

The Socialist Construction of the Moscow Theater Festival 1933-1937

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ABSTRACT

From 1933 through 1937, the Soviet Union invited foreigners to experience the best of Soviet theater at the Moscow Theater Festival. This thesis focuses on the festival as both an object of and vehicle for socialist construction. The first chapter explores the event as an economic activity through a consideration of the capitalist methods employed to sell the festival. The second chapter examines how the organizers focused on the festival's increasing cultural and political significance when planning it. The final chapter reflects on the attendees' responses to their experiences. The conclusion compares the festival to another project of socialist construction—the building of the Moscow subway—and to the Nazi Olympics of 1936. It suggests that a constant and critical aspect of socialist construction is the fusing of the concepts of politics, economics, and culture into the singular concept of socialism.

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All the remaining faults in this work are mine alone.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	v
A Note on Transliteration and Translation	vi
Introduction: The Social(ist) Construction of Reality	2
Chapter 1: Stalin's Commercial Theater	21
Chapter 2: Cultural Diplomacy on Stage	67
Chapter 3: The Visitors Speak	127
Conclusion: The Reality of Social(ist) Construction	201
Appendix A: Moscow Theater Festival Repertoire 1933-1937	221
In Chronological Order	221
By Theater	224
By Title	227
Appendix B: Partial List of Festival Attendees 1933-1937	230
By Name	230
By Country	232
Bibliography	234

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

1. Festival Attendance, 1933-1937	89
2. Program of the 1935 Moscow Theater Festival	116
3. Festival Attendees by Country	147
4. Program of the 1937 Festival	194

FIGURES

1. Intourist advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , April 2, 1933)	28
2. Festival advertisement (April 9, 1933, <i>New York Times</i>)	29
3. Intourist advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , April 12, 1936)	35
4. Photograph of Moscow Art Theater production of <i>Armored Train</i>	40
5. Photograph of Kamerny Theater production of the <i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i>	41
6. Photograph of the ballet <i>The Red Poppy</i> at the Bolshoi Theater	41
7. Advertisement (<i>North American Review</i> , May 1934: 7)	50
8. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , July 10, 1934)	50
9. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , May 31, 1936)	51
10. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , July 26, 1936)	52
11. Non-Festival Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , February 28, 1937)	53
12. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , May 23, 1937)	54
13. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , June 6, 1937)	55
14. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , June 20, 1937)	56
15. Advertisement (<i>New York Times</i> , June 20, 1937)	56
16. University Travel Bureau 1934 festival tour brochure cover	60

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

The Cyrillic script of the Russian language has been transliterated in this work using a modification of the system used in passports from the Russian Federation between 1997 and 2010. This system has the benefit of not using diacritical marks. The most common variant of the names of well-known persons has been used though it may deviate from this system. The original spelling of Russian names in sources in English has been retained in quotations and references. Soft signs (ь) and hard signs (Ъ) have been omitted in transliteration.

All translations from Russian are mine unless otherwise noted.

The Socialist Construction of the Moscow Theater Festival 1933-1937

INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL(IST) CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

We tell ourselves stories in order to live.... We look for the sermon in the suicide, for the social or moral lesson in the murder of five. We interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the “ideas” with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience.

—Joan Didion¹

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels²

Before the government of the Soviet Union ceased grain collections from Ukrainian farms in mid-March 1933, an estimated five million people had perished in the 1932-1933 famine.³ This could be stated another way: the Soviet regime of state and Party killed an estimated five million people through a famine caused by forced collectivization of agricultural production. Each telling is based on the same underlying facts. The Soviet regime pursued a policy of forced

¹ Joan Didion, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live: Collected Nonfiction* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2006), 185.

² Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin Classics (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 219.

³ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 246.

collectivization of agriculture. Grain was collected from Ukrainian farms and sent to other parts of the Soviet Union. Approximately five million people died in Ukraine while these grain collections occurred.

In a certain sense, each of these representations is true; each corresponds to the facts. Yet, in another sense, the representations are mutually exclusive. If it is true that the Soviets killed five million people, it cannot be the whole truth to say, “five million people perished.” This difference between active voice and passive voice becomes more than a neutral linguistic difference. This linguistic difference takes on ethical implications. The passive voice obscures the cause of the deaths and seems intended to do just that, when compared with the alternative. Even if the statement in its passive form is true, the choice of the passive form over the active seems untruthful. It seems deceptive, a deliberate misrepresentation of reality.

Beyond the reality of our own present experience, we have access only to representations of reality. Some representations we create for ourselves, such as our memories of our own past. Didion argues this arises out of our own need, that “we tell ourselves stories in order to live.”⁴ In their foundational study *The Social Construction of Reality*, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann suggest that this narrative need arises out of a need to produce a stable world in which goal-directed human activity is possible. “The biologically intrinsic world-openness of human existence is always, and indeed must be, transformed by social order into a

⁴ Didion, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*, 185.

relative world-closedness,” write Berger and Luckman.⁵ Their argument is that human behavior, unlike other animal behavior, is not dictated by biological instinct or the natural environment. They claim that we create social order to constrain human activity into boundaries that are socially intelligible and psychologically manageable. While Didion locates this narrative need in the individual human psyche, Berger and Luckmann place it in a societal perspective. Taken together, we have both an individual and collective impulse towards the transformation of our actual experience into stories that can be filled with meaning.

Without going into the latest advances in cognitive science, it is readily observable that our brains are particularly adept at selecting which sensory data to allow into consciousness. In separating background noise from that to which we intentionally listen, for example, our brain selects the sounds that make the most sense. Accepting then a distinction between our brain and our mind (or self), what our mind hears seems to be an aural *perception* of reality. But it is already a *representation* of that reality created by our brain. Even given the same aural stimuli, or the same reality, another person or a recording device would produce representations that differ to a certain extent.

Most representations of reality are provided to us by others. If our mind has access to our own experience only through the representation of that experience created by our brain, then we can never share our own experiences

⁵ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality; a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1966), 51.

through anything other than representations. As Berger and Luckmann trace in their book, human societies have developed systems by which collectively held representations are inter-subjectively legitimated and accepted as fact. Thus, the “social construction of reality” is a process through which we render the world understandable and meaningful. As a result of this process, we no longer perceive shared representations or interpretations of reality as such and accept them instead as facts about reality or even as reality itself. However, even universally accepted representations remain just that—representations, which always admits the possibility that these representations may in fact be misrepresentations. Still, we make decisions primarily based upon social representations of reality—socially constructed facts—that are informed or guided by our own perception of reality. Given the importance of these representations in our lives, we are understandably concerned with discerning those that are true from those that are false—representations from misrepresentations. This semantic binary “representation/misrepresentation” linguistically encodes the expectation that representations be truthful. And widespread societal acceptance of a system of representations is not alone sufficient to establish the truthfulness of those representations individually or of the system as a whole.

The general acceptance of capitalist and democratic ideologies in capitalist democracies is no more proof of those ideologies’ truthfulness than the broad espousal of socialist ideology in the Soviet Union proved that ideology’s truthfulness. As systems of representations, ideologies present particular difficulties in assessing their reliability. Like language, ideology provides not

only the object to be studied but also the means by which to study it. Objectivity, at least that kind that requires a critical distance, becomes essentially impossible from within ideology, as from within language. And we are always within ideology, whatever our particular ideology may be.

Those fields and professions whose members earn their living through the creation of representations continually grapple with the ethics of representation. Whether through the professional ethical standards of journalistic organizations or the historiographical discourses within the academy, writers recognize an obligation in representation beyond simply providing true representations. There is an obligation to provide the truest representation, to select among the many options and select that representation, which will not seem to be a misrepresentation in comparison to others. Likewise among seemingly mutually exclusive ideologies, there is an obligation to select the most truthful, the one that is “right.” Thus, capitalist ideology seeks to expose the errors of socialist ideology and vice versa. The work of the historian (at least a certain kind of positivist historian) is to find facts through careful research and to craft a historical narrative from those facts, giving them meaning. Consequently, it must be recognized that the historian is, first and foremost, a storyteller. And like all storytellers, he shapes the historical narrative through selection.

Given that writing history involves the creation of narratives, Roland Barthes asks the question of whether historical discourse differs from fictive

discourse, if the modes of narration differ in each.⁶ To answer this question Barthes embarks on a semiotic analysis of the historical discourse. He claims, “fact never has any but a linguistic existence (as the term of discourse), yet everything happens as if this linguistic existence were merely a pure and simple ‘copy’ of *another* existence, situated in an extra-structural field, the ‘real.’” This claim aligns with Berger and Luckmann’s concept of the social construction of reality. Language is part of the institutionalized social system that makes “reality” possible. Thus, there is no reality that can exist outside of language. However, history works precisely through the illusion that there is a “real” past upon which it is based. Thus, Barthes provides the following analysis of the place of the “real” in the historical discourse:

Historical discourse supposes, one might say, a double operation, one that is extremely complex. In a first phase ... the referent is detached from the discourse, it becomes exterior to it, grounds it, is supposed to govern it: this is the phase of *res gestae*, and the discourse simply claims to be *historia rerum gestarum*: but in a second phase, it is the signified itself which is repulsed, merged in the referent; the referent enters into direct relation with the signifier, and the discourse, meant only to *express* the real, believes it elides the fundamental term of imaginary structures, which is the signified. Like any discourse with "realistic" claims, the discourse of history thus believes it knows only a two-term semantic schema, referent and signifier.⁷

What Barthes is suggesting through the terminology of semiotics is that historical discourse works to present representations of reality as simply untransformed

⁶ Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 127.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 138–139.

expressions of reality. For Barthes, if history works from facts, which are always already only social constructions, then history can never lay claim to expressing reality because history has no access to reality outside of these facts. Thus, historical discourse engages what Barthes calls, “the reality effect,” which is akin to Berger and Luckmann’s social construction of reality.

Berger and Luckmann and Barthes present compelling arguments for the socially-constructed nature of history. Still, Barthes statement that facts do not exist outside of linguistics or Berger and Luckmann’s claim that reality is a social construct are too strong to be acceptable as stated. They contradict our phenomenological encounter with the world that tells us there is reality beyond language and social construction. The physical sciences demand recognition of a world outside of language. Even without a linguistic means of expressing or understanding it, a water molecule has two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. That must be a fact. And it is a fact that refers to the real.

It is difficulties such as these that led John Searle to answer Berger and Luckmann with *The Construction of Social Reality*.⁸ The rearrangement of the words of Berger and Luckmann’s title signals Searle’s critique of their argument and the focus of his work. While still recognizing an element of construction in reality, Searle circumscribes this constructed reality to “portions of the real world, objective facts in the world, that are only facts by human agreement.”⁹ Searle

⁸ John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

⁹ Ibid., 1.

calls these “social and institutional facts.”¹⁰ These are facts regarding certain things, “things that exist only because we, believe them to exist.... things like money, property, governments, and marriages.” They may be objective facts about these things in the sense that the truth of the facts does not depend on individual “preferences, evaluations, or moral attitudes.” Nevertheless, these things and facts are social constructs. Searle modified the social constructionist epistemological viewpoint to include only a certain part of reality, social reality. As modified, this concept becomes particularly useful in analyzing a wide range of complicated social phenomena, both historical and contemporary. Social construction is a particularly useful term in studying the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

The term socialist construction was constantly evoked in a metaphorical and literal sense for the project of developing a socialist Soviet state and culture. This state was to be the rightful heir of the October Revolution and the heritage of Marxism-Leninism. Stalin recognized the inherently constructed nature of social life. And Stalin and other Soviet leaders of the time also realized the power of ideology to guide representation and therefore intervene in and guide the social construction of reality. At the same time these leaders were incapable of seeing how ideology shaped their representations of reality, functioning as they did within that ideology. Marxism required a particular representation of reality in order to secure belief in its central tenets. As the replacement for religion, faith was essential for the maintenance of Marxist ideology and the Soviet society built

¹⁰ Ibid., 221.

upon it. In fact, one of Marxism's primary tenets as expressed at the start of the Communist manifesto, was that, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."¹¹ This belief collapses all history into one structure, class struggle. Without clearly questioning this one representation, all Stalinist ideological efforts were built upon it.

In a 1927 journal article, S. G. Strumlin expressed the regime's belief in the power of the collective will as expressed through central planning. "We will never draw back from targets simply because their realisation is not a 100% certainty, since it is *the will of the proletariat and our plans*, concentrating that will on the struggle to achieve the task at hand, that themselves can and must be the *decisive* factor needed for their successful fulfillment," Strumlin wrote.¹² The Stalinist regime located the power to accomplish concrete material objectives in the "will of the proletariat" and the plans of the state. The regime was convinced that all reality, material and social, could be constructed or transformed purely through the will. The five-year plans begun in 1928 were a direct manifestation of that belief. All aspects of Soviet life—cultural, political, and economic—came under the control of the Party-state regime as part of the project of socialist construction.

The Soviet regime worked concertedly to control representations of reality. While the regime worked to transform the material reality to correspond to the representations it had already promulgated, the regime relied upon these

¹¹ Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, 219.

¹² Quoted in Philip Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 49.

aspirational representations to guide the stories people told themselves. Socialist construction was a specific type of social construction. It worked on both the material and psycho-sociological levels to enact the world envisioned by Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist socialist ideology. Consequently, as a reminder of the relationship between the concepts of social construction as theorized by Berger and Luckmann and socialist construction as practiced by Stalin and the Soviet regime, this practice may be referred to as social(ist) construction. It has alternatively been labeled “socialist constructivism.”¹³

It is tempting to make separating representations from misrepresentations the primary task with historical investigation of the Soviet period. However, this is always complicated by the very nature of the Soviet project to transform completely the bourgeois reality of imperial Russia into the proletarian reality of the Soviet Union. Recognizing the allusiveness of reality, particularly when studying the Stalinist Soviet Union, explicating the processes of social(ist) construction at work is more productive than attempting to define Soviet reality. Perhaps paradoxically, the reality of the Soviet Union in the 1930s was characterized by the constant transformation of reality.

The Communist Party undertook this transformation of reality in at least two distinct ways: the transformation of the material circumstances in which people lived and the transformation of the mental frameworks through which people understood and interpreted the meaning of the material circumstances that

¹³ Jeffrey K. Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2003), 230.

they experienced. One may interpret Soviet propaganda as primarily a means of deception, of somehow preventing the targets of the propaganda from understanding the truth of something. Or one may view the purpose of propaganda as convincing the targets of the truth of false propositions. One might consider the goal of propaganda to create propositional knowledge that is not really knowledge, because it is justified but not true. Implicit in this conception of Soviet propaganda is that this deception was necessary to win support for the ideology, policies, and practices of the Communist Party and Soviet government.

However, an alternative to this view of Soviet propaganda is that it simply modeled the ideological worldview espoused by the Communists. As such, it presented reality in a way that may have seemed untruthful or incorrect to those operating under different frameworks. In essence, the Communists worked on an ontological level seeking to transform reality. They also worked on an epistemological level seeking to transform how people came to know reality, how they learned facts about the social world. Both of these efforts were with the professed aim of building socialism, of social(ist) construction. But one is direct and the other indirect. An awareness of this epistemological work being conducted by the Soviet regime alerts the historian to the need to assess constantly the ideological underpinnings of every piece of evidence, or every representation provided by Soviet sources.

Just a few months after the famine of 1932/1933, in June, theatre practitioners, scholars and enthusiasts from the United States, England, France, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Finland, China and other countries traveled to Moscow

to attend the first annual Moscow Theater Festival and to experience the Soviet Union firsthand.¹⁴ The massive loss of life from the famine was only one of many of the devastating consequences of Stalin's policy of forced collectivization of agriculture and the centralization of industry. For example, one historian estimates that, at that time, workers spent 60 percent of their income on food that was rationed by the government but still limited, especially items such as meat, milk, and eggs.¹⁵ These consequences were evident throughout the Soviet Union, even in major cities like Moscow, despite the fact that these cities received a disproportionate share of food and other rations.¹⁶ In other words, the effects of Stalin's policies should have been evident to the foreigners invited to attend the Moscow Theater Festival.

