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Danish friends of the Soviet Union: the history of interwar Danish–Soviet organizations

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the history of two key organizations in interwar Danish–Soviet relations, the Danish–Soviet Association (DRS) and the Danish Union of Friends of the Soviet Union (SUV). Drawing on a large selection of primary sources and literature, the article navigates considerable archival fragmentation and presents a comprehensive analysis of two parallel but separate national nodes in the wider transnational framework of Soviet cultural diplomacy. The analysis explains the background, structures, activities, and relevance of the Comintern-organized SUV and the non-party-affiliated DRS and demonstrates how both associations were relatively successful in both the Danish and Scandinavian contexts throughout the interwar period. The organizations' resilience was bolstered by the comparatively good cohesion of the Danish Communist Party, and widely respected people in key positions.

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Introduction

> We must create a whole solar system of organizations and smaller committees around the Communist Party, small organizations, so to speak, actually working under the influence of the party but not under its mechanical control.
>
> Otto Wille Kuusinen, actors.1926[1]

In April 1940, as the story goes, a communist activist collected the archive of the 'Danish Union for Friends of the Soviet Union' (*Landsforbundet af Sovjet Unionens Venner i Danmark*, SUV), placed it on the back of his bicycle, and rode off.[2] War had caught up with Denmark, and German troops were marching into the country. Where the archive was taken has since faded from memory. The storage case holding the few surviving files that eventually found their way into the Library and Archive of the Workers' Movement (*Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv*, ABA) in Copenhagen is not even half full. The contemporary collections of a related organization operating at the time, the Danish–Soviet Association (*Dansk–Russisk Samvirke*, DRS), do not require even a single case: The DRS archive was burned during the occupation, and the holdings of the library sold for the

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economic benefit of the resistance movement.[3] Any historian attempting to trace and present the history of these interwar Danish–Soviet organizations must thus overcome serious archival fragmentation.

Despite the challenges, pursuing this history can yield enlightening results. The German occupation of 1940 ground Danish–Soviet relations to a halt and brought on years of hibernation, lawlessness, and ultimately, active resistance for all friends of the Soviet Union.[4] Before that, however, Danish communists had been able to overcome several challenges and, by the mid-1930s, establish a socially active and internally rather united revolutionary workers' movement. While the party (*Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti*, DKP) remained small with no more than 5,000 members and two (three in 1939) parliamentary seats, Danish communism (as well as broader communist activities coordinated from Denmark) stayed relevant until the occupation, not only nationally but also from transnational and Soviet perspectives. The same holds true to the networks of the de facto communist SUV and the non-party-affiliated DRS, and the clandestine and illegal international apparatus organized by the Communist International (Comintern).[5] As our article demonstrates, the SUV in particular was a relatively successful organization among its Scandinavian counterparts. Nevertheless, comprehensively researched histories of neither the SUV nor the DRS have yet been published.

In this article, we draw on a large body of Danish archival materials from several collections to present the most comprehensive organizational history of both the SUV and the DRS to date. Through an overall analysis of the origins, development, activities, and, finally, the demise and legacy of both organizations, we aim to explain the nature of their parallelism and distinctiveness as well as their roles in the wider framework of cultural diplomacy. With the concept of cultural diplomacy, we refer both to the development of transnational networks and the implementation of cultural exchanges with relevant foreign individuals and organizations. Although cultural diplomacy may involve state-level actors in both ends, the Soviet Union regularly dealt with foreign nongovernmental organizations.[6]

While we focus on two Danish civil society associations, the cultural diplomacy framework is examined here with a 'Soviet–Danish' perspective instead of 'Danish–Soviet'. After the initial developments that eventually led to the establishment of the DRS in 1924, the Danish organizations existed and operated without state support. In comparison, all Soviet agents for cultural diplomacy were centrally organized, mainly by the state-controlled 'All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad' (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul´turnoi sviazi s zagranitsei*, VOKS, established in 1925). In practice, VOKS established relations transnationally with non-governmental organizations such as the DRS, distributed publications, facilitated art exhibitions and book translations and, perhaps most importantly, hosted and cultivated potentially interested intellectuals during their visits to the Soviet Union. While propaganda was always important to the Soviet Union, the first VOKS chairperson Ol´ga Kameneva had asserted in 1928 that as the European intellectual left was still more advanced than the young proletarian culture of the Soviet Union, VOKS should pursue reciprocal exchanges.[7]

The landmark studies with a broader focus on interwar Soviet cultural diplomacy have largely focused on the formal and informal networks connected with VOKS. In these studies, the parallel and more strictly organized Comintern structure has

generally been categorized as a separate phenomenon and mostly been left unexplored or even unmentioned.[8] The Comintern was by definition an 'international' organization of subordinate national sections and understood itself as a supranational and transnational world movement. Its various elements, including the *International Association of Friends of the Soviet Union* (FSU) and its national branches such as the Danish SUV, constituted a transnational space that extended beyond national cultures and boundaries. However, the dominant role of the Russian (and from 1925, the 'All-Union') Communist Party – which de facto equalled the Soviet state – in the Comintern resulted in a hybrid complexity which blurred the lines between state and non-state actors.[9] Our case study of Denmark demonstrates that while the exchanges that involved the VOKS and the DRS were often technically separate from the Comintern–FSU–SUV network, they nevertheless took place in the same transnational space and facilitated relations that often functioned as processes of dedication to parallel or shared goals.[10]

The other Scandinavian organizations relevant for interwar Soviet cultural diplomacy constitute a natural comparative context for a detailed study of the DRS and the SUV. Research on their Norwegian and Swedish counterparts has also been published mostly in the Scandinavian languages. A recent exception is Ole Martin Rønning's article about the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish 'Cultural Fronts', which were intellectual-driven leftist organizations of the mid-1930s Popular Front period.[11] They had most success and societal visibility in Denmark, where the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokratisk Forbund*) was particularly strong, leading the Danish government for most of the interwar period and winning the 1935 parliamentary elections with 46.6% of the popular vote.[12] However, the Cultural Fronts were dissolved across Scandinavia when the Popular Front policy was effectively abandoned by Stalin by the purges of the Great Terror of 1937–38, and communists were largely isolated both within the workers' movement and from liberal sympathizers across Scandinavia. In Finland, the organizational level of comparable groups stayed much lower throughout the interwar period due to the illegal status of the communist party and, by the beginning of the 1930s, most other radical socialist organizations as well. While Finnish communists were still active and relevant in several ways, the framework of Soviet–Finnish cultural diplomacy was limited. Consequently, we have chosen to not include Finland in our comparative Scandinavian perspective.

In addition to contemporary publications such as newspapers and periodicals, references to the SUV and the DRS are scattered across various archives and personal collections. Most are located in Copenhagen, at the ABA and the Danish National Library (*Det Kongelige Bibliotek*, KB). While we have not been able to include Russian collections, of which the most relevant are the FSU collection at The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii*, RGASPI), and the VOKS collection at the State Archive of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, GARF), many of the earlier publications referenced here have utilized sources produced by the Comintern and Soviet authorities as well. In Soviet-era scholarship, the FSU network was viewed as an integral element of the cultural diplomacy apparatus.[13] More recently, Comintern files of Danish communists have been published through Danish–Russian archival collaboration, but none refer to the SUV or the DRS.[14]

The earliest Danish initiatives, KOMSAMRUS, and the DRS

The Comintern's Executive Committee Secretary Otto Wille Kuusinen's remarks about a 'solar system of organizations and smaller committees' reflect how the Comintern and its highest authority, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, gave increased priority to transnational network-building during the 1920s. However, a similar development had already been initiated earlier within a parallel but distinct structure, and in this case by the Danish.

Before either the FSU or even VOKS existed, the first Danish efforts for contacts with the new Soviet Russian state had come from the left-wing political groups that had splintered from the Social Democratic Party following the October Revolution.[15] The road towards non-party friendship relations and formal organizations had started several years later, against the tragic background of the 1921 Volga famine. On August 14 that year, various humanitarian groups organized a 'Russia Day'.[16] However, political disagreements over the perception of the new Russian state meant that the various humanitarian initiatives could not join forces for a common effort for the benefit of the famine victims.

