“Do Not Divide the Dead”: The Limits of Representations of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, 1960-1968

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Course: HIST 449, Honours Graduating Essay

Instructor: Dr. Courtney Booker

A graduating thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
in
The Faculty of Arts
History Department

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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University of British Columbia

April 17, 2019

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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for the help and guidance that my advisor, Dr. Alexei Kojevnikov, has given me throughout the year. He played an important role in my Honours experience and my growth as a scholar.

I would also like to thank Dr. Courtney Booker for his unwavering support throughout the year and his commitment and dedication to helping each individual in my cohort. Dr. Booker has encouraged me to always ask historical questions and to approach history with integrity, logic, and proper grammar, and for that I am extremely grateful. I also thank Dr. Richard Menkis for his advice and support this year. His expertise and guidance when I needed it the most was very helpful. Thank you also to Dr. Anne Gorsuch for giving me confidence in my writing and research, and love for the Soviet Sixties. Thank you to the 2018/19 Honours History Class for help with citations, for taking time out of their thesis writing to read and edit my work, and for a good laugh when I needed it the most.

Thank you to all of the scholars and archivists who took time out of their busy schedules to help a Canadian undergraduate student: Dr. Daniel Elphick for sending me scans of sources on Mieczysław Weinberg, Olga Golovanova from Blavatnik Archives, and Yael Robinson from Yad Vashem.

Above all, thank you to my friends and family for their love and support. Thank you to Aiden Raff for truly being my rock during this process. Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to my parents for encouraging me to love history and to do what I love.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my *Zeida*.

Introduction

Oh, if this murdered people could be revived for an instant, if the ground above Babi Yar in Kiev or Ostraia Mogila in Voroshilovgrad could be lifted, if a penetrating cry came forth from hundreds and thousands of lips covered in soil, then the universe would shudder.

- Vasily Grossman, *Ukraine without Jews* (1943)

And there is nothing left to say. Another Kaddish? And another one? How many prayers can one say for an entire world? How many candles must one light for mankind? So as not to betray ourselves by betraying the dead, we can only open ourselves to their silenced memories. And listen.

- Elie Wiesel, *Pilgrimage to the Country of Night* (1979)[1]

In the aftermath of World War II, people wanted to tell their stories. The stories of those who had died at the front, in the ghettos, and in death camps and labour camps, were also waiting to be told. However, whether or not these stories would be heard was largely dependent on where the narrator was from. In the decades after the war, as the world began to realize and cope with the cultural and physical devastation that had occurred during World War II, both Jewish and non-Jewish artists began to represent what would become known as the Holocaust.

In the Soviet Union, the fate of these creative representations, produced in the 1960s, was largely dependent on the political atmosphere—one which was constantly changing. By closely studying three artistic representations of the Holocaust—Vasily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate;* Dimitri Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony based on Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar"; and Mieczysław Weinberg's opera *The Passenger*—it is possible to discern trends within Soviet policies of the 1960s towards representations of the Holocaust. Past scholarship on representations of the Holocaust has focused on the influence of anti-Semitic Soviet policies on

[1] A Kaddish is the Jewish prayer for the dead. Elie Wiesel, "Pilgrimage to the Country of Night," *New York Times* (New York), Nov. 4 1979.

the fate of Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar."[2] I however, contend that anti-Semitism was not the root cause of limitations to expressions of the Holocaust. Rather, expressions of the Holocaust were more likely to be censored if they were believed capable of provoking Israeli nationalism or Jewish movement away from Soviet collective identity. Above and beyond themes of Jewish identity, certain topics, such as collaboration with the Nazis, which violated the Soviet principle of "*druzhba narodov*" ("fraternity of the peoples"), were likely to produce discord among the various nationalities in the Soviet Union and therefore disapproval.

Before entering into a discussion of the background of the term "Holocaust," I find it necessary to first discuss my position as an author and as a historian. I am a third-generation Canadian and the child of two Jewish parents. I was raised in a Jewish home and attended a Jewish school until I was 15 years old. My grandparents, although born in Canada to immigrant parents, spoke Yiddish to their parents. Although my direct family, and much of my extended family, was fortunate to be able to immigrate from Poland, Russia, and Romania to Canada between the early 1900s and 1930s, some of my extended family was not able to leave. I do not remember learning about the Holocaust: it has always been a part of the collective consciousness of those I grew up with and learned with and from.

With this in mind, I was drawn to this subject as a historian. Historical questions about why certain representations were allowed in the Soviet Union while others were censored intrigued me. I am interested in the fluctuations in cultural and artistic openness after Stalin's death, and what effect they had on representations of a trauma towards a specific group such as Jews after the Holocaust. I am also drawn to the specific cases and how they can illuminate part

[2] See Zvi Gitelman "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust, 1945–1991," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941–1945,* ed. Lucjan Dobroszyki and Jeffery Gurock (New York: Routledge, 2016), 9; William Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole': The Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 154; Jacqueline Cherepinsky, "The Absence of the Babi Yar Massacre from Popular Memory" (Master's thesis, West Chester University, 2010), 4.

of the past and individual artists' stories. Although all of the examples I analyze seek to portray the same event, they are all unique and individual representations, written or composed for unique and individual reasons.

Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union

The use of the term "Holocaust" in scholarship raises questions. How does one define a holocaust and why do historians use the term when discussing the Nazi genocide of the Jews? When did this term enter public consciousness? Historians and scholars have entered into a debate about whether or not the term "Holocaust" is sufficient when discussing the Nazi genocide.[3] However, none of these scholars has a solution for what they perceive as a lack of accurate terminology in scholarship or suggests alternative English terms to replace the word "Holocaust." In her chapter on the term "Holocaust" in public discourse, Vivian Patraka notes that although English-speaking scholars critique the word Holocaust, they generally resort to its use because of its recognition and stability.[4] For this same reason, I will continue to use the phrase "the Holocaust" when referring to the Jewish genocide during WWII.

With the term "Holocaust" appearing relatively late in public consciousness, it is not likely that those in the Soviet Union would have considered the genocide of the Jews with that term. Use of the word Holocaust only began increasing in 1955.[5] In the 1940s and 1950s, the word "holocaust" (lowercased) was used in the United States and Israel in reference to the Nazi

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[3] This debate is mostly due to the origins of the word "Holocaust," which implies death by a sacrificial offering, and the lack of unique names for other genocides. For more on the debate surrounding the naming of the Holocaust see Vivian Patraka, "Situating History and Difference: The Performance of the Term Holocaust in Public Discourse," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 55; Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, "Why Do We Call the Holocaust 'The Holocaust?' An Inquiry into the Psychology of Labels," *Modern Judaism* 9, no. 2 (1989): 199; Jon Petrie, "The Secular Word Holocaust: Scholarly Myths, History and 20th Century Meanings," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 1 (2000): 54.
[4] Patraka, "Situating History and Difference," in *Jews and Other Differences,* ed. Boyarin and Boyarin, 55.
[5] Petrie, "The Secular Word Holocaust," 54.

genocide.[6] However, it was not until the 1960s that the word Holocaust entered the American public consciousness and vocabulary, largely because of the Israeli Holocaust Museum and Archive's publications and the use of the term in Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel's novel *Night*. The word "genocide" was also relatively new, coined in 1945 by the Polish born, Jewish lawyer, Rafael Lemkin for use in prosecution of war criminals in post-war tribunals.[7] Although "Holocaust" was being used in the United States during the 1960s, Soviet individuals may rather have referred to the mass death, if they knew of it, as "mass murder" or "extermination."[8] Although a "recognizable historical referent" such as "Holocaust" had not yet entered Soviet vocabulary, individual Soviet artists were able to recognize the genocide and speak about it in ways they felt necessary.

Extant scholarship on representations of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union has focused on different media and genre: physical memorials, news reports, textbooks, and encyclopedias.[9] Most scholarship looking at artistic representations of the Holocaust tend to focus on two representations that captivated, and still captivate, many: Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony and Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar."[10] In this thesis, I will closely examine these two pieces, as they are important expressions by non-Jewish Soviet artists. However, I aim to move past treating "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony as definitive representations of the Soviet artistic conception of the Holocaust.

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[6] Ibid., 55.
[7] Philippe Sands, *East West Street: On the Origins of "Genocide" and "Crimes Against Humanity"* (New York: Vintage Books, 2016), 61.
[8] Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, *The Complete Black Book of Soviet Jewry,* trans. David Patterson (New York: Routledge, 2017), xxvii, xxxi.
[9] Lukasz Hirszowicz, "The Holocaust in the Soviet Mirror," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 30; Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole,'" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 146.
[10] See Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 9; William Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole,'" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 154; Jacqueline Cherepinsky, "The Absence of the Babi Yar Massacre from Popular Memory" (Master's thesis, West Chester University, 2010), 4.

To illuminate both the constraints and possibilities of representations of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union I will engage with three main artistic representations: Vasily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate;* Dimitri Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony based on Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar"; and Mieczysław Weinberg's opera *The Passenger.* Grossman's novel, which was completed in 1960, and Weinberg's opera, which was completed in 1968, were not published or performed in the creator's lifetimes. Therefore, these two works offer a point of comparison with the Thirteenth Symphony and "Babi Yar," which, despite their causing international scandal and governmental discomfort, were still published and performed at the time of their completion.

Historical Context: The Thaw and Soviet-Israeli Relations

To understand the irregular approach of the Soviet government toward artistic representations of the Holocaust throughout the 1960s, it is crucial to appreciate the contextual importance of Khrushchev's "Thaw" and de-Stalinization.[11] Many historians mark the beginning of this period with Khrushchev's Secret Speech held at the 20th Party Congress in 1956.[12] This speech marked a separation of policy from the Stalinist period. The environment of fear that had been facilitated by Stalin's mass imprisonments was dissipated by Khrushchev's acknowledgement of the wrongdoings of the previous leader and subsequent release of those in Soviet labour camps. Although these releases were followed by the publication of Solzhenitsyn's book cataloguing the terrors of the gulag, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* there were still limits to what was acceptable and how the government allowed these acceptable topics to be

[11] Historians have disputed how useful the term "the Thaw" is in the current era. The ambiguity of the metaphor has raised questions about whether the phrase adequately represents the period and whether most Soviet citizens would have defined their experience in this term. As with the term "Holocaust," it is equally difficult to find a widely used and accepted phrase. See Miriam Dobson, "The Post-Stalin Era: De-Stalinization, Daily Life, and Dissent," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 4 (2011): 922; Stephen Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12.
[12] Dobson, "The Post-Stalin Era," 907.

represented. Many in the public took the publication of *Ivan Denisovich* to signal a massive loosening of controls over the arts, a signal that those in charge of ideological policy hastened to reverse in the months following November 1962. Although Solzhenitsyn's book was published, other books documenting experiences of suffering during the Holocaust, such as Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate,* were suppressed. In an atmosphere of what appeared to be relative freedom, Grossman was told "that the novel could not be published for another two or three hundred years."[13] Therefore, the period spanning Khrushchev's assumption of power in 1956 to his replacement by Brezhnev in 1964 is "increasingly seen as one in flux."[14]

1963 serves as a turning point away from what was considered relative liberalism in the arts after years of life under Stalin. On December 1, 1962, Khrushchev visited a modern art exhibit in Moscow. The abstract art, which did not follow Socialist Realism, provoked Khrushchev's anger.[15] He felt that "pictures should arouse us to perform great deeds," something he felt was missing from the exhibit.[16] The art that Khrushchev saw led him to call for new conservative policies.[17] Political turmoil, nationalism, and dissent in Eastern Bloc countries—expressed in events such as the Prague Spring and Hungarian Revolution—prompted increasingly oppressive approaches to cultural production starting in 1968. Furthermore, tensions between the Soviet Union and Israel on the one hand and a blossoming US-Israeli relationship on the other caused the Soviet Union to increase its anti-Zionist propaganda.

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[13] Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, trans. Robert Chandler (London: Vintage Books, 2006), xxviii.
[14] Dobson, "The Post-Stalin Era," 911.
[15] The Composers' Union laid out the following guidelines regarding Socialist Realism in art and music in 1934: "The main attention of the Soviet composer must be directed towards the victorious progressive principles of reality, towards all that is heroic, bright, and beautiful." Stalin himself added that Soviet operas must have "a libretto with a Socialist topic, a realistic musical language with stress on a national idiom, and a positive hero typifying the new Socialist era." Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917–1970* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 114, 123.
[16] Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962–1964* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1965), 103.
[17] Boris Belge, "From Peace to Freedom: How Classical Music Became Political in the Soviet Union, 1964–1982," *Ab Imperio* 2 (2013): 283.

Anti-Zionism and the 1967 Six-Day War

The anti-Zionist campaign in the Soviet Union during the 1960s was influenced by the uneasy relationship between the Soviet Union and Israel. Relations between the Soviet Union and many of the Arab nations in the Middle East were positive due to the potential for communist revolution throughout the 1950s.[18] The commitment of both Syria and Egypt to a strong anti-American policy caused the Soviet Union to increase its influence in both countries.[19] The Soviet Union maintained its support of both countries as tensions escalated with Israel after Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping vessels.[20] Despite opposition to war, the Soviet Union was ultimately drawn into the conflict, which led to a breaking of diplomatic ties with Israel and a Soviet anti-Zionist campaign in the news media.[21] This anti-Zionist campaign was only intensified after Israel won the war after six days of battle.

At this point, another definitional stumbling block arises: that of the definitions of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Today, the debate continues about what constitutes legitimate criticism of Israel and what is anti-Semitic criticism. In the context of the Six-Day War these definitions are important, as many in Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and even the Soviet Union saw Israel as the aggressor, and therefore believed their criticisms were justified. In 2004, the Soviet-born Israeli politician Natan Sharansky proposed the "3D test," which was enthusiastically accepted by scholars. This "test" suggests that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitic if it employs "demonization,

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[18] Yaacov Ro'i and Boris Morozov, *The Soviet Union and the June 1967 Six Day War* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 2008), 16.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews: A Documented Study, 1948–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; 2012), 243.

double standards, or delegitimization."[22] Through these three methods, Jewish people are attacked for their specific attributes rather than a state for its political errors and misconduct.

Anti-Zionism, a force which would become influential in policy and in the Soviet media in the late 1960s, was already evident in *Pravda,* the official newspaper of the Communist Party, in the early 1960s.[23] Anti-Zionist policies had an influence on whether or not the Holocaust was commemorated with space for Jewish victims and had an influence on what art was deemed acceptable by censors and the Soviet government. Anti-Zionism was already present in organs of Soviet policies when Grossman was trying to publish *Life and Fate* and when Shostakovich was premiering his Thirteenth Symphony. On January 19th, 1962 the Soviet newspaper *Trud* published an article accusing Israel and Zionist organizations of using synagogues and Jewish places of worship to recruit spies.[24] The article further linked Zionism and Israel with "the USA and other Imperialist states." The article argued that Zionist spies had used a synagogue for their meetings. By painting a Jewish place of worship as a home for spies and espionage, *Trud* encouraged an environment of distrust of the Jewish religion, crossing over from anti-Zionism into anti-Semitism.