Given the internal state of the Soviet Union from 1933 to 1937, when the festival was held, and the Soviet Union's constant efforts to gain credibility in other countries, especially in the United States that had granted official recognition of the Soviet Union only in 1933, the Moscow Theater Festival's existence as a beacon for foreign tourists seems remarkably ill-timed. The festival was inaugurated shortly after the devastating man-made famine. It ceased being conducted only after the peak of the Stalinist Terror in 1937, which had been instigated by official and public Party purges. While common sense might suggest that a state that governs through terror and fear would seek to limit its exposure to

¹⁴ Inturist, *Moscow Theatre Festival September 1-10 1934* (U.S.S.R.: Intourist, 1934), 8.

¹⁵ Elena Osokina, *Our Daily Bread : Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin's Russia, 1927-1941* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 91.

¹⁶ Ibid.

outsiders, the Soviet Union pursued the opposite course. It actively welcomed tourists throughout Stalin's tenure.¹⁷ As an effort at cultural diplomacy, the Moscow Theater Festival should have been a complete failure due to the volatile and repressive political and economic (and therefore cultural) environment of the Soviet Union from 1933 through 1937.

The apparent conflict between the inhospitable historical circumstances of the period and the hosting of an annual event that attracted hundreds of foreigners to the center of these circumstances instigated this investigation of the Moscow Theater Festival. The study was also motivated by the search for answers to fundamental questions that have not yet been addressed by historians such as what caused the festival to be launched, what were the aims in conducting it, how was it planned and conducted, how was it received, and what did it accomplish. The answers to these questions are necessary to assess the significance of the festivals in Soviet and theater history. However, from the outset of the inquiry there was much that supported the claim of the festival as a worthwhile research subject.

First, the Soviet theater in the 1930s remained of significant interest to the international theater community. It had already been introduced to the work of directors such as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, Aleksandr Tairov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and their theaters—the Moscow Art Theater (*Moskovskii Khudozhestvennyi Teatr* or MKhT), Nemirovich-Danchenko

¹⁷ See Samantha Kravitz, *The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929--1939* (Canada: Concordia University (Canada), 2006). and Sylvia R. Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia; the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison,: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 290.

Musical Theater (*Muzykalnyi Teatr imeni Nemirovicha-Danchenko*), Kamerny Theater (*Kamernyi Teatr*), and Meyerhold Theater (*Teatr imeni Vs. Meierkholda*)—respectively. The tours of these and other Soviet theaters in 1920s and early 1930s impressed and intrigued theater professionals around the world.

As interest in the Soviet theater increased after the Revolution and into the 1920s, individual theater directors, designers, and scholars began to travel to the Soviet Union to witness the methods of the Soviet theatrical pioneers at first hand. The first theater critics and scholars to travel to the Soviet Union to study its theater began to publish books on what they observed. American writer, journalist, and press agent Oliver Sayler published a series of works on the Soviet theater from 1920 to 1925 including *The Russian Theatre Under the Revolution*, *The Russian Theatre, The Story of the Moscow Art Theatre, 1898-1923*, and *Inside the Moscow Art Theatre*.¹⁸ English theater critic, author, and lecturer Huntly Carter published *The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia* in 1924 and *The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre, 1917-28* in 1929.¹⁹ In 1928, Joseph Gregor and René Fülöp-Miller published *Das russische Theater; sein Wesen und seine Geschichte mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Revolutionsperiode*, which was subsequently translated and published in English as *The Russian Theatre, Its*

¹⁸ Oliver Martin Sayler, *The Russian Theatre Under the Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1920); Oliver Martin Sayler, *The Russian Theatre* (New York: Brentano's, 1922); Oliver Martin Sayler, *The Story of the Moscow Art Theatre, 1898-1923* (Leipzig: Printed by C.G. Röder, 1923); Oliver Martin Sayler, *Inside the Moscow Art Theatre* (New York: Brentano's, 1925).

¹⁹ Huntly Carter, *The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia* (London: Chapman & Dodd, Ltd., 1924); Huntly Carter, *The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre, 1917-28* (London; New York: Brentano's Ltd, 1929).

*Character and History: With Especial Reference to the Revolutionary Period in 1929.*²⁰

Second, by the time the Moscow Theater Festival was introduced in 1933, Moscow had become a recognized center of theatrical innovation and a pilgrimage site for theater practitioners from around the world. It is well known that significant cultural figures such as George Bernard Shaw, Edward Gordon Craig, Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Norris Houghton, Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht, and Mei Lanfang had visited the Soviet Union to experience its theater and/or to perform during this period. That made it appear likely that some of them had attended the Moscow Theater Festival during the five years of its existence.

Additionally, the Soviet theater of the 1930s has been a popular topic for theater historians because of internal developments and conflicts within the Soviet theater also. The artistic culture of the Soviet Union immediately following the Revolution and into the 1920s accepted the coexistence of diverse artistic styles. Styles such as Futurism, Constructivism, and naturalism as well as various artistic forms in the theater such as mass Revolutionary spectacles, melodramas, comedies, naturalistic dramas, and classical works all flourished initially. However, the 1930s saw the Soviet regime reject avant-garde aesthetics in favor of Socialist Realism, which encouraged a naturalistic style and ideologically

²⁰ Joseph Gregor and René Fülöp-Miller, *Das Russische Theater; Sein Wesen Und Seine Geschichte Mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Revolutionsperiode* (Zürich: Amalthea-Verlag, 1928); Joseph Gregor and René Fülöp-Miller, *The Russian Theatre, Its Character and History: With Especial Reference to the Revolutionary Period*, trans. Paul England (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1929).

correct content. Dramatists and directors alike had difficulty fitting their own aesthetic tendencies to the new demands of Stalinist culture. What is more, the artistic tastes and preferences of Stalin and the Party were constantly shifting and unpredictable, as was the form the Soviet bureaucracy responsible for administering the arts would take. The 1930s saw changes in the structure and nature of these organizations as well as in their leadership. The Moscow Theater Festival presented an opportunity for foreign theater practitioners to witness this complicated cultural environment. It was also a chance for the Soviet regime to misrepresent the actual environment within which the Soviet theater operated. An exploration of the festival was necessary to understand the extent to which each opportunity was realized.

And finally, the Moscow Theater Festival was a multi-faceted event not easily characterized. As a tourist offering, the festival was a commercial product, part of the Soviet Union's economic activity. To the extent that it provided an opportunity for cultural diplomacy, to improve the Soviet Union's relationships with Europe and the United States, the festival was a political effort. It was also political as the Soviet regime used the festival to support its claim of Soviet socialist cultural superiority before the Soviet populace. And by virtue of being a theater festival but also a site for potential international cultural exchange, the festival was a cultural event. Only research would uncover which of these aspects—the economic, political, or cultural—dominated the festival.

There were two initial entry points into the research of the festivals. The first was Norris Houghton's brief account of his experience at the 1934 festival in the first chapter of his book on Soviet theater, *Moscow Rehearsals*.²¹ This led to seeking, finding, and studying firsthand accounts of the festival that were published in books including *Sidelights on the Soviet* by Australian playwright Doris Hayball, *Theatre in Soviet Russia* by English actor, director, and writer André van Gyseghem, and American actress Blanche Yurka's autobiography, *Bohemian Girl*.²²

The second point of entry for the research was through the archival collection of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, grandson of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Dana led tours to the festival in 1934, 1935, and 1936. He was a lecturer, researcher, and writer who studied Soviet theater as one of his primary interests. Dana compiled an extensive collection of materials related to Soviet theater, including his involvement with the festivals. Much of this is held in the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection of Russian Theatrical Scripts and Papers (MS Thr 402) in the Harvard Theater Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard College Library. The Dana Collection made evident the variety of materials available related to the festival. These included newspaper articles, programs, brochures, photographs, correspondence, and speech transcripts. This

²¹ Norris Houghton, *Moscow Rehearsals: An Account of Methods of Production in the Soviet Theatre* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936), 3–26.

²² Doris Hayball, *Sidelights on the Soviet: a Plain, Unvarnished Tale of a Trip to Russia and Its Great Theatre Festival* (Melbourne: George Batchelor Pty. Ltd, 1939); André van Gyseghem, *Theatre in Soviet Russia* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1943); Blanche Yurka, *Bohemian Girl: Blanche Yurka's Theatrical Life* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1970).

led to the discovery of a wealth of material outside of the collection. It also raised an awareness of the need to access Russian archival material, primarily at the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum, both in Moscow, in order to fully explore the festival.

The bulk of the research was archival, focusing on primary sources. Still, consulting secondary sources on a wide variety of topics was critical to placing the festival in historical context. The history of the festival is intertwined with Soviet political, cultural, and economic history. The festival also plays a part in the history of international tourism, cultural diplomacy, and the global economy. Of course, the history of Soviet and international theater of the 1930s is relevant to situating the festival. Likewise, the biographies and writings of the many persons involved in the festival from Soviet and foreign theater practitioners to Soviet government and Party officials were important. All of these different research areas help to delineate the historical web within which the Moscow Theater Festival is located.

Both in conducting the research and in constructing the historical narrative of the festival, an effort has been made to focus on the process of social(ist) construction as illuminated by the Moscow Theater Festival. The first chapter explores the festival as an economic activity through a consideration of the capitalist methods employed to sell the festival to international tourists. As a commercial endeavor, the festival was intended to contribute to the material construction of the ideal socialist society through the acquisition of foreign

currency. As such, the festival engaged in ontological social(ist) construction.

The second chapter examines how in planning the festival, the organizers focused on the increasing cultural and political significance of the festival. The festival's cultural diplomacy was an attempt at epistemological social(ist) construction. The festival was meant to influence how Soviet citizens and foreign visitors perceived the Soviet Union and the system of representations that constituted socialist ideology. The third and final chapter focuses on the festival attendees' responses to their experiences and to the festival performances. This analysis helps to assess the efficacy of the festival's effort in epistemological social(ist) construction. The conclusion considers what the festival suggests about the process of social(ist) construction. The festival is compared to another project of social(ist) construction—the building of the Moscow subway—and to the Nazi Olympics of 1936. It will be argued that a constant and critical aspect of social(ist) construction is the fusing of the concepts of politics, economics, and culture into the singular concept of socialism. Throughout it will be clear that the Moscow Theater Festival was both an object of and vehicle for social(ist) construction.

CHAPTER 1: STALIN'S COMMERCIAL THEATER

“Travel in Soviet Russia is not difficult, it is not dangerous, it is more than reasonably comfortable, it is always completely engrossing and different, and it is probably the most friendly sort of trip you could undertake,” begins a 1933 *Nation* article.¹ The author then goes on to explain how foreign tourists travel in Russia. The intent of the depiction is to reassure American tourists that traveling in Soviet Russia is just like traveling in other popular European destinations with a difference. Intourist takes a similar approach in its 1933 guidebook to tourist attractions in the Soviet Union, *Seeing the Soviet Union*. Intourist conveys the similarity of Soviet tourism by presenting itself as like other tourist agencies and its tours like other tours. Intourist also expresses the difference between Soviet tourism and tourism everywhere else. “The chief interest which brings tourists to the Land of the Soviets is certainly the novelty of its economics and the distinctive character of its new social order,” explains the guidebook.²

Communicating the similarity of Soviet tourism to other tourism provides would-be travelers a point of reference or comparison, while the difference between traveling in the Soviet Union and in other destinations generates interest. This marketing and product development strategy of differentiation is an essential mechanism of capitalism. Innovation and differentiation in products and services are what attract consumers to new offerings. However, products and services that are completely different from other products and services in the same category

¹ Amy S. Jennings, “How to Travel in Soviet in Soviet Russia,” *Nation*, May 10, 1933.

² Intourist, *Seeing the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Intourist, 1933), 3.

risk being entirely unrecognizable. Thus, new offerings are marketed so as to be comparable to other products, though still differentiated. The term differentiation implies placement in a category against which the differentiated product can be compared.

Intourist advertised tours of the Soviet Union in the same way, emphasizing their similarity to other travel while also emphasizing their distinctiveness. This approach extended to the marketing and advertising of the Moscow Theater Festival. As this chapter will show, the promotion of the festival was conducted through the mechanisms of capitalism, including product differentiation. By promoting the festival in this way, Intourist provided an aura of familiarity with a sense of enigma that obscured the significant disparities between the cultural, material, and political realities of the tourists' home countries and those of the Soviet Union.

The thoroughly capitalist mode of Intourist's promotional activities was in perfect conformity with the essentially capitalist nature of the company. Intourist was founded through a decree of the Council for Labor and Defense of Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (*Sovet Truda i Oborony pri Sovete Narodnykh Kommissarov SSSR*) on April 12, 1929. The company was formally called the State Joint Stock Company for Foreign Tourism in the USSR (*Gosudarstvennoe aktsionernoe obshchestvo po inostrannomu turizmu v SSSR*). Intourist's founding shareholders included the People's Commissariat for Foreign and Domestic Trade (*Narodnyi komissariat vneshnei i vnutrennei trgovli SSSR*), the People's Commissariat for Rail Communications (*Narodnyi komissariat putei*

soobshcheniya) and the Joint Stock Company for Naval Trade (*Sovtorgflot*). Thus, Intourist was not established as government entity but as corporation, external to the government, but wholly owned by government entities. As shareholders, these entities had claim to the surplus profit generated by Intourist without being liable for the losses or other financial liabilities of the company. Though legally Intourist was not a government agency, it was directly controlled by the Soviet regime. As a clear indication of the approach the Soviet regime took to foreign tourism, Intourist fell initially under the supervision of People's Commissariat for Foreign and Domestic Trade, one of its shareholders.³

As a state-owned monopoly, Intourist had responsibility for all foreign tourism from the "acquisition" of tourists to providing their transportation and lodging in the Soviet Union. Tourism was treated like any other industry, to be centrally planned. The first deputy chairman of Intourist, T.S. Khozyainov, described foreign tourism as, "the simplest and most profitable export."⁴ Consequently, Intourist was managed through the imposition of goals for its main performance metrics such as number of tourists acquired and amount of foreign currency generated. Along with the five-year plans in which Intourist participated, the tourist company was an important element of Stalin's plan for the rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union. In this way Intourist resembled all the other business enterprises in the Soviet Union in this period.

³ Shawn C. Salmon, "To the Land of the Future: A History of Intourist and Travel to the Soviet Union, 1929--1991" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 31.

⁴ T. Khoziainov, "O problemakh razvitiia inostrannogo turizma v SSSR; usloviia i itogi raboty A/O Inturist, perspektivy i blizhaishie zadachi," September 22, 1929, GARF f. 9612, op. 2, d. 1, n. 30-31 quoted in *Ibid.*, 32.

However, Intourist was distinguished from other Soviet enterprises by the degree to which it operated within the global capitalist system. As a state-owned joint stock company, Intourist was able to enter into contracts with foreign companies as well as to operate in foreign countries itself. In the year of its founding, Intourist established offices in Berlin, Teheran, and New York among others.⁵ By 1933, the year of the first Moscow Theater Festival, Intourist operated branches or agencies in Vienna, Prague, Istanbul, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Tokyo, Paris and London in addition to Berlin, Teheran, and New York.⁶ As with all exports, the foreign tourism industry requires sales to be executed outside the country of origin while the “product” is produced inside the country. However, unlike other exports, the experiential good of tourism is not shipped abroad. Rather, foreigners travel from abroad to consume the “product.” As with theater, the inability of consumers to see or touch or sample the tourism product before purchasing requires a particularly significant investment in marketing and sales. In the case of Intourist, this investment took the form of a global organizational infrastructure and large expenditures for advertising and publishing. In a way, Intourist’s participation in the global tourism market represented Stalin’s victory in an ideological contest over the relationship that the Soviet Union should have with the capitalist world.

One of the central areas of dispute in Stalin’s ideological contest with

⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁶ Marina Dmitrievna Kressova, “‘Inturist’ v 1929-1939 gg.: Struktura, kadry, napravleniya deyatelnosti [Intourist in the years 1929-1939: Structure, personnel, activities]” (Dissertation, Moskovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet Servisa, 2004), 71.

