

SOVIET TOURISM THROUGH THE EYES OF FRENCH TRAVELERS

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE FRENCH PRESS OF THE 1930s



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15/8/2021

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Course name: MA Arts and Culture (Specialization Tourism and Culture)

Title of the document: Soviet Tourism through the Eyes of French Travelers – A critical review of the French Press of the 1930s

Filing date: 15/8/2020

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SUMMARY

In the following thesis I will try to examine how the soviet tourism was presented in the French press of the 1930s. Not many scholars have tried a relevant research in the past. This particular research has a strong connection with the tourism studies and adds a new perspective while connecting parts of under-researched subjects. Through the presentation of the theoretical and methodological framework on which this thesis is based on as well as the different types of tourism that the thesis falls under, the reader builds a strong background in order to examine in depth the conducted research. A review of the role of Intourist, a core element around which the thesis revolves, but also the foreign tourism in the Soviet Union would be presented. In both cases, the emphasis is on France and the French tourists. Later, a detailed analysis of the sources I have collected is presented, using the tools of discourse analysis and framing, based on the theory of tourist gaze by Urry. More specifically, one chapter is focused on articles reflecting the role of the soviet propaganda and the other on articles reflecting the role of Intourist. Finally, the conclusion of the research, consists a sum up of all my findings, reflect on my research and answer my research questions.

1. Introduction

In an era where travelling abroad is considered to be a leisure activity, that most of us choose to do in our spare time, mainly for relaxing, experiencing new cultures and identities, but also history and places is of great importance. This huge economy that flows around the word “tourism” is boosted by the relatively easiness of travelling between countries. This has not been always the case. Up until the fall of communism the world was divided largely between east and west. The Iron Curtain set a border on the eastern side of the European continent. Travelling from and to the Soviet Union, was something that required quite some paperwork, keeping away a portion of potential tourists that did not have the patience or the financial resources to follow this path. But travelling to the Soviet Union might had a mystery for people coming from Western countries. The prejudice around that area, which was stimulated by the political division, along with the lack of communication in a period where global communication was hard to be achieved, since internet was not existing, gave to the future tourists another reason to visit the country. This was not simply a new, foreign country, but a country that had a whole different political and ideological construction, from what was then known to the West. The path was officially paved with the foundation of the national tour operator company (Intourist) in 1929.¹ More specifically for this research project, the case that would be analyzed is that of France. I will examine how soviet tourism was presented in French newspaper articles of the 1930s through the trips of the French tourists who visited USSR. The newspapers cover the years 1930-1939, a decade that starts after the foundation of the official tourist agency of the Soviet Union, Intourist in 1929 and ends with the beginning of the second World War, that shaped Europe as we know it.

¹ Kravitz, Samantha A. “The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939,” 52.

1.1 The topic and its relevance

Travelling to the Soviet Union through the eyes of the French tourists is consequently the central theme that will be explored in this research and it raises a variety of questions like the main research question about how did the French press of the 1930s present the Soviet Union to its readers. The main focus is on interpreting this whole travel experience through the eyes of a Westerner and in this case a French tourist. The debate that arose between east and west both on a political, but also on a cultural level consisted my personal motivation to conduct the following research, since it can uniquely combine tourism and politics, which was my major field of studies in my bachelor degree.

Trying to answer why the following research is important, we should examine piece by piece all the aspects of this complex topic. One has to do with the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The 1930s is the decade of the rise of the dictators in Europe, but most importantly in the Soviet Union, as well as in Germany. The importance of Germany lies in the fact that, it was a country the Soviet Union had bilateral relationships not only on financial, but also on a political level.² In addition to that, Germany is the natural border between France and the Soviet Union. As Elizabeth Piller mentions in her work, Weimar Germany often used tourism to reshape the bad image it had since the first World War, but also as a medium of advertising Germany's development and that was the case for many other countries worldwide, including the Soviet Union.³ Piller, whose work was mainly focused on American tourists and the application of foreign tourist policies on them, concluded that the tourism industry and everything around it (agencies, railway companies, tourism offices) were targeting Americans for financial reasons, mainly to attract new investments and restore their economies, an example the Soviet Union followed as well.⁴

On answering why France was chosen to be studied, it is because it is a high-income western and liberal country with a political structure complete opposite of that of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, in 1932 the non-aggression Franco-soviet pact was signed

² Koivunen, Emma-Reetta. *Tourism and the Reality of Everyday Life: an Ethnographic Study on the Shetland Islands*, 2012, 41.

³ Piller, Elisabeth. "Managing Imponderables: The Rise of U.S. Tourism and the Transformation of German Diplomacy, 1890-1933." *Diplomatic History*, 2019, 75.

⁴ Zuelow, Eric. *Touring beyond the Nation: a Transnational Approach to European Tourism*. Aldershot, England, etc.: Ashgate, 2011., 70.

after the return of the socialist government back in the French Parliament. It is clear that this set the path for an amelioration in the bilateral relations between France and the Soviet Union. The French foresaw the potential in the soviet economy.⁵ The Soviet Foreign Affairs minister, Maxim Litvinov, proposed a collaboration between France, Britain and the USSR against the Nazi Germany leading to the Franco-soviet pact of May 1935. It was not until 1938 when Franco-soviet relations got a bit colder, mainly due to Stalin's urge to follow his purge plans. In 1939, the Soviet Union separated its position from the Anglo-French collaboration, since it lost faith in their credibility and went deep into the Stalin reign.⁶ It is clear, however, that for the most part of the 1930s the Franco-soviet relations were not only positive, but prosperous and productive, which makes the examination of this decade even more interesting.

Along with the rise of dictators came the Soviet propaganda. The 1930s are the first years of the reign of Stalin. That was a policy that mainly aimed in promoting patriotism, but went further and affected other scientific fields, like sociology or genetics. During the years of Stalin any deviation from the propaganda was punished with execution or work at the labor camps.⁷

The French youth association "Les amis de l'Union soviétique (AUS)" (The friends of the Soviet Union) which was led by the communist party of France and was officially created in 1927, paved the way for the organized development of French tourism in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It promoted the USSR as a touristic destination, especially to youngsters and had as its main goal the preparation of countries outside the Union for the implementation of socialism, by diffusing a positive image of the regime, on both an economic and social level. In a way it consisted a pro-soviet society, in which younger people would learn about the "Truth of the Soviet Union", through propaganda.⁸ In order not to leave the truth only to those few who had seen it with their

⁵ Watson, David Robin. *Makers of the Modern World*. France. London: Haus Histories / Haus Publishing, 2008, 175.

⁶ Bellanger, Claude. *Histoire Generale De La Presse Francaise*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969, 182-189.

⁷ Sune Bechmann Pedersen, and Christian Noack. *Tourism and Travel during the Cold War: Negotiating Tourist Experiences across the Iron Curtain*. London: Routledge, 2021, 46.

⁸ Mazuy, Rachel, Jean-Jacques Becker, and Zérafra-Dray Danièle. *La Section française Des "Amis De L'Union soviétique": 1927-1939: Une "Organisation De Masse" Sympathisante Du Parti Communiste français*, 1988, 23.

bare eyes, the Organization offered different types of tours (most of them guided) to the USSR.⁹

The turning point that facilitated French tourism to the Soviet Union can be considered the years 1932-1933. The foundation of Intourist, a key institution that would be examined in the first part of the thesis. Its role and the image of the Soviet Union presented through their guides is another core element of this thesis along with the reliability of their guide tours and information. Both would be set under a scope of examination. Intourist, boosted the arrival of tourists that were not belonging only to a certain social group, as it happened before where the majority of the tourists were mainly intellectuals. Now traveling opened also to people of middle classes.¹⁰ Certain events and facts during the 1930s have also assisted in projecting the Soviet Union to France and increased the number of French tourists on soviet soil. This decade was named by the Soviets as “the French scientific decade”, since many scientists visited the Soviet Union during this time and helped in its scientific enrichment.¹¹

In 1933, the international Olympiad of open theaters held on soviet soil facilitated the evolution of the Franco-soviet cooperation in theatrical arts and hosted a great number of French artists who participated with their groups.¹² In 1934, the French language started to be taught in the secondary schools of the Soviet Union. The third international congress of art and history which took place in Moscow in 1935, brought a great number of art historians and museum experts to the Soviet Union, who were able to observe the vast art collections of the country and transfer those observations back to the West. It is clear, that slowly but steadily the French tourism in the Soviet Union started to witness some growth during this decade, which is often described as the decade of the tourism opening of the Soviet Union to foreign countries.¹³

This decade has an additional importance on tourism. During this decade the various governments around the world realized the potential in tourism and commenced to

⁹ Koivunen, Emma-Reetta. *Tourism and the Reality of Everyday Life: an Ethnographic Study on the Shetland Islands*, 2012., 190.

¹⁰ Kravitz, Samantha A. “The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939,” 134.

¹¹ Ibidem, 36.

¹² Kehayan, Nina, Jean Kehayan, and Montalbán Vázquez Manuel. *Calle Del Proletario Rojo: Dos Comunistas Franceses En La URSS*. Barcelona: Blume, 1979, 64.

¹³ Martin, Marc. *Médias Et Journalistes De La République*. Paris: O. Jacob, 1997, 106.

approach it with organized policies, like the creation of tourist agencies.¹⁴ Tourism was developed mainly for financial purposes. It was already established in a premature form, since many international exhibitions were already held, addressing mostly to professionals, so in a sense a basic form of tourism existed, but it only considered a small part of people. This period which followed exactly after the first World War, still experienced the effects of nationalism that had a very negative aftermath for the whole Europe. Under this scope, tourism and experiencing new cultures and countries was used as a tool to limit nationalism and racism. In addition to that tourism in the interwar period gave a psychological relief to people traumatized by the war. Furthermore, the vast use of the bicycle as well as that of the automobiles, facilitated transportation and supported the development of tourism. This decade of constant international political shifts, as this one was, made tourism a tool of the diplomats in exercising their foreign policy.¹⁵

Previous research in the study of the convergence of tourism and the USSR has focused on a specific number of topics. By focusing the discussion on the relation with the Soviet Union, a relatively unpopular for that period of time tourist destination of great cultural and economic importance, new perspectives are added. On the level of the academic field and the industry of tourism, the importance of this question lies on a few key issues. First of all, it relates to different types of tourism that are not historically focused. In other words, it can expand the academic field by adding the cultural perspective of a certain nation (in this case France), as well as a political aspect to it, since it helps understand how a country's different from the capitalism of West political system influenced the country's policies towards tourism. This special characteristic would therefore add to the international literature.

On a social level, the reader by understanding the way a dictatorship was operating its propaganda even towards tourists can appreciate better the liberty provided in our times by the more advanced and open regimes. By understanding the past, we can appreciate the present and not repeat the same errors in the future.

¹⁴ Zuelow, Eric. *Touring beyond the Nation: a Transnational Approach to European Tourism*. Aldershot, England, etc.: Ashgate, 2011, 87.

¹⁵ Roberts, Alison J. "The Business of Tourism." *Tourism Management* 4, no. 3 (1983): 224–25.

1.2 Status quaestionis

There have been some works focusing on tourism in the USSR, which also include low key comments of the tourist gaze of the people who visited those places, as well as the way this type of tourism was projected in France. The limited literature underlines how niche this topic is and that is quite logical, considering the fact that the access to the USSR was limited for many years.

In this part an example of scholarly literature on the topic will be presented. As it will become clear, there is some relevant work done around this topic, but still some parts remain under-researched or have not been touched at all.

To start with some examples of those works, the historian Michael David-Fox describes the large flows of Westerners, both from Europe and the US, who travelled to the Soviet Union especially in the 1920s and 1930s in order to have an insight in what is referred as the “Soviet Experiment” and how the soviet system was affected by those tourists.

¹⁶ This work is mainly referring to a group of people with specific backgrounds. They were American and European and either professionals, intellectuals or artists and scientists of a great, already established social status. He continues by making a critical comparison between the East and West and later emphasizes on the great effort the Soviets did to shape the international communism and project their example abroad through propaganda.¹⁷ There is no specific focus though on the behavior of the Soviets towards the French. No particular attention is paid on how the tourists experienced the Soviet Union and the link to the political aspect is barely present. In one of her articles, Sheila Fitzpatrick gives an insight in Western tourism in the 1930s Soviet Union through observation. A significant part of this work also mentions the reluctant soviet position to everything coming from the West and the enormous effort from the soviet part to reshape the western opinion according to theirs, something that the current research justifies as well. No specific focus is set on French tourism, but more likely general Western tourism as a concept. Furthermore, no special attention is paid on the language interaction and there is barely no attempt to interpret it and connect it with the

¹⁶ David-Fox, Michael. *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 47-52.

concept of western tourism, but also the political debate between East and West.¹⁸ Historian, Danilo Kravets, clears up on western tourism in the Soviet Ukraine during the 1920s and 1930s and manages to explain thoroughly to the reader the image during these two decades. On top of that, this is one of the few works, like my research, that is mainly based on newspaper articles. Nonetheless, the core is the author's native Ukraine and the western tourism it examines is mainly American and partly West European.¹⁹

French historian Rachel Mazuy narrates the French tourism in the Soviet Union after the Russian revolution, until the beginning of the Second World War. The core of her work is the workers' movement and how French activists saw the Soviet Union as a different example by which they could be inspired. She also includes information about how the soviet government was pushed through the tourist practices and it was based on the Italian and German model.²⁰ The emphasis of her work though is set on the technical parts of the trip and not so much focused on the images this trip imprinted on the French, as this current research will try to uncover. Sylvain Pattieu, in one of his article casts lights on French tourism in the Soviet Union. This work has a deeper view, since it is produced by a French historian, who clearly knows the French mentality.²¹ Although the article does not limit itself to the 1930s, but rather covers a large period up until the fall of communism, it pivots around the travels of French communists with the association "Tourisme et travail" and therefore narrows down the spectrum of tourism, since they all had a common political background. There is no further connection of tourism with the political debate between capitalism and socialism, but there is a political point of view since the association was consisted mainly by French socialists. The information provided is rather practical (some statistical data are also presented) but there is almost no information about the interaction between the tourists

¹⁸ Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "Foreigners observed: Moscow visitors in the 1930s under the gaze of their soviet guides." *Russian History* 35, no. 1-2 (2008), 215–35.

