

The Business of Selling the Soviet Union:
Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939

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A Thesis
in
The Department
of
History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (History) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 2006

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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-20671-3
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-20671-3

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ABSTRACT

The Business of Selling the Soviet Union:
Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939

Samantha A Kravitz

Created by the Soviet government in 1929, the all-union, joint stock company, Intourist (Foreign Tourist) was created to facilitate tourist travel to a land in transition. It was designed as a modern, full-service travel agency offering inclusive and individual tours to the Soviet Union, while at the same time selling a vision of the Soviet state to foreigners. The USSR was a country of the future, a “Land of Color and Progress” (according to one 1939 Intourist advertisement) and this was especially appealing to Americans during the tumultuous 1930s.

This work explores the dynamics behind how Intourist sold the Soviet Union as a travel destination to Americans in the interwar years (specifically 1929-1939). It highlights the political and economic power of tourism using traditional primary source documents in combination with visual and material history items, specifically Intourist ephemera. It also brings to the forefront the intricate and fruitful relationships between the Soviets and American advertisers, the mass media, banks, law firms and major names in the tourism industry. Intourist could not have survived, let alone succeeded, without support.

American tourism to the Soviet Union influenced opinion on multiple levels of society and government during the 1930s. Intourist helped the Soviets garner legitimacy on the world stage and reshaped the American public’s image of the USSR, thus furthering Soviet policy objectives.

DEDICATION

No journey is ever really taken alone. For every intrepid traveler there is someone waiting on the other end – sacrificing on many levels to give that person the freedom to explore the infinite possibilities out there in the distance. Mom, Dad and Dan all of my love and my thanks for allowing me to embark on this journey and for always loving and accepting me without reservation.

Also essential to any journey is the guide. Without this person the traveler would surely lose her way – thank you Alison for lighting my way with your enthusiasm, utter brilliance, wisdom and humor.

Finally, to Montreal, Concordia and the friends that have made the journey so memorable –Merci, Je t'aime, Sam.

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Point of Departure: Dreams, Myths and Journeys

"Tourism was a particularly useful form of state generated fantasy because vacations are so often something dreamed about, saved for, and seen as a future reward for work well done."

-Anne E. Gorsuch, Historian¹

"Today, you need no magic carpet, no store of riches to travel. If you but choose your journey carefully, thoughtfully, new horizons open up before you...And where are horizons wider and more promising than in the Soviet Union? Here, in a land of vastness and infinite

variety, is the fulfillment of your brightest travel dreams."

-Intourist, Soviet Travel Agency, 1939²



Figure 1-1 – Intourist
Brochure, *See the U.S.S.R.*,
1939 2

*"Into the night, far into the night, I sit and dream...
Broad boulevards, flanked by superb buildings;
Fantastic spires and gorgeous palaces! A great
and varied land, Orient and Occident; old and new;
steel and song!...Across the waves, our ship advances
garlanded with a thousand dreams, and a thousand
voices join the chanting song; and the sound is carried
off across the waves."*

-Mattie John Utting, *Tourist on a Cruise to the Soviet Union*, 1939³

Our dreams take us to far away places. They invade the quiet hours of our existence and tie into our childhood aspirations of somewhere better just over the

¹ Anne E. Gorsuch, " 'There's No Place Like Home': Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 781.

² Intourist, *Seeing the U.S.S.R. [1939]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1939), Inside Cover. Author's collection.

³ Mattie John Utting, *Arctic Fringe: A Day by Day Cruise* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1939), 161.

horizon. Travel embodies and fulfills these dreams while tapping into the curiosities of the greener grass on the other side.

Dream fulfillment has been the hallmark of the salesman since the inception of advertising in the mid-nineteenth century. Those such as Isaac Merritt Singer, with his sewing machine, took advantage of industrialization in the late 1800's to sell items of convenience to those who could afford such products and sometimes those who could not as well. In the 1920s advertising became the driving force behind the growing consumption habits of a prosperous American public. Mass consumption was not a product of the 1920s, but it became a hallmark of the post-WWI American standard of living through the "extensive use of national advertising, and the pervasive powers of radio and motion pictures."⁴ Advertisers sought not only to give the public what it desired, but also to reshape its dreams of fulfillment. These skilled image makers included artists, copy editors, writers, salesmen and public relations executives, and their function was the "creation and propagation of symbols to persuade mass audiences to some action or belief...These experts are image makers...dedicated to fashioning both vocabularies of sentiment, motive and image and frameworks for perceiving social reality."⁵ Advertisers brought those dreams to people through the pages of mass market newspapers, periodicals and travel brochures.

The leaders of nations also realized that they too could sell people a vision, a myth or a dream. This entailed not only convincing individuals what it meant to be a citizen within the nation, but also of persuading the world community of the legitimacy and power of that nation. The Soviet Union offers a prime example of this process, as the victorious Bolsheviks sought to replace the old Tsarist model of the nation. They had to convince their population of a particular dream of the future: the creation of a Socialist Utopian state, which would later be tied to the goals of Stalin's Five Year Plans. This reeducation process used all the methods of a successful advertising campaign including the branding of slogans, the creation of symbols to represent certain personified ideals, and the pervasive placement of clear and accessible messages filtered through multiple

⁴ Michael E. Parrish, *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression 1920-1941* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), x.

⁵ Robert Jackall and Janice M. Hirota, *Image Makers: Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethos of Advocacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5.

mass media. Victoria Bonnell charts the creation of this new Soviet identity in her work *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*. The goal of the Bolsheviks was to transform the identity of the state and its people through political advertising, what Victoria Bonnell refers to as “political education.” This “education” campaign consisted of creating repetitive and comprehensible “invented traditions,” including “compelling emblems and symbols (for example, the hammer and sickle, the red star and the image of the heroic worker).”⁶ The creation of a visual and textual lexicon, tied to the goals of the state, is intrinsic to the very foundations of state, empire or nation building.

It was a combination of many factors that led dreamers in the 1930s to seek out travel as a means of adventure and personal fulfillment. No matter what the motivations, however, the demand for travel by Americans was strong despite the unstable economic and political climate. It was during this time that a partnership arose between dreamers and foreign tourist bureaus. One of the most successful, yet overlooked, of these partnerships was formed between American tourists and the Soviet government. A curious American public coalesced with the Soviet state’s need for revenue and legitimacy. These American tourists were in large part responding to appeals by Intourist, the Soviet state travel agency, to “Tour the Soviet Union.”⁷

Intourist was created on April 12, 1929 through a decree of the Council for the Labor and Defense of the USSR and was an “abbreviated form of Inostrannyi Turist,” (Foreign Tourist) itself an acronym of “Gosudarstvennoe aktsionernoe obshchestvo po innostrannomu turizmu v SSSR.”⁸ This all-union, joint stock company or monopoly was created to facilitate tourist travel to a land in transition. Intourist was not only a full-service travel agency offering inclusive and individual tours to the Soviet Union, but it was also to design and sell a vision of the Soviet state to foreigners. Tourists were to experience first-hand what the Soviets had constructed both physically and symbolically.

⁶ Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 3.

⁷ “Tour the Soviet Union,” *Fortune*, April 1933, 8.

⁸ Shawn Salmon, “Tourism,” in *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 1562. This entry includes a misprint of the author’s last name, referring to it as ‘Solomon.’ Subsequent references to this source in this work will be listed with the correct spelling of the author’s last name.

They were to “see the immense activity, new building, social work, and famous theatres of the world’s most discussed country [and at] [r]educed travel rates.”⁹ This was a country of the future, a “Land of Color and Progress”¹⁰ consisting of millions of peoples from various backgrounds working together to build a future that was brighter than the backwards past. In other words, the Soviets were tapping into the travel dreams of foreigners and especially Americans. These tourists desired for many reasons to get away from it all and Intourist would give them what they desired cheaper, easier and more comfortably than in Tsarist days.

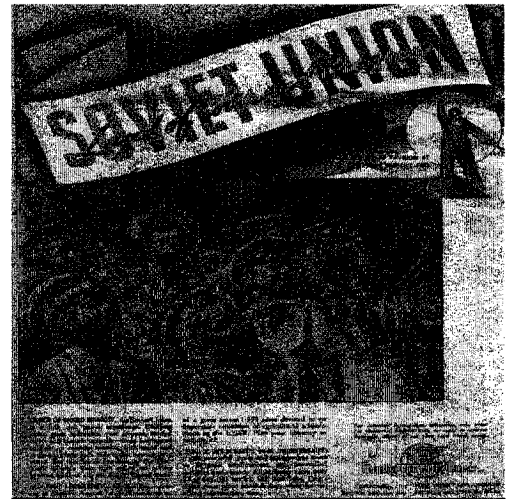


Figure 1-2 – Intourist Advertisement, “Land of Color and Progress,” 1939 ¹⁰

The flow of American tourists to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and the simultaneous transition of tourism into a mass market industry, have generally been considered as mere footnotes of history. One often finds a generic line in a scholarly work that describes American tourism to the Soviet Union in the interwar years as a trickle of intellectuals, fellow-travelers and Communists who wanted to see their “red dreams” realized. Another theory holds that in a decade wracked by the economic and emotional hardships of the Great Depression, tourism was limited mostly to a fringe of the leisure class who were trying to escape from the poor masses at home. Added to this improbable mixture, tourism between the Soviet Union and the United States seems on the surface to be especially improbable because of the state of American-Soviet relations during the 1930s. As preeminent scholar John Lewis Gaddis argues, relations between the Soviet Union and the United States consisted of “oscillation between friendship and enmity as diplomats succeeded only occasionally in balancing interests against principles.”¹¹ While the 1930s contained periods of thaw and friction between the two countries, it did see a high point in relations with formal diplomatic recognition of the

⁹ “Tour the Soviet Union,” 8.

¹⁰ “Soviet Union: Land of Color and Progress,” 1939. This campaign was associated with the Soviet Pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City. Author’s collection.

¹¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, The Soviet Union and the United States: An Interpretive History, Second Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990), xi.

Soviet Union in 1933. Adding yet another layer to this tourist phenomenon was the internal dynamic of the Soviet Union at this time. The decade started with severe famine in the Ukraine and continued with the show trials and purges of the mid to late 1930s that sent so many to their deaths or to the far reaches of Siberian camps.

A superficial acceptance of these historical circumstances led historians to dismiss the existence of a thriving and important interwar tourist industry. They saw the American-Soviet tourist connection as nothing more than an anomaly on the historical radar. Thankfully, the historical profession is not a static entity, but a profession consistently reevaluating methods and approaches to its craft. With a wave of revisionism in the 1960s and through the impact of philosophy and literary analysis in the 1980s, historians of the current era have revisited the grand narratives and outdated interpretations with new tools and insight.

This modern climate of the historical profession allows one to reevaluate the subject of American tourism to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. When one looks closer it becomes clear that this subject consists of much more than just ideologues on political voyages to 'discover the future.' The phenomenon is instead a multi layered arena of inquiry that brings into focus many areas of current historical curiosity, including the interplay between state and non-state actors and issues concerning how nations construct internal and external identities. This work explores how Intourist sold the Soviet Union as a travel destination to Americans in the interwar years (specifically 1929-1939). They promoted the USSR to a wide range of Americans with the help of their American business and travel industry contacts through the visual and textual premise of technological and social modernization.

Deconstructing the language, imagery and motivations behind the picture that Intourist and the Soviets painted of the USSR for foreign audiences can also assist historians in understanding how and for what reasons states harness images for political and economic purposes. In the interwar years, tourism had grown into a highly specialized and politically and economically powerful industry based on mass consumption. This power was finally recognized at the end of the decade by the United States Department of Commerce which calculated that from 1919-1938 tourist "expenditures overseas by United States residents totaled approximately

\$5,400,000,000.”¹² Travel was big business and, even during the days of the Great Depression, Americans still found the dollars to fulfill their dreams.

The story of American tourism to the Soviet Union emerges during a unique time and place in history that needs to be explored in more detail in order to fully understand its significance. It began in a year when the Great Depression gripped the United States, while the Soviet Union, half a world away, looked much different. This dichotomy between one world appearing on the brink of failure and the other on the ascent spurred the imagination of authors, politicians and especially the public. The Great Depression caused many Americans to dream of far off places and to desire to see the Soviet experiment for themselves. This sense of wonder and curiosity, in conjunction with the economic conditions of the times, led many to seek out alternatives, escapes and fulfillment through travel.

Laying the Foundation: Historical Background and Issues of Time and Place

On October 29, 1929, “Black Tuesday,” the bottom fell out of the dream that was capitalism in the United States. The crash of the American stock market led to a decade of hardship that would be known as the Great Depression.¹³ While a worldwide phenomenon, it was precipitated in other countries, especially in Europe, by events less related to the American market and more so by the impact of World War I. While not immune to these events, the Soviet Union was not affected in the same manner as other countries in the West. In addition, hardship was nothing new for the Soviet people. Even before 1929 the Soviet people had coped with starvation, the introduction of collectivization and the inherent sacrifices and tribulations of having to rebuild a society

¹² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *Overseas Travel and Travel Expenditures in the Balance of International Payments of the United States, 1919-1938*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), vi.

¹³ The events of October 1929 are not the sole explanatory factor for the onset of the Great Depression in America. As economic and political scholars have argued, there were indicators throughout the 1920s that the bubble of prosperity was going to burst. Poor monetary policy, problems with the gold standard, an unreliable banking system, and the international repercussions and problems with war debt repayment from World War I were contributing factors to American economic woes. For more, see Barry Eichengreen’s *Golden Fetters: The Gold Standard and the Great Depression, 1919-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Peter Temin *Lessons from the Great Depression* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989); Charles P. Kindleberger *The World in Depression, 1929-1939* (London: Allen Lane, 1973); William E. Leuchtenburg *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) and finally one of the standard political histories of the time, Robert S. McElvaine’s *The Great Depression: America 1929-1941* (New York: Time Books, 1984).

from the ground up. They endured rapid societal and industrial change from the introduction of War Communism during the Civil War through Stalin's Five Year Plans of the 1930s.¹⁴ By 1929, after nine years of recovery efforts, the Soviet Union was showing signs of incredible progress, at least in the industrial sphere, just as capitalism was about to hit a wall.

Images of the United States in the 1930s are ones of misery and hardship, of bread lines, shanty towns, the Dust Bowl, and overwhelming unemployment. Even those with jobs saw a reduction in hours or a decline in wages. As seen below by 1933 the unemployed in the United States numbered 12.8 million [Figure 1-3].

United States Labor Force and Unemployment, 1929-1939 (Numbers in Millions)			
Year	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	% of Labor Force Unemployed
1929	49.2	1.6	3.2
1930	49.8	4.3	8.7
1931	50.4	8.0	15.9
1932	51.0	12.1	23.6
1933	51.6	12.8	24.9
1934	52.2	11.3	21.7
1935	52.9	10.6	20.1
1936	53.4	9.0	16.9
1937	54.0	7.7	14.3
1938	54.6	10.4	19.0
1939	55.2	9.5	17.2

Figure 1-3 – United States Unemployment Figures, 1929-1939¹⁵

American displeasure with this situation, and President Herbert Hoover's perceived inaction, resulted in the 1932 election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who promised a

¹⁴ There is a wealth of works on the economic and political specifics of Soviet history. A short list of this scholarship includes: Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the Soviet Union* (London: Allen Lane, 1969); Alan Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen 1917-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); E. H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929* (New York: Macmillan, 1969) and R.W. Davies, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, Part I* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), 70; Chart reprinted in Jeanne Boydston, et al., *Making a Nation: The United States and Its People, Combined Volume* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004), 570.

“New Deal” for Americans. From 1933 to 1938 Roosevelt enacted a series of big government reforms, commonly referred to as the First and Second New Deals.¹⁶ The New Deal did not end the Great Depression.¹⁷ What Roosevelt’s reforms did accomplish was the restoration of a sense of stability to the American psyche, while at the same time reinforcing the economic structures of the country.

While a majority of people did endure hardship during the Great Depression, the experience for Americans varied by geographic location, profession and class. Overwhelming American suffering, coupled with the resilience of the American spirit to withstand these hard times, has taken its place in the pantheon of narratives that forms the core of American identity. Yet, what about the experiences of the millions of Americans who were not out of work in these years? One can look, for instance, at those such as Gerald W. Johnson, an editorial writer for the *Baltimore Sun*, who wrote about his experience as a middle class American during the Depression. He says:

I live on a street, I believe, is a representative cross-section of the American middle class. A banker lives at one end of our street and a carpenter at the other...Around the corner is a physician...The depression came to our street in 1931...And how has it affected us? Frankly, we are scared. However, we had seen it coming and have had time to brace ourselves... We are to a certain extent gloomy, but we are by no means in despair...And perhaps the most remarkable effect of all is that we are very tired of humbug.¹⁸

The middle class experience during the Depression consisted of a complex set of interactions between sector of employment, government initiatives and the variety that colors individual experience. This complexity has rarely come through in the historical narrative.

¹⁶ Commencing with a period known as “the Hundred Days” in 1933, Roosevelt sought to use government to help to resolve two of the biggest problems facing the American economy: unstable banks and high unemployment. He solidified the shaky American banking structure through the Emergency Banking Act and put Americans back to work job programs including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). With “the Second Hundred Days” in 1935 Roosevelt further created a sense of stability through the Social Security Act of 1935.

¹⁷ For further information on the nuisances of the New Deal, see Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Jordan A. Schwarz, *The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (New York: Knopf, 1993) and Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (UK: Macmillan, 1989).

¹⁸ Gerald W. Johnson, “The Average American and the Depression,” *Current History*, 35 (February 1932): 671-675 reprinted in Daniel Aaron and Robert Bendiner, eds., *The Strenuous Decade: A Social and Intellectual Record of the Nineteen-Thirties* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 6.

Another set of individuals whose narratives differed from the norm during this time was the upper or leisure class. J. P Morgan defined the leisure class as those “who could afford a maid” and *Fortune Magazine* found that in 1931 “there still were 1,000,000 families with servants.”¹⁹ While many of the well-to-do lost a portion of their fortunes, rarely did they become destitute. The effects of the Depression trickled down the economic ladder with the working class and poorest members of society feeling the pinch the hardest.²⁰ Therefore, there can be no singular narrative to explain the impact of the Depression on Americans. And the era’s tourism industry reflects these varied experiences, which were based on class and individual experience.

Tourism during the Depression is a unique and interesting phenomenon, but perhaps not as much an aberration as it appears. It has been stated by at least one historian that “the terms ‘evasiveness’ and ‘escapism’ have been used frequently, and quite properly, in descriptions of popular culture in this period.”²¹ Dreams of adventure and excitement can in many ways be tied to an anxious population in need of escape. On the other hand, tourism during this time could also be an indicator of Americans’ strong sense of hope and faith that this too would pass. The 1930s can generally be considered “a contradictory decade in which a sense of bewilderment, or personal guilt and despair was mingled with an inextinguishable hope for a better tomorrow.”²² Travel to the Soviet Union embodied this sense of hope.

Mass consumption in the forms of demand for new technology and entertainment were also hallmarks of the Depression decade. It was “a time when destitution, stagnation and aimlessness were widespread, but also one in which legislation and technology moved the nation towards...the suburban lifestyles and the consumerism

¹⁹ Edward Robb Ellis, *A Nation in Torment: The Great American Depression 1929-1939* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1971), 252.

²⁰ A valuable primary source collection of the experiences of those hit hardest by the Depression is Robert S. McElvaine’s *Down and Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the ‘Forgotten Man’* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

²¹ Stephen W. Baskerville and Ralph Willett, *Nothing Else to Fear: New Perspectives on America in the Thirties* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Manchester University Press, 1985), 6.

²² Baskerville and Willett, 8. Baskerville and Willett, 6, state that this progress motif was also part of projects associated with the New Deal, specifically the ‘Treasury Section’ murals. These murals consisted of “iconography [that] was often dominated by travel and machine motifs, with their promise of progress and comfort.” This point is especially important when compared to the forthcoming analysis in Chapter 3 of Soviet tourist literature iconography.

characteristic of the postwar period.”²³ Advertising for travel and tourism in the *New York Times* consistently appeared next to ads for other consumer goods, especially automobiles, kitchen appliances, pianos, furniture and furs. Consumption did not stop wholesale in the Depression years and the experience of travel, while not a consumer durable, was part of the ideological construction of things that one needed to have in order to attain a fuller life even in the midst of tough times.

When one unravels the layers of improbability surrounding American tourism to the Soviet Union, one then moves from issues of time to issues of place. Lack of official diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States until 1933 did not act as an impediment to tourism between the two countries. Viewing the United States and the Soviet Union as non-compatible entities because of divergent value systems/ideologies is a narrow, Cold War point of view. John Lewis Gaddis correctly states that “a more fruitful approach to the history of Russian-American relations is to examine the interplay...between interests and ideologies.”²⁴ A closer inspection of the history of American-Soviet relations shows an expanded picture of the ideological flexibility of both powers. When one views relations in this way it is a less improbable scenario to then consider tourism between the two countries. Thus an analysis of tourism can do much to inform and expand upon the history of American-Soviet relations.

There is no question that right from the start American opinion of the Bolsheviks was unfavorable. Not only did the Bolsheviks dissolve an elected Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918, something which flew in the face of Wilsonian self-determination, but they also advocated world revolution; refused to honor the war debts of the Provisional and Tsarist governments; and of great importance to the American leaders, they looked to sign a separate peace with Germany. American fears were realized when

²³ Ibid. As Susan Strasser’s work has shown, hardship went hand in hand with the marketing and consumption of refrigerators, radios and automobiles. Machines were a metaphor for the optimistic future and many of them began to appear in American homes (including the new electric iron, refrigerator and washing machine). For more, refer to Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon, 1982). Not only did those in the advertising industry feed the technological dreams of the American public, but many Americans had the means and accordingly responded; in other words there was a market for these goods. As the editor of the *Nation’s Business*, February 1931, 9 points out, in 1930, the American economy had “made and sold a new automobile for each ten families at a cost of \$2,159,600,000 and saw registrations highest of any year...” The automobile was also central to the rise of domestic travel in the United States: “[v]acation travel, most of it by car, was responsible for half of all recreational expenditures [domestically] in 1935” according to Baskerville and Willett, 7.

²⁴ Gaddis, xv.

on March 3, 1918 the Bolsheviks at Brest-Litovsk signed a treaty with the Germans and withdrew from the First World War. From the beginning of the Revolution, the Americans supported the enemies of the Bolsheviks.²⁵ Yet, with the end of the war and the Bolshevik solidification of power following their victory in the Russian Civil War, American President Woodrow Wilson and the Allies had to “find, on the firm ground of national self-interest, some mutually acceptable basis for peacefully tolerating each other’s existence.”²⁶ This theme of toleration would be the basis of the political relationship between the two powers during the period of diplomatic non-recognition.

Diplomatic non-recognition did not mean that the Soviet Union was closed to American interests. There was much complementary interaction between the two countries at other levels of society. For instance businessmen, cultural figures and tourists formed relationships with the Soviets and pushed the debate on formal Soviet diplomatic recognition up until 1933. There also was not a government consensus on how the Soviet Union should be handled. As Soviet markets became more appealing, the American government became more flexible with regards to economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union.

The ties between American business and the Soviet Union in the interwar years were strong.²⁷ American corporations had eagerly sought to do business with the Soviets as early as 1918, even lobbying President Wilson to include economic penetration as part of his campaign for military intervention in Russia, a request Wilson denied. Following the lifting of the Supreme Allied Economic Council’s trade embargo on January 16, 1920, the American Treasury Department restricted U.S.-Soviet trade by making it difficult for the Soviets to secure credit and prohibited them from paying for American

²⁵ Wilson went so far as to militarily intervene in Siberia in 1918. While intervention was stated by the Americans not to be for the purpose of defeating the Bolsheviks, the Wilson administration believed that this action would serve to undermine their power.

²⁶ Gaddis 77 and 86.

²⁷ These ties are explored in far greater detail and scope in works such as James K. Libbey, *Russian-American Economic Relations, 1763-1999* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1999); Christine White, *British and American Commercial Relations with Soviet Russia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Anthony Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1968-1973); and Joan Hoff Wilson, *Ideology and Economics* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1974).

goods with gold.²⁸ In the mid 1920s, the Commerce and State Departments would facilitate easier and more profitable economic relations with the Soviets and by 1930 “American exports to the Soviet Union exceeded those of any other country.”²⁹

It is clear, especially from the documents found in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* that the State Department’s policy, throughout the period of non-recognition, was that it would not stand in the way of American business interests; economics trumped ideology. It could have easily impeded such trade through its power to grant visas. A May 19, 1925 dispatch from Secretary of State Kellogg to the Consul General in Paris speaks to this matter. The dispatch concerns a request by the law firm of Simpson, Thatcher and Bartlett of New York, who “represents certain commercial organizations in the United States such as the All-Russian Textile Syndicate and Amtorg Trading Corporation,”³⁰ for visas allowing these Soviet agencies and their representatives to travel to the United States for the purpose of business with American firms. The State Department responded: “Department does not desire, in general, to impose objection to visits of Russian nationals even if associated with Soviet regime provided the bona fide purpose of their visit involves solely trade or commerce between the United States and Russia.”³¹

Further, the State Department policy towards economic relations with the Soviet Union is highlighted in a correspondence between the Vice President of the American Locomotive Sales Corporation and the Under Secretary of State in October of 1927. The

²⁸ The impediments to economic relations early on with the Soviets were a reaction to American public opinion then in the grips of a Red Scare. However, the importance of economic interests to the Soviets as well as American business was never in question nor was trade banned between the two entities during this period of anxiety. The problems involved in these early economic dealings between American business and the Soviets are personified in the case of Ludwig C.A.K. Martens and his Soviet Bureau. Only open from January 1919 to June 1919 while it was not successful in its original mandate which was to garner diplomatic recognition by the American government, it was highly successful in receiving economic consideration from American business interests. As Todd Pfannestiel writes, Martens “served as the unofficial Soviet ambassador to the United States,” and the Soviet Bureau “represented the first and most concerted effort by the Bolshevik regime to normalize relations between Russia and the United States.” For more on the Soviet Bureau refer to Todd Pfannestiel, “The Soviet Bureau: A Bolshevik Strategy to Secure U.S. Diplomatic Recognition through Economic Trade,” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 2 (April 2003): 171.

²⁹ Gaddis, 103.

³⁰ “Authorization of Visas for Russian Nationals to Visit the United States Temporarily for Business – The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Paris (Skinner), May 19, 1925” *Foreign Relations of the United States 1925: Volume II* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940), 703.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Soviet State Railway, as part of the rebuilding of the Soviet economy under the NEP, was looking to purchase railroad locomotives, cars and equipment from the American Locomotive Sales Corporation. The State Department answered with the following:

Accordingly, while the Government of the United States has not granted recognition to the regime now functioning in Russia, no restrictions are imposed upon the carrying on of trade and commerce with that country or with the Soviet regime, and no objection has been raised to the financing of ordinary current commercial intercourse.³²

There were many other firms besides the American Locomotive Sales Corporation that were rebuilding Russia from the ground up during the years of the NEP and Stalin's Five Year Plans. Leading American businesses including Ford, International Harvester, Black and Decker Manufacturing, Bausch and Lomb Company and General Electric all worked with the Soviets in the interwar years.³³ The building of the Dnieper Dam in the Ukraine personifies the extents of American-Soviet economic cooperation. This project was not only led by an American, General Hugh L. Cooper, but it was contracted out to various American firms including most notably General Electric who supplied the dam's generators.³⁴

American banking also greatly facilitated commercial relations between the two powers through loans, capital and credit. Chase National Bank, the second largest bank in the country, was one of the largest contributors to American-Soviet trade. In 1925 it issued to the All Russian Textile Syndicate "\$15 million in credit" and in 1926 they

³² "The Under Secretary of State (Olds) to the Vice President of the American Locomotive Sales Corporation (Charles M. Muchnic), November 28, 1927," *Foreign Relations of the United States 1927: Volume III* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 654.

³³ By no means is this a comprehensive list of corporations that established commercial relations with the Soviets during this time. Refer to works by: Bruce Parrott, editor, *Trade, Technology and American-Soviet Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Andrew J. Williams *Trading with the Bolsheviks: Politics of East-West Trade 1920-1939* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1992) and Table I of Marika de Janitsary, "Americans and the Great Experiment: The American Contribution to Soviet Economic Growth 1917-1933" (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 1997). Also compare these companies to the members of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce as reported in "Annual Luncheon of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce," *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 4 (February 1931):156, for interesting correlations between major segments of the American economy and the Soviet Union pre-recognition. The History Channel has produced a documentary detailing the extent to which American business aided Stalin's Five Year Plans entitled *History Undercover: Yanks for Stalin* (1999).

³⁴ Katherine A.S. Siegel, *Loans and Legitimacy: The Evolution of Soviet-American Relations, 1919-1933* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 86.

issued an “additional \$30 million dollar credit line for Moscow.”³⁵ The connections between the Soviets and a variety of American business interests ran deep. For instance, the vice president of Chase National Bank, Reeve Schley, had previously worked for the law firm of Simpson, Thatcher and Bartlett who happened to represent the Amtorg Trading Corporation and the All-Russian Textile Syndicate.³⁶ Schley was also a member and former president of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. And he took a much publicized tour of the Soviet Union in the Summer of 1929.³⁷ His trip was organized by the same American Express Corporation (owned by Chase National Bank) which would establish a Russian Tours Division and work with Intourist running package tours to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. In addition, the then president of American Express Corporation, Frederick P. Small was, like Schley, a member of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce.³⁸

By 1927 both Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce and President Coolidge were well aware of American business ties to the Soviet Union despite the lack of formal diplomatic recognition. The President and the Secretary of Commerce followed a clearly defined policy of non-interference in economic matters between the Soviets and American business during the period of non-recognition. While the government made it less than easy at times to do business with the Soviets, they never totally barred firms from doing business or from establishing agencies in the United States. Soviet economic agencies such as Alamerico, the All Russian Textile Syndicate, Sovtorgflot, Amderuta and Amtorg Trading Corporation could have never opened up offices in New York at this time without the consent of the federal government.

This American-Soviet dynamic in the 1920s and 1930s shows the fallacy of the claim of interwar American isolationism pushed by the traditionalist school of foreign relations scholars.³⁹ Contrary to this school of thought, revisionist historians such as

³⁵ Siegel, 83.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Business Men Here Plan Russian Tour,” *New York Times*, 15 May 1929, p. 51; “Companies to Send Officials to Russia,” *New York Times*, 7 June 1929, 41; “99 Americans Begin Soviet Study Trip,” *New York Times*, 16 June 1929, 5; “Soviet Entertains American Tourists,” *New York Times*, 18 July 1929, 9 and “American Tourists Buy Russian Art,” *New York Times*, 25 July 1929, 7.

³⁸ “Annual Luncheon of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce,” 156.

³⁹ The traditionalist school was dominant until the early 1960s and these scholars built on the approaches of earlier historians such as William Langer and Charles Beard. Their histories primarily focused on statesman and diplomats who were concerned with matters of security and strategy.

William A. Williams, Walter LaFeber and other members of the Wisconsin School or the New Left argue that the United States government during the interwar years used “the open door as a technique of economic penetration and political influence.”⁴⁰ These historians saw the interwar years as a continuation of late nineteenth century American expansionism and they pushed scholars to look more closely at the domestic structural elements that determined policy. New Left historians were often accused of economic determinism, disregarding the “human element in policymaking”⁴¹ as well as being accused of being Soviet or Stalinist apologists. Since the 1960s this debate between the traditionalists and revisionists has evolved into the post-revisionist school. Post-revisionists shifted the work started by Williams and LaFeber towards a more international focus.⁴² Looking at tourism between the United States and the Soviet Union during the interwar years can further shed light on this isolationist debate between traditionalists, revisionists and post revisionists.

Tourism inherently does not mesh with the traditionalist viewpoint of interwar isolationism. A complex series of interactions between state and non state actors helped to define interwar relations between the Americans and the Soviets. Scholars such as Emily Rosenberg and Christopher Endy have looked at the role of these non state actors in shaping foreign policy.⁴³ In addition, Anders Stephanson points out that diplomatic history has in recent years looked at “the role of such non-state actors as corporations and

⁴⁰ Williams, *American Russian Relations 1781-1947*, 177. William A. Williams, “The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920s,” *Science and Society* 18 (1954): 1-20; William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1962) and Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

⁴¹ Brian McKercher, “Reaching for the Brass Ring: The Recent Historiography of Interwar American Foreign Relations,” in Michael J. Hogan, editor, *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181. Other later New Left historians include Ellis Hawley and Michael J. Hogan who advocated the idea of “corporatism” which looked at how corporations affected government foreign policy.

⁴² For more on the current state of the historiography in the field as well as a more detailed explanation of these approaches see McKercher. In addition, consult Robert Buzzanco, “What Happened to the New Left?: Toward a Radical Reading of American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 575-608 and Michael J. Hogan, “SHAFR Presidential Address – The ‘Next Big Thing:’ The Future of Diplomatic History in a Global Age,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no.1 (January 2004): 1-21.

⁴³ See particularly Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1800-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); For a connection between travel and diplomatic history see the especially important piece by Christopher Endy, “Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917,” *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 565-594. Endy makes a case for the importance of tourism as a “new way for historians to reflect on the familiar issue of the United State’s development as a world power.” He also connects revisionism to cultural studies and foreign relations by looking at the cultural underpinnings as well as the economics of travel.

missionaries.”⁴⁴ Far from isolationist, Americans as tourists acted as agents of economic penetration. Businessmen pushed the door open, government facilitated the way through tacit non interference, and Americans walked through the door, acting as dollar diplomats to the rest of the world.

Tourism weaves its way through the Depression and American-Soviet relations as a thread that colors many aspects of the larger canvas of the inter-war years. What on the surface appears to be far removed from the currents of history is actually an integral component of the relations that make up this period. The Soviets as well as the Germans, the French, the Japanese and forty-six other nations in the 1920s realized the economic and political benefits of garnering American tourist traffic for their respective destinations.⁴⁵ The United States government in the interwar period characterized tourist expenditures in the balance of payments of the United States as “invisible exports”⁴⁶ and this is an apt way to look at tourism’s utility and importance within history. Recognized as essential by those in the know, but ignored by those in power is a summary not only of the American government response to tourism in the interwar years, but it also characterizes the historical profession’s response to the field of tourism studies.