Leon Trotsky was the position of the Soviet Union in the wider world and in the wider proletarian revolution. Trotsky supported the idea that the success of the Soviet Union depended on the success of what was to be a worldwide socialist revolution. Stalin, on the other hand, cited Lenin in arguing that it was through the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union that revolution would be enabled in other countries.⁷ Stalin's argument became crystallized in the phrase, "socialism in one country," which was officially adopted as Party policy in the 14th Party Congress in 1925 suggesting Stalin's ideological victory over Trotsky. In 1929, Stalin achieved his final political victory over Trotsky by convincing the Politburo to banish Trotsky from the Soviet Union.⁸ Thus, Stalin was able to pursue his extreme focus on building socialism in the Soviet Union to the exclusion of devoting energy to furthering a worldwide proletarian revolution.

This ideological position was simultaneously an economic one. "Socialism in one country" enabled the course of rapid industrialization, agricultural collectivization, and urbanization that Stalin pursued in the 1930s. Stalin and other Party leaders viewed the economic development of the Soviet Union achieved through these mechanisms as not only necessary for the establishment of socialism in the country but as constitutive of the success of socialism.⁹ Consequently, the drive for industrialization and collectivization, as manifest in

⁷ Evan Mawdsley, *The Stalin Years: The Soviet Union 1929-1953*, vol. 2nd, New Frontiers in History (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 9–10, 113–115.

⁸ Martin McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, Rev. 3rd., Seminar Studies in History (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008), xiv.

⁹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 252.

the five-year plans and in the work of monopolies like Intourist, was as much an ideologically-driven political effort as an economic one. Just as the elevation of the pursuit of industrialization to a top priority was enabled by Stalin's ideological triumph over Trotsky, pursuing industrialization both required and enabled a significant amount of economic involvement with the global capitalist system.

Thus, in 1928 the Comintern or Communist International, the Communist Party organ created to lead the world socialist revolution, adopted a policy of engaging capitalist countries to the extent that doing so would help the Soviet Union achieve its short-term economic goals. The Soviet Union applied this policy with the understanding that this short-term interaction with the capitalist system was necessary to insure the long-term independence of a fully socialist Soviet Union.¹⁰ Though participation in the global capitalist system remained ideologically suspect as a necessary evil, the rapid tempo of Stalin's industrialization created significant pressure for companies like Intourist to increase their activity in this system. Stalin's constant push to hurry the pace of economic development by insisting upon the accomplishment of the first five-year plan in four years, for example, only intensified the need for Soviet firms to extract foreign currency from capitalist countries. Without this foreign currency, the Soviet Union could not purchase the heavy equipment and machinery necessary for its program of industrialization and collectivization. It is within this context that Intourist established, marketed, and conducted the Moscow Theater

¹⁰ Sylvia R. Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia; the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 22-23.

Festival during the second five-year plan (1933-1937) as part of its economic mission to generate foreign currency revenue to support the political aim of building socialism in the Soviet Union.

In operating as a multinational capitalist enterprise, Intourist adopted one of the most conspicuous and defining features of twentieth-century capitalism—an emphasis on advertising. The publicity campaigns for the festival included advertisements placed by Intourist as well as by travel agencies with whom Intourist had partnered. Advertisements by Intourist appeared in newspapers and magazines in major cities across the world. In the United States, for example, advertisements were placed in popular magazines like *The Chicagoan*, *Nation*, *Vanity Fair*, and *New Yorker*. Intourist also purchased advertising space in politically leftist publications like *New Masses* and *New Republic*. Publications focused on the arts such as *New York Stadium Concert Review*, *The Stage*, and *Theatre Arts Monthly* also featured festival ads by Intourist.¹¹ This was all in addition to advertisements in major papers including *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *London Times*. While Intourist decided where to place its own advertisements, on at least one occasion, Intourist consulted a knowledgeable partner in the local market to allocate its advertising budget most effectively.¹² The advertisements placed by Intourist created the awareness of the festivals as another option in the tourism marketplace, an option differentiated from its competitors by the nature of the

¹¹ Harry Rubin to Henry Dana, July 7, 1934, MS Thr 402, Box 31, Folder 26, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹² Ibid.

experience though of the same type.

An advertisement that appeared in the *New York Times* just two months before the start of the first festival in 1933 (figure 1) is emblematic of the most common type that Intourist used to promote the festival. In this type, the festival was presented as one of the many tour options offered by Intourist. In figure 1, Intourist advertises fifteen different tours from which the traveler may select. The “May Day in Moscow” and “Theater Festival” are the only two tours described in the advertisement. Placed along side advertisements from other travel agencies in the European hotels and resorts section, this ad does little to highlight the unique nature of traveling in the Soviet Union. The iconographic images of monumental neoclassical buildings, oil derricks, palm trees, factories, an airplane, and a farm

TOUR THE SOVIET UNION

Visit this amazing land at reduced travel rates . . . 15 tours to choose from . . . 5 to 31 days. Price includes Intourist hotels, meals, guide-interpreters, Soviet visa and transportation from starting to ending point in the Soviet Union. Price does not include round-trip passage to the Soviet Union.

MAY DAY IN MOSCOW
See the Soviet World pass in review Special border-to-border rail and tourist concessions for May celebrations.

THEATER FESTIVAL
The best in opera, ballet, and drama in a colorful 10-day festival, beginning June 1st. Tourists may see Soviet backstage life, theatrical schools and museums.

Write for Folder 13.

INTOURIST, INC.
U. S. Representative of the State Travel Bureau of the U. S. S. R., 545 Fifth Ave., New York. Offices in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. Or see your own travel agent.

Fig. 1 Intourist advertisement
(*New York Times*, April 2, 1933)

worker, among others, are meant to suggest the breadth of tourist experiences available in the Soviet Union from Black Sea resorts and cultured cities to new industrial enterprises and collective farms. The Soviet Union is described as “this amazing land,” eschewing any explicit claims about the distinctiveness of Soviet tourism, though the combination of images makes its own implicit claim. In this context, the festival is described straightforwardly as “the best in opera, ballet, and drama in a colorful 10-day festival.” The advertisement also indicates that festival attendees will have the opportunity to visit other theatrical institutions such as schools and museums.

The other type of advertisement used by Intourist to promote the festival advertised it exclusively, such as in figure 2. This advertisement, also for the first

**MOSCOW
THEATER FESTIVAL**
June 1st to June 10th

An epoch-making event offering the American visitor his first opportunity to see the most significant achievements of the Soviet drama, ballet, and opera. Memorable productions arranged by world-famous producers, and played by the foremost artists and performers. Lectures by leading authorities. Tourists will see Soviet backstage life, theatrical schools and museums, as well as join in sightseeing tours to chief points of interest in Moscow.

**FIRST CLASS \$150
TOURIST \$85
SPECIAL \$50**

Price includes Intourist hotels, meals, guide-interpreters, attendance at all events, transportation about Moscow, and Soviet visa. Price does not include rail fare in Soviet Union to and from Moscow, which however, is reduced for tourists. Price does not include round trip passage to the Soviet Union.

Write for folder 13

**TOUR THE
SOVIET
UNION**

**INTOURIST
INCORPORATED**
U. S. Representative of the State
Travel Bureau of the U. S. S. R.,
545 Fifth Avenue, New York.
Offices in Boston, Chicago and
San Francisco. Or see your own
travel agent.

Fig. 2 Festival advertisement
(April 9, 1933, *New York Times*)

festival, incorporates the imagery of the general Intourist advertisement (figure 1) while adding language that articulates the unique value proposition of the festival being made to the potential consumer. First, the advertisement calls the festival an “epoch-making event offering the American visitor his first opportunity to see the most significant achievements of the Soviet drama, ballet, and opera.”¹³ As this is the first festival, the move to tie the significance of the 1933 festival to its never having occurred before is entirely predictable. However, suggesting that the festival represents “the American [visitor’s]” first opportunity for exposure to the achievements of Soviet theater is both perplexing and revealing.

Intourist’s belief in the possibility of the economic success of the festival was based upon the widespread renown of such Soviet directors as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Aleksandr Tairov. By 1933, the work of these directors and their companies had become famous through their multiple tours through Europe and the United States¹⁴ and through the writings of European and American theater practitioners and scholars—such as Huntly Carter, Oliver Sayler, and Henry Dana—who traveled to the Soviet Union to study its theatre.¹⁵ Thus, it is perplexing that the festival should be billed as a “first opportunity” to experience Soviet theatre. However, resolving this apparent contradiction reveals important information about who the advertisement’s

¹³ “Advertisement,” *New York Times*, April 9, 1933.

¹⁴ While a Soviet theater company had not toured the United States since 1922-1923, these early tours established the reputation that grew over time.

¹⁵ For insight into the acclaim of the Russian and Soviet theatre in Europe and the United States in the early twentieth century see Laurence Senelick, ed., *Wandering Stars: Russian Emigré Theatre, 1905-1940*, Studies in Theatre History and Culture (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

intended audience was and intended nature of the works to be shown at the festival.

One way to make sense of this claim of the festival as the “first opportunity” for the American tourist to see the Soviet theatre is to read this as an indication of the target audience for both the advertisement and the festival. Most likely, the advertisement was aimed at would-be first-time visitors to the Soviet Union, at Recreational tourists rather than communists, fellow travelers, or theater practitioners or scholars. Despite how Intourist would later try to portray the festival as a site of cultural exchange for Soviet and Western intelligentsia, the primary targets of its advertisements were those members of the middle class for whom European travel was fairly commonplace but who had not yet visited the Soviet Union. It is for this group of people that the festival would have represented a “first opportunity” to experience the Soviet theater.

There is still another sense in which this claim that the festival provided the first chance to “see the most significant achievements of the Soviet drama, ballet, and opera,” could apply to even those who had already seen theater in the Soviet Union. The advertisement suggests that the works at the festival would represent to “most significant achievements” of Soviet theatre because they had only recently been created. This could be either because earlier works were not as “significant” or because they were not sufficiently Soviet. As with all labels that refer to nation-states and nation, that is to specific geopolitical entities and cultural-ideological identities, “Soviet” employs a double meaning in this advertisement and in most of the advertising for the festival. “Soviet” theater here

means theatre produced in the Soviet Union but also theatre that manifests the socialist ideology of the Communist Party that controls the Soviet state. Thus, not all Soviet theater (in the former meaning) was Soviet theater (in the latter meaning). Although the advertisement is ambiguous, given the American imaginary at the time that constructed the Soviet Union as a land dominated by ideology, it is reasonable to conclude that Intourist was advertising theater that was Soviet by virtue of its form and content and not just by virtue of its origin. For example, the theaters of the national republics, also referred to as national theaters, which many would have seen for the first time at the festival, were Soviet in both senses because the Soviet regime's support of these theaters was itself an expression of its ideology concerning national minorities. The desire to showcase theater that was Soviet in both senses became more evident in the meetings of the festival planners when choosing the festival repertoire, which is discussed in the next chapter.

After 1933, Intourist continued to run general Intourist advertisements that mentioned the festival and advertisements that focused on the festival exclusively. Both types of advertisements became more specific about the nature and benefits of the tourist experience being sold. For the general Intourist advertisements, this involved emphasizing the uniqueness of Soviet life. A 1934 advertisement that appeared in major U.S. newspapers called visiting the Soviet Union, "the most interesting trip in the world," inviting tourists to "see what the Soviets are doing with their new way of life." The advertisement was also more specific about the festival. It indicated that Sayler and Dana were leading tours. It also provided

more detail on the programming saying, “The brilliant program announced ranges from Borodin, Rossini and Shakespeare, to such modern pieces as, ‘Intervention’, ‘Armored Train’, ‘The Negro Boy and the Ape’—all done by Moscow’s world-renowned directors and artists.”¹⁶

In London during the same month, the festival-specific advertisements in the *Times* were very basic, announcing only the dates of festival.¹⁷ However, the advertisements in the United States included more information, such as one in the *Boston Globe* that included the same program description as above with a statement highlighting the relatively inexpensive nature of the trip, “All-inclusive costs are very low, the entire Festival may be visited for as little as \$77 for ten days in Moscow—including tickets.”¹⁸ The low cost was one of the primary benefits the advertisements emphasized, often in conjunction with the uniqueness of Soviet tourism, such as in a 1935 advertisement that declared, “You, too, will proclaim the U.S.S.R the most vitally interesting of all countries ... and an outstanding travel value as well” (ellipses in original).¹⁹ Advertisements that declared travel to the Soviet Union, “Recreation amid scenes of re-creation,”²⁰ the “most vitally interesting of all countries,” and an “outstanding value,” listed the festival as one of the year’s “special attractions.”²¹

In 1936 and 1937, Intourist advertisements promoting Soviet tourism

¹⁶ “Advertisement,” *Boston Globe*, June 3, 1934.

¹⁷ “Advertisement,” *Times*, July 6, 1934.

¹⁸ “Advertisement,” *Boston Globe*, July 22, 1934.

¹⁹ “Advertisement,” *New York Times* (United States, New York, N.Y., March 26, 1935).

²⁰ “Advertisement,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1935.

²¹ “Advertisement,” *Washington Post*, May 12, 1935.

generally but that featured the festival were the most common type of festival advertisements found in newspapers and magazines. With headings like, “To the Soviet Union this Summer,” (fig. 3) these advertisements paired general enticements such as “progress being recorded by the 175 million people,” “a rejuvenated people untiringly pursuing their new way of life,”²² and the “a new travel experience filled with the excitement and adventure of seeing the largest land in the world being remade by its 175 million people,”²³ with statements about the festival that increasingly emphasized famous directors. “Outstanding directors such as Meyerhold, Stanislavski, Tairov ... will produce their best works,” proclaimed one advertisement, calling the festival, a “feast of all the theatrical arts.”²⁴ Another announced, “world famous Soviet theatres will stage the foremost productions of their most famous directors and artists.”²⁵ A 1936 advertisement featuring a picture of the Bolshoi Theater that ran in the theater section of major U.S. newspapers stated, “For the fourth successive year, the leaders of the Soviet theatre, opera, ballet and screen, have arranged a program of the outstanding productions from their famous repertoires.”²⁶ While the truthfulness of this claim will be discussed in the following chapter, promoting the festivals as the product of the Soviet artistic leadership was clearly a marketing strategy intended to make the festival more appealing to tourists, especially those with a particular interest in Soviet theatre.

²² “Advertisement,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1936.

²³ “Advertisement,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 1936.

²⁴ “Advertisement.”

²⁵ “Advertisement.”

²⁶ “Advertisement,” *Boston Globe*, June 7, 1936.

85 ORGANIZED GROUPS

The great interest centered in the Soviet Union this summer by the individual tourist is exemplified by the fact that more than 85 groups of Americans have organized themselves to visit the Soviet Union. These groups are organized by the Intourist, Inc., and will visit the Soviet Union during the summer months of 1936. The groups are organized by the Intourist, Inc., and will visit the Soviet Union during the summer months of 1936. The groups are organized by the Intourist, Inc., and will visit the Soviet Union during the summer months of 1936.

TO THE SOVIET UNION this Summer

THEATRE FESTIVAL
Moscow-Leningrad
September 1 to 10

These performances are the most important in the world. Some of the best actors in the world are taking part in these performances. The performances are the most important in the world. Some of the best actors in the world are taking part in these performances.

INTOURIST, INC.
545 Fifth Avenue, New York

Please send an illustrated Brochure and colored Map of the Soviet Union.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

INTOURIST, INC.
545 Fifth Avenue, New York

APPLY TO YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

PLANNING a Europe trip this summer, you will certainly want to include the Soviet Union. See for yourself the progress being recorded by the 175 million people who inhabit the largest of all countries. Time pressing, just a few days in Leningrad and Moscow will help to give you a picture of what is happening in the land of the Soviets. You will be rewarded by vivid impressions of a rejuvenated people uniting their new way of life. Longer stayers can cruise down the Volga, cross the Caucasus range by motor, sail along the Black Sea Riviera, sojourn in lovely Crimea, visit the Ukrainian centers, Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa. Leading steamship lines and travel bureaus are co-operating to include Soviet ports of call in their European bound cruises this season, both at Leningrad and, in the Black Sea, at Yalta. Fast air, train and boat connections put the metropolitan centers of the U.S.S.R. within easy reach of more western continental cities, as indicated by map. . . . Moderate, all-inclusive rates on tours ranging from five to thirty-one days are as low as \$15 per day first class, \$9 tourist and \$5 third . . . these include fine hotels, meals in cities and enroute, transportation on tour, daily sightseeing by car and the services of trained guide-interpreters. On your free time there are only a couple of hours sightseeing go where you please and see what you want, wherever you are . . . travel incidents are moderate at the new dollar-rouble exchange rate. Intourist will be glad to send you (see coupon at lower left) its 22" x 16" colored map of the U.S.S.R. and Europe and its illustrated booklet No. 13.