¹⁹ Kravets, D. "Soviet Ukraine in the eyes of Western travellers (1920s–1930s)." *Сторінки історії*, no. 49 (2019), 34-36.

²⁰ Mazuy, Rachel, Jean-Jacques Becker, and Zérapha-Dray Danièle. *La Section française Des "Amis De L'Union soviétique": 1927-1939: Une "Organisation De Masse" Sympathisante Du Parti Communiste français*, 1988., 22.

²¹ Pattieu, Sylvain. "Voyager En Pays Socialiste Avec Tourisme Et Travail." *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 102, no. 2 (2009): 63.

and soviets.²² Albert Mahusier, a French writer and film director who published a large number of books where he narrated his experience from his travels, in his work manages to present a rather detailed insight from a trip with his family to the Soviet Union, given in the form of a travelogue, which also makes the approach but also the presentation more direct for the reader. In his book he includes information about Intourist and its role. There is a strong focus on the interaction of the reader and his family with the guides, whose attitude is deeply examined through the conversations the author had with them.²³ Still there seems to be no intention to connect the agency with the political aspect and although dialogues are often presented as they actually happened, between parentheses, the author does not proceed in an analysis of the discourse.²⁴ In another work of Mazuy, she successfully connects tourism of French communists to the Soviet Union with the youth association “Amis de l’URSS”. Since this organization had a strong link with the French Communist Party (PCF), there is no hint of the soviet propaganda. Furthermore, this organization had only one tourist destination and that was the Soviet Union, with its main goal to educate the youth of France under the communistic principles.²⁵ As expected, the connotations formed around the Soviet Union are more positive than negative. Finally, the work has some limitations, both set by the ages of the tourists (in this case French youth) and their political background (communists), unlike this research where the political background of the tourists and other factors, like age or gender are not taken into account, making the research more general and therefore more accurate.²⁶

This research examines tourism in a dictatorial regime, as the one of the Soviet Union was. Under this spectrum it is wise to see what relevant work has been written about similar political regimes. For this matter, the regimes of N. Korea and China have been chosen, since they seem to operate in an analogous way with the Soviet Union.²⁷ Although not a category of tourism per se, tourism in regions with a peculiar political

²² Mazuy, Rachel, Jean-Jacques Becker, and Zérafra-Dray Danièle. *La Section française Des "Amis De L'Union soviétique": 1927-1939: Une "Organisation De Masse" Sympathisante Du Parti Communiste français*, 1988, 24.

²³ Mahuzier, Albert. *Les Mahuzier En U.R.S.S.* Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1963, 83-91

²⁴ Ibidem, 39.

²⁵ Mazuy, Rachel, Jean-Jacques Becker, and Zérafra-Dray Danièle. *La Section française Des "Amis De L'Union soviétique": 1927-1939: Une "Organisation De Masse" Sympathisante Du Parti Communiste français*, 1988, 52.

²⁶ Ibidem, 37.

²⁷ Zhao, Jinlin. *The Hospitality and Tourism Industry in China: New Growth, Trends, and Developments*. Oakville, ON, Canada: AAP, Apple Academic Press, 2019, 52.

status have triggered the interest of tourists and we could define them as at least a sub category. Not many regions worldwide can provide this combination, but some dictatorships do exist, even in our times. One great example is North Korea, a country which presents many similarities to the country under research (USSR) and of which the development of tourism, although commenced late, had many similarities in the form as well as the goals with USSR. As Zhiyong Li et al. summarize in their article, there is a big importance in the branding and general image a country has abroad, based on its political and also economic structure, therefore the political frame, plays a significant role, when it comes to socialist countries. They are what is described as “hermit countries”, closed countries, with little information about them, something that intensifies the mystery.²⁸ China presents even more similarities with the Soviet Union. Until recent times, China was relying its economy on its fast-developing industry and on agriculture. The government decided to tilt its policy towards the development of tourism, which for many years was forbidden, like the Soviet Union chose to do. Foreign tourism witnessed a massive augmentation after 1978, and became more organized in 1985 with the official opening of the National tourism Administration. China examined the potential advantages of tourism to the country and concluded that apart from boosting the economy, it would help the Westerners invoke any negative beliefs towards their country that remained excluded for many years and thus help it build better and healthier relations with the outside world.²⁹

The category of tourism under which this research falls is that of Slum Tourism. This type of tourism appears in very few regions around the world and has only lately been defined.³⁰ The opening of the borders of USSR to the outside world boosted the economy of the country but also provided a chance to show their lifestyle and culture to the rest of the world in order to eliminate any stereotypes or misconceptions. On the other hand, that ideological debate made those countries seem different and exotic in the eyes of a Westerner, since the western tourist could experience the disaster, the poor living conditions and the suffering. This often refers in tourism studies as Slum Tourism, meaning tourism that revolves around visiting impoverished regions, like the Soviet Union was in the 1930s. There has been a debate about how politically correct

²⁸ Li, Zhiyong, Fangxuan (Sam) Li, and Chris Ryan. “Perceiving North Korea through Chinese Tourists’ Eyes.” *Tourism Review* 76, no. 1 (2020): 150–63.

²⁹ Xie, Philip Feifan. “Authenticating Ethnic Tourism,” 2010, 47.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 21.

the term “slum” is and which types of tourism fall into this category. What has been observed is that the common characteristic among all of them is the poverty.³¹ This is something most of the articles that have been analyzed focus on. Even though not intentionally, the poverty in the soviet urban spaces was something that caught the attention of the French tourists in most of the articles analyzed.

As it seems not many books or articles have been written focusing mainly on this topic. On the contrary there is a research dissertation that approached closer the theme of this thesis. More specifically, the research by Alex Hazanov published in 2016 in the university of Pennsylvania manages to present in detail the relationships between foreign tourists and the soviet institutions. One of the factors analyzed is the soviet propaganda but the main focus is on other institutions like state security. Furthermore, the time frame of this researched is placed on the 1950s and 1980s. No specific reference is given to France and French tourists as well as on the interaction of them with the locals.³²

In general, the focus of the existing literature is on the post 1950s period, where also Intourist started massively selling travel packages to foreigners. There are some specific case studies on topics like ideological trips, but still seemed under- researched and they do not manage to connect propaganda, with discourse analysis and the political debate. The existing literature although manages to sometimes present well the tourist gaze of the tourists visiting the USSR, most of the times does not connect it with a political approach, nor focuses enough on French tourists or pays the necessary attention on the language and vocabulary used to explain either the experience of the tourists or the mentality and the propaganda. This research aims precisely to the unification of those scattered elements through the forementioned complex approach by trying to combine articles of different newspapers with different political backgrounds and provide a critical review of the French press of this decade, along with helping them understand the soviet mentality formed by the communist regime through the tourist gaze they formed within the frame of their environment.

³¹ Ibidem, 182.

³² Hazanov, Alexander, Benjamin Nathans, Peter Holquist, and Kevin M.F Platt. “Porous Empire: Foreign Visitors and the Post-Stalin Soviet State,” n.d.

1.3 Research question

This thesis will address the following research question: How was the soviet tourism presented in newspapers of France in the 1930s? Therefore, I will be focusing on the relationship between tourism and the political debate between a capitalistic Western country, France, and the epitome of communism, the Soviet Union during the 1930s. In order to better understand the topic and arrive at an answer, the main question has been divided into two sub questions:

- How did the French press portray the role of Intourist?
- How did the French press portray the implementation of soviet propaganda?

I personally believe that there is a connection between my two sub-questions. Since Intourist was a state agency, there is a suspicion that the government was using it to transmit propaganda to foreign tourists. That remains to be studied within the articles.

1.4 The choice of the articles

The importance of newspapers as a source is what should be underlined here, since it is one of the core elements that distinguish this research from the rest of the available literature. The main advantage of newspapers as a source is that it aims to express the public opinion and, in some cases, even shape it. Language expression is often used as the main tool with which the author can control the masses.³³

The reason why newspapers were chosen as a type of source to be analyzed is because they incorporate better the political aspect, in contrast with academic journals and books that are mainly addressing to the academic society. Newspapers address to everyone and specially to average educated people. The reason why newspapers were chosen as the sole source of analysis, is because for the period studied, where media was limited, they managed to successfully combine discourse with politics and critically use language as a policy making tool for shaping the public opinion, in this case for the implementation of propaganda.³⁴ What is really important here is that the study concerns French newspapers published during the period observed. Hence, the time and the discourse made is aligned with the history and are not seen afterwards through the

³³ Nettement, Alfred. *Histoire Politique, Anecdote Et littéraire Du "Journal Des débats"*. Paris: Dentu, 1842, 24.

³⁴ Böröcz, József. "Hungary as a Destination 1960–1984." *Annals of Tourism Research* 17, no. 1 (1990): 19–35.

eye of a scientist/observer, but are reflecting the facts, the reactions and the emotions in true time. Additionally, since the press is from France and the articles are written solely by French authors, another factor is added, this of the French mentality. With that in mind, it can be agreed that this research does not only present a political debate or simply summarizes historical facts, but rather delves into history filtered by the mentality of a specific nation, the French, which imprint their culture and their beliefs on the reactions and interpretation of their experience.

To access those articles, I used the online database of Gallica. By using the search term “Intourist” a total of 302 articles and reviews on newspapers were returned. I limited down my findings to only newspapers articles, of a good length in order for them to be able to get analyzed. I excluded all the advertisements and focused on the articles from the period 1930-1939. My main aim was to find articles that would cover different years and therefore the whole decade and not a specific part of it, but also articles from different newspapers, that would add an extra political aspect to my research. I preferred to choose travelogues and articles that referred to political visits, since they demonstrate better the personal gaze of the French tourist. From the remaining articles I randomly chose a number that would form my research corpus.

1.5 Theoretical framework

Propaganda in the Soviet Union

Propaganda in the Soviet Union started to be taught from a very young age. The state’s aim was the construction of a new man, a new citizen to which it would implement all the ideas and ideals the state considered necessary for the construction of a powerful country. This is the reason why an important place within the soviet society was given to youth organizations like the young pioneers and Komsomol.³⁵ People who were born after the revolution were brought up within the new state and had no idea of the country as it was before. Many times, art was used as well in order to train the youth and the adults. This is what triggered the socialist realism. That was a style inspired by the depiction of the communistic values. All the forms of art but also anything that revolved

³⁵ Watson, David Robin. *Makers of the Modern World*. France. London: Haus Histories / Haus Publishing, 2008, 81.

around culture was highly constrained and censored. Another important aspect of the soviet propaganda is what was described by the Soviets as the “enemy of the people”. That was anyone who possessed property and therefore had profit. Those were the kulaks and the old bourgeoisie that the Soviets tried to eliminate with every means. Propaganda was also part of Stalin’s plan to increase production in order to catch up with the developed west, in fear of the socialism to be attacked and destroyed. For this reason, during the 1930s the development of the USSR and the need for extra production was the main topic in the soviet art, literature and cinema.³⁶

The role of Intourist

The tours of the Westerners to the Soviet Union were highly managed by the agency of Intourist. Therefore, the entrance to the country as well as the traveling within it was set by the agency. In 1955 though, the agency started selling travel packages to foreign tourists. This chapter was officially closed with the privatization of the company in 1992.³⁷

Intourist was the official tour operator of the Soviet Union. It was established in 1929 and it was offering tourist packages to people who wanted to enter the Soviet Union and additionally collected all the payments in foreign currency. The service tourist purchased was given in the form of “traveler cheques” as they were called, equivalent to an amount of money with which they could cover their first and basic needs.³⁸ Usually, the price that the tourist paid in advance included some days in a hotel and some meals in any restaurant administrated by Intourist. For those who wanted to stay longer there was an option for another independent type of accommodation. After all everyone travelled with a tourist visa that did not permit them to stay for a very long period time.³⁹ The procedure to get the tourist visa was quite easy. The potential tourist had only to pay the necessary amount to Intourist and they would manage all the paperwork on their behalf. The visa could be denied in very exceptional cases, for instance if the person demanding it had a bad criminal record or had been showing anti-

³⁶ Bassow, Whitman. “Izvestia Looks Inside U.S.A.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1948): 430.

³⁷ Mazuy, Rachel, Jean-Jacques Becker, and Zérafra-Dray Danièle. *La Section française Des "Amis De L'Union soviétique": 1927-1939: Une "Organisation De Masse" Sympathisante Du Parti Communiste français*, 1988., 47.

³⁸ Kravitz, Samantha A. “The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939,” n.d.

