“Working Class Music” in the Discourse of Early Soviet Sociology of Art

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Abstract
This research has a survey-analytical nature and uses the theoretical method of comparative historical analysis of texts. Through the selection and analysis of key works and archival documents, the conceptual basis for the sociology of music of the USSR during the 1920s is determined to form an academic project, developed in the frame of the record of state cultural policy. The transformation of the institutionalized academic domain music in a decade is described. The tasks involved in the sociology of music with the aim of state order for the formation of a proletarian music culture are reconstructed. It has been established that music was delegated the function of structuring daily occurrences, motivating labor activity, promoting cultural education, and supporting an aspiration to solidary, collective action based on the emotional acceptance of the ideological postulates of the time. The research also focuses on the transformation of the crucial characteristics of the central ideologists of the “proletarian culture” from the utopian romanticism directed toward the achievement of class solidarity to the distortion of basic humanistic ideals in favor of fixing the developed hierarchies of power.

Keywords
working class, working-class culture, sociology of music, cultural studies, Soviet ideology

Introduction
Critical epochs in social development involve a fundamental review of cultural foundations, which also includes the figurative language of art and the ways in which it interacts with the masses. The task of complete reorganization of Russian society based on socialist principles, instigated by the October revolution of 1917, made the authorities turn to art and socio-humanitarian knowledge as tools to exercise and advance their political agenda. The 1920s decade formed a period of intense and eclectic research on artistic practices, aimed at the creation of a synthetic project, the Marxist sociology of art. The practical objective of this emerging academic field was to design sustainable explanatory models to offer cultural legitimation to the ideology of the working class as the central agent of social action as well as advocate the necessity to upgrade the art forms in a new social order. The domain of “narodnost” (neologism which could be translated as “folkness” or adherence to folk) became the integrating element for all streams of humanities, signaling and asserting the fact that the proletariat was considered as the primary subject of the cultural production, a development aimed at the expression of the interests of those in power.

The rapid growth of urban culture in the USSR laid the foundation for numerous experiments in the field of “life-building,” with both the state and artists employing art as the means to achieve this process. The violent destruction of boundaries between the academic tradition and emerging mass culture through actions of the administrotive machinery were aimed at the formation of a new kind of individual and achievement of class solidarity. All these trends led to the deconstruction of the traditional repertoires of art existence, determining the specific condition of blurring the boundaries between the sciences, arts, cultural policies, and the social realities of the USSR.

Considered in this light, an essential artistic practice, which influences a large number of people, is music. Concentrating collectively shared occurrences in the form of emotional experiences, this art entails a high subjective significance and is directly involved in the construction of cultural identity and the creation of sustainable forms of social solidarity. The historical period under consideration grants composers and performers of popular music unprecedented access to the domain of society. Organizing music assistance for mass events and political actions, trying to create highly artistic and understandable music culture for people by synthesizing peasant folk art and academic forms of expression,
musicians, and musicologists became agent of one of the most ambitious projects of social engineering in the history of humankind.

**Research Purposes and Methodology**

This article is devoted to the analysis of the origin, formation, and decline of the Soviet sociology of music in the 1920s as a synthetic scientific-ideological project, which served as an instrument to consolidate and legitimize the dominant working-class ideology. The study employs the method of comparative historical analysis of texts, which formed the discourse of music in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. The basic cultural values of this era that were directly incorporated into the state cultural policy will be reconstructed.

The main objectives of the article are to denote the a priori principles of the early Soviet sociology of music, to mark its intersection with similar problems Europe faced at the time, describe the functions of music as a means to design and disseminate the ideology of the working class, and trace the dynamics of the movement toward the single-paradigmatic synthesis of the Stalinist era. The focus will also be on, as stated earlier, the transformation of the central perspectives of the “proletarian culture” ideologists from a utopian romanticism, aimed at the achievement of class solidarity, to the complete distortion of basic humanistic ideals favored toward fixing the existing power hierarchies.