Soviet reactions to the Six-Day War also depicted the Israeli government negatively. Zionism was related to fascism, with connections being made between Zionist leaders and fascist

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[22] Demonization refers to the transfer of longstanding anti-Semitic characterizations being transferred to the Jewish state. In this way, Israel is perceived as "the collective Jew," being seen as having demonic powers or other negative attributes stereotypically applied to Jews. Double standards refers to the application of higher standards of morality and actions towards the Israeli government that are not applied to other states or governments. Finally, delegitimization applies to those actions which delegitimize the existence of the state of Israel. Kenneth Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 156–160.

[23] *Pravda,* along with all other Soviet newspapers, was an arm of the Communist Party. As Angus Roxburgh stated in his book about *Pravda,* "*Pravda…* is not the most representative of Soviet newspapers, but it is the most important… The rest of the Soviet press takes its cues from Pravda, and the rest of the world studies it…" There were no privately owned newspapers in the Soviet Union and all newspapers were answerable to the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee. Angus Roxburgh, *Pravda: Inside the Soviet News Machine* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1987), 10, 53.

[24] See above footnote regarding the connection between all Soviet newspapers and the Communist Party. For more see Ibid.

leaders.[25] Explicit relationships were drawn, stating that "the practical application of Zionism in the affairs of the Middle East includes genocide, racism, treachery, aggression and annexation—all the characteristic attributes of Fascism."[26] Israel was said to be attempting to extend its "*Lebensraum*," the term Hitler had used in his push towards the Soviet Union.[27] Finally, the article in *Komsomalskaya Pravda* opens by stating that: "The wind has dispelled the ashes of the fires of those cremated with napalm" in reference to those whom the Jewish Zionists had killed. The use of the word "cremated" further brings to mind the Nazi policies. The article, as a Soviet response to the Six-Day War, shows that although the Soviet Union may have had reason to disapprove of Israel's aggression, it expressed this disapproval by demonizing Israel in the media and relating a world-wide "conspiracy" of Zionist leaders to fascists.

Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union

Throughout the Soviet Union's existence, Jewish identity differed widely. Vasily Grossman, who was born and raised in an assimilated Jewish household, wrote often about Jewish themes and increasingly wrote about Jewish identity after the Holocaust.[28] Mieczysław Weinberg, who was born in a Jewish household and was raised in a predominantly Jewish community, became an atheist in the later years of his life.[29] Although he composed many pieces

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[25] E. Evseev, "Lakei na pobegushkakh' (Lackeys at Beck and Call)," *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* 4 October 1967, in Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews*, 253.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Polly Zavadivker, "Vasilii Grossman: A Cosmopolitan Depicts the Murder of the Jewish People," *Journal of European Studies* 43, no. 4 (2013): 288.
[29] Elizabeth Blumin, "'I Never Talked about It, but Now, I Think, It's Time: Interview with Moses Weinberg's Daughter ("'I͡A nikogda ne govorila ob ėtom, no seĭchas, dumai͡u, prishlo vremi͡a': Interv′i͡u s docher′i͡u Moisei͡a Vaĭnberga)," Colta.ru, February 26, 2016. Accessed April 11, 2019. https://www.colta.ru/articles/music_classic/10232-ya-nikogda-ne-govorila-ob-etom-no-seychas-dumayu-prishlo-vremya.

on Jewish themes, with his last Symphony being a Jewish Requiem, he would convert to Russian Orthodoxy on his deathbed.[30]

There was a wide variety of Jewish expression and relationships to both the Jewish religion and culture. One way to grasp this variety is to look at the lived experiences of Jewish Soviets, both those who identified as Jewish culturally and religiously and those who identified as communist. Many belonging to the older generation, born and raised before the Revolution, clung to traditional expressions of the Jewish religion, while those who had been involved in the spirit of the Revolution were more likely to identify as Soviets and communists first. Maya Yelagina, born in Kiev, Ukraine in 1925, recalls that her grandparents were the ones who brought Jewish traditions and customs into her life, while her father was an ardent communist:

> When my grandmother and grandfather were alive we observed Jewish traditions. But my father was a communist. He was a very devoted communist. In those days there were always meetings, conferences, more meetings… My mother said to him, "What kind of life is this?" [...] He said, "Remember this once and for all. My first wife is the Party. And the second wife is you."[31]

Although elderly Jews raised before the Revolution were more likely to want to express their Jewish identity through traditional means, the generation which had been more closely involved in the Revolution was more committed to communism above all else.

Jewish families in small towns where the population was predominantly Jewish often practiced Judaism, celebrating holidays even well into the 1930s. Some villages had over 50,000 Jews, and often holidays were celebrated even after synagogues were closed down.[32] Children who grew up in such villages also recall attending Yiddish schools, speaking Yiddish at home, and being "fully observant."[33] Sheftl Zisser, a Jewish war veteran, remembered that when he was

[30] David Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom* (Frankfurt: Wolke, 2010), 152–53.
[31] Maya Yelagina, Clip 01:"Father was such a communist!" UKR122.CLIP01.Blavatnik Archive, New York, May 21, 2009. 00:01–1:06.
[32] Anatoly Birger, Full, unedited interview, UKR012.interview. Blavatnik Archive, New York, June 11, 2009. 22:39–23:47.
[33] Ibid.

drafted into the Red Army no one from his community sent him off at the train station because they were all at prayer services for the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur.[34]

Although there are multitudes of examples of Soviet Jews who remained connected to their Jewish culture and religion, the opposite was also commonly the case. Even an individual who grew up in Birobidzhan, the short-lived "Jewish Autonomous Republic," recalled that "everything was in Russian there. It was a Jewish kolkhoz [collective farm] only on paper, everything else was in Russian."[35] Many Jewish children attended Russian or Ukrainian schools, even if there were options to attend Yiddish schools in their cities or villages.

The decrease in Yiddish speakers influenced how representations of the Holocaust were received and the means through which these representations were conveyed. There are examples of representations of the Holocaust in newspapers and journals which would have had solely Jewish readership, such as the Yiddish journal *Sovietische Heimland.* However, the number of Yiddish speakers in the Soviet Union had dropped significantly since the early 1930s due to the process of Russification. By the late 1930s, 54% of Jews in the Soviet Union declared Russian as their mother tongue.[36] With the decrease in access to Yiddish media, these publications were seen as less of a threat by the Soviet government.[37] It is difficult to measure how many Jewish individuals, or individuals who identified as Jewish, would have been able to access Yiddish representations of the Holocaust, let alone felt a connection to those representations, compared to a Russian representation such as *Life and Fate,* "Babi Yar," or *The Passenger*.

[34] Sheftl Zisser, Full, unedited interview, MI012.interview. Blavatnik Archive, New York, April 27, 2009. 2:03–3:20.
[35] Illan Palat, Full, unedited interview, SF036.interview. Blavatnik Archive, New York, December 13, 2007. 39:05–40:15.
[36] Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher,* 141.
[37] Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 16.

These distinctions are important when considering the reactions of different Jewish individuals to what they were hearing about the Jewish genocide, their own experiences in this genocide, and their reception of representations of the Holocaust. Regardless of whether or not Soviet Jews identified as Jewish or learned the Jewish culture, language, or religion, the “fifth point” on Soviet passports maintained their ethnic identity.[38] The large number of Jews who were caught up in the Holocaust in Eastern Europe made it likely that at least some of the Jewish individuals who were engaging with Soviet representations of the Holocaust would have had a personal connection to the event itself, creating further emotional responses. These factors influencing Jewish identity would collide with the Soviet political atmosphere and nationalities policies to influence how the Holocaust was represented in the 1960s.

[38] Ibid., xiv.

Chapter 1

"The Right to Write the Truth": Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*

As a Soviet and Jewish author writing at the beginning of the Thaw, Vasily Grossman, and his 1960 novel *Life and Fate,* acts as a lens through which to view the Soviet approach toward the memory of the Holocaust. Although Grossman grew up in an assimilated Jewish household, did not speak Yiddish, and did not identify specifically as Jewish, his experiences on the front-lines of WWII, and the death of his mother in the Holocaust led him to feel responsible to speak for those who had died. Grossman spoke about the murder of Soviet Jewry as a unique wartime experience:

> How is this murder different from the hundreds and thousands [*sic*] of people that the Germans executed elsewhere in fascist-occupied Europe? There is a difference, and it lies in the fact that the fascists execute the French, Dutch, Serbian, Ukrainian, Russian, and Czech people for violating fascist rules and laws… But the Germans execute the Jews only because of the fact that they are Jews.[39]

Grossman's view of the mass death of World War II would be expressed throughout his novel *Life and Fate.* He saw the murder of Jewish individuals as significant and would expand upon the importance of the individual throughout his work. However, by stressing the importance of the individual and the unique "life and fate" of each character in the novel, Grossman actively opposed the guidelines and values of Socialist Realism, which focused on a collective struggle, especially in the context of the victory of WWII.[40]

Life and Fate also explores the theme of Jewish unity, which the Soviet government considered dangerous. Grossman believed that the unity which had been imposed upon the Jews by the Nazis' racial policies turned into a voluntary unity over time, which was expressed

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[39] Vasily Grossman, "Ukraine without Jews," *Vek: Vestnik Evreiskoi Kultury,* no. 4 (1990) trans. Polly Zavadivker in *Jewish Quarterly,* 2014. https://jewishquarterly.org/2011/10/ukraine-without-jews/. This article was originally written in 1943.

[40] Historian Patrick Finney has written on Grossman's depiction of the war. He analyzes *Life and Fate* through the lens of collective memory, examining how *Life and Fate* clashes with the memory imposed by the state. Finney addresses the memory of the famous battles of WWII, such as the Battle of Stalingrad. See Patrick Finney, "Vasily Grossman and the Myths of the Great Patriotic War," *Journal of European Studies* 43, no. 4 (2013): 312.

through several of Grossman's Jewish characters.[41] The idea that Soviet Jews could have a strong sense of identity would become increasingly dangerous as Israel became more prominent in the Middle East and as Soviet-Israeli relations fractured in the late 1960s.

Much of the current scholarship on Grossman and *Life and Fate* has focused on how WWII changed Grossman's relationship to his Jewish identity, and how this Jewish identity was expressed through *Life and Fate.* Although some scholars such as Simon Markish argue that it was the Holocaust that drove Grossman to focus on Jewish themes for the first time, others such as Polly Zavadivker contend that Grossman had engaged with Soviet Jewry prior to the Holocaust.[42] Evidence suggests that Grossman engaged with his Jewish identity before the war, writing short stories with Jewish characters such as "In the Town of Berdichev"; however, the Holocaust did change the nature of his expression.[43] His focus on the experience of Jews in the Holocaust and his expression of Jewish identity in *Life and Fate* were influential forces in the complete censorship of the novel until the late 1980s. As with the other works discussed in this thesis, the censorship of *Life and Fate* was informed both by the Soviet Union's nationalities policy and by its growing fear of a unified Jewish identity after the trauma of the Holocaust.

As with Grossman, the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg was driven to identify with his Jewish identity because of the Holocaust. In his memoirs he stated that "so long as there is a single anti-Semite in the world I shall declare with pride that I am a Jew."[44] Ehrenburg and Grossman would work closely on a Soviet-supported collection of Holocaust testimonies, *The Black Book.* However, they would also disagree on core components of the book, such as the

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[41] Grossman, *Life and Fate*, trans. Chandler, 65; Ibid., 531.

[42] For more on Grossman's identity as a Jewish Soviet writer see Simon Markish, "A Russian Writers Jewish Fate," *Commentary* 81, no. 4 (1986): 40; Zavadivker, "Vasilii Grossman: A Cosmopolitan Depicts the Murder of the Jewish People," 285.

[43] See Markish, "A Russian Writers Jewish Fate," 46; Zavadivker, "Vasilii Grossman: A Cosmopolitan Depicts the Murder of the Jewish People," 288.

[44] Ilya Ehrenburg, *Post-War Years, 1945–1954,* trans. Tatiana Shebunina and Yvonne Kapp (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967), 131.

inclusion of collaboration. Although *The Black Book* was focused on Jewish victimhood, Ehrenburg argued in his memoirs that all nationalities were being murdered and targeted equally, a stance that the Soviet government supported.[45] Therefore, Ehrenburg's views can be seen as an indication of the party line, while Grossman was tentatively diverging from this line.

A Soviet Writer's Life: Grossman's World War II Writing

Vasily Grossman was born in 1905 in the Ukrainian town of Berdichev.[46] Although a significant Jewish population lived in Berdichev prior to the Holocaust, Grossman's family was assimilated and did not practice Jewish traditions. He studied engineering in Kiev, but while studying he began writing short stories and soon started to write full-time. During WWII Grossman was at the front as a correspondent for the military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*).[47] He was present at many of the most famous battles in the Soviet Union, including the Battle of Stalingrad. He was also among the first Russians to witness extermination and labour camps. While acting as a war correspondent, Grossman began investigating the death of his mother and 20,000 to 30,000 other Jews in the Berdichev Ghetto, murders that would be used in his novel *Life and Fate* twenty years later.

In 1943 Grossman was invited to join a new Literary Commission as part of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAFC).[48] The JAFC was organized at Soviet initiative by two Polish Bundist labour union leaders in 1941 and was meant to influence public opinion against the Nazis in an attempt to draw the United States into WWII and provide international support for

[45] Ehrenburg, *Post-War Years*, trans Shebunina and Kapp, 130.
[46] The following biographical information can be found in Markish, "A Russian Writer's Jewish Fate," 40–46.
[47] *Krasnaya Zvezda* was a military newspaper published by the Ministry of Defense. For more on Soviet newspapers and journals see Roxburgh, *Pravda,* 55–57.
[48] The chairman of the JAFC was Solomon Mikhoels, the father-in-law of Mieczysław Weinberg, the last artist discussed in this thesis. In 1948, Mikhoels was killed. Starting in 1949, the members and leadership of the JAFC began to be arrested under charges of "rootless cosmopolitanism." For information about Grossman's role in the JAFC see, John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev: The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 177–205.

the Soviet war effort. Grossman's role was to collect testimony about Nazi racial policies on Soviet land and to publish this testimony in what would become known as *The Black Book of Soviet Jewry.* Grossman worked with Ilya Ehrenburg to gather, edit, and compile this material. However, because it stressed Jews as the primary victims of the Holocaust and supplied evidence of Ukrainian collaboration, *The Black Book* was not published at the time of its completion. Such matters were tipping points for the Soviet regime, especially while Stalin was still alive.

It was while Grossman was a war correspondent that he began writing about Jewish death in WWII, publishing *"Treblinskii Ad"* ("The Treblinka Hell") in the Soviet journal *Znamya* in 1944. Grossman's first article about the extermination of the Jews, "*Ukrainia Bez Eevreev*" ("Ukraine without Jews") was rejected for publication by *Krasnaya Zvezda* in 1943. The essay was translated into Yiddish and partially published in the JAFC's journal *Einikayt.* "Ukraine without Jews" was not fully published until 1990.[49] Comparing what Grossman expressed in "Ukraine without Jews" and "The Treblinka Hell" shows both what was considered publishable in Russian and Yiddish at the time and Grossman's changing expression of the Holocaust.[50]

"Ukraine without Jews" overlaps with what Grossman would write in *Life and Fate* twenty years later, with some direct repetitions from the sections that were not published. Conversely, "The Treblinka Hell" followed what those on the Literary Commission of the JAFC were being asked to adhere to by the government. "The Treblinka Hell," although discussing the death of Jews at the Treblinka extermination camp, avoids overuse of the word "Jew," instead using the words "people," "prisoner," and "victim." By mentioning at the beginning of the essay that most of the prisoners at the second Treblinka camp were Jewish, Grossman discusses the fate of the prisoners without explicitly specifying their ethnicity. The Literary Commission of the

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[49] Grossman, "Ukraine without Jews," trans. Zavadivker. https://jewishquarterly.org/2011/10/ukraine-without-jews/.
[50] Vasily Grossman, "The Treblinka Hell" in *The Years of War, 1941–1945,* trans. Elizabeth Donnelly and Rose Prokofiev (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1946), 376.