³⁹ Pinsolle, Dominique. *Le Matin, 1884-1944 Une Presse D'argent Et De Chantage*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013, 54.

soviet behavior throughout his life and since those cases were quite rare and hard to be proven, almost all of the visa applications were accepted. The tourist was not able to go anywhere they wanted, but only to certain cities authorized by Intourist and of course under the strict surveillance of a guide who was also working for Intourist. Upon their arrival at the borders, a member of the personnel of Intourist was there to help them fill in the necessary paperwork and declare all their items. Before leaving the control check, the tourist had to pay the insurance fee and the fee of circulation.⁴⁰

Intourist having Moscow as its headquarters was the agency that among other activities was occupied with the administration of hotels around the Soviet Union. After the tourist was picked up by his private guide/interpreter, they were driven to a hotel. Every hotel had an office, offering services and information specifically to Intourist's clients. The hotels were usually housed in state-of-the-art buildings. Luxurious meals in a well decorated dining room, usually accompanied by the sound of a live orchestra, were part of the package. Most of the times, central areas were chosen for the hotels to be built. The hotel itself as well as the surroundings were showing the country's fictional wealth through their rich architectural style. Most of the hotels, newly built were offering a high-quality experience.⁴¹ Intourist was also responsible for offering only top of the list quality services, making sure that the foreign tourists would be treated almost as the state would treat a foreign official. That way, Intourist not only justified the high price of the trip, but presented a luxury image of the country.⁴² The whole trip was so well organized, that everything had been scheduled in advance like the route the tourists followed, the time they needed to go from one place to the other, even the distance in kilometers the group would have to cover.⁴³

The guides of Intourist received a very strict education. They were not only educated on the language of the people they were guiding, but also on their country's culture and history. Most of the people working as guides were young students with strong command of foreign languages.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Mahuzier, Albert. *Les Mahuzier En U.R.S.S.* Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1963., 11-19

⁴¹ Mahuzier, Albert. *Les Mahuzier En U.R.S.S.* Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1963., 47-56

⁴² Bortoli, Georges. *Voir Moscou Et Leningrad.* Paris: Hachette, 1985, 27

⁴³ Barillon François-Guillaume. *Mon Voyage à Paris (Imitation De L'anglais).* Signé: Barillon. Lieu de publication non identifié: éditeur non identifié, n.d.

⁴⁴ Mahuzier, Albert. *Les Mahuzier En U.R.S.S.* Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1963, 24.

The guides were following a very strict protocol and there was a list of certain places they were able to show to the tourists and talk about. They also were selected with attention and all of them were profound supporters of the regime and Marx's theory. In that way, it was reassured that eventually the general image and aftertaste the tourists had was the one the soviet government would like to project abroad. The propaganda was cultivated through the employees of Intourist, who actually were strings of the system itself. Their aim was that the foreigners visiting USSR would later reproduce those notions back to their countries, but obviously the Soviet government did not take into account that those tourists coming from different countries with different political backgrounds were able to compare, and in most cases distinguish the lie from the truth, the propaganda from what was actually presented.⁴⁵ Even when they were obliged to show items of for instance their aristocratic past, like the crowns and jewelry of the former czars of Russia, exhibited in the Hermitage or other palaces and museums, they were rather biased towards this period, since what this period symbolized was against the communistic ideology.⁴⁶

Moscow, the capital of the country, being one of the most popular touristic destinations, was lacking available rooms during peak seasons, and some of the tourists were obliged to either stay at hotels in the periphery or at dormitories of the train stations. This rather shows that although Intourist was the main agency, in some cases was lacking basic infrastructure.⁴⁷

The two biggest cities (Moscow and Leningrad) were also the pride of Intourist. After all, foreign tourism for the Soviets was mainly a tool for boosting the soviet economy through the import of foreign capital.⁴⁸ For that reason, as a general rule a foreigner paid triple the price for the same room in an Intourist hotel, in comparison to what a soviet would pay.⁴⁹ Furthermore, foreign tourism was used for projecting propaganda abroad, especially during a period like the 1930s where international news was not travelling as easily as it happens nowadays and was mainly relying to newspapers, books and television. With focusing only on central districts and the fanciest areas of

⁴⁵ Lelong, Pierre Emile, and Mourgue Gérard. Lelong. Genève: P. Cailler, 1961, 27- 30.

⁴⁶ Bortoli, Georges. Voir Moscou Et Leningrad. Paris: Hachette, 1985., 22.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 56.

⁴⁸ Kehayan, Nina, Jean Kehayan, and Montalbán Vázquez Manuel. Calle Del Proletario Rojo: Dos Comunistas Franceses En La URSS. Barcelona: Blume, 1979., 16.

⁴⁹ Bortoli, Georges. Voir Moscou Et Leningrad. Paris: Hachette, 1985, 86.

the capital, Intourist was having the extra task of convincing the foreign tourists that all the negative gossip and images they had for the USSR before visiting the country were exaggerations and the truth lied further away. Tourism was therefore their biggest weapon in changing a Westerner's negative perception for USSR from within.⁵⁰ On the other hand, spending fifteen days in the center of Moscow is the equivalent for a Russian tourist who does not speak any French to spend fifteen days being "trapped" between the Eiffel Tower, the Pantheon and Champs Elysées of Paris, while trying to get a realistic image of France. It seems rather impossible.

There were also some cities that were off the list of Intourist for national security reasons and because they were not projecting the image that the Soviets wanted to show abroad. This was further pinpointed by the fact that Intourist did not have any hotels in those areas and if for any reason a visitor wanted to visit them, Intourist was booking for them a room in another, not under its administration hotel.⁵¹

In certain cases, like that of researchers wanting to experience USSR at its raw form, meaning as it really was outside the barriers and the facades set by the guides and the agency of Intourist, the visitors could rent a car by Intourist and travel independently inside the country.⁵²

1.6 Methodology

The analysis will start with the "tourist gaze". A very important theory in tourism studies, that also consists a method and is proposed by John Urry.⁵³ The tourist gaze is the way a tourist perceives the area he is visiting, first and foremost visually and then by using his other senses and creating certain images and concepts. Since the first book of Urry in 1990, where he described his new notion of tourism gaze, a lot has changed. Internet has invaded our lives and tourism is not an exception to the rule. That made the sociologist publish a new work, where he included these factors as well. Now tourism gaze includes apart from the framing of an image through a camera lens, also the framing being created by a cultural lens. That can be the lens of tourist but also the

⁵⁰ Kehayan, Nina, Jean Kehayan, and Montalbán Vázquez Manuel. *Calle Del Proletario Rojo: Dos Comunistas Franceses En La URSS*. Barcelona: Blume, 1979, 16.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 112.

⁵² Kravitz, Samantha A. "The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939," n.d.

⁵³ Urry, John, and Jonas Larsen. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. London: SAGE Publications, 2011, 36-37

industry's.⁵⁴ Thus, gazing is strongly connected with how we socially and technologically “see” the reality around us. There is a strong focus on the sense of visuality and what people can perceive with their eyes. A photograph, not only one from a camera but also the one imprinted in a tourist's mind through vision while he is travelling is an element that is not considered stable within time and place. It is ageing in reality, but also in mind and affects our opinion on things, while at the same time it is being affected by them. What someone chooses to photograph, and in simpler words focus on, has a clear political connotation. This power of photography reveals a tourist's interests, but also the interests they serve, by paying attention to what is included in the photo and what is not. While the tourist gaze can shift, the photography manages to capture it within a specific moment in time.⁵⁵ This last feature of the tourist gaze is dominant throughout the analysis and consists the criterion with which the phrases analyzed with my methodology tools were chosen. While I read the newspaper articles, I tried to catch the parts where the writer intended to focus more on an element while ignoring others, or more simply put I tried to discover his tourist gaze and then define it and explain it with my other methodology tools. As argued by Urry and Larsen, the tourist gaze is “performed by and within existing mediascapes”.⁵⁶ Sociologists like Hutnyk⁵⁷ have concluded that tourists tend to picture the locals of the places they visit according to the image they have from media. In his example the locals of Calcutta, were presented mostly as poor, since that was the image, a Western tourist had for them.⁵⁸ Similarly to that, the French tourists who visited the Soviet Union during the 1930s mostly focused on images they had formed in advance and those images and norms that stand out within the text are highlighted and observed within the analysis.

Although Urry and Larsen focus a lot on the role of photography in alluring tourists and framing places, this can be also projected to images shaped through text. A quite interesting category is what they refer to as “Seductive and Commercial Images”.⁵⁹ Some of the newspapers analyzed do include photos, but even the ones they do not create certain images in the mind of the reader which he anticipates to meet when he

⁵⁴ Larsen, Jonas, and John Urry. *The Tourist Gaze*. Sage Publications UK, 2011, 24-30.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 156.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 179.

⁵⁷ Hutnyk, John. *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics, and the Culture Industry*. London: Pluto Press, 2001, 34.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 62.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 172.

visits the country. Photographs as well as text are focusing on the individual, on the person they target and want to allure. One of the main roles is to tease the tourist's fantasy and cultivate a need within the reader, in order for him to experience what is described.⁶⁰ This is exactly what would help me analyze the information found on the newspaper articles. By observing where the stress is put on, we can understand a lot about the tourist, who subconsciously or not, forms this specific gaze. It reveals information about them, like for instance if they are biased, their political beliefs and in certain cases their goals.

After the phrases were selected based on the theory of tourist gaze, they later got "framed" according to the notion of framing, a notion of significant importance in understanding and elaborating the social norms and ideas hidden within the phrases under examination. As N. Edwards et al. present and develop in their work, framing suggests a key in cultural studies and sciences, giving an inside to the different identities someone might perceive during a trip.⁶¹ Again, the perspective of the visual perception is incorporated in this term. It elevates reading to a deeper approach and understanding. A way to interpret not just a text, but everything that surrounds the traveler who experienced the trip and later communicated it in the form of an article or travelogue which eventually mirrored what they perceived with their senses, all that through the lens of a certain frame.⁶² In that way reading receives a broader sense, since with this method the heterogenous texts are becoming clearer and more coherent. As W. Wolf refers in the introduction of "Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media", he presents framing as something close to a 'script' or a 'schema' and through a comparison of various forms of art he defines the frames as 'culturally formed metaconcepts, most of which possess a certain stability, that enable us to interpret both reality and artefacts and hence other concepts that can be applied in perception, experience and communication'.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 176.

⁶¹ Poiana Peter, McCann Ben (ed.), and Edwards Natalie (ed.). *Framing French Culture*. University of Adelaide, 2015. Roberts, Alison J. "The Business of Tourism." *Tourism Management* 4, no. 3 (1983): 224–25.

⁶² Ammon, Frieder von. "Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media." *Poetica* 40, no. 3-4 (2008): 428–32.

⁶³ Semetko, Holli A., and Patti M. Valkenburg. "News Media Framing Measures." *PsycTESTS Dataset*, 2000, 74.

The third and last part of examination of the phrases relies on Discourse Analysis. In an effort to approach this topic and this interrelationship from a more social perspective, since politics and culture fall under the umbrella of social studies, the main methodological tool I used in order to interpret the frame of the phrases that mirror the tourist gaze of the travelers is that of discourse analysis and more specific, the subcategory of it, the critical discourse analysis (often abbreviated to CDA). As Marianne Jorgensen and Louise J. Phillips have extensively developed in the third chapter of their book, CDA is an empirical tool that supports the qualitative side of research within the social studies.⁶⁴ It is widely used on different social aspects and bridges the discourse and the cultural alternations within society. There are different approaches when it comes to CDA, but one of the most prominent is that of Fairclough, which will also be explicitly developed. Apart from the philosophical base, Fairclough also adds the linguistic analysis of the text. A key in understanding the thought of the French tourists. Therefore, the first goal of CDA is to clear up the linguistic-discursive side of social phenomena. The semiotics contested within visual stimuli is of great significance when it comes to tourism, since most of the experience of a tourist is based on those.⁶⁵

What tourists perceive from a trip is mainly relied on sight. What should not be ignored is that CDA not only consists a method, but it is also created by a combination of other social methods. Therefore, it reflects the phenomenon while it studies it. As mentioned above, another reason why CDA was chosen is because it emphasizes on the element of language analysis. With an empirical view on language, CDA critically shows the meanings behind words. It does not only remain there. It goes one step forward and spots the relations, between classes and groups of society. Last but not least, what is worth mentioning is the fifth characteristic of CDA and that is its critical approach. It is not a politically neutral approach, which is a key element of this research. Based on previous theories on identity and representation it poses questions on how these processes occur. I personally applied these tools to interpret the newspapers and find the underlying opinion of the tourists. My aim is to detect the elements of that interaction between cultures from both sides, the Soviet and the French. By

⁶⁴ Zuelow, Eric. *Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies and Beyond*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020, 54

⁶⁵ Catalano, Theresa, and Linda R. Waugh. *Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies and Beyond*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020, 48

understanding the connection between the visual stimuli and the semiotics, I further understood the implied tourist gaze but also the subtle propaganda on the newspapers. Its critical approach is something that consists the core of a critical review of articles of this nature, that sometimes aim to propagandize or express a biased view and that requires a critical tool like CDA in order to be properly analyzed.⁶⁶

1.7 Chapter structure

When it comes to the chapter structure, I divided my work in three main parts. The first chapter, the introduction, is where I analyzed my topic, its connection with the tourism studies, but also its relevance and importance in the academic world, since it adds a new perspective and connects parts of under-researched subjects. Furthermore, I presented the theoretical and methodological framework on which this thesis is based on as well as the different types of tourism that the thesis falls under. The following two chapters, two and three, would consists of the analysis of the sources I have found, using the tools of framing and discourse analysis, based on the theory of tourist gaze by Urry. In the second chapter, I presented the articles that reflect better the soviet propaganda and in the third chapter those that reflect the role of Intourist. The final chapter is the conclusion of the research, where I summed up all my findings, reflected on my research and answered my research questions. In addition, I presented a potential future research and application of my work.

⁶⁶ Catalano, Theresa, and Linda R. Waugh. Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies and Beyond. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020, 134.

2. Articles that reflect the soviet propaganda

In November 1933 in *La Croix*, the author, a French named Robert Picard de la Vacquerie reports his experience after a trip he had in Leningrad. The article consists of two columns and it is placed on the front page of the newspaper among other about international news. It is accompanied by three photos: one of them is the avenue of the 25th of October in Leningrad, the other is the Admiralty House of Leningrad and the third portrays a soviet factory with the workers sitting on its front. *La Croix* was a Roman Catholic Newspaper.⁶⁷ The choice of putting those pictures that depict magnificent and glorious aspects of the soviet wonder and the soviet life on the front page of the newspaper clearly show the intention of the author and the paper to project what the soviet government managed to build and thus show its power.