**Literature Review**

The formation and ideological foundation of Soviet music have been the subject of several research works. Early studies on the subject were bounded both by the Soviet side, by the dogmas of authoritarian ideology, and the western side, influenced by the political climate of the Cold War. At that time, musicologists were mostly interested in specific artworks or outstanding individuals rather than the social context in which music was produced and perceived. Among the most cited early research works that focussed on the socio-political context of Soviet music are, the works of B. Schwarz and A. Olkhovsky merit a mention. Both authors compelled to immigrate from the USSR; in exile, they focused their studies on exposing the detrimental effects of Soviet cultural policy on music. Olkhovsky asserted that musical education in the country turned into the exploitation of talented personalities within institutional settings such as schools and conservatories to serve political purposes. His concern regarding the direction of music development is reflected in his forewarnings about art being depleted of its spiritual content and music transforming into an artificial reconstruction of folk traditions (Olkhovsky, 1955). Later in the 1970s, Schwarz formulated the perspective on the concerned issue, which became a conventional belief afterward. Applying the concept of “regimentation” to describe the sphere of music in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, he distinguished between the comparatively free-thinking 1920s and the totally regulated 1930s (Schwarz, 1983, pp. 109-110). He also indicated the fundamental gap between the essence of the creative act of producing music and the state-imposed obligation on composers to create music palatable for the masses.

From 1991 up till now, the initial axiomatic assumptions regarding the relationship between music and political power in the Soviet Union have been constantly challenged, thereby contributing to the research on the subject due to emerging debates on controversial points and increasing access to archived documents. A. Nelson (2004) and K. Tomoff (2006) have offered a multidimensional analysis of the associations between composers, musicians, and authorities in the world of Soviet art. Recent achievements in the research on the subject can be presented through the works of P. Fairclough, S. Mikkonen, M. Frolova-Walker, and J. Walker. Fairclough concentrated on the 1920s as a crucial period during which the dogmas of state cultural policy were taking shape and the fundamental decisions concerning the development of the field of music in the USSR were being formed. The study examines music from the perspective of various participants, such as professional associations, composers, musicians, music teachers, policy makers, and scholars. It demonstrates that in spite of the repressive character of the state cultural policy, the repertoires of performing music remained rich and extensive, incorporating elements of different kinds of classic and latest Russian and European artworks. Hence, she asserted that in this period, music succeeded in resisting the ideological strains to a considerably greater degree as compared to several other areas in arts and humanities (Fairclough, 2016). Furthermore, S. Mikkonen dealt with the relationship of music and politics in the Soviet Union during the early Stalinist phase, also paying attention to the music policy of the 1920s. The author investigated the ideas of different social groups of that time with regard to the concept of Soviet music, development of the sphere of music, and the Communist Party’s role in its formation (Mikkonen, 2007).

In Frolova-Walker and Walker’s book, the central tendencies and contradictions in the shaping of the Soviet Union’s identity in terms of music have been analyzed. Dividing the concerned period into three phases, defined by historical events (1917-1922, 1923-1928, and 1929-1932), these authors demonstrated the way in which the intelligentsia in music conformed and adjusted to the new state regime. The study is based on the analysis of the complex intersections of structural factors and individual activity in the abovementioned process. For instance, they have presented the new vision of the relationship between the two major musical associations of from an economic perspective. Grounded in the vast body of empirical evidence, which hat is comprised by archived documents and personal letters, the conclusions this book draws are validated by the state of affairs in 1932, when the sphere of music in USSR finally became centralized; up till this time most musicians and composers had been supporting
Notwithstanding, despite the broad range of related works on the topic, “sociology of music,” as a part of Marxist art studies in the early decades of the USSR, has never been a specific point of interest in the western scientific discourse.

Music Culture of the USSR of the 1920s

The music culture of the period had an eclectic nature; the composers and academicians intensively searched for new stylistic forms and practices. Traditional and new genres were intertwined in the musical landscape of urban culture: the folk song traditions were woven and assimilated into the fabric of the emerging urban proletarian folklore; the role of the musical avant-garde in Soviet culture was the subject of intense debate; significant popular music of “easy” genres (household romance, operetta, among others) were widely accepted, whereas domestic jazz was in vogue among the highbrows (Kovalenko, 2014). The main subjects of the institutionalization in the musical sphere, in addition to the organs of state cultural policy, were academic research groups and composers' associations. “Production Collective” (“Procoll,” 1925-1929) at the Moscow Conservatory, the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (“RAPM,” 1923-1932), and the Association for Contemporary Music (ACM, 1923-1931) became the foundational centers of a new proletarian music culture. There is extensive literature on the different aspects of the musical movements and associations that existed during the period of 1920s and 1930s (see Brooke, 2002; Edmunds, 2000; Mally, 1990; Nelson, 2000; Tomoff, 2006).