The largest fundraiser was organized by the Danish Red Cross and collected approximately 660,000 Danish crowns, with an additional 100,000 crowns provided by the Danish state as funds earmarked to aid children in the suffering districts in Soviet Russia.[17] Meanwhile, the Social Democratic–led Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (*Landsorganisationen i Danmark*, LO) decided to issue its own call for humanitarian in a meeting of the Social Democratic *International Federation of Trade Unions* (IFTU) held in Berlin on August 13–14, 1921.[18] The LO refused to co-operate with *Internationale Arbeiter-Hilfe* (Workers International Relief, IAH, or Mezhrabpom in Russian), which was a newly-established Comintern organization and caused the LO leadership worry about the control of the collected funds.[19] For similar reasons, the LO also limited its co-operation with the Danish Red Cross to technical and logistical issues.[20] According to the best available information, the Social Democratic–led campaign collected almost 100,000 crowns.[21]

Finally, a third fundraising campaign was organized by a group called *Komiteen for Hjælp til Rusland* ('The Committee for Help to Russia'). It included the DKP, the breakaway Social Democratic Youth Fraction (*Socialdemokratisk Ungdomsforbund*, SUF), and the syndicalist trade union (*Fagoppositionens Sammenslutning*, FS). The Committee leadership featured, among others, prominent left-wing figures such as the internationally-known writer Martin Andersen Nexø, the communist pioneer Marie Nielsen, and the first DKP Chairman Ernst Christiansen.[22] They established contact with a delegation from *Vserossiiskii komitet pomoshchi golodaiushchim* (Pomgol, 'All-Russian Committee for Helping the Hunger Victims'), which visited Stockholm in August 1921 to organize and coordinate the humanitarian aid efforts in Scandinavia, and later joined forces with the IAH.[23] While the immediate focus was to provide food and medicine to Soviet Russia, the campaign turned out to be the first step towards the later establishment of the DRS and formalized cultural diplomacy relations between the two states. The organization of the committee also demonstrates how the left-wing opposition to the Social Democrats was aiming to take a leading role within the Danish workers' movement.

Among other events, the Committee organized three so-called 'Famine Meetings' to increase public interest in the cause. They collected approximately 32,000 Danish crowns, of which 21,000 were sent to the IAH in three batches.[24] Surviving archival records indicate that the Danish LO had good reason for its doubts about the IAH. A large proportion of the funds were spent on meetings, movie screenings, and even the purchase of red flags, but very little on actual aid to the areas affected by the famine.[25] A dramatic rebuke came from Martin Andersen Nexø, who publicly called the IAH 'either 75% fraudulent and 25% incompetent or 75% incompetent and 25% fraudulent'. However, this criticism did not stop him from continuing as an IAH board member.[26]

In 1921, the Committee established a special women's section under the leadership of Marie Nielsen. The women's section called for workers' families as well as clothing shops to donate surplus clothes, which the members then sewed and cleaned in their own workshop. Despite the internal split in the DKP in January 1922 through September 1923 that removed Nielsen from her position, as well as external difficulties caused by heavy ice around the Baltic Sea ports in the winter of 1922–23, the women's section shipped two dozen boxes of clothing to Soviet Russia.[27] Additionally, archival sources suggest that either the women's section or the entire Committee supported a Scandinavian-organized children's home in the Chuvash Autonomous Oblast.[28] In these terms, the women's' campaign was more successful than the channelling of funds through the IAH.

Nexø's role was particularly important in the origins of the DRS. While visiting Soviet Russia and Moscow for the first time in late 1922, he was invited to an orphanage in Samara that would be named in his honour. In December, after completing the necessary paperwork with the help of Comintern Secretary Karl Radek, Nexø travelled to the children's home and stayed for several days, participating in various activities. After that experience, he decided to work actively to secure more funding for the facility. While Nexø urged his friends and colleagues to chip in, he ultimately had to provide most of the funds out of his own pocket, including from royalties from foreign editions of his books.[29]

Back in Denmark, Nexø gave public speeches and statements about his experiences in Soviet Russia. On 6 March 1923 between one thousand and twelve hundred people attended an event in the packed *Nikolaj Kirke* in Copenhagen, a former church converted into a cultural venue. Inspired by the wide public attention, Nexø concluded that the Danish Committee needed to reorganize into a new association for cultural relations. He planned for seemingly broad representation in the leadership, but only as figureheads (a 'Committee body', or *Komitee Körper*, as he called them in a letter to Kuusinen), with the communists in actual control.[30] This new organization, the Committee for Cultural and Economic Cooperation with Russia (*Komiteen for kulturelt og økonomisk samkvem med Rusland*) or KOMSAMRUS, as it was known, was first mentioned in the left-wing newspaper *Klassekampen* ('Class Struggle') on 25 May 1923. In a mission statement, the purposes of KOMSAMRUS were listed as helping the victims of the Volga famine, assisting Danish factories and businesses with (re)establishing trade relations with Soviet Russian trade companies, and strengthening the cultural exchange between the two countries.[31] However, members soon started to leave the organization, complaining about a lack of activity and limited possibilities for influencing the decision-making process.[32] It is thus doubtful how much KOMSAMRUS actually engaged in any of its stated activities.

For Nexø personally, the turn of 1923–24 was the culmination of a tumultuous period, as he moved to Germany and while maintaining his sympathy for the Soviet state, left KOMSAMRUS and the DKP. His position as chairman was taken over by a close friend, the Social Democrat Georg Bolgann, a central figure of the Danish co-operative movement.[33] On 23 April 1924 some two months before the official Danish de jure recognition of the USSR, KOMSAMRUS was transformed into the *Dansk-Russisk Samvirke*. In a meeting at a Copenhagen restaurant, Bolgann and the leaders of KOMSAMRUS decided to dissolve the Committee and replace it with a new association, again with a stated mission to advance cultural relations and exchanges between Denmark and Soviet Russia.[34] The first public meeting of the DRS was then organized in June 1924 as a celebration of the Danish–Soviet trade agreement that formalized relations between the two countries.[35]

From transnational to national: the founding of the FSU and the SUV

The Comintern–FSU structure, initiated in 1927, was a transnational network of effectively communist 'friendship' societies in more than thirty countries. Similarly connected Comintern organizations were established for other sectors as well, such as the Profintern (Red International of Labour Unions), Sportintern (International Association of Red Sports and Gymnastics Associations), Krestintern (Red Peasant International), and the previously mentioned Mezhrabpom (IAH). In comparison to these organizations, the history of the FSU has received less scholarly attention.[36]

In November 1927, during the celebrations held in Moscow for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, approximately a thousand members of workers' delegations from forty-three countries participated in an international congress held in the building of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (*Vsesoiuznyi tsentral'nyi sovet professional'nykh soiuzov*, VTsSPS). Officially, the congress was based on the initiative of a British workers' delegation. In reality, the gathering was the result of the Comintern's transnationally planned grand scheme, proposed in December 1926 by Willi Münzenberg to utilize the anniversary celebrations to create a worldwide wave of sympathy for the USSR. Among the speakers were Clara Zetkin, Nikolai Bukharin, and the Soviet head of state Aleksei Rykov. As the first step in the foundation of a larger framework, the congress delegates elected a permanent presidium, which included such well-known left-wing intellectuals as Henri Barbusse, Arthur Ewers, Arthur Holitscher, and Zetkin. After the Moscow congress, national communist parties loyal to the Comintern quickly set up local 'Friends of the Soviet Union' associations in several countries. Their stated aim was to form united fronts of mainly labour organizations and progressive intellectuals against the 'threat of a new war'. Some six months later, in May 1928, delegates from sixteen of these newly established associations, as well as from Mezhrabpom and the *League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression* (another Comintern front organization), gathered at a congress in Cologne to formally launch FSU. A permanent secretariat, called the *International Bureau*, was also set up as the FSU executive organ under the leadership of Albert Inkpin, a former secretary of the British Communist Party. After Hitler took over in Germany in 1933, the presidium was relocated to Amsterdam.[37]