JAFC was very sensitive to avoiding the overuse of the word "Jew" in *The Black Book.* In October of 1944, Grossman himself mentioned in a meeting of the Literary Commission that he had been "struck by the all too frequent use of the word 'Jew'" in a draft of *The Black Book.*[51] He suggested that *The Black Book*, as it was mostly about Jewish victims, should follow his template in "The Treblinka Hell" and refer to Jewish victims as "individuals" or "people."[52] Grossman suggested this in order to prevent "irritat[ing] the reader."[53] The change in language from 1943, when Grossman tried to have "Ukraine without Jews" fully published, to 1944 when Grossman successfully had "The Treblinka Hell" published, shows that certain language was less desirable in Soviet publications about Jewish victimhood.

Both "The Treblinka Hell" and "Ukraine without Jews" have significant points of overlap with scenes in *Life and Fate.* In "The Treblinka Hell," Grossman's depiction of (Jewish) individuals being led to their deaths in a gas chamber and their final moments converge with his creative depiction of Jewish individuals in a gas chamber in an unnamed camp. However, in *Life and Fate,* Grossman does use the word "Jewish," specifically using the scene of the character's final moments to show her reconnection with the Jewish faith and the Jewish people more broadly.[54] The victims are explicitly said to be Jewish several times in the scene, emphasizing Jewish identity, rather than implying Jewish identity as was done in "The Treblinka Hell."[55] In *Life and Fate,* Grossman was not concerned with "irritat[ing] the reader" and rather wrote to express his truth. Ironically, the expression of truth is what Grossman emphasized in "The

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[51] Document No. 124: Minutes of the Meeting of the Black Book Literary Commission, f. 8114, op. 1, d. 912, l. 1–28, October 13, 1944, State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Moscow, Russia published in Shimon Redlich, *War, The Holocaust, and Stalinism: A Documented History of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR* (London: Routledge, 1995), 352.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 353.
[54] Grossman, *Life and Fate,* trans. Chandler, 531.
[55] Ibid., 528.

Treblinka Hell," arguing that "it is the duty of a writer to tell the truth however grueling, and the duty of the reader to learn the truth."[56]

The change in what Grossman thought could be published is also seen in the similarities between *Life and Fate* and "Ukraine without Jews." Much of the second half of "Ukraine without Jews," in which Grossman discusses the nature of anti-Semitism, was inserted into *Life and Fate.*[57] The discussion of anti-Semitism was the section which was not published in 1943. Also among the section that was not published was a discussion of German policy, arguing that it was fundamentally anti-Semitic and had used Jewish scapegoating to turn blame away from the German government after WWI.[58] Grossman's recycling of this argument is an indication of his belief that what could not be published in 1943, under Stalin, could be published in 1960.

An issue that Grossman did not express in his newspaper publications, which caused disagreements in the Literary Commission, was collaboration. At a meeting of the Literary Commission in October of 1944, Ehrenburg mentioned that he had removed the term "Ukrainian" and replaced it with the term "*politsai"* because "no one can be offended by it in these instances."[59] Ehrenburg's comment suggests that those reading drafts of the book were offended by the implication that Ukrainians were collaborating with Germans. Ehrenburg was concerned by the government's response toward implications of collaboration and expanded upon direct comments he had received about mentions of collaboration in the book: "I had two long conversations, in which I argued the necessity of showing the Jews were in a difficult situation. I had kept the following in the text: 'There was nowhere to go; they were not accepted

[56] Grossman, "The Treblinka Hell" in *The Years of War, 1941–1945,* trans. Donnelly and Prokofiev, 399.
[57] Grossman, *Life and Fate,* trans. Chandler, 468–71.
[58] Grossman, "Ukraine without Jews," trans. Zavadivker. https://jewishquarterly.org/2011/10/ukraine-without-jews/.
[59] Document No. 124: Minutes of the Meeting of the Black Book Literary Commission, published in Redlich, *War, The Holocaust, and Stalinism,* 353.

in a single house; the doors were locked.' I was asked to remove it and I agreed…"[60] The line in the text that was removed shows the difficulty of defining collaboration. Although individuals may have considered themselves innocent bystanders, they may not have always been completely passive victims. As Grossman would later represent in *Life and Fate,* many bystanders had a stake in the persecution of Jews.

Although Ehrenburg tried to remove material that was seen as inappropriate, *The Black Book* was ultimately shelved by the government. A document from February 26, 1945, entitled "Conclusion and Recommendations of the Black Book Review Commission" noted that the editors and compilers of the book had taken creative liberties and had focused too much on the "vile traitors" among the Ukrainians, Belarussians, and Polish.[61] Two years later, on February 3, 1947, Georgy Aleksandrov, the Head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee, wrote to the Secretary of the Central Committee suggesting that the publication of the book was "inadvisable."[62] The reasons Aleksandrov cited were the focus on the victimhood of Jews and the "non-existent order of priorities" that the Germans had in execution decisions.[63] Aleksandrov mentioned that it was false that Jews were targeted more than any other Soviet nationality and therefore the contents of the book were false. Aleksandrov mentioned that Grossman's preface supported the idea that "the destruction of the Jews followed a peculiar provocative policy."[64] Grossman also argued this in the section of "Ukraine without Jews" which was not published until 1990. As this point was significant in the government's censorship of

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Document No. 126: Conclusion and Recommendations of the Black Book Review Commission*,* P.21 III-49, February 26 1945, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel published in Redlich, *War, The Holocaust, and Stalinism*, 355.
[62] Document No. 131: A letter by G. Aleksandrov to Zhdanov concerning the Black Book*,* f. 17, op. 125, d. 436, l. 216–18, February 3 1947, Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Most Recent History (RTsKhIDNI), Moscow, Russia published in Redlich, *War, The Holocaust, and Stalinism,* 366.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

The Black Book, it was most likely the case in the rejection of "Ukraine without Jews" by *Krasnaya Zvezda*. After Aleksandrov's letter recommending the censorship of *The Black Book,* the publication was cancelled.

Evidence of Jewish Victimhood in *Life and Fate*

During the Holocaust, it is estimated that approximately 1.3 million Soviet Jews died. Those Jews who survived and returned to their homes in the Soviet Union were faced with the nearly impossible task of reintegrating after an experience of war that was vastly different from what many other Soviet civilians experienced. Even those Jews who had been soldiers in the Red Army felt the impacts of the Holocaust. When Sheftl Zisser, a Jewish Soviet war veteran returned from the front, he found that not just his home but his entire town had been destroyed and "the life that was there before the war was gone."[65] For men such as Zisser, the Soviet government's lack of recognition of a distinctive wartime experience by the Jews only exacerbated the magnitude of the loss of Jewish life and culture.

When considered in conjunction with slowly but steadily growing anti-Zionism and the silence still surrounding the memory of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, the Jewish themes in *Life and Fate* become more significant. When also considered together with the fate of two other works taking on similar themes, the Thirteenth Symphony, premiering one year later, and *The Passenger,* written eight years later, it becomes clear that the party line against the Holocaust and Jewish identity was influenced by international politics and ideological factors. *Life and Fate* takes up two major themes, both present in other representations of the Holocaust from the 1960s: Jewish identity and a focus on individual Jewish victims, and the collective memory of this victimhood. Grossman also explores the issue of collaboration and the guilt of bystanders.

[65] Sheftl Zisser, interview clip: Jewish life in Tulchyn, MI012.CLIP06. Blavatnik Archive, New York, April 27, 2007. 3:51–4:13.

Collaboration was something he had tried but was unable to portray in *The Black Book* due to censorship.[66] Even in the 1960s, collaboration was a topic that Grossman knew could not be approached directly in his novel.

Grossman, who had also been at the front during WWII, felt the sense of a unique wartime experience because of the death of his mother in the Berdichev Ghetto. The impact of Grossman's mother's death and the expression of his own Jewish identity through his characterization of her can most clearly be seen in the character of Anna Shtrum in *Life and Fate.* Anna Shtrum and her son, Viktor Shtrum, parallel the life of Grossman's mother and Grossman himself. In *Life and Fate,* Viktor Shtrum receives a final letter from his mother, who is writing to him from a ghetto in an unnamed Ukrainian town. He had not been able to bring his mother to live with him in Russia, as his wife did not get along with Anna and was therefore opposed to her moving in with them. After receiving this final letter, in which Anna reports of her own impending death, Viktor begins to blame himself, believing that he could have saved her if he had gone against his wife's wishes. This situation directly parallels that of Grossman's. As his close friend Semyon Lipkin noted, Grossman believed that his mother would have survived if his wife had permitted her to stay with them in Moscow.[67]

The letter from Anna to Viktor may provide some evidence of how the government approached the memory of the Holocaust in the early years of the Thaw. Above and beyond the parallels between Grossman and Shtrum, the letter expresses many points which would have been viewed as politically dangerous by the Soviet government. First and foremost, Grossman expresses the concept of a united Jewish identity, one induced by Nazi policies. Expressions of

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[66] Document No. 124: Minutes of the Meeting of the Black Book Literary Commission, published in Redlich, *War, The Holocaust, and Stalinism*, 353.
[67] Semyon Lipkin and Anna Berzer, *Zhizn' i Sud'ba Vasilya Grossmana* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 59.

this re-ignited Jewish identity are revealed both in the letter written by Anna to Viktor and in the experience of Sofya Levinton, another character, during her journey to a German death camp.

Anna Shtrum was an assimilated Soviet Jew who reconnected with her Jewish identity when faced with Nazi policies. She notes that she had "forgotten during the years of the Soviet regime" that she was Jewish.[68] Furthermore, Anna says that "I never used to feel I was a Jew: as a child my circle of friends were all Russian… When I was fourteen, my family was about to emigrate to South America and I said to my father: 'I'll never leave Russia—I'd rather drown myself.'"[69] Anna did not connect with Jewish culture or with the Yiddish language. Her friends were not Jewish and her everyday interactions led her to identify as mostly Russian or Soviet. However, when faced with the racial policies of the Nazis, and confronted with anti-Semitism, Anna's Jewish identity was revitalized.

Through the characters Anna Shtrum and Sofya Levinton, Grossman is showing the power that racial policies had in creating a sense of unity and identity. The feeling of identifying and connecting with the Jewish people is evident in the experience of the character Sofya during her journey to an unnamed German concentration camp. Like Anna, Sofya was an assimilated Jew. She was a doctor and was therefore educated. And also like Anna, Sofya did not engage with Jewish culture or literature, instead reading "Homer, *Izvestia, Huckleberry Finn,* and Mayne Reid."[70] Individuals who may not have identified as Jewish, and who would only have been identifiable through the "fifth point" on their passport noting their ethnicity, might now be drawn to an explicit Jewish identity through a communal experience of suffering. Sofya's relationship with her Jewish identity is expressed when she is undressing with other Jewish individuals on their way to the gas chamber: "It was as though she felt, not just about herself, but about her

[68] Grossman, *Life and Fate,* trans. Chandler, 65.
[69] Ibid., 70.
[70] Ibid., 537.

whole people: 'Yes, here I am.' This was the naked body of a people: young and old, robust and feeble, with bright curly hair and with pale grey hair."[71] Sofya identifies herself with the broader Jewish people, regardless of her identity prior to the war. This identity and her love for the Jewish people also influences her decision to lie about her education, saying she is not a doctor, and therefore sealing her fate and sending her to her death.[72]

By expressing a growth in Jewish identity during WWII, Grossman simultaneously focuses on the lived experience of Jewish war victims. This experience was something he had wanted to portray in *The Black Book* in the 1940s, yet such Jewish individuality was one of the reasons for which that work was censored. In the 1960s, Grossman had hope that the suffering of Jewish victims in WWII could at last be highlighted. For instance, Anna's letter both addresses the suffering of specific individuals in the ghetto and expresses her hope for the salvation of the Jewish race in general. Writing from inside the ghetto, Anna says that "the world is full of events and all these events have the same meaning and the same purpose—the salvation of the Jews."[73] Anna goes on to explain that "I look around myself and simply can't believe it: can we really, all of us, already be condemned to be executed? The hairdressers, the cobblers, the tailors, the doctors, the stove-repairers are still working."[74] Through this section of the letter, Grossman shows the individuality of each victim in the ghetto, and the enduring hope that the Jewish people had. Living in the ghetto, these individuals had a sense of a unique experience. By way of Anna's letter, Grossman is able to establish the essence of an individual experience and the feeling of distinct victimhood. Juxtaposing the scenes of Anna with scenes of the front, of

[71] Ibid., 531.
[72] Ibid., 524.
[73] Ibid., 73.
[74] Ibid.

civilians, and of Soviet prisoners of war, Grossman is able to show that each individual had a distinct "life and fate" during WWII.

However broad the scope of the characters with which Grossman engaged, *Life and Fate* was still censored. That the novel also tackles the issue of Ukrainian collaboration and bystanders, a topic that contradicted the policy of *druzhba narodov,* doubtless also played a part in its censorship. *Druzhba narodov* "represented the Soviet nationalities as a community of common destiny" tied together by their location, shared historical experiences, and social values, along with their commitment to interethnic friendship and communal goals.[75] The unity implied by *druzhba narodov* required recognition of ethnic differences but also multicultural friendship and the dampening of interethnic tensions and historical antagonisms.[76] Therefore, ethnicity and the desire to create a unified Soviet state became difficult for the Soviet government to reconcile. By singling out Ukrainians and other collaborators during the Holocaust, Grossman was showing that ethnicity was an influential force in how individuals were treated during WWII, and highlighted the unique experiences that different ethnicities had during WWII. He also revealed divisions among nationalities that had existed for generations, divisions that would become even more hostile due to arguments concerning victimhood during WWII.

Grossman's concern about collaboration is most clearly seen through Anna. In her letter to Viktor, Anna reflects on the change in attitude by many of her Ukrainian neighbors to her Jewish identity and to Jews in general. She also reflects on a possible reason for this change—that they might profit from goods and property that Jews moving to the ghetto were forced to

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[75] Mark Bassin, *Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 154.
[76] Ibid., 155.

leave behind.[77] This depiction shows that collaborators did not have to be actively working with the Nazis. Bystanders who had a stake in the dispossession and murder of Jews were still guilty. By exploring this distinction, Grossman implied that those who were bystanders in order to enrich themselves were guilty. By defining collaborators in this manner, Grossman shifted guilt onto a wide population that would have been under Soviet rule at the time. Furthermore, Jewish individuals in the Soviet Union who had experienced isolation from their communities during WWII because of their Jewish ethnicity would have related to these descriptions of bystanders, possibly turning them away from Soviet identities and toward more sympathetic feelings for Israel. Regarding her experiences fighting in the Red Army after having lost her entire family and village of 54,000 Jews, a female war veteran stated in 2009 that "I am very happy today to have a homeland, because Israel is our common homeland. Even if it is difficult here [in Belarus], we are never left alone, they [Israel] won't let us die."[78] These feelings of disillusionment with the Soviet Union, caused from perceived abandonment during WWII, may have caused other Jewish readers to read between the lines of what Grossman was saying in *Life and Fate.*

"Such is, apparently, [my] fate": The Censorship of *Life and Fate*

Although Grossman had faced disappointment with *The Black Book* and "Ukraine without Jews," he believed that the openness implied by Khrushchev's Thaw would allow him a chance to speak about the Holocaust and WWII publicly.[79] In October of 1960, he sent *Life and*

[77] See the quote from Anna Shtrum's letter: "'You're outside the law!' she [the neighbor] said, as though that were something very profitable for her." Grossman, *Life and Fate,* trans. Chandler, 65.
[78] Galina Olkha, full, unedited interview, BEL046.Interview. Blavatnik Archive, New York, November 18, 2009. 11:00–11:29, 19:50–20:50.
[79] Vasily Grossman quoted in Garrard and Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev,* 354.