Lighting the Way: A Validation of the Historiography of Travel and Tourism

Tourism Studies as an interdisciplinary movement has been a field of interest for many in the social sciences since the early 1980s. However, it was not until 2002 that the discipline was officially designated with the title the “International Commission for the History of Travel and Tourism,” and was formally recognized as “an accredited section of the Internal Commission for the Historical Sciences.”⁴⁷ It attempts, like cultural

⁴⁴ Anders Stephanson, “Commentary: Diplomatic History in the Expanded Field,” *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1998):595-603.

⁴⁵ As of December 1930 the publication lists fifty foreign governments who had engaged in the promotion of tourism within the United States. For a full list of these countries and their specific methods of tourist promotion see U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931).

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *Oversea Travel and Travel Expenditures in the Balance of International Payments of the United States 1919-1938*. For use of this term in the course of the debate over American tourist dollars being spent abroad see Francis M. Mansfield, “Uncle Sam Leads as World Spender,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1933, XX4 and “Invisible Exports a Billion, Says Klein,” *New York Times*, 18 July 1932, 9.

⁴⁷ John K. Walton, editor, *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* (Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications, 2005), 1.

studies and genocide studies, to close the gap between the social sciences and the humanities. Those who work in the field range from theorists to those in the tourist industry itself and these professionals include geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, economic modelers, urban planners, landscape designers, hospitality workers, literary analysts and historians.

One of the first debates in the nascent field of tourism studies surrounded terminology. The very definition of the terms ‘tourist’ or ‘tourism’ was contested from all sides of the field. One’s definition was largely based on one’s particular methodological background and due to the interdisciplinary nature of tourism studies varied points of view were represented. Anthropologist Valene L. Smith in the first edition of *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977) defined tourism in terms of an equation in which tourism equaled “leisure time + discretionary income + positive local sanctions.”⁴⁸ More generally Smith considered a ‘tourist’ as a “temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change.”⁴⁹ Alternatively, literary theorist James Buzard engaged this definitional issue from a semiotic vantage point. He wanted to deconstruct a definition of tourism that many in the field believed was based on binary oppositions between tourism and travel, leisure and work. Buzard, as well as Orvar Lofgren, goes about this deconstruction of the binary by tracing the historical evolution of the terms ‘traveler’ and ‘tourist.’⁵⁰ Both scholars demonstrate that the two terms emerged separately in the eighteenth century, in opposition to each other and were based on class distinctions, value judgments and social anxieties held by those engaging in the journey.

Differences between travel and tourism emerged out of the grand tour, which was “the invention of the middle classes, who defined their leisure travel against that of putatively indiscriminating, sheep like, ‘mass’ tourists.”⁵¹ Starting around the late sixteenth century, the grand tour consisted mostly of the male aristocracy of Britain and

⁴⁸ Valene L. Smith, editor, *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism – Second Edition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and Orvar Lofgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁵¹ Shelley Baranowski, “An Alternative to Everyday Life? The Politics of Leisure and Tourism,” *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (2003): 563.

France traveling around the continent of Europe for a period of longer than a year.⁵² The primary purpose of this journey was not leisure, but the expansion of the individuals' mental and social horizons. During the French Revolution, tourists were seen as those "more socially diverse than their elite predecessors on the grand tour, [and] were frequently identified as 'part of the modern crowd or mob.'" Tourists induced class anxieties, in the wake of the French Revolution, about the 'mobility' of the lower orders of society."⁵³ This association with the masses would be a hallmark of what would continue to distinguish tourism from travel.

The creation of new technologies during the nineteenth century industrial revolutions fundamentally altered notions of time and space associated with travel.⁵⁴ In addition, travel was now being undertaken for leisure and not educational purposes. The individual centered journey was being eclipsed by the uniformity of the mass tourist experience. For many scholars the birth of modern tourism dates from 1842 when Baptist minister Thomas Cook used railroads to facilitate sobriety tours for the masses. These small endeavors would expand over the course of the nineteenth century and came to include packages with hotels and restaurants. Thomas Cook's package tours lead scholars to argue that "indeed the term 'tourism' was a British invention."⁵⁵ With its reliance on new forms of transportation, tourism is connected implicitly to modernity. It involves the consumption habits, the infrastructure and the over-arching powers of a mass society. What once was the simple art of travel was now a mass commodity.

⁵² Jozsef Borocz, "Travel-Capitalism: The Structure of Europe and the Advent of the Tourist," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 4 (October 1992): 709. As Borocz points out the Grand Tour was exceedingly popular between the late sixteenth and the late eighteenth century. He also states that the traditional notion was that the Grand Tour was primarily an aristocratic endeavor. However, historian John Towner argues that the grand tour was taken by a more varied group of people. For more, see John Towner, "The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 12, no. 3 (1985): 297-333 and Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

⁵³ Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, editors, *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 2 originally cited in James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Baranowski and Furlough point out in *Being Elsewhere*, 22, that "the word tourist entered into the French language (touriste) in 1816." While recognizing the historical differences between the terms 'tourist' and 'traveler,' this thesis will use these terms or variations of them interchangeably throughout the remainder of this work.

⁵⁴ Refer to Wolfgang Shivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1800-1918* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁵⁵ Baranowski, "An Alternative . . .," 566.

The theoretical foundations of tourism studies consist largely of contributions from anthropologists and sociologists such as Dean MacCannell and John Urry. MacCannell's *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* as well as Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* are the points of origin for many of the major debates within the field, such as the debate over the nature of the tourist experience and its authenticity. Urry builds on Michel Foucault's notion of "the gaze" when he argues that tourists take a passive role in the tourist experience because "...there are in fact many professional experts who help to construct and develop our gaze as tourists."⁵⁶ This construction of the tourist gaze involves power relationships and therefore serves to invalidate the authenticity of the experience.

This thesis will build on the notion of tourism as a constructed experience. The nation creates an image of itself and sells this to the consumer as the tourist destination. This constructed image of the nation and the ideas associated with 'the experience' of visiting that nation is the essence of John Urry's tourist gaze. This work will not, however, reinforce his argument for the passivity of the tourist. The power relations involving the tourist and the agents of the destination are not hierarchical, but instead involve a dialogue. Intourist used the services of American advertising firms, who utilized market research and consumer feedback, to tailor their message for the particulars of their audience. This is also apparent in accounts by travelers, especially those who evade Intourist guidelines and those who create their own itineraries. The relationship was such that Intourist had to find an acceptable line between Soviet official rhetoric and imagery and the allowable tolerance for such things by American tourists and the American government.

The active nature of the tourist is argued by Dean MacCannell and historians Hartmut Berghoff and Rudy Koshar. Dean MacCannell is primarily concerned with issues of authenticity. Tourists seek to find something true and meaningful from their experiences in order to attempt "to discover or reconstruct a cultural heritage or social identity."⁵⁷ Hartmut Berghoff argues for tourism as a "'secular pilgrimage,' in which the desires of tourism promoters and consumers interact in the production of

⁵⁶ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Second Edition* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 1.

⁵⁷ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1989), 13-14 in Baranowski and Furlough, *Being Elsewhere*, 3.

attractions...tourism, has encouraged, and continues to encourage, individual preference."⁵⁸ Rudy Koshar argues along similar lines that "leisure encourages individual and popular agency."⁵⁹ He represents one of these bridges between tourism and history and how they can mutually inform each other. However, more often than not, historians have virtually ignored tourism studies.

John K. Walton, one of the few historians to engage in tourism studies in its early years, takes the profession to task in a piece for the *European History Quarterly*:

Tourism has not been accepted into the charmed circle of acceptable themes in European history...Rather, the history of tourism has remained a sub-field whose practitioners speak to each other but are seldom listened to by the outside world...The conventions and seldom-articulated selection processes by which themes are admitted to or excluded from the canon of the mainstream of professional history would be well worth sustained examination...In so far as most historians have thought about tourism at all, they have consigned it a residual category devoid of political significance and entailing fringe economic activities of a candyfloss and (ironically) Mickey Mouse kind.⁶⁰

This attitude persists even when there has recently been a great deal of new and invigorating work by historians on subjects related to tourism and travel. Substantial and respected historians such as Shelley Baranowski, Ellen Furlough, Christopher Endy, Karen Dubinsky and Kristin Semmens, to name a few, have pushed the boundaries of both history and tourism studies. These historians have remedied the weak position of history in tourism studies or what John Walton sees as the "tired, limp parade of inaccurate clichés that constitutes a token obeisance to history in some such texts on tourism" by connecting tourism to larger historical preoccupations.⁶¹ Their scholarship has highlighted the significance of tourism "to such major historical developments as class formation, political mobilization, the tensions between nation building and regional development and the power of consumer culture" and has done so with a keen eye to issues of race, class and sexuality.⁶²

⁵⁸ Baranowski, "An Alternative...", 567.

⁵⁹ Baranowski, "An Alternative...", 570.

⁶⁰ John K. Walton, "Taking the History of Tourism Seriously," *European History Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1997): 563.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Baranowski and Furlough, *Being Elsewhere*, 1.

Much of this new scholarship has served not only to expand the horizons of tourism studies, but has filled gaps in under-researched areas of American, Canadian, British, French, German and Soviet history. In the realm of American history, a good amount of work has been published recently on the connections between domestic tourism, government and American identity formation. For instance, Marguerite Shaffer connects industrialization and the consumption habits of a rising middle class with the development of American identity in the process of 'Seeing America' in her work *See America First: Tourism and National Identity 1880-1940*. The 'See America First' movement was one in which the railroads and corporations as well as the government tried to harness the economic power of tourism for domestic purposes as well as to promote patriotism. This movement started in 1910 and it involved convincing Americans through a domestic propaganda campaign to see their own country instead of spending their money abroad.⁶³

Another work that connects the creation of American identity with the state and tourism is Catherine Cocks' *Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States 1850-1915*. This work traces the rise of late nineteenth century American urban tourism as an outgrowth of an increasing American consumerism and a rising tourist industry. She also argues that tourism helped eclipse a more Victorian influenced culture in favor of a distinctly American national identity.⁶⁴ The role of tourism in shaping both American identity and the very landscape that Americans lived in, specifically the American West, is explored by those such as Hal Rothman and Anne Farrar Hyde.⁶⁵

Christopher Endy brings tourism, American identity formation and the global politics of the twentieth century together. Not only did transatlantic travel reinforce the class status of middle and upper-class Americans, but it "also shaped questions of

⁶³ Marguerite S. Shafer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2001). Loss of capital to foreign countries was a large concern in the 1930s and it led to much government research on how to get Americans to spend their money domestically. This talk led to the establishment of the U.S. Travel Commission in the late 1930s within the Department of Commerce and many campaigns to again 'See America First' especially the U.S. National Parks.

⁶⁴ Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States 1850-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For more on tourism in America at this time period consult John F. Sears *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

⁶⁵ Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998) and Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

national identity...voyaging to Europe compelled travelers to reflect on what it meant to be an American.”⁶⁶ In addition, through his work both on tourism in the early twentieth century, and in the Cold War era, Endy makes natural and valuable connections between tourism, foreign relations and the growth of the U.S. as a world power (or as some state American imperialism). The increased political significance of tourism, according to Endy, is reflected in the fact that “discourse on going abroad paralleled the language and concepts of international engagement and imperialism.”⁶⁷ Tourism was a potent political tool that a rising power like the United States would have been remiss not to recognize.

Due in large part to its historic roots, the literature on tourism in Britain, France and Germany has been richer than that focusing on other areas. Many of the original scholars who studied tourism were British and they were concerned with the roots of tourism in their own country. Research on British tourism, other than work on the grand tour, can be broken into several categories. Scholarship on Thomas Cook by historians such as Piers Brendon, Edmund Swinglehurst and Lynne Withey is the first.⁶⁸ The second area of focus has been on the prominence of spa and seaside resorts as travel destinations in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁹ A more theoretical approach to modern British tourism is found in the edited collection by Hartmut Berghoff, *The Making of*

⁶⁶ Endy, “Travel...,” 571.

⁶⁷ Endy, “Travel...,” 580. In *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) Endy looks at how travel abroad after the Second World War was used by the American government as a tool to fight the Cold War. He brilliantly ties together tourism, state policy and the global or transnational impact of tourism thus highlighting its significance and power in the realm of foreign policy. Current scholarship in diplomatic history, most notably the 2000 roundtable featured in *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 3 (2000), has stressed this vein of scholarship regarding culture as a tool of imperialism. Tourism studies have also recognized the use of travel to reinforce racial, class and traditional power relationships between guest and host countries that are a hallmark of both political and cultural imperialism. Refer to John M. Mackenzie, “Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Century,” in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*; Ellen Furlough, “Une Leçon Des Choses: Tourism, Empire, and the Nation in Interwar France,” *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 441-473 and Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire,” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 111-149.

⁶⁸ Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991); Edmund Swinglehurst, *Cook's Tours: The Story of Popular Travel* (London: Pool and Dorset, 1982) and Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel 1750-1915* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1997).

⁶⁹ John Walton is the foremost scholar in this area of tourism research; refer to his *The English Seaside Resort 1750-1914* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1983). Other works of interest include P. Hembry, *The English Spa, 1560-1815* (London: Athlone Press, 1990) and R.S. Neale, *Bath: A Social History, 1680-1850* (London: Routledge, 1981).

Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000.⁷⁰ This collection focuses on preoccupations discussed in the context of much of the new literature in the field including “the inter-relation between national identity and traveling and tourism, and the dynamic historical relationship between tourism and the rise of modern consumer society.”⁷¹

Just across the channel, scholarship has focused on how tourism transformed the landscape of Europe. While places like Paris, Berlin and Rome have been destinations for travelers further back even than those who ventured on the grand tour, historians have of late have looked at the nature of mass tourism in Western Europe in the context of the turbulent twentieth century.⁷² The twentieth century was marked forever by the First World War, which fundamentally altered the fabric of Europe and out of its legacy came leaders and ideologies that sought to remake their societies. The Fascists in Italy, the Nazis in Germany or the Bolsheviks in Russia, all sought to rebuild their economic, military and political might and to reaffirm their place on the world stage.

Out of this time and place has come unique and fascinating work on tourism and totalitarianism. Scholars such as Shelley Baranowski, Kristin Semmens, Ellen Furlough and Victoria de Grazia have published works examining the role of tourism in totalitarian societies.⁷³ At first glance tourism and totalitarianism, with its tightly regulated xenophobic governments, would seem to be incompatible. However, tourism fits nicely with the political and economic goals of totalitarian states, a point illustrated by Kristin Semmens in regards to Nazi Germany:

It [the Nazi regime] saw tourism as an important branch of the German

⁷⁰ Hartmut Berghoff, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

⁷¹ David W. Maguire, review of *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000*, by Hartmut Berghoff, *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 4 (2003): 966.

⁷² For literature on tourism in Europe from the nineteenth century to the 1920s, consult in the area of France, Harvey Levenstein, *Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and on Germany see the exceptional work of Rudy Koshar including his “‘What ought to be seen’: Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 323-340 and his *German Travel Cultures* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2000).

⁷³ Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler’s Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Ellen Furlough, “Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France 1930s to 1970s,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (April 1998): 247-86 and Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

economy, which demanded support and regulation by the state. Tourism also offered a means to advance the regime's political agenda. Domestically, it would assist the creation and unification of a racially purified, unswervingly loyal and deeply patriotic 'national community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Internationally, it would calm fears about the Nazis' intentions on the world stage. Most importantly, tourist practices under the swastika would serve as 'rituals of reassurance', helping to convince both German citizens and visitors from abroad of the continued normality of everyday life in the Third Reich.⁷⁴

The scholarship involving totalitarian tourism is still lacking in regards to a focus on the international tourist trade rather than domestic tourism within these countries. This recent scholarship by Baranowski, Semmens and de Grazia spends very little time discussing international tourist campaigns or the state tourist bureaus that worked alongside and in competition with Intourist in New York. Semmens only spends a chapter on campaigns aimed at foreign tourists, while Baranowski a few pages on this very important phenomenon. Important research also still needs to be done on the competition between these tourist bureaus and how they shaped the tourist trade and exerted a large amount of influence on the global and domestic American stage.

The literature that connects tourism and history has been especially neglected in the non-Western areas of study, especially with Russia and the former Soviet Union. Other than Louise McReynolds' *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era*, there exists very little scholarly work on pre-Revolutionary tourism in any language.⁷⁵ For the Soviet era the scholarship is also extremely sparse. Notable exceptions include Sylvia Margulies' *Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* and the Winter 2003 issue of *Slavic Review*, which was devoted entirely to tourism and travel, and consisted of early contributions by historians in the field including Diane P. Koenker, Anne E. Gorsuch, Francine Hirsch and Michael David-Fox.⁷⁶ The work of historian Auvo Kostiainen who researches Soviet tourism and its connection to Finland has been reproduced online, but has not been

⁷⁴ Semmens, 1-2.

⁷⁵ Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁷⁶ Sylvia Margulies, *Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

published by any scholarly journal.⁷⁷ Forthcoming scholarship will include an edited collection by Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker with articles on a wide range of tourism related topics.⁷⁸

Finally, no one has written even a general history of Intourist. This is, however, in the process of being done by PhD student Shawn Salmon at University of California - Berkeley. Salmon is looking at the history of Intourist as a state entity from 1929 to the fall of the Soviet Union, (it exists today as a separate corporation), in her thesis, which is currently still in its research phase, and is provisionally entitled "Showcasing Soviet Socialism: A History of Intourist, 1929-91."⁷⁹ What this review of the literature brings to the fore is the many interesting, valuable and viable areas of historical inquiry left to be explored in the field of tourism studies, particularly concerning developments in Russia and the USSR.

Building Bridges and Filling Holes: The Place of My Research in the Literature and its Overall Importance.

As the review of the existing literature has shown there is much work still to be done to build bridges between tourism studies and history. Examining American tourism to the Soviet Union not only widens the scope of previous inquiry on the subject to a wider mass movement, but it also highlights issues surrounding consumption, cultural relations and notions of national and individual identity formation.

⁷⁷ Auvo Kostiainen, "The Soviet Tourist Industry as Seen by the Western Tourists of the Late Soviet Period," XIII International Congress of Economic Historians, Buenos Aires, July 22-26, 2002, <http://users.utu.fi/aukosti/Soviet%20Tourism.html>, (8 October 2004); Auvo Kostiainen, "The Vodka Trail: Finnish Travellers' Motivation to Visit the Former Soviet Union," <http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article263e.htm>, (25 March 2005); Auvo Kostiainen, "Mass Tourists, Groups and Delegates: Travel from Finland to the Soviet Union from 1950 to 1980," <http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/art/article242e.htm>, (25 March 2005).

⁷⁸ This work is tentatively entitled *Turizm: Leisure, Travel and Nation Building in Russia, the USSR and Eastern Europe*. This information was obtained in reference to a notice on H-Tourism for submissions to the collection. Per correspondence between Anne Gorsuch and Alison Rowley as of March 2005 this volume was in the editing phase. As of the writing of this thesis publishing date for said collection is unknown. However, no submission deals with tourism during the interwar period in the Soviet Union. Shawn Salmon's contribution, "Faded Flowers: Intourist and the Problem of Service in Moscow Hotels and Restaurants in the 1950s" is the only piece related to Intourist in this collection.

⁷⁹ Information provided by both Shawn Salmon per phone conversation on 9/11/2005 and at the website of the American Historical Association found at: <http://www.historians.org/pubs/dissertations/DissertationDetail.cfm?DipID=4998>, (25 January 2006).

This work will also address the research possibilities in areas of American, Soviet, economic, political and cultural history. Not only has the history of Intourist been overlooked by scholars until recently, but there has been absolutely no scholarship that looks at the messages and iconography that the Soviet state presented as part of its tourist campaigns. Shawn Salmon points out, that an analysis of “Intourist’s advertisements and exhibit materials throughout the Soviet period spur consideration of the various messages the state promoted about itself to the outside world.”⁸⁰ In addition to expanding the parameters of Soviet historiography, this work will also attempt to extend the understanding of inter-war history and debates over American isolationism and imperialism. It will broaden the picture of American-Soviet relations beyond the realms of businessmen and bankers to advertisers, travel agents and the hospitality industry as a whole.

This thesis further approaches issues of gender and race through the unique lens of tourism in the Soviet context. Soviet tourist advertising is rife with gendered symbols and messages that appeal to both men and women. By deconstructing these images and messages versus those of other nations one can gain insight into the mass appeal of Soviet tourism. Women were actively and directly solicited in the Soviet travel literature and tourism itself was also an experience engaged in by both genders. Women were also involved in the advertising and sales of these travel packages, as well as leading some of the more specialized tours under the auspices of travel agencies associated with Intourist.

Issues of race and nationality also played a role in the message the Soviets put forth in their advertising campaigns. The Soviet Union was marketed on the basis of the seemingly harmonious cohabitation of various nationalities under the banner of socialism.⁸¹ The peoples of Soviet Central Asia and other Soviet ethnic minority groups were frequently used in campaigns in order to show how the USSR was progressing from backwards past to harmonious future. While very few Americans of minority backgrounds traveled to the Soviet Union, prominent African American intellectuals such

⁸⁰ Salmon, “Tourism,” *Encyclopedia of Russian History*, 1563.

⁸¹ Films like Grigori Aleksandrov’s *Circus* (Moscow: Mosfilm, 1936) were distributed in the United States during this time and were also designed to reinforce this image of racial harmony in the USSR.

as Langston Hughes visited the Soviet Union and were also specialty tour leaders.⁸² Therefore, it is clear that my thesis fits not only with current trends in historical thinking, but addresses areas of viable and utilitarian inquiry.

Scope/Parameters of the Thesis

In its first full year of operation Intourist established itself as a global entity, with offices throughout the world including Germany and Japan. Its materials were printed in a variety of languages and many of the foreign tourists who visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s were from countries other than the United States such as England, Germany, France and even South America. This work, however, will only consider the American component of this tourist trade.

This thesis is especially interested in ascertaining who, and for what purpose, the Soviets considered the target audience for their promotional campaigns. It is very clear though who Intourist was not targeting and therefore these individuals will not be the focus of this thesis. Several groups of people did indeed travel to the interwar Soviet Union, but were not considered by the Soviets as mass market tourists: ‘fellow-travellers’; high profile business leaders and those individuals engaged in business travel; members of the American Communist party; trade and labor delegations and engineers. These individuals are what Sylvia R. Margulies refers to in *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* as “potential opinion leaders.”⁸³ A substantial literature exists on these travelers, their motivations for going to the Soviet Union and the means by which they got there.⁸⁴ None were considered ‘tourists’ by the Soviets and did not fall under the jurisdiction of Intourist and therefore are specifically omitted from the scope of this thesis. These individuals were courted to

⁸² The other segment of African Americans who visited the Soviet Union during the interwar years consisted of cultural figures especially jazz musicians. For more see Allison Blakely’s *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1989).

⁸³ Margulies, 16.

⁸⁴ For more on these persons of influence including intellectuals, trade delegations, labor leaders, businessmen and engineers and their travels to the Soviet Union during the 1930s refer to Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia*. For intellectual travelers to the Soviet Union refer to Paul Hollander’s, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, 1928-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); David Caute, *The Fellow-Travelers* (New York: Macmillan, 1973) and Lewis S. Feuer, “American Travelers to the Soviet Union 1917-1932: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology,” *American Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1962): 119-149.

travel to the Soviet Union through specific Soviet organizations related to their job functions/backgrounds as well as courted by VOKS (the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries).⁸⁵

It is difficult to ascertain from the travel literature, tourist statistics, balance of payments or passport information the specific class background of tourists during the interwar years. Although, as historian Harvey Levenstein argues interwar overseas tourism was not so much a working class phenomenon as one dominated by the middle and upper classes since: “those who were hardest hit by the Depression, industrial workers and farmers, had never been overseas tourists to begin with.”⁸⁶ While passport application forms and Intourist paperwork did provide spaces for the individual’s profession, it is questionable whether anyone ever compiled or analyzed this data. In lieu of these difficulties this thesis will tackle this subject by looking at who Intourist considered the target audience for their promotional materials and campaigns. The bulk of Intourist’s “average tourists” included a diverse portion of middle class Americans such as sportsmen/adventurers, professionals (journalists, doctors, lawyers, teachers and scientists) and students.

Methodology and Sources

The theoretical framework, and evidentiary basis of this thesis, reflects the multidisciplinary nature that is the foundation of the study of tourism. My thesis builds on the work of cultural historians who have expanded the historical discipline by incorporating methodologies from other disciplines. They consider historical texts and evidence as not just static objects, but as cultural artifacts that become “a source or locus of meaning.”⁸⁷ These artifacts involve traditional primary source documents, but also include “anything produced by human activity: written texts, but also visual texts...and

⁸⁵ More on VOKS and predecessor organizations to Intourist will be explored in Chapter 2. Established in August of 1925 by the Council of People’s Commissars, VOKS’ functions included drawing intellectuals to the Soviet Union, as well as establishing links with friendship societies in foreign countries.

⁸⁶ Harvey Levenstein, *We’ll Always Have Paris: American Tourist in France since 1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14. Although the subject of American working class domestic tourism is addressed by Michael Berkowitz in “A ‘New Deal’ for Leisure: Making Mass Tourism during the Great Depression,” in *Being Elsewhere*, eds. Baranowski and Furlough, 185-212.

⁸⁷ T.G. Ashplant and Gerry Smyth, “Schools, Methods, Disciplines, Influences,” in *Explorations in Cultural History*, eds. T.G. Ashplant and Gerry Smyth (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 5.

other discrete material objects.”⁸⁸ Cultural historians then deconstruct the very artifacts themselves, “examining the systems of *production, signification* and *reception* that gave rise to the artifact and from which it derives its meanings [italics in original].”⁸⁹ I consider the messages and promotional materials of Intourist to be cultural artifacts that have embedded in them a meaning that was intended to signify to a tourist population a certain vision of the Soviet state. In addition to cultural studies, this thesis employs methodological techniques borrowed from literary studies and art history. These scholars have used literary and iconographic deconstruction to explore their subject matter and I will follow these approaches in exploring the overall image constructed by the Soviet state through its literature.⁹⁰

Many of the subsequent chapters combine primary sources with visual and material history. Since no archival collection of Intourist literature and ephemera exists, over the past year and a half I have amassed a personal collection of Intourist promotional materials from the online auction site, eBay.⁹¹ These cultural artifacts include travel brochures, luggage labels, postcards, travel documents, stamps and print advertisements. This thesis will also use a variety of primary source documents to piece together the picture of American tourism to the Soviet Union in the 1930s from both the American and Soviet perspectives. These sources include, but are not limited to the following: travelers’ accounts and diaries published upon their return; American government economic and political documents; Soviet government documents of a 1938 audit of Intourist from the *Personal Archive of M.I. Kalinin*; historical statistics; Soviet periodicals for American audiences such as *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* and *Soviet Russia Today* and a large swath of American newspapers and periodicals including *Fortune*, *The Nation*, *Time*, *The Review of Reviews*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ T.G. Ashplant and Gerry Smyth, 6.

⁹⁰ The work of historian Peter Burke will be considered when looking at Intourist’s visual materials. See his, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁹¹ For the methodological challenges of using eBay see Alison Rowley, “Beyond the Archives and Into Cyberspace: e-Bay as a Source for Historical Research and Teaching Materials,” *Women East-West 77* (2003): 2-3. Part of the collection of tourist ephemera used in this thesis includes twenty-two Intourist guidebooks and ten Intourist maps from 1930-1938. In addition to e-Bay, Intourist materials were also acquired through inter-library loan.

Structurally this work will consist of five chapters in total including this introduction, three main body chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 2 will examine the establishment of Intourist and, through partnerships with the global tourist industry and American firms, the building of infrastructure within the Soviet Union to support the growth of tourism. In addition, this chapter will look at the American government's response to foreign tourist bureaus such as Intourist and the solutions that were devised to stop the flow of much needed American dollars from going abroad. This chapter will build on evidence found in Soviet and American periodicals, government publications and the tourist literature to piece together the growth of tourism to the Soviet Union.

Chapter 3 will focus on the "Selling of the Soviet Union" and Intourist's American advertising campaigns. It will also examine the growth of tourism as a viable industry and the connections between Intourist and various sections of the American economy, especially advertisers and travel industry professionals. Primarily based on the promotional materials in the author's collection, this chapter will also include a large amount of advertising materials from various American print media outlets.

Chapter 4 will examine the inherent variety involved in traveler motivations and experiences on the journey through the Soviet Union. Its main focus will be on the role of factors other than ideology in driving and coloring the tourist experience and the active nature of the tourist in the Soviet Union. The second half of the chapter will look at the subject of logistics, tracing exactly how an American went about traveling to the Soviet Union during the Depression. This section will rely on a selection of traveler's accounts from the time.

Note on Sources

There is very little on the early history of Intourist in the Russian archives and what does exist is full of issues that the historian must confront. The archives on tourism are especially poor, according to two first-hand scholarly sources. Historian Michael David-Fox stated in response to an inquiry for information on the history of Intourist on H-Net in 2001 that "there is an Intourist archival collection in GARF, but it seems

disappointing for the early years.”⁹² Shawn Salmon reinforces these comments based on her work in 2005 in Russia stating that the archives are very thin on the early years, but they “explode for the work of Intourist in the 1960s.” In my phone interview with her, when asked about the state of documents for the pre-World War II period of Intourist, Salmon reiterated Michael David-Fox’s comment above. She states that the spotty and incomplete documentation of the setup of Intourist and its workings in the 1930s could have been due to the bureaucratic methods of the Soviet state as well as damage done to various archives during World War II. Salmon also stresses that any documents that she did find, such as minutes or summaries of committee meetings on Intourist-related matters cannot be taken at face value as policies that were actually enacted. Further, there are also things ‘edited out’ of the documents on Intourist in the party archives.⁹³

Salmon also states that her repeated requests and personal visits to the headquarters of Intourist in Russia were not granted. This author also made repeated phone calls to the number listed for Intourist in New York and encountered only confusion and denial of access to any paperwork they might have. It is unclear, however, whether the Intourist headquarters in Moscow ever kept records for this time period. Nor is it clear whether the Intourist offices in the United States kept files, destroyed them in 1939 or sent the paperwork back to the Soviet Union. Unlike the German Railroads Information Office, the government travel agency of the Nazi regime, Intourist’s documents were not confiscated by the U.S. government under the auspices of the Office of Alien Property during World War II.⁹⁴

⁹² Response to Nick Baron by Michael David-Fox, H-Net, Tuesday February 27, 2001, <http://h-net.msu.edu>, (6 March 2005). The spelling of Intourist varies. In American publications the official Soviet tourist agency is referred to as ‘Intourist,’ but in other countries it is spelled ‘Inturist.’ GARF is the State Archive of the Russian Federation.

⁹³ The decision making process for Intourist was different than other Soviet organizations. It was more intimately connected to Stalin through his first wife’s brother who was a high ranking Intourist official. This meant that decisions could bypass normal bureaucratic channels. However, once his brother in law was purged in the late 1930s, the archives would have had materials relating to him purged as well. All statements regarding the September 11, 2005 phone conversation with Shawn Salmon are taken from the author’s notes of said conversation. Verification of the details of this conversation can be acquired through contact information provided by Shawn Salmon.

⁹⁴ The records of the German Railroad Information Office can be found at the United States National Archives in College Park, Maryland. For more on this subject consult NARA Record Group 131: Headquarters Records of the Office of Alien Property and Predecessors Relating to Activities Arising from World War II, 3.2 Seized Records of Enemy-Controlled Organizations.

In addition, while the Soviet government treated tourism as a state-run business, the American government considered it a private affair. Any official American government documents concerning tourism in the 1930s come out of the Department of Commerce and no documents are to be found on the subject of tourism and the Soviet Union in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* volumes until 1937. After that date, two items appear, the first being reports of Soviet anti-foreigner sentiment and the purging of Intourist officials in 1937 and the second being a late 1938 spying incident involving an official from the Intourist office in Los Angeles. This incident involved Soviet spying on the Japanese while on American soil.⁹⁵ While those in the Commerce Department who saw the impact of tourism on the balance of payments pushed for the United States government to become more active in tourist activities, it was not until 1936 that a U.S. government agency was setup in regards to tourism. However, this agency would only be responsible for promoting domestic tourism to Americans, not international tourism.

While other U.S. government agencies dealt specifically with the Soviets, tourism in general, and tourism to the Soviet Union in particular, fell under the realm of ‘cultural relations.’ The State Department did have a role in ‘regulating’ tourism or as its officials considered it ‘cultural relations’ through passport issuance. However, as J.D. Parks writes, their role in this area could only be described as laissez-faire “[d]uring the twenties and thirties the State Department played an insignificant role in the realm of cultural contacts, exercising its minimal influence through its control over visas and passports.”⁹⁶ It was not until the mid to late 1930s that the American government realized that tourism could be a tool of ‘cultural imperialism.’ These activities were directed specifically at Latin America. Therefore, relevant American government sources on tourism are extremely limited for this time period.

Because of problems with both Soviet and American government documents on either tourism generally and tourism to the Soviet Union specifically, I have used a variety of non-government sources to piece together the workings of Intourist at this time.

⁹⁵ For further information on these incidents refer to, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Soviet Union 1933-1939* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1952), 391-394, 590-591 and 726-730.

⁹⁶ J.D. Parks, *Culture, Conflict and Coexistence: American-Soviet Cultural Relations, 1917-1958* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland Press, 1983), 3.

Regarding official policy issued by the Soviets, I have looked at information on tourism and Intourist reiterated by Soviet agencies, primarily Amtorg, working in the United States and periodicals designed for foreigners such as *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* and *Soviet Russia Today*, as well as the information relating to tourist policy found through American newswires and reported in American newspapers such as the *New York Times*. These releases have been triangulated to ascertain that the information released by the Soviets was consistent and there appears to be no large scale deviations. In addition, while one should always question the validity of Soviet figures and information released by Soviet officials in general, the growth of tourist infrastructure during the 1930s as well as the specific tourist campaigns for each year can be proven by cross-referencing the advertisements in American periodicals, the actual advertising materials, the information reported in American and Soviet periodicals, and occasionally memoirs of participants on given tours.