National organizations were important for the state-level structure of Soviet cultural diplomacy as well. However, as the origins of the DRS demonstrate, these associations for cultural, scientific, and economic relations with Soviet Russia/Union were established

more independently and stayed more elitist in composition. In addition to the DRS, several other comparable national organizations were also founded before VOKS, including the American (in 1921), German (1923), Argentinian, British, and Swedish (all in 1924) ones. By comparison, the FSU national branches had stronger transnational links, aimed at mass participation, and quickly outgrew the more independent but highbrow associations. According to contemporary and later Soviet-era sources, the number of Comintern-affiliated 'friendship' organizations (22) immediately exceeded the number of the older 'cultural' ones (21). In 1932, the numbers were 30 and 22, respectively. Simultaneously, the membership figures and the number of regional organizations of the FSU affiliates grew to a whole different level. In France, the non-Comintern-affiliated association (established five years earlier in 1925) had around only six hundred members; the FSU branch had some fifty thousand members in five hundred local organizations.[38]

The transnational level of the FSU operated mainly through congresses to which the national branches sent delegates. After the first congress in Cologne, the second meeting took place in Essen in 1930, and the third was organized in Paris in 1933. The congresses were used to coordinate strategies and initiate campaigns such as 'Hands off Russia' in 1930. The FSU existed until the Second World War with national organizations in thirty-nine countries, although several, such as the German branch, had to operate illegally.[39] The FSU was thus an integral component of the Comintern's transnational network of organizations that functioned in connection with the Popular Front policy that characterized the mid-1930s. The policy was effectively abandoned by Stalin by the purges of the Great Terror of 1937–38, and the final curtain fell at the German–Soviet nonaggression pact of August 1939. These upheavals changed the course of Soviet foreign policy and the functions of the Comintern and its network of international organizations.

In November 1927, Georg Bolgann was still the DRS chairman, and one of the Danes attending the Moscow meeting that initiated the FSU.[40] However, that did not lead to the transformation of the DRS into the Danish branch of the Comintern-organized Friendship International. Instead, the seeds of the FSU were sown by Bolgann's countrymen who had arrived in Moscow as a twenty-one-strong delegation of various trade unions, organized by the Copenhagen branch of the communist-dominated *Sadelmagernes Fagforening* (the Saddlers' Union). Although the Social Democratic LO had also received an invitation, the organization had declined to participate because of a conflict between the Profintern and the IFTU.[41] During their visit to the USSR, the Danish delegation was exposed to the whole array of Soviet cultural diplomacy practices, visiting various factories, unions, workers' clubs, co-operatives, children's homes, schools, rest homes, and prisons in Leningrad, Moscow, Rostov, Dnepropetrovsk, Kamenskoe, and Odessa. Before the meeting that elected the permanent presidium, and thus, established the foundation for the FSU, the delegation witnessed the November celebrations at Red Square, and participated in a six-hour question-and-answer session with Stalin.[42]

In February 1930, more than two years after the visit of the 1927 delegation, a preparatory committee led by Trade Union Chairwoman Inger Gamburg finally dispatched a circular letter that led to the founding of an actual Danish FSU branch. The letter announced a delegation to the FSU Essen congress later that month, and called for public events, lectures, and movie screenings that could counter the various 'lies' about the USSR in the Danish press. The signatories and delegates included several well-known

leftist figures.[43] Although some of these founders of the Danish SUV had already been present in the 1927 Moscow meeting, formally establishing the SUV still turned out to be a slow process with much bureaucracy.

The popular front period and the expansion of SUV activities

During the first three to four years, the SUV's organizational structure and level of activity were very modest. In the autumn of 1933, the SUV leadership asked Aage Jørgensen, a prominent DKP insider and *éminence grise* at the Soviet legation in Copenhagen, for help in strengthening the member organization and for better propaganda materials, as those distributed by the Profintern were too poor for any meaningful use.[44] The operational environment was radically altered during the next eighteen months, when the Comintern began to transnationally adopt its Popular Front policy. Consequently, the SUV was able to rapidly expand and consolidate its activities and structure. At least nine local branches were founded across Denmark, and the greater Copenhagen branch was split into eight local sections. As the SUV grew from a small vanguard to approximately four thousand people, it launched a monthly journal, *Sovjet idag* ('The Soviet Union Today'), aimed at the wider public.[45]

Although the few actual SUV financial documents that have survived in the Danish archives are uninformative, it is generally well known that the upscaling of activities of similar Comintern-affiliated organizations was centrally financed and directed.[46] When the SUV treasurer Aage Berner left the organization in 1935, he publicly stated in the Social Democratic journal *Socialisten* ('The Socialist') that the SUV was a communist front organization directed and financed from Moscow, and that he as treasurer had no control over the economics.[47] The SUV leadership tried to deny Berner's accusations but, unsurprisingly, failed to provide any further evidence.[48] In *Sovjet idag*, the huge increase in members was later credited to Carl Wieth, a journalist and the SUV national secretary.[49]

At the height of its activity, the SUV also engaged in several transnational activities with its Scandinavian and European counterparts. In 1934, for example, an inter-Scandinavian FSU delegation was sent to study the role of women in Soviet Society.[50] Three years later, the SUV urged its members to participate in an international FSU congress in conjunction with the Paris World Fair.[51] In June 1939, members of the Swedish organization (*Sällskapet Sovjetunionens Vänner*) attended midsummer celebrations organized by the Danes.[52] The SUV also sought to financially and morally support those sister organizations that were under pressure or pushed into illegality, such as the German FSU section,[53] and initiated a campaign of humanitarian aid for the benefit of its Spanish counterpart during the Spanish Civil War.[54] An important image boost was achieved when Nexø, who had returned to Denmark in 1930 and made his final break with social democracy following Hitler's takeover, re-joined the DKP in 1937 and was elected the SUV national chairman the following year.[55] The interwar DKP was generally a party of widely known and respected public intellectuals, which made this stand out among its Scandinavian counterparts as well.[56]

During the SUV's earliest years, it seems unlikely that the organization had drafted any formal regulations. Instead, its activities were organized through transnational and often informal FSU channels. When the SUV bylaws were published in January 1936, they did not elaborate on the purpose of the association.[57] In a 1934 mission statement, however, the SUV appealed to the

> Social Democratic and non-party affiliated public, that has understood or has begun to understand that developments in the Soviet Union are not an internal Russian matter, but on the contrary, of decisive importance to the entire international labour movement, because in the Soviet Union today, socialism is being realized, the theories of the working class are being confirmed, and it is becoming clear that the socialist society is superior to the capitalist in every aspect.[58]

Thus, it was the SUV's task to 'establish this fact and to popularize the results of the first and second five year plans among the widest possible circles'.[59] In 1935, SUV Chairman Martin Ellehauge had defined the organization's mission in similar terms, emphasizing promoting awareness about Soviet issues to the Danish public as well as defending the Soviet Union 'against the political schemes of capitalist states'.[60] Both statements from the Popular Front period illustrate the nature of the SUV as an organization that followed the Comintern line and aimed for mass participation.

By comparison, the *Dansk-Russisk Samvirke* remained non-party affiliated throughout the interwar period. This relative independence meant that the DRS could have been more inclusive in principle, but in reality, the association was an exclusive club of less than two hundred members, all residents of the Greater Copenhagen area.[61] In practice, the events, networks, and developments of Soviet–Danish cultural diplomacy often linked the SUV and the DRS. The first Soviet ministers to Denmark had close relations with both associations. Especially the Danish-speaking Mikhail Kobetskii, who had lived in exile in Denmark before the Bolshevik revolution and assisted Lenin in the 8th Congress of the Second International in Copenhagen in 1910,[62] was very active and held several public lectures right until he departed in 1933.[63] His successor Nikolai Tikhmenev was also engaged and hosted events with representation from both associations.[64] Nevertheless, they continued to exist and operate as distinct organizations throughout the 1930s.