“RAPM” declared the central role of the amateur artists of the working class as creating music that belonged to the new culture type; its activity was also associated with filtration and censorship of classical and contemporary music in accordance with the proletariat's social class position. Furthermore, the primary task of “Procoll” was the synthesis of academic and folklore to produce a special kind of urban music that comprised artistic content and was democratic and understandable at the same time. Under the framework of this Association, the foundations of the genre and the term “Soviet mass song” emerged, which included the immensely popular song composers of the Soviet Union till the mid-1950s. However, with the growth of diversity in terms of genre, this kind of Soviet musical art began to be perceived in a narrow sense, such as the chorus song, which was related with the socio-political issues and was performed by large groups of people without any accompaniments during major public events such as rallies, meetings, and demonstrations (Sohor, 1973), thus acquiring a more one-dimensional character that was predominantly political.

At the same time, the academic musical sphere in the 1920s was engulfed by a divide. In addition to seeking opportunities for the democratization of the academic tradition, this period is interesting for its famous avant-garde experiments that became the foundation of innovative styles and acoustic practices in the 20th century. For instance, the futuristic sound of the musical instruments created by L. Theremin (“thereminvox” and “etherophone”) are even now associated with the space technologies of the future, and the “Symphony of Factory Sirens” by A. Avraamov (1927), which incorporated industrial noise into music, is regarded by modern musicologists as a forerunner of the “industrial” and “noise” styles of music.

Institutional Dynamics of the Sociology of Music in the USSR of the 1920s

During the 1920s, the sociological study of music was primarily concentrated at the State Academy of Artistic Sciences (SAAS) in Moscow and the State Institute of the Art History (SIAH) in Leningrad. SAAS was established in 1921 and was initially positioned as the body of scientific expertise for providing solutions to the tasks commissioned by the state cultural policy. The Sociological Department, whose main objective was to postulate the “study of art from the point of view of its social origin and importance,” was established in October 1921 under the leadership of V. M. Fritzische. In this department, primary importance was given to the “questions of art education, art propaganda” (Kondratiev, 1923, p. 417) as well as the creation of a holistic and system based on Marxist esthetics (GACHN, 1926, pp. 14-16). In the same year, the music section under the chairmanship of L. L. Sabanean was founded in SAAS, which focused on integrated musicology and aimed to unite the representatives of various departments involved in musical issues (GACHN, 1926, p. 40). The employees of other branches of SAAS, including the well-known musicologist B. L. Yavorsky, philosopher A. F. Losev, a specialist in music psychology and hermeneutics, S. N. Belyaeva-Ekzempiarskaya, also influenced the social aspects of musical practices through their works, dealing with concepts such as musical perception and types of listeners, the ratio of the physical and socio-psychological aspects of the musical process, an individual’s music culture and the ways it is formed, the regularities of musical thinking in the context of the phenomena of the historical, cultural, and esthetic order of society.

Since its introduction and enforcement in 1926, the “sociological method” began to be actively implemented across musicology institutions in Leningrad. In October 1925, in the frames of the Music Division (MUZO), SIAH, a special Commission “on account of the musical and artistic life of Leningrad” appeared, which, through a questionnaire survey, sought to investigate the “musical life of the masses” (Kupman, 2014, p. 13). Soon, this structure was institutionalized into the “Cabinet for the Study of Musical Life” (KIMB; Sohor, 1975, p. 28). The rejection of the bourgeois methods of theorizing about music, regular personnel cleaning, a violent introduction of the Marxist–Leninist
interpretation of the role of art in society, and its social functioning transformed music into an instrument of political ideology, turning scholars into its promoters. For instance, the plan for the vocal-methodological section, headed by B. V. Asafiev, begins with the following statement: “Work must clearly be based under the motto of turning the musical and vocal culture into the tool of the class struggle on the front of cultural revolution and socialist construction” (Kupman, 2014, p. 15).