Endings and Beginnings: The Conclusion

As historian Anne E. Gorsuch alludes to in the epigraph to this chapter, tourism is the intersection of the dreamer and the mythmaker. The campaign to woo Americans to travel to the Soviet Union in the interwar years was a myth constructed to feed into the dreams of a populace who was looking for something outside the realm of its everyday existence.⁹⁷ The Soviets with the assistance of many professionals both globally and in the United States fulfilled the desires of the American travel consumer for the experience that was the journey and, in the end, it was a winning partnership for both.

⁹⁷ Life in the 1930s for Soviet citizens was overtly full of hardship caused by the policies of Stalin. He starved, murdered and worked his population to its breaking point, all the while constructing an elaborate system of reinforcing myths for foreign consumption – myths concerning the Utopia that was being created in the Soviet Union. Americans responded to these myths and in most cases whether it be purposely or not failed to see the reality behind the Soviet façade. It is not for this thesis to judge, but to present the evidence regarding American tourism to the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

Recreation amid Re-Creation: The Development of Soviet Tourism

“From time immemorial Russia has been a sort of ‘closed area’ to foreigners, who entered only with delay and difficult
-New York Times, 1926¹

“The Russian revolution attracted world-wide interest, but Russia herself is almost entirely unknown. We possess treasures...famous throughout the world which are seldom seen by foreigners. Our Crimean and Caucasian coasts rival the French Rivera...Tourists would come by the millions and bring tens of millions of rubles every year.”
-Writer, *Financial Gazette*, Official Organ of the Soviet Treasury Department, 1926²

“Under the tsars it had been ‘almost a matter of policy for the authorities to obstruct and inconvenience visitors’...But now, thanks to the Intourist organization...‘a highly developed and competitive travel-world’ had been established in Russia.”
-Thomas Cook, *Published Tours*, 1935³



Figure 2-1 – “Building Soviet Tourism,” Intourist Travel Map, 1938⁴

While some intrepid travelers had ventured to Russia during the years before the Revolution, their trips were for all intents and purposes sojourns to a “closed society.” The lands of what would post-1917 be known as the Soviet Union were not the stomping grounds of those on the grand tour nor were they on the itinerary of those booking with

¹ “Urges Soviet Russia to Welcome Tourists,” *New York Times*, 27 August 1926, 5.

² Ibid.

³ Originally quoted from materials cited from the Thomas Cook archives in Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991), 271.

⁴ Intourist, *Travel Map of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Intourist, 1938), Front Cover. Author’s collection.

Thomas Cook in the late 1800s. The mass tourist industry developed in isolation from rugged closed-off Russia. Modern tourism is instead intrinsically linked to Europe owing to mid to late nineteenth century industrialization which facilitated the means, the infrastructure and the time by which to travel. While other lesser developed destinations were certainly part of the rise of modern tourism, this was mainly due to the economic and political desires of these areas' colonial masters.⁵ Although geographically and politically connected to Europe, many contemporaries considered turn-of-the-century Russia as a separate, almost stand alone entity that languished in backwardness.

That is not to say that prior to the Bolsheviks travel to Russia did not exist. In fact, many made their way to Russia during the time of the Tsars, especially to Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, their journeys were not always easy or comfortable. Ruth Kedzie Wood's memoir of her 1912 sojourn in Tsarist Russia sheds light on the state of tourism before the Revolution.⁶ While her trip was agreeable, her memoir highlights the inconveniences that the traveler faced. In comparison to other destinations touring Russia required that "the traveler must be patient."⁷ Many of these inconveniences were due to the lack of a modern, centralized tourist organization. All aspects of the journey, therefore, had to be arranged separately, often leading to delay and confusion. Kedzie Wood never mentions interacting with a government official or dealing with any representative of a travel agency while in Russia. Therefore, it was not an overstatement

⁵ Many of those who traveled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to places such as Egypt, South America or Bermuda did so based on colonial affiliations. Colonial power had created tourist infrastructure in these destinations and they were marketed through state supplemented tour lines, such as the Cunard Line's imperial tour packages. These tours not only brought income into the imperial coffers but, some scholars assert, reinforced the power hierarchies of the masters and the colonized. For a valuable look at the connection between imperialism and tourism or what John M. Mackenzie refers to as "empires of travel" see his "Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries," in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, ed. John K. Walton (Clevedon, United Kingdom: Channel View Publications, 2005): 19-36.

⁶ Ruth Kedzie Wood, *The Tourist's Russia* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912), 12. For a greater picture of the wealth of travel to Russia prior to the Bolshevik Revolution refer to the work of Harry Nerhood, *To Russia and Return: An Annotated Bibliography of Travelers' English-Language Accounts of Russia from the Ninth Century to the Present* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1968) and Anna Mary Babey, *Americans in Russia, 1776-1917: A Study of American Travellers in Russia from the American Revolution to the Russian Revolution* (New York: Comet Press, 1938). In addition to Ruth Kedzie Wood, other pre-Revolutionary travel memoirs of note include: Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia* (London: Cassel and Company, 1886) and Stephen Graham, *A Vagabond in the Caucasus* (New York: John Lane Company, 1911). For the creation of tourism around sanatoria (resorts) in Tsarist Russia see Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁷ Wood, 13-14.

for an Intourist official to later insist that “before the war there had been no tourist agency in Russia.”⁸

The Bolsheviks, like many others during the 1920s, realized the importance of tourism as an economic and political tool. The development of tourism in the Soviet Union mirrored the solidification of foreign tourism in the 1920s as a worldwide industry. And again what had laid the groundwork for mass tourism in Europe, industrialization and modernization, would lead to its development in the Soviet Union. The creation of a thriving tourist industry in the USSR reflects the saying, “if you build it, they will come.” By creating infrastructure and facilities, and modernizing roads and accommodations, the Soviets recreated their country as a vacation destination. They made the journey seem more in line with Europe than with the far reaches of Asia and a long way from the backwardness of the Tsarist days.

From 1917-1926 conditions in the Soviet Union were not ripe for tourism due to the ravages of war and revolution. In these years, not only was the country economically and socially devastated, but it lacked even the infrastructure needed to supply basic necessities, let alone support travel. The difficulty of traveling in these years is reflected by the *Review of Reviews* when it states “[i]t was necessary for an individual...to apply to Moscow for a visa. Then after waiting perhaps six weeks to learn whether or not he was persona grata with the authorities, he had to take his chances in getting transportation on trains...and in finding room and food in overcrowded cities.”⁹ Delay and ruggedness rather than ease and comfort characterized a trip to the Soviet Union during these years, far from the optimal conditions which would sell tourists on traveling to the USSR.

However, throughout the 1920s conditions gradually improved and working with major agencies within the global tourist industry helped the Soviets to make the journey more comfortable and accessible than it had ever been before. Just like the partnership with American corporations briefly outlined in Chapter One, the Soviets were trying to rebuild their society and they could not do it alone. While they had established trading

⁸ “Soviet Intourist Travel Bureau,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 24 (15 December 1931): 576. American Express did setup a satellite travel office in St. Petersburg in 1916. Their timing was not the best and according to Alden Hatch in *American Express: A Century of Service* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1950), 136, by July of that year officials wisely left with all of the valuables the agency possessed and made their way east on the Trans-Siberian railway just in time to avoid the “group of armed bandits [that] would call on them to ‘collect money for the revolution.’”

⁹ “Russia Bids for Tourist Trade,” *Review of Reviews*, August 1931, 94.

and economic agencies in foreign countries, such as the Amtorg Trading Corporation in the United States, the Soviets needed agents already a part of the tourism industry to help them with logistics.¹⁰ The two major players on the international travel scene were Thomas Cook and the American Express Company, and both were instrumental in the growth of Soviet tourism. Especially in the early years, both were among the first major travel institutions to make joint arrangements with the Soviets.

The name “Thomas Cook,” is synonymous with tourism. As the first modern travel agency, its partnership agreement with the Soviets in 1928 lent legitimacy and validity to their fledgling tourist industry. This partnership made the Soviet Union a major industry player and solidified it as a viable tourist destination. Thomas Cook’s name recognition and established network of agents and resources provided Intourist with more opportunity to sell its tours to a greater number of potential travelers. It was also an arrangement with advantages for Thomas Cook, since during the first half of the 1930s “Russia was the only foreign country with which Cook’s business actually expanded.”¹¹

The American Express Company entered the tourism industry much later than Thomas Cook. However, by 1905 the name “American Express” was linked with travel, mainly due to the creation of the travelers cheques.¹² They found that “in order to sell more TCs [travelers cheques], the company had to serve the people who used them.”¹³ In addition, their assistance to stranded tourists during the outbreak of World War I, which allowed many individuals to get the money they needed to book passage home, solidified the company’s reputation as “*the* company for American travelers abroad [italics in

¹⁰ Intourist used Amtorg to purchase equipment needed to build Soviet tourism such as automobiles and railroad cars. They also used it to disseminate information on their tours to Americans through Amtorg’s publication *Economic Review of the Soviet Union*. For further information on Amtorg and its ties to American business in the interwar years, see John Kenton Walker, “Soviet-American Trade and the Amtorg Trading Corporation during the Period of Non-Recognition,” (Master’s thesis, University of Tulsa, 1981) and Geraldine Louise Chase, “Amtorg: Instrument of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1924-1940,” (Master’s thesis, University of Hawaii, 1958).

¹¹ Brendon, 270.

¹² Historically travelers had used letters of credit when abroad. However, the redemption of these letters of credit often involved time consuming processes with foreign banks that involved proof of signature, limited locations to cash them in and issues dealing with exchange rates. By the turn of the century American Express recognized the potential for profit in creating a modern and convenient travel payment device.

¹³ Peter Z. Grossman, *American Express: The Unofficial History of the People Who Built the Great Financial Empire* (New York: Crown Publishers 1987), 111.

original].”¹⁴ Thus, American Express was fully entrenched in the travel business and poised to expand its dominance during the interwar years. They would do so by reaching into all areas of the industry, making partnerships with hotels, steamship lines and increasingly in the 1920s with state sponsored travel bureaus such as Intourist.

The earliest connection between the Soviets and American Express came through the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. In 1929 and again in 1931 the Russian Travel Division of American Express sponsored the American businessmen tour of the Soviet Union in conjunction with Intourist and the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce.¹⁵ Intourist’s partnership with American Express, like that with Thomas Cook, garnered them legitimacy and a greater pool of resources by which they could reach a larger percentage of the American tourist market.¹⁶

Cruise lines were another pivotal partner that aided in establishing institutionalized tourism to the Soviet Union. Trans-Atlantic steamers were a staple of the industry since the mid-1800s. In the days before passenger airplanes, they were, besides railroads, the arteries between distant lands. Europeans, while constituting a portion of the travelers on steamships, were also joined in large numbers by Americans. Intourist made various partnerships with steamship companies. Many of these routes directly involved Soviet ports of call and they became especially prolific after Soviet diplomatic recognition.

The earliest relationship between the Soviets and the cruise lines was with the Cunard Line steamship company. The official partnership between the two started in May of 1928 when the Soviets announced that they had established Thomas Cook as one of their official agents and “as the result of this arrangement, a trip across Russia will be a

¹⁴ Grossman, 118. For more on the role of American Express in helping stranded tourists at the outbreak of World War I see, Hatch; Grossman; and Christopher Endy, “Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917,” *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 565-94.

¹⁵ “Business Men Here Plan Russian Tour,” *New York Times*, 15 May 1929, 51 and “American-Russian Chamber of Commerce Tours to the U.S.S.R.,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 10 (May 15, 1931): 227-230. These tours received good media coverage and did much to spread the word to the mass public of the party’s positive reactions to what progress they had seen in the Soviet Union.

¹⁶ American Express had offices across the United States and many in cities where Intourist did not already have a presence. The front cover of the February 1934 edition of the *Travel Agent* advertises the American Express Company as the “Special Representative of Intourist... in the following cities: Atlanta, Buffalo, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis New Orleans, New York District, Pittsburgh, Portland, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle and the Chicago District.”

feature of next year's cruise of the Cunarder Franconia."¹⁷ Cunard also provided the transportation for the 1930 round-the-world tour advertised by Intourist in conjunction with Thomas Cook aboard the "cruiser Carinthia."¹⁸ This cruise docked in Leningrad and after some sightseeing in Russia continued on via the Trans-Siberian railroad to the Far East.

Other important cruise lines negotiated partnerships with the Soviets. In 1928 the Soviets made arrangements with major high capacity cruise lines including "the Canadian Pacific Steamship Line...the Holland-America Line and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company."¹⁹ In one of the first Intourist guidebooks, the Hamburg-South American Line advertised a "Russia Trip in the summer 1930 with the luxurious steamer Cappolonio leaving Hamburg on 3rd August, 1930."²⁰ Hamburg-American also was an important connection between the cruise industry and the Soviet Union, offering routes to the Soviet Union aboard the S.S. Deutschland and the S.S. Reliance.²¹ A 1930 Intourist brochure also listed as one of its many American travel representatives, the United States Lines of New York.²² These cruise lines were some of the first travel agents for the Soviets, selling short land excursions to destination cities as add-ons to their vacation packages. It was through established connections to major players in the tourist industry, such as these steamship companies, that a tourist industry grew in the Soviet Union.²³

In addition, Intourist could not have gotten a firm foothold in any country without relying on existing economic ties and infrastructure, especially domestic travel agencies. While some of the American travel agencies who laid the ground work for tourist relations with the Soviet Union had overt Communist ties or sympathies such as World

¹⁷ "Russia Open to Tourists," *New York Times*, 11 May 1928, 51.

¹⁸ "Americans Visit Moscow: Around-World Tourists, 400 Strong, Get All Taxis and Stir Curiosity," *New York Times*, 27 July 1928, 26. In 1929 the round-the-world cruise would be on the "Franconia" and not the "Carinthia" but it would also include Russia and a trip on the Trans-Siberian railroad. See "Russia Open to Tourists," 51.

¹⁹ "Arrange Russian Tours: Steamship Lines to Aid Travelers to Get Permits and Plan Visits," *New York Times*, 8 June 1928, 52.

²⁰ Intourist, *Our Tours: 1930* (Berlin: Wilhelm Greve, 1930), next to last page.

²¹ "Europe – May Celebrations in Soviet Russia on the S.S. Deutschland," *The Nation* 136, no. 3532 (15 March 1933): 299.

²² Intourist, *Hunting in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930), 31.

²³ Partnerships with steamship companies were particularly important to the growth of tourism to the Soviet Union. No other arrangement could offer the quantity of tourists that the steamship companies could give the Soviets. When cruise ships stop including your destination as part of their overall itineraries you lose thousands of potential tourists. This author believes that one of the major reasons that tourist numbers rose to the Soviet Union from the late 1920s to the early 1930s is the capacity provided by these cruise ships.

Tourists, others like the Open Road had no overt political ties or none substantiated by this author.²⁴ Located in New York City, the Open Road was one of the first major suppliers of group tours to the Soviet Union starting in the late 1920s.²⁵ This “non-profit making membership corporation” started to offer trips to the Soviet Union based on the suggestions of Dr. Stephen P. Duggan, Director of the Institute of International Education who “returned to the United States [after a visit to the Soviet Union in 1926] with the strong feeling that students and professional people should be able to visit the USSR.”²⁶ John Rothschild, the director of the agency, was also a frequent contributor of travel articles to the publication *The Nation*, where many ads for the agency appeared.

The Open Road and World Tourists were by no means the only American travel agencies with early ties to the Soviet Union. In 1927 the Soviets also cited the Amalgamated Bank of New York and Frederick C. Howe’s American-European Travel Bureau as their travel representatives in the United States. These American travel agencies were essential throughout Intourist’s work in the American tourist market. Their advertisements for travel to the Soviet Union not only gave the address for Intourist’s American branch offices, but also told the public to “consult their local travel agent” for more information and to book tours. By 1929 Intourist had expanded this network of affiliations to more regional travel agencies, especially those attached to certain specialty markets such as student travel bureaus.²⁷ This was a mutually reinforcing partnership: the Soviets needed to grant visas and tend to accommodations, while the travel companies needed to iron out the logistics of the journey.

²⁴ World Tourists was a travel agency located at 41 Union Square in New York City that in the 1920s and 1930s seems to have only sold tours to the Soviet Union. They were one of the first to advertise trips to the Soviet Union in the *New York Times* (22 June 1927, 55 and 3 July 1927, X12). Harvey Klehr, Earl Haynes and Kyrill M. Anderson assert in *The Soviet World of American Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) that World Tourists was also a Communist front organization, passing along revenue generated from these tours to fund the US Communist Party (CPUSA).

²⁵ While they were primarily in the business of specialty tours to the Soviet Union, the Open Road according to their brochure, *The Open Road in Soviet Russia* (New York: The Open Road, 1932), back cover, also organized group travel to Europe through the “International Student Hospitality Association [ISHA].”

²⁶ The Open Road, *The Open Road in Soviet Russia*, Front Cover and Sylvia Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 73.

²⁷ More on the network of affiliations with travel agencies and their role in facilitating the growth of Intourist will be seen in Chapter Three.

Facilitating Foreigners: Improvising and Early Soviet Tourism

One of the first major Soviet organizations (prior to the creation of Intourist) that dealt with foreigners, and specifically foreign tourists, was VOKS or the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. VOKS was established by decree of the Council of the People's Commissars in August 1925 to handle the visits of intellectuals, and members of foreign scientific and cultural organizations.²⁸ Lacking a “single powerful oversight agency” it was tied loosely to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID), the secret police (at the time the OGPU) and the Central Committee.²⁹ A “Service Bureau for Foreign Visitors,” was created to handle the intricacies of these meaningful interactions with foreigners, “assist[ing] foreigners who go to the Soviet Union for purposes of research or study, and arrang[eing] tours for visiting professors, scientists, etc.”³⁰ VOKS was not meant to handle mass tourism, however, and it was faced with greater numbers of persons falling outside of these cultural realms who desired to visit the Soviet Union.

Prior to the creation of Intourist, some of the pressures put upon VOKS were alleviated by the establishment of an entity more apt to handle the transport of foreign goods and/or people. In March 1927 the “Soviet Commercial Fleet Trust” or Sovtorgflot opened an office in New York City and established within it was a tourist bureau.³¹ Referred to in the *New York Times* (but nowhere else) as “Russtourist,”³² its duties were to “give a visa to American citizens wishing to visit the Soviet Union.”³³ It was logical that the Soviets established this early centralized tourist bureau through its Merchant

²⁸ As pointed out by Michael David Fox in “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public’: VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period,” *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 7-32, VOKS has been “rarely seriously studied.” In addition to his own work, Michael David Fox cites the work of Ludmila Stern (“The Creation of French-Soviet Cultural Relations: VOKS in the 1920s and the French Intelligentsia,” in the *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literary Association*, 89 (May 1998): 45-66) and two Russian sources. Much of VOKS’ work was done in conjunction with foreign friendship societies.

²⁹ David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public.’ ” 11.

³⁰ “Society for Cultural Relations,” *Russian Review* 4, no. 7-8 (April 1926): 119.

³¹ Very little scholarly works exists on Sovtorgflot. It is usually written about in an ancillary fashion by maritime scholars and by those looking at American-Soviet lend-lease activities. In regards to the maritime relations between the United States and the Soviets and specifically the Americans building and selling ships that Stalin would later use to exploit the resources of the Arctic as well as to transport slave labor refer to Martin J. Bollinger, *Stalin’s Slave Ships: Kolyma, the Gulag Fleet, and the Role of the West* (New York: Praeger Press, 2003).

³² “Soviet Arranges Tours of Russia,” XX18.

³³ “Expect 10,000 American Tourists,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1927, E9.

Marine agency. As their foreign shipping agency it had experience in dealing with various governments and regulations, as well as with the capacity and logistics to transport people to the Soviet Union.

The Travel Bureau of Sovtorgflot also deepened the connections between those in the travel industry and the Soviet Union. It recognized that it needed more partnerships with established sectors of the worldwide tourist industry to facilitate the growing demand for foreign travel to the Soviet Union. By 1928 the Travel Bureau of Sovtorgflot needed to transport what they estimated as an influx of “5,000-6,000” foreign tourists to the Soviet Union for the next travel season.³⁴ Therefore, in July of 1928 Sovtorgflot made “arrangements with six steamship and travel companies with offices here [United States] for the transport of American tourists to Russia.”³⁵ These transportation arrangements were necessary to fulfill what by the summer of 1928 was “fifteen standard tours...varying in length from a week...to six weeks.”³⁶ Sovtorgflot also expanded established relationships with the Soviet Union’s geographic neighbors to build upon existing tourist transportation offerings. One such partnership was with “the Chinese Eastern Railway and railways in Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan in promoting travel to and through the Union.”³⁷

By 1929 the Soviets recognized the need for a more centralized and efficient organization to handle tourism; thus Intourist was established. VOKS and Sovtorgflot found that they could no longer effectively coordinate the growing number of tourists coming to the Soviet Union. Sylvia Margulies reinforces this conclusion, stating that Intourist was specifically created in 1929 because “its predecessor, the Travel Bureau of

³⁴ “Soviet Arranges Tours of Russia,” XX18. While this number, as many issued by the Soviets, can be interpreted by historians as inflated, it is still evident from news reports that in a period of three years (1925-1928) tourism to the Soviet Union had grown exponentially. This issue of tourist numbers and their validity as well as a chart composed by this author will be dealt with later on in the chapter. What is important is that these early agencies were making connections with the worldwide tourist industry in order to meet growing demand, whatever that demand may have been. One does not need to make multiple partnerships with cruise lines in order to take a trickle of foreigners abroad. These connections also show the web of entanglements that included American, British and European players in various industries that were needed to build from the ground up a tourist trade to the Soviet Union.

³⁵ “Expect 700 to Visit Russia,” *New York Times*, 26 July 1928, 43.

³⁶ “Soviet Arranges Tours of Russia,” XX18.

³⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 57.

the Soviet Merchant Fleet, had failed to handle the increasing number of visitors...³⁸ Demand, as well as the desire to spur even greater demand, fueled the development of a modern tourist infrastructure in the Soviet Union.³⁹ To keep these tourists coming in greater numbers required a modern, streamlined agency that could cater to the demands of Western tourists who often had high expectations (due to years of first class travel in Europe). The competitiveness of the interwar tourist trade required an agency that was on par with Thomas Cook and American Express. A myriad tangle of multiple government agencies and sporadic and archaic domestic accommodations would not do.

Intourist would fulfill the same functions as any foreign full service travel agency. It was also, however, an agency that reflected a truly Soviet approach to tourism. The campaign for tourists to the Soviet Union was a manifestation of Stalin's Five Year Plans. Not only did tourism fund and receive funding from the Five Year Plans, but it also was structured in accordance with them: break-neck growth, centralized coordination and quota fulfillment all characterized Soviet tourism as they generally would other industries in the 1930s USSR.⁴⁰

Red Star Rising: The Birth of Intourist

On April 12, 1929 a new player was inaugurated on the foreign tourist scene: Intourist. It was on the one hand, just another agency among the plethora of travel agents, steamship companies and other fulfillers of American travel dreams whose offices lined Fifth Avenue in New York. On the other hand, Intourist was a unique and important entity, one that represented the precarious partnership between two seemingly

³⁸ Margulies, 63.

³⁹ The figures reported by the Soviets and published in American newspapers and periodicals show that there was exponential growth of tourism to the Soviet Union for the years 1927-1929, even if one takes into consideration that the numbers might be inflated. While only "200" Americans went to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1927, by 1929 "2,800" of them had traveled to the USSR [see Appendix A]. One must also consider that these were solely the figures for American tourists and did not take into consideration that many citizens of other nations traveled to the Soviet Union as well. Therefore, when I state that demand fueled the development of Intourist these are the numbers upon which I am basing my assertion.

⁴⁰ It is very clear from the language set out in the documents found in the Personal Archive of M.I Kalinin, fond 78, opis 1, dela 688, list 3-16, that Intourist's mission was to actively and enthusiastically fill the quotas created for it by the Plan. One report lays out the progress filling the foreign tourist plan for May 1938. It shows for each separate line item the May 1937 figures versus May 1938 figures and a column for the percentage of the plan fulfilled. Along with this report is a memo titled "Report on Intourist Enterprises for 1st Half of 1938," 8, which states that "all of the various kinds of Intourist workers are motivated to fill the plan." These documents, in Russian only, are available through the *Leaders of the Russian Revolution Series*.

opposed regimes. It was formed in the Soviet Union as a joint-stock company in 1929, but it would not be chartered as a legal entity in the United States until October 28, 1930. Its legal name was Intourist, Inc. or “the United States agency of the [Soviet] travel bureau” and it was formally chartered in the borough of Manhattan with an “aggregate capitalization of \$5,000.”⁴¹ In both American publications and Soviet periodicals for American audiences, to distinguish between the leadership and infrastructure in the Soviet Union and the offices and apparatuses setup in the United States, the Soviet side was referred to without the “Inc.” There was, however, no actual distinction between the two, except that Intourist, Inc was an agent or satellite office of the All-Union Joint Stock Company for Foreign Tourism in the USSR, hereafter referred to as Intourist.

Created by a decree of the Council of Labor and Defense, Intourist’s “authorized capital was 5 million rubles and its shareholders were exclusively state agencies, [including] the People’s Commissariat for Trade, the Soviet Trade Fleet, the Railroad Commissariat of the USSR, and...the All-Union Joint-Stock Company [H]otel.”⁴² However, its exact bureaucratic structure, the chain of command and its definitive place in the Soviet bureaucracy is difficult to trace (as is the case with most 1930s Soviet government authorities). As was discussed in the first chapter, many unanswered questions regarding the exact inner workings of Intourist require further study by specialists on Stalinist-era Russia. However, through various pieces of evidence one can extrapolate the importance of the agency in the hierarchy of the Soviet bureaucracy as well as obtain a partial understand of its place in the state command structure.

Intourist was a very important entity, one supported thoroughly by the Soviet government and staffed by important personages. It was connected to the Central Executive Committee within the Soviet Union, and it needed Politburo approval in order to build infrastructure.⁴³ In addition, since it dealt with foreigners it had ties to the

⁴¹ “Kurtz, Here, Gives Soviet Travel, Aim,” *New York Times*, 22 November 1933, 8 and “New Incorporations: New York Charters,” *New York Times*, 28 October 1930, 48.

⁴² “We Are Building Intourist,” *Kommersant*, 12 November 2004, <http://www.kommersant.com/page.asp?id=522979>, (30 October 2005) and Shawn Salmon, “Tourism” in *Encyclopedia of Russian History* (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 1562.

⁴³ “Kurtz, Here, Gives Soviet Travel Aim,” 8 and “We Are Building Intourist,” 3. On his November 1933 visit to the United States, Wilhelm A. Kurtz, the president of Intourist in the Soviet Union, stated in “Kurtz, Here, Gives Soviet Travel Aim,” 8, that Intourist was an “independent organization, but at the same time under the supervision of the Central Executive Committee.” However, exactly how “independent” the agency was is questionable. He expanded on this statement when a reporter asked him whether Stalin or

OGPU/NKVD.⁴⁴ The first chairman on the Soviet side was A.S. Svanidze, Stalin's brother-in-law through his first wife Ekaterina. In 1931 Wilhelm A. Kurtz was installed as its president. Kurtz was a member of the Central Executive Committee, and in 1920 had been president of the "autonomous Volga German Republic and later was appointed Vice Commissar for Education."⁴⁵ According to the *New York Times*, his wife Tatiana was also a "secretary of the Commissariat of Education."⁴⁶ Kurtz and Intourist's overall status in relation to other Soviet agencies can be seen in that he was the first Soviet representative sent to the United States after diplomatic recognition had been established.⁴⁷

Building Tourism in Stalin's Russia – Infrastructure, Improvements and Bureaucratic Centralization

Within a matter of months after it officially arrived on the tourist landscape, Intourist established itself as a serious entity in the world market for foreign tourists. With more partnerships in various sectors of the travel industry and with promising signs that even greater numbers of foreigners wanted to visit the Soviet Union, Intourist was ready to "compete with other European countries for American tourist traffic."⁴⁸ Whereas VOKS and Sovtorgflot were equipped to handle tourist traffic, but had their

Kalinin had given him any instructions or messages for the American people on his first visit to the United States, to which he answered: "That he is the president of Intourist and the chief of this bureau. That he gives orders. He does not receive them. Occasionally he has advice from other members of the executive committee, of course."

⁴⁴ The connection between Intourist and the OGPU is stated explicitly in a letter from Kurtz to Kalinin found in Kalinin, f. 78, o. 1, d. 688, l. 2. In it Kurtz asks Kalinin to "use his Kremlin phone line rather than city telephones for their conversations. Says that the nature of his work with organs of the NKVD and other Commissariats on questions of services for foreigners, make it necessary to use the Kremlin line." The connection between the two agencies is more circumstantial in the United States. There was a spying incident relating to the manager of Intourist's office in Los Angeles in late 1938. Mikhail Gorin, his wife, and a "Russian-born ex-navy intelligence agent" Hafis Salich, were accused of stealing information on Japan from the "United States Naval Intelligence Service." In March of 1939 Gorin and Salich were sentenced to six years and four years respectively and then were to be deported. For more on this incident refer to "Coast Jury Indicts Two on Spy Charges," *New York Times*, 22 December 1938, 10; "Spy Suspect's Wife Held," *New York Times*, 12 January 1939, 9; "Sidelights of the Week: Spy Story," *New York Times*, 15 January 1939, E2; "Bars Freeing Spy Suspects," *New York Times*, 8 March 1939, 4 and "Russian Spies Sentenced," *New York Times*, 21 March 1939, 10.

⁴⁵ "Kurtz, Here, Gives Soviet Travel Aim," 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Soviet Ends Visa Fee to Attract Tourists: Government Makes Provisions to Receive 15,000, Who are Expected to Spend \$10,000,000," *New York Times*, 6 April 1930, 19.

primary focuses elsewhere, Intourist was, and would continue to be until the breakup of the Soviet Union, the sole state-sponsored organization for promoting and coordinating tourism to the Soviet Union. In the midst of one of the worst economic crises the world had seen, Intourist hit the ground running for its first tourist season starting in the spring/summer 1930. In a very optimistic appraisal, Intourist sought to accommodate “15,000” foreigners including “5,000” Americans through “39 different tours of varying lengths [5-30 days] for 1930.⁴⁹

The Soviets realized that only the proper modifications would allow them to handle the full complement of tourists they expected. A thriving tourist industry required modern, available and accessible accommodations and infrastructure. Massive railroad and road improvements, the purchasing of cars, taxis and other technology, the modernizing and new construction of hotels, and the training of personnel for a burgeoning hospitality industry were needed, and very quickly. Therefore, domestic infrastructure improvements on a scale and rapidity in line with the Five Year Plans were a hallmark of the first years of Intourist.

Hotel refurbishment and construction was one of the first issues tackled by Intourist. It believed that, in summer of 1930, “from ten to twelve thousand tourists may be looked for...and lack of accommodation is the only reason there will not be more.”⁵⁰ What can only be likened to the Soviet penchant for “monumental construction” occurred in the area of hotel accommodations from 1930 to 1932. As Intourist reported, “the influx of tourists into the Soviet Union, especially American tourists, is increasing so rapidly that the Intourist will spend over 20 million rubles in 1931 to provide adequate up-to-date accommodations for foreign visitors.”⁵¹ It was stated in *Review of Reviews* that, in addition to the normal expenses incurred with running a successful business such as overhead, salaries and advertising, the Soviets were going to spend “more than

⁴⁹ Intourist, *Our Tours: 1930*, 8. For more information on tourist figures refer to Appendix A.

⁵⁰ Walter Duranty, “Summer Prospects Encourage Russia,” *New York Times*, 25 May 1930, 53. Again it is debatable whether this was an inflated estimate. However, that does not take away from the fact that the steady reporting by American newspapers and periodicals regarding American tourists in the Soviet Union, the Soviets growing partnerships with various tourist industry partners, as well as the massive tourist infrastructure building in the Soviet Union demonstrated that the demand was there and that it was growing.

⁵¹ “Many Hotels Built and Reconstructed for Tourist Travel,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 1, no. 7 (April 1931): 158.

\$10,000,000 this year [1931] on remodeling old and building new hotels and tourist [word missing] throughout Russia.”⁵² Also, many of these new hotels were constructed in some of the most remote locations in the Soviet Union, and specialty tours were built around them (such as the tour of Turkestan). This tour was offered in 1931 and in subsequent years on the Turkestan-Siberian Railroad (completed in 1930). It went through remote regions of Soviet Central Asia including places such as Samarkand in present-day Uzbekistan. Those on the 1931 tour had to live on the train for forty days because “there are no hotel accommodations in many of the places to be visited.”⁵³

The construction of tourist infrastructure in the first half of the 1930s was a miniature Five-Year Plan. A United States Department of Commerce publication described the lofty Soviet goal of accommodating “150,000 tourists,” by the 1933 travel season.⁵⁴ These building endeavors continued through the 1934 season (boosted by the hopes of even greater American tourist traffic due to diplomatic recognition) by which point massive tourist infrastructure building had been continuous for almost four years. In addition to the “28 hotels in the principal cities,” the interwar post-recognition period saw a further “large building program...involving the construction of 30 new hotels.”⁵⁵ The entire span of hotel and infrastructure building can be exemplified by a then “\$18,000,000” hotel being completed in Leningrad in June of 1934. This hotel with its “1,100 rooms with bath or shower; a restaurant large enough to accommodate 2,000; high vaulted modern lobbies, banquet halls, billiard rooms, gymnasium, Roman swimming pool, roof garden and a broadcasting station” was to be “one of the finest in Europe,” thereby uniting European luxuriousness and modernity within the Soviet Union.⁵⁶

Increased accommodations were only one facet of the building of tourist infrastructure in the Soviet Union during the early 1930s. A society that was “building utopia” meant that not only did facilities have to be available, but they had to be on par or even better than those in Europe. Everything had to be modern. Therefore, existing hotel rooms, railroad cars, and facilities that would be used by visitors had to be upgraded. A

⁵² “Russia Bids for Tourist Trade,” *Review of Reviews*, August 1931, 94.

⁵³ “Russia Bids for Tourist Trade,” 96.