For the DRS, the primary Soviet point of contact was VOKS, which facilitated many of its transnational activities.[65] Although some of these activities had limited outreach, such as receiving high-profile Soviet delegations, other events, such as music concerts,[66] hosting a visit by the cruiser *Aurora* in 1928,[67] and exhibitions of Soviet books,[68] had potential for wider public interest. The association's non-affiliation with the Comintern line made the DRS more acceptable in broader circles, including Social Democrats, whose party tried to keep its members from joining the SUV or even *Frisindet Kulturkamp* ('Liberal Cultural Struggle'), the broader anti-fascist 'Cultural Front' formed in 1935 during the Popular Front period.[69] As a result of the Comintern's FSU strategy, comparable parallel and structures existed in Sweden, Norway, and several other countries. When examined transnationally, the development, activities, publications, and general life cycles of these organizations were very similar.[70] However, there are also notable differences, such as whether a Comintern-affiliated 'friendship organization' or a more independent 'cultural organization' was established first.

The SUV as a propagandist, entertainer, and social organizer

Throughout the existence of the SUV, its activities ranged from formal and clearly ideological to informal and social. Although a lot of effort was put into transnationally shared propagandist activities, the SUV also shared interests with the wider socialist movement in Denmark, especially in improving social conditions for the working class.

One SUV priority was to set up delegations and support individuals travelling to the USSR. These delegations included the traditional workers' delegations that participated in the annual celebrations of the revolution and International Workers' Day, as well as the women's delegations celebrating International Women's Day.[71] In 1934, the SUV co-operated with the Soviet state travel agency Intourist to provide Danish workers the option to visit the USSR on very affordable all-inclusive tours.[72] The first trips to Leningrad and Moscow, travelling via Sweden and Finland, were advertised for the summer of 1934.[73] In the following year, more than a hundred members participated in the Leningrad summer tour.[74] This led to the establishment of a travel department, which operated for some time as the formally independent *Dansk–Russisk Turist Bureau* ('Danish–Russian Travel Agency').[75] SUV members who could not afford to pay in cash were given credit.[76]

While much of the original documentation about the SUV is either lost or scattered between different archival collections, the main publications of the organization have survived. Although subjective and propagandist, they offer a rather wide-ranging view of its activities. Between 1934 and 1941, the SUV monthly journal was known first as *Sovjet idag*, then *Sovjet og Vi* ('The Soviet Union and Us'), and finally, *Nyt Land* ('New Land'). The SUV also produced an internal bulletin, *S.U.V. Nyt*, which tried to keep members informed and boost their level of participation. Reminders about overdue membership fees and pleas for economic support to keep the external journal afloat were also regular features. This demonstrates that in internal communication, the SUV acknowledged some of the challenges the association faced in outreach beyond its base of core supporters.

Sovjet idag regularly published book reviews, including of translated Soviet works. The DKP publishing house *Arbejderforlaget* and the communist-affiliated although technically independent publisher *Mondes Forlag* were prominently featured, but some ideologically unaffiliated commercial companies such as *Martins Forlag* also published books by communists or fellow travellers.[77] Books with a positive view of the USSR consistently received glowing reviews, but critical titles were bashed. The existence of famine in the Soviet Union was also denied by the journal.[78] One of the most notable examples of this was Arne Strøm's *Onkel, giv os Brød* ('Uncle, Give us Bread'), an eyewitness account of the 1932–33 famine that was also widely translated throughout Europe and featured in the North American press. In an extremely angry worded review, *Sovjet idag* called Strøm, who had worked as a foreign specialist at a collective poultry farm in Povorino in the Voronezh region, a liar and imperialistic agent slandering the USSR in search of personal profit. SUV representatives even wrote to the *sovkhoz*, asking for support in dismissing Strøm's claims of poor leadership, agricultural mismanagement, and the existence of famine. Unsurprisingly, the local soviet agreed and provided a statement blaming Strøm for any possible malpractice.[79] *Sovjet idag* also answered readers' letters that featured questions on topics ranging from Soviet oil production output to Maxim Gorki's works. Occasionally, the answers addressed even critical questions, such as Soviet enthusiasm for awarding medals and honours in a supposedly equal workers' state.[80]

Another recurring feature was longish articles ('comments') on Soviet foreign policy, initially by Professor Adolf Stender-Pedersen and based on his lecture at the 1935 SUV congress. He was soon followed by the communist high school teacher Peter P. Rohde, who was always ready to defend Soviet foreign policy, whether in the form of collective security measures in co-operation with France,[81] the German–Soviet nonaggression

pact[82] (despite his earlier writings condemning fascism and Nazism[83]), the annexation of Eastern parts of Poland,[84] or the Soviet aggression against Finland.[85] Soviet domestic policy was naturally defended as well, including Nexø's numerous articles about the purges of the Great Terror of 1936–38. In his commentary on the January 1937 trial of the 'Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Center', which he witnessed in Moscow, Nexø expressed his faith in the guilt of the accused and the truthfulness of their confessions, and argued that the trial had expressed the love of ordinary Soviet citizens for the Soviet state and constitution.[86] Commenting again on the 'Trial of the Twenty-One' in March 1938, Nexø declared that it had strengthened Soviet society by cleansing it of fascism.[87] All this demonstrates how the Comintern's line and rhetoric were prominently featured throughout the content of *Sovjet idag* and its successors, with praise for all aspects of Soviet social and industrial progress, and for 'true democracy' as opposed to 'capitalist democracy'.

As this type of rhetoric could be supported only by the most loyal friends of the Soviet Union, it took considerable commitment, as well as some literary skill, to first cope with one's own suspicions and reservations and then to defend Stalin against all opposition, including that from other socialists. From the perspective of Nexø, or other loyalist authors including the Icelandic Halldór Laxness and the German Lion Feuchtwanger who were invited to watch the show trials, critics such as André Gide had broken with the principle that a deeper conviction should guide conclusions.[88] Thus, the independent-minded critics were condemned for being unable to correctly contextualize their impressions and analyses.[89] As the loyalists had chosen the Stalinist state as the best available manifestation of communist ideals, it was to be defended through all hardships. At the organizational and transnational levels, FSU national sections from Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Holland, and Belgium joined forces to issue a statement declaring the trials 'necessary to preserve world peace' as they strengthened the USSR to 'withstand intrigues by fascist countries'.[90]

An important form of outreach for the SUV were various public events organized by the local branches. Members of the workers' delegation to the 1933 anniversary of the October Revolution were particularly active and gave speeches across Denmark. In this case, Soviet authorities had directly invested resources, as the propaganda film *15 danske Arbejdere 6000 km gennem Sovjet-Unionen* ('15 Danish Workers 6000 km across the Soviet Union') was produced about the visit and screened during the events. The film featured flourishing Ukrainian corn fields and rich crops, all part of the Soviet and SUV efforts to counter news about the Holodomor.[91] Nexø was also a popular speaker, especially following his 1934 visit to the USSR.[92] Some of the SUV-organized events in Copenhagen drew very large crowds, such as an August 1934 celebration of the 'Cheliuskin Heroes', a group of aviators who had rescued a stranded Soviet polar expedition. The evening at *Idrætshuset* ('Sports Palace') attracted more than three thousand guests and included a recitation by the author Karen Michaelis, a lecture by the Danish polar explorer Peter Freuchen (both SUV members), and several musical performances.[93] An important recurring celebration was the anniversary of the October Revolution. The 1937 event featured speeches by the communist writers Harald Herdal and Martin Andersen Nexø, and performances by a choir and a ballet troupe.[94] In 1939, the celebrations included screenings of Soviet documentaries.[95]