Fig. 3 Intourist advertisement
(*New York Times*, April 12, 1936)

The alleged cultural significance and artistic legitimacy of the festivals were alluded to in a large portion of the advertisements Intourist placed in newspapers and magazines, but these characteristics were more fully elaborated upon in richly illustrated brochures published by Intourist. These brochures were available at Intourist offices as well as at offices of tourist agencies that partnered with Intourist. Prospective tourists could also request them from Intourist and other travel agencies by mail. These brochures were one of the primary means by which Intourist sought to overcome the main challenge in marketing experiential goods like tourism—that consumers cannot know in advance of purchasing and consuming an experience whether they will actually enjoy it.

While non-experiential goods such as manufactured consumer products can be tested to determine whether a consumer will purchase it in the future, the ephemeral nature of experiential goods makes it such that each instance of the

experience varies from the previous. There is no guarantee that if one enjoys a theatrical performance on a Saturday that one will enjoy a performance of the same production the following day. Further, the evaluation of experiential goods, especially cultural goods, tends to be highly subjective making it difficult for individuals to gather information they consider credible on which to base their purchasing decisions. These marketing difficulties increase the importance of word of mouth. They also lead companies selling experiential goods to try to find other ways to provide as much of a preview as possible of what the experience will be like. While this role is filled by video clips and live performances on television shows for contemporary Broadway musicals, for the Moscow Theater Festival, the role was filled by the brochures published by Intourist.

Intourist brochures advertising the festival generally came in two formats: trifold and booklet. The trifold was an intermediate step between the newspaper advertisement and booklet in terms of the information it provided the prospective tourist. In addition to the planned program for the festival, these brochures contained promotional text meant to explain the artistic significance of the festival. This is especially true in the trifold circulated in the United States for the first festival in 1933. The pamphlet first provides a basic description of what the festival would include: “performances in Moscow’s leading theaters, ...interviews...lectures,” and an introduction to “the everyday work of the theaters, theatrical schools, conservatories and museums.”²⁷ The pamphlet then

²⁷ “Moscow Theater Festival June 1st-10th 1933”, 1933, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, MS Thr 402, Box 31, Folder 23, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

begins to elaborate on the nature of the festival in more specific terms:

This tribute to the arts of the stage has been arranged by the leading producers and artists of the Moscow theater world. Stanislavsky, Nemerovitch-Danchenko, Tairov, Meyerhold—these men have made stage history. Moskvina, Leonidov, Kachalov, Geltzer, Semionova—these performers are recognized the world over as exceptional exponents of drama and ballet. They have selected some of their most memorable productions for the festival. Among the authorities who will lecture to visitors on the Soviet Theater are: A. Lunacharsky, A. Tairov, K. Stanislavsky, and Prof. Goldenweiser.²⁸

Much as a news story begins with a hook, something to draw in the reader and motivate his interest in the rest of the story, Intourist placed the information that it felt would most capture the interest of the prospective tourist at the start of the trifold.

The evocation of the names of famous directors and performers was meant to signal the artistic legitimacy and significance of the festival. The involvement of these established and respected artists suggested to the tourist that the festival was not only a tourist attraction but a legitimate act of artistic expression. Simultaneously, by evoking these names together in the trifold, Intourist was suggesting that the significance of the festival was in being able to experience the art of all of these leading figures of Soviet theater in one trip, in one short time period. Had Intourist stopped only at establishing the significance of the festival

²⁸ Ibid.

by listing the artists involved, the representation of the festival presented in the trifold might have been accurate. But in asserting that the directors and actors selected the works for the festival, Intourist is misrepresenting reality for the purposes of selling a product.

This one false assertion taints the true claims Intourist makes in the trifold. It confirms what is obvious, given the nature of advertisements, that everything printed in the trifold brochure is for the purpose of generating revenue through sales. Intourist constructed the festival as an artistic and cultural event for a commercial purpose, but in doing so the company actually created a commercial product masquerading as a cultural event. This was enabled by the fact that the ultimate building blocks of the festival were theatrical productions directed and performed by artists who had international reputations. These artists were pursuing artistic goals rather than commercial ones. But the festival consisted of more than simply the theatrical productions on the program. The festival was a coordinated combination of many different elements including these theatrical productions. Thus, the festival cannot be reduced to its constituent parts and analyzed on the basis of those parts. Rather, the festival is best understood as a totality, as an event in and of itself, with its own characteristics apart from the theatrical productions that are its most prominent feature. Intourist's efforts to tie the nature of the festival to the directors, actors, theatres, and productions through its advertising was an effort to conceal the truly commercial nature of the festival in order to improve the chance of commercial success. Thus, in all its publications and advertisements Intourist downplayed its own role in the organization of the

festival focusing instead on the artists and theaters involved and falsely asserted that these artists, not Intourist, planned the festival.

Consequently, in the 1933 trifold after mentioning the artists involved and claiming they “arranged” the festival, Intourist then focuses on specific theatres: the Bolshoi Theater, here referred to as “The Grand Opera House and Ballet”; the First Moscow Art Theater; and the Moscow Kamerny Theater. Within the limited space of the trifold, focusing on only three theaters allowed the brochure to provide more specific description of certain elements of the festival. While of course mentioning the key figures related to each production, the main function of the description was to capture concisely the nature of each production highlighted. Thus, Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera *Pskovityanka* (*The Maid of Pskov*) that played at the Bolshoi was summarized with the statement, “The peculiarities of 16th century Russian life are reproduced with great skill and inventiveness.” Mikhail Bulgakov’s adaptation of *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol at the Moscow Art Theater was described as a play that “will show the audience the terrifying countenance of old Russia.” Aleksandr Tairov’s staging of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* by Eugène Scribe, master of the well-made play, at the Kamerny Theater was called a “faithful picture of France two hundred years ago.” It is notable that the genre of the works was not considered important enough to mention in these brief descriptions.

Each of these descriptions helped the prospective tourist get a sense of the productions. Each also contained a justification for its inclusion in a Soviet theater festival where imperial Russia and eighteenth-century France might have been



Fig. 4 Photograph from Moscow Art Theater production of *Armored Train* from a 1933 festival brochure (Harvard Theatre Collection)



Fig. 5 Photograph from the Kamerny Theater production of the *Adrienne Lecouvreur* from a 1933 festival brochure (Harvard Theatre Collection)



Fig. 6 Photograph from the ballet *The Red Poppy* at the Bolshoi Theater from a 1933 festival brochure (Harvard Theatre Collection)

questionable subjects for dramatic representation. However, the masterfulness of representation or its effectiveness in depicting the negative aspects of the otherwise objectionable period rendered these productions acceptable for the Moscow Theater Festival. The inclusion of these justifications in the trifold brochure aimed at prospective foreign tourists for whom these productions would not have been problematic suggests the pressure Intourist faced at least to pay lip service to socialist ideology while conducting its commercial activities in the global capitalist system.

Still, the publication of the trifold brochures served a commercial purpose not an ideological one, and it was with the hopes of attracting tourists that, in addition to text describing the festival overall and individual productions, Intourist featured photographs as a prominent element of these brochures. The 1933 brochure included photographs of the directors and leading actors mentioned in the text, as well as photographs from productions on the festival program and described in the brochure. The cover of the brochure was filled almost entirely by a photograph of the production of *Armored Train* (figure 4) at the Moscow Art Theater while the center of the inside of the brochure was occupied by a photograph of the production of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (figure 5). The back of the brochure contained a photograph from the ballet *The Red Poppy* (figure 6) that played at the Bolshoi Theater. While photographs of the Soviet theater circulated in publications dedicated to theater, they were not familiar to the average tourist. Whereas cost prohibited Intourist from publishing many photographs its newspaper advertisements, the brochures allowed space for photographs, both in

the trifolds, and even more so, in Intourist's booklets dedicated to the festivals.

While the newspaper advertisements for the festival located the event within the commercial marketplace of foreign tourism, and the trifold brochures elaborated on the artistic nature of the festival, Intourist's festival booklets emphasized the political significance of the festivals. The twenty-to-thirty-page booklets afforded Intourist space to showcase the productions while also placing them and the festival in a broader socio-political context. Still, across these different types of advertising the purpose remained the same – to entice tourists to purchase festival tour packages. Thus, as with many aspects of the festival, the propagandistic language of the booklets was another element of Intourist's traditionally capitalist marketing strategy.

“To see the Moscow Theatre Festival is to get a perspective of the whole sweep of Soviet achievement in the fields of the drama, the opera, and the ballet,”²⁹ begins the 1934 booklet. On the one hand, this statement speaks to the artistic nature and purpose of the festival; on the other hand, the claim that the festival gave access to “the whole sweep of Soviet achievement,” even if just theatrical achievement, echoes the statements such as those that advertised travel to the Soviet Union as a means of seeing “a rejuvenated people untiringly pursuing their new way of life.”³⁰ Whether in newspapers advertisements or festival booklets, these statements promoted the idea of the superiority of Soviet society, and by implication, Soviet ideology.

²⁹ Intourist, *Moscow Theatre Festival September 1-10, 1934* (U.S.S.R.: Intourist, 1934).

³⁰ “Advertisement.”

The 1934 booklet continued in its opening paragraph, “Like a colorful pageant the art of the traditional Russian stage, enriched by the new revolutionary art of the USSR, passes before the visitor.” As will be shown in subsequent chapters, festival planners hotly debated the role of new socialist Soviet dramatic works in the festival. Still, they never considered it prudent to exclude completely the traditional, pre-Revolutionary repertoire and the companies, like the Bolshoi and Moscow Art Theater, which were most closely associated with this repertoire. The festival planners were fully aware that any success the festival experienced could be attributed in large part to the widespread acclaim achieved by pre-Revolutionary theatrical companies and artists. Nevertheless, there was significant emphasis placed on the contribution to the festival of plays and companies developed after the Revolution. These works were included in the festival to present the most accurate and timely impression of the results of the Soviet social, political, economical, and cultural experiment. Thus, the booklet described the festival, not as an overview of theater in the capital city, or of Russian theater but as, “a survey of the dramatic art of the peoples inhabiting one-sixth of the world ... compressed within ten vivid days.”³¹

The 1935 booklet began with a story of the Moscow theatrical scene coming to life in the evening. First the prop men enter the theatres. “At seven the theatre-goers appear on the streets,” continued the booklet. “They make their way to the theatres by taxi, tram, bus, suburban train, and by the subway. There are 52,000 of them every day. At this hour of the evening the streets of Moscow teem

³¹ Intourist, *Moscow Theatre Festival September 1-10, 1934*.

with them.”³² Shortly afterwards, the curtains rise at forty theaters. “Before the Revolution, Moscow had nine theatres of opera, ballet and drama. It now has forty,” the booklet informed readers. These numbers of spectators and theatres were critical to connecting the narrative of post-Revolutionary theatrical development to the narrative of social(ist) construction:

People have become theatre-goers who before the Revolution had no conception of the theatre.

After the Revolution, all kinds of new things entered the new flats of the workers. Among these were season tickets for theatres.

Since the Revolution, 125 entirely new theatres have been built. These are, for the most part, workers' club theatres. ...

In the evening people, who before the Revolution knew neither theatre nor cinema, watch the best actors of the Republic in new clubs that resemble palaces.

... There is the same colour and finish to the theatrical performances in these once neglected outskirts of the city as in the central squares of the metropolis.³³

The festival planners presented the theatrical activity of Moscow as a microcosm of both the theatrical activity of the Soviet Union and the social development enabled by socialism. The festival was thus marketed to tourists not only as an opportunity to experience Soviet cultural progress, but also to witness the project of Soviet social(ist) construction. As the booklet put it, “These are the theatres,” revived and inspired by the Revolution, “to which Moscow invites its guests at the

³² *Moscow Theatre Festival* (Intourist, 1935), 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

annual Theatre Festivals.”³⁴

While the festival booklets especially highlighted the opportunity for tourists to witness social(ist) construction, this particular marketing appeal underlay most of the advertising for the festival and much of Intourist’s advertising in general. Intourist was undoubtedly responding to widespread interest in the Soviet experiment that had been cultivated by the reports of the American intellectuals who had traveled to the Soviet Union from immediately after the Revolution to just before the creation of the festival. As one historian has outlined, almost immediately upon its inception, the “Soviet experiment” was seen as an opportunity to learn lessons that could be beneficial to the United States prompting a “procession of social workers, artists, labor leaders, educators, social scientists, businessmen and representatives of ethnic minorities” to the Soviet Union.³⁵ From dancer and choreographer Isadora Duncan to journalist John Reed, the reports of these American visitors to the Soviet Union published in the United States helped to generate an interest in the Soviet Union in the wider American public.

The Depression affected the already established popular American interest in the Soviet Union in multiple ways. The Depression drove technical workers by the hundreds to a Soviet Union in desperate need of their skills, resulting in more

³⁴ Ibid., 6.

³⁵ Lewis S. Feuer, “American Travelers to the Soviet Union 1917-32: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology,” *American Quarterly* 14, no. 2, Part 1 (Summer 1962): pp. 119–149.

than a thousand American workers there by the 1930s.³⁶ Additionally, the social and economic challenges caused by the Depression and the seemingly rapid social and economic transformation of the Soviet Union inspired many Americans to view it as a source of ideas and lessons that could be applied to the American situation. However, this was not exclusively an American interest.

The effects of the Depression were felt beyond the borders of the United States. Consequently, the eyes of people around the world turned towards the Soviet Union as a potential alternative to the capitalism that had brought about the difficulties they were experiencing.³⁷ Along with the general public, the international scholarly community sought accurate information about the developing regime.³⁸ Around the world, interest in the Soviet Union was strong. During this time, the Soviet Union offered American tourists a place to which they could escape from the atmosphere of the Depression, a place where they could still maintain hope for the future.³⁹ To tourists around the world the Soviet Union offered, if not hope and redemption, novelty and curiosity. The sizable market for tourists to the new country drew travel agencies around the world to partner with Intourist in promoting and booking tourism to the Soviet Union.

These business partnerships were mutually beneficial to Intourist and the

³⁶ Ibid.; Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia; the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937*.

³⁷ Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia; the Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937*, 10–12.

³⁸ Bernard Pares, “English Books on Soviet Russia,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 10, no. 30 (April 1, 1932): 525–546.

³⁹ Samantha Kravitz, “The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929--1939” (Dissertation, Concordia University (Canada), 2006), 6.

other firms, including large multinational companies like American Express and Thomas Cook & Son (then recently acquired by Wagons-Lits), smaller firms like The Open Road and Edutrail, and even non-profit travel agencies like the University Travel Bureau. While Intourist had a monopoly on providing lodging, food, transportation, interpretation and guide services, and other travel services required by tourists once they reached the Soviet Union, it did not provide these services en route to the country. Intourist's partners provided passage to the Soviet Union, often as part of tour packages that included other parts of Europe and often with guides who shared the nationality of the tourist groups' members. These partnerships were critical in marketing the Soviet Union as a tourist destination. This arrangement leveraged the experience and trust represented by these established travel brands in combination with the novelty of the Soviet Union as a travel destination to capitalize on the significant interest in the new country.

In marketing the Moscow Theater Festival, Intourist's partners took essentially the same approach as Intourist with respect to advertising. They used a mix of newspaper advertisements to spark the tourist's interest and brochures to provide the details. Of course, the similarity in the approaches of Intourist and the other firms was due to the fact that, at its inception, Intourist intentionally modeled its business methods on those of the successful and established travel agencies with which it would come to partner. However, these partner agencies contributed more than operational savvy and experience with their local customers. These firms used their trusted brands to sale a tourist experience that

was a combination of Intourist's Moscow Theater Festival and the partner agency's own tour, that is to say, a combination of something foreign and something familiar. The combination of these elements is immediately clear in the newspaper advertisements these agencies used to promote the festival.