*“Chacun sait que, depuis quelques années, le gouvernement de Moscou a organisé le tourisme russe. Les dirigeants de l’ U.R.S. S. font en cela prévus de psychologie humaine. En effet, les bons bourgeois de l’ancien et du nouveau Monde, craignant pour leur propre pays la propagande bolcheviste, sont fortement tentés de goûter eux-mêmes aux fruits défendus. Aussi, l’époque des vacances approchant, étudient-ils volontiers les programmes de voyage de l’Intourist leurs permettant de se rendre par terre ou par mer dans le paradis soviétique.”*⁶⁸

In this paragraph the author subtly refers to the slow shift of the negative opinion the western countries had over the Soviet Union. There had been many stereotypes over the Soviets which of course created an atmosphere of hate and the idea of the world being divided in two political spheres. For the author the intelligence of the Soviet people is so big that they managed to foresee and analyze the human psychology, shift their image abroad to a positive one and take full advantage of it by bringing foreign tourists and thus foreign capital in order to boost their economy. With the phrase “craignant pour leur propre pays la propagande bolcheviste, sont fortement tentés de goûter eux-mêmes aux fruits défendus” the author is creating intertextuality by reproducing an already for that time existing stereotype, that of the Soviet Union being the “forbidden fruit” (fruits défendus) that someone would love to taste, meaning visit

⁶⁷ Alain Fleury, « *La Croix* » et l’Allemagne. 1930-1940, Paris, Le Cerf, 1986. Catholics were strong anticommunists.

⁶⁸ November, 1933, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k413821d/f1.item.r=intourist.zoom>

the country.⁶⁹ Those two sentences create an opposite relation. They want to taste the fruit, although they are afraid of doing it. The main clause that explains their need is placed second in order to intensify what is stated in the subordinate clause and that is the fear that exists. The paragraph starts with the author saying that it has not been long since the USSR started to permit international tourism within the country (“depuis quelques années, le gouvernement de Moscou a organisé le tourisme russe”).⁷⁰ With this last phrase he clarifies that the Soviet Union was not the enemy who was introverted and was not willing to open up its borders to other countries, since they preferred to do all the jobs under the table, but shows a rather extroverted and open minded image of the soviet regime that breaks all the stereotypes.

The approach he has and the comments he makes are rather indicators of his gaze, and framed probably by his Catholic morals, towards this country that was very different politically, ideologically and religiously with his. The approach is rather neutral and humanistic. This is obvious from this small passage in the introduction before the introductory paragraph:

“Comment, d'ailleurs, blâmer les bons bourgeois de cette intelligente inspiration? L'homme qui a vu n'est-il pas mieux informé que l'homme qui a lu? Quand il s'agit surtout de voir un peuple défiguré généralement par ceux qui écrivent, aveugles qu'ils sont par leurs préjugés personnels, soit de droite, soit de gauche.”⁷¹

Where he says that “the man who saw is better informed than the man you read”, even if he belongs to the right or the left” and later adds “people write based on the stereotypes they have for other people”. This comes to support what was explained before in the first passage. The author possibly believes that the soviet system and the whole country was foully stigmatized and perceived in a wrong way. It is obvious that the social frame he uses to interpret facts and experiences is not influenced by politics, stereotypes or religion since the norms of his era, his society as well as his religion demanded the opposite from what he supported within his text.

With the phrase: “Quand il s'agit surtout de voir un peuple défiguré généralement par ceux qui écrivent, aveugles qu'ils sont par leurs préjugés personnels, soit de droite, soit de gauche” he probably refers to people who visit Russia and then returned back to their

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

home and transfer a rather exaggerated or false image of what they saw.⁷² It is a suggestion to the future tourists to be cautious with expressing their thoughts and opinions or even publishing them, since they can easily give a poor description or worse a biased one. Their testimony would then be against other people's and they can get easily exposed. Most of the times the emotion is what wins over and distorts the facts by adding personal views and political beliefs. He clearly gives a reference to the Christian empathy people should have towards people in need. This religious tone is further pinpointed by the word "aveugle" (blind) to describe people who cannot see the truth, a metaphorical term often used in religious texts with the same connotation.

As the author was around the city, he has the opportunity to observe both the locals, as well as the city, which looks big and industrial. This industrial lifestyle is presented thoroughly within the text:

*"Ces gens marchent rapidement, sans bruit de paroles, sans curiosité, s'ayant plus d'ailleurs rien à regarder, puisque le commerce libre est, pratiquement, supprimé. Plus d'étalages, plus de vitrines de magasins, plus de petits artisans vendant leurs produits, plus de couleur locale. Chacun s'achemine vers sa besogne, un petit sac à la main, allant généralement à pied (...)"*⁷³

Everywhere he looks he sees workers, mainly wearing work uniforms. The soviet worker as he clarifies does not resemble a lot to a western employee. They walk fast, without even making any noise, nor stopping to watch the shops, as a Westerner would usually do on their way to work. The reason why is the lack of free commerce. The soviet system might be different, but this does not mean it is inferior. With the phrase: "Ces gens marchent rapidement, sans bruit de paroles, sans curiosité, s'ayant plus d'ailleurs rien à regarder, puisque le commerce libre est, pratiquement, supprimé" he brings up a debate of that period. The debate concerns how much capitalism has invaded a Westerner's life and shows an aspect of the soviet government many people have not thought about. The soviet citizen is not dependent on products and is therefore more focused on his work. That is a reason why the soviet economy was moving ahead with very high rates. The soviet regime did not rely on capitalism, the products were standard and few, just enough to cover the purpose they serve. This does not let them waste time

⁷² Ibidem.

⁷³ Ibidem.

with being curious (“sans curiosité”) and focus on what is important.⁷⁴ It is interesting that capitalism here is connected with a negative term. Indeed, capitalism cultivated greed within people, since they were in a constant hunt for more and that of course held them back from focusing on something that might return back to the state, like work or education. On the opposite site, relies the Soviet Union which was moving forward really fast. The expression “marchent rapidement” might be a metaphor about the really fast development of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The five-year plans for the development of the national economy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had already started from 1928 and by the time this article was published the first plan had already been finished and its outcomes were visible.⁷⁵

In conclusion we could agree that the general tone of the article is rather neutral. The author does not take a certain clear position on the subject, as someone would expect, given his catholic background. The Christian empathy for all the people, no matter where they come from, is implied throughout the text.

In August 1934, in *Paris-Soir*, Jules Sauerwein, a French journalist, writes about his experience on the trans-Siberian railway, which served as a rail path for Soviets in order to transport goods, but also people of Jewish origin to inhabit certain areas. One could agree that the author’s identity and profession serve as the main a frame through which he sees and explains his experience. The article is of big size and consists of three columns, published on the fifth page of the paper among other articles about international politics. It also includes two photos: the first one is of the Vladivostok Station and the second ones portrays young soviet people who learn how to use a tractor.⁷⁶ These photos were not chosen accidentally since they both praise the soviet system. The first one refers to the construction of the miracle of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the second one to the soviet youth, a very important part of the soviet society, which was used extensively as a tool of cultivating the soviet ideas to the young population of the country.

In one of the paragraphs the author refers to the power of the press in the Soviet Union and how that was a strong part of the daily routine of the Soviet citizen:

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

⁷⁶ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k76390096/f5.image.r=intourist?rk=407727;2>

*"(...) Ils achètent de grandes feuilles de Moscou, La Pravda et les Izvestia, et aussi la feuille locale. Et ce qui attire leur attention plus que les discours de Genève, c'est la statistique journalistique généralement commentée avec vigueur et sans ménagement. Telle usine a dépassé le plan de 3 pour cent : on voit alors généralement dans un coin de la page une rudimentaire illustration qui représente l'ingénieur en chef congratule par le Soviet régional. Tel autre a failli pour la qualité ou pour la quantité : on réclame en termes sévères des sanctions. On voit même des caricatures qui représentent des gens qui se sont appuyés sur un mur ou leurs vêtements de teinture douteuse ont laissé des secrétaires qui assiste le président du comité exécutif, Kalinine."*⁷⁷

Here the author clearly pinpoints the important role newspapers played in projecting the achievements and the inferiority of the soviet system and thus cultivating a feeling of pride to the Soviets. Newspapers were considered to be the main means of propaganda the state was using. They were accessible to everyone, were published often, so they were able to keep the public aligned with the policy of the state and they were also something that people of medium to lower social strata could easily believe.⁷⁸ There is also an intertextuality between the theme of this research which is the study of the press and the fact that the author of the article chooses to focus on the soviet press within his narration. In this passage he presents two opposites. The way the newspaper, that the author observes, tried to transmit the positive and the negative message to the reader is worth mentioning. On one hand there is a factory that managed to produce 3% more than its goal with a photo of its head engineer congratulated by a local senior officer ("Telle usine a dépassé le plan de 3 pour cent : on voit alors généralement dans un coin de la page une rudimentaire illustration qui représente l'ingénieur en chef congratule par le Soviet regional") and right after that there is a caricature depicting the workers of a factory that did not do well, being nailed on the wall ("Tel autre a failli pour la qualité ou pour la quantité : on réclame en termes sévères des sanctions. On voit même des caricatures qui représentent des gens qui se sont appuyés sur un mur...").⁷⁹ Here the image that the author chooses to put the emphasis on is placed first. In order to support the positive message and show the way the Soviets should work, he presents statistical figures which reinforce in a scientific way his argument, which is the importance of work. On the other side, since the newspaper cannot be vivid with the

⁷⁷ Ibidem.

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ Ibidem.

photographs, they choose to put a caricature that would scare the soviet reader while at the same time transmit the negative message, which is not meet the goals of the production, because then there would be severe sanctions (“Tel autre a failli pour la qualité ou pour la quantité: on réclame en termes sévères des sanctions”).⁸⁰ In my opinion it is an indirect threat to the soviet worker reading the paper, but given in the form of a caricature that makes the threat look lighter. This does not change the fact that it still is an indirect threat. Furthermore, this paragraph portrays a contrast with France where the criteria for what is important to be on newspapers are different. Here it mainly revolves around themes that are important for the soviet society like workers, or even a factory that has a large production. Probably the reason why this catches the attention of the reader is due to the way his values and western mindset have framed his opinion. With his western mindset he evaluates differently what is important and what is not.

One paragraph of this article is dedicated to the kulaks, peasants who owned a small piece of land and after the dekulakization which started in 1929 their land became public, so most of them were sent to exile along with their families far from their homes.⁸¹

“Dans les gares, on croise parfois des convois de koulaks envoyés en bannissement avec leur famille. Triste spectacle. Dans des wagons de marchandises à peine aérés par de petites fenêtres grillées ils sont entassés sous la garde de soldats armés de pied en cap. Je me souviens au crépuscule d'une de ces visions. Les déportés avaient eu la permission de faire quelques pas (..)”⁸²

The author describes it as a “sad” spectacle (“triste spectacle”), referring to the image of the kulaks being deported.⁸³ Here two key elements of the Soviet Union that contributed in the implementation of the soviet ideas are brought up. One of them has to do with the nationalization of private land, land that was taken away from the kulaks, in order to serve and be cultivated for the national interest and the other has to do with the common policy of sending people who were not in accordance with the country’s plans to exile.⁸⁴ The harsh conditions under which those people were kept when

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² Ibidem.

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

transferred to their destination of their exile (“Les déportés avaient eu la permission de faire quelques pas “) in my opinion might reflect a general negative image the author wants to give to the soviet state.⁸⁵ A state that treats its people like that cannot be good in anything else and that possibly extends to politics as well.

As the author’s trip continues, he comes across a new Jewish republic, where Jewish people from around the world travel to live. He meets with a young Jewish man who tells him his story:

*“À quelques kilomètres de Khabarovsk, nous traversons la nouvelle république juive de Biro-Bidzhan. Pressée contre les barrières de la gare, la pollution de la petite ville vient nous admirer. Un voyageur monte, un jeune homme au beau profil énergique, aux cheveux légèrement crépus. Il est haletant de fatigue. Assis en face de moi, il siffle avec délice son verre de thé. Nous lions connaissance, il me raconte en yiddish son odyssée.”*⁸⁶

This paragraph sheds light on another aspect of the Soviet Union. It was a multinational country, where all the nations, all the people of different origin were living together and there was much respect for each other. The country itself though was not showing a lot of respect towards minorities. For many years it followed a policy of ethnic cleansing, either by eliminating minorities or by constraining them into ethnic republics within the vast soviet area.⁸⁷ According to the text, even if the minorities were not physically eliminated, their living conditions or the areas the state chose to send them were indirectly eliminating them, since those places were very poor and dirty (“la pollution de la petite ville vient nous admirer”) or of extreme living conditions like the Siberian weather.⁸⁸ This young man seems to be very exhausted (“Il est haletant de fatigue”).⁸⁹ The Soviet Union projected the creation of this Jewish Republic as new project that showed the openness of the Soviet Union to the Jewish population across the globe, but their real goal was to bring workers to the country in order to help in the augmentation of the production. Here another problem of the Birobidzhan Experiment is shown.⁹⁰ Those people coming from all around the world, were not at all intergraded within the

⁸⁵ Ibidem.

⁸⁶ Ibidem.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

⁸⁹ Ibidem.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

Russian society, nor did they speak the language.⁹¹ The young man tells his story in Yiddish (“il me raconte en yiddish son odyssée”), which in my opinion reflects this phenomenon.⁹²

To conclude, the author’s gaze as tourist competed with his social frames a French Catholic.⁹³ He probably had a certain christian frame through which he interpreted the soviet people, an image most of the Westerners would have.