Fate to *Znamya,* which had published "The Treblinka Hell" in 1944.[80] The editors sent the manuscript immediately to the cultural section of the Central Committee, which began discussions regarding the manuscript on December 9, 1960.[81] That same day, the Head of the Ministry of Culture of the Central Committee made an official recommendation to the editorial board of *Znamya* that a "sharp political conversation" be held with Grossman regarding *Life and Fate,* which was viewed as "a collection of malicious fabrications about our reality, a dirty slander [original emphasis] on the Soviet public and state system."[82] The meeting between Grossman and the editorial board was held the next day, on December 10.[83]

Several weeks later, on January 2, 1961, Grossman was called to a meeting of the Union of Soviet Writers.[84] At this meeting, the members expressed concern regarding the international response to *Life and Fate*, were it to be published. Grossman, however, pointed out that the international literary community would know about the unfair censorship of his novel, seeing that it would not be published and that *Znamya* had not given him any feedback or means to have the novel published in the future.[85] Furthermore, several negative reviews of the book had already been released by members of *Znamya*'s editorial board.[86] Following the meeting, the secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers noted that "[Grossman's] ideological and artistic

[80] *Znamya* was a monthly literary journal, originally established under the name LOKAF (Literary Union of Writers of the Red Army and Navy). Most of the literature published in the journal was on military topics. See Victor Terras ed., *Handbook of Russian Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 533.
[81] Document No. 131: Note by the Department of Culture of the CPSU Central Committee on the need for the editorial Board of the magazine *Znamya* to hold a "sharp political conversation with V. S. Grossman about the novel *Life and Fate,* f. 5, op. 36, d. 120, l. 69–70, December 9 1960, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Moscow, Russia published in K. Aimermakher et. al. ed., *Series: Documents on Culture and Power from Stalin to Gorbachev: Documents from the Apparatus of the CPSU Central Committee and Culture 1958–1964* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2005), 415.
[82] "Ostryĭ politicheskiĭ razgovor," and "sbornik zlovnykh izmyshleniĭ o nasheĭ deĭstvitelʹnosti, gri͡aznoĭ klevety na sovetskiĭ obshchestvennyĭ i gosudarstvennyĭ stroĭ." Ibid.
[83] Document No. 135: Note by the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR on the conversation with the writer V. S. Grossman about the novel *Life and Fate,* f. 5, op. 36, d. 120, l. 71–72, January 2 1961, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Moscow, Russia published in K. Aimermakher et. al. ed., *Series: Documents on Culture and Power from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 426.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 427.
[86] For these reviews see Ibid., 428, fn. 3.

catastrophe has not caused any shock to him," and observed that there was no evidence of Grossman reflecting on his mistakes or attempting to rectify them.[87] On February 14, about a month after Grossman's meeting with the Union of Soviet Writers, the KGB arrived at his apartment to confiscate all copies and evidence of his novel.[88]

The "imprisonment" of *Life and Fate* on February 14, 1961, profoundly impacted Grossman. Although the manuscript would be published in the West in 1980, Grossman still deeply felt the blow of his inability to express his perception of WWII and the Holocaust. This impact was heightened by his feelings of responsibility toward the memory of his mother. On September 15, 1961, Grossman wrote a letter to his mother, as if she were still alive, expressing his desire to keep her memory alive through his novel:

> When I die, you will continue to live in this book [*Life and Fate*], which I have dedicated to you and whose fate is closely tied to your fate… Working [on *Life and Fate*] over the past ten years, I have been thinking about you constantly. My novel is dedicated to my love and devotion to people, and that is why it is dedicated to you. For me, you are humanity, and your terrible fate is the fate and destiny of humanity in this inhumane time.[89]

The dedication of *Life and Fate* and Grossman's reflection through his letter show that he was trying to keep not just his mother's memory alive, but also the memory of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. However, because this memory conflicted with the specific collective remembrance that the Soviet state espoused, its censorship by the government was rigid and total.

The uncompromising attitude of the government was reflected in a meeting between Grossman and the Ministry of Culture of the CPSU held on March 4, 1961, less than a month after the confiscation of *Life and Fate.* This meeting was held at the request of Grossman himself, who was distressed both by the complete rejection of his novel by *Znamya* and the

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[87] "Ego ideĭno-khudozhestvennai͡a katastrofa ne vyzyvala v nem potri͡acenyĭ." Ibid., 427.
[88] Garrard and Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev,* 260.
[89] Grossman quoted in Ibid., 353.

confiscation of his manuscript by the KGB a month earlier.[90] At the meeting, Grossman expressed concern not only over being censored, but also about his being blacklisted by publishers, newspapers, and magazines in the Soviet Union. The members of the CPSU responded that "his future fate as a writer will depend on himself, and on his civil and social position…"[91] Indeed, the assertion that Grossman "did not deny what he had written" is underlined in the original archived document recording the minutes of the meeting, suggesting that Grossman's commitment to his novel was influential in how the government would treat both his manuscript and Grossman himself. Regarding *Life and Fate* Grossman roughly quoted the Russian poet Blok, stating that "writers do not have a career, they have a fate… and such is, apparently, [my] fate."[92] By accepting whatever repercussions would come with his commitment to *Life and Fate,* Grossman signaled to the CPSU that he would be unwilling to reject what he had written, both at that moment and at any point in the future.

Hoping for a change of heart, Grossman wrote to Khrushchev in February of 1962. In this letter, Grossman noted that after his manuscripts were confiscated he approached the Central Committee and was told he had to denounce his work.[93] Grossman explained to Khrushchev that he "[has] not come to the conclusion that [his] book is untruthful."[94] He demanded from Khrushchev a reason for the censorship of *Life and Fate,* stating that "the issue is the right to write the truth, painfully learned over many years of living."[95] In writing this letter Grossman

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[90] Document No. 139: Note by the Department of Culture of the CPSU on the conversation with the writer V. Grossman*,* f. 5, op. 36, d. 133, l. 102, 103–105, March 4 1961, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Moscow, Russia published in K. Aimermakher et. al. ed., *Series: Documents on Culture and Power from Stalin to Gorbachev*, 436.
[91] "Ego dal′neĭshai͡a sud′ba kak pisateli͡a budet zaviset′ ot nego samogo, ot ego grazhdanskoĭ, obshchestvennoĭ, pozit͡sii…" Ibid.
[92]"U pisateleĭ ne byvaet kar′ery, a byvaet sud′ba, on skazal, chto takova, vidimo, ego sud′ba." Ibid., 437.
[93] As was made evident from the notes from the meeting with the CPSU. See Ibid.
[94] Grossman quoted in Garrard and Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev,* 354.
[95] Ibid., 355.

hoped that, if he could not get the novel published, he would at least have his manuscript returned.

Grossman eventually received a response in July, in the form of an invitation to meet with Mikhail Suslov, a member of the Presidium (Politburo).[96] Suslov suggested that the book was harmful to the Soviet people and could potentially be used by the Soviet Union's "enemies" as a weapon.[97] Suslov further criticized Grossman's "favourable" views of religion, God, and Trotsky. From the lengthy meeting with Suslov, it is clear that the Party had many reasons for not wanting to publish *Life and Fate.* Grossman criticized Stalin harshly in the novel, while stressing the importance of the individual, rather than the collective, in the outcome of the war. He also focused on a resurgence of religious feelings, elicited and encouraged both by the oppressive Soviet system and the systematic methods of killing imposed by the Nazi regime. The Soviet state in the 1960s, despite presenting itself as open to criticism of Stalin and Stalinist policy, was not open to discussions or commemorations that did not align with its policy, whether of individual minorities who died in WWII or of the war in general.

Although the 1960s were lauded as a time of cultural openness in the Soviet Union, Soviet policy toward the Holocaust remained uneven, often unrelenting, and reliant on a firm nationalities policy. Representations as explicit as *Life and Fate,* showing the vast differences in experiences between an individual in a ghetto and a Jewish individual safely behind Soviet lines, would ultimately meet the same fate as more allusive representations, such as the Thirteenth

[96] The Presidium/Politburo was the supreme policy making body of the Communist Party. In 1952, the Politburo was replaced by the a larger Presidium to move power away from the chairman of the Politburo, the general secretary of the Communist Party (formerly Stalin). The name Politburo was still often used to describe the Presidium. Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 530.
[97] Suslov stated: "Why should we add your book to the atomic bombs that our enemies are preparing to launch against us?" See: Grossman quoted by Garrard and Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev*, 358.

Symphony. Soviet policy toward the Holocaust was reliant on a firm nationalities policy and anti-Zionism, which would become more prevalent throughout the Soviet press after the Six-Day War in 1967. As the 1960s waned, the "Jewish Question" in the Soviet Union would emerge as a point of contention in Soviet policy and a further reason to disassociate the memory of WWII from a specifically Jewish collective experience.

Chapter 2

A Symbol of the Holocaust: Yevgeny Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" and Dimitri Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony

The Thirteenth Symphony and Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" remain two of the most well-known representations of the Holocaust to emerge from the Soviet era. Composed and written by non-Jewish Soviet artists, these representations offer a different view of the devastation of WWII. Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the author of "Babi Yar," was born in the Irkutsk region of Siberia, in the Soviet Union's Southeastern reaches.[98] Although identifying as Soviet, Yevtushenko had Polish, Latvian, and Ukrainian roots.[99] Shostakovich's background was very similar: originally of Polish-Lithuanian descent, his immediate family also came from Irkutsk.[100] These two artists produced two of the most popular and well-studied Soviet artistic pieces about the Holocaust and post-War anti-Semitism.

Shostakovich's friend and editor of his memoir, Solomon Volkov, has argued that the Thirteenth Symphony has remained one of the definitive symbols of the Holocaust because of its musicality:

> Once in a while, an artist succeeds in creating a symbol, a work of art, something that will symbolize a certain situation or political period… Shostakovich created a symbol for the Holocaust – a *musical* symbol. It's just impossible to convey the horror and dread of the Holocaust in words… But, for me, music has occasionally been able to do this.[101]

It was both fortunate and improbable that the performance of the Thirteenth Symphony was allowed, despite alterations to address Soviet requirements. Because of both Shostakovich's and Yevtushenko's fame and stature in Soviet society, the Symphony received international attention. Although it did not fit into an acceptable Soviet narrative of WWII or collective Soviet

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[98] Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Precocious Autobiography* (New York: Dutton, 1963), 14.
[99] Ibid., 14, 16.
[100] Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.
[101] Solomon Volkov, "Dimitri Shostakovich's 'Jewish Motif': A Creative Enigma," in *Dimitri Shostakovich and the Jewish Heritage in Music (Dmitri Schostakowitsch und das jüdische musikalische Erbe)*, ed. Ernst Kuhn, Günter Wolter, Dethlef Arnemann, and Andreas Wehrmeyer (Berlin: Kuhn, 2001), 14.

identity, the Thirteenth Symphony went uncensored until its first performance. Other representations of similar events, even when presented in conjunction with wider suffering, were not as fortunate. Although Vasily Grossman juxtaposed Jewish suffering with Soviet suffering, his representation of the Holocaust strayed too far from what the Soviet government considered appropriate. As will become clear, the government was wary regarding any representations of WWII that could be used to bolster Jewish identity.

Because they are two of the most famous works representing the Soviet Holocaust, "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony are often used by scholars to explore Soviet policy toward the event. Most of this scholarship regards the Thirteenth Symphony as part of a larger struggle to build physical monuments to Jewish victims in the Soviet Union.[102] Current scholarship also examines "Babi Yar" and the Symphony as representative of trends of anti-Semitism and of a unique Jewish culture in the Soviet Union.[103] However, the period of the 1960s has not been discussed specifically for the unique political atmosphere—both domestically and internationally—that influenced what the government allowed to be expressed and what both Jewish and non-Jewish artists felt able to express in the Soviet Union.

"I Came to You, Babi Yar": Writing "Babi Yar"

The subject and title of the poem "Babi Yar" are drawn from the name of a ravine, which had been the site of a Jewish mass murder near Kiev, the capital of Ukraine.[104] On September 29, 1941, the German army occupied Kiev and set into motion their plans for the mass murder of the Jewish population. At Babi Yar, it is believed 33,771 Jewish individuals were killed over two

[102] Korey, "A Monument over Babi Yar?" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 61.
[103] Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 6–7.
[104] Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews*, 97.

days.[105] The lack of Ukrainian memorialization of the event and the number of Ukrainian collaborators and bystanders raised questions about how to properly memorialize those who died at Babi Yar and how to memorialize the Holocaust within the collective Soviet state.

In the late 1950s, during a visit to Ukraine, the Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko was shocked both by the anti-Semitism that attended Ukrainian nationalism and by the hidden nature of the Babi Yar massacre.[106] Yevtushenko was visiting the construction site of a new hydroelectric power station. While there, he met Ukrainian nationalists who made openly anti-Semitic statements in his presence. Yevtushenko also encountered Ukrainian writers who were openly anti-Semitic toward the author Anatoly Kuznetsov, who was writing about Babi Yar at the time. Kuznetsov was a Soviet writer, born to a Russian father and Ukrainian mother. He grew up in Kiev, and at the age of fourteen began to record material in a notebook on the atrocities he heard of and experienced under Nazi occupation.[107] Although Kuznetsov was not present at the Babi Yar Massacre, he "saw how it all took place."[108] When Yevtushenko met Kuznetsov during his visit, Yevtushenko urged him to write on the atrocities of WWII. However, Kuznetsov admitted to Yevtushenko that he was afraid, both because he was being investigated for being a

[105] A report from the Einsatzgruppen directly cites this number as the number of Jews killed at Babi Yar: "All Jews were arrested in retaliation for the arson in Kiev, and altogether 33,771 Jews were executed on September 29th and 30th." Document No. 189: From a Report by Einsatzgruppen on the Extermination of the Jews in Ukraine, October 1941, in Yitzhak Arad, Lea Ben Dor, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margaliot, ed., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Jews of Germany, Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Pergamon, 1987), 416; Anatoly Podalsky, "Collaboration in Ukraine During the Holocaust: Aspects of Historiography and Research" (presentation, The Holocaust in Ukraine: New Sources and Perspectives, Centre for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Museum, Washington DC, 2013), 189.
[106] Yevtushenko himself mentions that he does not remember the exact year he had this experience. He suggests it might have been in either 1957 or 1958. See Maxim Shostakovich, Solomon Volkov, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, and Kenneth Kiesler, "Shostakovich Symposium" ed. Harlow Robinson in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* ed. Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov (London: Toccata Press, 1998), 380.
[107] Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar* (Moscow: LLC Kupiranov's Publishing House; World Holocaust Forum Foundation, 2006), 14.
[108] Ibid.