In addition to the significance ascribed to ideological work, an empirical turn in the science of music was also witnessed this cultural upheaval in the Soviet Union. The party setting for the study of peasants and ethnic minorities contributed to study of regular fields. As both address issues pertaining to everyday life, sociology and the study of folklore can be considered to be interrelated. Furthermore, the ethnographic data collected by the Department of Folklore SIAH could have served as the foundation of high-quality interpretive sociological studies of the musical life in Russia. However, during that period, a synthesis of this nature could not be realized due to the conventional positivist perception of sociology as an objective science concerned with facts.

Since 1928, the movement toward the unification of scientific approaches, accompanied by the elimination of creative unions and scientific associations, commenced. In addition to the loyalty to the ideology, workers in the field of science were expected to prove their proletarian origin, which led to the mass dismissal of professionals from research institutions; by the end of 1929, a similar requirement was imposed on students in higher education institutions. Subsequently, in 1929 to 1930, SAAS and SIAH were completely reorganized and eliminated; the elite of the intelligentsia were persecuted.

The Conceptual Foundations of the Early Soviet Sociology of Music

The first studies conducted within the nascent field of Soviet sociology of music were based on the fundamental principles of the Marxist paradigm; however, their interpretation varied from straightforward economic determinism to systemic neo-Hegelianism. The selection and analysis of the key works from the 1920s allowed us to distinguish the basic methodological attitudes prevalent in this research field. As it was a part of the emerging Marxist art studies, the sociology of music, as an academic project, could be defined as comprising ideological linings toward such as the application of economic determinism and naturalism, predominant focus on the role of music in social dynamics, a counteraction to “formalism” and its proposed belief of the cultural autonomy of art, an aspiration for the paradigmatic and disciplinary synthesis of art studies under a “sociological” viewpoint, research on the way in which music functions in the context of daily life, and the fortification of social integration as the mission of creative and scientific activities.

The theorists who were accused of practising “vulgar sociologism” in contemporary esthetic discourse in Russia did not concentrate on the specifics of music or other arts; they rather preferred to offer general statements concerning the creative processes as a whole (Fritzsche, 1929; Plekhanov, 1922). In several respects, the established art studies’ metaphors of production contributed to this process of generalization and unification. The academic community was called to converge the different directions of research to determine the final solutions in the paradigm of historical materialism. The autonomous study of musical process had been possible until mid-1920s; however, all attempts to conduct non politicized theoretical research on this subject afterward were defined as constituting “formalism.” The state policy’s aim to synthesize all research fields and approaches into one is demonstrated by their action of forcing scholars to implement the “sociological method,” which was forced to become not a particular sphere but the core of art studies itself (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 202).

Furthermore, in the 1920s, significant differences in perception existed among Soviet authors regarding the foreign scientific discourse in the sociology of art. Among the western scholars of the period, the most popular in the USSR was W. Hausenstein, who was the first to have attempted applying the principles of historical materialism in the study of art history. An appeal of the Soviet scholars to the non-Marxist authors was rather sporadic; the borrowing of some of the socio-deterministic statements was accompanied by a criticism of the methodological principles that contradicted the principles of historical materialism. Therefore, N. B. Bukharin agreed to W. Hausenstein’s position, believing that the style of a musical work is determined by the dominant social psychology and ideology and embodies the current “life system.” With the reference to A. H. Taine’s categories of “moral temperature” and “condition of morals and spiritual life of the era” (Taine, 1959), he presented the direct connections of the artwork’s content with the social environment’s influence. However, he criticized Taine for his idealism and the hypostatization of “social consciousness,” which, in reality, he asserted “. . . is determined by social being.” Therefore, the content and forms of a musical work were asserted as “a function of public economy and of the productive forces.” The author did not stop here, postulating that music theory also “directly depends on all the previous considered factors and, therefore . . . subjects to the movement of the productive forces of the society” (Bukharin, 2008, pp. 231-233).