In September 1935, in *Grand Écho du Nord de la France*, Lucien Souchon, a French writer and journalist of the nationalist right reports the first day of his trip in Moscow. The article is a small two-column article on top left corner of the first page and continues on the fifth. It also includes a photo of young soviet athletes on the Red Square.⁹⁴ This in my opinion is not a random chose. By including this photo, the author makes a reference to the soviet youth which would be the future of the country. They are athletes, which is a metaphor for power and strength, in this case the power and strength of the state. All that is set in the Red Square, a symbol of the soviet governance.

He starts his text with the question “what do we know about Russia?”⁹⁵. This way not only he captures the attention of the reader but forms a very accurate question, since a lot of people around the world knew very little about this country. The reason was, as he later adds, the self-isolation the soviet state chose to put itself into and made it seem mysterious abroad:

*“Que sait-on de la Russie ? Ce que disent du régime soviétique amis et adversaires, pas toujours désintéressés. Mais l'isolement dans lequel semble se complaire "la sixième partie du monde " contribue fortement à entretenir une impression de mystère. Ce qu'elle exporte de ses productions intellectuelles est généralement trop tendancieux pour être instructif.”*⁹⁶

Everything that had to do with intellectuality and science coming from the Soviet Union, was not received as trustworthy, since it was not really objective (“trop tendancieux”). By using the word “tendentious” he accurately describes the gaze many

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² Ibidem.

⁹³ Ibidem.

⁹⁴ Verly, Hippolyte. *Essai De Biographie Lilloise Contemporaine, 1800-1869, augmenté D'un Supplément Et accompagné De Notes Historiques Et Bibliographiques*. Lille: Leleu, 1869: 139

⁹⁵ *Grand Eco du Nord*, 1

⁹⁶ Souchon, Lucien, September, 1935,

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k47649667/f5.image.r=intourist?rk=278971;2>

western tourists had before coming there, but also reflects his own frame through which he interpreted what he witnessed. Westerns like the author always had this fear of things might not be presented in the Soviet Union as they actually were. It would seem that the word tendentious has a second connotation. It might refer to the propaganda. People outside of the Soviet Union know the existence and the intensity of the soviet propaganda and therefore are skeptical about the accuracy of the everything coming from this country. Especially something that has to do with knowledge, cannot be taken for granted if it comes from the Soviet Union (“Ce qu'elle exporte de ses productions intellectuelles est généralement trop tendancieux pour être instructif”).⁹⁷

Before entering the city all the passengers have to have their suitcases, as well as their belongings checked and noted down:

“Les bagages sont examinés avec minutie, mais surtout afin de passer au crible les livres, journaux et papiers quelconques et de noter le signalement des appareils photographiques.”⁹⁸

What the people at the control check mainly worry about is the import of foreign press, magazines and books. This suggests that they are aiming to confiscate everything that could bring foreign ideology within the soviet soil and poison the soviet one and thus jeopardize their propaganda. This is quite similar with what happens to tourists who travel to North Korea. In my opinion propaganda sets roots where there is ignorance. The more people know and therefore have the chance to compare with something different from what they know, the more resistant and rebellious they become. Intourist had already booked their seat on the train, which after the check he finds with difficulty, since he does not speak the language.

Another striking point that shows the role of Intourist but at the same time the control it and the system had on everyone, not only the locals, but especially the foreigners visiting the country is highlighted in this passage:

“Dans les deux ou trois grands hôtels qui reçoivent des bureaux dans lesquels de jeunes femmes polyglottes s'emploient, sans marivaudage, à satisfaire aux desirata des visiteurs (...)”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Ibidem.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ Ibidem.

As it seems from this passage the Soviet Union pays a lot of attention to those interpreters/tour guides. They are being educated not only in the language of the country whose tourist they are going to guide, but most of them, like the author's interpreter, are young people who were born and raised within communism and that is the only thing they know. As it is obviously clear to the author and consists a subtle comment to the reader, the soviet government did not leave anything to luck, and was very cautious in putting people in key positions. This supports the idea that the control over the tourist throughout his trip was tight. The guide was the one who would intervene and interpret everything the tourist needed. Since the guides were young and they only knew the communistic Russia, it was clear that they would only transmit information in accordance with the state.

The text concludes with what is titled as "the formation of a new elite" and it refers to a tendency in the Soviet Union, where younger people, voluntarily chose to follow military activities:

*"Les jeunes travailleurs russes apprennent à soigner leur corps ; mais ils ne se connaissent plus d'âme."*¹⁰⁰

As the author comments, "the soviet people care more about their bodies and not so much about their souls"¹⁰¹. Indeed, military education strengthens the soviet spirit and aims towards the revolution, while everything academic related strengthens the personal opinion, something the soviets wanted to suppress. This proves that cultivating the mind, brings resistance to propaganda.

In October 1938 in *L'Homme libre*, the author Rene Barotte reports his experience of a trip he had to the USSR. The article is of medium size, it consists of two columns and it is placed on the bottom right corner on the front page of the newspaper, underneath the main article about the Union of Socialists. The editor in chief of this paper was Georges Clemenceau and therefore the paper was following a radical socialist approach.¹⁰²

In the first paragraph the author presents the reason of his trip:

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² Watson, David Robin. *Makers of the Modern World*. France. London: Haus Histories / Haus Publishing, 2008.

“Je rentre d'U.R.S.S. Mon voyage au pays de Staline fut d'une brièveté extrême. Et je n'ai pas la prétention de rapporter sur la vie économique de ce pays renseignements sensationnels.”¹⁰³

He starts by explaining that his trip was quite short and he was planning to examine the financial life of the country (“Et je n'ai pas la prétention de rapporter sur la vie économique de ce pays renseignements sensationnels”).¹⁰⁴ He makes his intentions clear and it can be agreed that he starts by giving a rather neutral approach to the whole trip, so we do not expect to see extremely biased opinions.

The trip was part of a cruise he did with a group of other journalists to the Baltic Sea, where they had only five days to explore Russia. As soon as they arrived, he saw many of the tourists holding the manual provided by Intourist with all the things recommended to do during your visit. This indicates that Intourist was quite organized and even provided manuals, the objectivity of which is under question.

His neutral tourist gaze is further stated when he mentions that he would find it difficult to give an answer if asked if the Soviets are happy with the current state, but what he can clearly say is how good they have preserved their cultural heritage:

“Lorsqu'on me demande si les paysans russes sont heureux sous le régime actuel, je puis difficilement répondre, mais si l'on me parle des palais d'antan, je puis affirmer sans mentir que le gouvernement soviétique a conservé parfaitement intacts les grands morceaux d'art du passé.”¹⁰⁵

After all, the narration cannot be directly against the soviet regime, since the paper is socialist itself, but on the other side the harsh policies the soviet government, that were showing on people's appearance, cannot be hidden. The author takes a common discourse common in the articles studied and that is how the bad conditions of living were reflected on people's looks and makes it indirect. That could also be the frame he sets on the facts he observes. Since the newspaper was socialist, we suspect that the author had similar political beliefs which reflect on his framing. He even tries to shift the negativity of this by presenting a positive fact, that the government managed to preserve the cultural heritage of the past (“le gouvernement soviétique a conservé parfaitement intacts les grands morceaux d'art du passé”) in order to make this look less

¹⁰³ Barotte, Rene, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7597614c/f1.image.r=intourist>

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

serious. As he later explains he is not very much interested in modern Russia, so he skipped what Moscow had to offer, namely the mausoleum of Lenin and the modern neighborhoods. Instead, he moved towards landmarks and attractions of the past, such as the winter Palace of St Peterburg, where he takes a stroll around the garden.

“Seule la façade sur les jardins se trouve un peu gâchée par un immense panneau de couleurs voyantes qui célèbre en lettres blanches sur fond rouge la mémoire des fondateurs du bolchevisme.”¹⁰⁶

The beautiful gardens of the palace are interrupted by a huge panel that celebrates the memory of the founders of bolshevism, an indication that the propaganda is still strong in the regime. Something that we often come across through those articles is the soviet government trying to contain or demolish everything that reminded the old royal regime. In this case a new aspect is added. The cultural significance of the Winter Palace did not permit its physical demolition. It can be agreed that since this was also a tourist attraction, the government managed to use it as a means of transmitting propaganda. If we observe it deeper, there is also another symbolism that returns often in the articles and that is the continuity between the old and the new regime. In this case, it is clear: that was what the old regime replaced. The sign is within the physical space of one of the biggest symbols of the old regime, the palace.

In short, all of the above are in general put with a neutral to positive tourist gaze, something that is expected from a socialist paper. Russian art, as well as the respect the Soviet people show to it, is highly praised within the text.

In November 1931 in the *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* the author starts his column by referring to some photos of the USSR published in a magazine as part of a survey and then moves the spotlight towards a rather political aspect and on how the Soviet Union was indeed communistic, with zero signs of capitalism. The article is published on page 3 and consists of two big columns. It is placed on the right part of the page among other articles about foreign and national policy and is signed by J.M. Bourget. It is not accompanied by any photos.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem.

The author starts his article by noting that the magazine *Vu* published a survey with a collection of photos by a team of people of different opinions who participated in some long trips in the Soviet Union accompanied by interpreters of Intourist:

“Vu publie une enquête au pays de Soviets, écrite par des collaborateurs d'opinions différentes qui ont parcouru de longs itinéraires en compagnie de guides et d'interprètes appartenant à l'organisation d'Etat "Intourist", qui est sous la dépendance du Guépéou, illustrée de nombreuses photographies prises pour la plupart par M. Lucien Vogel.”¹⁰⁷

With this paragraph this article is the only one from those studied that clearly states that Intourist was depended on the state police (“Intourist”, qui est sous la dépendance du Guépéou”).¹⁰⁸ This probably suggests that Intourist was following state’s orders and could be used potentially as a channel through which the government could transmit propaganda to foreign tourists, although such a thing is not clearly, nor directly stated.

It is interesting how the author himself do not directly state his opinion, but he rather chooses to express it through the words of others. For instance, later on the text, he adds some words from the survey, words said by the director of the magazine *Vu*. A possible explanation for this might be the fact that the arguments that were about to be presented were politically-colored, reflecting the author’s frame, while with this way he remained neutral, and hid his political beliefs. So, as the director introduces, the people who watched the photos were shocked on one hand about how the Soviets were entirely proletarianised, meaning that there was no luxe in their life, something that seemed like a “scandal” to them.¹⁰⁹ The word “scandal” underlines the reaction of those people, but also poses their mental frame and the gaze they had for the soviet lifestyle.

Later in the text, the author presents a new phenomenon that has started to rise within the soviet society:

“D'autre part, s'ils aperçoivent certaines différences entre les individus dans la façon de se vêtir ou de vivre, un commencement de confort chez certains intellectuels, directeurs d'usines, fonctionnaires plus ou moins importants, ou même chez des ouvriers qualifiés par rapport aux manœuvres, ils y découvrent, disent-ils, le commencement d'une nouvelle

¹⁰⁷ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5067843/f3.image.r=intourist?rk=42918;4>

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem.

bourgeoisie, et crient également au scandale pour inobservance de la doctrine communiste."¹¹⁰

A certain comfort has started to be developed in some higher social groups of society, like intellectuals, factory directors, even in some qualified workers, and it seems like a bourgeoisie is rising, which of course was a "dereliction of the communistic doctrine". This again brings the discourse of power differentials that is often met within the articles and the reason why is probably because a Westerner had the idea of the soviet society being socially flat, with no stratification. It would seem that the import of foreign currency through the tourists and probably other elements of capitalism has created this division within the soviet society, where some people eventually have more power than others.

Later the author presents the words of the journalist Louis Forest, who wrote in *Le Matin*:

"Les Soviets font, en ce moment, chez nous, un intense effort de propagande de luxe ; ils se font charmants ; ils s'amadouent pour nous amadouer. La Russie ? Séjour idéal ! Et quel endroit d'élection pour diriger nos capitaux !" ¹¹¹

He describes the Soviets as presenting themselves to be charming, propagandizing intentionally the west with some luxury. It can be argued that the author here is being sarcastic by making a question and then answering it ("La Russie ? Séjour idéal !").¹¹² He refers to Russia as an ideal destination where the foreign capital will be spent. This pattern of foreign currency being imported in the Soviet Union through the tourists, is a common pattern in the articles analyzed and might be a subtle reference to the espionage and propaganda coming from the Soviet Union, which in its turn feeds this notion.

The critical approach is intense and explains the reason why the author chose not to adopt this as his own words, but reproduce it through the words of other, highly ranked people. It also justifies the newspaper's character as an anti-communistic paper.

In September 1932, *Le Matin* gives an insight on the experience of Doctor Marie during his stay in Leningrad, as part of a medical cruise to USSR. The article is placed in the

¹¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹¹ Ibidem.

¹¹² <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5777405/f1.item.r=Intourist.zoom>

front page of the paper, accompanied by a photo of Dr. Marie and it consists of two columns on the first page and continues on the second page with another two columns. *Le Matin* was an extreme right and antisemitic paper.¹¹³

At the passport control the author meets with an employee of Intourist:

*"Ils sont fiers ne nous montrer un pays sans liberté (conception que nous, Occidentaux, nous ne réalisons pas dès le premier abord)' ils sont fiers de faire constater les résultats d'un système triomphant aux représentants de la France qui sombre dans la misère et le chômage, alors que chez eux, tout le monde travaille."*¹¹⁴

The employee starts chatting with him, as well as the officials at the customs, who find it weird that a group of French people chose to visit them, while France is in a financial crisis and full of unemployment and misery. In my view, a very general and broad conclusion for someone that was not probably able to confirm his arguments. This discussion underlines the strong presence of the propaganda, with which those people were brought up, creating mixed feelings to the potential tourist thinking about visiting the USSR and it forms a peculiar gaze to them. The importance of work within the soviet society that also constated the tool with which the country would be rebuilt, is again presented but also further highlighted by the creation of two opposites. First the author, or better the employee whose words the author reproduces, presents the unemployment in France, in comparison with the almost zero unemployment in Soviet Union, where everybody works ("... un système triomphant aux représentants de la France qui sombre dans la misère et le chômage, alors que chez eux, tout le monde travaille").¹¹⁵ This conclusion mirrors the frame of the employee. For him labor is an ideal that lays high on his moral scale, and therefore affects the way he assesses the global news.