On reviewing the newspaper advertisements produced by the agencies that partnered with Intourist, one is struck by their consistent visual structure. Each was anchored at the top with an announcement of the focus of the tour, "visiting Soviet Russia,"⁴⁰ "Soviet Theatre Festival,"⁴¹ or even, "Socialism and Fascism," in an advertisement for tours to the Soviet Union and Germany. At the bottom of each advertisement were the firm's name and usually its logo. This format, of course, was not unique to advertisements for the Moscow Theater Festival. Most tourism advertisements were laid out this way. The result was to emphasize the novelty of the destination while providing the reassurance that comes through a trusted brand. The purpose of branding, as a marketing practice, has always been to decrease the consumer's feeling of uncertainty inherent in any purchase.⁴² This uncertainty is heightened when the goods or services being sold are experiential rather than utilitarian. Combining tourism and theater, two experiential goods, the Moscow Theater Festival was in particular need of association with the strong brands provided by its partners. However, the partnership with these agencies brought more than brand recognition, it transformed the nature of the good being offered to the consumer from a mass market good to a more customized one.

⁴⁰ "Advertisement," *New York Times*, May 31, 1936.

⁴¹ "Advertisement," *New York Times*, July 26, 1936.

⁴² Rita Clifton and John Simmons, *Brands and Branding*, 1st ed. (Bloomberg Press, 2004).

MUSICAL RUSSIA

The great Musical Festival will be held in Leningrad this June. The world-renowned Festival of the Theatre will take place in Moscow in September. To attend either is not expensive. Travel in the U. S. S. R. costs only \$15 a day First Class, \$8 a day Tourist Class. Full arrangements can be made at any office of the

AMERICAN EXPRESS
 "Intourist" Representatives



Fig. 7 Advertisement
 (North American Review, May 1934: 7)

THE FAMOUS

... **MOSCOW**
THEATRE FESTIVAL

... TEN DAYS IN MOSCOW WITH
 TICKETS, FOR AS LITTLE AS \$77

THERE'S a stimulus and a challenge about Moscow which the whole world feels. To the many other reasons for going there add the MOSCOW THEATRE FESTIVAL. Here is the quintessence of today's most vital theatre.

Ten first rank repertory companies... a program of unprecedented importance and variety... drama, opera, ballet, tragedy, comedy, fantasy. And you can see these companies nowhere but in Moscow.

The dates are Sept. 1 to 10. Go for the FESTIVAL itself... or prolong your stay. Moscow, and the U.S.S.R., offer a new vacation land and a vaster theatre—the one of social change. Official FESTIVAL program on request... substitutions will be possible. Write for descriptive circular... and consult us freely on other travel in the U.S.S.R.

COOK'S
 FOR
 VACATIONS
 EVERYWHERE

Thos. Cook & Son—Wagons-Lits Inc.
 387 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 1-100
 523 Broadway, Bk. 7-7100... Hotel Tel. Cl. 7-4000
 Weldon-Armstrong Hotel, WI. 5-3460 (Open 11:00 P.M. daily)

Fig. 8 Advertisement
 (New York Times, July 10, 1934)

**VISITING
SOVIET RUSSIA
with Experts**

•

Louis Fischer's Group—Behind the scenes with one who has lived 13 years in the Soviet Union. Special services and comforts. 5 weeks in Russia with Tourist passage..... **\$850**

•

Julien Bryan's Group — Great centers and places seldom seen by tourists. One month in Russia with Third Class passage..... **\$575**

•

Joshua Kunitz's Group—A comprehensive itinerary. One month in Russia with Third Class passage.... **\$469**

•

Other trips of a month or more in Soviet Russia from
\$372

Or you may travel on your own.
Don't forget the Fourth Moscow Theatre Festival, Sept. 1 — 10.
Booklets on request

 **THE
OPEN ROAD**
Soviet Travel Section
8 West 40th St., New York
Cooperating With Intourist

Fig. 9 Advertisement
(New York Times, May 31, 1936)

Get a
**BACKSTAGE
 VIEW**
 of the
**SOVIET
 THEATRE
 FESTIVAL**

with
ALEXANDER BASY
 Director
Amasov Artists' Bureau

The most brilliant theatres in the world will stage their finest twelve productions in Moscow for seven days and in Leningrad for three between September 1st and 10th. Under the expert leadership of Alexander Basy, American theatre lovers are invited to participate. The tour will include not merely the theatres themselves but backstage conferences with artists and directors and visits to theatrical workers' clubs. On a shorter itinerary you visit Paris and London also . . . On a longer—Warsaw, the Ukraine, Crimea, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, London. Rates include tourist class at sea and travel expense ashore.

Sailing

AUG. 12	AUG. 19
in the	in the
QUEEN MARY	AQUITANIA
46 days	39 days
\$589	\$498

For literature and reservations apply to

EDUTRAVEL

An Institute for Educational Travel
 535 Fifth Avenue, New York

Land tours in Europe in conjunction with
 Amerop Travel Service, Inc. (in U. S. S. R.,
 in cooperation with Intourist, Inc.).

Fig. 10 Advertisement
 (New York Times, July 26, 1936)

**MOSCOW
MAY DAY**
and the
**SOVIET
THEATRE**
in
Leningrad, Moscow,
Kharkov, Kiev
under leadership of
NORRIS HOUGHTON
author of "Moscow Rehearsals"

See the Soviet Union in the
festival month of May when
theatres and other activities
are in full swing.

Sailing April 14, back in New
York May 23.

PRICE, INCLUDING
THEATRE TICKETS

\$387

Other Tours from	\$394
------------------------	--------------

THE  **OPEN ROAD**
Soviet Travel Section
8 West 40th Street
New York
Cooperating with Intourist

Fig. 11 Non-Festival Advertisement
(*New York Times*, February 28, 1937)

TRAVEL in Select Small Groups

EUROPE

*Guests in Europe. For students only. Student hosts and guides abroad. France, England, Holland, Belgium, six days in the Alps, choice of Italy, Central Europe and Scandinavia. Sailing June 30. **\$659**
8½ weeks.....

EUROPE and RUSSIA

*Public Housing. Leader: Helen Alfred, Director, National Public Housing Conference. England, Holland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark. Sailing June 23. **\$670**
8 weeks.....

*American Student Union Tour. Leader: James Wechsler. For students only. Social inquiry in France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, England. Sailing July 3. **\$499**
8 weeks.....

RUSSIA

*General Survey Tour. Leader: Robert Magidoff, literary worker in Moscow since 1935. Sailing July 3. **\$399**
8 weeks.....

*A Travel "Collective." Leader: Dr. Joshua Kunitz, journalist, now living in Moscow. Sailing July 3. **\$543**
8 weeks.....

*Theatre Festival Tour. Leader: Will Geer of New Theatre League. 5 weeks in Russia, including Theatre Festival. Sailing July 28. **\$595**
7½ weeks.....

*Julien Bryan's Sixth Annual Trip through the highways and byways of the Soviet Union. Sailing July 10. **\$694**
9 weeks.....

†A Public Health Survey. Leader: John A. Kingsbury, co-author "Red Medicine." Program arranged by Commissariat of Public Health. Sailing July 10. **\$797**
9 weeks.....

†Open Road Travel Seminar. Leader: Anna Louise Strong, author "The New Soviet Constitution" etc.; just back from 15 years in Russia. Sailing July 4. **\$895**
9 weeks.....

† Tourist Steamship Passage

*Third-Class Steamship Passage

Consult your travel agent or
write direct to

THE  **OPEN ROAD**

Soviet Travel Section
8 West 40th Street New York
Cooperating with Intourist

Fig. 12 Advertisement
(New York Times, May 23, 1937)

SOCIALISM and FASCISM

TOURS of INQUIRY for COLLEGE STUDENTS

*Tour of Italy. Italian art, picturesque-
ness and contemporary life combined
with a Mediterranean cruise. Sailing
June 26. Seven weeks **\$325**

*Tour of Germany. The Rhine, the Ba-
varian Alps and the most interesting
German cities. Sailing June 27. Six weeks **\$326**

*Europe and Russia (auspices American
Student Union). France, Austria,
Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia, Fin-
land, Sweden, Denmark, England.
Sailing July 3. Eight weeks **\$499**

RUSSIAN TOURS for STUDENTS and PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

*General Survey Tour. Leader: Robert
Magidoff, literary worker in Moscow
since 1935. Sailing July 8. Eight weeks **\$399**

*A Travel "Collective." Leader: Dr.
Joshua Kunitz, journalist, now living
in Moscow. Sailing July 8. Eight weeks **\$543**

*Theatre Festival Tour. Leader: Will
Geer of New Theatre League. Five
weeks in Russia, including Theatre
Festival. Sailing July 28. Seven and one-half weeks. **\$595**

*Julien Bryan's Sixth Annual Trip
through the highways and byways of
the Soviet Union. Sailing July 10. Nine weeks **\$694**

†A Public Health Survey. Leader: John A.
Kingsbury, co-author "Red Medicine."
Program arranged by Commissariat
of Public Health. Sailing July 19. Nine weeks **\$797**

†Open Road Travel Seminar. Leader: Anna
Louise Strong, author "The New So-
viet Constitution," etc.; just back
from 15 years in Russia. Sailing July 4. Nine weeks. **\$895**

†Tourist Steamship Passage

*Third-Class Steamship Passage

Consult your travel agent or
write direct to



THE OPEN ROAD

Soviet Travel Section
8 West 40th Street New York
Cooperating with Intourist

Fig. 13 Advertisement
(New York Times, June 6, 1937)



be in
MOSCOW
for the
THEATER FESTIVAL

THE Edutavel Festival Tour
under the leadership of **WILLIAM CHALLEE** of the **GROUP THEATRE**
sails August 18th, Visiting London,
Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsingfors,
Vienna and Paris, as well as Leningrad,
Moscow and Kiev. All expense 42 day
cost, \$393. (with 3rd class ocean passage)
EDUTRAVEL, Inc., 55 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.
— IN COOPERATION WITH INTOURIST —

Fig. 14 Advertisement
(New York Times, June 20, 1937)

5 WEEKS
In Soviet
RUSSIA

A comprehensive tour under leader-
ship of
WILL GEER
of New Theatre League,
including attendance at the
MOSCOW
THEATRE FESTIVAL

Sailing July 28. Tour in-
cluding round trip Third
Class on the Queen Mary **\$595**

Other trips under authoritative
leadership,
\$399 up

Consult your travel agent or
write direct to

THE
OPEN ROAD



Soviet Travel Section
West 40th Street
New York

Cooperating with
Intourist

Fig. 15 Advertisement
(New York Times, June 20, 1937)

Though Intourist offered several different classes of travel and accommodation, the company designed the Moscow Theater Festival experience to be essentially standardized for each customer. As Intourist had planned it, all the festival attendees were to attend the same productions, hear the same speakers and see the same sights. What companies like Edutavel and Open Road, and to a lesser extent American Express, offered was an experience more customized to the tastes and preferences of specific consumers. These firms employed several techniques in the newspaper advertisements to convey this customization.

Perhaps the most obvious way that the travel agencies marketed the Moscow Theater Festival tours as customized travel experiences was to position them as one of many options. Naturally, this positioning applied to all the various tours they advertised. By advertising multiple tours in the same advertisement, which was then located next to similar advertisements from other firms, the travel agency could convince prospective customers that they had a choice in tours and could choose the one tour that would be perfect for their needs at a given time. The appearance of variety went a long way towards obscuring the fact that the festival tours of the different companies were remarkably similar. The traveler truly had choices, but the various firms offering the tours were severely limited in the ways they could differentiate them by Intourist's control of the Russian portion of the tours. While the newspaper advertisements reinforced the perception of the tours as customized goods through the appearance of choice and variety, they also highlighted a real source of differentiation and customization—the tour leaders.

The tour leaders to the Moscow Theater Festival were integral to the successful marketing and operation of the festival tours. Billed as experts, they helped to moderate the foreignness of the Soviet Union as a familiar compatriot. The ideal tour leader was one with experience and knowledge in both the theater and traveling in the Soviet Union. In order to raise the cultural profile of the festival, thereby attracting more tourists, Intourist worked with the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (*Vsesoyuznoe obshchestvo kulturnykh svyazei c zagranitsoi* or VOKS) to recruit significant international theater figures to attend the festival, sometimes with financial support from the organizations. Some of these were the same individuals targeted by tour operators to lead groups to the Moscow Theater Festival. While the theatrical credentials of the tour leaders tended to be legitimate, they often lacked knowledge of the Soviet Union, sometimes having traveled there only once. Since Intourist provided interpreters/guides within the Soviet Union, the tour leader's knowledge of the country was important for marketing the tours and reassuring tourists, but not essential for ensuring the quality of the tourists' experience in the Soviet Union. That is not to say that there were not advantages to having a tour leader with significant travel experience and connections in the Soviet Union.

One illustrative example of the role tour leaders played in the promotion of the festival is that of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, grandson of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who led tours to the festival in 1934, 1935, and 1936. Born in Boston and raised in Cambridge, Dana was educated at Harvard where he completed his undergraduate and graduate education. He worked briefly

as a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University before being dismissed in 1917 for his pacifist political activities. A committed socialist, Dana was a political activist through much of his life. Although he taught college only for a short time after his dismissal from Columbia, Dana continued an active scholarly life as a lecturer, researcher, and writer. The Soviet theater was one of his primary areas of expertise. Through extended periods of time spent living in the Soviet Union from 1927 to 1928 and in 1931 and 1932, as well as through extensive correspondence and interaction with the leading figures of the Soviet theater, Dana became one of the foremost American experts on the subject by the time of the first Moscow Theater Festival. Subsequently, he published several books on the Soviet theater including *Opinions and Attitudes in the Twentieth Century: Shaw in Moscow* (1934), *The Theatre in a Changing Europe: Development of Soviet Drama* (1937), and *Handbook on Soviet Drama* (1938).

Although Henry Dana did not attend the 1933 festival, he led a tour to the 1934 Moscow Theater Festival under the auspices of the University Travel Bureau based in Newton, Mass., a non-profit organization that provided educational tours to and lectures on foreign countries. In coordinating the tour Dana worked with William Maltby Barber who was then with the University Travel Bureau. He also worked with Harry Rubin of the Boston Intourist. From Rubin, Dana received the details about the festival program and from the Bureau he received leads on those who were interested in attending the tour. Dana drafted and approved informational brochures published by the Bureau (figure 16). He also personally corresponded with each person who expressed an interest in

joining the tour. Barber expected Dana to be actively involved in promoting the festival tours he led.