⁵⁴ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries*, 57.

⁵⁵ “Preparations for Tourist Season,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 9, no. 4 (April 1934): 94.

⁵⁶ “\$18,000,000 Hotel Rising in Leningrad,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1934, N8.

group of students traveling tourist class (the least expensive of all the packages) in 1931 remarked that the newly remodeled accommodations in such hotels as the October in Leningrad were “good, and third class though we are, we have large, comfortable rooms.”⁵⁷ Much hotel remodeling involved installing modern private bathrooms with “hot and cold water connections.”⁵⁸ Running water, private baths and showers were the most stressed upgrades to existing hotels in Intourist’s press releases. The renovations show attempts to cater to the class and cultural preoccupations of Americans, since many would be “shocked to find no bathroom attached to their room in some small city.”⁵⁹ While seeking adventure and experience, the majority of American tourists were simply unwilling to “rough it.”

Upgrading tourist services, like various other aspects of society under the Five Year Plans, meant a large focus on technology. New and faster ways of transporting people including the building of the Moscow metro system were in line with Soviet thinking that the only way forward, to the future, was through technology. If the tractor was the symbol of progress in the Soviet countryside, then the automobile personified all that was modern about the city. For what *Time* described as “luxury-loving Capitalist tourists” the car was a necessity and a hallmark of any modern society.⁶⁰ Therefore, as a sign of progress as well as for logistics, the Soviets, in “the largest single order for high-priced American cars ever placed by a foreign government,” purchased “one hundred and thirty Lincoln automobiles” including parts that cost “\$400,000.”⁶¹ This high profile purchase did much to reinforce the idea that the Soviets were modernizing. Pictures of these Lincoln automobiles were front and center in many Intourist brochures [Figure 2-2].⁶²

⁵⁷ The Open Road, 9.

⁵⁸ “Many Hotels Built and Reconstructed for Tourist Travel,” 159. The “most important of the renovated hotels” listed by the *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 1 (1 January 1932): 23, were the Europa and National in Moscow, the Continental in Kiev, the Leningrad in Yalta and the Golden Horn in Vladivostok.

⁵⁹ “Russia Eager for Visitors,” *New York Times*, 10 April 1932, E3.

⁶⁰ “Lincolns for Luxury,” *Time*, 22 February 1932, 19.

⁶¹ *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 4 (15 February 1932): 88 and “Lincolns for Luxury,” 19.

⁶² The most oft cited picture is that of the Lincolns in front of the Kremlin. See the 1933 Intourist brochure, *Seeing the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Intourist, 1933), 7.

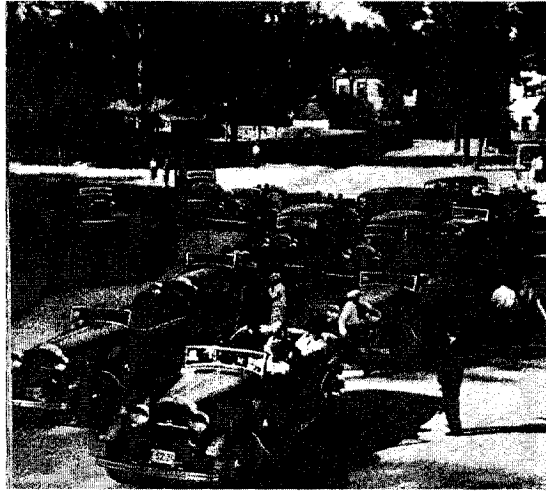


Figure 2-2 – “Lincolns for Luxury,” Intourist Brochure, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 1933 ⁶³

In 1931 Julien Bryan led a group of Americans on an Open Road tour where he recalled the “ever-present Ford buses.”⁶⁴ In total, in 1932 through Amtorg, the Soviets purchased “208” of these buses as well as “48 baggage trucks,” in order to “facilitate sight-seeing in the principal cities.”⁶⁵ This same year also saw the expansion of tourist possibilities along Russia’s scenic waterways with the acquisition of many “motor boats” not only for “sight-seeing in the principal cities,” but also to facilitate tourist transport between destinations.⁶⁶ On the railroad side of the transportation equation more rubles were spent in 1932 to build “100 new dining cars” for tourists aboard the Trans-Siberian express.⁶⁷ While air travel was just in its infancy, in 1930 the Soviets offered travelers “148,000 kilometers” of air routes; by the end of 1933 they offered “665,000 kilometers.”⁶⁸ All of these expenditures on technology reinforced the message that the new society the Soviets were building was based on modern innovation.

Only a centralized and streamlined bureaucratic organization could handle modern tourism to the Soviet Union. In order to effectively meet and increase demand, Intourist had to be the central point for all forms of transportation and accommodations in the Soviet Union. There could be no duplication of services. Intourist was a joint stock

⁶³ Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union* (New York: Intourist, 1933), 7. Author’s collection.

⁶⁴ The Open Road, 7.

⁶⁵ “Special Airplane Rates for Tourists,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 12 (5 July 1932): 311.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Russia Eager for Visitors,” E3.

⁶⁸ “Soviets Prepare for Bigger U.S.S.R. Tourist Season,” *American Travel Agent’s Magazine* 4, no. 1 (December 1932): 23.

company whose majority shareholders were state agencies with ties to the transportation sector, such as Sovtorgflot and the People's Commissariat of Rail Transport. Therefore, it was no surprise that in 1931 Intourist announced it would be taking over

the passenger service of the Sovtorgflot...the transfer, affecting fifteen vessels in active service, marks the second major step towards consolidating under Intourist management all Soviet travel service for visitors from abroad. The first step was the transfer of operating direction of two special Trans-Siberian express trains [De Luxe Express]. The two trains are made up of the newest and best rolling stock in the U.S.S.R...and are reserved for foreign visitors.⁶⁹

A month following Intourist's consolidation with Sovtorgflot's travel bureau, it also merged with VAO Hotel taking over "operating direction of all Soviet hotels catering to tourists from abroad."⁷⁰ Bureaucratic consolidation within the Soviet Union was coupled with Intourist's satellite office expansion throughout the world. In addition to their head office in the Hotel Metropole, Moscow in 1930, Intourist listed branch offices in Berlin, London (Anglo-Soviet Shipping Company), New York (Amderutra), Paris (Banque Commerciale pour l'Europe du Nord), Holland, Austria, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Japan (Japan Tourist Bureau) and Teheran, Persia (Intourist).⁷¹ By 1934 Intourist not only had branches throughout the Soviet Union in hotels and border points ranging from Baku to Yalta, but had also opened additional worldwide offices in Turkey and South Africa.⁷²

Expansion was especially rapid within Intourist's operations in the United States. Intourist opened its first office in New York in 1930 at 452 Fifth Avenue. Within two

⁶⁹ "Intourist Takes Over Sovtorgflot Passenger Department," *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 24 (15 December 1931): 574.

⁷⁰ "Intourist Takes Over Leading Soviet Hotels," *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 3, no. 5 (April 1933): 21. According to "We Are Building Intourist," the November 12, 2004 article in the *Kommersant* on Intourist, the state agency "Hotel" was established in 1931 and "served tourists in the big cities," but it was merged with Intourist in 1933. While no scholarly literature exists on this state agency the information provided by the *Kommersant* article can be verified by a postcard issued by the agency and found in G.V. Shalimoff and G.B. Shaw, editors, *Catalogue of Propaganda – Advertising Postal Cards of the USSR 1927-1934* (Washington, DC: United Postal Stationery Society, 2002), 129. This postcard is for the All Union Company 'Hotel Limited' and was issued in 1932 with a 2 million initial print run. It lists on the postcard the Metropole, Savoy, National and Europa in Moscow; the Astoria in Leningrad; the London in Odessa and the Versailles in Vladivostok as the hotels it represented. This state agency "Hotel" was also one of Intourist's original stockholders.

⁷¹ Intourist, *October Celebrations in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930) and Intourist, *Hunting in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930).

⁷² Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1935]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1935), Back Inside Cover. See this brochure for a complete listing of the many cities within the USSR that had Intourist offices.

years demand including “heavy advance bookings for spring and summer [1932] tours to the U.S.S.R.” had precipitated a move to the Lorraine Building on 545 Fifth Avenue.⁷³ This office had double the capacity of the previous one and it was a location that signified that Intourist was on par with some of the top agencies in the business. With its new office, Intourist was “situated in the heart of a district famous for its many steamship and travel agents offices, and therefore feels better placed to serve its large and growing clientele.”⁷⁴ Then, in March of 1932, Intourist opened a new Chicago office at 304 North Michigan Boulevard. This office replaced their previous one at 30 West Washington Street, and indicated, according to one publication, “the increasing importance of Soviet Russia as a travel land.”⁷⁵ What is especially telling about the inauguration of this new Intourist office was that its opening gala was attended by “two hundred Chicago travel and steamship men and women.”⁷⁶ This shows that Intourist was not a fringe element, but an accepted member of the professional tourist industry. By the time diplomatic recognition was extended, Intourist already had four travel bureaus installed in the United States in New York, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.

In four short years (1929-1933) Intourist built from the ground up the infrastructure of a modern tourist agency, one able to compete with other travel bureaus that had long traditions and more experience. Not only did those in the industry stand up and take notice, but there were those in the American government who finally realized the power of tourism as well. These individuals saw the success of state tourist agencies such as Intourist and noted the large outflows of much needed dollars going abroad and they wanted their piece of the pie.

The Invisible Export – American Tourists, Dollars and the Soviet Union

“The United States is the milk cow which nourishes the world.”

⁷³ “Soviet Union Tours for 1932,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 4 (15 February 1932): 88 and “Latest Dealings in Realty – Shops in Demand for Retail Trade,” *New York Times*, 31 March 1933. In another small way this new leased space shows the cooperation that had to occur for the Soviets to be successful in the United States – Intourist needed to lease space from a landlord and according to the June 7, 1933 *New York Times* that landlord was Cross & Brown, Co.

⁷⁴ “Intourist Takes New Quarters,” *American Travel Agent’s Magazine* 4, no. 5 (April 1933): 5.

⁷⁵ “Intourist Opens New Chicago Office,” *American Travel Agent’s Magazine* 3, no. 5 (March 1932): 20.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

- Francis M. Mansfield, *New York Times* Reporter, referring to a 1933 League of Nations report on Invisible Exports and Imports including American Tourist Expenditures Abroad.⁷⁷

Since the beginning of the 1930s, portions of the United States government, the most vocal being the Department of Commerce, were keenly interested in the tourist trade. They tried various avenues to get other portions of the U.S. government to actively engage in the lucrative world-wide tourist trade. In multiple publications, they pointed out that even during these hard times, millions of American dollars were being lost to foreign countries who were actively soliciting American travelers. But their cries mostly fell on deaf ears.

The Commerce Department recognized as early as 1930 that the Soviet Union was a major contender for U.S. tourists. In a 1930 report by its Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, it predicted that “the Danube countries, Scandinavia and Russia are expecting to increase greatly in popularity among foreign tourists.”⁷⁸ More and more Americans were spending their hard earned dollars in the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Commerce Department reported that American tourist expenditures in the Soviet Union went from “\$2,000,000 in 1929 to \$10,000,000 in 1931.”⁷⁹ The Soviet Union and the British West Indies were the only two locations where expenditures rose in those years. These 1931 numbers were especially important because they represented increasing expenditures during one of the hardest years for the worldwide tourist industry owing to the Great Depression.

Those in the industry who tracked tourist trends also concluded that the Soviet Union was a popular tourist destination. American Express reported for the summer of 1934 that “the Russian and Baltic cruises attracted outstanding increases...travel to the

⁷⁷ Francis M. Mansfield, “Uncle Sam Leads as World Spender – His Tourist Outlay and Other ‘Invisible Imports’ Top the List of Nations,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1933, XX4.

⁷⁸ George B. Galloway, *Editorial Research Reports: Foreign and Domestic Tourist Traffic* (Washington, DC: Editorial Research Reports, 1930), 426.

⁷⁹ “‘Invisible Exports’ A Billion, Says Klein: Assistant Commerce Secretary Cites as One \$570,000,000 Spent by Tourists in 1931,” *New York Times*, 18 July 1932, 9. According to the hearing before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives, *A Bill to Promote Travel to and in the United States and its Possessions, Thereby Promoting American Business, and to Encourage Foreign Travel in the United States*, 3d session., January 23, 1931, H. Doc. 13553 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 25, American tourist expenditures to the Soviet Union in 1929 totaled \$1,714,000. While this was not comparable to the top destination France with \$137,143,000, it was on par with tourist expenditures in Belgium with \$1,736,000, Denmark with \$1,101,000 and Spain with \$1,629,000.

Soviet Union to date being 10,210 as against approximately 5,000 last year.”⁸⁰ Not only was cruise travel increasing during the 1934 tourist season, but “reports from thirty-one offices of the American Express Company for the first six months of the year show an increase of 134 per cent over the corresponding period last year.”⁸¹ It is not surprising that American tourist traffic increased exponentially in 1934 given the attention garnered by formal American diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933. However, the 1934 travel season is not an anomaly that reflects solely the peak of American interest in the Soviet Union. It was a point along the trajectory upon which American travel to the Soviet Union had increased yearly from the time the Soviets had actively begun engaging in the mass tourist trade [Appendix A].

Continuing to the 1935 travel season American Express found that “the European war crisis has done little to alter plans for a record travel season.” They also found that Russia had “25 per cent more American visitors than last summer.”⁸² The following year travel agents reported that tourist traffic to the Soviet Union increased by “100 percent.”⁸³ These increases were facilitated by more cruises including the Soviet Union in their itinerary, such as, in 1936 “fifteen world cruise ships, carrying 6,000 persons [that] have added Russian ports to their itineraries.”⁸⁴ If Walter Duranty is to be believed, one can conclude that 1936 was a banner season for the Soviets with “hotels [that] are so crowded with foreigners that they are beginning to overflow into the new and yet unfinished Hotel Moskva.”⁸⁵ Rounding out Intourist’s popularity in the 1930s was the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1937.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ “Travel Increases by Ship and Rail,” *New York Times*, 22 July 1934, N6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² “Agencies Expect Big Tourist Season: Survey Indicates Travel Will Be Heavy This Fall Despite the European Crisis,” *New York Times*, 6 October 1935, 45.

⁸³ “Notes of Interest in the Shipping World,” *New York Times*, 12 April 1936, N12.

⁸⁴ “Random Notes for Travelers,” *New York Times*, 31 May 1936, XX10.

⁸⁵ Walter Duranty, “Tourists Jamming Moscow’s Hotels,” *New York Times*, 19 July 1936, E4.

⁸⁶ By 1938 conditions on the ground, including increasing government anti-foreigner sentiment, the purges and the show trials, could not be ignored by American tourists. This coupled with the deteriorating situation in Europe led to a significant decline in tourist traffic to the Soviet Union. From the documents in Kalinin, f. 78, o. 1, d. 688, l. 3-16 it is clear that the Soviets were very much taken by surprise at the suddenness of this downturn. While the “Report on Intourist Enterprises for 1st Half of 1938” does show that Intourist generated revenue [referred to as Accrued Funds], it also reports on rising expenses and significant decreases in tourist figures from the same time the previous year. However, one does not see a complete break in tourism between the United States and the Soviet Union until the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact in 1939. Americans would not visit the Soviet Union again as tourists until well into the 1950s.

Conclusion: With a Little Help From Their Friends

The Soviets built tourism from the ground up. They were so successful that, by the early 1930s, they were a threat to other foreign tourist bureaus vying for the attention and dollars of American travelers. Infrastructure improvements (spanning the vast expanses of the Soviet Union), centralization of services and an established global network of partners made Intourist a modern travel agency. They did in ten years what it took others fifty to produce and they could not have done it alone. Successful partnerships with and support from major names and American travel agencies lent legitimacy to the fledgling Soviet tourist industry. These partnerships would be strengthened in the 1930s with the assistance of the American advertising industry, which would aid in further building Soviet tourism.

Capitalist Coordination and Socialist Scenery: The Business of “Selling the Soviet Union”

**HIGH
SELLING
POINTS FOR
TRAVEL IN THE
SOVIET
UNION**

You have *different* and *interesting* travel buys to sell your customers when you sell Tours in the Soviet Union. Here are the vigorous sales points which will sell your patrons and bring you profits.

- 1** *New life* in a changed social and economic society about which the whole world is talking—collective farms, planned industry, communal life, Soviet culture and education.
- 2** *New scenic vistas* in a vast land off the beaten travel track; *Stately Leningrad*; *Moscow*, the throbbing hub of a planned economy, the *Caucasus*, highest mountains in Europe; *Cruising the Volga*; *Colorful Ukraina*; *Crimea*, the pearl of the *Black Sea*.
- 3** *Amazingly low rates* for 15 standard itineraries of from 5 to 31 days; or your customers may select their own itinerary.
- 4** *Intourist's all-inclusive service*: hotels, meals, guide-interpreters, transportation, sightseeing and Soviet visa in the Soviet Union.

Your work is simple! We supply you with *Illustrated Booklets* and all *authentic* information. You sell one or more of these itineraries, deduct your 10% COMMISSION, and your task is done.

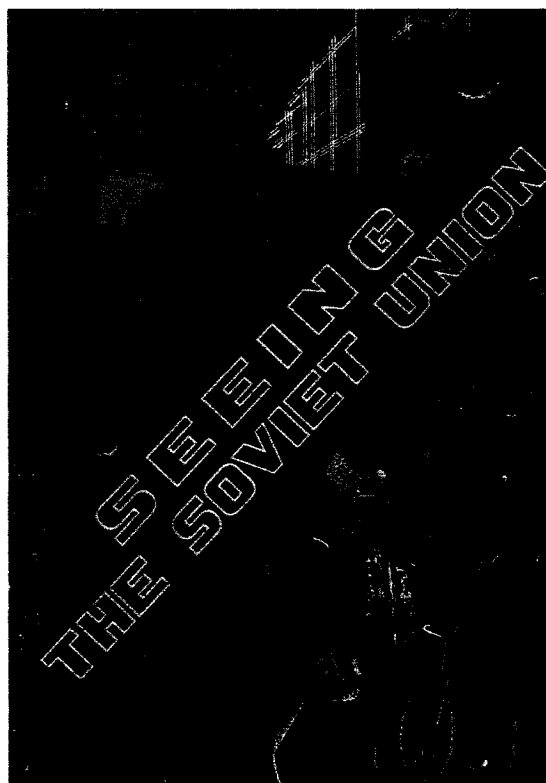


Figure 3-1 - "High Selling Points for Travel in the Soviet Union," Intourist Advertisement, May 1933 and Front Cover Intourist Brochure, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 1933 ¹

"4,000,000 People are being reached by Soviet Russia Travel Advertising. INTOURIST is Urging Them to Buy Their Tours through Travel Agents. A HUGE, nation-wide campaign of advertising in magazines and newspapers is covering the United States with news that it is inexpensive, easy, and comfortable to travel through the most discussed country in the world. Every insertion carries the slogan: See your own Travel Agent."

-Intourist Advertisement, *American Travel Agent's Magazine*, 1932 ²

¹ "High Selling Points for Travel in the Soviet Union," *American Travel Agent's Magazine* 4, no. 6 (May 1933): 2 and Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Intourist, 1933), Front Cover. Advertisement reproduced from author's collection and Intourist brochure cover by permission of David Levine http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_9.htm, (28 April 2006). This advertisement also ran in the June 1933 issue of *Review of Reviews* with amended wording (omitted message to travel agents).

² "4,000,000 People are being reached by Soviet Russia Travel Advertising," *American Travel Agent's Magazine* 3, no. 4 (February 1932): 35.

While Intourist was the face of Soviet travel to Americans, it was American advertisers, or the “myth creators,” who really sold the public on the idea of travel to the Soviet Union. Advertisers were the Soviets’ connection to American hearts and minds. They used their experience and methods to systematically target an audience eager for a new travel experience. Their knowledge of the American media and the public provided the direct links by which tourism to the Soviet Union could thrive.

Advertisers packaged Soviet Russia as a modern commodity. While the Soviet travel message itself was produced by those in Moscow, it was delivered to the American public through a template formulated by Madison Avenue. Working together the Soviets and their advertising firms created materials for media placement as well as those to be handed out by Intourist and their travel agents. All of these materials would be interwoven with similar messages geared towards a specific targeted group of individuals. This resulted in an overall vision of the Soviet state ready for American consumption.

The partnership between American advertisers and the Soviets embodied Roland Marchand’s assertion that advertisers “were inducing them [consumers] to live through experiences in which the product [or its absence] played a part.”³ In fact, the Soviet Union was simultaneously the product and the experience. Adventure, sport, study, culture, history or simply “the future” were all to be had in the lands of the Soviets. Wilhelm A. Kurtz, President of Intourist, affirmed that a variety of spectacles awaited travelers: “Intourist guests have shot polar bears in the Arctic; they have trekked, by ‘rail caravan,’ across the ageless deserts of Turkestan...they have studied the new life, visited cities sprung up only yesterday from the steppes, and been impressed by the mighty creation of a new social order.”⁴ Such experiences could be had simply by contacting one’s local travel agent or Intourist representative. Intourist and Madison Avenue remade the Soviet Union into an accessible, affordable and almost innocuous commodity, one that was indistinguishable from travel to other less contentious destinations.

³ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), xxi.

⁴ Wilhelm A. Kurtz, “The Soviet Union as a Tourist Land,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 9, no. 1 (January 1934): 16.

For a society that had long been considered foreign by Americans, it was advertisers through their media partners that brought a refashioned vision of the Soviet Union into thousands of American homes. The relationship between them was highly coordinated and very important. Magazine and newspaper publishers saw travel advertisers as an important group to have represented in their publications. In fact, many publications used their own valuable advertising space to convince firms that represented travel entities that they were “first” in travel advertising [Figure 3-2].

These 1932 advertisers have made TIME

First

in Pages of Travel Advertising
(exclusive of hotels)

Canada S. S. Lines .. Ronalds Advertising Agency, Ltd.	Northern Pacific	Stack-Gobel Adv. Agency
Canadian National	Santa Fe	Stewart-Davis Adv. Agency
Canadian Pacific	Southern Pacific	Lord & Thomas, Inc.
Kenyon & Eckhardt, Inc. & Albert Frank Co.	Railways of France	Dorland International, Inc.
Columbian Lines	Union Pacific	Caples Co.
Cosulich Line	Alaska Guides	Bott Advertising Agency
Conard S. S. Line	Allen Tours	Chambers & Wiswell, Inc.
French Line	Thomas Cook & Son	L. D. Wertheimer Advtg. Co., Inc.
Furness Bermuda Line	Frank Tourist	Frank Prosbrey Co., Inc.
General S. S. Line	Interlist	Smith, Sturgis & Moore, Inc.
Hamburg American Line	Open Road	H. A. Morse, Jr.
Italian Line	Raymond & Whitcomb	H. B. Humphrey C.
Lloyd Sabaudo Line	Temple Tours	P. F. O'Keefe Adv. Agency, Inc.
Matson Lines	Travel Guild	Ferry-Hanley Adv. Co.
N. Y. K. Lines	All Year Club of Southern California	Lord & Thomas, Inc.
North German Lloyd	Hawaii Tourist Bureau	Lord & Thomas, Inc.
Panama Mail S. S. Lines	Italian Tourist Information Office	Wendell P. Colton Co.
Panama Pacific	Japan Tourist Bureau	Wendell P. Colton Co.
Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co.	Maine Publicity Bureau	McCann-Erickson, Inc.
Swedish American Line	Nassau Development Board	Stanley E. Gunnison, Inc.
Union Castle Line	On-to-Oregon	Gerber & Crossley, Inc.
United Fruit Lines	Natural Bridge of Virginia	Staples & Staples, Inc.
U. S. Lines	New England Council	Dorrance Sullivan & Co.
Ward Line	South African Government Bureau	Gotham Adv. Co.
White Star Line	St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce	Lean-Florida Adv. Agency
American Airways	Ten Thousand Lakes-Greater Minnesota Assn.	David, Inc.
Transcontinental & Western Air Lines	New Hampshire State Development Commission	Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc.
United Air Lines	Vermont Bureau of Publicity	Hays Adv. Agency, Inc.
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy	Californians	Lord & Thomas, Inc.
Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific		
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific		
Great Northern		
London & Northeastern		
Missouri Pacific Lines		

In advertising to TIME's 400,000 Best-Travel-Prospect Families these advertisers are helping you increase business.

TIME
The Weekly Newspaper

Figure 3-2 Time Magazine Travel Advertisers, *American Travel Agent's Magazine*, 1932⁵

A 1934 article in the trade publication the *Travel Agent* highlights media support of the travel industry. It states that per year “newspaper lineage runs into the millions of lines and dollars and that magazine advertising runs into thousands of pages and millions of

⁵ “These 1932 Advertisers Have Made TIME *First* in Pages of Travel Advertising,” *American Travel Agent's Magazine* 3, no. 11 (October 1932): 4.

dollars,” personifying “the tremendous drive which carriers [had] put behind the development of travel.”⁶ However, by 1940 due to turmoil abroad, travel advertising in the American print media declined and was represented almost entirely by domestic American travel entities (which advertised less than foreign travel bureaus in the years prior).

Various advertising firms, ranging from major players such as J. Walter Thompson to less well known operations, such as Smith, Sturgis and More (who represented Intourist in 1932), catered to clients in the tourist industry [Figure 3-2]. Fierce competition for travel industry clients was found in the advertising pages of leading periodicals and on the agency level itself. During the 1930s, Intourist changed advertising agencies three times, each time working with a respectable main-stream agency. From 1932-1934 Intourist was represented by Smith, Sturgis & Moore, from 1935-1938 by L.D. Wertheimer Co., and in 1939 by Dundes & Frank, Inc.⁷ Relationships were fluid between travel companies and advertising agencies. Therefore, agencies had to use all of the tools at their disposal to produce the most effective campaigns to keep these lucrative travel industry clients. One of the ways in which to attract and retain clients was by creating campaigns using “the science of advertising.” This involved market research based on scientific measuring techniques or target marketing. According to the advertising firm N.W. Ayer & Son, the point of target marketing was to “scientifically determine whether your advertising is being directed to the right markets, in the right quantities, at the right time.”⁸

Not just advertising firms, however, collected information about their audience. In order to increase and track their business, foreign tourist bureaus needed information on the effectiveness of their campaigns. It was essential that Intourist know which publications they should spend their advertising budget on and whether a particular campaign’s message was having the desired effect. They did this through such marketing

⁶ “The Advertising Drive Behind Travel,” *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 2 (January 1935): 24. The top newspaper in the country for travel advertising during this time according to “The Advertising Drive Behind Travel,” 24 not surprisingly was *The New York Times*.

⁷ Two of these advertising firms (Smith, Sturgis & Moore and L.D. Wertheimer Co.) had represented at one time or another North German Lloyd and the Cunard White Star Line during the interwar years. As seen in Chapter 2 both of these cruise lines were Intourist’s historic partners in the travel industry. Therefore, it was quite logical that Intourist would choose to work with either of them in the 1930s.

⁸ “Pre-Determined: The Scientific Method in Modern Advertising,” *Fortune*, December 1938, 82.

strategies as the “Coupon Return Method” of advertising copy testing.⁹ Coupons were first used by Intourist in a November 30, 1931 *Time* advertisement for that year’s “Turkestan Tour.”¹⁰ Subsequently, they accompanied six major ads in the *New York Times* from February to May 1936. The coupon portion, located at the bottom of the advertisement, was to be filled out, removed and sent to Intourist’s main office in New York. In return travelers received a map of the Soviet Union (with itineraries and prices printed on the back), a general travel booklet and any other related promotional materials [Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-7]. By receiving these coupons Intourist was able to track the effectiveness and popularity of a given publication and campaign, as well as collect data on the geographic area that the advertisement had reached.

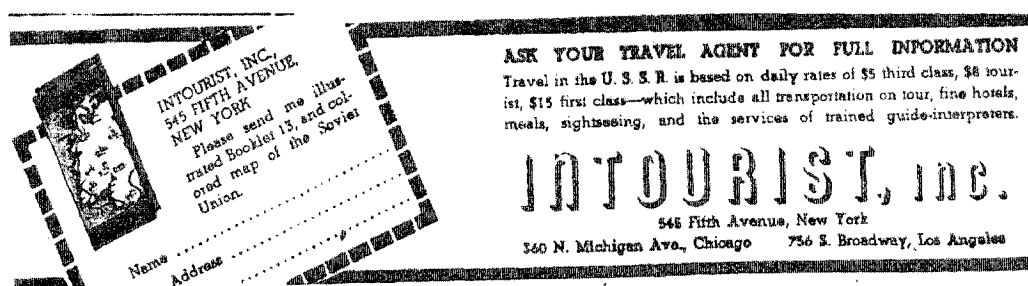


Figure 3-3 Coupon Portion of Intourist Advertisement, “Travel in the Soviet Union,” 1937¹¹

This information was shared with the advertising firm in charge of Intourist’s account and used to assist in placement in other publications.

These tools were important because they brought in greater amounts of travelers, thereby justifying the large outlays on advertising. The archival record on Intourist’s advertising expenditures is sparse. We do know, however, Intourist’s overall advertising expenses for 1937-38 based on NKF [People’s Commissariat of Finance (*Narodnyi Kommissariat Finansov*)] audit documents. They show that Intourist spent 1,000,000 rubles from their hard currency fund on foreign advertising.¹² In addition, valid comparisons with other foreign tourist bureaus can give the historian an approximate feeling of the large overall costs of a nation-wide advertising campaign. Accompanying

⁹ “Pre-Determined: The Scientific Method in Modern Advertising,” 83. Consult Susan Strasser’s *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989) for numerous examples of American advertisers using the coupon method, especially at beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁰ “The Golden Road to Turkestan,” *Time*, 30 November 1931, 30.

¹¹ “Travel in the Soviet Union,” *New York Times*, 11 April 1937, 68.

¹² Personal Archive of M.I. Kalinin, fond 78, opis 1, dela 688, list 9. It is unclear, however, from this document what percentage of the 1,000,000 rubles went towards advertising in the United States.

Senate Bill 33 in 1935 was data on “foreign government appropriations [for] tourist propaganda.”¹³ This amounted to the following: “Germany (Before Hitler), \$10,240,000; Italy, \$4,760,000; France, \$2,840,000; Britain, \$2,760,000; Poland, \$1,040,000; Hungary, \$920,000; Czechoslovakia, \$720,000; Jugoslavia, \$520,000 [and] Rumania, \$280,000.”¹⁴ While it is important to note that these numbers included all foreign publicity not just that for American audiences, they still give a frame of reference as to how much foreign travel bureaus spent on advertising.

Intourist needed market feedback to make choices about advertisement placement. It was essential for Intourist to know what publications would reach the largest share of their target audience. A letter published in the *New York Times* by Intourist Vice President, G.M. Melamed, named that newspaper as one of the most effective publications in bringing tourists to their Fifth Avenue office:

61% of our inquiries on travel in the U.S.S. R. are directly traceable, through keying or otherwise, to our advertisements in *The New York Times*. In view of the fact that only 40% of our advertising appropriation was spent in *The Times*, it would seem that *The Times* has proved itself to be by far our most effective advertising medium.¹⁵

Despite the high cost, the Soviets had to publicize their country, because it served their goals to do so.¹⁶

Intourist and its affiliated advertising agencies sought to create pervasive advertising campaigns that were nation-wide and mainstream.¹⁷ They used a variety of

¹³ United States Travel Commission, “Hearing before the Committee on Commerce, S.33 A Bill to Encourage Travel to and within the United States by Citizens of Foreign Countries, and for other Purposes,” Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, May 13, 1935 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), Cover and 13.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ G.M. Melamed, “61% of Inquiries Traceable to Advertising in the Times,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1931, 27.

¹⁶ The benefits clearly outweighed the costs in regards to Intourist advertising expenditures. In 1938 when the People’s Commissariat of Finance (NKF) recommended that Intourist cut its advertising budget by 100,000 rubles, Intourist argued that the cuts should not be done “given the political meaning of Intourist’s work abroad.” This according to “Report on Intourist’s Enterprises for 1st Half of 1938,” Kalinin, f. 78, o. 1, d. 688, l. 10.

¹⁷ To gauge the overall validity of this statement and to affirm that Intourist intended to be as pervasive as possible with their advertising campaigns, I examined the frequency of Soviet travel advertising and compiled it into a chart [Appendix B]. I looked at publications at the small, medium and large circulation levels including *Time*, *Fortune*, *The Nation*, *Review of Reviews* and the *New York Times*. Each issue for the years 1930-39 was searched for Intourist advertisements. The results reinforce that Intourist used the main stream media in a progressive fashion throughout the 1930s to sell their message to the American public.

media, including both large and local American newspapers, periodicals and travel industry publications, to reach the widest portion of the American public with their vision of the Soviet state. Intourist also advertised in Soviet periodicals aimed at Americans including *Soviet Russia Today* and *Economic Review of the Soviet Union*. In 1932 they reported that over “4,000,000 People are being reached by Soviet Russia Travel Advertising” with a “huge nation-wide campaign of advertising in magazines and newspapers...”¹⁸ In 1938 Intourist reported that their advertising season (starting in February for the coming May – August/September travel season) would be a nation-wide endeavor using “thirty-one newspapers in nineteen key cities [and] about a dozen general magazines and trade papers.”¹⁹ This statement again reinforces the pervasiveness of the Soviets’ message.

Vehicles of Persuasion or Pervasive Paraphernalia – Intourist Advertising

Ephemera

Intourist’s vision of the Soviet state was not solely found in periodical advertisements. It could also be seen in the ephemera created to augment these print campaigns. These portable advertisements, what today would be referred to as direct marketing pieces, included tourist brochures, guidebooks, maps, postcards, postage stamps, posters, signs and luggage labels. These materials were created and disseminated not only in the United States, but also in other countries.

While in the Soviet Union travelers were a captive audience for the Soviets. Intourist reinforced the advertising it did in the tourists’ home markets through additional exposure within the Soviet Union. In 1938 Intourist’s target outlays for advertising within the Soviet Union was 3,500,000 rubles versus 1,000,000 rubles for advertising in foreign markets.²⁰ These budgeted expenditures included the printing and distribution of ephemera that, among other locations, could be acquired at “all news stands in Intourist Hotels.” Items available for sale included “books in the English, French and German

¹⁸ “4,000,000 People are being reached by Soviet Russia Travel Advertising,” 35.