"hidden Jew" and because of possible censorship.[109] Kuznetsov was correct to be afraid: in 1966, when he finally completed his book on Babi Yar, the published copy was "brutally cut by the censors."[110] The pain of having his first-hand account manipulated impacted Kuznetsov emotionally, causing him to defect to the United Kingdom in 1968.[111] Through Kuznetsov's influence and previous accounts such as Lev Ozerov's 1945 poem "Babi Yar," Yevtushenko became increasingly interested in the topic himself.[112]

The concealed nature of Babi Yar also drew Yevtushenko to a creative representation of the massacre. There was no official recognition of the deaths, no monument or memorial, and no collective consciousness of the event throughout the Soviet Union. Although memorialization of WWII did not begin until after 1965, specific memorialization of Jewish deaths in the Soviet Union would not become common until after the fall of the Soviet Union. This lack of Jewish memorialization is significant as it indicates the government's unwillingness to approach the reality of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust, above and beyond the suffering of the Soviet people. At Babi Yar specifically, a monument was built to commemorate the deaths of Soviet citizens in 1975; however, a Jewish memorial was not built until 1991.[113]

The night after visiting Babi Yar, Yevtushenko wrote his poem. During the same visit, he read his new poem publicly in Kiev. On September 19, 1961 "Babi Yar" was published in the

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[109] Ibid; M. Shostakovich, Volkov, Yevtushenko, and Kiesler, "Shostakovich Symposium" ed. Robinson in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* ed. Ho and Feofanov, 380.
[110] Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar,* 14.
[111] Ibid.
[112] The poem by Lev Ozerov was very influential for Yevtushenko. His book of reminisces on his own poem was named after part of Ozerov's "forgotten" poem: "I came to you, Babi Yar/ If grief has age, then I am unimaginably old–/ You couldn't count/ How many centuries." M. Shostakovich, Volkov, Yevtushenko, and Kiesler, "Shostakovich Symposium" ed. Robinson in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* ed. Ho and Feofanov, 380–81; Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar,* 14.
[113] Korey, "A Monument over Babi Yar?" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 61, 73.

journal *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.[114] Yevtushenko suggested that the poem was published "mysteriously quickly" for the time, as "the theme of anti-Semitism had not been touched" in Soviet poetry or culture.[115] Yevtushenko argued that this quick publication was because of the decision of the editor-in-chief at the time, Valery Kosolapov.[116] As a result of this "courageous decision" the editor was fired.[117]

After the use of "Babi Yar" in the Thirteenth Symphony in 1962, Khrushchev and other government officials began to speak out against the poem, deflecting questions about the Jewish national status in the Soviet Union and the poem's historical accuracy. Although Yevtushenko stated that the Soviet public had a positive response to his poem, the Soviet government's response was negative.[118] Khrushchev would attack Yevtushenko for the next three years, arguing that

> [The poem] was criticized because the author was unable truthfully to show and condemn the fascists, particularly the fascist criminals responsible for the mass slaughter at Babi Yar. The poem represents things as if only Jews were the victims of the fascist atrocities, whereas, of course, the Hitlerite butchers murdered many… Soviet people of other nationalities. The poem reveals that its author did not show political maturity and was ignorant of historical facts. For whom and for what purpose has it been necessary to present things as if someone is discriminating against the Jews in our country?[119]

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[114] *Literaturnaya Gazeta* was a literary periodical, which was first published in 1847. In 1947, it began publishing both literary works and articles on cultural and political news. In 1987, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* had a circulation of approximately 3.1 million and was read mainly by those who were considered "educated." See "About the Newspaper," last modified January 2019, Literaturnaya Gazeta, http://www.lgz.ru/gaz/; Roxburgh, *Pravda,* 56.

[115] M. Shostakovich, Volkov, Yevtushenko, and Kiesler, "Shostakovich Symposium" ed. Robinson in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* ed. Ho and Feofanov, 382.

[116] Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar*, 23.

[117] M. Shostakovich, Volkov, Yevtushenko, and Kiesler, "Shostakovich Symposium" ed. Robinson in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* ed. Ho and Feofanov, 382; Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar*, 23.

[118] Yevtushenko, *Precocious Autobiography*, 117; "High Ideological and Artistic Mastery Is the Great Strength of Soviet Literature and Art (Vysokai͡a ideĭnostʹ i khudozhestvennoe masterstvo – velikai͡a sila sovetskoĭ literatury i isskutsvo)," *Pravda* (Moscow), March 10, 1963.

[119] This comment was published after the Thirteenth Symphony premiered; however, there is no mention of the Symphony itself. See "High Ideological and Artistic Mastery Is the Great Strength of Soviet Literature and Art (Vysokai͡a ideĭnostʹ i khudozhestvennoe masterstvo – velikai͡a sila sovetskoĭ literatury i isskutsvo)," *Pravda,* 11. Translation found in "Khrushchev Says Yevtushenko Poem Ignores the Facts," *The New York Times* (New York), March 11, 1963; Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts*, 181–82.

The connection between the re-invigorated discussion of "Babi Yar" and the premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony shows that it was the national and international exposure of the Symphony and the genre of the Symphony itself that prompted the government to suppress the poem.

A Musical Symbol: Composing the Thirteenth Symphony

Within a few days of the publication of "Babi Yar" in *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* Shostakovich's friend and librettist Isaak Glikman visited him at the Yevropeyskaya Hotel in Leningrad.[120] Glikman, having been deeply influenced by the poem, gave it to Shostakovich to read. Later that night, Glikman received a phone call from Shostakovich saying that "he shared [Glikman's] feelings for the poem, and that he had conceived an immediate desire to write a symphonic vocal poem based on the text."[121] On May 24, 1962, Shostakovich played through the completed score for Glikman in Leningrad, which "moved [Glikman] to tears."[122] Several months after Shostakovich performed his new score for Glikman, Boris Schwarz, an American musician and musicologist, visited Moscow as a result of a cultural exchange agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States. During his visit, Schwarz attended the dress rehearsal and premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony. His memoirs, published in his overview of Soviet music from the Revolution to the 1970s, offer insight into the political intrigues influencing the performance of the Thirteenth Symphony.[123]

The premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony, held on December 18, 1962, generated intense excitement and drew attention throughout the artistic elite in the Soviet Union and the

[120] Glikman is not sure of the exact day that he shared the poem with Shostakovich. He notes it was either the 20th or 21st of September, 1961. Dimitri Shostakovich and Isaak Glikman, *Story of a Friendship: The Letters of Dimitry Shostakovich and Isaak Glikman*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 279.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Although Schwarz notes that his recollections are unbiased and therefore do not incorporate any political influences, he was writing a decade after his experiences, and therefore the memory of his experiences may have been influenced by later historical events during the Cold War. See Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, x.

international music community. The Soviet government, however, increased pressure to prevent the premiere and dissemination of the Symphony. The square in front of the Conservatory Hall in Moscow, where the Symphony was to be held, was cordoned off by police.[124] Regardless of the police presence, the Hall was filled. Prior to the performance of Shostakovich's new Symphony, a Symphony by Mozart was played, but according to Schwarz it "received a minimum of attention; no one cared…"[125] The performance of Shostakovich's Symphony, however, was received enthusiastically. The conductor, Kirill Kondrashin, described the performance as "a triumph," saying it "almost caused a political disturbance."[126] Yevtushenko recalled that at the end of the performance "applause… flew up from all sleeves, and this genius [Shostakovich] stood on the stage above the stormy explosion bowing awkwardly."[127] According to accounts of those who attended, the reception of the Symphony was explosive and approving. Although accounts of the premiere vary over whether or not government officials were in attendance, it can be confirmed that a scheduled televised performance did not take place, and the day after the premiere there were no reviews in any official Soviet newspaper.[128]

"One Massive, Soundless Scream"[129]: Reception of the Thirteenth Symphony

The Soviet press' refusal to publish any reviews of the Thirteenth Symphony indicated the government's disapproval and its attempt to silence the conversation around memorialization of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. On December 19, *Pravda* printed two sentences about the

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[124] Ibid., 367.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (London: Faber & Faber, 2006), 409.
[127] Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar*, 13.
[128] Historian Laurel Fay suggests that government officials were "conspicuously" in attendance, while Schwarz (who was present at the premiere) says they were not. However, both sources note that the televised performance of the symphony was cancelled, and that the symphony was only mentioned briefly in *Pravda* the next day. Fay argues that there was a veiled review in the form of an "unsigned editorial" that did not directly mention Shostakovich's name or the Symphony. This, however, cannot be confirmed. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 234–35; Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* 367.
[129] Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Collected Poems, 1952–1990,* ed. Albert C. Todd and James Ragan (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1991), 102–104.

Symphony – the only proof the performance had occurred. Furthermore, the cancellation of the televised version of the premiere diminished the audience for the Symphony, an act that limited those who were exposed to both Shostakovich's and Yevtushenko's messages about post-War anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. To limit further the spread of awareness of the issues in the Symphony, it was decided not to publish the Symphony's lyrics in the programmes at the premiere, despite such publications being common at the time.[130] When Schwarz asked the Composers' Union for a copy of the score, he was told: "the 'only' available score was in the hands of a critic who had failed to return it."[131] By restricting those who heard the words and music of the Symphony, the Soviet government attempted to limit those who were exposed to representations of the memory of the Holocaust.

On January 12, 1963, the international community began to react to the censorship of the Symphony with disapproval. A back-and-forth exchange began between the Western press and the Soviet Union regarding the existence of anti-Semitism. Khrushchev and Soviet newspapers denied the existence of anti-Semitism, or the "Jewish Problem," in the Soviet Union, claiming it was being used as a distraction from anti-Semitism in the West.[132] American and British newspapers responded by focusing on the plight of the Thirteenth Symphony, Shostakovich, and Yevtushenko as proof that anti-Semitism existed in the Soviet Union and was a concern for the government.[133] The Soviet Union's deflection of the Western press' attacks was part of a

[130] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia,* 367.
[131] Ibid., 368.
[132] "High Ideological and Artistic Mastery Is the Great Strength of Soviet Literature and Art (Vysokai͡a ideĭnost′ i khudozhestvennoe masterstvo – velikai͡a sila sovetskoĭ literatury i isskutsvo)," *Pravda,* translation in Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts*, 181–82.
[133] Seymour Topping, "Shostakovich's 13th Is Silenced in Moscow for Ideological Taint," *New York Times* (New York), January 12, 1963; Edward Crankshaw, "Mr. K Is Worried over Jews," *The Guardian* (London), January 15, 1963; "Moscow Cultural Currents," *New York Times* (New York), January 17, 1963; "Khrushchev Says Yevtushenko Poem Ignores the Facts," *New York Times* (New York), March 11, 1963.

continuing denial to grapple with the memory of the Holocaust, an issue that Shostakovich and Yevtushenko were highlighting through their art.

Israeli media responses show that those in Israel were also following the developments of the censorship of the Symphony, making it an international cultural scandal that was not only relegated to the tensions of the Cold War. Two Israeli newspapers, *Harot* and *Davar,* published articles on December 20, 1962, describing Khrushchev's denunciation of and displeasure with the Symphony.[134] A month later, on January 13, 1963, two articles were published regarding Yevtushenko's "correction" of the words of the poem.[135] The articles mention that the changes Yevtushenko made would be reflected in future performances of Shostakovich's Symphony, and questioned the impact these changes would have on the music itself.

Conveying the Horror of the Holocaust: The Musicality of the Thirteenth Symphony

Although Shostakovich's music was not ideologically problematic for the Soviet government, it remains one of the most important parts of the "Babi Yar" movement for the way it is able to "convey the horror and dread of the Holocaust…"[136] The movement in question, the first, is performed adagio, meaning that it should be played slowly and with expression. Beginning a symphony with an adagio movement breaks from conventional choral symphonic structures, as most choral symphonies begin with a fast-paced, allegro movement.[137]

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[134] "Khrushchev Denounces Shostakovich's Symphony Based on 'Babi Yar' (Chrushtz'ov magnah ha'simfoniyah shel Shostakovitz al-fi Babi-Yar)," *Davar,* December 20, 1962; "Khrushchev Blames Shostakovich for Basing His Symphony on the Subjects of the Poem 'Babi Yar' (Chrushtz'ov mashim et Shostakovitz vavisos ha'simfoniyah shelo al nosheya ha'poema 'Babi Yar')," *Harot*, December 20, 1962.
[135] "Yevtushenko Corrects the Song 'Babi Yar' (Yevtushenko tikan et shiru 'Babi Yar),'" *Davar,* January 13, 1963; "Yevtushenko 'Corrects' 'Babi Yar' (Yevtushenko 'tikan' et 'Babi Yar),'" *Al HaMashmer,* January 13, 1963.
[136] Volkov, "Dimitri Shostakovich's 'Jewish Motif,'" in *Dimitri Shostakovich and the Jewish Heritage in Music,* ed. Kuhn, Wolter, Arnemann, and Wehrmeyer, 14.
[137] Leon Stein, *Anthology of Musical Forms - Structure and Style: The Study and Analysis of Musical Forms* (Los Angeles: Summy-Birchard Inc., 1995), 152.

While Shostakovich certainly had experience with Jewish motifs and styles, in the Thirteenth Symphony he relied solely on Russian themes. In the movement, Shostakovich parodies the Russian folk song "Akh, Vy seni, moi seni"; however, the version Shostakovich employs is set in a minor key, making the tone more foreboding.[138] Shostakovich represents the Russian people through their folk music, but shows this music, and therefore the Russian or Soviet people, as corrupted by anti-Semitic acts.[139] Shostakovich avoided the use of Jewish musical themes, as they "would actually have attenuated the power of the message. A plea to Russians to renounce anti-Semitism had to be done in Russian, not Jewish terms."[140] The desire for Russians to renounce anti-Semitism was a goal behind both Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" and Shostakovich's desire to set the poem to music. The musicality of the symphony itself represents the artists' desires behind the words and music.

The use of a "grotesque" mode in the symphony is also significant in the music's ability to express the fear within "Babi Yar's" words. The grotesque can be conveyed through exaggerating the "pitch, speed, and density of sound."[141] By means of such musical exaggeration, the listener is made to feel conflicting emotions or uncomfortable reactions.[142] The use of the grotesque is especially important in the pogrom scene in the first movement of "Babi Yar," as it elicits from the listener an emotional response that is contrary to the disgust and horror that one would expect to feel from the scene.[143] This counterintuitive response, in turn, then causes a feeling of fear and discomfort.

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[138] Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered,* 401.
[139] John Peter Hausmann, "Shostakovich, Yevtushenko, and Criticism in the Thirteenth Symphony" (Master's Thesis, University of Louisville, 2008), 30.
[140] Michael Mishra, *A Shostakovich Companion* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2008), 244.
[141] Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (London: Routledge, 2000; 2011), 211.
[142] Ibid.
[143] See Appendix for full poem. Ibid., 215.