Harry Rubin, head of the Intourist office in Boston, similarly expected Dana to be actively involved in promoting the tour. Though Intourist ran an aggressive advertising campaign, Rubin often wrote Dana asking him to

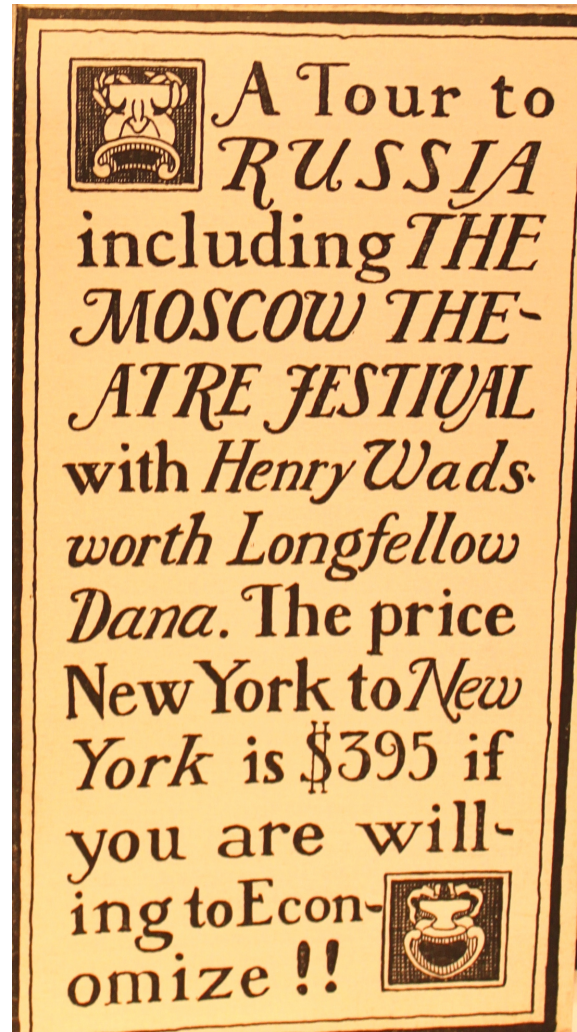


Fig. 16 Cover of brochure for the University Travel Bureau 1934 festival tour (Harvard Theatre Collection)

distribute brochures regarding the festival, and inquiring about how well his tours were selling. Rubin also consulted Dana on which local publications would be most for effective for Intourist to advertise in. On at least one occasion, Dana

edited an Intourist press release for subsequent publication as a news piece in the *Boston Globe*.⁴³ Later, Intourist asked Dana to disseminate in the press information the company had provided to Dana on the festival. Rubin and other Intourist officials made clear that they relied upon Dana's assistance in selling the festival to those who might be interested. Maintaining a positive working relationship with Intourist and VOKS helped Dana receive continued convenient access to materials on the Soviet theater while he was in the United States and access to accommodations and social connections in while he was in the Soviet Union. This provided a strong incentive for Dana to acquiesce to Intourist's requests to help promote the Moscow Theater Festival in his capacity as tour leader.

Quickly, Dana became an important part of the Moscow Theater Festival tourist industry. Barber, who coordinated the 1934 tour in behalf of the University Travel Bureau left that organization to found his own private for-profit travel business. He continued to work with Dana as a leader of tours to Russia and Europe that featured the Moscow Theater Festival. Barber paid for Dana's travel and accommodations, making his travel and research on Soviet theater free during the festivals. Barber even offered Dana a commission for each tour member he recruited beyond their target. Dana and Barber worked together as business partners through to the last theater festival, though they ultimately canceled that

⁴³ Intourist, "Press Release - Moscow Theatres Plan Festival", 1934, Ms Thr 402, Box 31, Folder 26, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University; "Moscow Theatres Plan September Festival," *Boston Globe*, July 15, 1934.

tour due to low sales. They also continued to work with Intourist, which took an active concern in the success of Barber's tours.

Other theater professionals were also anxious to capitalize on the keen American interest in the Soviet Union in general and Soviet theater in particular. American writer, journalist, and press agent Oliver Sayler, who was also making a career as literary and actor's agent, led a tour in 1933 to the first festival. Blanche Yurka, an American theater and film actress, led a group in 1935. Actor and acting teacher Lee Strasberg of the Group Theater advertised a tour in 1935, and Julia Dorn Heflin an American theater director, journalist and later theater professor planned to lead a tour in 1937. Americans were not alone in providing knowledgeable leaders for the festival tours. For example, Hubert Freeling Griffith—English playwright, dramatic critic, and nonfiction writer—led a tour in 1934. In theory, all of these leaders not only assisted the festival visitors in navigating the physical geography but also the social geography providing connections and introductions. In practice, there was a great diversity in terms of what the leaders offered. Yurka and Strasberg had each attended the festival only once before they offered their services as a tour leader.

When Norris Houghton wanted to go to Russia to research Soviet theater for what would become *Moscow Rehearsals* he inquired about both Sayler's and Dana's tours. He could not afford to pay for full participation in either but hoped he might be able to achieve some of the same social advantages by affiliating with

Dana as he might with Sayler.⁴⁴ His connection with Dana likely arose because they were both gay in a culture at the time that was hostile to open homosexuality leading gays to rely upon each other significantly for mutual support. Dana was a fixture of the Cambridge gay community, often helping young gay men navigate the complex social terrain.⁴⁵ Thus, Houghton's homosexuality may have enabled his trip to Moscow and his access there through Dana. Both Sayler and Dana were knowledgeable in Russian theater and had connections within the Soviet theater world. However, Houghton would not have been able to acquire the same benefits with some of the other tour leaders whose experience in Russia consisted of just a few weeks of prior travel. The efforts of individuals with relatively little Soviet experience seeking to parlay that experience into lucrative engagements as tour leaders for years to come was only part of an economy that developed out of the intense interest in the Soviet experiment and traded in first-hand Soviet knowledge for financial gain.

Just as enterprising individuals sought to capitalize on the interest in the Soviet Union by leading tours to the theater festival, those who attended the festival also sought to profit from their tourism by writing and publishing accounts of their trips. For example, Australian playwright Doris Hayball's account, *Sidelights on the Soviet*, claimed to be an "unvarnished" account of her

⁴⁴ Norris Houghton to Henry Dana, August 3, 1934, MS Thr 402, Box 31, Folder 26, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁴⁵ See Douglass Shand-Tucci, *The Crimson Letter: Harvard, Homosexuality, and the Shaping of American Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 129–155.

experience in the Soviet Union at the theater festival.⁴⁶ In essence, she claimed to provide an understanding of how the Soviet experiment was working based on her personal travels. She did not claim any expert knowledge in politics, history, or sociology. Nevertheless, or perhaps because of this, she was able to publish her book solely on the strength of her eyewitness testimony. The significant demand internationally for any material that could be considered credible that focused on the Soviet Union helped drive interest in the Soviet theater, and by extension, the Moscow Theater Festival.

The Soviet Union helped to encourage and answer this interest through a broad program of international publishing. While Intourist published materials related to tourism in the Soviet Union, VOKS published an array of periodicals that covered different topics related to Soviet culture. Theater was a frequent subject of these magazines during the years of the festival. For example, the third issue of *Soviet Culture Review* in 1933 featured a series of articles on Stanislavsky and congratulatory letters on the occasion of his 70th birthday while the fourth issue that year featured an article celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Theater of the Revolution.⁴⁷ Often entire issues were dedicated to Soviet theater such as the third issue of 1933 of the French-language edition of *Socialist Construction in the USSR*. The same issue was then published

⁴⁶ Hayball, *Sidelights on the Soviet : a Plain, Unvarnished Tale of a Trip to Russia and Its Great Theatre Festival*.

⁴⁷ "Life and Work of a Great Artist," *Soviet Culture Review*, March 1933, 28–29; "C. Stanislavsky on the Soviet Theatre," *Soviet Culture Review*, March 1933, 30; Maxim Gorky, "Letter from Gorky to C. Stanislavsky," *Soviet Culture Review*, March 1933, 31; "Comments on C. Stanislavsky's Jubilee," *Soviet Culture Review*, March 1933, 31–32; S. Litovsky, "The Quest for the New Hero," *Soviet Culture Review*, April 1933, 31–33.

in the English-language edition exactly one year later.⁴⁸ These editions were heavily illustrated with photographs of theatrical performances and personages. These same photographs were distributed by VOKS to foreign individuals with an interest in Soviet theater, like Henry Dana, and to the foreign press for use in their publications. The Soviet press and other organizations used these photographs in domestic publications, as Intourist used them in its festival programs.

Through Intourist's promotion and conduct of the festivals and VOKS's distribution of information on the Soviet theater and thanks to the work of Soviet theater artists, the Soviet theater retained a place of prominence in the minds of theater professionals and scholars throughout the world. Thus, not only Soviet periodicals but even foreign ones dedicated entire issues to Soviet theater. *Theatre Arts Monthly*, published in New York and distributed internationally, devoted its entire September 1936 issue to the topic, timed to correspond with the fourth Moscow Theater Festival.⁴⁹ The issue, titled *The Soviet Theatre Speaks for Itself*, contained articles by playwright Vladimir Kirshon; theater director, instructor, historian, and critic Pavel Markov; director Meyerhold; theater designer and director Nikolai Akimov; actor and director Yurii Zavadskii; and film director Sergei Eisenstein. It also showcased the work of theater designers and photographs of leading actors. Such international attention paid to the Soviet theater significantly benefitted Intourist in its task of selling the festival.

While the international popularity and admiration of the Soviet theater

⁴⁸ "Le Theatre en U.R.S.S.," *Edification Socialiste dans l'U.R.S.S.* 4, no. 6 (1933); "Theatre in the USSR," *Socialist Construction in the USSR* 5, no. 6 (1934).

⁴⁹ "The Soviet Theatre Speaks for Itself," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, September 1936.

made it possible for Intourist to create the Moscow Theater Festival, the company did so as a commercial undertaking. The establishment of “socialism in one country” as the official policy of the Soviet Union spurred rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization. These goals could only be attained if the Soviet Union could acquire more capital in the form of foreign currency. Nationalizing the entire tourism industry through the incorporation of Intourist and imposing measurable targets on the company through the five-year plans were tactics the Soviet regime employed as part of its strategy of central planning to raise needed capital for social(ist) construction. The Moscow Theater Festival was one of many of Intourist’s efforts to meet its targets for foreign currency revenue and tourist acquisition and to succeed financially as a State-owned, for-profit company.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY ON STAGE

Of the many stories told about the Moscow Theater Festival, one of the first appeared on April 5, 1933, a few months before the first festival was held. The *Moscow Daily News*, an English-language Moscow newspaper published primarily for expatriate English-speaking workers,¹ ran an article titled “The Story of the June Theater Festival.” Articulating what might be seen as an origin myth for the the festival, the article began as follows:

The most celebrated creations of the Soviet stage are to be presented in 10 consecutive evenings during the Theater Festival which will enliven Moscow’s already vivid theatrical world in the first 10 days of June.

The Festival, which is to become an annual feature of Moscow’s cultural life, fills days as well as nights with a brilliant and varied program, including addresses by Lunacharski and Tairov, a visit to a rehearsal of the Moscow Art Theater, and a gala program after midnight at the Theatrical Workers Club.

¹*The Moscow Daily News* went under different titles at different times including *Moscow News*, and *Workers News*. It was started in 1930 by the Comintern and American Anna Louise Strong for the benefit of the thousands of English-speaking workers who had come into the Soviet Union mainly from depression ravaged America to fill the skilled labor shortage needed for the accomplishment of the first five-year plan. Although aimed primarily at the internal English-speaking community it also likely circulated abroad as a tool of Soviet propaganda. See Anna Artunyan, “Pioneers, Purges and Propaganda,” *The Moscow News*, April 10, 2010, <http://themoscownews.com/news/20101004/188096533.html>; Tim Wall and Anna Artunyan, “Lost in Stalin’s Russia,” *The Moscow News*, n.d., <http://themoscownews.com/80years/20101005/188097818.html>; “Library of Congress Catalog Record,” *Library of Congress Catalog Record*, n.d., <http://lccn.loc.gov/sn98058010>.

Organized primarily in the interests of the visitor from abroad, the Moscow Theater Festival will provide a solution to the dilemma faced by the foreign theater-lover, free to travel to the Soviet Union only during the summer months, but arriving in the capital to find the principal theaters dark, the leading artists on tour or vacation.

Yet because the Mecca of the world's theater-lovers is a socialist city where cultural activities can be planned as well as construction and industry, it was possible to solve this seemingly hopeless problem in one conference, lasting a little less than two hours, in the office of V. A. Kurts, president of Intourist,² the State Tourist Company.

The directors of Moscow's principal theaters assembled there and arranged to present the outstanding productions of their repertoire between June 1 and June 10, in many cases final showings before the company leaves on tour, or closes the theater for the summer.³

The article then went on to outline the activities and theatrical productions planned for presentation during the festival: An address by Anatolii Luncharskii, *Adrienne Lecouvreur* at the Kamerny Theater, *Maiden of Pskov* at the Bolshoi, rehearsal and tea at the Moscow Art Theater followed by its production of *Armored Train*, a visit to "Soviet dramatic schools," a ballet at the Bolshoi titled *The Red Poppy*, a meeting with the Professional Union of Theater Workers, the

² While the Russian name for this company would be transliterated "Inturist," to remain consistent with the transliteration system I use in this work, I will instead always use the English version of the name used by company in its materials published in English. The English version is neither a transliteration nor a complete translation. The first syllable, which is short for "foreign" in Russian, remains unchanged while the remainder of the name, the Russian cognate for "tourist," is translated while still preserving the sonic similarity to the Russian original.

³ "The Story of the June Theater Festival," *Moscow Daily News*, April 5, 1933.

Moscow Art Theater production of *Dead Souls*, a tour of the Bakhrushin Theatrical Museum, a late-night cabaret program, *Revolt* at the Theater of the Moscow Council of Trade Unions (Theater MOSPS), *Lamara* by the Rustavelli troupe from Georgia, a visit to Ostankino, *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi, and a concluding meeting attended by “representatives of the Theater and Art sections of the Peoples Commissariat of Education.”⁴

The theater, ballet, and opera productions selected for inclusion in the festival had already played or were currently playing in Moscow. While information about which productions had been chosen was newsworthy, information about the productions themselves was not. As the headline and structure of the article make clear, the real news was the first appearance of the festival on the Moscow theatrical scene. What is of primary significance to a theater historian is the story the anonymous reporter told about why the Moscow Theater Festival was created and by whom.

Although the narrative here was presented with the ending first, as is common with news stories, the article still presented a basic narrative driven by conflict and offering resolution. Of course, this was done in a very compressed format. The narrative started with the appearance of “the visitor from abroad,” “the foreign theater-lover.”⁵ With the inciting incident of arrival in Moscow, this theater-loving tourist, with a desire to enjoy the wealth of Moscow theater, immediately encountered an obstacle—the already-ended theater season. The tourist was locked in a seemingly irresolvable conflict between two institutional

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

systems, the one, which allowed him only to travel in the summer, and the other, which allowed the Moscow theaters to travel or rest during the summer. This conflict was resolved only through the intervention of Moscow theater directors and Intourist, and by extension, the Soviet state and the Communist Party. In asserting, “the Mecca of the world’s theater-lovers is a socialist city where cultural activities can be planned as well as construction and industry,”⁶ the reporter suggested that the true hero of the story, the one who enabled the tourist-protagonist to accomplish his objective, was socialism itself. However, it was not just any socialism, but the socialism of the five-year plans. This language echoed the philosophy undergirding the Soviet five-year plans that had been introduced in 1928 in a rejection of the limited private capitalism of the New Economic Policy. The five-year plans were the manifestation of a belief held by Stalin and leading Party members that through central planning, the will of proletariat could be mobilized to transform the material reality of the Soviet Union. It is this belief that drove social(ist) construction. It similarly promoted the idea that culture as well as industry could be planned. It is this socialism that made it “possible to solve this seemingly hopeless problem in one conference, lasting a little less than two hours,”⁷ to grant the foreign theater-lover the ability to enjoy Moscow’s principal theaters in the summer.

If five-year-plan socialism was the primary hero in this story, then Wilhelm Adolfovich Kurts, chairman of the board of Intourist and “the directors

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

of the Moscow's principal theaters”⁸ were the secondary heroes. While socialism was one of the primary motivating forces behind the festivals, and much of Soviet activity, actual persons were the ones who took action. What this story of the festival leaves unclear is who initiated the meeting that resolved the narrative conflict and resulted in the creation of the Moscow Theater Festival.

On the one hand, the story suggests that Kurts summoned the directors. This interpretation is supported by the story's claim that the meeting took place in Kurts's office. Furthermore, Kurts's responsibility for the experiences of tourists in the Soviet Union as chairman of Intourist lends plausibility to the idea that Kurts initiated the meeting and the entire festival. Also, it would have been easier for Kurts to send a letter to each of the directors than for the directors to coordinate amongst themselves and then to approach Kurts. On the other hand, it is conceivable, though unlikely, that the directors recognized a need and desire to present their work to foreign tourists and, therefore, approached Kurts because of his position to make their endeavor possible. The unlikelihood of the theater directors initiating the festival derives primarily from the scheduling of the festival in the summer when, as will be shown hereafter, theaters and their staff preferred time to tour and to rest. Had the festival been scheduled to occur during the theater season, it would be easier to believe that the theater directors might have initiated it. Still, the article, “Story of the June Theater Festival,” offered no solid basis for a conclusion as to who initiated the creation of the festival.