¹⁹ “Advertising News and Notes: Intourist Uses 31 Newspapers,” *New York Times*, 3 February 1938, 30. Moreover, the 1938 advertising campaign did not represent Intourist at the peak of its capabilities. In fact, 1938 had the lowest frequency of advertisements placed in the *New York Times* (13) since 1931, when Intourist had started to advertise nationally. See Appendix B for more on advertisement placement and frequency.

²⁰ “Report on Intourist Enterprises for 1st Half of 1938,” Kalinin, f. 78, o. 1, d. 688, l. 9-10.

languages, guide-books, post-cards [and] postage stamps.”²¹ So the hotels themselves facilitated further distribution of Intourist materials, thus extending the reach of its message.

Luggage labels were one of the main advertising methods used by the hotels. They provided a visual tapestry of the destinations that a person had visited. Some labels advertised the names of the hotels themselves, while others portrayed a specific destination of interest within the Soviet Union. Figure 3-4 provides two examples of the luggage labels issued by Intourist in the 1930s.



Figure 3-4 – Intourist Luggage Labels, 1930s ²²

Postcards and postage stamps were other useful advertising vehicles. They were inherently portable, many times covering wide geographic areas outside the original origination point. This was the case with one 1930 Intourist postcard *Travel on the Volga – The Cradle of Russian Song!* which sold on eBay and was addressed to someone in Tel Aviv, a location in which Intourist did not advertise. Postcards and postage stamps were also functional objects. They circulated widely within the Soviet Union and could be obtained in hotels, bookstores and post offices. They were also distributed in the United States and abroad. Both types of promotional items were printed in multiple editions with large print runs. One 1930 Intourist postcard, *Visit Caucasus – The Crossroad of*

²¹ “Books in the English, French and German Languages, Guide-Books, Post-Cards, Postage Stamps Can Be Obtained at All News Stands in Intourist Hotels,” *Soviet Travel* 5 (1935): 43.

²² Intourist, *Leningrad Luggage Label* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930s) and Intourist, *Kiev Luggage Label* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930s). Author’s collection.

Nations!, circulated in four editions with a 300,000 minimum copy run.²³ Other 1930 Intourist postcards with comparable print runs included: *See Crimea - The Pearl of U.S.S.R.* and the aforementioned *Travel on the Volga – The Cradle of Russian Song!* [Figure 3-5].²⁴ These postcards were printed in multiple languages, targeting a wide and diverse audience both within the USSR and abroad.

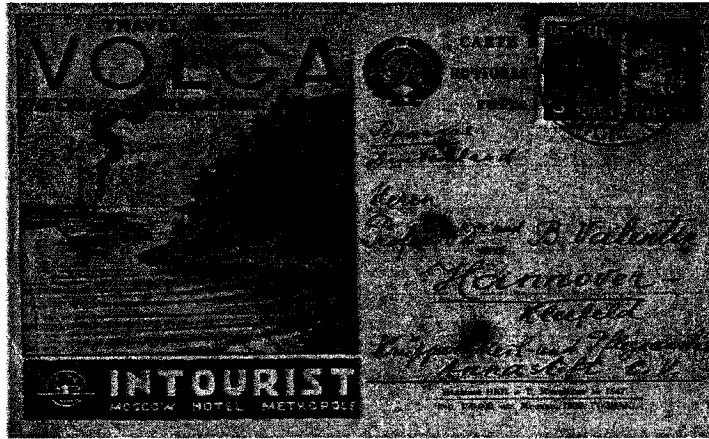


Figure 3-5 – Intourist Postcard, *Travel on the Volga – The Cradle of Russian Song!*, 1930²⁵

Furthermore, not only did such postcards and stamps circulate among travelers and their friends and family, but they also came into the hands of collectors. Outside the Soviet Union professional collectors (as well as the average person) bought these items. Stamp collecting in the 1930s was an avidly pursued hobby so these pieces of paper could reach an entire set of people that might not otherwise be exposed to Intourist’s advertising.²⁶

²³ G.V. Shalimoff and G.B. Shaw, editors, *Catalogue of Propaganda – Advertising Postal Cards of the USSR 1927-1934* (Washington, DC: United Postal Stationery Society, 2002), 35. Many of these postcards have appeared on auctions on eBay and are sought after by collectors. This postcard was issued in English in addition to Russian (150,000 print run), Ukrainian (100,000 print run) and Azerbaijani (50,000 print run).

²⁴ Shalimoff and Shaw, 37 and 39. *See Crimea – The Pearl of U.S.S.R.!* was issued in English in addition to Russian (150,000 print run), Ukrainian (100,000 print run) and Georgian (50,000 print run). *Travel on the Volga – The Cradle of Russian Song!* was issued in English in addition to Russian (150,000 print run), Ukrainian (100,000 print run) and Belarussian (50,000 print run).

²⁵ Intourist, *Travel on the Volga – The Cradle of Russian Song* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930). This postcard is reprinted with permission of Dr. Alison Rowley from her collection. It is also pictured in Shalimoff and Shaw, 39.

²⁶ Douglas Botting’s *Dr. Eckener’s Dream Machine* (New York: Owl Books, 2001) highlights the scope of stamp collecting as a popular passion for both professional and amateur alike. The 1929 flight of the German Graf Zeppelin, according to Botting, 141, carried onboard “33 pounds of airmail letters for the international stamp collector’s market, an important means of funding the flight...the interest shown by

Intourist's 1931 special Arctic Tour combined promotional and functional advertising. This tour involved a journey aboard the icebreaker Malygin coupled with a rendezvous with the Graf Zeppelin. The stamp issued to commemorate the meeting served not only a promotional purpose, but also a functional one in that affixed to postcards or letters it "may be exchanged with the Zeppelin"²⁷ [Figure 3-6]. Issuing a stamp or a postcard was also a common Soviet propagandistic technique and it shows that the Soviets' message played out through various types of media.²⁸



Figure 3-6 - Stamp Commemorating the Meeting of the Malygin and the Graf Zeppelin, 1931²⁹

Other forms of mail related items were included in Intourist's travel promotion activities. In 1930, for instance mail for foreign destinations leaving the Soviet Union was stamped 'Spend your vacation in U.S.S.R.' in English and German."³⁰

Other important Intourist print advertising included posters (a staple of any Soviet propaganda campaign), periodicals, guidebooks and maps. Travel posters were found at all Intourist offices, and were given to travel agencies for marketing purposes. The Soviets also published many English-language periodicals for the American market during the 1930s. These publications were distributed by the Amkniga (*Amerikanskaia*

stamp collectors in the Graf's highly publicized flights added greatly to the profitability of its airmail service, amounting eventually to some \$5 million." For more on stamp collecting in the 1930s see Ernest A. Kehr, *The Romance of Stamp Collecting* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1956).

²⁷ Intourist, "Advertisement: Soviet Arctic Tour Has Luxurious Side," *New York Times*, 29 June 1931, XX10. Issuing a stamp to commemorate the voyage of the Graf Zeppelin was a common way for the trips to make money. This is verified by Botting, 229, in regards to the 1931 meeting between the Graf Zeppelin and the Malygin "[f]or the entire flight two men had been busy day and night inside the Graf's own flying post office, a bright red polar survival tent, stamping the mail with the zeppelin's special rubber stamp. The value of the mail was fifty thousand dollars, half of which went to the German post office and the other half toward the cost of the arctic flight."

²⁸ The importance of Soviet stamps as forms of propaganda is explored in Alison Rowley's "Miniature Propaganda: Self-Definition and Soviet Postage Stamps, 1917-41," *Slavonica* 8, no. 2 (2002): 135-157.

²⁹ The stamp is reprinted with permission of Dr. Alison Rowley from her collection.

³⁰ Walter Duranty, "Summer Prospects Encourage Russia," *New York Times*, 25 May 1930, 53.

Kniga) Corporation, located on 258 Fifth Avenue in New York City.³¹ Intourist advertised not only in publications distributed by Amkniga, such as *The Moscow Daily News* and *Soviet Russia Today*, but also published its own specialty magazine for Americans, *Soviet Travel* starting in February 1932.³² This magazine, “devoted to touring in the Soviet Union,” was available at a yearly subscription rate of “\$4.00” or “\$.35” per issue at newsstands.³³ A second publication distributed by Intourist, the *Intourist News*, was published specifically for travel agents and was sent to them by request.³⁴

Guidebooks and maps made up a large portion of Intourist’s advertising ephemera. Portable and informative, they provided prospective travelers with information regarding Intourist’s services and prices. They portrayed a certain vision of the USSR, one that had been purposely crafted by the Soviets. The guidebooks pushed this vision through vivid pictures, choice wording and purposeful selection of feature destinations. Their condensed descriptions of the cities and attractions said much about how the Soviets defined themselves as a nation to the outside world.³⁵

Throughout the 1930s Intourist issued an annual general guidebook for the American travel market, offering all of its itineraries for that year. In addition, specific

³¹ “Soviet Books and Periodicals,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 9, no. 1 (January 1934): back cover. The list of publications that they distributed in English for 1934 included the newspaper *The Moscow Daily News* and the periodicals *U.S.S.R. in Construction*, *Soviet Travel*, *VOKS*, *Soviet Culture Review* and *Economic Review of the Soviet Union*. All of these publications included Intourist related news and advertisements. Amkniga also sold Russian language publications to Americans such as *Pravda* and *Izvestia*.

³² The New York Public Library in New York City has the only known copies of *Soviet Travel* in public circulation in the United States or Canada.

³³ “New Magazine Issued Devoted to Soviet Travel,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 7 (1 April 1932): 163.

³⁴ Mention of this publication is contained in Intourist advertisements found in the travel agent trade publication *The American Travel Agent’s Magazine* (which in the mid 1930s was renamed *The Travel Agent*). No known repository in the United States or Canada has copies of the *Intourist News* and therefore I was unable to use it for this work.

³⁵ Rudy Koshar writes about the connection between national identity and travel guidebooks in “‘What ought to be seen’: Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 323-340. He questions the lack of scholarship on the cultural significance of the guidebook by affirming its connection to the shaping of the “image of the nation.” His primary focus is on Germany and how specifically Baedeker promoted “a sense of Germanness,” 332. The only other direct scholarship on the importance of guidebooks as cultural artefacts is Esther Allen, “Money and the Little Red Books: Romanticism, Tourism and the Rise of the Guidebook,” *LIT* 7, 2/3 (1996), 213-26. Another work of interest, in the pre-Soviet context, touching on the subject of guidebooks is Christopher Ely, “The Origins of Russian Scenery: Volga River Tourism and Russian Landscape Aesthetics,” *Slavic Review* 62, 4: 662-682.

destination guidebooks were disseminated. Figure 3-7 represents a sampling of items the prospective 1934 tourist would have received from their travel agent or Intourist representative. These included a general guidebook and accompanying map with itineraries and prices and multiple area specific guidebooks/maps for popular destinations and activities.

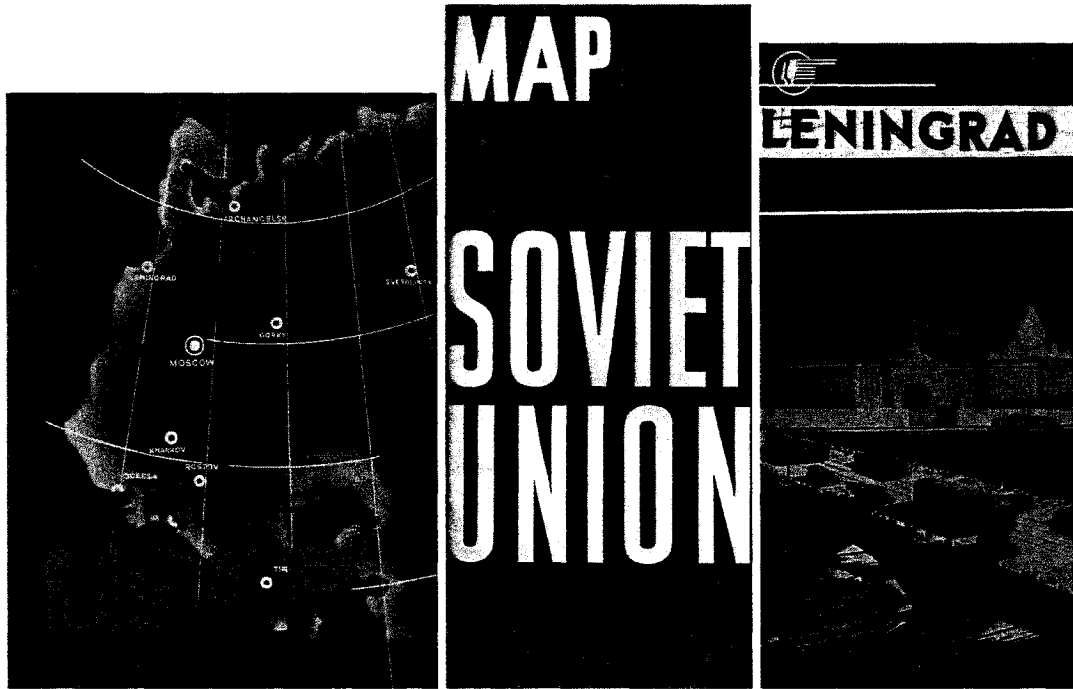


Figure 3-7 – Intourist Prospective Traveler Information/Advertising Materials, 1934³⁶

In 1934, Intourist published guidebooks on the following for the American tourist market: Moscow, Leningrad, the Volga, the Caucasus, the Crimea, the Ukraine, Hunting, Sovtorgflot, Trans-Siberian Express, Soviet Health Resorts, May Day Tours, November Celebrations Tours, Moscow Theatre Festival, Leningrad Festival of Music, Seeing the Soviet Union (general) and Winter Tours.³⁷ These publications represent the wide scope of interests that the Soviets were playing to in order to entice varied segments of the American marketplace to travel to the Soviet Union.

³⁶ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1934]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), Front Cover; Intourist, *Map – Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), Front Cover; Intourist, *Map - Leningrad [1934]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), Front Cover. Author's collection.

³⁷ Intourist, *Map - Moscow* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), Back Cover.

Maps, like postcards and postage stamps, were also dual function advertising pieces. They assisted with travel logistics by providing itineraries and pricing information. Moreover, they symbolically represented the physical scope of the Soviet Union, reinforcing the variety of locales and activities to be had within its immense borders.

While print materials made up the majority of Soviet advertising ephemera, Intourist also engaged in non-print advertising. It produced radio shows, advertisements and films as well as participated in exhibits such as the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Radio could reach a vast number of potential travelers since, as was shown in Chapter One, Americans en masse in the 1930s owned one. Yet, because of the cost of radio advertising, Intourist used it less often than print publications. It usually bought allotments of fifteen minutes at peak travel times, such as at the opening of the Soviet tourist season in May. In the *New York Times*, Intourist radio time was simply listed as "7:30 [PM] – Intourist Program," or "7:30 [P.M.] – Russian Intourist Program."³⁸ Essentially these were fifteen minute advertising pitches to a captive radio audience. The 1931 Intourist radio campaign was advertised on WRNY 1,010 Ke in New York at 7:30 P.M. on Tuesday, May 12, Friday, May 15 and Tuesday, May 26.³⁹

Intourist would further diversify its broadcasting efforts with radio interviews such as one conducted on March 14, 1936. This featured Intourist Representative Ina Ilena and A.K. Dawson of American Express speaking about "tourist travel in the Soviet Union."⁴⁰ By 1939 Intourist had its own weekly "radio travelogue" on WQXR in New York.⁴¹ This show, entitled "Scenes of Soviet Russia," was broadcast at 9 P.M every Wednesday. The series, according to Intourist, was "extremely well received and to date hundreds of letters have poured in to the Intourist office making inquiry about Soviet travel arrangements and requesting the attractive travel literature which Intourist offers."⁴²

³⁸ "Radio Programs Scheduled for Broadcast this Week," *New York Times*, 10 May 1931, XX10 and "Week-End Programs – Friday, May 15," *New York Times*, 10 May 1931, XX10.

³⁹ Ibid and "Radio Programs Scheduled for Broadcast this Week," *New York Times*, 24 May 1931, XX10.

⁴⁰ "Today on the Radio – Outstanding Events on All Stations," *New York Times*, 14 March 1936, 13.

⁴¹ "Intourist Presents Radio Travelogue," *Soviet Russia Today* 18, no. 1 (April 1939): 17.

⁴² Ibid. Perhaps some of the popularity of this series was due to the fact that it combined "short descriptions of various key cities in the Soviet Union with musical selections of both Soviet and classical Russian composers."

Film was also a highly effective medium with which to sell travel. While it is widely recognized that the Nazis pioneered propaganda film-making, many other countries at this time used films as sales vehicles. The U.S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce reported that at the start of the 1930s “about 90 per cent of the more important countries of the world are using tourist motion pictures to stimulate foreign interest in their respective countries.”⁴³ The Soviets had long known of the power of film. Lenin, for instance, had understood that no tool was more effective at swaying public opinion than film saying: “of all the arts, for us cinema is the most important.”⁴⁴ Some of the most influential Soviet filmmakers, such as Sergei Eisenstein, worked with Intourist to make travel based motion pictures. In fact, Eisenstein wrote the booklet on Soviet cinema that was disseminated at the Soviet Pavilion of the 1939 World’s Fair.⁴⁵

The use of fairs or exhibitions further introduced foreign audiences to a vision of your country.⁴⁶ Intourist used both smaller exhibitions and major events to reach large groups of potential tourists. It often specifically targeted certain professional groups, such as teachers. Intourist’s exhibit at the 1935 convention of the Progressive Education Association “attracted considerable attention.” Another successful exhibition staged in that year was at the annual meeting of the Department of Superintendents of the National Education Association.⁴⁷

Intourist’s final bid for American tourists in the 1930s was part of a much larger public relations campaign: the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City.⁴⁸ The very purpose behind the World’s Fair was for nations to advertise themselves on a world stage. With the presence of many foreign tourist bureaus at the Fair, the Soviets faced much

⁴³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries*, 4.

⁴⁴ Richard Taylor, “Soviet Cinema – The Path to Stalin,” *History Today* 40 (July 1990): 43.

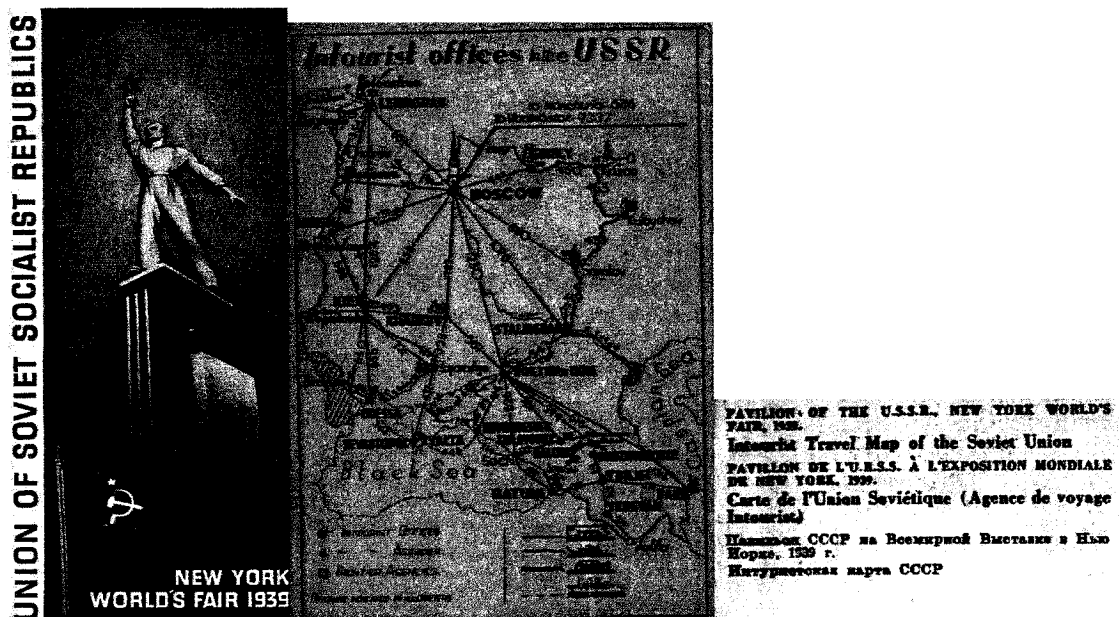
⁴⁵ “Eisenstein Sails for Soviet Union,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 9 (1 May 1932): 215 and Sergei Eisenstein, *Soviet Cinema* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing, 1939).

⁴⁶ For more on how exhibitions like the World’s Fair can be used for cultural diplomacy or as some see it cultural imperialism, see for the early twentieth century the work of Robert W. Rydell including *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and the collection *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2000).

⁴⁷ “Preparations for Soviet Tourist Season Progressing,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 10, no. 3 (April 1935): 94. Intourist had an Education Department to specifically handle the creation and dissemination of promotional materials at these events.

⁴⁸ For more, see Anthony Swift’s “The Soviet World of Tomorrow at the New York World’s Fair, 1939,” *The Russian Review* 57 (July 1998): 364-79.

competition for their messages. Therefore, they took this chance for self-promotion very seriously, constructing a full scale pavilion, in which one could take a tour of all the Soviet Union had to offer [Figure 3-8]. The Fair offered the Soviets a golden cross-promotional opportunity. Not only were brochures and materials available on every aspect of Soviet life, but Intourist provided visitors with a wide array of promotional travel materials.⁴⁹ They distributed everything from maps and guidebooks to special postcards made specifically for the World's Fair [Figure 3-8].



[Back of Postcard]

Figure 3-8 – Soviet Pavilion Brochure and Intourist Postcard Issued at Soviet Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1939⁵⁰

Throughout the 1930s, Intourist produced full scale, modern marketing campaigns to sell its message to Americans. These advertising campaigns highlight the fact that Intourist played the game using the same rules and methods as everyone else looking to

⁴⁹ Many booklets covering various aspects of Soviet life were given out at the Soviet Pavilion. In addition, a September 1939 advertisement in *Soviet Russia Today* offered twenty Soviet life pamphlets free with renewal of the magazine. Touted as a “gold mine of information” and written by “authorities in each field” they covered everything from “Machine and Tractor Stations” to “Folk Arts and Crafts of the USSR.” For more on these pamphlets see *Soviet Russia Today* 8, no. 5 (September 1939).

⁵⁰ *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, New York World's Fair 1939* (Moscow: Publisher Unknown, 1939), Front Cover and Intourist, *Postcard of Intourist Offices in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1939). Author's collection.

sell travel in the American marketplace.⁵¹ It was not unique in its methods and that is a very important fact to recognize. The ideological underpinnings of Communism did not stop the Soviets from selling themselves in a competitive capitalist travel market.

The Not So Secret “Agents” of Soviet Travel Promotion: Intourist and the American Travel Agent

Just as advertising agencies worked hand in hand with Intourist to further its exposure in the American tourist market, so too did travel agencies across the United States. Travel agents were the workers on the ground who made the Soviet travel machine run. They reinforced the advertisements placed by Intourist in newspapers and periodicals. A pervasive marketing campaign could not have been accomplished without the support, not just of major players such as American Express and Thomas Cook (as seen in Chapter Two), but also of smaller, regionally based travel agencies.

Intourist had to contend with a large and competitive marketplace of competing interests within the realm of the travel agency. Steamship companies, foreign tourist bureaus and many others were vying with Intourist to be on the mind of the travel agent when a potential client came in for services. Theoretically, if one could not sell the travel agents themselves on the Soviet Union as a destination then the entire ship would have been sunk. Therefore, travel agents had to be convinced to sell travel to the Soviet Union over another destination.

The two main ways in which Intourist courted travel agents was by advertising in trade publications and by offering competitive commission rates. Similar to the situation with mass market periodicals, Intourist was in an advertising war for the hearts and minds of the reader, in this case, the travel agent. Therefore, it needed to consistently remind travel agents of the attractiveness of the Soviet Union as a travel destination, and that it would be a source of much business for the travel agent. From 1932-35 Intourist placed

⁵¹ From 1932-1934 Intourist used Smith, Sturgis & Moore to run their advertising campaigns. In 1934 the firm added the German Tourist Information Bureau and the German Spa resort of Bad Nauheim as clients. This did not precipitate Intourist to switch to another advertising firm, even though deep ideological differences and animosities existed between the two countries. This scenario reflects that Intourist worked in the same vein as other entities in the American tourist market and that ideology mattered less than an agency's effectiveness in selling travel to the Soviet Union.

thirteen advertisements in the trade publication *American Travel Agent's Magazine*, including five in 1935, alone.

These advertisements tried to woo travel agents in a number of ways. First was with the ease of selling travel to the Soviet Union. One advertisement reads “[a]lmost every client that comes into your office has an active curiosity about the Soviet Union...a curiosity that can with little effort, often by a mere suggestion, be converted into a *sale!* [italics in original].”⁵² Intourist also stressed that travel agents would find it smooth to work with Intourist, and that getting their commission would not be a hassle. The process was described as such: “We supply you with booklets containing and explaining these standard itineraries. You simply sell one or more of these tours, deduct your 10% COMMISSION, and your work is done [capitalized in original].”⁵³ It was essential for Intourist to create effective and positive relationships with travel agents. The President of Intourist stated in a 1935 piece for *The Travel Agent* that “[w]e have set up an agents’ department that will give every agent adequate personal contact in the furtherance of our mutual work.”⁵⁴

Intourist also stressed the economic incentives of selling travel to the Soviet Union. Figure 3-9 reinforces this notion when it states that selling tours to the Soviet Union was “a vital, *profitable* field of work for you next year [italics in original].”⁵⁵ Intourist offered a very competitive 10% commission rate and since “travel to the U.S.S.R. is no longer a novelty,” that meant that there was money to be had for travel agents selling Intourist tours over other destinations.⁵⁶ This commission rate was only lower in 1935 than the 15% being offered by Simmons Tours on their Bermuda

⁵² “Tap the Tremendous Interest in the U.S.S.R. and Make Sales!,” *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 4 (March 1935): 28.

⁵³ “Sell...Most Unusual Travel Buy of the Season,” *American Travel Agent's Magazine* 4, no. 2 (June 1933): Inside Cover.

⁵⁴ G.E. Elansky, “Comments from Foreign Government Railroad and Tourist Offices,” *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 2 (January 1935): 28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*



USSR

SELLS YOUR CLIENTS!

The figures prove it! Travel to the U.S.S.R. is no longer a novelty . . . the numbers of tourists have been climbing year by year, smashing all records of past seasons. Facilities have vastly improved. Costs remain low, definite, easy for you to compute: \$15 per day First Class, \$8 per day Tourist Class, \$5 per day by Third Class, are the basic daily rates for 1935 . . . including Soviet visas, meals, hotels, guide-interpreters, sightseeing, boat, motor and train transportation on tour in the U.S.S.R. It's a vital, profitable field of work for you next year. . . acquaint yourself now with the rates, schedules and itineraries being sent you.

INTOURIST, INC.
 U. S. Representative of the Travel Co. of the U.S.S.R., 545 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Figure 3-9 – Intourist Advertisement for Travel Agents, 1935⁵⁷

and Nassau tours.⁵⁸ This competitive commission rate, as well as the trade publication advertising, were part of the overall sales package created by Intourist and its advertising partners to ‘sell the Soviet Union’ to the entire American public.

Attracting Americans: Tailored Tours and Targeted Travelers

Intourist used key sectors of the American economy to disseminate not just its message of travel to the Soviet Union, but also to present its picture of the new society the Soviets were creating. The picture of the Soviet Union peddled to Americans was filled with optimism and opportunity. However, it was also about selling a vision of the state that would garner legitimacy, dollars, and diplomatic recognition.

This section will focus on the major groups of Americans that the Soviets targeted with this vision of a modern, exciting and progressive land. The main target audience for Intourist’s efforts in the U.S. in the 1930s was the middle class, in particular professionals, such as lawyers, doctors and journalists; as well as students, sportsmen and adventurers, and women. I will also consider how the overarching messages of the Soviet state were tweaked in order to specifically attract these target groups.

⁵⁷ “U.S.S.R. Sells Your Clients!,” *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 2 (January 1935): 3. Author’s collection.

⁵⁸ “Commission Rates,” *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 2 (January 1935): 2-3. The commission rates published in this issue of the *Travel Agent* varied from a low of 5% to others that offered 6%, 7 ½%, 10% and the above mention 15%.

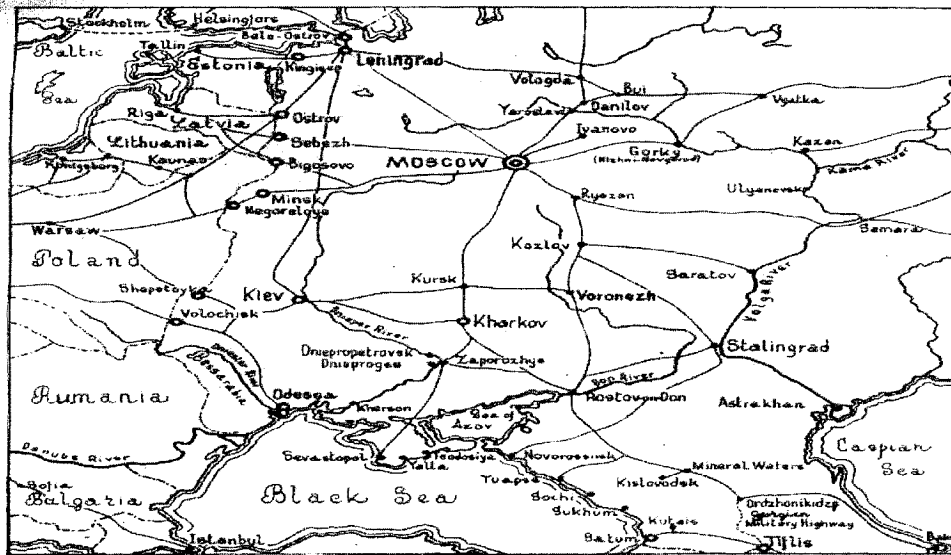
These ‘average tourists’ have often been overlooked by historians, whose focus has primarily been on fellow travelers or those that Sylvia Margulies refers to as “opinion leaders,” including businessmen, labor leaders, intellectuals or engineers. The reason that the Soviets would try to attract these individuals was because “potential opinion leaders were to be personally convinced after a visit or a residence in the Soviet Union of the superiority of Soviet civilization over that of the West” and then spread their news to others.⁵⁹ While this was certainly one of the major intentions behind the wooing of foreigners for travel to the Soviet Union, it is incorrect to say that these groups constituted the bulk of Intourist’s travel audience.

As Figure 3-10 illustrates and Daniel Soyer reinforces, Intourist arranged tours for “scientists, teachers, lawyers and doctors...[who] enthusiastically toured factories, power plants, collective farms, prisons, schools, and workers’ clubs, returning home to create a large subgenre of travel literature full of praise for the socialist state.”⁶⁰ In May 1935 Intourist advertised that it could also accommodate “special medical, health resort and criminological tours,” for professionals interested in seeing such aspects of a land that was re-creating itself.⁶¹ Occupation related tours were just another example of Intourist’s competitive philosophy to meet all of the needs and interests of the potential traveler by specifically tailoring tours. Lawyers would visit Soviet law schools, doctors would visit hospitals and rest homes and others would visit places of interest to their respective professions [Figure 3-10]. These occupation driven tours recall the days of the grand tour when travel was undertaken for the expansion of one’s cultural, professional and educational horizons.

⁵⁹ Sylvia Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 16.

⁶⁰ Daniel Soyer, “Back to the Future: American Jews Visit the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2000): 126.

⁶¹ “From Leningrad – Recreation and Re-Creation,” *New York Times*, 15 May 1935, X21.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR GROUPS OF LAWYERS, PHYSICIANS, JOURNALISTS AND TEACHERS

This year Intourist has prepared special programs for selected groups which have some professional or other interest in common.

LAWYERS, in addition to the excursions already described for the various centres, will be given an opportunity to visit law schools, institutes for the study of criminology, and the museums of the detective service. Interviews are arranged with lawyers holding the position of public defenders, the courts are visited, and the offices for free juridical advice. They see the Dom Krestyanina or Peasants' Hostel; reformatories, the dungeons in the old tsarist fortresses where revolutionaries were formerly imprisoned, and in general visit all the places of special interest to lawyers.

DOCTORS will be able to visit hospitals, health resorts, sanatoriums, dispensaries, maternity homes,

sanitation centres, the Institutes for the Protection of Mother and Child, the Institute of Dietetics, the Institute for the Scientific Management of Health Resorts, Children's townlets, and confer with leading Soviet physicians.

TEACHERS are given an opportunity to study the reorganised school system, the normal schools, high schools and colleges, the special communes for street children, workers' faculties, the scientists' clubs, the Academy of Science, and to meet groups of representative Soviet teachers and students.

JOURNALISTS may visit the Federation of Soviet Writers, the editorial offices of Pravda, Izvestia and other newspapers, the Press Club, the State Publishers, etc. Intourist also arranges meetings with distinguished Soviet authors and editors.

Figure 3-10 – Intourist Advertisement for Professionals, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 1933 ⁶²

More often than not Intourist ran profession based tours in conjunction with regional American travel agencies. As seen earlier in this chapter, these tours required coordination on multiple levels, and were dependent on the smooth relationship between Intourist and its travel agent partners. Union Tours in New York City was one of many travel agencies that offered Intourist's profession specific tours. In April 1934 it advertised a "new way to visit Soviet Russia" for professional groups including "physicians, dentists [and] lawyers" that cost "\$256 and up" for roundtrip tours. ⁶³

⁶² Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 38. Author's collection.

⁶³ "A New Way to Visit Soviet Russia," *New York Times*, 15 April 1934, XX9. This was an affordable venture for physicians. The *Nation's Business*, October 1931, 110, reported that the "average net income of physicians throughout the United States is \$5,509, the average gross income \$8,284." The affordability of the tours for the professional classes is tied to the fact that they were in fact able to travel to the Soviet Union. The article "Tourists From America Are Numerous In Russia," *New York Times*, 26 January 1930, 137, reported that for the 1928-29 tourist season businessmen constituted "30 per cent" of the total of American tourists to the Soviet Union while "scientists, artists, teachers, engineers and other professional men made up one-fourth."