As an example of a typical smaller event, an evening hosted by the SUV Nørrebro branch in Copenhagen in 1935 included SUV Secretary Otto Melchior's speech about the Soviet struggle for peace, poet Otto Gelsted's recitation of his works, stonecutter H. Damholdt's talk on workplace conditions in the USSR, and pianist Børge Roger-Henriksen's performance of classical music.[96] In addition to Nexø, several other SUV-affiliated visitors to the Soviet Union gave public speeches about their experiences as guests of provincial branches.[97] The SUV secretariat also supported so-called living room meetings, where even a very small group could invite a SUV activist to give a lecture on the USSR and show supporting visual materials, typically of Soviet origin but edited and translated by the SUV.[98] However, a reading of the various SUV journals indicates that most of the lectures were still organized by the local branches of the Greater Copenhagen area. Eventually the SUV began renting cinemas to screen Soviet documentaries, feature films, and animated films.[99] In 1938, after several years of operating at various addresses in Copenhagen, the SUV found itself a large and functional office space on Frederiksborggade.[100] This facility enabled the association to develop its courses on Soviet issues into a small educational institution where German-language classes were also provided.[101] The facilities also housed a library, a bookstore with a selection of Soviet journals, books, and photo albums in English, German, French, and Yiddish, and the travel department.[102]

Another popular format for disseminating appropriate information about Soviet development was study circles organized in local branches. The earliest topics covered childcare and Soviet trade unions, but this quickly expanded to ten different courses, including women's rights, the school system, agricultural development, industrial development, housing development, the church and religion, Soviet law, and the USSR and world peace.[103] The public lectures, study circles, and Russian language classes were typically organized as winter activities. According to the members' bulletin *S.U.V. Nyt*, sixty meetings with a total of 4,750 participants were organized between January and March 1935, along with one study circle and two language classes. For the first three months of the following year, the numbers were fifty meetings with 6,450 participants, six study circles, and three language classes.[104] All of the activities mentioned above were similar to those organized by other national FSU sections. By 1932, for example, Comintern-sponsored journals were published in fourteen countries. The FSU International Bureau also circulated a bulletin with suggestions and examples for topics and articles on Soviet issues, such as the development of socialism or the peacefulness of Soviet foreign policy.[105]

While cooperation between the Danish Communist and Social Democratic parties was always limited, some of the activities of the SUV benefited from the general progress of Danish social policy during the 1930s. As the amount of paid leave was expanded for most employees, camping became a hugely popular pastime during summer vacations. With support from the Social Democratic–led government, a network of camping sites quickly developed especially along the coast south of Copenhagen.[106] In 1935, the SUV started organizing summer camps and open-air festivals for members.[107] The 1938 summer festival programme included a speech by Martin Andersen Nexø on Soviet peace policy and democracy, readings by actor Palle Fønss, performances of Russian songs by Sonia Besiakov, and jazz music.[108]

In terms of activity and popularity, the SUV had a noteworthy success in 1937 with the so-called *Den Gyldne Bog* ('The Golden Book'), a collection of signatures on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of Soviet Russia. As a similar campaign was carried out by the American FSU branch,[109] the effort was clearly Comintern-initiated. In the Golden Book, the signatories congratulated the Soviet Union for its economic and cultural achievements, and for its 'struggle so far to avoid the horrors of a new world war'. All SUV members were encouraged to collect as many signatures as possible, typically at their workplaces.[110] The campaign collected approximately fifty thousand signatures, which was more than ten times the number of SUV members.[111] This was, however, an exception to the rule. Despite high ambitions and Soviet funds, the SUV never grew into an organization with real mass participation. Although some high-profile events such as speeches by prominent intellectuals drew public attention, the Danish non-Communist press mostly ignored SUV activities.

The demise of the SUV and the legacy of the interwar organizations

By 1938, the Great Terror had seriously damaged the Soviet public image in all but the most loyal circles, and finally in August 1939, the German–Soviet nonaggression treaty brought upon a crisis that marked the end of an era for the whole transnational network of organizations loyal to the Comintern. Following this abrupt turn in Soviet foreign policy, the SUV and the other FSU sections suddenly had to abandon their principles of anti-fascism in general and the struggle against National Socialist Germany in particular.[112]

In Denmark, the DKP's and the SUV's unconditional defence of the Soviet attack on Finland that followed some three months later in November 1939 was particularly damning, and it drove most members to leave the SUV immediately.[113] The collapse of support is strikingly visible in the *S.U.V. Nyt* bulletin, which was first reduced to a one-page flyer and then completely ceased publication after four issues in 1940. The main journal, now *Nyt Land*, struggled on, with content straight from the Soviet propaganda machine covering topics like celebrations of Stalin[114] and Lenin,[115] and the socio-economic advances for the peoples of Soviet Karelia[116] and the newly annexed Baltic states.[117] Peter P. Rohde also continued to write, now focusing on blaming France and England for the outbreak of the war.[118] Meanwhile, the page count declined, and the journal finally folded in January 1941. In the last issue, an article still stubbornly claimed 'major interest among citizens in Copenhagen' for a photo exhibition about the USSR.[119]

Although the SUV and the DRS ultimately stayed formally separate throughout their existence, preparations to merge them into a single organization were initiated at least a few months before the challenges of late 1939. When SUV Chairman Nexø visited Moscow earlier that summer, he met with VOKS Chairman Viktor Smirnov and Vice Chairman Grigorii Kheifets, who was a veteran of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs' (*Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del*, NKVD) and the Comintern's foreign intelligence operations, and more recently, the leading *chekist* serving with VOKS.[120] On July 16, Nexø, Smirnov and Kheifets talked about *Dansk–Russisk Samvirke* and its chair, the schoolteacher N. K. Johansen. In Nexø's opinion, Johansen was unsuitable for the job, a 'saboteur' and a constant hindrance to VOKS efforts in Denmark. When Nexø wrote to VOKS later in September, he suggested the history professor Albert Olsen, who was

technically a Social Democrat but friendly towards the Soviet Union, as the new DRS chairman and asked whether VOKS had made a decision about bringing the DRS and the SUV closer together.[121] Olsen was chosen for the post in 1940, and he continued in the role after 1945 until his death in 1949.[122]

During the next several months, the two Danish organizations engaged in discussions and made some progress on preparing the merger. According to Hakon Jarner, a central figure in the SUV and the DRS and a member of the Danish Social–Liberal Party (*Det Radikale Venstre*), the discussions were driven by 'Soviet insistence'.[123] Recent Scandinavian developments had undoubtedly reduced Soviet enthusiasm for supporting two separate organizations. The Norwegian FSU, which had constantly struggled because of sharp divisions in the Norwegian workers' movement, was disbanded in 1938 and replaced with a new organization. Meanwhile, the more independent *Norsk-russisk kultursamband* (NRKS) was almost invisible.[124] In Sweden, the local FSU had completely replaced the non-Comintern-affiliated cultural diplomacy association in 1935.[125] However, Nexø's initiative and his personal role behind the scenes were also important in the Danish merger, and more so than his compatriots understood at the time.

The Danish merger preparations were still incomplete when the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 suppressed both the SUV and the DRS.[126] As the DKP and all Soviet-related organizations were banned, Olsen fled to Sweden, where he became an active force in the exiled Danish resistance movement. Nexø, who was first imprisoned for several weeks and then had to be hospitalized, stayed in the country for two years but in October 1943 moved to Sweden and in November 1944 to the Soviet Union. SUV Secretary Harry Jensen was less fortunate. He was deported to Germany and died in the Stutthof concentration camp.[127] Some Danes who had been central figures in Soviet–Danish cultural diplomacy during its heyday had chosen different paths well before the summer of 1941. One of the most noteworthy was the DKP and Comintern insider Aage Jørgensen, who had become vocally anti-Soviet in the mid-1930s, and eventually found his way to the Danish Nazi Party (DNSAP).[128]

Despite the loss of figures like Jørgensen and Jensen and the exile of Olsen and Nexø, neither turncoats, nor the crises of August 1939 and April 1940 and the shutdown of June 1941 could ultimately overcome the resilience of Danish–Soviet co-operation. A circle of former SUV and DRS members joined the Danish resistance movement by publishing eighteen issues of the illegal magazine *Nyt fra Sovjetunionen* ('News from the Soviet Union') between May 1943 and April 1945.[129] After Germany surrendered, SUV and DRS veterans set up a Help Committee to support former Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) left behind by the occupation forces, inspected camps, visited sick POWs in hospitals, and even secured and maintained grave sites for deceased POWs.[130]