The guides of Intourist seem to have an impressive command of the French language, and inform the tourists that they can purchase high quality objects with their expensive currency:

"Les guides femmes de l' "Intourist" nous frappent par leur connaissance raffinée du français qui rappellent l'ancien régime, ainsi que par leur habileté à servir la doctrine. Elles nous expliquent que nous pouvons

¹¹³ Pinsolle, Dominique. *Le Matin, 1884-1944 Une Presse D'argent Et De Chantage*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013: 353

¹¹⁴ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5777405/f1.item.r=Intourist.zoom>

¹¹⁵ Ibidem.

acquérir grâce à nos dollars des objets de prix que nous entrevoyons dans un baraquement ou l'on nous dirige.”¹¹⁶

This again refers to the policy that the soviet government followed where the tourists were used as importers of currency which would boost their economy. Here this norm that is quite repetitive through the articles I analyzed is combined with the role of Intourist. Its guides were the ones executing this policy by informing the tourists about this option. In my opinion, this shows that the communism was starting to witness some ruptures from within and the foreign currency was well appreciated. Illegal trade was present and consisted a normality for the locals, who did not seem to bother.

Later in the same text, the author gives to one of the columns the title “art of propaganda”. The first paragraph of this column is the following:

“Malgré sa haine du passe le gouvernement actuel n'a pas détruit les palais du tsarisme, les musées, ni la splendide cathédrale de Saint-Isaac transformée en musée antireligieux. Aussi, Leningrad a-t-il conserve son patrimoine de beauté et les trésors d'art de ses musées. Ils sont utilisés pour l'éducation artistique du peuple, pour l'enseignement de la haine du tsarisme et pour la propagande.”¹¹⁷

Against all odds, the soviet government has kept intact all the landmarks of the past, like the palaces and museums in order to teach propaganda through art. Their goal is to cultivate hate for the past regime. Again, in this article we can observe one norm that it is agreed that it might have been an intentional policy of the soviet state, which we also came across in the article of Rene Barotte and that is the use of cultural heritage for transmitting propaganda. As the author mentions later:

“Les palais sont bien entretenus, surveilles remplis de panneaux de propagande sur la pourriture de tsarisme, la férocité de la bourgeoisie cupide, vivant de la sueur de peuple.”¹¹⁸

Teachers with their pupils come to Leningrad exactly for this reason, from all around USSR. In order to serve better their goal, they have managed to put banners within those palaces against czarism. Again, an image we met in Barotte’s article and here, in this article it caught the eye of the author because of the oxymoron, the combination of two opposite regimes.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem.

A bit before the end of an article a new aspect of the soviet society unveils:

“Un intellectuel de Leningrad auquel nous disions combien nous étions indignes de ce luxe qui nous était offert au milieu de tant de misère nous répondit que cela servirait à démontrer comment vivent ces sales bourgeois repus. La propagande obsédante, universelle, ne perd jamais ses droits !”¹¹⁹

Here the author has a talk with an intellectual. As it seems the soviet society is not unified on an intellectual level. There are people who have succeed and received a higher education and probably those can read through the lines of the soviet policies. This intellectual seems to be aware that this luxury is happening in his country only for the foreigners and understands the reason why this happens. He has formed these specific arguments after framing them with the knowledge he had as an intellectual. The reason why this fake luxury is taking place is in my opinion the creation of a false, prosperous image of the Soviet Union the tourists would later bring back to the West. This presents another discourse within the soviet society, that of power differentials. A society where there was equality in wealth, was not equal in other levels, such as intellectuality or in this case members of the society. In this conversation, where there are two actors, the tourist and the soviet intellectual, although the logical relationship is for the western tourist to be having more power in the discourse and know more compared to the Soviet who lacks international media information, in this passage the intellectual seems to be the one that has a more premium position, because he has managed to understand what has not been said to him, while the tourist lies only on what his senses perceive.

His last paragraph has the title “la fin du cauchemar” (the end of the nightmare). The writer does not even try to present in a subtle way his opinion about the general taste the trip left him.¹²⁰ He is using the word “nightmare” to do so. The author reaches a deep conclusion. This could never happen in France. For the propaganda to blossom, you need a huge nation without road connections and big masses of people confused with what happened in the war:

“Il a fallu la situation exceptionnelle d’un pays immense, sans routes, aux masses incultes et bouleversées par les misères de la guerre, pour les

¹¹⁹ Ibidem.

¹²⁰ Ibidem.

*“bactéries de révolution” aient pu y prendre une telle virulence et détruire
les bases qui régissent un Etat civilisé”¹²¹*

This conclusion, along with the far-right character of the newspaper clearly state the position of the author. He refers to “bacteria of revolution” and makes a metaphor where he presents the revolution as a virus that destroys everything. This can be interpreted in two ways. The first one is mainly relied on the newspaper being far right. The other one has to do with the images the author witnessed during his trip. I personally believe that it is a combination of both, since for every Westerner, no matter their political background the difference between the developed life of the West and the one someone would experience during a trip to the Soviet Union is quite striking.

¹²¹ Ibidem.

Findings and discussion:

The following table presents the articles with the main themes that arose in each of them.

Article (Date)	Themes
November 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soviet Wonder• Presentation of the SU as a “forbidden fruit”• Use of opposite to intensify an argument• The fear of the tourists exporting a negative image abroad• The importance of work in the SU• The invasion of capitalism in the SU
August 1934	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soviet Wonder – Railways• Newspapers as means of propaganda• The importance of work in the SU• Punishment of those not following the state’s orders• The SU being a multinational country
September 1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intellectuality• Tourists being cautious about everything coming from the SU• The fear of importing foreign ideology• The education of the guides• The guides transmitting propaganda• The formation of a “new elite” – power differentials
October 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of Intourist• Praise of the soviet system• The use of propaganda in order to create a hate towards the past regime

November 1931	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intourist under the control of the state • The formation of a “bourgeoisie” – power differentials • The importance of foreign currency
September 1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propaganda from the locals • The importance of work • The education of the guides • The importance of foreign currency • Propaganda in order to create hate towards the old regime • Intellectuality – power differentials

The table above clearly shows the repetition of certain topics within the articles referring to the soviet propaganda and those are:

1. The creation of the soviet wonder
2. The importance of work in order to increase productivity
3. The education of the guides of Intourism

All of the above could be easily explained since they consist the methods the soviet government used to implement propaganda. Indeed, the ideal that lied in the future, the powerful country that would become better than the west with the construction and the increase of productivity was a key theme in the soviet propaganda during the 1930s. The education of the guides of Intourist, sometimes shows some norms we do not expect. The aspects the authors focus on, leaves the reader but think that this was intentional. They mainly focus on the loyalty the guides showed towards their regime, meaning that indeed they were aiming to transmit propaganda to the tourists.

Other themes highlight a new aspect:

- The formation of a new elite
- The punishments of those who were drifting away from the doctrine
- The rise of a soviet intellectual group

All of those could be defined as a result of the harsh years of communism and the reaction to Stalin’s first five-year plan. The formation of a new elite probably pinpoints the idea that an equal society is indeed hard to exists since people are different and even if they are equal in wealth, they cannot be equal in mind. An

intellectual elite that always existed and cannot be blinded by the lies of propaganda starts to be skeptical. These toxic elements have probably caught the attention of the soviet government, which tried to suppress them though harsh punishments.

3. Articles that reflect the role of Intourist

An article published in *Le Temps* on the 13th of September 1932 consists of a letter of a correspondent and describes his visit in Veliky Novgorod. It has the size of exactly one column, posted on the second page among other columns giving inside news and stories from different anonymous correspondents of the newspaper, from different countries of the Eastern and Western World. The column is signed by Pierre Berland. *Le Temps* was a newspaper that always remained moderate politically.¹²²

In the beginning the author stated that Novgorod, became a center for many traders from all over Europe, due to its geographical position and its connectivity with the sea. A city full of differences and opposites, close to the city of Volkov and the Ilmen lake.

*"C'est à cent mètres du sanctuaire au cœur même de "Sophiskaia" que nous passerons la nuit dans l'hôtel d'Intourist. Intourist, l'agence officielle de voyage, néglige singulièrement ce joyau du patrimoine historique du peuple russe."*¹²³

The author used rather praising adjectives and nouns to describe the city and its surroundings, such as "joyeau" (= jewel).¹²⁴ He did that in order to form a positive gaze while alluring the reader to come and visit this relatively unknown soviet place. Furthermore, the author here introduces some characteristics of the role of Intourist. As stated, Intourist is the only official agency for the trip. It could be agreed that the author subtly refers to the lack of other alternatives for coming to the Soviet Union and therefore might refer to the intentional need of the soviet state to have one sole agency that would be able to control everything. By giving all the responsibilities and thus the power to one institution, in my opinion, the soviet state managed to not leave anything to luck by creating an institution that for sure would follow the orders of the state.

The representant sent by Intourist was a young, shy guy, who apologized himself for the inconvenience that happened with their reservation:

¹²² Bellanger, Claude. *Histoire Generale De La Presse Francaise*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969: 352–353, 559–561.

¹²³ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k248921d/f2.item.r=Intourist.zoom>

¹²⁴ Ibidem.

“Son représentant a Novgorod, jeune homme falot et timide, n'a guère à nous offrir que les assurances de sa bonne volonté malheureusement inefficace.”¹²⁵

As presented in the introduction Intourist was deploying mainly young people to become their agents. The agent is shy and apologetic. He is presented to be well mannered, in contrast with the idea some Westerners would have for the average Soviet. But some would argue that this could be the frame of the author through which he interprets the guide's behavior. It can be agreed that the author here probably unintentionally is breaking some stereotypes. To sum up, it seems clear that the writer in this case is not biased by the politics or the political distance of the state, as someone would expect by a politically moderate newspaper. He focuses mainly on the touristic aspect of this city which although full of beauty, remained relatively untouched by both the large numbers of tourists that flooded Leningrad and Moscow, as well as the soviet government, which by that time had not intervened in a negative manner on the city and its landmarks.

In January 1936 C. Duin, narrates in *Le Progrès* one of his trips that took place within the Soviet Union. The article consists of an exactly one column and it is placed next to another article about the new Russia that has immerged after the revolution. *Le Progrès* was classified as a left, radical-socialist paper.¹²⁶

From the beginning of the article the role of Intourist is becoming clear:

“Ce fut sous un ciel gris d'averse, et parmi des mines désappointées que se fit notre arrivée a Moscou. L'express nous déposa dans l'immense gare moderne vers 10 heures, et de suite les cars d'Intourist nous emmenèrent a l'Hôtel Novo-Moscowska ... toujours sous la pluie. Cet hôtel est immense, il a plus de 700 chambres munies du confort le plus moderne et pouvant soutenir la comparaison avec les palaces des grandes capitales d'Europe.”¹²⁷

The writer describes the first day of his trip as quite rainy. A key element here is that the car of Intourist picked them up from the station as soon as they arrived (“de suite les cars d'Intourist nous emmenèrent a l'Hôtel Novo-Moscowska”).¹²⁸ This can be interpreted in two ways. The first one might be that Intourist offered a luxury service

¹²⁵ Ibidem.

¹²⁶ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6352575c/f2.item.r=intourist.zoom>

¹²⁷ Ibidem.

¹²⁸ Ibidem.

that included this convenience. On top of that, it was a rainy day (“toujours sous la pluie”).¹²⁹ On a deeper level, it can be argued that Intourist was trying to control every movement of the tourists and let them have the slightest interaction possible with the locals, since they could easily reveal the harsh conditions under which they were living. In addition to that, Intourist agents could start their propaganda from the very first moment the tourists arrived, without letting them form a personal opinion.

As the tour with the car and the agents continues, they pass in front of the Palace of Labor:

*“Les car poursuivent leur visite, et devant nos yeux défilent le Palais du Travail, magnifique bâtiment à l'architecture hardie et bien moderne, L'Internationale Rouge Syndicat, la Maison des Soviets, la place Arbat etc. ... La ville donne l'impression d'une cité énorme, bouillant d'une vie intense ;”*¹³⁰

He, in praising words, gives an image of those monuments and landmarks full of glory. The palace of Labor, “magnificent building of architecture” (“bâtiment à l'architecture hardie et bien modern”).¹³¹ He adds that the city gives the impression of a huge place full of life (“La ville donne l'impression d'une cité énorme, bouillant d'une vie intense”).¹³² They create a rather positive gaze to all the writers, who probably envy to experience this city. It would seem that the choice of passing in front of this specific building is not an accidental one. This building symbolizes a key aspect of the soviet ideology, the hard work that every Soviet should do and would lead to the reconstruction of the country. Its importance is further highlighted by the fact that it is called “Palace” of Labor. Its architectural style is both daring and modern (“hardie et bien modern”). The author framed this in such way, probably to explain that this building is used in order not only to create this feeling of wonderment and pride to the soviet people but also to the tourists.¹³³ In addition to that the building is placed among other important and glorious buildings, something that not only highlights its importance but also makes the tour more interesting and presents a positive image to the tourist who forms a positive gaze. Its modern style creates a continuity and connection with the present. It could have been more classical, but the choice of modern

¹²⁹ Ibidem.

¹³⁰ Ibidem.

¹³¹ Ibidem.

¹³² Ibidem.

¹³³ Ibidem.

in my opinion is something that refers to the present and to the future at the same time, and therefore to the country that the Soviet Union will become in the future after its reconstruction and nothing would remind of the past. There are two key themes that are implied here and return often in the articles under study. One of them is the importance of labor in the soviet mindset and the other is the erase of the past and the look towards the future.