Analyzing the details of the reception of the foreign authors’ works, we should refer to A. V. Lunacharsky’s interpretation of M. Weber’s unfinished work, “The Rational and Social Foundations of Music” (Weber, 1958). Expressing his disappointment with this piece, Lunacharsky evaluated the work of M. Weber only as an eclectic sketch, the primary approximation to the problem, “semi-product,” which “asks for a Marxist plant” (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 160).
He criticized the multi-factor methodology of Weber that deviates from the only correct point of view on the matter:

internally . . . feeling the tremendous truth of the proletarian worldview, [Weber—author’s note] tries to shield himself from it by the imaginary complexity of the issues . . . Sometimes it seems that the monstrous super-erudition of Weber hinders the lucidity of his view point. A single dominant point of view, an integrated method are too simple for him and are not commensurate with the immensity of the phenomenon . . . (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 159)

The informative criticism, offered by Lunacharsky, however, was not grounded on the “proletarian truth.” He accused M. Weber for paying inadequate attention to the “physical substrate” of music, which refers to the sounds of nature and natural rhythms of human activity as well as the ignorance of the physiological basis of music perception and its emotional nature. Speaking against Weber’s central thesis concerning the universal rationalization of social relations, Lunacharsky did not accept the ideas of the rationalization of sound combinations as determinants of musical evolution, accepting the foundation of this process as a more natural and spontaneous one (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 163).

As can be observed from these examples, the agreement with the socio-deterministic statements of the western authors of the late 19th to early 20th century and rejection of judgments that oppose Marxism gradually formed the framework of a new field of theorisation, the characteristics of which increasingly became straightforward materialistic determinism, naturalism, and dogmatic rhetoric, aimed at the formation of a new kind of cultural space. As an instance of the reductionist interpretations of musical activity, the textbook on sociology written by N. I. Bukharin in 1921 can be presented. He used musical process as a case that allowed the analysis of any artistic practice from a sociological point of view. He divided it into the following elements: material part (musical instruments and real symbols and signs, such as notes), the organization of the people (the ways of social connectivity in the process of creating and performing music), formal elements (rhythm, harmony), the principle of creation (style as a way of combining the formal elements), the content of the artwork (the choice of subject and story), and the theory of musical technique (e.g., the doctrine of counterpoint). In the above structure of musical superstructure, every subsequent element is determined by the previous one, and the whole structure, in turn, is based on the productive forces of society and the prevailing form of class relations. Bukharin applied the direct analogies between production and creative work to enhance the rhetorical impact of his texts. The interaction of people in an orchestra, for example, for him was “just like the factory—defined by the instruments and the combination of these instruments,” that is, musical technique (Bukharin, 2008, pp. 226-227).

The specificity of the musical process was accentuated by A. V. Lunacharsky. Since it was, as he stated, “a complex function of the public where the reality is refracted through a worldview of the known classes” (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 117), he considered art a valuable source of information for the sociologist. In the framework of Hegelian Marxism, he interpreted music as a phenomenon in which the class contradictions were clearly reflected through the combination of sounds. Similar to a musical theme, they aim for a dialectical resolution after the final stage of culmination. Thus, the music process entails one of the means that directs the social system toward equilibrium (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 123). The author conceals a deep faith in “natural” laws, associated with the positivist sociological project, under Marxist terminology, such as the organic-like structure of society (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 144) and the ideas of evolutionism (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 175). It is worth emphasizing that naturalistic explanations were rather popular during this historical period. For instance, the leading early Soviet musical associations considered above also applied the concept of “natural selection” in analyzing the history of music and contemporary state of the arts (Raku, 2015).

These conceptual foundations of the early Soviet sociology of music were supplemented by a special kind of ideologically distorted objectivism. The criterion of the verification of scientific statements served its conformity with the interests and viewpoints of the proletariat as a class. The very same “proletarian position” at the time was under active discursive construction through the means of political propaganda.

**Music as a Means to Construct and Disseminate the Working-Class Ideology: Theoretical Aspect**

The creation of the Soviet proletarian culture was intended to resolve two central issues: the development of its own artistic style and sifting the cultural heritage of the bourgeois society from the new era’s undertakings. The formation and implementation of working-class ideology on art has been in focus of the vast amount of works (see Fitzpatrick, 1978; Murray, 2018; Stites, 1992). Regarding the role of “bourgeois heritage” in the formation of Soviet music, we found the taxonomy of M. V. Yudin useful; he has classified the members of the “Proletkult” (Central art and educational organization under the Commissariat of Enlightenment, which existed from 1917 to 1932) as “leftists,” “rightists,” and “centrists” in relation to the classics of the world music. The first depended exclusively on the creative power of the proletariat, the latter, on the contrary, believed in the necessity of using the highest achievements of western culture for the purpose of education. “Centrists” attempted to justify the need and possibility of combining the creative activities of the working class with the simultaneous assimilation of the selected elements of the past (Yudin, 2001, p. 5).