Emotional responses toward the poetry are further supported by Shostakovich's use of repetition and distortion of popular music. He employs the folk song, "Akh, Vy seni, moi seni" in a scene that is meant to convey violence and suffering, the pogrom attack. In order to portray these feelings, Shostakovich distorts the tune to evoke emotions of uneasiness within the listener.[144] This distortion mixes Shostakovich's Russian style with the grotesque musical genre. Not only does he represent his ideas regarding Russian civic responsibility toward the prevention of anti-Semitism through this genre, but he is also able to conjure up powerful feelings. Through these techniques, Shostakovich creates a bridge between the words of suffering, which may be unable to convey the full terror of the Holocaust, and feelings of pain that were left unresolved.

A "Necessary" Change: The Revision of "Babi Yar"

By adopting the words of Yevtushenko's poem, Shostakovich was also taking responsibility for its contents. Although several of Yevtushenko's other poems are used in the Symphony, it was "Babi Yar" that originally sparked Shostakovich's desire to compose, and that drew the most ire of the government.[145] Furthermore, "Babi Yar" was the Symphony's first movement, meaning it was the first heard by those in attendance and may have been heard again if played in the case of an encore.[146] Considering the implications of an increased audience and the international attention being given to the Symphony, the government told Yevtushenko and Kondrashin that the work would not be allowed further performances if the poem were not revised to mention Russian and Ukrainian victims at Babi Yar.[147]

[144] Ibid., 238.
[145] The conductor of the premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony, Kirill Kondrashin, mentioned that "the poem that provoked the most conflict was, of course, the poem about the Jews." See Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered,* 405.
[146] In the case of the Thirteenth Symphony, Kondrashin decided to play the second movement during the encore, so as not to place Shostakovich in an "awkward position." See Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered,* 410.
[147] Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures: The Culture of Democracy in the Soviet Union* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1991), 296–97.

Although commemoration of all victims of WWII was not the intention of the poem, additions were made in the first month of 1963.[148] At the time of the revisions, Yevtushenko denied any government involvement in his decision, arguing instead that he was exercising his artistic liberties.[149] However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yevtushenko reflected on the influence of the Soviet government on the revisions. He mentioned that he did not regret the decision to comply with what the government requested, and believed that if he had not changed the words "the world would not have heard Shostakovich's work of genius for another twenty-five years – until today's glasnost."[150] Yevtushenko's changing views on his own actions are reflective of both the changing nature of memory and the changing nature of perceptions of the power and influence of the Soviet state over the arts.

The most significant change to the poem was the introduction of wider suffering during WWII and the shift of focus away from continuing anti-Semitism and Jewish suffering—elements of the poem that the Soviet government considered inappropriate. A comparison of the original words with the revisions can be seen below:[151]

"Babi Yar"[152]

Original	Revision
I feel myself a Jew. Here I tread across old Egypt.	Here I stand as if at the fountainhead that gives me faith in our brotherhood.

[148] "What Are They Saying? (Mah Omrim?)," *LaMarhav,* Jan 14, 1963; Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar,* 33.
[149] "What Are They Saying? (Mah Omrim?)," *LaMarhav,* Jan 14, 1963.
[150] Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures,* 296–97.
[151] See Appendix for full poem.
[152] The revision was noted in a review of the Thirteenth Symphony in *Tempo,* a quarterly music magazine from the UK. The revisions were made to several lines from a paragraph at the beginning of the poem and a paragraph at the end of the poem. The review was published in 1973 and was comparing a recording of the symphony from Russia made in 1972 to the original score published in Canada in 1970. Kirill Kondrashin noted that when touring the West several years later he came across a pirated recording of the Symphony, which had originally been recorded for government officials. In this manner, the original Thirteenth Symphony made its way into the West. Upon discovering the original score's infiltration into the West, the Soviet Union retaliated by recording the revised edition, before again withdrawing all performances of the Symphony. See Hugh Ottaway, "Review: Beyond Babi Yar," *Tempo,* no. 105 (1973): 26–27; Mishra, *A Shostakovich Companion,* 243; Kondrashin, "Talking about Shostakovich," in *Shostakovich Reconsidered,* 516–17.

Here I die, nailed to the cross, and even now I bear the scars of the nails.	Here Russians lie, and Ukrainians lie together with the Jews in the same ground.
And I myself am one massive, soundless scream above the thousand thousand buried here. I am each old man here shot dead. I am every child here shot dead.	I think of Russia's heroic deed in blocking the way to Fascism. To the smallest dewdrop she is close to me with her very being and her fate.

The massive revisions shift the focus away from the suffering of a minority to that of the collective. The second half of the revisions expands upon tenets of Socialist realism, focusing on the victory of communism over fascism.

By suppressing the memory of the Holocaust and moving toward the policy of friendship and solidarity throughout the Soviet Union, the government was attempting to prevent the formation of particular identities. The government's fear that "Babi Yar" would cause a resurgence of Jewish identity and nationalism was founded not merely in paranoia: exactly a year prior to the premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony, an anonymous Jewish individual wrote to the famous Soviet Jewish writer Ilya Ehrenburg expressing feelings of intense Jewish nationalism emotion stemming from the poem "Babi Yar."[153] Furthermore, an article published in the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* on October 11, 1961, a year before the performance of the Symphony, recorded that Yevtushenko's poem was recited at a synagogue in Moscow for the Jewish holiday of Sukkot.[154] Therefore, prior to any widespread dissemination of the poem through music and multiple performances, it had already become a vehicle through which Jewish identity and nationalism could be expressed and received. By demanding that the words of "Babi Yar" be changed, the Soviet government was attempting to prevent the coalescence of a national identity around the trauma of the Holocaust, which was already becoming apparent. As historian and

[153] Letter written by an anonymous resident of the Cherkassy Region regarding the poem, "Babiy Yar" by Yevtushenko, December 18 1961, P.21.3.137, Ilya Ehrenburg Collection, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
[154] "The Poem 'Babi Yar' Was Recited at Synagogues in Moscow on the Festival of Sukkot (HaShir 'Babi Yar' Doklam V'Beiti HaCaneset V'Moskvah," *Maariv,* October 11, 1961.

director of the Anti-Defamation League William Korey has argued, "expunging the Holocaust from the record of the past was hardly a simple matter, but unless it were done the profound anguish of the memory was certain to stir a throbbing national consciousness. Martyrdom, after all, is a powerful stimulus to a group's sense of its own identity."[155] Jewish consciousness would have been further bolstered by the creation of Israel in 1948 and the new nation's growing influence in the Middle East.

The revisions to "Babi Yar" also reflect the ideological policy of Socialist Realism. By shifting the focus of the poem toward the victory of the Red Army and the Soviet Union in WWII, the central theme becomes the victory of communism over fascism. Rather than acknowledge the suffering of a minority, the lyrics express a triumph of the whole Soviet people. The revisions also create a stark contrast between the past – with suffering and fascism as the enemy – and the bright future, made possible by the success of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the victory of the Soviet Union allowed the government to use WWII as a legitimizing myth.[156] Many of those who were coming of age during WWII had no direct memory of the Revolution. In its place, the "Great Patriotic War" was used to legitimize the existence of the Soviet Union as well as the power and credibility of communist ideologies.[157] Consequently, there occurred an explosion in culture and art concerned with the victory of the Soviet people during the war, yet this same burgeoning culture and art focused little on the suffering of minorities.

The increase in culture surrounding WWII can be seen in a poem produced during the same time that Yevtushenko was writing "Babi Yar." This poem, called "Buchenvaldskii Nabat" ("Buchenwald Alarm Bells"), would become a famous, and politically acceptable, example of

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[155] Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole,'" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 147.
[156] In the 1940s, Stalin had stated that the victories of the Soviet Union had proven the State's viability. For more on the Myth of the Great Patriotic War in relation to Socialist Realism and *Life and Fate* specifically see Finney, "Vasily Grossman and the myths of the Great Patriotic War," 314.
[157] Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 18.

the devastation of WWII. Although still focusing on the mass death which occurred in the war, the poem, and the song which it later became, focused on universal and worldly suffering. The author of the poem, Aleksander Sobolev (originally named Isaac Sobol) was born in 1915 in a small village in Ukraine to a Jewish family.[158] During the war, he fought on the front and was later discharged because of an injury.[159] In the summer of 1958, he heard of the opening of a memorial at the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp, which consisted of a bell to act as a constant reminder of the threat of fascism. Sobolev, however, saw the bell as a premonition of the constantly impending doom of war and genocide. As Sobolev's wife recollected:

> The experience of the past war, the tense international situation, the relentless "cold war" suggested a terrible conclusion: the world is ruled by those with Power Madness. In the middle of the 20th century, in the hands of the omnipotent Madness, there turned out to be a weapon of destructive force unknown to mankind – nuclear power, a means, as the poet understood, capable of destroying all life on Earth, turning a blooming planet into a lifeless desert covered with ashes.[160]

The poem itself does not focus on the suffering of a specific people or minority and centers instead on the suffering of the world should another war occur.

Soon after its completion, Sobolev submitted the poem to *Pravda* but was rejected.[161] In September of 1958, the poem was published in *Trud,* a labour union journal, with a much smaller readership than *Pravda.* Sobolev was unhappy with this small level of readership. Believing the message should be heard by more people, he showed the poem to the Secretary of the Composers' Union. He was told to send the words to the renowned Soviet composer, Vano Muradeli, who was deeply influenced by the message of the poem and composed a song. After

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[158] The following biographical information about Sobolev is from Tatyana Mikhailovna Sobaleva, *V Opale Chestnyĭ Iudeĭ* (Moscow: Paralleli, 2006), 2–27.
[159] Ibid., 6.
[160] "Opyt minuvsheĭ voĭny, napri͡azhennai͡a mezhdunarodnai͡a obstanovka, neutikhai͡ushchai͡a «kholodnai͡a voĭna» podskazali strashnyĭ vyvod: mirom pravit vlastʹimushchee Bezumie. V seredine veka v rukakh vsemogushchego Bezumii͡a okazalosʹ oruzhie nevedomoĭ ranee chelovechestvu razrushitelʹnoĭ sily - i͡adernoe, sredstvo, kak ponimal poėt, sposobnoe unichtozhitʹ vse zhivoe na Zemle, prevratitʹ t͡svetushchui͡u planetu v bezzhiznennui͡u pustyni͡u, pokrytui͡u peplom." Ibid., 20.
[161] Ibid., 24.

being performed on the radio and at a youth music festival in Vienna, the song began to gain popularity. It was performed in the movie *Spring Wind Over Vienna*, sold over 9 million records, and was translated into multiple languages worldwide.[162] Although the poem gained a wide audience through the movie and song, Sobolev's wife claims that his name was purposely eclipsed in newspapers by Muradeli's.[163] Furthermore, when the song won a Lenin Prize in 1963, Sobolev's name was not included.[164] Whether or not Sobolev was actually or purposely removed from the international spotlight, "Buchenwald Alarm Bells" remains representative of a poem that encompassed the suffering of all nationalities in WWII. The poem became popular because of its ability to unite those who had suffered in the Soviet Union, rather than divide them, as "Babi Yar" was seen to do.

Israeli articles discussing the "correction" of "Babi Yar" to include wider suffering were not altogether approving of the shift in focus away from Jewish victims toward Soviet victories. A day after the changes were reported in the Israeli press, a letter to the editor appeared, lambasting Yevtushenko for changing the words of "a poem of stifled rage and silent sobs, of profound identification with the Jewish people…," and thereby altering what was seen as an ideal representation of commemoration.[165] The author went on to comment that after the poem was completed, it ceased to belong to Yevtushenko, and was "the property of those who saw it as a scream of protest."[166] The poem mentions Shostakovich's Symphony, noting that the fact the Symphony could not be performed until after Yevtushenko's poem was revised was an indication of something larger at play than simple corrections or artistic adjustments. Although

[162] Ibid., 26.
[163] Ibid., 27.
[164] Defense Documentation Centre for Scientific and Technical Information, *Works Accepted in Competition for 1963 Lenin Prizes, USSR.* AD 405232, Washington, D.C.: Joint Publications Research Service, 1963.
[165] "Shir shel za'am chanuk v'domiyah mityapechet, shel hezdahut amokah im ha'am ha'yehudi [...]" See "What Are They Saying? (Mah Omrim?)," *LaMarhav,* Jan 14, 1963.
[166] "[...] le'nachalat rabim she'rau bo tsa'akat mecha'ah." See Ibid.

the reason Yevtushenko gave for his changes at this time was his artistic license, many saw that the government desired a less explicit representation of Jewish commemoration and anti-Semitism. The response seen in the Israeli press shows that individuals outside of the Soviet Union felt a connection to the words of "Babi Yar" and saw it as a poem of protest. Shostakovich's use of the words in his Symphony only widened the scope of those who would come into contact with them, a fact that may have caused the Soviet government to become more fearful of the words' potential impact.

The Soviet government deemed Shostakovich's decision to portray "Babi Yar" musically a significant act. In the first official review of the Symphony, published in *Sovetskaya Belorussaya* in 1963, it was noted that

> A poem is one matter. Any poet can be criticised for a greater or lesser degree of verisimilitude. But, no matter how significant his ideological faults in one poem, he cannot seriously be accused of flagrant violation of the truth of life on the basis of that single work alone. A symphony is quite a different matter. The peculiarities of this genre are such that they inevitably objectify the content, established as a basis for the symphony by the composer, and impart to it an epoch-making significance and scale. [167]

Although Yevtushenko's poem was originally believed by many to be ideologically flawed, it was of little concern by itself. It was only Shostakovich's use of the poem in the genre of the symphony that elevated the words and sentiments to a dangerous level. Ladygina, the reviewer of the Symphony, believed that many poets could be accused of ideological and even historical inaccuracy, but the same could not and should not be said of composers and musical representations. Music should be a truthful representation, yet—as a representation of a divisive issue—the Thirteenth Symphony did not appear truthful to many who heard it. Furthermore, Ladygina disagreed with the focus on Jewish suffering, arguing that there were other, more horrendous crimes the Nazis committed during the war. She criticized Shostakovich's

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[167] A. Ladygina, "Listening to the Thirteenth Symphony (Slushaya trinadtsatuyu simfoniyu')," *Sovetskaya Belorussiya,* April 2 1963, in Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews*, 124–25.

Symphony, rather than the poem itself, noting that "if the composer needed material disclosing the atrocities of Fascism in World War II, is this the only place to look for it? Is Fascism really terrifying first and foremost for its anti-Semitism?"[168] The Symphony and composition itself is what triggered the government to act: Yevtushenko was compelled to change several lines within the poem, and the Symphony was barred from future performances.

On March 23, 1963, after Yevtushenko had modified the poem to include recognition of Soviet loss in WWII, a national radio correspondent wrote to the Central Committee of the Soviet Union regarding the performance of the Thirteenth Symphony which had taken place in Minsk. The correspondent noted that "the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has a definitive opinion of this composition. But, perhaps, you do not know everything that is going on around it…"[169] The correspondent critiqued the Symphony for deliberately creating a division between Jews and non-Jews. The Symphony was hazardous because it "awakened not only extremely dangerous Jewish nationalism, but a no less dangerous chauvinism, and anti-Semitism."[170] The correspondent concluded that censoring the Symphony might create a scandal abroad, but this would be less dangerous than the consequences of the Symphony itself. This letter shows that individuals who were part of the government throughout the Soviet Union, and who had access to the Central Committee members, were concerned about possible reactions of concrete Jewish identity stemming from the Symphony itself. Although the Central Committee was reluctant to completely censor the Symphony, individuals within the government bureaucracy were uneasy about the potential impact of its messages.