Another key travel partner was The Open Road, which advertised in *The Nation* that “more Americans of the professional classes look forward to personal exploration of the Soviet world.”⁶⁴ Travel agencies also augmented the profile of profession tailored tours by advertising that they would be led by noted individuals in the particular professional community. One such tour was the July 1935 “Crime and Punishment in the Soviet Union” tour for those “interested in criminology and allied subjects.” It was led by Joseph Fulling Fishman “Criminologist, Author, Lecturer.”⁶⁵ Whether it was through Intourist directly, or in conjunction with a local travel agency, American professionals were a key group being marketed to by Soviet travel advertising.

Another group of interest was American students. Eager young minds were thought to be open to exploring the intricacies of a land they had only studied in their textbooks. The Soviets constructed tour elements to suit the needs and wants of an increasingly travel minded student population. They scheduled certain special tours during “the vacation period for professors and students” as with the 1932 “Round the World in 60 Days via the Trans-Siberian Railroad” tour.⁶⁶ Intourist also coordinated with academic institutions so that students could “receive college credit” for their visit to the Soviet Union. Educational institutions such as the Teacher’s College at Columbia University, The School of Education at Rutgers University and New York University all worked with Intourist in the 1930s running educational tours to the Soviet Union during the summer months.⁶⁷ Intourist created an exchange program between American students and Moscow University during the summer travel season. It also reached large numbers of students by targeting them directly through coordination with local university travel

⁶⁴ “The Open Road in Russia,” *The Nation*, 24 January 1934, 104.

⁶⁵ “Crime and Punishment in the Soviet Union,” *New York Times*, 26 May 1935, E5. This was a very interesting tour owing to the internal situation in the Soviet Union in 1935. This tour suggests that the Soviets were using tourism to deflect bad press from the early purge trials. A clever way to disguise the imprisonment and death of many Soviet citizens was to have foreigners see the “Soviet methods in the treatment and prevention of crime...prisons, labour camps, communes and institutions for the reclamation of delinquents.”

⁶⁶ “Round the World in 60 Days via the Trans-Siberian Railroad,” *New York Times*, 3 April 1932, E4.

⁶⁷ “Other Tours,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 9 (1 May 1931): 209 and “Educational Tours to the Soviet Union,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 7 (1 April 1932): 162.

agencies such as “University Travel Company, 1416 Mass. Avenue, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA,” and “The Bureau of University Travel, Newton, MA.”⁶⁸

Students were one of the first major groups to travel to the Soviet Union, beginning in the 1920s in conjunction with VOKS. With the 1924 creation by steamship companies of tourist third class, students could afford to travel in greater numbers to places such as the USSR.⁶⁹ In the article “Russia Bids for Tourist Trade,” *Review of Reviews* pointed to students as a large segment of the “10,000” American tourists traveling to Russia in 1931. Passport figures also reinforced the point that students constituted a major travel group. Student was the third most listed occupation on passport applications, and constituting “8.63%” of passports issued in 1934 behind the top occupations of “housewife” and “none.”⁷⁰ Students had the time and inclination to visit the Soviet Union and the Soviets obliged by providing them with low cost interest tailored tours that satisfied their needs and curiosities. The Soviets also considered students an important group to cater to because, as the future leaders of American society they would be invaluable opinion leaders who would spread the vision of the new Soviet society that Intourist was providing in its tourist materials.

Arctic Adventures and Bolshevik Bears: Adventure Tours and Sport Hunting in the USSR

During the 1930s the Soviet Union was an often talked about country. Its image was tinged with curiosity, excitement and danger. The Soviets used this hint of adventure as one of their general selling points, but also specifically for encouraging adventurers or

⁶⁸ The Intourist brochure *Seeing the USSR [1934]* in the author’s collection is stamped with the address of the University Travel Company of Cambridge, MA. “1939 Conducted Tours to the USSR,” *Soviet Russia Today* 8, no. 1 (April 1939): 11.

⁶⁹ As argued by Mark Rennella and Whitney Walton in “Planned Serendipity: American Travelers and the Transatlantic Voyage in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of Social History*, Winter 2004, 365-383, one of the major factors behind the increase in transatlantic travel starting in the 1920s was the creation of “the relatively inexpensive, and reasonably comfortable” tourist third class with fares that were “as low as \$110 round trip.” More on this development can be found in Alexander Varias and Lorraine Coons, *Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Year* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁷⁰ “Russia Bids for Tourist Trade,” *Review of Reviews*, August 1931, 96 and “Travel Section,” *Review of Reviews*, September 1935, 61.

sportsmen to travel to the Soviet Union. These were men who hunted, fished or found appealing off the beaten track locales.⁷¹

Intourist's entrance into the American travel market was colored by the image of the Soviet Union as a land of excitement. Intourist played into this notion from the beginning, creating in 1931 one of a kind adventure tours. The two most notable ones for 1931 were the Soviet Arctic and Old Turkestan tours. They were usually advertised separately from Intourist's general tours because they were longer in duration and more expensive. The 1931 "Cruise to the Arctic for the Sportsman, Scientist and Traveler" lasted "forty days," and from New York it was priced "as low as \$2500" round-trip.⁷² The 1931 Turkestan tour lasted "35 days" and cost "\$1,000" round-trip.⁷³ In subsequent years Intourist advertisements for their general tours also highlighted the adventurous side of their land. One April 1934 advertisement reads "U.S.S.R. - A *New Vacation Land*. Vacationers abroad are looking to the Soviet Union to supply the thrills of travel lacking in the beaten-track countries [*italics in original*]."⁷⁴ This advertisement was not far from the truth, since Intourist's very first tours in 1930 probably appealed to this more adventurous type of traveler. It is hard to imagine that many accustomed to a certain level of comfort would take a 1930 tour of the Caucasus where "traveling must sometimes be done on horseback. In these tours, high mountains will be ascended, and the nights must be passed under canvas."⁷⁵ Whether it was their 1931 special interest tours, or other general ones, Intourist was seeking to attract the tourist who was not looking for the run of the mill vacation.

⁷¹ This message also appealed to scientists, to whom the advertising language for the Arctic tour was specifically addressed. It is not surprising that the Soviets would look to attract these individuals, since World War I and the Revolution had caused a mass exodus of skilled technicians, and the Soviets were keen to re-establish scientific links with the rest of the world.

⁷² "Cruise to the Arctic for the Sportsman, Scientist and Traveler," *New York Times*, 7 June 1931, X23. The Arctic tour was truly a unique and particular tour. It was limited to forty travelers and its price was above anything else Intourist would subsequently offer. For prospective American travelers \$2500 was a large sum of money not withstanding the Great Depression. The Arctic and Turkestan tours were really aimed at the leisure class. As the U.S. Department of Commerce's *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, Part I* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), 303, states the medium overall American salary in 1939 was \$1,231. The top income bracket for tax purposes, according to statistics in *The Travel Agent* 6, no. 2 (January 1933): 11, was \$5,000. What these 1931 special adventure tours did was show Intourist that they did not lead to mass market success. Long, expensive tours did not attract Americans in large numbers.

⁷³ "Visit 23 Centuries in 35 Days," *New York Times*, 13 December 1931, E4.

⁷⁴ "U.S.S.R. A New Vacation Land," *New York Times*, 1 April 1934, E4.

⁷⁵ Intourist, *Party to USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930), 9.

Capitalizing on this theme of adventure and excitement the Soviets used their physical landscape as a major selling point. One of the primary destinations highlighted was the Soviet Arctic. It embodied openness and excitement since it was an “undiscovered” area within a virtually “undiscovered” country. Not only could one see the natural wonders of the Arctic, but hunting and ice fishing could also be arranged. Its advertising value in attracting tourists was bolstered by the publicity concerning the rescue of the Cheliuskinites. The first pages of a 1934 Intourist brochure contain two large pictures, one of Otto Schmidt (leader of the Cheliuskin expedition) and one of the “heroes of the Soviet Union who rescued the Chelyuskinites.”⁷⁶ There is no text relating to the incident; the pictures instead go along with the section for the Soviet Arctic (which is at the back of the brochure). The incident garnered a large amount of international publicity and bolstered the interest of many American travelers, including sportsmen and adventurers.

The sportsmen niche of the tourist market was one that the Soviets were trying to capture. Intourist not only offered adventure tours geared towards those seeking excitement abroad, but also for those interested in outdoor sporting. From its first touring season Intourist offered special trips for foreign sportsmen.⁷⁷ In fact, one of the first brochures it issued in 1930 was *Hunting in the USSR* [Figure 3-11]. In many 1930s Intourist guidebooks there were special sections devoted to hunting. Usually accompanying these sections were pictures of rifle-bearing men in fur jackets posing

⁷⁶ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1934]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), 9. The Cheliuskin incident was a polar expedition made by the Soviets in July 1933, one of many, that involved scientific exploration of the Soviet Arctic (and for other reasons such as prospecting for natural resources and penal colonization/forced labour camp locations). According to Rowley, “Miniature Propaganda: Self-Definition and Soviet Postage Stamps, 1917-41,” 140, the ship got into trouble and eventually went down while the “crew, researchers and their families left the sinking vessel and set up a makeshift camp on the ice. They sent radio messages about their plight and the central authorities mounted an extensive rescue operation.” The worldwide popularity of this incident can not be overlooked. In fact the Soviet-made film depicting the adventures of the Cheliuskin was sold to American audiences in 1934 and Schmidt himself toured the U.S. after being rescued. For Russian sources on the Cheliuskin expedition refer to footnote 19 of Rowley, “Miniature Propaganda: Self-Definition and Soviet Postage Stamps, 1917-41.” English sources on the Cheliuskin and the propaganda value of the Soviet Arctic include: Pier Horensma, *The Soviet Arctic* (New York: Routledge, 1991); John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) and Chapter 3 “Imagining the Motherland: The Celebration of Soviet Aviation and Polar Exploits,” in Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous. Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

⁷⁷ “Hunting Trips for Foreign Sportsmen,” *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 7, no. 12 (15 June 1932): 287.

beside the carcass of a dead bear. Also a sign of the importance of the sportsmen to the Soviets was the specialty literature available in a given year. In 1933 the magazine *Soviet Travel* (published by Intourist) offered to send, “free of charge to all readers,” illustrated booklets of Soviet destinations; three of the seven were related to hunting.⁷⁸

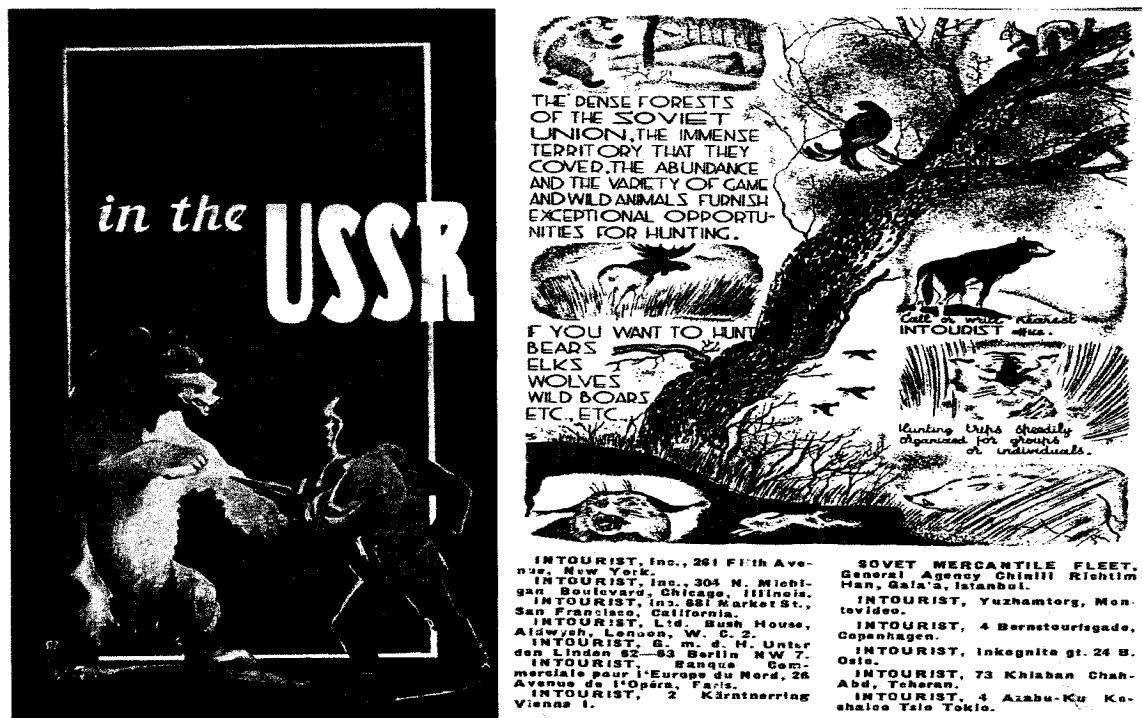


Figure 3-11 – Intourist Brochure, *Hunting in the USSR*, 1930 and Intourist Hunting Themed Advertisement, 1932⁷⁹

Brochure and marketing descriptions stressed the variety of the Soviet landscape and climate and this was especially appealing to hunters. Instead of traveling to multiple destinations to encounter “tiger, mountain ram, reindeer, white bear, etc”⁸⁰ the Soviet Union was a one-stop smorgasbord for sportsmen. As one Intourist brochure stated: “wild animals of every sort abound in the *far-stretching* territory of the USSR and there is glorious hunting in the *endless* forests and high mountains [italics in original].”⁸¹ This

⁷⁸ “Intourist Illustrated Booklets,” *Soviet Travel*, no. 2 (1933): 56. The three hunting brochures offered in this advertisement were: *Hunting the Bear*, *Hunting the Elk* and *Hunting the Wolf*, all by N. Orlov.

⁷⁹ Intourist, *Hunting in the USSR*, Front Cover and “Hunting in the Soviet Union,” *Soviet Travel*, no. 4 (1932): 41. Author’s collection.

⁸⁰ Intourist, *Hunting in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930), 27.

⁸¹ Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 39.

message is also evident in Figure 3-11, where the very landscape itself is described as an “immense territory” in which “the abundance and the variety of game and wild animals furnish exceptional opportunities for hunting.”⁸² The Soviet Union was full of variety, excitement and adventure, all exemplified by Intourist’s advertising towards hunters and sportsmen.

The ease of hunting in the Soviet Union was another message found in Intourist advertising for sportsmen. Intourist provided American travelers, specifically in this case, sportsmen and adventurers, with full service packages. These packages were modern and convenient with all of the logistics accounted for. As was highlighted in Chapter Two, Intourist’s competitiveness depended on its modeling itself on Thomas Cook and American Express with full-service client specific packages. Intourist provided every convenience to the hunter while he was engaging in his sport. Each hunting site was provided with its own “pavilions and all necessary equipment.”⁸³ Nevertheless, if a hunter wanted to bring his own guns and equipment from abroad he was allowed, and even encouraged, to do so without tax or penalty. In addition, sportsmen were spared from bureaucracy since they did not need to apply for a special hunting permit. Also the auspices of an Intourist tour the “export of skins of animals killed in these hunts is allowed without duty or license.”⁸⁴ Intourist’s overall advertising pitch was based on providing full-service, customized tours to diverse segments of their target population. Success in a competitive travel market depended on providing convenience and logistical ease for potential travelers.

One of the main selling points of the overall Soviet message towards travelers concerned the diversity of experience that could be had in the Soviet Union. It was a destination where one could escape from the ordinary and venture into the extraordinary. The Soviet Union was marketed as a land of immense opportunity where one could engage in all sorts of exciting and unique activities no matter one’s personal, professional or interest background.

⁸² “Hunting in the Soviet Union,” 41.

⁸³ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1934]*, 63.

⁸⁴ Intourist, *Hunting in the USSR*, 30.

Constructing Legitimacy – Soviet Identity Re-creation through Travel Advertising

By the 1930s the symbols of the worker and the peasant, Lenin pointing towards the future and the hammer and the sickle, had come to represent the Soviet state.⁸⁵ They contained obvious and overt ideological baggage and signified to American audiences that the Soviet Union was, in many respects, foreign to the American way of life. However, Stalin's Five Year Plans needed American support in the form of dollars, as well as diplomatic recognition, and along with it, legitimacy through international goodwill and good public relations. As with other regimes looking to expand their political agendas, tourism played an integral role as a legitimizing tool in foreign relations. A recent study by Kristin Semmens explored these connections for the Nazi German case and her analysis applies to the Soviets as well. She writes that "within the field of foreign policy international tourism had a special role: to convey the 'truth' about Germany to guests abroad."⁸⁶ To sell the new Soviet Union to American audiences not only as a travel destination, but as a legitimate trading and political partner required a public relations reeducation campaign. The Soviets, through Intourist, were going to show the 'true' nature or vision of their country.

The following paragraphs will explore the overarching messages that the Soviets used to construct their identity for American tourists during the 1930s. Through an examination of the application of iconography to the texts of Intourist's travel advertising and ephemera this vision of the Soviet state can be deconstructed.⁸⁷ I have chosen in most instances to use guidebook covers as representative examples of the specific theme I am considering, because they were the first things that readers encountered. However, similar images appeared across many other forms of Soviet travel advertising ephemera.

In an effort not to offend American audiences with too much ideology, the overt symbols of the Soviet state were virtually replaced in Intourist's advertising campaigns by those that could be ascribed to by everyman. Americans needed to be convinced to view the Soviet Union in a new light, one that made them forget about the "Red

⁸⁵ Further reference on these symbols and their meaning as icons of the Soviet State can be found in Ulf Abel, "Icons and Soviet Art," in *Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union & Eastern Europe* (New York: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 141-159.

⁸⁶ Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12.

⁸⁷ My thinking on these points has been shaped by Peter Burke's *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Menace.” This subversion of overt political propaganda to sell the state as a travel destination was similar to Nazi tactics vis-à-vis foreign tourist advertising. The Nazis sold their destination as Angela Schwarz writes by “praising Germany as a cheap and delightful place to spend one’s holidays...the regime dexterously abstained from using overt political propaganda and conveyed instead the illusion of an idyll free from political strife in a country where the political situation was extremely explosive.”⁸⁸

Modernity, the Cult of Technology and Remaking the Soviet Landscape

The Soviet message to American travelers was a simple and universal one of hopeful progress. This hope lay in the package of a modern future being ‘constructed’ out of the landscape of the past. It was symbolized by the cultural and industrial modernization of the entire Soviet landscape. Cultural modernization was featured prominently in Intourist promotional materials. The destinations described in Intourist guidebooks, both well known and remote, contained many references to theatre, the arts and literacy. In fact, annually during the 1930s the Soviets held a theatre festival in Moscow, which Intourist publicized with a travel brochure. This event attracted large numbers of foreign tourists to the country. Cultural progress was a sign of a modern society, just as important to highlight as blast furnaces or automobiles. Industrial modernization was an even more appealing message to Americans who had lost both faith and jobs as a result of the Great Depression. It also connected with a strong tradition of American idealism and faith in the prospects of the future. Stalin’s First Five Year Plan brought with it the construction of many large public works projects and rapid industrialization continued well into the Second Five Year Plan (1933-37). Through Intourist advertising, the Soviets created a visual language that signified this message of a progressive reality to Americans (much as they did at home to convince their own population). The images demonstrated the physical construction of a new society and the conquest of the Soviet landscape.

New symbols had to be created in order to echo the building of this modern society and nothing personified the ideals of the Five Year Plans more than the machine.

⁸⁸ Angela Schwarz, “Image and Reality: British Visitors to National Socialist Germany,” *European History Quarterly* 23 (1993), 381.

Instead of the cult of Lenin or Stalin, Intourist materials featured the cult of technology.⁸⁹ Modernity was intrinsically linked with the policies of the Five Year Plans. This preoccupation, however, is what makes the Soviet tourist endeavor unique. Unlike Germany or France, the Soviets were not using sunny destinations or medieval castles to sell their land and vision to foreign audiences. Instead, Intourist told Americans to visit the Soviet Union because they would see the construction of a new society based on the following:

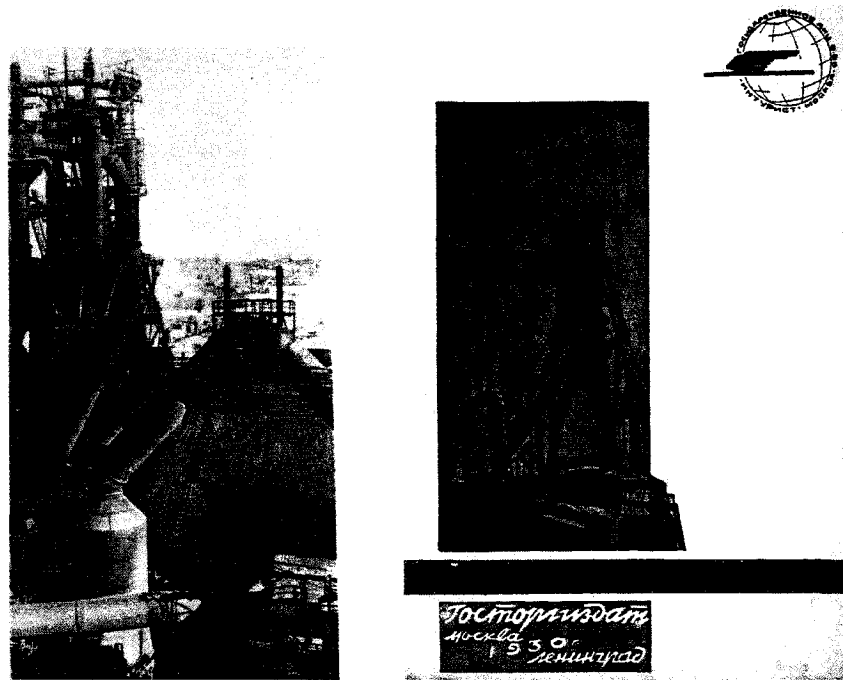


Figure 3-12 - The Beauty of the Blast Furnace in Intourist Guidebooks⁹⁰

There is a strong connection in the Intourist materials between Soviet modernization and the incorporation of machines into all aspects of daily life. The thirty-two page brochure *Seeing the USSR [1934]*, contains five pictures of trains, two pictures of tractors, one picture of an airplane, two pictures of automobiles and multiple photographs of factories including the Molotov Motor-Car Works at Gorki. This

⁸⁹ Unlike internal Soviet propaganda in which Stalin permeated every aspect of life, in a large number of Intourist's 1930s guidebooks and brochures for Americans, his picture or overall mention of him rarely occurs. I believe this was a strategic and purposeful omission on the part of Intourist, one that reflected the assumed low level of tolerance its American target audience had for overt propagandizing.

⁹⁰ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1935]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1935), 62 and Intourist, *October Celebrations in the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930), Back Cover. Author's collection.

emphasis on transportation serves a two-fold purpose: the first is logistical showing that travelers can get to their respective destinations; the second is nationalistic supplanting the imagery of the old Russia as technologically backwards. One of the most important symbols of the Soviet move towards modernity was the automobile. The automobile epitomized modern living and prosperity, symbolizing to travelers that they were going to have all the comforts of home while in the Soviet Union [Figure 3-13]. Automobiles were even prominently featured on the advertising materials for certain destinations where they would not have been commonplace, such as the luggage label seen below for Baku [Figure 3-13]:

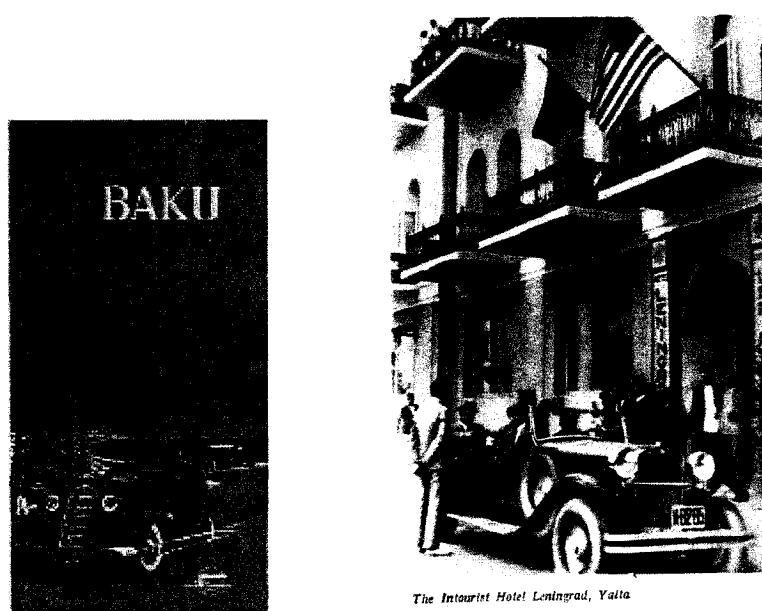


Figure 3-13, Intourist Luggage Label, *Baku*, 1930s and the Automobile as a Symbol of Modern Living, *Seeing the U.S.S.R.*, 1935 ⁹¹

Many forms of transportation were prominently featured in Intourist travel materials. They were meant to reinforce the overall theme of progress as forward momentum, such as in Figure 3-14 with the image of the train. In addition to automobiles, the Soviets had trams, metros, trains, buses and boats scattered in multiple

⁹¹ Intourist, *Baku Luggage Label* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930s) and Intourist, *Seeing the U.S.S.R. [1935]*, 39. Brochure image reprinted from author's collection. Luggage label reprinted by permission of David Levine http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_11.htm, (28 April 2006). Note in the image on the right the American flag situated with the Soviet flag above the car parked outside the Hotel Leningrad in Yalta.

places in their brochures. On one page in the 1938 brochure *Visit the USSR* one sees listed for Tour No.1 three pictures which include some form of transportation. The first picture shows the Hotel Moscow with trams and cars in the foreground; the second image is of a tram car; and the third is of the Sokolniki station of the Moscow Metro.⁹²

Another symbol of Soviet modernity was the large public works projects undertaken in the 1930s. One of the most celebrated was the Dneprostroi Hydro-Electric Dam.⁹³ Its image can be found in many Intourist brochures and was featured in its own luggage label [Figure 3-14].



Figure 3-14 – Intourist Brochure, *See USSR*, 1931 and Intourist Luggage Label, *Dnieproges*, 1930s⁹⁴

Dneprostroi was such a cornerstone of the Soviet message that not only could one go on a special Dneprostroi tour, but also an entire tourist brochure was dedicated to its opening. It is interesting to note the language of the brochure which describes the plan this way: “Le Dnieprostoi, deja fameux dans le monde entire occupe une des premieres places parmi les plus grands ouvrages d’art.”⁹⁵ The conquest of nature through industrialization was seen as beautiful, something to be visited and celebrated by tourists as if they were seeing a painting in a museum. Many of the public works projects like Dneprostroi were

⁹² Intourist, *Visit the USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1938), 1-2.

⁹³ Anne Rassweiler’s *The Generation of Power: The History of Dneprostroi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988) provides an excellent background on the building of the hydroelectric station at Dneprostroi.

⁹⁴ Intourist, *See USSR* (Moscow: Intourist, 1931), Front Cover. Reprinted by Permission of David Levine http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_9.htm, (28 April 2006).

Intourist, *Dnieproges Luggage Label* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930s). Luggage label image reprinted from author’s collection. This luggage label was printed in German, but it would also have been printed in English. Note also the cars crossing the dam which again symbolize the modernization of the Soviet state.

⁹⁵ Intourist, *Inauguration du Dnieprostoi*, (Paris: Intourist, 1932), 1.

emblematic of discourse surrounding the drive to conquer nature that appeared by the late 1920s in Soviet internal propaganda.⁹⁶

Intourist highlighted other large scale public works projects as evidence of the remaking of the Soviet landscape. The brochures made reference to the never built Palace of the Soviets, the Moscow-Volga Canal, the Moscow Metro and Magnitogorsk.⁹⁷ To reinforce this theme, many of the pictures and descriptions in the brochures emphasized the massive size of the projects [Figure 3-12]. If something was built on a bigger scale than had ever been done before it was assumed to show progress.

The transformation of the landscape was also apparent in Soviet descriptions of modern cities. The reconstruction of Moscow serves as a particularly visible example. The changed capital was to be evidence of the superiority of the new over the old. According to a 1930 Intourist brochure Moscow was being transformed into a "...modern metropolis of the 20th century."⁹⁸ It is fitting that the Soviets reconstructed their capital, since it was the focal point from which all regime imperatives spread and was thus seen as the central conduit from which progress would proceed.⁹⁹ The theme of replacing the old with the new would be seen in later publications such as *A New Moscow in Construction*, a pamphlet given to Americans at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. In this pamphlet the Moscow of old was antiquated; it was a "city of merchants...a city built of wood."¹⁰⁰ The new Moscow would have all the trappings of modernity: high-rise buildings, modern utilities, schools, streets paved with asphalt, new bridges, a subway system and a series of new Intourist hotels. This rhetoric concerning the construction of modern cities was very familiar to Americans who saw similar changes in their own

⁹⁶ Refer to James Von Geldern, "The Centre and the Periphery: Cultural and Social Geography in the Mass Culture of the 1930s," in *New Directions in Soviet History*, ed. Stephen White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 179.

⁹⁷ Further readings on the massive public works projects of the Five Year Plans include: Cynthia Ruder, *Making History for Stalin: The Story of the Belomor Canal* (University Press of Florida, 1998) and Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (University of California Press, 1997).

⁹⁸ Intourist, *Party to the USSR [1930]*, 24.

⁹⁹ This statement is reinforced by James Von Geldern in "The Centre and the Periphery: Cultural and Social Geography in the Mass Culture of the 1930s." He writes about the Soviets move in the mid 1930s from a preoccupation with the periphery back to the centre. He calls this "the strengthening of the centre" with money shifting away from places like Magnitogorsk and back to projects like the Moscow Metro. "Rebuilding Moscow bolstered its symbolic role as centre of the country. It was the capital, focus of political and economic life, and the visible face of the Soviet Union, representing it to Soviet citizens and the world." Von Geldern, 178-79.

¹⁰⁰ D. Chechulin, *A New Moscow in Construction* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 6.

country's landscape with the construction of skyscrapers and other improvements to cities such as New York and Chicago in the early 20th century.

The building of new Soviet cities was also a major selling point to Americans that the Soviets were not only putting people to work, but that they had physical evidence of the progress they had been touting to the West. The Intourist guidebooks abound with visual evidence of these changes to Soviet cities. Guidebooks in general, according to Rudy Koshar, stress “what is to be seen” by the tourist. The Soviets were telling American tourists that they should expect to see the new rising above the old with the images of scaffolding and construction cranes symbolizing this change [Figure 3-1, 3-14 and 3-15]. The brochure cover for *See the Ukraine* [Figure 3-15] symbolically reinforces this construction of the new Soviet city in two ways: first through the image of scaffolding on the upper margin and second through the picture of the recently constructed Palace of State Industry in Kharkov.



Figure 3-15 – Intourist Brochures, *See the Ukraine*, 1931 and *Moscow-Leningrad*, 1931 ¹⁰¹

Intourist materials worked well to supplement other Soviet publications that highlighted the transformation of the Soviet landscape for foreign audiences, including most notably *USSR in Construction*. This magazine was printed in English in a coffee table format and

¹⁰¹ Intourist, *See the Ukraine* (Moscow: Intourist, 1931), Front Cover and Intourist, *Moscow-Leningrad* (Moscow: Intourist, 1931), Front and Back Covers. Images reprinted by permission of David Levine. From website: http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_2.htm and http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_3.htm, (28 April 2006).

included vibrant photography and avant-garde art concerning the remaking of Soviet society through transformations to its physical landscape.

Selling the New Soviet Social Landscape: Gender, Race and Soviet Tourism

“As you know, one of the best ways to win a person’s sympathy is through attractive persons of the opposite sex.”

-*Life* Reader, Responding to Margaret Bourke-White photo-essay of Soviet Women, September 1941.¹⁰²

One of many tools that Intourist used to attract travelers to the Soviet Union was through images of attractive and modern Soviet women in its advertisements and ephemera. Female iconography is not as apparent in Intourist materials from the early part of the decade, but appeared with greater frequency from approximately 1936 to 1939.¹⁰³ Intourist used three categories of female iconography: the healthy and modern Soviet woman, the cherubic female peasant, and the enlightened ethnic woman [Figure 3-16]. All in Figure 3-16 are attractive and have pleasant and inviting smiles. They echo the theme of prosperity and modernity found throughout the Intourist materials. They provided evidence that Soviet women were well nourished and well clothed, and far from the backwards and starving Soviet citizens that some foreigners would have expected.

¹⁰² “Letters to the Editors,” *Life*, 1 September 1941, 4.

¹⁰³ Images of what scholars refer to as the “New Soviet Man” are infrequent in the tourist materials. One example, however, is in Figure 2-1. On this subject see Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997) and John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003).



Figure 3-16 – Women as Icons of the Soviet State, Intourist Guidebooks, 1930s ¹⁰⁴

To project a sense of health and vitality, Soviet tourist materials employed images of women engaging in sport. The stress on sport in the mid-1930s was found in much of the Soviets internal propaganda: “Soviet women had long been encouraged by posters and the press to add athletics to their leisure activities. It was thought that healthy citizens would perform better at work and be useful in the defense of the country.”¹⁰⁵ A popular image in Intourist guidebooks and advertisements was of Soviet female athletes on parade [Figure 3-17] and it highlights this connection between women and sport.

¹⁰⁴ Intourist, *See the Soviet Union 1937* (Moscow: Intourist, 1937), Inside Front Cover; Intourist, *Kiev* (Moscow: Intourist, 1932), Front Cover and Intourist, *See the Soviet Union 1937*, Front Cover. Images from *See the Soviet Union 1937* reproduced from author’s collection. Image from *Kiev* reproduced by permission of David Levine from http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/Top_Level_Pages/russia/russia_page_11.htm, (29 April 2006).