The “centrist” integrative position was held by leading Soviet ideologists such as V. I. Lenin, A. A. Bogdanov, and
A. V. Lunacharsky. Moreover, music was given a special role in the artistic hierarchy of future proletarian art. According to Bogdanov, “the proletarian art will be mostly poetry, there may be music” (Raku, 2015, pp. 38-39). With reference to the works of K. Marx and V. I. Lenin, Lunacharsky justified the value of bourgeois culture for resolving issues related to socialist construction, education, and raising of the masses (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 144). Arguing about the history of music in capitalist societies, he linked the dynamics involved in artistic forms to the peculiarities of the social environment in which they are created. Therefore, according to him, there exists the great music belonging to the era of “revolutionary storms” (the music of Bach and Beethoven as embodiments of the triumph of the bourgeoisie), then the “ornamental,” frivolous, music, devoid of the pathos, that belonging to the “age of relative complacency,” and finally, the music of “absolute welfare,” of the ruling circles, when the “always poor lower classes” fail to rise in protest against class oppression (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 125). However, according to him, the music of any period of history bears the imprint of class oppression—the vulgar bourgeois art forms “accompanying well-being” contrast with the “music of the broken and hopeless classes,” which serves a compensatory function. He believed that the victory of the socialist revolution would grant the necessary impetus to the emergence of music, whose level and emotional potency nears that of the great classics. Lunacharsky’s classification of contemporary music into “machine” and “architectural” types is particularly interesting in this study (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 135). The first category embodies the industrial rhythms in mechanical dance forms, symbolizing the total submission of the working man to the industry in the age of hypercapitalism and imperialism, while the second one is derived from the composer’s admiration for the natural sounds and the rhythms of human activity. However, according to the author’s idea, architectural music (a combination of pure sounds in a particular sequence) only seeks the approval of the existing hegemony under capitalism. The real social mission of music is comprised by its liberation and revolutionary potential (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 122).

Till now, the most influential and popular concept concerning the social dynamics of music, created during the period under review, is the intonation theory given by B. V. Asafiev. Asafiev has headed the Department of Music History at the SIAH since 1920. According to the above typology, Asafiev’s position in the early period of his work should be considered “rightist” as he was confident in the permanent values of the western European experience for the creation of a new Soviet culture. In one of his early works, written under the pseudonym of Igor Glebov, he stated,

We have repeated and will continue repeating in the major part the experience of the Western European musicians and even the experience of the middle ages music . . . to ensure the normal development of musical culture and introduce it to the general population, to replace the previous attitude to the music as to the expensive sweet dish that is not for all by the wide cultivation of art music and its mass consumption . . . it is impossible not to go the way of the acquaintance with the experiences and ancestral musical practices of the Western European cities which have already democratized music art long time ago. (Glebov, 1927, pp. 12-13)

The originality of Asafiev’s conception is determined by the processual perspective of the analysis, which overlaps with phenomenology, communication theory, and semiotics. According to the author’s idea, the meaning-making in the process of creation and perception of a musical material allows social integration and the socialization of sentiments and ideas through communication (Asafiev, 1952, pp. 10-12). “Sounding substance” creates a feeling of solidarity between the individual and the surrounding group, leading to the formation of a similar music experience. Based on this, we can conclude that he considered the “universal language” of music as a medium to construct social identity and a source of group solidarity in society.