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[168] Ibid., 124.
[169] N. Matuvosky, Letter to L. F. Ill'ichev of the Central Committee CPSU, March 23, 1963, Archive of the Central Committee CPSU in Yevtushenko, *I Came to You, Babi Yar*, 31.
[170] Ibid.

As the Thirteenth Symphony and the other works of art discussed in this thesis show, the Soviet Union did not publicly have a firm stance regarding the Holocaust or representations of it.[171] However, multiple factors coalesced during different periods of the Soviet regime to influence cultural and artistic representations of the event. With respect to such coalescence, the period of the 1960s is a particularly rich decade to examine. As censorship loosened during the period of liberalization after Stalin's death, artists began to explore new creative vistas, examining previously buried tensions and traumas in the Soviet past. Focusing mainly on representations of the Babi Yar Massacre, historians have argued that anti-Semitism was inherently part of Soviet party policy, and was therefore fundamental in allowing or disallowing representations of the Holocaust.[172] In the case of the Thirteenth Symphony, Socialist Realist and nationalities policies collided to influence the production of the Symphony and poem.

[171] This argument is supported by Gitelman "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust, 1945-1991," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 3.
[172] See Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 9; Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole,'" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 154; Cherepinsky, "The Absence of the Babi Yar Massacre from Popular Memory" (Master's thesis, West Chester University, 2010), 4.

Chapter 3

"If the Echo of Their Voices Fade, We Too Perish": Mieczysław Weinberg's *The Passenger*

On December 25, 2006, Mieczysław Weinberg's opera *The Passenger* was heard by the public for the first time, in a semi-staged premiere in Moscow.[173] *The Passenger* would only be fully staged four years later, at the Bregenz Festival held in 2010 in Austria.[174] The opera follows a German couple as they travel from Germany to Brazil. The wife, Liese, believes she sees a woman she knows to be dead, a former inmate at Auschwitz. By the end of the first scene, Liese has confessed to her husband that she used to act as a camp guard at Auschwitz and had suppressed the memories of what she had done. The opera then splits its scenes between Auschwitz, which is depicted below deck, and scenes from Liese's perspective above deck. Although Liese is the main voice above deck, the voices and experiences of the victims become more apparent below deck.

The opera served as a way for Weinberg to express the guilt he felt for being the sole survivor of his Jewish, Polish family. Writing in a letter to his wife on September 1, 1965, Weinberg expressed these feelings of survivor's guilt:

> I do not want to stand before you with the aura of something unique – God forbid, unfortunately there were many fates similar to mine. Alas! If I consider myself marked by the preservation of my life, then that gives me a feeling that it is impossible to repay the debt, that no twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week compositional hard labour would bring me even an inch closer toward paying it off.[175]

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[173] "The Premiere of Moses Weinberg's Opera 'Passenger' Will Be Held in Moscow (Premʹera opery Moisei͡a Vaĭnberga 'Passazhirka' sostoitsi͡a v Moskve)," Global Jewish Online Center, December 25, 2006, http://www.jewish.ru/news/culture/2006/12/news994243866.php.

[174] Staging was arranged by the theatre director David Poutney. Poutney consulted on the staging with Medvedev, the librettist of the opera, and Posmysz, the author of the story the opera was based on, but did not consult with Weinberg. George Loomis, "'The Passenger Gets Long Awaited Full Staging at Bregenz Festival," *New York Times* (New York), Aug. 3, 2010; David Fanning, "The Passenger/The Portrait, Bregenz Festival, Review," *The Telegraph* (London), Aug. 4, 2010; Zachary Woolfe, "Sailing with a Ghost from Auschwitz," *New York Times* (New York), July 4, 2014.

[175] Weinberg's second wife, Olga Rakhalskaya, and his children with both her and his first wife, speak Russian. Original Russian: "I͡a vovse ne khochu predstatʹ pered toboĭ v oreole chego-to neobychnogo, — sokhrani Bog, K

For Weinberg, *The Passenger* was his self-proclaimed “most important” composition and his work was a way for the dead to be memorialized.[176] Weinberg’s music sought to represent a specific version of the past, one that collided with what the Soviet government wanted to portray as reality.

There is presently no comprehensive analysis of *The Passenger,* as the opera has only become famous over the past decade.[177] Weinberg’s life remains eclipsed by more well-known and explicitly Soviet composers, such as his mentor Shostakovich. As a Polish-born composer, Weinberg does not fit the definition of “Soviet” as neatly as Grossman, Shostakovich, or Yevtushenko. Historians and musicologists are becoming increasingly interested in Weinberg because of his relationship with Shostakovich, his marriage to the daughter of the famous Soviet-Jewish actor Mikhoels, and the suppression of *The Passenger.*

Completed in 1968, at the end of a period of relative openness and artistic freedoms, the chances of *The Passenger* being performed were slim. The Soviet Union’s diplomatic relationship with Israel had just reached its lowest point since Stalin had been in power. Furthermore, the question of Jewish nationality policy in the Soviet Union remained unsolved and unchanged, impacting the rights that Jewish individuals had and the ease of Jewish immigration to Israel. Connected to nationality policies was a fear of increased Jewish nationalism or Zionism, a resurgence of which could have been a product of Israel’s new

sozhaleni͡iu, sudeb, skhozhikh s moeĭ, bylo bezmerno mnogo. Uvy! I esli i͡a schitai͡u sebi͡a otmechennym sokhraneniem mne zhizni, to ėto vyzyvaet vo mne takoe chuvstvo nevozmozhnosti oplatit′ dolg, chto nikakai͡a dvadt͡satichetyrekhchasovai͡a, ezhednevnai͡a, katorzhnai͡a sochinitel′skai͡a rabota ne mozhet meni͡a dazhe na di͡iuĭm priblizit′ k granit͡se ėtoĭ oplaty.” See “Love Letters (Pis’ma o lyubvi),” *Muzikal’naya Zhizn’*, 2000, 18.

[176] Lyudmila Nikitina, “Mechislav Weinberg: ‘Almost Every Moment of My Life Is Work…’ (Mechislav Vaĭnberg: ‘Pochti li͡uboĭ mig zhizni — rabota…’),” *Academy of Music,* no. 5 (1994): 23.

[177] For a biography of Weinberg, see Fanning’s *Mieczysław Weinberg*. For scholarship on *The Passenger* specifically see Daniel Elphick, “Lines That Have Escaped Destruction: Weinberg and the Passenger” (presentation, Festival Voix Etouffees Colloque: “Music and Concentration Camps,” Strasbourg, Austria, 2013) which explores representations of concentration camps on the stage and the appropriateness and reception of this representation, and Verena Mogl, “Erinnern! Auch wenn es unmöglich ist: Mieczysław Weinbergs Oper Passažirka op. 97,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57, no. 3 (2016) which explores the impact of memory on the suppression of the opera.

influence in the Middle East. Therefore, anti-Zionism, which stemmed from the fear of Israeli nationalism and the possibility of Jewish movement away from Soviet collective identity, had a significant impact on the suppression of Weinberg's representation of the Holocaust.

A Voice for the Dead: Weinberg's Journey to *The Passenger*

To understand the reasons behind the composition of *The Passenger,* it is necessary to understand the influence of the Holocaust on Weinberg's life.[178] Weinberg was born in Poland in 1919. His life was imbued with music, as his father played violin in the local Jewish theatre orchestra. Weinberg began to take piano lessons at a young age and joined his father at the Jewish theatre at the age of ten. His musical prospects were promising and he began to study at the Warsaw Conservatoire two years later. However, Weinberg's life was interrupted in 1939 by the invasion of Poland and the rapid advance of the Nazis. When news reached Weinberg's family that the Nazis had invaded Poland, Weinberg and his sister, Esther, made preparations to flee to the Soviet border. However, Esther soon returned to Warsaw because "her shoes were rubbing her feet terribly."[179] On September 17, 1939, Weinberg was allowed to enter the Soviet Union with a group of Polish refugees. Although the days following the invasion of Poland were chaotic, it was quite common for Polish Jews, specifically single males, to attempt to enter the Soviet Union. In early 1940, approximately 300,000 Polish Jews had entered the Soviet Union in

[178] Unless otherwise indicated, biographical information is from Lyudmila Nikitina, "Mechislav Weinberg: 'Almost Every Moment of My Life Is Work…' (Mechislav Vaĭnberg: 'Pochti li͡uboĭ mig zhizni — rabota…')," *Academy of Music,* no. 5 (1994): 17–24.
[179] "Tufel′ki strashno naterli nogi." Ibid., 18.

the wake of the Nazi invasion, Weinberg among them.[180] Weinberg would learn 25 years later that his family had perished in the Trawniki concentration camp.[181]

It was in the Soviet Union that Weinberg became involved in composition. He began to study at the Minsk Conservatory under Vasily Zolotarev, a student of Rimsky-Korsakov. Weinberg remained in Minsk until the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, when he fled to Tashkent. While there, he met his future wife, Natalia Vovsi-Mikhoels, the daughter of the famous Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels. In Tashkent, Weinberg was also put into contact with Shostakovich. One of his scores was sent to the composer, who was greatly impressed with Weinberg's abilities and subsequently brought him to Moscow.[182] The two composers later became close friends, with Shostakovich acting as Weinberg's greatest inspiration and mentor.

The friendship between Shostakovich and Weinberg would become increasingly helpful when a new wave of anti-Semitism, which Weinberg had been fleeing since 1939, began in the Soviet Union. On January 13, 1953, *Pravda* announced the exposure of a conspiracy within the Soviet medical elite. Of the nine doctors charged in the plot, six had stereotypically Jewish surnames.[183] In the wake of this exposure, Weinberg was placed in prison on February 6. This imprisonment was most likely because of his connection to his father-in-law, Mikhoels, who had been murdered on the orders of Stalin in 1948, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and "family association with the supposed 'doctor-murderers.'"[184] Weinberg remained in prison for just over

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[180] John Goldlust, "A Difference Silence: The Survival of More than 200,000 Polish Jews in the Soviet Union as a Case Study in Amnesia," in *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union,* ed. Atina Grossman, Mark Edele, and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 36.
[181] Inna Barsova, "Seventy-Eight Days and Nights in Prison: Composer Mieczysław Weinberg (Semʹdesi͡at vosemʹ dneĭ i nocheĭ v zastenke: kompozitor Mechislav Vaĭnberg)" (presentation, Composers in the Gulag Under Stalin, Göttingen, Germany, June 19, 2010), 93.
[182] Ibid., 94.
[183] David Brandenberger, "Stalin's Last Crime? Recent Scholarship on Postwar Soviet Antisemitism and the Doctor's Plot," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 1 (2005): 194.
[184] Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg,* 86; The JAFC was founded by two Polish Bundist leaders in 1941 to sway international opinion against the Nazis. For more on the JAFC see Chapter One.

two months before being released because of a direct plea from Shostakovich to Beria, the Minister of Internal Affairs.[185] This action represents a firm connection between the two composers, which would be influential in helping Weinberg find his way to *The Passenger*.

As with "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony, Weinberg's opera began with a publication in a literary periodical. In the case of the opera *The Passenger,* however, the story was published in Russian translation from Polish in the journal *Inostrannaya Literaturnaya* (*Foreign Literature*).[186] The book was originally written in 1962 by Zofia Posmysz, a Polish survivor of Auschwitz, who was imprisoned by the Nazis for political reasons in 1942.[187] As with "Babi Yar," Weinberg did not discover Posmysz's story on his own. Shortly after its publication*,* Shostakovich became interested in the story and showed it to the librettist Medvedev.[188] Shostakovich believed that Weinberg would be interested in composing music for an opera based on the story because of his Jewish roots and personal connection to Poland.

Weinberg's interest in the themes of Posmysz's book may have been heightened because of his knowledge of his family's death during WWII, which he only confirmed in the 1960s. Furthermore, Weinberg had visited Poland in 1966, returning for the first time since fleeing the country in the wake of the Nazi invasion. During this visit, Weinberg did not feel like he had returned home. He felt like an outsider, not fitting into Soviet or Polish conceptions of a proper musician or composer.[189] Because of these reasons, Weinberg may have been induced towards

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[185] Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg,* 87; Barsova "Seventy-Eight Days and Nights in Prison," 96.
[186] Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg,* 105.
[187] Ibid., 117.
[188] The collaboration between Medvedev and Weinberg would last until Weinberg's death in 1996. An anecdote notes that several days before his death, Weinberg complained to Medvedev that he regretted never having heard his opera performed. To console him, Medvedev promised to listen twice as attentively, if and when the premiere took place. On December 25, 2006, Medvedev was present to attend the Premiere at the House of Composers in Moscow, fulfilling his alleged promise to Weinberg. Ibid., 117.
[189] Ibid., 105.

representing a story that portrayed the grief he felt when learning about his family's murder at the hands of the Nazis and the lingering pain that was caused by the Holocaust.

Soviet-Israeli Tensions in Context with the Arts

It is difficult to confirm why the premiere of *The Passenger* never took place.[190] On April 19, 1968, Shostakovich mentioned the approaching premiere, set to be held at the Bolshoi, with great excitement during an interview for the Soviet youth magazine *Yunost.*[191] Shostakovich and many musical critics, such as Tikhon Chrennikov, the Chairman of the Soviet Composers' Union, had only positive comments about the opera.[192] From these positive reviews, it can be gathered that the cancellation of the opera came from deeper, political reasons than the suitability of the music alone. These reasons may have been similar to those that influenced the censorship of the Thirteenth Symphony and the seizure of Grossman's novel: the Soviet government's desire to contain minority nationalism and highlight the communal nature of the suffering of WWII. When considered in conjunction with the anti-Zionism which was prevalent after the Six-Day War, it is also possible that anti-Zionist policies were influential. Furthermore, Weinberg's identification with Jewish loss during WWII and the Holocaust made the meanings behind *The Passenger* more deeply connected to those who identified as Jewish.[193] As with *Life and Fate,*

[190] Mogl argues that the opera was cancelled because of Weinberg's arguments about what could and should be remembered. See Mogl, "Erinnern! Auch wenn es unmöglich ist: Mieczysław Weinbergs Oper Passažirka," 415.
[191] The Bolshoi became a central part of Soviet culture after the Revolution. As a result of the Bolshoi's ties with the government and cultural policies, the art performed there was a "quasi-religious propaganda tool instilling enthusiastic revolutionary fervor in its audiences." The policies which would come to define the Soviet period were clear in the policies of the Bolshoi: ideological control over artistic production, and art with a clear educational mission. For more on the Bolshoi see Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 26–27.
[192] Mogl, "Erinnern! Auch wenn es unmöglich ist: Mieczysław Weinbergs Oper Passažirka," 404.
[193] In a recent interview with Weinberg's eldest daughter, Victoria, she noted that although she would describe her father as an atheist, "the leitmotif of this life was the theme of the Holocaust, the Jews, and the tragedy they experienced (Leĭtmotivom ėtoĭ zhizni byla tema Xolokosta, evreev i perezhitoĭ imi tragedii)." Weinberg inserted this theme into most of his music. In 1976, Victoria left the Soviet Union to live in Israel. She notes that her father's permission to allow her to leave was significant, as many people at that time feared retaliation from the government if they allowed their children to emigrate. Blumin, "'I Never Talked about It, but Now, I Think, It's Time ("'I͡A

combining a discussion of Jewish victimhood with Soviet suffering was not enough to prevent the censorship of *The Passenger.*

One of the influences on the opera's censorship could have been mere timing. Weinberg was attempting to premiere his opera at a time when Soviet-Israeli relations were at an all-time low and when anti-Zionist propaganda was becoming more prevalent in the press because of the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War. The tensions between the Soviet Union and Israel were reflected in the Soviet media in the form of an anti-Zionist campaign. Art which was permitted to be performed was meant to represent Soviet ideals and advance Soviet ideology and such art would not have been aligned with Soviet ideology if it had favourable representations of individuals who could spark Jewish nationalism or Zionism.