The two interwar organizations were finally merged in late 1946, but with little immediate effect.[131] Activities remained local and informal until a new national Danish–Soviet association was established in 1950. Two years later, the initially familiarly-named new *Dansk–Russisk Samvirke* was rebranded as *Landsforeningen til samvirke mellem Danmark og Sovjetunionen* ('Association for Cooperation between Denmark and the Soviet Union', DKSU).[132] As a mass organization unlike the former elitist DRS, the new association was a post-Comintern era spiritual successor to the SUV. Its status in Soviet-Danish cultural diplomacy was consolidated in 1977, when the Soviet successor organization of VOKS, the 'Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with

Foreign Countries' (*Soiuz sovetskikh obshchestv druzhby i kul'turnykh sviazei s zarubezhnymi stranami*, SSOD) established a 'Friendship House' on Vester Voldgade in central Copenhagen, technically owned by the Soviet embassy but run by the DKSU. The Friendship House functioned similarly to the former SUV building, hosting public events and exhibitions, a library, a gallery, a book shop, and a travel department. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the DKSU had more than ten thousand individual members and forty-nine organizational members nationwide.[133]

During the final years of the Soviet Union, the DKSU lost its covert Soviet funding, had to leave the Friendship House, was abandoned by the vast majority of its members, and again, had to reorganize and reimagine itself.[134] After a period of near hibernation, the name was changed to the form that still exists, *Dansk–Russisk Forening* (DRF, 'Danish–Russian Association'). The post-Soviet cultural diplomacy organization has retained its emphasis on activities, mostly organized by its local branches, as well as some larger events, including conferences on Danish–Russian relations hosted at the Danish Parliament. The DRF has chosen to extend its legacy to the original *Dansk–Russisk Samvirke*, and thus, has been preparing to commemorate its centenary in 2024 as the world's oldest association in existence for people-to-people relations with Russia.

Conclusions

Although an overall history of the Comintern's FSU network is still lacking, its foundations are strengthening with each contributing study. With this article, we have aimed to engage in this work by narrating and evaluating the history of the SUV by placing the Danish FSU branch in a wider national and transnational context. Our main point of comparison has been the DRS and the ways in which the two associations' origins and activities were related to each other. The organizations shared several interests and key individuals, who were also important to the wider Soviet–Danish cultural diplomacy framework. Each association also participated in all kinds of cultural and social activities, and not all of them had a direct connection to Soviet issues. Even so, the SUV and the DRS were separate entities with distinct contexts, aims, and methods of operation. In the wider Danish societal context, both were relevant, and at times very active, but also constrained by the limits of the general appeal of Soviet society and culture in interwar Denmark, especially during the late 1930s.

Some initial observations can be made from the transnational perspective as well. In principle, the parallel structure of two distinct nation-specific organizations for cultural diplomacy with the Soviet Union was a very common phenomenon during the interwar period. The clearest difference between the two was that the SUV was a transnationally networked mass organization, and the DRS was not. Not surprisingly, existing research on other national FSU branches indicates several similarities in their activities and life cycles. In the Scandinavian context, the resilience of the Danish SUV was bolstered by the comparative cohesion of the national Communist Party and widely respected people in key positions, most importantly Martin Andersen Nexø. Although the DRS was always a small organization, it remained separate from the DKP, and especially the Comintern, until the merger preparations began in late 1939. In Sweden and Norway, the DRS counterparts were unable to either exist or operate that long.

Unsurprisingly, the legacies of the SUV and the DRS are mixed. In occupied Denmark, former members played a limited but actual role in the resistance movement through their publishing activities. Immediately after the occupation ended, members also engaged in humanitarian efforts that evoked the early history of the DRS. However, the SUV's unconditional support and defence of brutal Soviet policies, especially after the Great Terror and during the Stalin era in general, are also an integral part of the story.

With this article, we have attempted to demonstrate that despite archival fragmentation, comprehensive nation-focused case studies of organizations such as the SUV and the DRS can, and should, be constructed. Our findings suggest that these focused studies contribute to our wider understanding of how nation-specific organizations were formed and how they functioned in the wider cultural diplomacy framework that included the Comintern and the Soviet state. While the history of the *Friends of the Soviet Union* remains partly unexplored, it is already evident that in the 'solar system of organizations and smaller committees', envisioned by Otto Wille Kuusinen in 1926, the Danish SUV filled its place. Together with the DRS, it operated in an arena of parallelism, hybrid complexity, and blurred lines between different actors. While both organizations were mediums of interaction in a transnational framework, their specific activities also had a clear and relevant national dimension.

Notes

1. Kuusinen, "Report of the Commission," 429.
2. Interview with Asger Pedersen, former National Secretary of the Society for Cooperation between Denmark and the Soviet Union (*Landsforeningen til Samvirke mellem Danmark og Sovjetunionen*, DKSU), 9 August 2009. DKSU is not an official acronym for the organization but is used here for brevity.
3. Memorandum on the occasin of the 50th anniversary of DKSU, 1974, DKSU archive (DKSUA) in the Library and Archives of the Workers' Movement (*Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv*, ABA), case 2.
4. In August 1941, 14 months after the occupation, Operation Barbarossa shattered the uneasy German–Soviet pact, and the Communist movement was then completely outlawed in Denmark from August 1941 until May 1945.
5. The Comintern's clandestine and illegal organizations, which focused on money transfers, document forgeries, espionage, and later sabotage, largely moved from Germany to Copenhagen after the events of 1933. The illegal apparatus, also widely studied by Scandinavian historians, is outside the scope of this analysis, which is limited to public interactions.
6. For wider discussions on cultural diplomacy, e.g. on how its various definitions address the roles of governmental and nongovernmental actors and spheres of society, see Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*; Snow and Cull, *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*.
7. On VOKS and Soviet cultural diplomacy, see David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*; David-Fox, *Crossing Borders*, 58–63.
8. See Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers*, 146, 201; David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 61–86; Golubev and Nevezjin, *Formirovanie obraza*, 69–86; Stern, *Western Intellectuals*, 103–4. Various studies of Cold War era friendship associations often include short references to the earlier national organizations, but the parallel structures of the state and Comintern levels are again largely sidelined. See Anderson, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 15–17; Rotihaug, *For fred og vennskap*, 11; Wenell, *Sovjetunionen och svenska vänsällskap*, 83.