Furthermore, B. V. Asafiev also attempted to integrate a theory of action in his conceptual scheme. In the intonation approach, we can observe a consistent social-constructionist rationale behind the dynamics of music, represented several years before the famous works of A. Schutz on music emerged (Schutz, 1976). According to Asafiev, the process of creation, performance, and collective perception of music constitutes a social action whose meaning and value are determined by imitation, and then it undergoes further institutionalization (Asafiev, 1952, p. 11). Furthermore, he also interpreted the formation of musical consciousness phenomenologically—through the accumulation of the “intonation stock” (Asafiev, 1971, p. 357) in the “intonation dictionary” of the individual, fragments of musical experience accumulated through the course of their life and structured and embodied in the musical creative act during the time. Similarly, using a collective sedimentation of sound-forming elements, the creation of the “intonation dictionary” of an era is performed, which is upgraded in the crisis era of social development. Musical form, thus, comprises a process and a “crystallized scheme,” which reflects “the organization of socially useful sound combinations” (Asafiev, 1971, p. 23).

Asafiev’s theory evidently follows Kant’s axioms concerning the constituting role of consciousness, when we discuss individual or group music experience and Hegel’s concepts in the analysis of the macrodynamics of the musical process through the dialectical resolution of contradictions. During 1929- to 1930, under the pressure of the power structures, however, Asafiev’s views changed; his later work were full of the rhetoric of class conditionality of musical life, criticism of the decadent bourgeois culture, and defense of the real “national” Russian composers. In his brief autobiography of 1934, he stated that he has arrived at the only right position
at the end of long romantic and formal walks and entirely owes it to the study of dialectical and historical materialism and the most important—the creative state-building of our country, led by the CPSU (b) and its brilliant leaders. (Asafiev, 1952, p. 24)

The Role of Music in Working Class’s Everyday Practices

The conjunction of “everyday life” and “monumentality” in the proletarian art had to be realized through the following principles: synthesis of various forms and genres of music, a concentration on the needs of the masses, and the continuous cocreation of music in the artistic act (Raku, 2015, p. 72). Chorus singing became the most important tool to fight this challenge as it allowed the transformations in the human psyche through music in the shortest time.

In addition to the democratization of musical forms, state cultural policy also prioritized the task of educating people. In the words of Lenin, “the proletarian friendly song about the imminent liberation of humanity from wage-slavery” formed a testimony of the approaching victory of communism (Lenin, 1968, pp. 273-274). In contrast to the Western neo-Marxists of that period (G. Lukács & A. Gramsci), who declared that the class consciousness of the masses could not arise spontaneously but had to be gradually nurtured by the intelligentsia, the Russian Marxists believed that the Soviet people were ready to embrace the new musical experience. In particular, Lunacharsky believed that “the widest masses of the people are eager to learn the culture of the past without which, as a great teacher teaches them, they will not be able to go forward” (Lunacharsky, 1958, p. 126). According to his project of music culture, people needed music that was “tendentious,” “courageous,” “passionate,” and replete with “combat cheerfulness.” Composers were instructed to create high-quality as well as simple “musical-everyday things.” He called the artists to take their performance outside of the concert hall and ensure the accessibility of the art in everyday life. Working songs, children’s songs, and march songs were postulated as the most important music genres. The inspiration for the creation of the Soviet mass song was supposed to be both the “natural rhythm of the revolutionary city” and the peasant folks’ traditions and music culture of the ethnic minorities.

Since the mid-1920s, Asafiev also dealt with the problems of musical education and upbringing (Asafiev, 1952, p. 12). Being one of the founders of the Russian school of ethnomusicology, he emphasized the need for scientific synthesis in this direction with academic musicology. Based on the first Soviet programs of the education in music methodology, created by N. Bryusova, Asafiev developed a comprehensive conception of Soviet music education, in the center of which was his thesis concerning “ideological programming through musical perception” (John, 2009, p. 2002).

By 1930, a holistic notion of a “cultured person” had developed as one of the state policy objectives. The required uniformity was realized through a series of disciplinary procedures—from preschool education to the control of the “culture level” of the population applying survey methods. Therefore, a standard set of knowledge regarding music in 1936 was measured by the magazine “Ogonek” through the questionnaire titled “Are you a cultured person?”—this was published in each issue (Salnikova, 2008, p. 76). Thus, the “level of culture” ideology became an instrument for the social integration of the lower classes into the system of quasi-elite values.