The *Moscow Daily News* story similarly failed to distinguish a single or

⁸ Ibid.

overriding purpose for the events. The story suggests that the festivals were created as a means of “[providing] a solution to the dilemma faced by the foreign theater-lover.”⁹ On its face this might suggest the primary purposes of the festivals were to improve the tourist experience and consequently to promote tourism. These purposes fall squarely within the purview of Intourist, which suggests it was responsible for the creation of the festival. However, the story also suggests that the festival was created out of an artistic need—the need to share the creativity and activity of Moscow’s theaters with the rest of the world. The meeting of this artistic need would have fallen to the directors of the Moscow theaters as a collective or potentially to the state or the Party as the self-appointed guardians of Soviet culture. Still, Intourist frequently took upon itself the responsibility of representing Soviet culture to the world, though it could be argued that the firm was doing so only as an agent of the state and Party.

The question of who initiated the planning of the festival is significant because the answer could help to establish the creators’ intent for the festival. A festival created and operated by Intourist would potentially develop along different lines than one created and guided by the directors of Moscow’s prominent theaters. While knowing the creators’ intent in organizing the festival would not of itself impart a full understanding of the functions of the Moscow Theater Festival and its historical significance, knowing this intent is a natural starting point to the analysis of the festivals.

In this chapter, several stories told about planning the festival are

⁹ Ibid.

examined alongside materials created in the process of planning the festival to explore why and by whom the festival was created and planned and how institutional forces affected these processes. While there are certain clear facts about who created and organized the Moscow Theater Festivals, the primary purpose of this chapter is not to find the “truth” about these questions but to explore the ways in which the “truth” of these questions was intersubjectively constructed by the stories told about the festival. Additionally, this chapter explores the multiple representations of the festival these stories presented with varying degrees of correspondence to facts.

For example, two aspects of the above article implicate it in a process of storytelling as a means of participating in social(ist) construction. First, the article is, on its face, a news story rather than an editorial or opinion piece, yet it was published unsigned. The article below it on the same page was also on the theater but identified its author, making the lack of a byline for the theater festival article more conspicuous and suspicious. One likely possibility is that the article was a lightly edited press release provided to the paper by Intourist. As discussed in the previous chapter on promoting the festival, this was a common tactic employed by newspapers and Intourist to publicize the festival.

Second, in stating, “because the Mecca of the world’s theater-lovers is a socialist city where cultural activities can be planned as well as construction and industry,”¹⁰ the article emphasized the enabling role of socialism in the founding of the festival. This promoted the idea of the superiority of socialism over

¹⁰ Ibid.

capitalism, the implication being that such a mobilization of cultural resources would have been impossible under capitalism. The strong ideological component of the article potentially marks it as a piece of propaganda, an article that aimed to indoctrinate as well as to inform.¹¹ Thus, the story functioned not only to inform the public of what the festivals would be but also to secure the cooperation of the public in collectively constituting, or co-creating, the festivals according to the description provided in the story. The circularity of this process makes it difficult to distinguish the true nature of the festivals from the impressions of the festivals promulgated in the public sphere. Consequently, the analysis of the stories about the festival emphasizes the motivations behind the story telling as a way of understanding the stories themselves and what they might suggest about the facts of the festival.

Where the *Moscow Daily News* story was inconclusive on the question of who initiated the planning of the Moscow Theater Festival, G. M. Melamed, a leader at the New York bureau of Intourist, was more straightforward in suggesting that the festival was planned at the insistence of Moscow theater leaders. In a letter of August 9, 1933 from Melamed to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, a scholar of Soviet drama, Melamed wrote, “The leaders of the theatre groups in the Soviet Union are desirous of bringing together those interested in the theatre from various countries, not only to show the development in the Soviet theatre but to provide an opportunity for discussion and exchange of

¹¹ While the term “propaganda” is often used to connote deception or the attempt to generate a belief in a false proposition, I use the word to mean an attempt at indoctrination, to generate belief in a proposition, whether that proposition is true or false.

ideas.”¹² In Melamed’s retelling of the story of the creation of the Moscow Theater Festival, the presentation of the festival was motivated by the artistic/cultural desire of the theater leaders with the support of Intourist in facilitating the realization of this artistic/cultural desire. Thus, Melamed continued, “They have written me for advice as to the best time of year to hold the Festival, inasmuch as they are particularly anxious to have a large attendance from the United States.”¹³ Given that Melamed worked in New York and not in the Moscow administrative offices of Intourist, it is highly unlikely that he received direct correspondence from the leaders of the theaters. It is far more likely that he received a request from a superior within his own organization to reach out to leading members of American society involved in the theater or the study of Russian theater. He was likely asked to gather information as to the best time to hold the festival and to generate early support for the creation of the festival.

Rather than providing more support to the argument for an artistic orientation of the Moscow Theater Festival, Melamed’s letter instead suggests a highly commercial orientation to the festival. Considering that the letter was addressed to a potential festival attendee and tour leader, Melamed’s insistence upon the artistic nature of the festival was mostly a marketing tactic to increase the appeal of the festival to foreign tourists. As with the case of many cultural products, Intourist may have perceived the festival’s success in the marketplace as

¹² G. M. Melamed to Dana, August 9, 1933, MS Thr 402, Bo: 31, Folder 23, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³ Ibid.

dependent upon the degree to which the festival appeared purely artistic and, ironically, noncommercial. And while the story in this letter may have overstated the artistic nature of the festival, it was also likely intended to increase the artistic nature of the festival by drawing to it foreign tourists involved in and interested in theater as an art, in general, and Soviet theater, in particular. The letter *claimed* the artistic nature of the festival in order to *create* the artistic nature of the festival. In other words, the letter appears calculated to suggest to Dana that the festival was being organized along artistic lines rather than commercial ones.

The story of planning the Moscow Theater Festival was told not only in print, but also in speeches on various occasions. One such occasion was the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the founding of Intourist. Employees of Intourist as well as political leaders and other prominent figures in Soviet society, such as theater director Aleksandr Tairov, attended the event. In summarizing the accomplishments of Intourist since its founding in 1929, Kurts described the firm's cultural diplomatic work:

We are winning friends for our Soviet Union abroad, these friends number in the tens of thousands, they have already seen our country, they have already been in our country, they do not believe everything that is sometimes written about our country, they can critically relate to what is written and said about us, and at the same time they are real sources able to give the truth about our country – these are not agitators, these are not propagandists, these are not communists, whom you cannot trust and should not trust in a capitalist country, these are people of very different strata, of very different classes, of very different political and social

orientations. These are people who, having been in our country and formed specific impressions of our country, are the most objective sources, who in large measure are trusted abroad, and in them is the main success and main result of our five-year work.¹⁴

Rather than highlighting the direct economic purposes and accomplishments of Intourist, Kurts highlighted Intourist's political and cultural aims and achievements.

While the work of "winning friends...abroad" was largely cultural in shaping the meaning that foreigners attached to the Soviet Union, the aim of this work was political as part of an effort to increase the power of the Soviet Union relative to other countries. Similarly, while this cultural diplomatic work was not directly economic, part of its ultimate aim was to increase the Soviet Union's access to foreign currency. The logic employed suggests improved foreign popular opinion would result in diplomatic recognition and increased access to trade and credit for the Soviet Union. Thus, this work of "winning friends...abroad" was indirectly economic as well as political and cultural. To say this activity is only indirectly economic is not to suggest that the tourism that facilitated this cultural diplomacy was not economic activity. Rather, there is a distinction between cultural diplomacy as a primarily politico-cultural activity and tourism sales and service as a primarily economic activity. While Kurts could have highlighted the latter, his language was more reflective of the former. He made no mention of specific numbers of tourists, of amounts of foreign currency

¹⁴ "Dokumenty o 5-letnem yubilee VAO 'Inturist'", April 1934, Fond 9612 Op. 1 Delo 20a, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

revenue, of profits, or of any other economic measures traditionally used when discussing the results of economic activity. This particular representation of the work of Intourist requires further exploration to investigate why Kurts chose this representation over others.

Kurts could have been signaling that this political and cultural mission took priority over the company's economic mission to accumulate foreign currency for the Soviet regime. However, since Intourist did not succeed in attracting large numbers of tourists until 1934, his emphasis on Intourist's success at cultural diplomacy was also likely calculated to draw attention away from Intourist's frequent failures to meet its Party-mandated targets for tourist acquisition and foreign currency revenue.¹⁵ Intourist was as centrally managed as all other aspects of the Soviet economy under the five-year plans.

Still, the Moscow Theater Festival figured prominently in the way Intourist represented itself at its fifth anniversary celebration. Aleksandr Tairov, founder of the Kamerny Theater and one of Moscow's foremost directors, not only attended the event; he also gave a speech. Whether he was specifically requested to speak about the festival or did so out of a sense of obligation given his theater's participation in the festival, it seems unlikely that Tairov could have spoken without discussing the festival. Consequently, although it is unclear who at Intourist or the Party invited him to participate, it is clear that including him as a speaker meant featuring the Moscow Theater Festival.

¹⁵ Kressova, "Inturist' v 1929-1939 gg.: Struktura, kadry, napravleniya deyatelnosti [Intourist in the years 1929-1939: Structure, personnel, activities]," 71–86.

Tairov began his speech by acknowledging the apparent incongruity between the setting—Intourist’s fifth anniversary celebration—and the speaker—a representative of the Union of Art Workers. “It would seem that, essentially, there is no connection between these two organizations,” said Tairov.¹⁶ “But comrades, all the might of our government, our socialist system consists namely in the excellent manner in which it unites the most different powers of our socialist culture for the common work of our culture, in general.” Tairov referred to the same coordinative power of the Soviet Party-state to control all aspects of culture as referred to in the *Moscow Daily News* story. Read without irony, this is a recognition of the superiority of the Soviet system over capitalist systems in the former’s ability to control all aspects of economic, cultural, and political life. Of course, read ironically, Tairov’s comment can be seen as a criticism of the way in which everything is subject to state and Party control under the Soviet regime.

Tairov next described the work Intourist had accomplished and placed the theater festival within the context of that work:

Intourist is attracting foreigners to come to our Soviet Union, fulfilling the huge responsibility of acquainting an entire row of people, flowing from all the ends of the world, with the vast riches of our country, with her extraordinary beauties, physical and moral, with the birth of a new society and new man; Intourist at the same time decided to acquaint visiting foreigners-travelers with our art. The company had the happy thought – to acquaint visiting foreigners with the best accomplishments of the Soviet theatre.¹⁷

Before looking more closely at the rhetoric of the opening lines of Tairov’s

¹⁶ “Dokumenty o 5-letnem yubilee VAO ‘Inturist’.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

speech, it is significant to note that Tairov credited Intourist with the initial idea of showcasing Soviet theater to foreigners. As became clearer later in the speech, Tairov was here referring to the creation of the Moscow Theater Festival.

Like Kurts, Tairov focused on the cultural work of Intourist—acquainting foreigners with the Soviet Union in its developing socialist splendor. Of course, Tairov excluded any mention of the negative aspects of Soviet reality, such as rationing, deportations, forced labor camps, or any of the other repressive practices enacted by the Soviet regime to create this “new society and new man.” Certainly, Tairov would not have been in a position to criticize the regime openly in this forum without serious personal political and economic consequences. So, as is always the case when individuals speak publicly in Stalin’s Soviet Union, the lack of criticism of the Soviet regime and even explicit praise can never be taken as definitive evidence of the speaker’s actual opinion.

Even if these statements cannot be read as evidence of Tairov’s feelings about the Soviet Union and Intourist’ mission, they do highlight a potential representational challenge for Intourist. Intourist’s cultural diplomatic mission could only be achieved if foreigners took with them on departure positive representations of the Soviet Union, representations of its “vast riches” and “extraordinary beauties.”¹⁸ The challenge was in preventing foreigners from forming negative representations based on their firsthand experience of the material reality of the time. How the festival attendees responded to the festival and their time in the Soviet Union will be discussed in chapter three.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Tairov continued his speech by suggesting there was no need to talk about the meaning of the Soviet theater in the world. He claimed that the audience knew the significance was great. “We know that the foremost figure of the Soviet theatre is generally recognized in the whole world,” Tairov said, referring to Konstantin Stanislavsky, co-founder of the Moscow Art Theater. Tairov considered it perfectly natural that foreign theater workers and scholars flocked to the Soviet Union to study and experience its theater.¹⁹ This belief motivated Intourist in its planning of the theater festivals. To a certain extent, this belief in the drawing power of theatrical activity in the Soviet Union was supported by the constant flow of foreign visitors, though in small numbers, to the Soviet Union to study and/or experience its theater. Huntly Carter, George Bernard Shaw, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, Gordon Craig, Norris Houghton, among others, all traveled to Soviet Russia specifically to investigate its theaters. In large measure, this interest in Soviet theater had been sparked by international tours of Soviet theaters, particularly, the Moscow Art Theater tour of Europe and the United States in 1923 and 1924.²⁰ These tours helped to secure Stanislavsky’s place as one of the most respected directors in the world and the foremost authority on the systematic training of actors for naturalistic portrayals. Along with Stanislavsky’s work, the theatrical experimentation of the 1920s by figures like Vladimir Mayakovskii and Nikolai Evreinov piqued the interest of the international theatrical community allowing, for example, Huntly Carter to publish *The New*

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For discussion of the influence of Russian theater abroad in the early twentieth century see Senelick, *Wandering Stars*.

Spirit in Russian Theatre in 1929.²¹ It was this general recognition of the vitality and diversity Soviet Russian theater, acquired during the 1920s, that Intourist sought to exploit in the Moscow Theater Festival. And it is to this recognition that Tairov referred in comments at the fifth anniversary celebration of Intourist.

Tairov then began to speak about the theater festival more specifically, initially through comparison to the Berlin Theater Festival, which he had attended with his Kamerny Theater company as part of its touring. Tairov described Intourist's work in creating the festival as, "[uniting] the desires and efforts of separate artists, separate prominent members of the intelligentsia."²² This statement lends more support to the view, which Tairov clearly held, that Intourist initiated and coordinated the development and conduct of the Moscow Theater Festival. However, this statement also gives the impression that Intourist acted not only *in* behalf of Soviet theater artists but *on* their behalf as well. In creating the Moscow Theater Festival, Intourist undoubtedly provided some benefit to the participating theaters in the form of increased exposure and ticket revenue. However, Tairov made it seem that Intourist was acting as an agent of the theaters in organizing the festival, that Intourist was representing the theaters' interests. While this was one of the impressions perpetuated in many of the stories told about the founding and planning of the festival, there is little evidence to support the truthfulness of this impression. Further, as discussed above, the idea of Moscow's theater workers agitating for the founding of the festival strains credibility. Whether you look to cultural, political, or economic circumstances,

²¹ Carter, *The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre, 1917-28*.

²² "Dokumenty o 5-letnem yubilee VAO 'Inturist'."

the theaters had little incentive to desire a special festival. Culturally, they had already achieved international recognition. Politically, the festivals would have only served to heighten scrutiny of theaters' political orientations, which would have been undesired by those theaters whose aims were more aesthetic than political. Economically, the theaters were again state-funded after the abandonment of the New Economic Policy and little dependent on ticket revenue. Further, the festival attendance was not likely to account for significant ticket revenue for an individual theater since the festival would have acquired tickets for, most likely, a single performance. Thus, while it makes a nice story to cast Intourist as the representative of the Moscow theaters in organizing the festival, it misrepresents the facts. Doing so furthered social(ist) construction by shaping the facts to convey the proper concern that the state, in this case represented by Intourist, had for cultural institutions.