"Written With the Blood of the Heart"[194]: Characterizations in *The Passenger*

At first glance, *The Passenger* appears to embrace a representation of collective suffering, just as *Life and Fate* did. Scenes which take place below deck, in Auschwitz, show a multitude of prisoners. The antagonist in the opera is Liese, an SS guard. This characterization prevents discussions of collaboration, placing the guilt on the German character rather than spreading guilt over those who were part of the Soviet "fraternity." However, the individual characters in the opera are represented as having an individual story and fate, just as those in *Life and Fate.*

The most significant character representations in *The Passenger* with regards to national identity are the representations of the Jewish prisoner, Hannah, and the Catholic prisoner,

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nikogda ne govorila ob ėtom, no seĭchas, dumai͡u, prishlo vremi͡a')," Colta.ru, https://www.colta.ru/articles/music_classic/10232-ya-nikogda-ne-govorila-ob-etom-no-seychas-dumayu-prishlo-vremya.

[194] Dmitri Shostakovich, Foreword to *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto*, trans. Graham Lack, 40.

Bronka. When Hannah is introduced, she beseeches Marta, a Polish prisoner, to visit the town where Hannah grew up and to remember her and her address.[195] In response, Marta agrees, but questions why they will not be returning together. Hannah responds that because of her religion it is her fate to die, because she is "wear[ing] the fatal mark of death" – the Star of David.[196] By appealing to memory and commemoration, the libretto of the opera sheds light upon the lack of memorialization of those who died in death camps, specifically Jewish victims, who are shown as requiring this memorialization more than others. Furthermore, by suggesting that Jewish individuals were targeted for no reason other than for their race, the words show that the experience of Jewish victims was unique. This representation is similar to how Grossman wanted to depict the Jewish experience during WWII. The music at this point in the scene changes as well, from a soft but ominous pulse of strings to a climactic, yet still threatening, combination of string instruments and horns.[197] Polish prisoners, such as Marta, are depicted through both the libretto and the music as having had a different experience during the war. Although Marta and Hannah may be depicted together, their destinies diverge.

The representation of Bronka draws further attention to the power of religion during a period of trauma and terror. Bronka is shown praying in secret in the barracks with a small icon and a candle.[198] When another prisoner, Krysztina, comes across the praying Bronka, the two have a conversation about the existence of God and the power of prayer. Krysztina does not believe in God, arguing that the existence of the suffering in Auschwitz was proof that God could not exist. A number of scenes later, after several of the young girls in the barracks have

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[195] Mieczysław Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto, Bregenz Festival, 2010*, (Halle, Germany: Arthaus Musik, 2010), 53.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Analysis of the staging is from a recording of the first fully staged premiere of *The Passenger* held at the Bregenz Festival in 2010. "Weinberg Passenger I (2010)," Filmed August 2010, YouTube Video, 1:00:53–1:02:09. Posted December 25, 2016. https://youtu.be/9_Wv2ol2sdk.
[198] Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto,* 53; "Weinberg Passenger I (2010)," 1:06:33–1:07:42.

been taken away, presumably to be shot, Krysztina is shown asking Bronka to say a prayer for them.[199] Although not a Jewish representation, Bronka's character shows the power of religion at a time when suffering and pain was widespread and when it was sensible to stop believing. Bronka, however, continues to believe and even causes others to have belief. Religious belief of any kind would have been disapproved of by the Soviet government. As was seen in Suslov's criticisms of Grossman's novel, creative representations of religion were something the Soviet government found distasteful in ideologically correct Soviet art.

Although the words of an opera are often seen as the most important aspect, the climactic moment of *The Passenger* has no words, which conveys terror, dread, and sadness to the audience. This scene was added by Weinberg and Medvedev and was not included in Posmysz's original plot.[200] Near the end of the opera, a prisoner is brought in front of several SS guards and the Commandant and told to play the Commandant's music on a violin.[201] Although it is impossible to say how the opera would have been performed originally, the performance of *The Passenger* at the Bregenz Festival had the violinist standing with his back to the audience, facing the SS officers sitting at the back of the stage. Prisoners stand on either side of the violinist. A single light shines on the lone performer. As the violinist stands preparing his instrument, the orchestra plays a long and loud tremolo.[202] This loud tremolo occurs twice before the violinist is prepared, building a sense of suspense and tension in the audience. Finally, the prisoner begins to play, alone. However, he does not perform the song he was commanded to, playing instead

[199] Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto,* 65; "Weinberg Passenger II (2010)," Filmed August 2010, YouTube Video, 49:01–49:52. Posted December 25, 2010. https://youtu.be/Nf3_oflaHCk.
[200] Shostakovich, Foreword to *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto*, trans. Lack, 40.
[201] Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto,* 68; "Weinberg Passenger II (2010)," 1:04:54–1:05:30.
[202] A tremolo is a trembling effect, produced by alternating rapidly between two chords on the piano and produced through the use of the bow moving across a single string on string instruments. "Weinberg Passenger II (2010)," 1:05:28–1:05:47.

Bach's *Chaconne in D Minor.*[203] Gradually, the orchestra begins to join in with the lone violinist, creating the sense that he is playing alone, passionately, although his life depends upon his performance. Ultimately, he is beaten by the guards and taken away to be killed.[204] This scene acts as the main point of tension throughout the opera and the most emotional moment. Although it does not have any words, it is able to elicit emotion in the audience and convey the most authentic feelings of fear and sadness.

The ability of *The Passenger* to elicit strong emotions is heightened by its explicit visual representation of scenes from the Holocaust. Although the Jewish character in *The Passenger* does not have as central a role as Viktor Shtrum in *Life and Fate,* the power of musical representations to acutely express the emotions of those who had suffered has been acknowledged.[205] The reception of this emotional representation would have been influenced by the composition of the audience watching. Of the 300,000 Jews who fled Poland to the Soviet Union, such as Weinberg, 200,000 returned to Poland. It is estimated that 30,000 to 50,000 Polish Jews survived Nazi extermination policies.[206] Therefore, any representation of Jewish suffering in WWII, which would have touched many Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia, would have been emotionally received. As was the case with "Babi Yar," these reactions had the potential to turn into anger and even feelings of renewed connection with Judaism and Jewish nationalism. At a time when anti-Zionist propaganda was widely prevalent and tensions with Israel were increasing, Jewish nationalism and Zionsim could not be afforded.

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[203] Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto,* 68; "Weinberg Passenger II (2010)," 1:06:10–1:07:52.
[204] Weinberg, *Mieczyslaw Weinberg: The Passenger/ Die Passagierin Libretto,* 68; "Weinberg Passenger II (2010)," 1:07:52–1:08:14.
[205] Volkov, "Dimitri Shostakovich's 'Jewish Motif': A Creative Enigma," in *Dimitri Shostakovich and the Jewish Heritage in Music (Dmitri Schostakowitsch und das jüdische musikalische Erbe)*, ed. Kuhn, Wolter, Arnemann, and Wehrmeyer, 14.
[206] Goldlust, "A Difference Silence" in *Shelter from the Holocaust*, ed. Grossman, Edele, and Fitzpatrick, 72.

Although the reasons why *The Passenger* was suddenly and silently canceled in 1968 cannot be confirmed, it remains today one of Weinberg's most well-known works. Weinberg's ability to convey the pain and suffering of the Holocaust and the communal and yet individual experiences within the Holocaust through the operatic form makes *The Passenger* a unique creative representation. Although thematically similar in many ways to *Life and Fate,* the potential emotional response to *The Passenger* was possibly more similar in scope to that of "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony. For these reasons, and the proximity between the planned performance and the Six-Day War, *The Passenger* had evident ramifications, both with regards to Soviet ideology and continuing nationalism policy.

Epilogue
Do Not Divide the Dead

Throughout this thesis, I have explored and analysed the ways that several artists sought to represent the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1960s, the possibilities afforded to these authors shifted as the political environment evolved and as the leadership of the Soviet Union changed. Representations which were deemed acceptable and which became the most well-known and popular were those that were written by famous artists, such as Shostakovich and Yevtushenko, who were also not ethnically Jewish.

In Chapter 1, I explored Vasily Grossman's Jewish identity and both his wartime and post-war writing. I paid particular attention to his novel *Life and Fate,* which was censored by the Soviet Government for several explicitly stated reasons. Through examining key characters in *Life and Fate*—Anna Shtrum, Viktor Shtrum, and Sofya Levinton—I concluded that although *Life and Fate* showed the different experiences individuals had during WWII, it was still censored because of its individualistic approach to the experiences of the War, and the topic of collaboration it addressed. *Life and Fate* showed that the Soviet stance toward the Holocaust was reliant on a firm nationalities policy and anti-Zionism, which would become more prevalent throughout the Soviet press after the Six-Day War in 1967. In my analysis of *Life and Fate* and Grossman's wartime writing, I drew connections between the difficulty of memorializing the Holocaust in the collective Soviet state, which would become relevant in Chapter 2, and the issue of Jewish identity and possibilities of Jewish nationalism.

In Chapter 2, I analyzed Yevtushenko's poem, "Babi Yar" and Shostakovich's Symphony based on the poem. This chapter showed the continuing concern of the Soviet state regarding Jewish individual identity and victimhood, Jewish nationalism, and the tenets of

Socialist Realism. As two of the most well-studied representations of the Holocaust in current scholarship, the influence of anti-Semitic policy on "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony has been widely studied.[207] My analysis of both works focused again on the impact that both Soviet nationalities policies and the international political atmosphere had on the production of the Symphony and poem. This chapter also explored Israeli reactions to the revisions Yevtushenko made to the poem, showing that those who identified as Jewish were influenced by the poem's words.

The third and final chapter of this thesis examined Weinberg's opera *The Passenger.* This chapter examined ideas of Jewish nationalism and identity and the power that artistic representations had to provoke these feelings in individuals. Although there is no current evidence that can confirm why the opera was not performed until the last decade, this chapter sought to connect the factors at play during the earlier half of the 1960s—which influenced the censorship of *Life and Fate* and the revisions of "Babi Yar"—with the cancellation of *The Passenger. The Passenger* represents a combination of *Life and Fate,* "Babi Yar," and the Thirteenth Symphony. As with *Life and Fate, The Passenger* focuses on individual experiences during WWII and shows an explicit representation of the Holocaust; however, the story of its production and the genre itself is more similar to "Babi Yar" and the Thirteenth Symphony. In conclusion, the international political environment of the time, namely, Soviet-Israeli relations, most likely had the largest impact on whether or not *The Passenger* could be performed in 1968, at the time of its completion.

[207] See Gitelman, "Soviet Reactions to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 9; Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole,'" in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* ed. Dobroszyki and Gurock, 154; Cherepinsky, "The Absence of the Babi Yar Massacre from Popular Memory" (Master's thesis, West Chester University, 2010), 4.

This thesis has only examined a handful of the many existing representations of the Holocaust that were produced in the Soviet Union. Some of these were sent privately to friends or acquaintances, as was the poem inspired by "Babi Yar" that the author Ilya Ehrenburg received. Some of these representations were published in Yiddish but still represent an important part of how the Holocaust was conceptualized by Jewish individuals within the Soviet system. Finally, some of these works were produced before and after the period examined, but still constitute important representations of the Holocaust on Soviet soil. The works in this thesis have acted as representative of artistic creations during the 1960s, but they are not meant to be seen as the only existing artistic depictions.

Although there are many other representations that could benefit from examination in the context of conclusions drawn from this research, it can be deduced that government approaches to the Holocaust were influenced by Soviet nationality policies and international politics, specifically Soviet-Israeli relations. Although there was no clearly stated Soviet government stance regarding the Holocaust and memorialization of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, the words of Grossman biographer's Garrard and Garrad may be seen as the most accurate summary: "Do not divide the dead."[208] The Soviet Union, as a vast nation containing many minorities and many different peoples, encountered the difficult task of approaching the issue of commemoration after WWII in a way that aligned with Soviet goals and ideologies. The limits to representations of the Holocaust that were therefore imposed were often uneven and reflective of the vast bureaucracy that comprised the government and the difficulties of trying to please the many minority groups the Soviet Union housed.

[208] Garrard and Garrad, *The Bones of Berdichev,* xix.

Appendix

No monument stands over Babi Yar.
A drop sheer as a crude gravestone.
I am afraid.
Today I am as old in years
as all the Jewish people.
Now I seem to be
a Jew.
Here I plod through ancient Egypt.
Here I perish crucified on the cross,
and to this day I bear the scars of nails.
I seem to be
Dreyfus.
The Philistine
is both informer and judge.
I am behind bars.
Beset on every side.
Hounded,
spat on,
Slandered.

Squealing, dainty ladies in flounced Brussels lace
stick their parasols into my face.
I seem to be then
a young boy in Byelostok.
Blood runs, spilling over the floors.
The barroom rabble-rousers
give off a stench of vodka and onion.
A boot kicks me aside, helpless.
In vain I plead with these pogrom bullies.
While they jeer and shout,
“Beat the Yids. Save Russia!”
Some grain-marketer beats up my mother.

O my Russian people!
I know
you
are international to the core.
But those with unclean hands
have often made a jingle of your purest name.
I know the goodness of my land.
How vile these antisemites—
without a qualm
they pompously called themselves
the Union of the Russian People!

I seem to be
Anne Frank
transparent
as a branch in April.
And I love.
And have no need of phrases.
My need
is that we gaze into each other.
How little we can see
or smell!
We are denied the leaves,
we are denied the sky.
Yet we can do so much—
tenderly
embrace each other in a darkened room.
They're coming here?
Be not afraid. Those are the booming
sounds of spring:
spring is coming here.
Come then to me.
Quick, give me your lips.
Are they smashing down the door?
No, it's the ice breaking . . .
The wild grasses rustle over Babi Yar.
The trees look ominous,
like judges.
Here all things scream silently,
and, baring my head,
slowly I feel myself
turning grey.
And I myself
am one massive, soundless scream
above the thousand thousand buried here.
I am
each old man
here shot dead.

I am
every child
here shot dead.
Nothing in me
shall ever forget!
The "Internationale," let it
thunder
when the last antisemite on earth
is buried for ever.
In my blood there is no Jewish blood.
In their callous rage, all antisemites
must hate me now as a Jew.
For that reason
I am a true Russian![209]

[209] This is the full, unrevised poem "Babi Yar," written by Yevgeny Yevtushenko and originally published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1961. Translation found in Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Collected Poems, 1952-1990,* ed. Albert C. Todd and James Ragan (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1991), 102–104.

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"About the Newspaper." Last modified January 2019, Literaturnaya Gazeta, http://www.lgz.ru/gaz/.