In addition to a large-scale social reconstruction mission, music was considered a means to resolve more practical problems. During that period, the effect of music on the increase in labor productivity was recorded; the relevance of this idea in the USSR could be proved by the popularity of K. Bücher’s book Work and Rhythm (Bücher, 1909). One of the party’s leaders, M. I. Kalinin, explained the social benefits of music lessons in the following manner: “Why are people interested in music? Because music is one of the powerful factors that increases labor productivity. Take, for example, folk tunes, all of them are connected with the work activity” (Kalinin, 1962, p. 300). In the work of the “NOT” chief ideologist (NOT refers to the “Scientific Organization of Labor,” the Soviet equivalent of Taylor’s management system), A. K. Gastev, the inevitability of the death of the “chamber music” in the era of “mechanized crowds” in the coming century is also mentioned (Brodsky, Rogachevsky, & Sidorov, 1929, p. 136).

Conclusion

The origin, development, and decline of the Soviet sociology of music in a short span during the 1920s demonstrates the results of the forced intervention of the government in a scientific sphere, when the reformation of institutions and formulaion of research tasks are imposed on the academic community without considering the basic principles of scientific logic, in spite of the internal dynamics involved in the development of different disciplines and the lack of attention to the specifics of the studied subject. Caught in the context of world science at the turn of the 1910s and 1920s, Soviet musicologists were forced to stop their ongoing research, severe the current community ties, and form artificial interdisciplinary synthesis with the purpose of creating a solution to the urgent political tasks.

The romantic idea of a new kind of man, the development of a common working-class worldview, unambiguous moral norms, and a common will to action—all these features were attributed to the music of the age by the leading theorists and ideologists. The old forms of social status, ethnic, religious solidarity were substituted by a romantic allegory of the unity of the nation through chorus singing. The music was entrusted the task of structuring everyday life, motivating of labor activity, promoting cultural education, and above all, supporting the pursuit of collective action on the basis of emotional acceptance of the ideological tenets of the party.
The elimination of esthetic hierarchies and the assignment of classical music culture in the Soviet era were processes replete with drama. The humanistic aims that succeeded in inspiring the scientific community resulted in the reshaping of institutional arrangements, repression of scholars, and decline of prerevolutionary musicology under the onslaught of the “sociological method.” The project of the creation of the new type of listener and composer in the early 1920s did not exclude individualization; on the contrary, it considered the development of creative individuality as an indispensable condition for the esthetic development of the majority. However, during the Stalinist era, these notions were forgotten, and there was a substitution of the socialist ideals by the total standardization and canonization of the musical art, forms and mechanisms of interaction with the audience, and even ways of reception and reaction to music.

However, the analysis of the key works of the decade under consideration demonstrated the differences in the research approaches. In the works of A. V. Lunacharsky, B. V. Asafiev, N. B. Bukharin, the various projects of the sociology of music were presented—from reductionist economic determinism to multivariate models concerning the socio-dynamics of music grounded on dialectical laws. Based on the analysis of the research texts and reported documentation of the academic institutions, we can conclude that numerous opportunities for productive research synthesis in the field of musicology were neglected or consciously rejected. For example, the conceptualization of “sound symbolism” as a “network of associations” inside the available reserve of musical intonations in Asafiev’s works (Glebov, 1927, p. 17) could be extended through hermeneutics and semiotics, areas that witnessed tremendous development greatly during those years in SAAS by the efforts of G. Schpet, S. N. Belyaeva-Ekzempliarzskaya, and A. F. Losev. Furthermore, the direction of the sociology of emotions, identified in the works of A. V. Lunacharsky, could offer a fresh perspective on the musical process by combining the sociology of art and psychology of musical creativity and L. Vygotsky’s perception. In the place of this perspective, however, a “crisis of art” was declared everywhere, which, in reality, was represented only by a crisis of the canons of classical esthetics, the continuous search for means for the democratization of artistic forms and practices, including classical music, the revision of the boundaries of the concept art. The required scientific synthesis was reduced to the propaganda of Marxism–Leninism and its forced implementation in the highly specialized branches of scientific knowledge.

The internal struggle faced by the researchers of that time is embodied in their attempt to combine special musicological knowledge and the state-prescribed ideological order. The interaction of the artists, scientific community, and government almost a century ago has remained an important subject of scientific examination as it demonstrates the possible monumental consequences of state intervention in academic institutions that is unregulated by the civil society.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was financially supported by the grant of Russian Science Foundation No 17-78-20062 “Young people life strategies of the new working class in contemporary Russia.”

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