As the trip continues, they observe the main streets and the facades of the rest of the buildings:

“Ce qui surprend aussi, c'est l'absence absolue de panneaux publicitaires et de noms propres sur les magasins, ceci s'explique aisément par le fait qu'il n'existe pas de magasins particuliers ici. Tous, des plus humbles aux plus vastes portent comme indication: "Mostorg", et sont des magasins d'Etat. D'autres bâtisses, portent en caractères latin l'inscription: "Torgsin", ce sont les magasins universels, pour les touristes ou seuls les devises étrangères sont acceptées en paiement des marchandises. À l'instant ou ces lignes paraîtront, le rouble sera devenu une monnaie négociable en banques étrangers, et "Torgsin" auront disparu.”¹³⁴

This paragraph gives an insight on the way a socialistic economy worked. They are shocked by the absence of advertisement bill boards, a rather capitalistic marketing tool (“Ce qui surprend aussi, c'est l'absence absolue de panneaux publicitaires”).¹³⁵ The shops are divided between state shops that are accessible to everyone and other shops accessible only to tourists who pay in foreign currency (“Tous, des plus humbles aux plus vastes portent comme indication: "Mostorg", et sont des magasins d'Etat. D'autres bâtisses, portent en caractères latin l'inscription: "Torgsin", ce sont les magasins universels, pour les touristes ou seuls les devises étrangères sont acceptées en paiement des marchandises”).¹³⁶ The reason why this happens, as it is explained later, is because the foreign currency would help boost up the ruble and make it stronger in the international market. When that happens those kinds of shops would disappear (“À l'instant ou ces lignes paraîtront, le rouble sera devenu une monnaie négociable en banques étrangers, et "Torgsin" auront disparu”).¹³⁷ It would seem that for some this

¹³⁴ Ibidem.

¹³⁵ Ibidem.

¹³⁶ Ibidem.

¹³⁷ Ibidem.

last passage shows that the soviet state admitted indirectly its financial difficulties and proceeded into implementing this policy of separate shops only for tourists with foreign money. This creates an opposite as well as an oxymoron between what the soviet government was projecting and the actions and policies it followed, which were revealing the actual situation.

When it comes to the framing of the writer and the social norms, he used to interpret his experience, it feels like it might be a bit biased, since as he explained, they came with a group of communist people from France, and the writer might himself be a supporter of the communistic idea and regime and therefore give a rather biased approach to the facts he observes. Generally, the whole narration is given in a neutral way.

In October 1937, *Le Journal* describes the working conditions in the USSR, through a visit the author had to a tobacco factory. The article is a two-column article on the fourth page of the newspaper among other articles of financial interest. *Le Journal* was a paper of nationalist character.¹³⁸

Although USSR had a heavy automobile industry, there were no taxis or private cars on the street. This is why Intourist usually sent a car for the foreign tourists to be toured around the city with:

*"Comme il n'y a pas de taxis en U. R. S. S., force est de se confier aux bureaux de l'Intourist qui fournit une voiture américaine ou russe pour tous les trajets en général, et en particulier pour ceux qui ne sont pas desservis par les transports en commun."*¹³⁹

One of the services that Intourist provided and returns often in the articles is their agents picking up the tourists after their arrival. Here a more practical explanation is given. The transportation especially in the big cities like Moscow was not efficient and therefore Intourist was sending its own private cars. In my opinion, this was of double meaning since tourists were not coming in contact with any of the locals and furthermore it was easier for the agents to control every step or interaction of their clients. After all, as it is stated in the theoretical framework of this research, the guides were also the interpreters of their clients.

¹³⁸ (Claude Bellanger (dir.), *Histoire générale de la presse française*, Tome III, PUF, 1972)

¹³⁹ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7634260w/f4.image.r=intourist?rk=557942;4>

Later in the same text the author visits a factory, where he observes how everything around him functions. This visit was part of the trip organized by Intourist. From what he observes within the factory, where the actual production process is taking place, he concludes to this:

“Mais que de décades sont nécessaires pour transformer en routes dignes de ce nom ces milliers de kilomètres de pistes existantes, coupées de marécages et semées d'entonnoirs ; pour développer le réseau de voies ferrées de l' U.R.S.S., à peine plus étendu que la nôtre, alors que la Russie a une superficie quarante fois plus grande que la France ;”¹⁴⁰

According to the author, in order for the soviet economy to be boosted they need better transport infrastructure, meaning a bigger and better road and railway network, which given the size of the country and its morphology would need a century to become fully developed. In a deeper approach, it seems that although Intourist with this visit was trying to project the excellence of the soviet production and its advanced system, it seems that the author did not fall for this and saw the bigger picture. This factory was lacking a lot in order to reach the level of the developed western factories. He concluded to this after framing what he saw with the images he has received from his country. The choice of Intourist to include this visit in their schedule is not random in my opinion. They aimed in projecting their system, what they believed as excellent, to the tourists, who according to them they probably have never witnessed something so “excellent”. Little did they know that their plan in projecting the soviet wonder, would sometimes have opposite results. The western tourists actually knew better, coming from more advanced countries, they could easily compare and see the difference. This last pattern also comes back often within the articles. The Soviets seem to fall for their own lie. Their propaganda is so strong that they reach a point where they turn everything negative into positive and eventually believe it.

After finishing their visit, the surveillance of the Intourist agents remains strict. The tourists have no time to walk around the factory or observe free, as they are taken straight back to their hotel with the car provided by Intourist.

¹⁴⁰ Ibidem.

With this last paragraph the author shows the problematic side of this regime, the one that is usually hidden from the tourists and the one someone was not able to discover easily. The newspaper's nationalist character justifies the dark image described.

In October 1937 *La Croix du Nord*, the author, politician Charles Reibel, recounts his impressions from a trip he had to Russia. The article has the size of almost a column and is placed on the fourth page among other articles of various thematic.

The strong political focus of the article is very clear even from the introduction, which includes the phrase "striking bankruptcy of communism" ("la faillite éclatante du communisme").¹⁴¹ This reflects the frame of the writer but also creates a certain gaze to the reader, who probably has never visited the Soviet Union.

The choice of words in this article is rather interesting for interpretation with the tool of Discourse Analysis. The text seems to be slightly biased since the words are not at all neutral. Even the title (le communisme a fait faillite: communism got bankrupt), does not prepare the reader for a positive approach.¹⁴²

The article starts from when the author received his ticket:

*"J'étais allé à titre, strictement, privé et de façon aussi impersonnelle que possible, parmi les voyageurs d'une croisière et qu'à Leningrad comme à Moscou, je n'ai vu que ce que nous ont montré les "guidesses" interprètes de l'Intourist (organe officiel de tourisme), animées sabotage du fonctionnement de la capitalisation pour payer encore avec les fonds de ces assurés jeunes des retraites ..."*¹⁴³

This paragraph brings up two themes. The one has to do with the role of Intourist. As explained in the theoretical framework, Intourist was responsible with providing all the necessary paperwork, as well as the ticket to the potential tourist. A new aspect is here presented. The author received his ticket in a very private manner and as impersonally ("de façon aussi impersonnelle") as possible.¹⁴⁴ This suggests that the agents of Intourist were having only the necessary interaction with their clients and were not opening up maybe in order not to reveal much about the state or its problems. From

¹⁴¹ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5059465w/f4.image.r=intourist>

¹⁴² Ibidem.

¹⁴³ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem.

early on, the meaning of the title of the column starts to be justified within the text. The second one has to do with the common, in the articles under research, theme of foreign capital that the soviet government seemed to seek desperately in order to boost and support its economy. Therefore, the reason according to the author why the communism has failed is because the soviet government is reaching out for foreign capital. Although the theme of searching for foreign capital is some we witness in many articles, this is the only article that provides a possible explanation on why this happened.

The author probably has concluded to this after using his political and social frames to support his idea. The reason why communism has failed is because elements of individualism have started to show.

In conclusion, the main points of this article that the author wanted to decry, have to do with the financial administration of the USSR. The system they chose to follow does not seem to be productive and efficient and probably the government reached the point of low key implementing camouflaged elements of capitalism in order for its economy to work.

The article of January 1932 in *L'Action Française* gives a rather detailed description of the role of Intourist. It consists of a single column, with no photographic material and is of unknown author. It is placed on the fourth page of the paper next to an article about foreign French policy and a travelogue. *L'Action Française* was the official paper that belonged to the far-right monarchist political movement with the same name, and it was founded as an answer to the left.¹⁴⁵

The article presents the role of Intourist and how foreign tourists were travelling to the USSR. Intourist was a tourism agency that was connected with the state police and therefore a tool that was controlling the whole trip. He has made this conclusion based on what the way he has framed the facts he saw, based on what he witnessed. The author chooses to start with this, in order to make clear his positions and his views as well as the frame through which he interprets what he sees:

*“Alors les Soviets ont crée un corps de guides brevetés, orthodoxes,
dûment catéchisés, tous rattaches à l'Intourist.”¹⁴⁶*

¹⁴⁵ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k764752m/f4.item.r=Intourist.zoom>

¹⁴⁶ Ibidem.

“Hors de l'Intourist pas d'hôtels confortables, ni de repas”¹⁴⁷

“Pour être servi, il faut les tickets de repas de l'Intourist. Et, sans le secours de l'Intourist, pas d'enquêtes possibles, pas d'articles possibles !”¹⁴⁸

The tourist guides who work for Intourist, according to the author are very “orthodox”, meaning they have stuck to the education they have received.¹⁴⁹ They are strong supporters of their regime, and it can be agreed that they are exporting the soviet propaganda through the tourists they are guiding. Intourist is also providing the hotels and the meals. Everything is strongly connected with this organization. In order to get your meal, you need a ticket by Intourist. It is not only a tourist agency, but through its guides, the eyes and the ears of the tourist. Without them, the tourist would not be able to communicate. They would help them go to the station, board their train, find their way around the city, translate into their language. This supports the idea that the guide is basically the only person a tourist would speak to, and the only one who can provide inside information about the state. This brings up the discourse of power differentials. As it seems the client is highly depended on the agent of Intourist and this creates an uneven relationship between them and the agent, who is above of the client in the hierarchy.

They then present the story of a man, who once the guide opened up about things that had to do with the state:

“... Il commence à te parler du prix du pain. Tu veux noter ses paroles, tu tires son carnet. Malheureux ! Qu'as-tu fait? Il se lève, il regarde autour de lui terrorisé, à droite, à gauche, puis il te fait un petit signe de tête. Adieu... Tu ne le reverras jamais ...”¹⁵⁰

The guide starts to talk about the price of the bread, the tourist took out his notebook and started writing down what the guide was telling him. The guide suddenly stopped, stood up and left. This, real story, as the author pinpoints, shows that even those people had a certain job task and were schooled on what to say and what not to say, they were not blind. They could distinguish how problematic the system was. This is a common

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem.

pattern in the articles studied, where some of the locals the tourists interacted with had. They seemed to be aware of the actual situation, although they did not have any information from abroad in order to compare. Again, a power differential relationship is shown, but this time is reversed. Although the norm is for the client to be depended on the agent, here the agent is showing some weakness against the client, who can expose him for revealing the real condition of the state. Furthermore, a new aspect of the locals is brought up, that of the human factor. The author feels empathy, as they were no different. That is probably his goal, to show that no matter the country and the politics, people were still human and they could understand the toxicity and the problems aroused by their system. This approach brings the western, French in this case, reader closer to another person who according to international politics was his enemy, something not expected by a right newspaper. That comes in contrast with the newspaper's right-wing political affiliation.

In August 1934, *Les Nouvelles de Versailles*, included an article that responds to an article published in the same newspaper a week before. The article is placed on page 15, consists of two medium sized columns with no photos and is signed by R.L. It is positioned underneath an article concerning accommodation in Paris and other articles of random topics. The main part of it includes two testimonies of famous people. One of them is of a famous Jewish Soviet writer, Ilya Ehrenburg and therefore the opinion stated through his words is considered to be stronger, since it is not coming from a Soviet of a lower social class, but from one belonging to the higher intellectual soviet social strata. Furthermore, he has framed this through the knowledge he possesses about the soviet system and politics:

*"D'après lui, s'est toujours le système des villages à la Potemkine ; les touristes anglais, français ou allemands sont entraînés par l'Intourist dans les villes ou les régions où tout leur semble parfait. Les hôtels où ils sont logés sont très satisfaisants. En réalité, ce n'est là qu'un faux-semblant; on évite à tout pris de montrer aux touristes le véritable état de choses."*¹⁵¹

This paragraph highlights the actions the soviet government followed in order to transmit a false image of the state to the tourists. As it seems everything was set in a

¹⁵¹ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k76390096/f5.image.r=intourist?rk=407727;2>

way to look perfect. It is clearly stated that Intourist has the role of transmitting that through its organized trips, by choosing to show regions or parts of the city that hide the reality (“les touristes anglais, français ou allemands sont entraînés par l'Intourist dans les villes ou les régions où tout leur semble parfait. Les hôtels où ils sont logés sont très satisfaisants”).¹⁵² This is a discourse, which we meet often in those articles, here has an extra aspect, an aspect coming from this conclusion made by a soviet citizen, something that I did not come across a lot during my analysis. The author presents the opinion of Ehrenburg by creating this type of opposites that often return in the text and usually follow the same pattern as here. First the false image is presented and then comes the real image, which is further intensified by this dyadic example of opposites (“En réalité, ce n'est là qu'un faux-semblant; on évite à tout pris de montrer aux touristes le véritable état de choses”).¹⁵³ The last sentence “on évite à tout pris de montrer aux touristes le véritable état de choses” clearly states that on purpose, as part of probably a propagandistic plan, Intourist preferred not to show the real state of the country.¹⁵⁴

Later a personal experience of Ilya Ehrenburg is presented within the text:

“Il habite lui-même dans un hôtel où il ne peut pas être assuré d'obtenir un verre de thé quand il le demande. Pourtant, un matin, en sortant de sa chambre, il vit que l'hôtel avait été temporairement réquisitionné par l'Intourist, et décoré luxueusement, mais il essaya en vain de réclamer quelque nourriture : tout était reversé pour les touristes étrangers.”¹⁵⁵

When he was a guest at a hotel of Intourist, he was even denied a basic service and then one day they placed him in a new room. The whole hotel was taken by Intourist and started to be luxury decorated due to the arrival of foreign tourists. Another aspect of the power of Intourist as an organization is pinpointed here. Intourist had the power to requisition a whole building and use it for personal use. This, in my opinion, supports the idea that Intourist was not a simple agency. The power differentials in the relationship that is formed between the client and the agency, in this case between Intourist and Ehrenburg, are further divided, since as it seems a new category of client that lies higher than Ehrenburg and therefore any soviet citizen is formed. In this case, we could agree that Ehrenburg belongs to a “second class” category of a client, and the

¹⁵² Ibidem.