¹⁰⁵ Rowley, “Miniature Propaganda: Self-Definition and Soviet Postage Stamps, 1917-41,” 150. Refer also to Alison Rowley’s “Ready for Work and Defense: Visual Propaganda and Soviet Women’s Military Preparedness in the 1930s,” *Minerva* 28, no. 3-4 (Fall/Winter 2000): 3-15 and the forthcoming “Sport in the Service of the State: Images of Physical Culture and Soviet Women, 1917-1941,” *International Journal of the History of Sport*. The connection to the theme of the health of the Soviet state and its peoples thereby making it an attractive destination can also be tied to Intourist’s desire to grab a share of the tourist market interested in spa vacations. Health resort tourism was historically strong to countries such as Germany as well as domestically in the United States. By 1937 Intourist reported in the March 1937 issue of *Review of Reviews*, 6, that the Soviet Union had “twenty-three” health resorts and that they had “drew a total of 2,570,000 visitors in 1936.” Health resorts were symbolic of the Soviets so called commitment to the well being and welfare of their people.



Figure 3-17 – Soviet Women and Sport, Intourist Brochure, *Visit the USSR*, 1938¹⁰⁶

Intourist's materials reinforced the idea that greater opportunity was had by women in the Soviet Union. Women are portrayed as active participants in their society and progress is again about forward momentum (sports images often show bodies in motion). Again the message in the Intourist materials is one of opportunity, progress and promise. The healthy, active and attractive Soviet woman was another bright sign of the progress of the Soviet state just like its hydroelectric dam or its cars.

The Soviets did not just consider women as objects to sell travel; they also considered them to be an important target group of prospective travelers. The images of Soviet women were to convey the opportunity and openness of the USSR to American female travelers. These characteristics were not only exemplified in the tourist literature, but in the actual physical makeup of Intourist itself. From its offices in the United States to its organization in the Soviet Union, women were visible parts of the Intourist bureaucracy, serving as everything from secretaries to travel representatives to tour guides. Intourist also worked with American travel agencies that had guided tours headed by women. One such tour was a 1931 Open Road tour led by the then "Secretary of the American-Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union, Miss Elizabeth Clark."¹⁰⁷

Women made up an important and strong percentage of the overall American traveling public. Again the travel market was a competitive place and appeals to specific

¹⁰⁶ Intourist, *Visit the USSR*, 1. This image also appeared in an April 12, 1936 Intourist advertisement in the *New York Times*. Author's collection.

¹⁰⁷ "American Tourist Groups for the U.S.S.R." *Economic Review of the Soviet Union* 6, no. 13 (1 July 1931): 304.

portions of it were the only way to expand Intourist's growth in the American tourist market. Women, like students, benefited from the creation of tourist third class. By the 1920s American women were generally traveling in greater numbers:

One of the noteworthy things about 'tourist third' is that the young traveler roughing it is more than likely to be a girl. Last June and July, Government officials report, about 60 per cent of outgoing passengers were women. That was true of all classes and an uncommon number were traveling alone. Widows, elderly spinsters, wives and mothers taking vacations from their families, and college girls on their own-they make up a growing proportion of...the year-round traffic.¹⁰⁸

This trend continued albeit to a lesser extent in the 1930s.¹⁰⁹ Intourist catered to this tourist segment just as they had for sportsmen or doctors. In fact, Intourist followed an inclusive rhetoric, not singling women out but selling tours with descriptions appealing to both genders.

Women responded to Intourist's message to come and see the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰ Like students, women, inspired by Margaret Bourke-White's photo spreads in the *New York Times* and *Fortune*, were some of the first Americans to see the Soviet Union. A 1929 *New York Times* article with the headline "99 Americans Begin Soviet Study Trip: Business Men, Financiers and Women Tourists Leave Berlin on Special Train" reported that the first delegation of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce's trip to the Soviet Union would include "twenty-two" women.¹¹¹ Later, the special 1931 Intourist Arctic Tour was taken by only three Americans; two of the three were women.¹¹²

Intourist brochures reinforced this sense of freedom and opportunity with pictures and commentary of women performing traditionally male dominated activities like mountain climbing [Figure 3-18].

¹⁰⁸ Bunice Fuller Barnard, "The Swelling Tide of Foreign Travel," *New York Times*, 6 May 1928, 77.

¹⁰⁹ According to passport figures reported in the *Travel Agent*, Volume 6, no. 3 (February 1935): 16-17, female passport applications for the years 1931-1934 were as follows: 1931 – 41.65% or 68,058; 1932 – 41.60% or 63,739; 1933 – 41.15% or 44,027 and 1934 – 42.29% or 47,228. The Department of State also reported that "housewife" was the number one occupation listed by passport applicants according to two separate sources from 1930 and 1935 including "Uncle Sam's Tourists: Why They Go Overseas," *New York Times*, 8 June 1930, 53 and *Review of Reviews*, September 1935, 61.

¹¹⁰ One way that this can be explored is by looking at traveler accounts of the time. One of the most insightful is Mary M. Leder's *My Life in Stalinist Russia: An American Woman Looks Back* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

¹¹¹ "99 Americans Begin Soviet Study Trip," *New York Times*, 16 July 1929, 5.

¹¹² "Soviet Icebreaker Starts Arctic Tour," *New York Times*, 20 July 1931, 7.



Figure 3-18 – Mountain Climbing Tour Appealing to Female Travelers, Intourist Brochure, 1938 ¹¹³

This was not just rhetoric, American female tourists certainly engaged in these activities. On the 1929 American-Russian Chamber of Commerce’s tour “[t]wo American society women...left the group to undertake an ascent of a mountain never climbed by women [Mount Ararat in Armenia].”¹¹⁴

The Soviet Union’s new social landscape included not just progress for women, but also for the many ethnic groups living within its borders. Racial egalitarianism was tied to the Soviets’ overall goal of creating a sense of Soviet nationalism.¹¹⁵ This new identity was based on the notion that all races and religions should work together towards the progress of the Soviet state.¹¹⁶ This campaign also highlights what Karen Petrone

¹¹³ Intourist, *Visit the USSR*, 49-50. Author’s collection.

¹¹⁴ “Ararat Climb Plan of American Women,” *New York Times*, 7 August 1929, 52. Anne Beezer’s “Women and ‘Adventure Travel’ Tourism,” *New Formations* 21 (Winter 1995): 119-130 explores women engaging in adventure tourism through a feminist postmodern scholarly lens. She dissects, like others in the tourism studies field, issues of authenticity and identity formation that arise when the traveler meets the host culture. However, while her work is a useful critique, her arguments do not fit the patterns of meaning encompassed within Soviet travel marketing towards Americans in the 1930s.

¹¹⁵ The complex and complicated task of national identity creation is discussed in Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

¹¹⁶ As seen after the break-up of the Soviet Union this incorporation of the many non-Russian nationalities into the harmonious vision of the Soviet Union was not successful. For more on the issue of non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era consult: Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001);

refers to as the “myth of the ‘friendship of peoples.’”¹¹⁷ One advertisement attributed the “unprecedented advances achieved economically and culturally” to the “great family of 189 different peoples living upon one sixth of the earth’s surface.”¹¹⁸ Intourist reinforced this internal vision with an external one, working with a small number of influential African Americans who served as tour leaders. Langston Hughes, as well as other African Americans, led study tours “through the colorful national minority regions of the U.S.S.R.”¹¹⁹

The theme of progress through modernity is repeated in regards to the Soviet Union’s ethnic minorities. The Soviet government had given their minorities the gift of modernity, in the form of culture and technology, thus improving their lives. Travel brochures spread this message of ethnic progress through campaigns celebrating such things as literacy [Figure 3-19].



Figure 3-19 – Literacy and Soviet Ethnic Minorities, Intourist Brochure, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 1933¹²⁰

Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, editors, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) and Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 3 (1994): 414-53.

¹¹⁷ Petrone, 75.

¹¹⁸ “The Soviet Union This Summer,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1938, 66.

¹¹⁹ John Rothschild, “The Intelligent Traveler: Trips to the Soviet Union,” 29 April 1936, 563 and “Hitch Your Tour Plan to a STAR Leader... When You Visit the Soviet Union,” *New York Times*, 13 June 1937, 168. Refer to John L. Garder, “African Americans in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s: The Development of Transcontinental Protest,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 3 (1999): 190-199; Allison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1989); and the travel memoir of Juanita Harrison, *My Great Wide Beautiful World* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936).

¹²⁰ Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union*, 37. Image reprinted from author’s collection. Images reinforcing the gift of modernity in Intourist materials are reminiscent of those issued by imperial powers.

One Intourist brochure states “Armenia is today a country of all round literacy. It has 13 higher educational establishments...and 1,147 primary and secondary schools...[also] it should be pointed out that Kurds were first given an alphabet and a written language of their own since the establishment of Soviet rule.”¹²¹ The Soviets were showing Americans that not only had they transformed their physical landscape, moving away from the backwards past, but were doing the same socially. This, in turn, strengthened their claim that they were a modern nation and travel destination.

Conclusion

American know-how sold an American audience on a Soviet vision. Tourism to the Soviet Union was a customized experience, yet was portrayed as accessible to everyman. Intourist and its advertising partners used the imagery and rhetoric of industrial, social and cultural modernization to tap into the dreams and curiosities of a targeted group of Americans who were eager to see something new. This vision was reinforced through advertisements and marketing ephemera which served as portable and tangible manuals, of “what ought to be seen” and passed along to others, concerning the Soviet state.

¹²¹ Intourist, *Soviet Armenia* (Moscow: Intourist, 1935), 22 and 24.

Seeing Is Believing or Is It?: Motivations and Experiences



Figure 4-1 – “Tourists Disembarking at Leningrad,” *Seeing the USSR*, 1935 ¹

“Instinctive restlessness is a basic national characteristic of the American people. In fact, one of the most striking aspects of modern life in this country is the amazing mobility of our people.”

-Mr. Glenwood J. Sherrard, Chairman of the Travel Committee, American Hotel Association ²

“Why do you want to go to Russia? There are almost as many answers to that question as there are visitors to the Soviet Union...Behind all these diverse reasons, however, there is usually one prime motive-Curiosity. It is almost incredible that Russia to-day should still be a mystery, but a mystery it is.”

-Lars Moen, *Are You Going To Russia?*, 1934 ³

¹ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1934]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1935), 17. Author’s collection.

² United States Travel Commission, “Hearing before the Committee on Commerce, S.33 A Bill to Encourage Travel to and within the United States by Citizens of Foreign Countries, and for other Purposes,” Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, May 13, 1935 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), 24.

Intourist's overall success or failure during its first decade depended on its ability to generate favorable worldwide public opinion. People were the vehicle needed to spread the gospel of the new Soviet state and the Soviets spent considerable resources creating the messages that would speak to the tourist masses. However, these public relations campaigns were not guaranteed successes; they were gambles dependent upon the unknown whims of human behavior.

Changing the climate of worldwide opinion was part of Intourist's mandate. No matter how it tweaked its advertising slogans Intourist consistently held to the notion that "Seeing Would be Believing." It stressed the active nature of the tourist to bear witness to the 'truth' of the Soviet Union. The Soviets "urged prospective visitors to see and judge for themselves the accuracy of hostile reports in the capitalist (and social democratic) press. 'The fair-minded observer of world affairs,' argued one official brochure, 'should base his judgment of the Soviet Union on actual experience, not on hearsay and secondhand reports.'"⁴ If Intourist could convince people to visit the Soviet Union, the Soviets believed that no matter the person's prior biases, the evidence they saw before them would transform them. This positive public opinion would then help the Soviet state to affirm its policy goals by garnering legitimacy on the world stage as well as help with public relations with the American government. What motivated Americans to want to travel to the Soviet Union in the 1930s? What ideological baggage did American travelers take with them to the Soviet Union? And how were these pre-conceived notions validated or not validated by their travel experiences? This chapter will not provide all-encompassing answers to these questions. It will instead reflect the diversity of motivations for, and reactions to, travel in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. This chapter is based primarily on travel memoirs published at the time, and presents material with the intent of dispelling the commonly held idea that Americans traveled for purely ideological reasons to the Soviet Union. Mr. Glenwood J. Sherrard and Lars Moen are but two of the many voices who refocus the debate to a more fundamental level of traveler curiosity as well as the search for fun, adventure and excitement.

³ Lars Moen, *Are You Going to Russia?* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1934), 1.

⁴ Daniel Soyer, "Back to the Future: American Jews Visit the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s," *Jewish Social Studies* 6.3 (2000): 126. The quotation that Soyer reproduces is from the Intourist brochure *Seeing the Soviet Union* [1933], 3.

Despite the many travel memoirs published in the 1930s [Figure 4-2], the bulk of Intourist's "average tourists" did not put down their travel experiences in mass print.

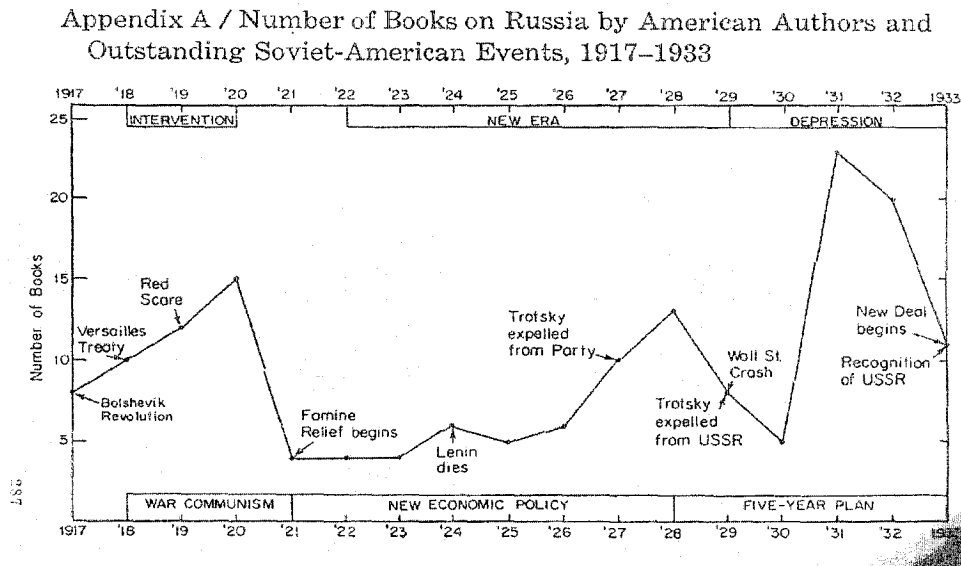


Figure 4-2 – American Memoirs on the Soviet Union ⁵

Many instead confined them to the realm of the personal through journals and correspondences and these items often have been lost or destroyed, or remain in private hands. Logbooks were given as souvenirs on the cruise ships and were intended to capture the travelers' experiences, but they too are often hard to come by.⁶ When using these sources the historian must also take into account that people bring with them opinions based on their backgrounds and life experiences.

⁵ Peter Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment: 1917-1933* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), Appendix A, 287.

⁶ I have been able to consult one such logbook to go with the published accounts. It was given to a passenger onboard the 1933 Hamburg-American "Cruise to the Land of the Midnight Sun and Russia." It states in the foreword to this logbook that "pages are left open for the mirroring of your own experiences. By utilizing this space for vagrant jottings you will discover later on that your efforts will have acted as a spur to your memory. It is hoped, in years to come, when resurrected from among your souvenirs, that the pages will recall pleasant memories of quaint ports, happy friendships, and reminiscences of one of the most pleasant interludes of your life." Although this particular logbook does not have any written material on the passenger's excursion in Russia it does present some interesting insight into the background of the author. One point of note is when the passenger writes in "At Sea" entry page of the book that "There is a splendid class of people aboard – due to the Nazi Movement!"

Travel Trend, Ideological Curiosity or Something Else? - Motivations Behind American Travel to the Soviet Union in the 1930s

One of the central frustrations of researching this subject is the assumption that most people have concerning the question of ‘why people went’ to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It is confidently assumed that the travelers were Communists or Communist-friendly individuals who wanted to get their beliefs about the Soviet Union reconfirmed. However, the answer is more complex. The emotional or non-ideological motivations for travel to the Soviet Union during this time are ignored. In various magazines, government documents as well as traveler accounts, the most mentioned reason for travel in general, and to the Soviet Union specifically, was curiosity. In addition, pleasure, fun and excitement were all reasons Americans sought to explore foreign lands. In fact, Intourist used these emotions as selling points, such as in the May 1934 advertisement that touted the “U.S.S.R. A New Vacation Land. Vacationers abroad are looking to the Soviet Union to supply the thrills of travel lacking in the beaten-track countries.”⁷

One article summarizes this ‘fun comes first’ mood towards travel, “the truth is that people want to increase their knowledge, but they will not work very hard at it, on shipboard or anywhere else.”⁸ For example, students and professors sought to travel for knowledge, but they also wanted to have a unique journey. Travel accounts of the 1930s according to one historian “reflect the importance of an active search for knowledge: travelers seek physical displacement not to distract themselves from the routine of everyday life but to transcend ordinary routines through the acquisition of knowledge, through understanding both oneself and the surrounding world.”⁹ According to passport figures, others desired to travel for a variety of reasons including family affairs, business, education and health reasons.¹⁰ Still others were responding to “this season’s travel trend,” wanting to know what all the talk was about concerning the Soviet Union.¹¹ Overall traveler motivations were as numerous as the travelers themselves. It is also important to note that what precipitated people to travel to the Soviet Union was often

⁷ “U.S.S.R. A New Vacation Land,” *Fortune*, May 1934, 24.

⁸ *Review of Reviews*, September 1935, 61.

⁹ Diane P. Koenker, “Travel to Work, Travel to Play: On Russian Tourism, Travel and Leisure,” *Slavic Review* 82, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 659.

¹⁰ Charles Hodges, “Uncle Sam’s Tourists: Why They Go Overseas,” *New York Times*, 8 June 1930, 53.

¹¹ “To the U.S.S.R. Intourist – This Season’s Travel Trend,” *New York Times*, 21 April 1935, X9. Other Intourist ads stressed the theme of travel to the Soviet Union as trendy.

connected to their reasoning for visiting other destinations. Remember that Intourist trips were most often undertaken in combination with cruises and tours of the European continent and not in isolation. Therefore, the role of ideology can be displaced from its prominent place in the pantheon of motivations.

Through the Tourist's Lens – The Travel Experience From Soup to Nuts or On Tour with Intourist

The experiences that Americans had in the Soviet Union in the 1930s were as diverse as the travelers themselves. Each person brought with them a set of preconceived notions or mental baggage in addition to their valises. Some were skeptical and curious while others went as enthusiastic believers in the vision that the Soviets were selling. Some came back with their feelings solidified, and others had their outlook changed. No matter how tourists came back, their experiences served the Soviets' goals since they came back reporting on what they had seen. Tourism was "a wealth of free publicity. Visitors return from Russia impressed or frightened, enlightened or bewildered, friends or foes of the Bolshevist experiment; but they nearly all come back reporting, truly, that something extraordinary is going on there; and mankind has always been impressed by the novel and the incomprehensible."¹² The following section will have you experience the journey, as the tourist did at the time. To understand their reactions to the Soviet Union, one must first understand the nature of what it was to travel with Intourist.

Variety was inherent not just in the motivations and experiences of American tourists who went to the Soviet Union in the 1930s but also in their transportation options for getting there. All tourists, however, started their journeys in the same manner, at the travel agent's office. There were a variety of ways that a travel agent or Intourist agent could sell a customer a tour of the Soviet Union. The first and seemingly most prevalent way to book an Intourist tour was as an add-on to other travel in Europe. This option made logistical sense as an economical way to extend travel time in Europe since "it only takes only 40 hours by train from Paris to Moscow."¹³ The second option offered by the travel agent was as part of a North Cape or other cruise that traveled to a Soviet port.

¹² "Russian Tourists and Others," *New York Times*, 15 June 1931, 17.

¹³ Intourist, *Travel in the Soviet Union: Your Questions Answered* (Moscow: Intourist, 1939), 2.

These cruises built into their overall price “shore excursions lasting from one to four days...All cruising tourists are provided with first class service. They are accommodated in hotels, and the best automobiles are placed at their disposal.”¹⁴ The third option for travelers was a direct tour with the Soviet Union as their only travel destination.

One could use various forms of transportation to arrive at the Soviet Union, including a combination of steamer, train, car or even airplane. This variety was another selling point for Intourist and gave the traveler many options in order to maximize their travel needs and wants. As one advertisement states,

Travelers to Russia are choosing from a wide variety of routes. One may take a steamer at New York and go directly to Leningrad. There are cruises by the way of the Mediterranean through the Black Sea to Odessa and Yalta, northern trips via Swedish ports...Those journeying via Plymouth and Southampton pick up a Soviet steamer at London, going through the Kiel Canal and Baltic Sea to Leningrad, a matter of five days. Finnish steamers ply between Hull and Helsingfors, tourists entering Russia by train from the latter town...Tourists planning to see as much of Europe as possible en route to Moscow use the de luxe trains running from Warsaw or Vienna and Budapest to Kiev...¹⁵

These options were visually reinforced in Intourist promotional materials via the inclusion of maps like the one shown below [Figure 4-3]. The well-marked routes suggested spatial organization and structure to the journey; hence travelers could be persuaded that traveling to the USSR was not particularly difficult to undertake.

¹⁴ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1935]* (Moscow: Intourist, 1935), 67.

¹⁵ “Russia Gains in Tourists,” *New York Times*, 8 July 1934, XX18.

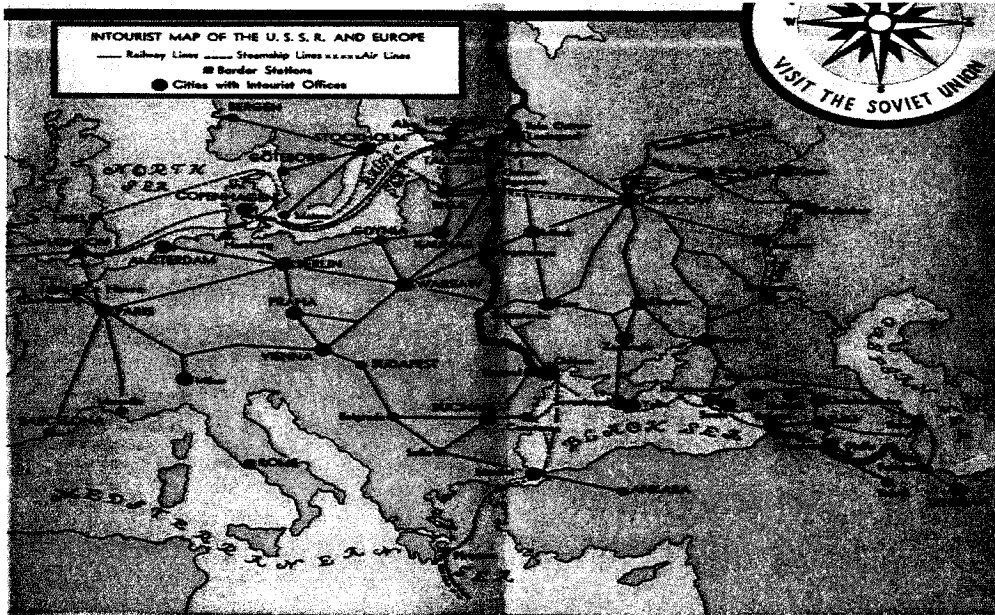


Figure 4-3 – Travel Routes to the Soviet Union, *See the U.S.S.R.*, 1939¹⁶

Once the customer decided to book an Intourist tour, the agent then provided them with a folder of Intourist materials such as that in Figure 3-7. The folder contained general information about the Soviet Union and its attractions, as well as logistical and rate information. The 1935 American Express “Map of the Soviet Union with Travel Rates and Suggested Itineraries” is a good example.¹⁷ Because of the competitive nature of the tourist business, the logistical information provided on these materials had to be clear and concise. It outlined exactly how to get to the Soviet Union, how much it would cost, and what was included in the price.

One of the first issues to be considered was how to legally enter the Soviet Union. Acquiring a visa to the USSR was not always easy.¹⁸ Intourist offered visa processing as part of their packages.¹⁹ Other inclusive items varied in scope of luxury depending on the

¹⁶ Intourist, *See the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow: Intourist, 1939), Inside Pamphlet. Author’s collection.

¹⁷ American Express Corporation, *Map of the Soviet Union – With Travel Rates and Suggested Itineraries* (New York: American Express Co, 1935), Front Cover.

¹⁸ Confusion and delay had been hallmarks of the process for acquiring travel papers to the Russia both before and after the revolution. This situation was meant to be rectified by Intourist’s system of including the visa in the tourist package.

¹⁹ Travelers filled out the visa applications [see Appendix C] given to them by their travel agent or Intourist representative when booking their tour package and the visa was included in tour package prices. Three blue (Intourist in Soviet Union) and two white (Intourist in United States) applications were to be completed. A photograph was attached to each of the five forms and each tourist had to fill out these forms separately, not one per family. These applications were then mailed or cabled (\$5 additional fee per application form) to Intourist’s headquarters in Moscow. Intourist received a reply on the status of the

class of service the tourist bought. The rates and services that one could book for all three of the classes included the following:

Intourist prices for travel in the Soviet Union are as follows: \$15 a day-1st Class; \$8 a day-Tourist [Second] Class; \$5 a day-Third Class. The prices include: hotels, meals, guide interpreters, two to three hours sightseeing a day, transportation and sleepers [within the Soviet Union], transfers to and from hotels, Soviet entrance and exit visas.²⁰

The 1937 tour prices were the same “basic daily all-inclusive rates established in 1932 [and] which have been retained by Intourist.”²¹ These rates were constant throughout the remainder of the 1930s as well. This price stability was one of Intourist’s major selling points.²²

While Intourist did not provide a total voyage cost in their brochures one can get an idea of this cost based on the all inclusive packages offered by touring companies who worked in conjunction with Intourist. The 1933 tour “28 Days under the Soviets,” given by Chicago’s Amalgamated Trust and Savings Bank including passage onboard a Cunard Line ship leaving from New York and connecting with a Soviet Steamer in London, was priced at “\$279” for Tourist Class and “\$510” for First Class.²³ The traveler accounts do

application from 15 to 30 days later. The visa was then picked up at the foreign consulate that the traveler had indicated on the Intourist American application form. Although, as the one application form states, Intourist was not responsible if the Soviets denied the tourist’s visa request. Another important point to note was the distinction between business and tourist travel on the blue Soviet visa form. This form states “persons going to the Soviet Union on business, apply to the Soviet Consulate for visas. Intourist service may be purchased after visas are granted” [see Appendix C]. This reinforces the assertion in Chapter I that Intourist tourists were categorized, and advertised to, separately from businessmen.

²⁰ Intourist, *See the Soviet Union 1937* (Moscow: Intourist, 1937), back inside cover. During the 1930 travel season these travel classes were referred to as Category P, W and T. These 1930 categories of travel were defined by Intourist as: “Category P – Most comfortable and in every way excellent service...Category W – Fully satisfactory service...[and] Category T – Plain but absolutely satisfactory service.” This information can be found in the 1930 Intourist brochure *October Celebrations in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow: Intourist, 1930), 14 among others from that year.

²¹ “A Big Year for Russia,” *New York Times*, 21 March 1937, 191.

²² The price of Intourist’s tours remained constant only in print during the 1930s because in actuality due to the changing value of the U.S. dollar at any given year the tour could be more or less expensive depending on its valuation. It is difficult to ascertain the exact cost of these tours because of the flux in the value of the dollar. However, for comparison sake take the cost of Intourist’s tours in 1934 and put them into the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator at <http://www.bls.gov>, (5/13/06). These tour costs then translate into 2006 dollar costs as follows: First Class - \$15 per day in 1934 is \$224 per day in 2006; Second Class - \$8 per day in 1934 is \$119 per day in 2006; Third Class - \$5 per day in 1934 is \$76 per day in 2006.

²³ “Tour Soviet Russia,” *Nation*, 17 May 1933, 567. The May 10, 1933 article in *The Nation* by Amy S. Jennings, “How to Travel in Soviet Russia” 529-530, provides the reader with a range of inclusive tour costs for travel to the Soviet Union. One could take a “typical Open Road tour [which] would be the eight

provide verification of Intourist's claims of the affordability of travel to the Soviet Union. Hubert Griffith's account is entitled *Seeing Soviet Russia: An Informative Record of the Cheapest Trip in Europe*, and he considered his trip both "easy and cheap."²⁴ Another traveler, Lars Moen, wrote about the affordability of his 1933 excursion to the Soviet Union: "practically speaking, Soviet travel is within the reach of almost anyone. If you were to go to the seaside for your holidays, you would not have to be especially extravagant to spend as much there as a Russian tour would cost you over the same period."²⁵ Juanita Harrison, an African American woman who worked as "an accomplished lady's maid" for two hundred dollars a year, was able to visit over "twenty-two different countries" from 1927-1935. Her travels included a month long excursion to the Soviet Union from September to October 1934 on "a cheap Tour."²⁶ The volume of student tourists with their limited budgets also reflects the affordability of travel to the Soviet Union. Harry Nerhood's annotated bibliography demonstrates, that alongside the newspapermen, writers and professors, there were many students on fixed budgets who traveled to the Soviet Union in the 1930s and left records of their trips.²⁷ Other accounts also underscore Intourist's message that travel to the Soviet Union was a unique and affordable venture for the traveling American public.

The only major change to the inclusive services offered by Intourist throughout the 1930s was that the initial 1930 packages offered theater, concert and museum tickets in the total package price and by 1934 tickets were considered extras. Other extras not included in the Intourist's tour packages were "sightseeing supplementary to the

weeks' trip, including thirty-one days of travel through the U.S.S.R....the cost is \$451 , traveling third (special category)." The Pocono Study Tours ten week excursion to England, Austria, Paris and a month in Leningrad and Moscow cost including tuition \$463 with third class travel accommodations. The least expensive all inclusive trip in the article was one through the Amalgamated Bank and for tourist class with five days in the Soviet Union it was "as low as \$180."

²⁴ Griffith, 10.

²⁵ Lars Moen, *Are You Going to Russia?* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd, 1934), 5. While other travelers also speak about the basic affordability of the tours, others speak of the high cost of incidentals and especially of the tricky situation involving currency exchange and other currency related issues such as the Soviet ban on the exportation of rubles or currency speculation by foreigners and Soviet citizens alike.

²⁶ Juanita Harrison, *My Great Wide Beautiful World* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936), 277.

²⁷ Harry Nerhood, *To Russia and Return: An Annotated Bibliography of Travelers' English-Language Accounts of Russia from the Ninth Century to the Present* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1968). One such account is Kendall Foss, *Black Bread and Samovars: An Account of an Unconventional Journey through Soviet Russia* (London: Arrowsmith, 1930) in which, "American student at Oxford University and companion on holiday journey to Sverdlovsk in 1929. With about \$50 a month in their budget, they manage to visit many of the cities of European Russia..." Nerhood, 205.

programs offered by Intourist for the Standard Tours...mineral water, wines and liquors, theatre tickets, laundry, special guide-interpreter. Transportation from border point of entry to first city of tour and from last city of tour to border points of exit.”²⁸ Travelers could also upgrade certain services such as higher-class accommodations at any point since even “[a]fter arrival at the starting point of the tour, the traveler is entitled to pass into a higher category, on paying the difference.”²⁹ Intourist also offered in addition to the set itineraries further options for the traveler including a la carte service. Intourist referred to this as “partial service” and it was “extended to those travelers who wish to purchase separate accommodations.” Intourist also offered tours with open itineraries called “Open Tour Orders” and “Open Credit Orders.”³⁰ After deciding on what class of tour and how they were going to get to the Soviet Union travelers had to choose their specific tour. Again variety was the name of the game with itineraries ranging from five to thirty one days and including any number of cities throughout the Soviet Union.

Once the particulars of the journey had been decided upon, the three blue and two white visa application forms filled out and other informational paperwork completed, a deposit was required. The Intourist American Application for Tourist Visa states, “full payment per person is required before Soviet visa applications are accepted.”³¹ The *1934 Map of the Soviet Union* elaborates on this stating that “a deposit of 25% is to be made with the application, the balance to be paid when tourist is advised that visa has been

²⁸ Intourist, *Map – Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), Inside Cover.

²⁹ Intourist, *October Celebrations in the USSR*, 14.

³⁰ Ibid, Inside Cover. Open tours were for those “travelers wishing to purchase a tour with all inclusive service, but not wishing to decide on their itinerary until after arrival in the Soviet Union...” Open Credit Orders were “issued for a specified sum in dollars minimum amount \$35 and may be drawn against in services in the Soviet Union, on the basis of Partial Service rates. Services are charged for at gold ruble rates, exchanged into dollars at the rate of exchange on the date when the Open Credit Order was issued to the traveler.” More often than not tourists would book the all inclusive services and pay for any additional upgrades or luxuries when they got to the Soviet Union. From the traveler accounts and the periodicals it seems that these all-inclusive tours were the primary booking method for tourists because they were more convenient and there was less currency and logistical uncertainty than with the open orders. The 1934 Intourist brochure *Seeing the U.S.S.R.* states on the back page that partial service was for those who “wish to secure hotels, meals and transport service in the cities and do not desire full tour service. It is arranged particularly for business men and those wishing to confine their attention to one or two cities.” This variety and flexibility in tour packaging reflects the assertion made later in this chapter that the totalitarian rigidity asserted by some concerning travel in the Soviet Union at this time was not the entire picture.