9. Studer, *Transnational World*, 4–7, 22. While defining the Comintern's transnationalism, Studer follows Jürgen Osterhammel and Akira Iriye.
10. For previous research on the Danish organizations see Frederichsen, 'Fra nødhjælp til samvirke,' on which the following discussion on the founding of the SUV and the DRS is partially based. Monographs that discuss the Danish organizations include Houmann, *Nexø og hans samtid* (3 volumes); Jensen, *Stalinismens fascination*; Thing, *Kommunismens Kultur* (2 volumes). On processes of dedication, see Saunier, *Transnational History*, 82–6.
11. Rønning, "Intellectuals ready to fight," 173–86. References to the various publications in Scandinavian languages are given throughout this article.
12. See e.g. Christensen et al., *Arbejdernes historie*.
13. See Romanovskii, *Mezhdunarodnye kul´turnye*, 12–46. Additionally, several articles were published in the scholarly journal *Voprosy istorii*, see references further on.
14. Jørgensen et al., *Datskie kadry*. This collaboration also produced a collection of research articles, but they do not discuss the SUV or the DRS. See Jørgensen et al., *Komintern*.
15. Thing, *Kommunismens Kultur*, 116–17, 930–1. These groups were *Danmarks Venstresocialistiske Parti* "'Left Socialist Party of Denmark'), *Socialdemokratisk Ungdoms Forbund* (the youth fraction of the Social Democratic Party) and *Kommunistisk Lærerklub* ('The Communist Teachers' Club'). The first two were founding members of the Communist Party of Denmark (*Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti*, DKP) in 1920.
16. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 47.
17. *Politiken*, 6 May 1922; *Bulletin der Auslandsvertretung der Hilfkommission für den Hungerden beim allrussiscen Zentral-Exekutiv-Komitee* 3/1921, 20. The equivalent sums in 2019 value are ca. 17.5 million and 2.6 million Danish Crowns, or 2.3 million and 350,000 euros.
18. *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsforbund* to *angeschlossenen Gewerkschaftzentralen*, August 18, 1921; related resolution (*Entschliessung*), undated, Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (*Landsorganisationen i Danmark*, LO) archive (LOA) in ABA, case 1356.
19. LO to *Komiteen for Hjælp til Rusland*, September 7, 1921 LOA ABA, case 1356. IAH had been initiated in Berlin by Willi Münzenberg following Maxim Gorki's call for international aid to the famine victims.
20. LO to the Danish Red Cross, November 3, 1921 LOA ABA, case 1356.
21. "Stand der russischen Hilfsaktion," July 31, 1922 LOA ABA, case 1356.
22. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 47.
23. *Rossiiskoe telegrafnoe agentstvo* (Russian Telegraph Agency, ROSTA) Bulletin no. 3 August 11, 3, 2, 1921, Marie Nielsen collection (MNC) in ABA, case 3; Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 46. The delegation of the All-Russian Committee included e.g. Leo Tolstoy's daughter Aleksandra Tolstoya.
24. Ernst Christiansen (*Komiteen for Hjælp til Rusland*) to LO, October 6, 1921 LOA ABA, case 1356; Final accounts, August 1, 1923 MNC ABA, case 3. Most of the funds seem to have been collected in the early stages of the campaign.
25. Russian Famine Fund accounts, August 15, 1921 to December 31, 1922 Aage Jørgensen collection (AJC) in ABA, case 2.
26. Houmann, *Nexø og hans samtid*, vol. 2, 165.
27. *Die Frauenkomitee* (K. H. R.) to Comrade Dikansky, 1 January 1922; *Det Forenede Dampskibs Selskab* (DFDS) shipping company to *Kvindekomiteen*, 27 January 1922; DFDS to *Komiteen for Hjælp til Rusland*, 2 February 1922; Ernst Christiansen to *Handelsdelegation Sowjet-Russlands*, April 22, 1922; "Bericht des Frauenkomités," July 3, 1922; "Berichtigung von Marie Nielsen," July 26, 1922; undated flyer, all in MNC ABA, case 3.
28. Memo by Alice Wallenius, March 4, 1922 MNC ABA, case 3.
29. Houmann, *Nexø og børnene*, 5–34; Houmann, *Nexø og hans samtid*, vol. 2, 154–69.
30. Houmann and Thing, *Venskab og revolution*, 214–17.
31. Undated flyer, first half of 1923, Georg Bolgann collection (GBC) in ABA.
32. Letter to Nexø, July 5, 1923 Martin Andersen Nexø collection in ABA, case 2.
33. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 51; Frederichsen, "Kammerat Nexø," 100; Thing, "Den politiske Nexø," 89.

34. *Socialdemokraten*, April 24, 1924; Bylaws of the DRS, 1935, AJC ABA, case 2.
35. Another public event took place the following week to celebrate General Consul Peter Schou, who had been the head of the Danish delegation during the trade negotiations in Moscow. See *Berlingske Tidende*, June 28, 1924; *Politiken*, June 22, 2027 30, 1924.
36. See e.g. Barghoorn, Frederick C. *Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 28–59; Lilleker, *Against the Cold War*; 31, 42–67; Rose, *Soviet Propaganda Network*, 243–54.
37. Fayet, "VOKS: The third Dimension," 42–3; Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 55–6; Margulies, *Pilgrimage to Russia*, 38–44; Rotihaug, "For fred og vennskap," 21.
38. Ioffe, "Deiatel'nost' zarubezhnykh," 15–19; Saakov, "Dvizhenie obshchestvennosti," 16–20; *Sovjet idag* 7/1934, 21–2; *Sovjet idag* 13/1935, 10–1; *Sovjet idag*, April 1937, 5.
39. An article by the SUV activist Ingvar Nielsen puts the overall membership figure of all the FSU branches at five million, which must be a huge exaggeration. See *Sovjet idag*, June–July 1937, 13.
40. *Politiken*, November 12, 1927; "Einladungskarte zum Internationalen Kongress der Freunde der Sowjet-Union no 960"; Undated invitation, GBC ABA, case 1., November 10, 1927.
41. Telegram from *Zentralgewerkschaft Sowjetunion* to LO, October 4,1927; LO to the *International Federation of Trade Unions* (IFTU), October 7, 1927 LOA ABA, case 1356.
42. Circular letter received by LO, October 14, 1927 LOA ABA, case 1356; Jensen, *Vor Rejse*.
43. Circular letter, February 6, 1930 Danish Union for Friends of the Soviet Union (*Landsforbundet af Sovjet Unionens Venner i Danmark*, SUV) collection (SUVA) in ABA, case 1.
44. Spelling to Jørgensen, September 23, 1933; Leif Gundel to Jørgensen, September 21, 1933 AJC ABA, case 2. Aage Jørgensen's personal history reads like an encyclopaedia of the Danish communist workers' movement. A founding member of the breakaway Socialist Labour Party (*Socialistisk Arbejderparti*) in 1918 and its later iterations, the editor of the first party newspaper *Klassekampen*, and a member of the Comintern's Executive Committee, Jørgensen played a leading role in the founding and running of the DRS, the SUV, and the Intourist office in Denmark. The Danish public radio often featured him as an expert on Soviet topics, and as such he was generally considered a semi-official Soviet spokesperson in Denmark. See Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 54–5; Thing, *Kommunismens kultur*, 124–6; Kofoed Pedersen, "Kommunist, socialdemokrat og nazist," 43–53.
45. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 58. The publishing of *Sovjet idag* started in 1934.
46. See SUV ledger, March 1932 to November 1934, SUVA ABA, case 1. On the Comintern's control over finances and activities, see Thing, "Ole Sohn og Moskvaguldet," 243–4; Holtsmark, "Moscow Gold," 276–91.
47. Jensen, *Stalinismens fascination*, 42–3.
48. *Sovjet idag* 13/1935, 10–1.
49. *Sovjet idag*, April 1937, 5. Wieth died of pneumonia in 1937 already at the age of 27.
50. *Sovjet idag* 5/1934, 8–9.
51. *S.U.V. Nyt* 6/1937, 2.
52. *S.U.V. Nyt* 6/1939, 3.
53. *Sovjet idag* 5/1934, 22, *Sovjet idag* 7/1934, 21.
54. *S.U.V. Nyt* 2/1937, 1–2.
55. *Sovjet og Vi* 2/1938, 4; Frederichsen, "Kammerat Nexø," 100–3.
56. Jansen and Thing, "Communism and Intellectuals," 219–20.
57. *Sovjet idag*, January 1936, 13.
58. *Sovjet idag* 4/1934, 12.
59. Ibid.
60. *Sovjet idag* 13/1935, 12.
61. Undated DRS membership register, AJC ABA, case 2; DRS membership register with 166 names, 1940–41, DKSUA ABA, case 106; Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 54.
62. *Fakta om Sovjetunionen* 8/1964, 19–21; *Fakta om Sovjetunionen* 10/1964, 16–7.
63. *Politiken*, August 3, 1933.
64. *Ekstra Bladet*, November 16, 1934.

