the British Broadcasting Corporation Keeps Its Balance," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1982.

8 Ibid.

9 Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (New York: OUP USA, 2013), 149–50.

10 The BBC was accused by some of being so infuriatingly fair it would give the devil an interview should it have offered God the microphone. See Pomerantsev, *This is Not Propaganda*, 112.

11 Willis, "How the British Broadcasting Corporation Keeps Its Balance." The idea of *American* and *anti-Soviet* being one and the same no doubt influences people's radio dials and biases.

> The BBC had no elaborate hierarchy of pay grades and positions. . . . I was struck by the importance the Russian Service accorded to the selection of staff. . . . Programs were made by experts in their field: Seva Novgorodsev made broadcasts about music, Dr. Edik Ochagavia covered medicine, Valery Lapidus, an engineer by training, made programs about technology. . . . Another difference in the way the stations worked. At Liberty the scripts were read on air by presenters with trained voices. At the BBC we read our own scripts and, as we didn't have any voice training, we just spoke in our usual manner, as if we were talking to friends. . . . Real human voices burst onto the Soviet airwaves. They were instantly recognizable and trustworthy.[12]

Aural recognizability dates back to wartime. One of the BBC's big takeaways from WWII was that creating larger-than-life personalities was vital, not for commercial purposes but to help boost the morale of the troops and the nation.[13] Thus, in the Cold War, this practice continued, and the World Service got into the habit of recruiting and elevating well-educated and eloquent-in-their-native-tongue émigrés. Seva was a quintessential example: "Living in England your English is never good enough, no matter who you are . . . [but] I wasn't working for Barclays Bank or something like that, I was working for the World Service and rather than being a second-rate Englishman I became a first-rate Russian."[14]

Radio Diplomacy (and Propaganda)

From its inception, the BBC fundamentally differed from every other "wireless" network in the world. While it was a legally independent creation, the BBC was not autonomous, particularly during World War II when it became essentially an ambassador for the British Empire to peoples everywhere. The BBC's official motto itself—"Nation shall speak peace unto nation"—attests to the corporation's sense of duty in promoting internationalist cooperation and

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12 Igor Golomstock, *A Ransomed Dissident: A Life in Art Under the Soviets* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 170–71.

13 The program *BBC Variety* was boosted post-May 1940 by imported American stars. See Siân Nicholas, "The People's Radio: The BBC and Its Audience, 1939–1945," in *Millions Like Us?: British Culture in the Second World War*, ed. Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 81.

14 Seva Novgorodsev, interview by Adriana Alexander, Museum of London, October 25, 1999.

harmony. Broadcasting created a much more informed citizenry in democratic and nondemocratic countries, which meant that policymakers and state actors had to not only *consider* the public in other countries, they had to also *speak* to those people directly. Even the BBC's board of governors confirmed the new level of concern at Bush House in a white paper to Parliament early in the Cold War: "Wireless has given to governments direct means of access to audiences overseas which enables them to influence foreign governments by and through direct contact with the masses."[15] It was no doubt this sense of responsibility at the highest echelons that led to the BBC seeking "close consultancy" with the Foreign Office (FO) on content as early as the 1930s. Through both the nesting of stalwart diplomats into key positions at Bush House and sharpening struggles between the BBC and Foreign Office, the corporation took on the role of intermediary in the war, particularly once the Nazis invaded the USSR in 1941, thereby birthing a new phase in the evolution of broadcasting—radio diplomacy.[16] Radio diplomacy combined the "mass-produced" aspect of propaganda[17] with traditional state-to-state diplomacy for the purpose of persuading, maintaining, or otherwise crafting public opinion and discourse to achieve certain goals.

The creation of radio diplomacy during the 1940s was crucial because it established a set of behaviors and practices for the BBC that continued into the Cold War, even if the aim was no longer to forge or keep alliances but rather "winning hearts and minds." As a result, when the BBC launched its Russian Service (RS) in 1946, it had a major advantage over other Russian-language broadcasters such as VOA Russian, which launched in 1947, and Radio Liberty, which launched in 1953. However, the RS's position was not always secure and was not exempt from criticism and government pressure largely because of its obvious power as a direct voice to the Russian people. Time and again the service came under fire from the British establishment and placed the BBC's objectivity and editorial autonomy in jeopardy. One very notable incident occurred at the time of Stalin's death in 1953 when a subdivision of the FO accused the RS of permitting the

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15 Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 87.

16 In Gary D. Rawnsley's *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), he argues for the importance of radio as a tool of foreign policy, but disputes W. J. West's assertion that radio rendered conventional diplomacy redundant, calling it an overstatement.