³¹ Intourist, *Application for Tourist Visa in the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Intourist, 1930s). Hereafter this application will be referred to as the Intourist American Application for Tourist Visa.

granted.”³² The cancellation fee varied throughout the decade from 5% (1934 *Map of the Soviet Union*) to 15% (per the Soviet White American Visa Application). All tours were paid for by cash, check or money order.³³

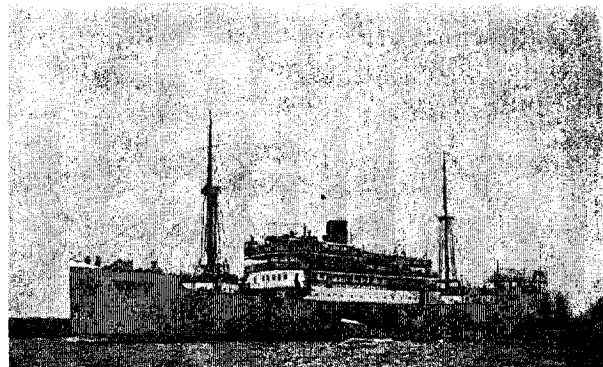
Tourists started their journey on a trans-Atlantic steamer, some to English ports, others to the Continent, and still others directly to the Soviet Union. With roundtrip transatlantic travel and a ten-day tour an entire trip from the United States would take from “30 to 35 days.”³⁴ If one was taking the option of traveling to the Soviet Union via a Soviet Steamer the accommodations were, as one English traveler wrote, “newly-built” and “clean as a new pin.”³⁵ These Soviet ships sailed once a week from London arriving in Leningrad in approximately “4 ½ days.”³⁶ Figure 4-4 is a diagram and picture of the Soviet steamers. The accompanying text underlies the amenities provided while the passengers were en route.

THE SOVIET SHIPS between London and Leningrad

PASSENGERS from Great Britain to the Soviet Union are particularly fortunate in having at their disposal the direct service of comfortable passenger ships between London and Leningrad.

The service is maintained by the up-to-date motor vessels “Felix Dzerjinsky,” “Alexis Rykoff,” “Smolny,” “Cooperatzia,” “Jan Rudzutak” and “Sibir.” These vessels, sister ships of approximately 4,000 tons each, are fitted with lounges, smoking rooms and dining saloons, and have ample promenade deck space. Bathrooms are available, and the First and Tourist class cabins are fitted with running hot and cold water. Each vessel carries a doctor and has a powerful wireless installation.

ONE OF THE LONDON-LENINGRAD SHIPS



³² Intourist, *Map – Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934*.

³³ Intourist, *Application for Tourist Visa in the U.S.S.R.*

³⁴ Intourist, *Travel in the Soviet Union: Your Questions Answered*, 1.

³⁵ Hubert Griffith, *Seeing Soviet Russia: An Informative Record of the Cheapest Trip in Europe* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd. 1932), 32.

³⁶ Intourist, *Visit the U.S.S.R.* (London: Intourist, 1938), Last Page.

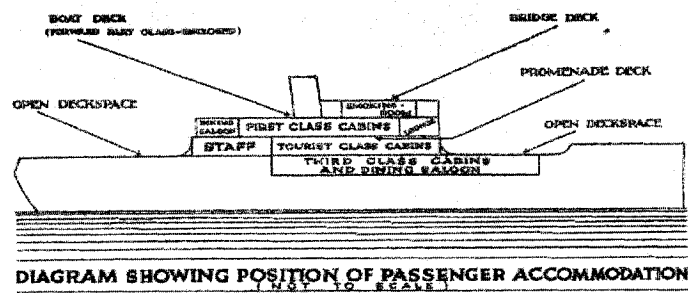


Figure 4-4 – Information Concerning Soviet Steamers, Intourist Brochure, *Visit the U.S.S.R.*, 1938³⁷

The information is supported by the recollection of Hubert Griffith who wrote that many of his fellow travelers onboard the Soviet steamer were Americans including tourists, workers and returning immigrants. Even with first class travel accommodations Griffith had been “prepared, as I have said, for discomfort.” Instead he found the steamer to be very comfortable with “the linens on the bunks having been spotless, and the food had been admirable-and too much of it.”³⁸

Intourist was a part of the traveler’s journey from their entry point into the Soviet Union. Whether it was at Leningrad (with its Intourist pavilion at the pier at which the tourist ships docked) or some other port of entry “Intourist guide-interpreters are stationed at all border points to assist tourists through customs, care for exchange of money, registration, baggage, etc.”³⁹ This level of customer service was a form of Soviet control over foreigners, but also reinforced Intourist’s claims of easy logistics and no red tape. Intourist smoothed the way for the traveler, helping them navigate the often-confusing realm of customs and currency related issues. If the traveler encountered problems at the border it could color the remainder of their voyage and this was to be avoided. In addition, through guidebooks such as the *Pocket Guide to the Soviet Union*, Intourist tried to head off any of these potential difficulties by laying out exactly what one could and could not bring into the country.⁴⁰ It was essential for a tourist to list at

³⁷ Intourist, *Visit the U.S.S.R.*, 28-29. Author’s collection.

³⁸ Griffith, 33.

³⁹ Intourist, *Map – Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934*, Inside Cover.

⁴⁰ Almost anything except Soviet currency was allowed into the country as long as it was “registered by the tourist at the customs office at the Soviet border point of entry” as stated in Intourist’s *Travel Map of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Intourist, 1938). This included all manners of clothing, personal use items such as teakettles, weaponry for hunters and cameras, plates and films. In regards to the exportation of these items currency was again not permitted to leave the border but everything else was allowed even developed

customs all of the valuables they were bringing in with them, as seen in the memoir of Eve Garret Grady, so as not to have difficulties taking them out of the country. Grady traveled to the Soviet Union in 1930 and in her travel memoir she relays the following story:

On my initial arrival at the Russian border-I was coming from Berlin alone-a very courteous representative of Intourist, the Soviet Travel Bureau for Foreigners, who was most solicitous concerning my welfare, advised me to declare the diamond ring which she observed I wore. I followed her suggestion and forthwith received a document stating that I had brought a diamond ring into Soviet Russia with me, and therefore would be permitted to take it out on my departure. Several month later, the wife of an American engineer, whom I know intimately, spent several agonized, tearful hours at one of the Soviet border stations...because one of the customs officials challenged the fact that she wore a diamond engagement ring, arguing that since she had no certificate to prove that she had brought it into the country with her, it must have been purchased within the Soviet boundaries. The matter was finally adjusted, but the experience was disagreeable in the extreme.⁴¹

Once through the border the traveler was taken either to one of the hotels in the border city or to the rail station in order to make their way to the first stop of their tour, which in most cases was Moscow. At this point in the journey the issue of what class of service one bought determined what type of accommodations and transportation class they received. Below is a chart of the levels of service for each class [Figure 4-5].

	First Class	Tourist Class	Special Class
Accommodations	Single rooms with bath in best hotels	Rooms in good hotels with 2 to a room with bath or shower.	Hotels with 3-4 persons in a room
Transportation	Steamers, Riverboats and Railroad - First Class Cabins	Steamers and Railroad - second or soft class railroad cars and second class on steamers	Railroad travel in third or hard class cars with bedding .50\$ extra. Second class on steamers

pictures. In "How to Travel in Soviet Russia," 530, Amy S. Jennings states that a traveler should take "all necessary toilet articles, including and especially toilet paper. Take G. Washington coffee crystals if you cannot live without your morning cup." In addition to these necessary items she also recommends safety pins, packets of needles and American postcards.

⁴¹ Eve Garrette Grady, *Seeing Red: Behind the Scenes in Russia Today* (New York: Brewer, Warren and Putnam Inc, 1931), 210-211.

		and riverboats	and riverboats
Meals	Three meals daily and afternoon tea	Three meals daily and afternoon tea	Three meals daily
Other	2-3 Hours Sightseeing and visa	2-3 Hours Sightseeing and visa	2-3 Hours Sightseeing and visa

Figure 4-5 – Levels of Service Based on Class of Tour, *Map of Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934*.⁴²

Upon arrival in Moscow or at Leningrad the traveler received a first taste of the advertised modern, convenient and comfortable newly built or renovated Soviet hotels [Figure 4-6]. Travelers remark in their narratives, usually in a surprised manner, at the high level of cleanliness and comfort at the Intourist hotels and onboard the trains. Even those staying and traveling in third class such as Juanita Harrison remarked how “very nice and clean” her hotel room in Moscow was as well as the accommodations in her third class rail car from Moscow to Manchuria. Harrison was given “clean white blankets four pillows nice green curtains at the windows in the isles [sic] as well as a nice table with a green shade lamp and a porter swept and dusted every 10 minutes.”⁴³ Rail travel was taken via ‘hard’ railroad cars or ‘soft’ ones and depending on the travel destination in Wagon-Lits.⁴⁴

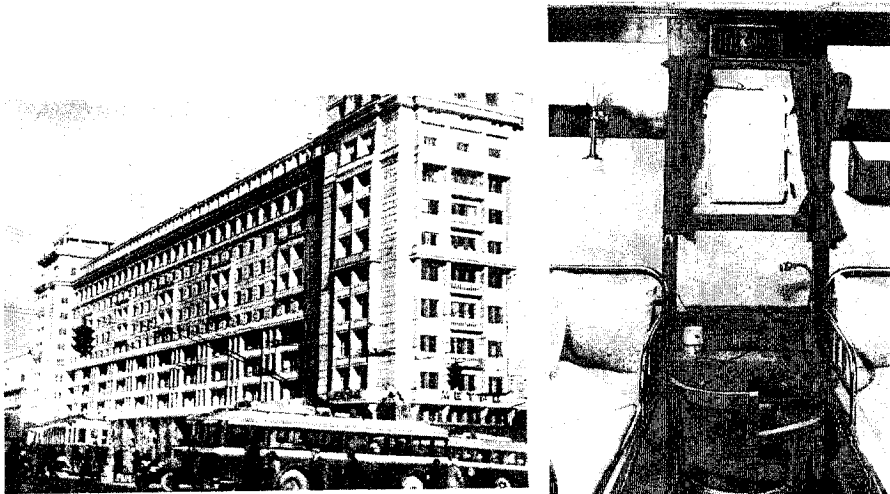


Figure 4-6, Moscow Intourist Hotel, *Seeing the USSR*, 1935 and Volga Steamer Cabin, *Volga*, 1934⁴⁵

⁴² Intourist, *Map of Soviet Union: Rates and Schedules for the Tourist Season of 1934*, Front and Back Covers.

⁴³ Harrison, 279-280 and 282

⁴⁴ Hard railroad cars were ones with wooden benches and soft cars were ones with upholstered benches.

⁴⁵ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1935]*, 16 and Intourist, *Volga* (Moscow: Intourist, 1934), 7. The description in the guidebook for the Volga steamer states that the typical stateroom is equipped with “comfortable

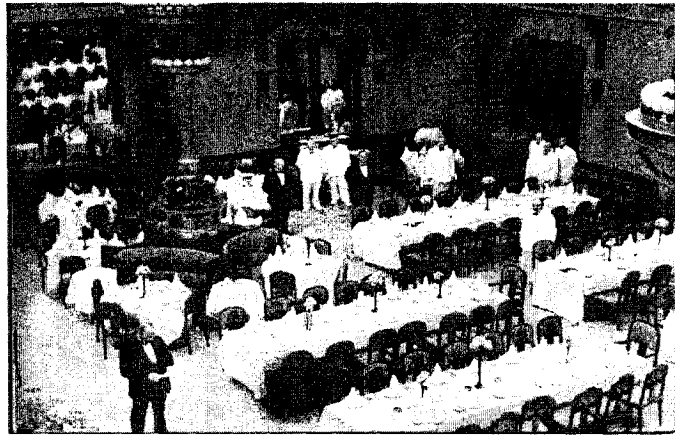


Figure 4-7 – Dining Hall of the Metropole Hotel in Moscow, *Seeing the USSR*, 1934⁴⁶

Travel in the Soviet Union was a varied set of experiences and not all travelers came back raving about the Soviets' apparent progress overall or in their tourist accommodations.

I.A.R Wylie reported in the January 5, 1935 edition of the *Saturday Evening Post* that his accommodations were far from what had been promised in the advertising materials. He stated vis-à-vis his hotel in Stalingrad: "one-half of it was still swathed in scaffolding, the other half was already falling down. The ceiling in my bedroom...threatened to crumble about my ears...the hot-water pipe in the bathroom burst in my face and the cold water wouldn't do anything at all."⁴⁷ These sort of accounts cannot be dismissed, but they must be weighed in relation to the various other more positive experiences had by travelers in the Soviet Union.

Once the traveler reached the hotel at the first stage of their journey and had redeemed a few of their meal tickets at the hotel's first class restaurant (pictured in Figure 4-7 is the Hotel Metropole in Moscow's main dining hall which was one of the best restaurants in the city) and a good night's rest was achieved, the tourist was off on the first of many days sightseeing in the Soviet Union. Tourists were swept like a whirlwind from destination to destination each day. Variety was to be had by all no matter what type of tour one booked. The destinations visited included a combination that was half

cabins, well-appointed public rooms, excellent cuisine and ample deck space." Intourist, *Volga*, 8. Images reprinted from author's collection.

⁴⁶ Intourist, *Seeing the USSR [1934]*, 15. Image reprinted from author's collection.

⁴⁷ I.A.R. Wylie, "Soviet Sidelights: Reality and Illusion," *The Saturday Evening Post*, 5 January 1935, 65. In all fairness the hotel in Stalingrad was still under construction when Wylie visited.

uniquely Soviet and half not uniquely Soviet. More often than not a large portion of a traveler's experience was had in the museums, palaces and theaters of the Soviet Union. People desired culture and the Soviets provided it as evidence of their progressive society. Mattie John Utting's recollections of his short excursions include traversing the grounds of the Kremlin and Red Square during the day and at night seeing a concert "arranged by Intourist." The following day in Moscow he walked around the Park of Culture and Rest and then was off to Leningrad where he "made a tour of the city's broad, straight avenues, its winding canals, its parks, palaces and gardens..."⁴⁸ His journey concluded with a visit to the Winter Palace, the Hermitage Museum and finally to Peterhof before turning in for the night and then sailing off to his next destination. Other tours mixed in these usual tourist destinations with factories, rest homes, worker apartment buildings and other signs of the progress of Stalin's Five Year Plans. Depending on the duration and geographic area, tourists would also be taken to spas, resorts and many out of the way locations in order to view the progress of these formerly backward towns and peoples.

Experience: Guided Vision or Active Voyeur?

It is important to consider when one looks at these tours to what extent Soviet authoritarianism infiltrated the physical composition of the tours and how this impacted the travel experience for the tourist? Many scholars, such as John Urry, have seen these tourists as sheep who passively accepted the vision that Intourist was selling while ignoring the 'reality' of life under the Soviets. This specific question connects to the larger theoretical foundations of tourism studies explored in Chapter One. The issue of active versus passive tourists or the authenticity of the tourist experience due to what John Urry coined as the "tourist gaze," is very much at play in the Soviet context. The Soviets constructed the tourist experience through their materials, and especially with Intourist guides, but that did not mean that tourists in the Soviet Union were passive spectators. The diversity of motivations, opinions and experiences as well as the amount of influence these tourists had on Intourist reinforces the work of Dean MacCannell, Hartmut Berghoff and Rudy Koshar. Koshar writes that "leisure encourages individual

⁴⁸ Mattie Johns Utting, *Arctic Fringe: A Day by Day Cruise* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1939), 148 and 153.

and popular agency” and this flexibility or space for tourist agency for those traveling to the Soviet Union in the 1930s has been barely recognized by either historians or tourism studies scholars.⁴⁹ It would seem that pervasive in this scholarship is the thesis of a highly totalitarian state that offered little room for subversion of the established power hierarchies. The level of control by the Soviet government did not necessarily stop individuals from coming to conclusions about the Soviet Union outside the acceptable Soviet narrative.

The recognized historiography of tourism at this time states that the Soviet government operated Intourist according to the Leninist guidelines of total manipulation and control. Sylvia Margulies states that the Soviets manipulated the tourist by “decreasing the amount of spontaneity permitted foreigners within the Soviet Union.”⁵⁰ However, the evidence points to a less totalitarian picture of Soviet tourism. There were options or maneuverability within the framework provided by Intourist; it was not an all-controlling entity. Although, it is also true that there was not total freedom to explore the Soviet Union at will (with good reason given that many visitors faced a language barrier). As Margulies herself points out agencies that cooperated with Intourist such as the Open Road had “...considerable latitude in designating itineraries.”⁵¹ If it were correct that the Soviets controlled the tourist through the construction of their tours, then why would they offer so many options including such things as open tour orders? The travel accounts again vary on their opinions of the amount of manipulation and control that the Soviets had via Intourist guides. Those like Eve Garrette Grady, who present an overall negative account of her time in the Soviet Union, consider Americans visiting the Soviet Union to be “spoonfed tourists” who “never gets that peep behind the scenes that tells the story.”⁵² Others like George Earle Raiguel and William Kistler Huff write that “you can see

⁴⁹ Quotation reprinted in Shelley Baranowski, “An Alternative to Everyday Life? The Politics of Leisure and Tourism,” *Contemporary European History* 12, 4 (2003), 570.

⁵⁰ Sylvia Margulies, *Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 80.

⁵¹ Margulies, 74.

⁵² Grady, 227 and 230. In Chapter X of her work, entitled “Spoonfed Tourists,” 258, Grady tells the story of her conversation with an Intourist guide who related the anecdote that he was taking a “group of Americans through the city when a portly matron pointed to a long line of people standing in front of a Government food store, and excitedly inquired what they were doing? To which the guide responded: ‘Why, madam, yesterday was pay day, and today, as you see, the people are waiting to put their money in the bank.’ Which explanation, he said satisfied everyone.”

exactly what you want to see” and that Intourist guides were not so much restrictive as “lacked the information. She never gave us any propaganda...Under her leadership we saw much that was good, and many things likewise which were imperfect.”⁵³ Intourist’s notoriously written about tour guides are one of the main pieces of evidence for those who argue for a passive traveler. The Intourist tour guide has often been presented as either a rigid, manipulative drone or an incompetent diversionary force that created “Potemkin Village” like experiences for the traveler. Others have hinted that Intourist guides were spies who were reporting the actions of foreigners to the Soviet government.⁵⁴

Seeing is Believing or Is It?: Conclusions

Intourist mobilized an army of resources, blanketed the American market with cross-promotional advertising campaigns, and enlisted a multitude of persons within the Soviet Union to cater to foreign tourists. However, like any campaign to influence human behavior these outlays were always a risky venture. Their effectiveness relied upon large unknowns including the history, baggage and personality of the tourist. All of the money, coordination with American agencies, time and planning could be negated solely by the negative impression of one American tourist to the Soviet Union. Again for the historian the pendulum swings back to the question of response when looking at the workings of any organization, state or non-state. Totalitarian states no matter how much they planned or tried to control the tourist had to contend with the age-old issue of agency. Some came and explored and were reconfirmed of their beliefs pro or con and others were converted to the vision that the Soviets were selling. Historians have fallen into the trap of the monolithic narrative and this thesis has shown that neither the actions of the Soviets, nor the response of American tourists to these actions, could be

⁵³ George Earle Raiguel and William Kistler Huff, *This is Russia* (Philadelphia: The Penn Company, 1932), 66-67

⁵⁴ Michael David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public’: VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period” *Contemporary European History* 11, 1 (2002):7-32 discusses the reports of VOKS tour guides in their dealings with foreigners. Scholars such as Harvey Klehr do not point the finger directly at Intourist, but that the Soviet government in all forms of contact with foreigners was involved in spying. See his 2005 work with John Earl Haynes, *In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2005), that takes on revisionist historians on this subject. The probability is very high that Intourist guides did keep tabs on foreigners especially with the links between the organization and the G.P.U.

categorized along black or white lines. The narrative is exceedingly more complex than the Soviet state wooing gullible tourists to the great Soviet experiment. While it is true, as historians have stated, that many came back reaffirmed of their adherence to the Soviet vision, it is also true that many simply took away from their journey what they wanted to take.

Conclusion: Reflections on the Journey

“No doubt Americans are to-day the greatest travelers in the world... [and] [f]rom Chile to Russia, from Spain to Japan, the tourist now finds official welcome. He encounters national tourist offices and information bureaus to expedite his travels and to make his stay as pleasant as possible. He finds available maps and literature, officially licensed guides, government-regulated hotels, and a variety of facilities not formerly available... The availability of such information is not left to be discovered upon the tourist’s arrival abroad. This information is sent to him, in his own country where, by magazine and newspaper advertising, local tourist bureaus of the government concerned offer their services gratis.”

–U.S. Department of Commerce,
The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries, 1931 ¹

“Leisure and tourism are not just pervasive social and cultural practices, they are also big business...”

–Shelley Baranowski,

“An Alternative to Everyday Life? The Politics of Leisure and Tourism,” 2003 ²

“American travelers are estimated to spend on this basis nearly \$1,000,000,000 abroad each year.”

– *New York Times*, 1930 ³

“Soviet Lures Visitors with 40-Pound Trout”

–Headline, *New York Times*, 1934 ⁴

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 1 and 3.

² Shelley Baranowski, “An Alternative to Everyday Life? The Politics of Leisure and Tourism,” *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (2003): 561.

³ Charles Hodges, “Uncle Sam’s Tourists: Why They Go Overseas” *New York Times*, 8 June 1930, 53.

⁴ “Soviet Lures Visitors with 40-Pound Trout,” *New York Times*, 7 August 1934, 19.

American tourism to the Soviet Union was a juncture at which Communism met Capitalism. Historians have traditionally overlooked the fact that Intourist was primarily a business - one engaged in a lucrative high stakes battle with over fifty other companies for a piece of the nearly one billion dollars that Americans spent annually on a leisure activity in the tumultuous 1930s.

While Intourist was Soviet in origin, it was global in its orientation, organization and practices. Built from scratch, it became a player in a highly competitive industry by engaging in business practices like any other travel firm. Intourist was not unique in its methods – it was a modern tourist agency. It used advertisers and the media to target audiences with a pervasive message through glossy advertising campaigns. It employed enticements (such as forty pound trout and progress through modernization) to attract prospective travelers, thus modeling itself after some of the most successful names in the field such as Thomas Cook and American Express. An intricate web of connections with established players helped it garner the legitimacy and resources by which it could reshape the American public's image of the USSR, thus furthering Soviet policy objectives. Tourists played the role of non-state actors, influencing opinion at multiple levels of society and government. Intourist's real novelty, however, lay in the picture it painted of its country. While others used sun and sand, Intourist used blast furnaces and symbols of modernity and progress.

Intourist could not have survived, let alone succeeded, without support. Its success in the American travel market highlights the high degree of cooperation and coordination with U.S. businesses, travel agencies, banks, law firms, advertisers, publishers and, most importantly, American consumers. This was reaffirmed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, which in 1931 wrote that the “study of the tourist industry abroad reveals a high degree of organization and government-sponsored cooperation.”⁵ Intourist partnerships with segments of the American economy only occurred because the U.S. government tolerated them, something John Lewis Gaddis considers characteristic of interwar American-Soviet relations.⁶

⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries*, 4.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, The Soviet Union and the United States: An Interpretive History, Second Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990), 77 and 86.

Soviet tourism was also part and parcel of the American consumption mentality that existed throughout the 1930s. Americans consumed the Soviet Union just as they did liquor, cars, radios and fine clothing. Marketed as a modern commodity, the Soviet Union was constructed as an ideal, a dream or a vision of a modern, progressive, adventurous land that had to be experienced to be believed. In fact, Intourist's entire message was constructed around the principles of modern consumption. Intourist and other foreign tourist bureaus advertised next to prominent ads for furs, cars, alcohol and department store clothing and furnishings. This consumption was tied to the public's desire to escape the ordinary, to find adventure and excitement in a far off place. The Soviets sold this vision to an audience seeking to recapture the euphoria of the 1920s: "American interest in the Soviet experiment was a form of self-interest. For Americans saw their own spirit of boosterism, their own penchant for the grandiose, even their own industrial techniques and technicians being applied to an explicitly anticapitalist purpose."⁷

This research has sought to widen the scope of interpretation, to flesh out the story of American tourism to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It has hoped to firmly place the subject squarely in the midst of important historical trends and debates – expanding the narrative of interwar American-Soviet relations, consumption habits, tourism, as well as showcasing the power of non-state actors to steer government policy. This author's overarching goal has been to bring to light the true nature of tourism between the two countries.

The Soviet tourist endeavor was, on the surface, a seemingly innocuous entity. It was, however, a cover, a mask created to manipulate foreign audiences into furthering Soviet goals (whether for money, workers, diplomatic legitimacy or positive public relations). Governments and their peoples saw tourism as almost immune to the agendas of the states that sponsored them. Unlike the Soviet trading agency Amtorg, Intourist was never investigated by the Fish Committee or any other American government agency for alleged propagandizing or illicit activities. Yet, Intourist was far from innocuous. It purposefully and skillfully targeted members of its intended audience with a message

⁷ Peter Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment: 1917-1933* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 243.

tailored to their specific needs and desires and gave them exactly what they wanted. The Soviets put on a show, the Americans bought the tickets and returned with mixed reviews, but they still returned talking and that was the point.

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Appendix A: Tourist Figures

Reported Tourist Figures 1925-1938: American Tourists to the Soviet Union

YEAR	ACTUAL #	SOURCE	ESTIMATED #	SOURCE
1925	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1926	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1927	200	<i>New York Times</i> , June 24, 1928	10,000	<i>New York Times</i> , March 13, 1927 per VOKS
1928	Unknown	---	700	<i>New York Times</i> , July 26, 1928 per Amtorg
1929	2,800	Joseph Barnes, "Cultural Recognition of Russia," <i>The Nation</i> , May 18, 1932	5,000 - 6,000	<i>New York Times</i> , June 24, 1928
	2,200	<i>Review of Reviews</i> , August 1931 and <i>New York Times</i> , July 3, 1931	5,000 - 6,000	<i>New York Times</i> , July 26, 1928
1930	5,000	<i>Review of Reviews</i> , August 1931 and <i>New York Times</i> , July 3, 1931	Unknown	---
1931	9,000	Joseph Barnes, "Cultural Recognition of Russia," <i>The Nation</i> , May 18, 1932	10,000	<i>Review of Reviews</i> , August 1931
	10,000	<i>Fortune</i> , March 1931	SAME	SAME
1932	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1933	Unknown	---	5,000	<i>New York Times</i> , July 8, 1934
1934	10,210	American Express Monthly Survey, <i>New York Times</i> , July 22, 1934; Mostly Americans on Russian and Baltic Cruises	10,000 - 15,000	<i>New York Times</i> , March 4, 1934 and July 8, 1934
1935	Unknown	American Express Monthly Survey, <i>New York Times</i> , October 6, 1935 reported 25% more Americans than previous summer	Unknown	---
1936	Unknown	---	7,000 - 8,000	<i>New York Times</i> , July 19, 1936
1937	Unknown	March 21, 1937 <i>New York Times</i> reports that 3 Transatlantic Liners with North Cape Cruises bring 3,000 Americans to Soviet Union	Unknown	---
	Unknown	May 21, 1937 <i>New York Times</i> reports increase of American tourists by 40% over 1936	Unknown	---
1938	Unknown	---	Unknown	---

Reported Tourist Figures 1925-1938: All Foreign Tourists to the Soviet Union

YEAR	ACTUAL #	SOURCE	ESTIMATED #	SOURCE
1925	483	Michael David-Fox, "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public' " per VOKS Archives	Unknown	---
1926	1,200	Michael David-Fox, "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public' " per VOKS Archives	Unknown	---
1927	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1928	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1929	1,500	Michael David-Fox, "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public' " per VOKS Archives	Unknown	---
1930	1,500	Michael David-Fox, "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public' " per VOKS Archives	15,000	<i>New York Times</i> , January 26, 1930 and April 6, 1930
1931	Unknown	---	25,000	<i>Economic Review of the Soviet Union</i> , April 15, 1931
	Unknown	---	12,000	Downgraded Figure - <i>New York Times</i> , July 5, 1931
1932	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1933	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1934	Unknown	---	50,000	<i>Moscow Daily News</i> , February 24, 1934
1935	Unknown	---	Unknown	---
1936	Unknown	---	25,000	<i>New York Times</i> , July 19, 1936
1937 [Jan - May]	3,028	Personal Archive of M.I Kalinin. Fond 78, Opis 1, Dela 688, List 3-16	Unknown	---
1938 [Jan - May]	1,348	Personal Archive of M.I Kalinin. Fond 78, Opis 1, Dela 688, List 3-16	Unknown	---

Appendix B: Intourist Advertising Content Analysis

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Intourist</u>	
		<u>Ads</u>	<u>Type of Ads</u>
<i>Fortune</i>	1930	0	N/A
<i>Fortune</i>	1931	1	1/4 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1932	3	All 1/2 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1933	3	All 1/4 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1934	3	All 1/2 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1935	2	All 1/4 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1936	4	2 1/2 Page, 2 1/4 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1937	3	All 1/2 Page
<i>Fortune</i>	1938	0	N/A
<i>Fortune</i>	1939	1	1/4 Page
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1930	0	N/A
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1931	0	N/A
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1932	3	1 1/2 Page, 1 1/4 Page
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1933	6	All 1/4 Page
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1934	4	All 1/4 Page
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1935	3	All 1/4 Page
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1936	0	N/A
<i>Review of Reviews</i>	1937	2	2 1/2 Page
<i>Time</i>	1930	0	N/A
<i>Time</i>	1931	5	All 1/4 Page
<i>Time</i>	1932	7	All 1/2 Page
<i>New York Times</i>	1930	0	N/A
<i>New York Times</i>	1931	43	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1932	62	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1933	48	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1934	18	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1935	20	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1936	19	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1937	22	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1938	13	Various
<i>New York Times</i>	1939	17	Various

Appendix C: Intourist Application Forms

Intourist American Visa Application Form and General Information Form

"Intourist," Inc.
 Representative of State Tourist Company of U. S. S. R.
 412 FIFTH AVENUE
 NEW YORK CITY

Head Office:
 HOTEL METROPOLE
 Sverdlov Square
 MOSCOW

(3 APPLICATIONS and 2 PHOTOGRAPHS ARE REQUIRED FOR EACH TOURIST.)

Attach one photo, bearing signature on front side, in this space on each of first two applications.)

APPLICATION FOR TOURIST VISA IN THE U. S. S. R.

1. Name in full _____
2. Date and place of birth
 (Year, country, town) _____
3. Nationality and citizenship _____
4. Residence _____
5. Profession and where employed
 (If married, state profession and place of employment of husband) _____
6. Have you ever been in Russia before?
 If so, state when _____
7. By what country was your passport issued? _____

REMARKS: (Indicate the foreign U.S.S.R. Consulate office where you would like to obtain this visa)

SIGNATURE _____

ENROLLMENT FOR A TOUR TO THE U. S. S. R.

Itinerary chosen No. Special Itinerary Date of Tour.....

I am enclosing check for \$..... to cover payment of tour in full.
 money order

Check type of accommodations desired:

Category "P" Category "W" Category "T"
 (First Class) (Second Class) (Third Class)
 (This class only in groups of 10 or more)

NOTE: Full payment per person is required before Soviet visa applications are accepted.
 Application should be sent in four weeks before date of sailing.
 For cabled applications there is an additional charge of \$5.00.
 15% cancellation fee is retained for cancellations.

AGENT: _____

* * * *

Surname..... Given name.....
 Year and place of birth.....
 Citizenship: Previous..... Present.....
 If born in Russia, when did you leave?.....
 Profession.....
 Have you ever been in the USSR and when?.....
 Soviet border points: Entrance.....
 Exit.....
 Home address.....
193.....
 Signature.....

INTOURIST, INC. • 545 FIFTH AVENUE • New York, N. Y.

Intourist Soviet Visa Application Form

Agent's Name:

Persons going to the Soviet Union on business, apply to the Soviet Consulate for visas. Intourist service may be purchased after visas are granted.

Visa No. _____

№ ВИЗЫ.....

Intourist, Inc., 545 Fifth Ave., New York
 Интурист, Нью-Йорк.

Application No. _____

Анкета №.....

THREE BLUE AND TWO WHITE FORMS, ALSO THREE PHOTOS, REQUIRED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL.

DO NOT PASTE PHOTO TO THIS FORM. ATTACH WITH CLIP.

QUESTIONS ВОПРОСЫ	ANSWERS ОТВЕТЫ	TRANSLATION ПЕРЕВОД
1. Last name, first name Фамилия и имя		
2. Father's name Отчество		
3. Date of birth—City and country of birth Дата, город и страна рождения		
4. Citizenship Гражданство		
5. Occupation—Business address Занятие и адрес работы		
6. Passport No.—When and by whom issued № паспорта, когда и кем выдан		
7. Purpose of trip Цель поездки		
8. Tour and class of service. Type and category of service. If member of organized group, specify name		
9. How much time do you wish to spend in the U.S.S.R. and in which cities? Сколько времени хотите провести в СССР и в каких городах?		
10. Names and ages of children accompanying tourist Имена и возраст детей, сопровождающих туриста		
11. Have you ever been in Russia, countries formerly Russia, or the U.S.S.R.; when, in which cities and what was your occupation? Были ли когда-нибудь в России, в странах, принадлежавших прежде России, или в СССР? Когда, в каких городах и чем занимались?		
12. When, from what city and under what circumstances did you leave Russia, countries formerly Russia or the U.S.S.R.? On what documents and through which border? Когда, из какого города и при каких обстоятельствах уехали из России, из стран, принадлежавших прежде России, или из СССР? По каким документам уехали и через какую границу?		
13. If you were ever a citizen of the U.S.S.R., give date and reason for having relinquished citizenship Если вы когда-либо были гражданином СССР, дайте дату и причину, по которой утратили гражданство.		
14. If you have relatives in the U.S.S.R., give their last names, first names, father's names and their addresses Если имеете родственников в СССР, укажите их фамилии, имена, отчества и адреса		
15. Your permanent address Ваш постоянный адрес		
16. Soviet border points—Entrance: Советские пограничные пункты: Вводной Выездной		
17. If visa is to be transferred abroad, give city a. give date of your arrival in that city b. give date of departure from that city (one additional photograph required when visa is to be transferred abroad)		
18. Sailing date from U.S.A. Дата отплытия из САСШ Date of arrival in the U.S.S.R. Дата прибытия в СССР		

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

NOTE: Intourist does not undertake to apply for visas for those who wish to go to the U.S.S.R. to seek employment. Such visas should be applied for through the Soviet Consulate. Persons arriving in the U.S.S.R. as tourists have no right to remain there and to be employed. Tourists should understand that they are to leave the U.S.S.R. upon expiration of their visas.
 INTOURIST IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAY OR REFUSAL OF VISAS.

Tourist's address in this country: _____

Date: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

3 EXTRA PHOTOS REQUIRED UPON ARRIVAL IN THE SOVIET UNION

Printed in U.S.A.