65. For an example of communications between the DRS and VOKS leadership from the 1930s, see e.g. Copy of telegram from Bolgann and Aage Jørgensen to VOKS Chairman Aleksandr Arosev, June 29, 1934 AJC ABA, case 2.
66. Various undated invitations and concert programmes, AJC ABA, case 2.
67. Pedersen, *Dansk–Russisk Samvirke*, 4.
68. *Sovjet idag*, December 1936, 7.
69. ABA/Georg Bolgann/1/Correspondence between Bolgann and the business manager of the Social Democratic Party of Denmark, September 16–8, 1930; Alsing Andersen to Albert Olsen, March 16, 1935 Albert Olsen collection in KB, case 1; see also Rønning, "Intellectuals ready to fight," 175.
70. On Sweden, see Björlin, "Kultur och politik," 39–71; Wenell, *Sovjetunionen och svenska vänsällskap*, 83–4; on Norway, Rotihaug, "For fred og vennskap," 17–26; Bentzen, "En tid for begeistring," 123; on the Netherlands, *S.U.V. Nyt* 6/1937, 2; on Britain, Rose, *Soviet Propaganda Network*, 245–8; on Canada, Anderson, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 15–27.
71. *Sovjet idag* 1/1934, 5–12; *Sovjet idag* 5/1934, 8–9; *Sovjet idag* 6/1934, 8–9, 18–9.
72. *Sovjet idag* 2/1934, 6.
73. *Sovjet idag* 4/1934, 11.
74. *Sovjet idag* 11/1935, 2–14.
75. *Sovjet idag*, November 1936, 16; *Sovjet idag*, June–July 1937, 16.
76. *S.U.V. Nyt* 1/1937, 4.
77. *Sovjet idag* 1/1934, 12; *Sovjet idag* 9/1935, 15; *Sovjet idag* 8/1934, 12.
78. See e.g. coverage of a 1933 workers' delegation to the USSR, *Sovjet idag* 1/1934, 5–12.
79. *Sovjet idag* 9/1935, 11–4; *Sovjet idag* 10/1935, 7.
80. *Sovjet idag* 6/1934, 21.
81. *Sovjet idag*, May 1936, 2–3
82. *Nyt Land* 9/1939, 4–6.
83. *Sovjet og Vi* 1/1938, 3; *Sovjet og Vi* 2/1938, 1, 4, *Sovjet og Vi* 3/1938, 1, 4, *Sovjet og Vi* 5/1938, 1, 4.
84. *Nyt Land* 10/1939:10, 1–3.
85. *Nyt Land* 1/1940, 6–7.
86. *Sovjet idag*, March 1937, 3–4.
87. *Sovjet og Vi* 2/1938, 1.
88. On the show trials and Nexø, see Keel, *Der trotzige Däne*, 226–33; on Laxness, see Guðmundsson, *Halldór Laxness*; Ólafsson, *Appelsínur frá Abkasíu*, 30–42; on Feuchtwanger, see David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 269–76. See also Soimetsä, "Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," 47–8.
89. Thing, *Kommunismens kultur*, 928–9.
90. *Sovjet idag*, March 1937, 4.
91. *Sovjet idag* 1/1934, 10; *Sovjet idag* 3/1934, 13.
92. *Sovjet idag* 8/1934, 6.
93. *Sovjet idag* 6/1934, 23–4; *Sovjet idag* 8/1934, 7.
94. *Sovjet idag*, November 1937, 2.
95. *S.U.V. Nyt* 11/1939, 1.
96. *S.U.V. Nyt* 4/1935, 16.
97. *Sovjet idag* 10/1935, 16.
98. *Sovjet idag*, February 1936, 15; *Sovjet idag*, April 1936, 15.
99. *Sovjet og Vi* 9/1938, 4.
100. *S.U.V. Nyt* 2/1939, 4.
101. *Sovjet idag*, March 1936, 15; *Sovjet og Vi* 9/1938, 4; *S.U.V. Nyt* 3/1939, 3.
102. *S.U.V. Nyt* 2/1939, 4; *S.U.V. Nyt* 3/1939, 2; *S.U.V. Nyt* 7–8/1939, 4.
103. *Sovjet idag* 12/1935, 15; *Sovjet idag* 13/1935, 15.
104. *S.U.V. Nyt* 5/1936, 2.

105. Ioffe, "Deiatel'nost' zarubezhnykh," 19–27. Various types of propaganda publications were also provided to the national branches with the support of both FSU and VOKS. In 1938–40, the Norwegian FSU journal was also titled *Nytt Land*, and both the Danish and Norwegian journals changed their names three times. See Rotihaug, *For fred og vennskap*, 11.
106. Henning, "Farvel til hverdagen," 32–62.
107. *S.U.V. Nyt* 1/1935, 4; *S.U.V. Nyt* 2/1935, 6; *Sovjet idag*, July 1936, 15; *Sovjet idag*, August 1936, 15; *S.U.V. Nyt* 8/1936, 2; *S.U.V. Nyt* 4/1937, 3.
108. *Sovjet og Vi* 7/1938, 3. Besiakov's name is spelled 'Besekow' in some sources.
109. The Golden Book of the American FSU branch is mentioned in Caute, *Fellow-Travellers*, 146.
110. *S.U.V. Nyt* 2/1937, 1.
111. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 59.
112. For an example of this discussed in 1970s Soviet historiography, see Papkov and Saakov, "Mezhdunarodnoe dvizhenie," 82.
113. Jensen, *Stalinismens fascination*, 44.
114. *Nyt Land* 1/1940:1, 3.
115. *Nyt Land* 4/1940, 2–3, 5–6.
116. *Nyt Land* 7/1940, 2, 14.
117. *Nyt Land* 6/1940, 7.
118. *Nyt Land* 3/1940, 6–7.
119. *Nyt Land* 1/1941, 13.
120. Soimetsä, "Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," 38. On Kheifets and VOKS, see Laamanen, "VOKS, Cultural Diplomacy," 1034; Laamanen, "From Communist Cadre," 9. On Kheifets' career as a *chekist*, see Degtiarev and Kolpakidi, *Vneshniaia razvedka SSSR*, 602–3; Usov, *Sovetskaia razvedka*, 354.
121. Soimetsä, "Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," 38–9. At the time, the DRS was still operating and, for example, communicating with VOKS to arrange some Danish visits to the Soviet Union. The details about Johansen's tenure as the DRS chairperson remain somewhat unclear, but in all probability Johansen held the post after Ejnar Thomassen and before Albert Olsen. See also Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 55.
122. Frederichsen, "Fra nødhjælp til samvirke," 59.
123. DRS Congress minutes, March 23, 1951 Jørgen Jørgensen collection in the Danish National Library *(Det Kongelige Bibliotek*, KB), case 22. On Hakon Jarner, see also SUV Congress minutes, November 10, 1935 SUVA ABA, case 1; Carlsen, *Kærlighed i krig*, 166.
124. Rotihaug, *For fred og vennskap*, 21–6; Bentzen, "En tid for begeistring," 123.
125. Björlin, "Kultur och politik," 39–71; Wenell, *Sovjetunionen och svenska vänsällskap 1945–1958*, 83–4.
126. See Membership protocol 1940–41, DKSUA ABA, case 106. To our knowledge, no definitive conclusions about the state of the merger negotiations in April 1940 have been made before the publishing of this article.
127. Pedersen, "Dansk–Russisk Samvirke," 6–7.
128. Kofoed Pedersen, "Kommunist, socialdemokrat og nazist," 43–53.
129. Revsgaard Andersen, *DKP og frihedskampen*. In total, more than 200 different illegal journals or newspapers were published in occupied Denmark.
130. Hans Hedtoft to Albert Olsen, August 7, 1945 Alfred Jensen collection in ABA, case 1; see also *Nationaltidende*, May 25, 1945; *Socialdemokraten*, May 25, 1945.
131. The merger is mentioned in *Land og Folk*, October 22, 1946.
132. Frederichsen, *Gennem kendskab til venskab*, 19.
133. Frederichsen, "Venskabshuset," 68–86.
134. Frederichsen, *Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, 263–4. Today, the former Friendship House hosts the Russian Centre for Science and Culture, run by *Rossotrudnichestvo*, more formally *Federal'noe agentstvo po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, sootechestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom, i po mezhdunarodnomu gumanitarnomu sotrudnichestvu* (Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation), a Russian public diplomacy organization under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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