¹⁵³ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem.

foreign tourists are the “first class” clients, whose needs come above of those of the locals.

In November 1939 in an article in *Marianne* the author, Andre David gives an insight to the soviet mentality by presenting an experience a friend of the author’s had in the Soviet Union. Additionally, he raises the financial relations between the USSR and Germany and the expectations the latter had over the first. It consists of two big columns on page 7 of the paper, accompanied by a photo of the reception hall of the ministry of public instruction, where all the French officials were gathered.

A memory that remained vivid in the authors mind, was one he had as his train stopped during a trip to Caucasus, that confirmed the insufficiency of the soviet railways:

*“Tandis que mon ami bénéficiait d'avantages dus a sa qualité de voyageur étranger, muni d'un billet délivré par l'agence Intourist, de malheureux Russes attendaient leurs trains des jours et des nuits. En pleine nuit, à Mineralye-Vodie, son train s'arrêta. Le wagon se vida. On prévoyait pour la correspondance cinq à sept heures de retard ...”*¹⁵⁶

His ticket was given to him by Intourist and as the train stopped, he observed the “sad Russians” (malheureux Russes) as he describes them, waiting hours and hours for a train to come.¹⁵⁷ What is really interesting here, is that the author has not shaped his tourist gaze through his personal views, but through the ones his friend told him. He then interpreted them with the social frames he already possessed. The role of Intourist as the only tourist agency responsible for providing the tickets and accommodation is stated. In addition to that, a discourse that returns often in the articles is presented. That is the insufficient soviet infrastructure, and especially the railways/transportation, since that is the main type of infrastructure a tourist comes across during a trip. The fact that this is again underlined here, in my opinion comes to question the credibility of the soviet state, which is presented as a highly advanced state by the Soviets.

One more thing he observes is the fact that the passengers who waited there had different origins and social backgrounds, another sign that the Soviet Union was indeed a multinational nation (“Toutes les races de l'Union soviétique - et elles sont nombreuses! - toutes les classes sociales semblaient s'être donne rendez-vous là”).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7634241j/f3.item.r=intourist.zoom>

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem.

An aspect of the Soviet Union that catches the attention of many tourists within the articles under study.

In the station he observes the banners referring to the importance of work:

“Sur les quais de la gare se balançaient de larges banderoles rouges bariolées d'inscriptions : reproches et avertissements à l'adresse des cheminots de Mineralye-Vodie dont le travail avait été jugé insatisfaisant par les gouvernants.”¹⁵⁹

On the platforms apart from all those people waiting, there are big banners addressing to the railway workers of a city that did not meet their productivity goals. It is clear of how big importance work was within the Soviet Union, since certain goals had to be met. This discourse is often met within the articles. In this passage, it refers to the workers of a specific region who did not meet their goals. It can be argued that the banners were used here as a way to disgrace in public those people. The platform of a station was an area where loads of people pass by every day so it was not probably chosen randomly. Furthermore, it shows that all the people who did not obey with the goals of the state, would have severe consequences like this. In my opinion this consists an indirect threat that aims to keep the Soviets aligned with the rules.

Although this article at the beginning presents some rather negative images about the Soviet Union and therefore creates a negative gaze, the general aftertaste that it leaves to the reader is positive, since the Soviet Union is presented as a strong country, whose need and collaboration other countries might seek.

In October 1937, *Le Journal*, presented in one of its columns the role of Intourist and the foreign policy of the soviet government towards everything coming from the West. The article is of small size, placed in the center of the third page, with no photos or a name of the author, among other articles about the news of that day. *Le Journal* was a paper of nationalist tendance.¹⁶⁰

Jean Raymond-Laurent, general councilor, member and former president of the municipal council of Paris, was appointed to go for a study trip to the Soviet Union, but

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁰ Claude Bellanger (dir.), *Histoire générale de la presse française*, Tome III, PUF, 1972

this was not possible for the reason he explained within a letter addressed to the soviet ambassador in Paris:

“À la date du 28 juillet dernier, dit-il, l'agence de voyages des Wagons-Lits demandait, par l'entremise de l'agence officielle soviétique Intourist le visa de votre ambassade pour trois passeports en vue de la mission d'études que deux collègues du conseil général de la Seine et moi-même nous avons été chargés de remplir en Russie dans le courant de septembre. Or, le 27 août, Intourist informait les Wagons-Lits que le visa était donné à mes deux collègues, mais qu'il ne me serait pas accordé. Un fonctionnaire du cabinet du syndic fit une démarche et fut reçu par un conseiller d'ambassade qui ne lui donna aucune explication.”¹⁶¹

As the agency of travel of Wagons-Lits asked Intourist to grant a visa for Jean Raymond-Laurent and his colleagues, Intourist accepted two of the three visas, and therefore, his visa had been rejected, without any explanation. As a result, him and his colleagues cancelled the trip. A new aspect of the power of Intourist is presented here. Referring again to the discourse of power differentials, this example comes to confirm that the agency had more power than the client and, in this case, it was so powerful that it could implement foreign policy. It could be argued that Intourist did not deny this visa by accident, since Jean Raymond-Laurent was a French politician of Parti démocrate Populaire, a French Christian party of the center, and Intourist by denying his visa without any reason, was actually making a political statement beyond the soviet borders. Although some would agree that this is a superficial statement, since it is based on a sole event, it rather presents the Soviets as people who would reject a visa to a person with status in order to create a scene and demonstrate their power. Thus, presenting them as being vain and superficial, and creates a negative image against the whole nation which also reflects the paper's nationalist background, which of course is framed by the type of newspapers. As explained, Le Journal was a nationalist newspaper and would therefore include an article that would decry the soviet system. In this case the newspapers character seems to set the frame through which the article is presented, since it is not a travelogue where the author states their personal experience, but an article about politics.

¹⁶¹ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5059465w/f4.image.r=intourist>

Findings and discussion:

The following table presents the articles with the main themes that arose in each of them.

Article (Date)	Themes
September 1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intourist as the sole tourist agency• Stereotypes against the SU
January 1926	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intourist driving the tourists everywhere with their private car• Intourist transmitting propaganda• The importance of work• The Soviet Wonder• The importance of foreign currency
October 1937 (Le Journal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intourist driving the tourists everywhere with their private car• The Soviet Wonder - Railways
October 1937 (La Croix du Nord)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communism reaching its end• Foreign capital
January 1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intourist being connected with the state police• The education of the guides• The guides being supporters of the regime• The power of the guides of Intourist – power differentials• Soviets being blind by their own propaganda
August 1934	Intourist transmitting propaganda
November 1939	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intourist being the sole tourist agency

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of work • The punishment of the workers
October 1937 (Jean Raymond-Laurent)	Intourist forming foreign policy

From the table above we could agree that there are certain themes that return often in the articles about the role of Intourist and those are:

- Intourist being the sole tourist agency
- Intourist being connected with the state police
- Intourist transmitting propaganda

The first two are observations of the French tourists that lead them to be suspicious about the role of Intourist. It cannot be a coincidence that the state chose to give all the power to an agency and to no other. After observing how Intourist worked during the whole trip the tourists conclude to the third theme. Indeed, Intourist was used as a tool by the state to project propaganda to tourists.

This was achieved through other themes:

- By intervening in the education of the guides
- By giving them extra power
- By being really close to the tourists throughout their trip

It is clear that Intourist was setting the bases from low. By making the tourist loyal servants of the state the government could implement its policy even to the lowest strata of the society, there where normally a state cannot reach to such an extent.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have strived to answer the question “How did French tourists experienced their trips to the Soviet Union and how was the soviet tourism presented in newspapers of France in the 1930s?”. In order to specify my research and make it more detailed and targeted I have divided this main research question in two sub-questions:

- How did the French press portray the role of Intourist?
- How did the French tourists see the implementation of soviet propaganda?

I wanted to examine if my two sub questions are somehow linked. Knowing that Intourist was a state organization and how strong the soviet propaganda was during the 1930s I wanted to interpret the experience of the tourists and the articles of the French authors and search for those elements, while discourse analysis would help me reach some conclusions.

Another aspect I wanted to observe, was the relationship between tourism and the political debate between the West and East and more specifically between France and the USSR, seen through the prism of the French press of the 1930s. By analyzing the tourists' behavior, their reactions and the facts they chose to focus during their trip, I succeeded to obtain an insight look in French mentality and culture of that era, formed not only by social facts, but also from political beliefs and misbeliefs and the fear of an unknown country.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I introduced the reader to the topic by explaining key background elements really important for understanding the notion of tourism in this decade and relative topics around my very niche topic, as well as the role of Intourist, an agency that played an important role in the Soviet Union, but also throughout my research. I focused on passages I found after using the the key word “Intourist” on Gallica, around which the whole experience of the French tourist evolved and, in this chapter, I used the discourse analysis in order to frame all the norms and

patterns that highlighted the role of this agency. Indeed, most of the aspects were in accordance with what we know from the theoretical framework. Intourist was responsible for dealing with all the paperwork of the tourist, educating the guides, being responsible for the accommodation as well as the whole trip. But through the analysis of the experience of the tourists' new patterns arose. Intourist guides started to have a rather unusual for their position power. They were not only the ears and the eyes of the tourist, meaning they could make him believe whatever they wanted to present, but also even most of the people working there were young and ignorant, they were unconsciously sometimes exercising foreign policy. This created the most common discourse in the text, that of power differentials which was appearing either in relationships between the agent and the client or between the locals and the tourists.

In the third chapter where I presented the articles that mainly focus on propaganda. The themes that appeared are more or less the same with the second chapter. Here the presentation of the soviet wonder is even more present. It is sometimes through the glorious buildings that according to the Soviets you could not find similar abroad or as the famous Trans-Siberian Railway that is the pride of the Soviet Union. In this chapter though, more than in the second, one a strong focus is set on the steady shift towards a new era. Although the years between the Russian Revolution and the decade studied are a bit more than 10, the society is shifting in lighting speed and asking for a change of its really young system. We cannot be sure if communism was achieving its goals since it was pressuring enormously the people who not only did not have any liberties, but they also had to follow the productivity rates that Stalin was setting already from the late 1920s. This need for an immediate shift is proved by the words and actions of the locals, but also by the new era that started to rise. Intellectuals, people who seem to understand better and faster the situation and the existence of a very well camouflaged and organized propaganda with fear express their thoughts, but their hands are tight since they know that expressing an opinion opposite than the state's could get someone punished. On the antipode lies the group of Intourist guides that start to gain more power and a possible explanation to this is that the state realized this social change and wanted to suppress it.

If we could agree on one theme that is common and presented almost throughout both of the chapters is the need of foreign capital to boost the soviet economy and that can be imported by the tourists. A great number of the articles I analyzed underline the need

of the tourist to buy in their currency since it is highly appreciated and needed and most of the times this suggestion comes from the guides themselves. This proves two key points. One is that indeed Intourist was using its guides to implement its orders and project propaganda and two the propaganda was showing a false image of the state. The agents who were presenting the soviet wonder, were the same who encouraged tourists to leave their currency in the state. The hard financial condition that the state was in after the hard first five-year plan of Stalin could not be hidden.

Further research could also take into account other decades after the 1930s or having this current thesis as an example proceed to a relative analysis with the focus on other countries apart from France. Another interesting idea that also is lacking from the current literature is a comparison of the perception of tourism in the Soviet Union during communism and after the fall of it. This comparison can be done with the image the same country presented during and after, or even a cross-country comparison between European countries and the Soviet Union. In both of the above cases, my research can consist an important tool.

This research comes to bridge the gap of this understudied first years of the reign of Stalin era for which not much literature exists. Tourism in the Soviet Union was an activity that by definition was limited and hard to happen, because of all the restrictions and paperwork needed. By managing to collect a corpus of articles that reflect the personal opinion of a Westerner and provide inside information about this decade for which we know so little, this research comes as an important addition to the global literature about tourism in totalitarian states. The use of Discourse Analysis explains the relationships between the locals, but also between the tourists and the locals and gives a further understanding of the soviet society but also of the discourses formed during this period. Those discourses concern the soviet ideology, but also the power differentials formed. Framing those interpretations helps the reader understand better the mindset of the tourist who was living the actual experience and leaves to the reader to judge the accuracy of those words, but also through a Socratic method leads the reader towards certain conclusions. The gaze of the tourist, positive or negative is reflecting his mindset and as an extension the perception of a western European towards this country of different political ideology than his.

Although the soviet system as a whole had many sides that still remain unknown, this thesis managed to shed light to one of the darkest pages of the history of the 20th century, by presenting the true image of the Soviet Union many ignored or did not know. As this part of history managed to fade through the flow of time, since it was and still is a taboo topic for many, modern research as this current thesis can manage to capture it and bring it to the present by showing all the aspects of history, bright and dark, and become a path for everyone when by underlying the cruelty of the past, we can be conscious in the present and plan properly the future.

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