17 Paul M. A. Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare* (New York: Hauraki Publishing, 2015), 39. Linebarger defines propaganda as "the planned use of any form of public or mass-produced communication designed to affect the mind and emotion of a given group for a specific public purpose whether military, economic or political."

airing of content that was "damaging to the Free World." One official dared to say that "the definition of the role of the BBC's broadcasts to Russia is primarily a matter for the Foreign Office."[18] A bitter row followed, and the head of the RS at the time, Anatol Goldberg, was targeted.[19] Goldberg, who had been with the BBC since 1939, defended the choice to be temperate in approaching the Soviet Union at this delicate juncture because Stalin's death represented a chance to create new connections and dialogue. Finally in 1958, though the BBC refused to fire Goldberg, it replaced him as head of the RS but kept him on as the host of the long-running program *Notes by Our Observer*, a show that certainly benefited from the BBC's hard-earned reputation.[20] Many Russian listeners tuned in to Goldberg for the precise reason that he, like Seva in the years to come, understood the audience and its needs: they wanted information.[21]

As American sociologist W. Phillips Davison stated in his 1960s book on international political communication, a broadcaster must have the ability and willingness to provide people "useful" information.[22] And what was deemed "useful?" Entertainment for one and "instrumental" information for another. Furthermore, concerning propaganda and propagandists, Richard Crossman, a member of a joint Anglo-American psychological warfare team during the war, stated in 1952 that a good propagandist is not in fact a "brilliant liar," but rather someone who is able to establish "empathy" with the target audience. "The central substance of propaganda . . . was 'hard, correct information.' Therefore 'news must take priority over views, facts over preaching.'"[23] Is it any wonder, then, that the BBC, which indeed placed emphasis on facts, education, balance, and objectivity, would rise to the top, and that all those presenters who kept with BBC editorial standards *and* established empathy with the audience would also rise? It's therefore the BBC that served as the proper vessel for Seva, and Seva

18 David Wedgewood Benn, "How the FO tried to stifle the BBC," *New Statesman*, December 6, 1999, https://www.newstatesman.com/long-reads/1999/12/how-the-fo-tried-to-stifle-the-bbc. Whether the BBC is in partnership with the FO seems to be unclear. John Tusa (a WS director) says that it was "never an arm of" the Foreign Office, but clearly from time to time the FO thinks that the WS and BBC Monitoring are obligated to work with the FO.

19 Ibid.

20 Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens*, 31.

21 John Tusa, "BBC World Service Celebrates 75 Years on Air," *Daily Telegraph*, December 16, 2007, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1572672/BBC-World-Service-celebrates-75-years-on-air.html.

22 See W. Phillips Davison, *International Political Communication* (New York: Praeger, 1965).

23 Quoted in David Wedgewood Benn, "Winning Hearts and Minds," *Gulf News*, December 4, 2004, https://gulfnews.com/uae/david-wedgwood-benn-winning-hearts-and-minds-1.340549.

who became the ideal navigator for the enormous target audience: lovers of rock 'n' roll.

"Rock the Seva Way"

Rock music was like war fought on stages rather than battlefields, with the enemy being any obstruction of arbitrary "freedom" and "self-expression." The very word "rock" implies foundation-shifting strength and immovable courage, and so, when the genre carried over into the Eastern Bloc and the USSR, it reflected both the greater struggle between the people and the government and an individual's internal struggle—love for the nation, but anger towards the regime. In the context of the USSR and its sphere of influence, rock was revolution itself, partly because it came from the West and partly because it dissolved the existence of the USSR in the minds of the youth.[24] Could it be entirely coincidental that once this genre took hold of the youth that revolutionary things happened—and happened so suddenly?[25]

Russian rock was an overwhelmingly male-dominated genre with women embracing the music as well but mainly as spectators rather than performers. One possible explanation for this gender disparity was that rock music helped young men in all stations of life enter an area that could be masculine in expression without stooping to the stereotypical idea of the strong Soviet male. Per Marko Dumančić's *Men Out of Focus: The Soviet Masculinity Crisis of the Long Sixties*, men in Russia experienced difficulty adjusting to life after World War II, especially following the death of Stalin, the ultimate male model and father figure, when Khrushchev began to institute many changes. Positive though they were, these changes put mental strain on men who began losing their sense of place and authority in an increasingly complex and female-oriented society.

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24 For youth culture and social movements, see Alexei Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), a seminal work that exposes the nuanced depth and richness of the USSR. Additionally, Padriac Kenney's *A Carnival of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) offers the argument that social movements cropping up across Eastern Europe (but not Russia) were the harbinger of death for communism. However, this study proves that Russia also experienced kinetic social energy, though it was not so easily observable to the West.

25 For studies on rock and its social and emotional impact on Soviet youth, see Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), which covers Ukrainian youth in Dnipropetrovsk and Radina Vučetic's *Coca-Cola Socialism* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012), which focuses on Yugoslav culture in the 1960s.