After paying lip service to this aspect of origin myth of the Moscow Theater Festival, Tairov then went on to claim that the first festival held the previous year, 1933, had, "its own unique character," which he suggested was manifest in its exclusive focus on Soviet theater, that is, theater in the Soviet Union. Tairov characterized most theater festivals as international affairs:

The fact is that the idea of theater festivals is not a new idea – such festivals have been held in Paris and in Berlin, and I myself, in the capacity of director of the Kamerny Theater, had to take part in such international theater festivals in Paris and Berlin... But usually these festivals were set up in the following manner: not only did the spectators come from all the ends of the world, but also the artists and theatres

came from all ends of the world. ... Here was a local place, where representatives of different national arts and cultures met.²³

Tairov claimed the Moscow Theater Festival was “unique” and meaningful precisely because it deviated from the international model of European theater festivals:

Our festival, is fundamentally different from this because here are shown the achievements of the Soviet theater, as such; here is shown our Soviet theater in its different branches, in its different directions, in its different schools, which are really the extraordinarily rich source of theater culture and rich experiment in the area of the new theatrical art.²⁴

Here Tairov captured one of the central difficulties of the Moscow Theater Festival for its organizers, attendees, and scholars—the representation of Soviet theater created in the festival. Tairov’s description of the variety that characterized the Soviet theater seems a more accurate description of the situation in 1924 than in 1934, when he was speaking. And as will be discussed below, there was a deliberate move to limit the variety represented in the festival through an emphasis on contemporary socialist Soviet issues and dramatists. This question of representing Soviet theater will be the primary topic of chapter three. At this point, it is interesting to wonder at Tairov’s intent in characterizing Soviet theater as diverse at a time when it was facing increased pressure for homogenization. Among the many possibilities, Tairov could have been reflecting the belief from abroad that Soviet theater was still diverse or he could have been subtly expressing support for a varied theatrical scene or he could have been

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

expressing sincere belief in the diversity of Soviet theater despite the homogenizing forces it encountered. Regardless of Tairov's intent, he told the story of a diverse theatrical culture in the Soviet Union.

In addition to describing the drawing power of Soviet theater that enabled the festival, Tairov articulated a vision of what the festival was to become in the future:

We expect that these festivals will play a large role in the meaning of our cultural connections with abroad. ... We expect that thanks to the ever increasing energy of Intourist, to the increasing coverage of its sphere of activity, thanks to the significant threading of its activity into the real new culture of our country, we will arrive at the point that our theater festivals will actually gather a huge number of the leading intelligentsia from all the ends of the earth, will gather a huge number of the foremost artists, and will become its own platform of culture and art, from which our Soviet culture, our new Soviet theater, new mankind will more and more firmly and decisively speak.²⁵

Although expressed as Tairov's aspirations for the festival, these statements also likely represent Intourist's goals as well. The festival was intended to appeal to members of the international theatrical community and to serve as a means of promoting socialist ideology through Soviet culture. Tairov, like Kurts, privileged the political and cultural purposes of the festival over the economic in his articulation of the future for the festival. Whether they endorsed Tairov's representation or not, the audience applauded his remarks at the conclusion of his

²⁵ Ibid.

speech.²⁶

While Tairov's comments do not decisively prove the orientation of the festival towards primarily economic, cultural, or political ends, they do lend significant support to the fact that Intourist was clearly the motivating and organizing force of the festival. The suggestion that the Moscow theaters somehow initiated or even supported the creation of the festival was a rhetorical device employed primarily for marketing. Tairov attributed the festival to Intourist. Even the theaters acknowledged Intourist as the creator and organizer of the festival. For example, on behalf of the Second Moscow Art Theater, the director Ivan Nikolaevich Bersenev, assistant director Viktor Feofanovich Zalesskii, and academic secretary Yurii Vasilyevich Sobolev sent Intourist a letter in recognition of its fifth anniversary. In addition to congratulating Intourist on its milestone, the theater expressed gratitude for Intourist's work on the theater festivals saying, "The theater festivals, which you organize, are a shining activity, for which the workers of Soviet art should be especially grateful to Intourist."²⁷

It is difficult to say to what extent the Second MKhT was grateful to Intourist for the festival, despite the language of their congratulatory letter. It is also difficult to extrapolate from this statement to a larger sense of the feelings of the other Moscow theaters to the festival and to Intourist for starting it. However, as will be shown hereafter, at least one theater expressed a desire not to participate in the festival for a reason that would have been common to many theaters. Thus, there is reason to believe that in addition to not initiating the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

creation of the festival, the Moscow theaters were not entirely supportive of it.

On a certain level it could be considered a minor detail that Intourist organized the festival. However, given the ways this fact was often obscured or blurred in representations made to foreigners, it is important to be able to identify those misrepresentations in order to interrogate the reasons for them.

Additionally, all of the work of Intourist is best understood within the context of an organization created out of the ethos and rhetoric of the five-year plans.

Intourist had a mandate that was primarily economic, but inevitably cultural and political as well, in ways that saw the three as virtually inseparable. Exposing foreigners to Soviet culture was viewed as a means of gaining political acceptance of the Soviet Union, which political acceptance would ease the country's access to financial capital, primarily through credit, that would enable industrialization and spur economic growth. However, it was also expected that by selling the Soviet Union Intourist could bring in badly needed foreign currency. This currency would directly support industrialization and economic growth, which was necessary to insure political sovereignty. Intourist's cultural activities were actually political activities, which were in turn economic activities that served a political end.

One organization that was unambiguously aware of Intourist's responsibility for organizing and conducting the Moscow Theater Festival was the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (*Tsentralnyi komitet vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskii partii bolshevikov* or Central Committee). In attempting to exercise control over all aspects of political, cultural, and

economic life in the Soviet Union, the Central Committee appears to have been constantly consulted during the planning of the festival for approval of Intourist's actions. For example, On November 3, 1937, Pavel Semenovich Korshunov, deputy chairman of the board of Intourist, wrote a classified letter to Andrei Andreevich Andreev, a secretary of the Central Committee, concerning the organization of the theater festival. Korshunov presented to Andreev another story of the festival's founding and planning along with a story of the festival's development. While much of the letter relates to topics that will be discussed in the next chapter, the letter demonstrates the rhetoric used by Intourist to justify the continued existence of the festival. This justification before the Central Committee was an important aspect of the festival planning.

Korshunov began by claiming that Intourist decided to organize the annual festivals because of significant interest from foreigners across the world in Soviet theatre, echoing Tairov's comments earlier. Speaking of the first theater festival in 1933, Korshunov acknowledged that the number of foreigners that attended, sixty, was quite small. Nevertheless, he claimed the festival produced "brilliant reports" in the global press about the Soviet theater to highlight the potential political influence of the festival in spite of poor attendance. Since then, Korshunov continued, the festivals were held annually in the first ten days of September, which corresponded with the opening of the theater season. He provided a report of festival attendance as summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Festival Attendance, 1933-1937

Year	Number of Countries Represented	Number of Festival Guests
1933	11	60
1934	18	234
1935	26	310
1936	29	602
1937	25	202

Korshunov evidently felt he needed to contextualize the drop in attendance at the fifth festival in 1937. He cited a generally unfavorable international situation, which affected all forms of international tourism in the Soviet Union as one reason for decreased attendance at the festival. He identified the attraction of the International Exhibition in Paris as another reason, suggesting it drew away significant numbers of tourists, especially Americans. Notwithstanding these “unfortunate conditions,” Korshunov said, the 1937 festival was attended by 202 tourists from twenty-five countries. The strategic use of attendance data likely reflects the mentality of the five-year plans that emphasized the measurement and attainment of quantitative performance metrics in most aspects of Soviet life.

Korshunov went on to discuss the reception of the festival by the foreign guests, which will be discussed in the next chapter, which is dedicated to the response to the festival. In understanding the story Korshunov told the Central Committee to receive approval to organize the 1938 festival, it is important to note that even the aspects of the festival of which the guests were critical, “did not influence, however, the general ideological and artistic success of the festival,” according to Korshunov.

Korshunov then presented a story of the festival growing from its “original

meaning as a purely tourist attraction” to acquire major “cultural-political meaning, ... [exploiting] the authority and popularity abroad” of the Soviet theatre. Consequently, according to Korshunov, the theater festival was widely covered on the pages of the world press. He also presented the festivals as, “a means for putting forth broader problems of Soviet culture and socialist construction in the USSR.” Intourist kept an archive of all the excerpts of the foreign press about all five festivals, from such major newspapers and magazines as *Tan*, *New York Times*, *Politiken*, *The Observer*, and others, Korshunov noted.

Korshunov tried to strengthen his case for the festival’s cultural and political significance by claiming that you could “follow the cases of creative influence of the Soviet theatre on the work of the foremost directors and actors of Western Europe and America, who have been at the festivals in the USSR.” He cited the example of Czechoslovakian director Emil Burian, manager of the theatre “D.37” in Prague, as one whose work was clearly influenced by his experience at the Moscow Theater Festival. In concluding his argument for the cultural significance of the festival, Korshunov claimed the festival had won for itself a “firm place in the theatre and tourist calendar.” With its completely new program each year, the festival generated lively interest in the foremost workers of the theaters of Europe and America, Korshunov stated. Moreover, Korshunov pointed out, the festival—held at the beginning of the theater season and the end of the tourist season— was the only opportunity for many foreign theatre workers to become acquainted with the “creative work of the best Soviet theatres.”

Before moving on to specific proposals for the organization of the next

festival, and almost as an aside, Korshunov mentioned that conducting the festival did not require special expenses. The budget for the festival in 1938 did not exceed 250 thousand rubles, according to Korshunov, and these expenses would have been in part offset by hard currency revenue from the sales abroad of festival tours. Korshunov's focus on the cultural and political significance of the festival, when coupled with this statement on the economic cost of the festival suggests certainly that the festival was not financially successful in terms of revenue generation and potentially that financial success was not a primary aim of the festival. If the festivals had generated significant revenue Korshunov would undoubtedly have said so in the letter. Of course, as with Kurts's comments at the Intourist five-year anniversary celebration, Korshunov's failure to discuss the economics of the festivals could reflect their failure to reach their financial targets rather than reflecting a lack of financial targets.

Having told his story of the festival's growth into significance, Korshunov proceeded to request specific actions for future years of the festival, in a manner likely indicative of the role the Central Committee played in ultimately overseeing Intourist's actions in planning the festival. He complained that the state body responsible for the arts, the All-Union Committee for Arts Affairs (*Vsesoyuznyi komitet po delam iskusstv* or VKDI) paid insufficient attention to the festivals. Thus, he requested that the festivals be supported by the Party as "cultural-political attractions of a national significance" and organized by an organizing committee, "in which all interested organizations should be represented," and led by the President of VKDI or someone specially appointed

by the state. In essence, he was asking that the responsibility for planning and conducting the festival be transferred from Intourist to VKDI. According to Korshunov, from then on Intourist should have been assigned only the distribution of advertising materials abroad and providing customer service for the foreigners while in the Soviet Union.

One interpretation for Intourist's move to transfer responsibility to VKDI is that Intourist was seeking to shed an activity of political and cultural but little economic value. Given that Intourist was under pressure to meet centrally-mandated targets such as number of tourists and amount of foreign currency revenue, it makes sense that the company's leadership might seek to abandon projects that were not culturally, politically, *and* economically successful. As a state entity, VKDI was not incorporated as a for-profit corporation like Intourist. VKDI would have been the logical state entity to assume responsibility for the festivals. Thus, Intourist could make the case, as Korshunov did, that it was more appropriate for VKDI to organize the festival without any reference to potential economic motivations for the change.

Korshunov concluded his letter by recommending that the next theatre festival be held September 1-10, 1938 in Moscow and Leningrad. He suggested the festival program (theaters and productions) needed to be confirmed no later than January 1, 1938, and that the libretti needed to be published and distributed abroad by April 1. Korshunov added that, at the same time as the program was being publicized, they needed to invite leading theatre workers who would attract

“broader circles of theatre workers from different countries.”²⁸

Based on the fact that the festival was not held in 1938, it would be tempting to assume that permission for the festival was not granted. In reality, however, any of a number of scenarios could have resulted in 1937 being the last year of the festival. The Central Committee committee might have approved the festival under the aegis of Intourist, but the festival could have fallen victim to a lack of demand from tourists. The Central Committee could have transferred responsibility for the festival to VKDI, which then failed to plan the festival. Or, of course, the Central Committee could have decided to discontinue holding the festival. The cancellation of the festival will be discussed further in the next chapter. It is not clear whether Korshunov’s letter requesting approval was a normal part of the festival planning process or a singular occurrence. However, as will be discussed hereafter, in 1935 Intourist sent a letter to the Central Committee requesting approval for the members of the festival organizing committee and the program.²⁹ This suggests that the Central Committee may have been consulted at important points in the planning processes. Receiving permission to hold the festival would have been one of the first steps in planning the festival, one that required strategic storytelling by Intourist.

Meetings of representatives of several Moscow theaters with representatives from Intourist to discuss the organization of the festival were another important part of the planning process, at least in 1935. For the third

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ N. N. Kulyabko and V. A. Kurts to Central Committee of the Communist Party (b), July 10, 1935, Fond 5283 Op. 1a Delo 277, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

Moscow Theater Festival, one such meeting was held on January 13, 1935. The meeting began with reports, proceeded to discussion, and then concluded with short remarks. There were only a few actual decisions made at the meeting. However, the proceedings of the meeting shed significant light on important questions such as how and why the productions and theaters were selected for the program, how democratic and/or collaborative the process was, how the state and Party were involved in the planning process. Consequently, I devote significant space in the remainder of the chapter to a fairly full representation of this meeting based on the official minutes and transcript.³⁰

The chairman of the board of Intourist, Wilhelm Adolfovich Kurts, opened the meeting by first stating its purpose, “to discuss the program of the third Moscow Theater Festival planned by Intourist.” A member of the Communist Party since 1919 and local leader since 1922, Kurts provided an excellent example of Party-style governance. In 1922, he became the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Regional Council of the Labor Commune of Volga Germans (*Ispolnitelnyi komitet Oblastnogo Soveta Trudovoi komuny Nemtsev Povolzhya*), having been born in Vienna, Austria. Kurts then served as chairman of the Council of the People’s Economy of the Labor Commune of Volga Germans (*Sovet narodnogo khozyaistva Trudovoi komuny Nemtsev Povolzhya*), chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Volga Germans (*Sovet narodnykh kommissarov Avtonomnoi*

³⁰ “Minutes of a Meeting of the Representatives of the Moscow Theatres on the Subject of Organizing the Third Theatre Festival in Moscow in 1935”, January 13, 1935, Fond 9612 Op. 1 Delo 25, State Archive of the Russian Federation. For a full translation of the minutes and transcript see the Appendix.

Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respublikoi Nemtsev Povolzhya), and the Vice-People's Commissar of Enlightenment of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (*Rossiiskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika* of RSFSR) before being appointed chairman of Intourist in 1931. He led Intourist until November 1937.

At the start of the January 13, 1935 planning meeting, Kurts reminded those gathered that the festival had already become a permanent element of Intourist's work plan and that those abroad knew the festival as an annual event. Of course, as demonstrated by Korshunov's letter, the label "permanent" within the volatility and unpredictability of Stalinist Russia in the 1930s could be easily applied but never be guaranteed to stick. Kurts then stated that it was already time to prepare and to advertise for the next festival. He acknowledged that the dates for the festival had been discussed intensely the previous year because of the importance of the date in determining the success of the festival. Citing the need to consider both the theater season and the tourist season, Kurts announced, "We have finally decided to choose September 1-10 for the dates of the festival." "This date has already been proved on the experience of last year's festival, and we consider it the most favorable of all suggested," continued Kurts.

Since this group had not had a chance to discuss the experience of the last festival directly afterwards, Kurts provided his own review of the previous festival. He considered the festival successful, "due in large part to the participation of those present and [their] work in preparing and executing the festival." He also attributed this success to the advertising campaign conducted by

Intourist, which was discussed in the previous chapter, that included a massive publishing effort dedicated to familiarizing the foreign public with the Soviet theater, in general, and with the work of participating theaters, in particular. Intourist published a series of monographs about the main theaters, two big illustrated magazines, and not fewer than twenty-five libretti in large printings. Additionally, Kurts said the foreign branches of Intourist printed a similar amount of material on Soviet theater. Kurts also credited Intourist's internal preparation as a factor supporting the success of the festival. He specifically mentioned the work Intourist did in preparing guides to interact directly with the foreign guests. The guides attended lectures to enable them to provide "sufficiently cultured and serious explanations on the topics of our theaters and their productions." Kurts acknowledged that the group of festival guests included, "not only normal tourists, but also a series of people, who come with the goal of seriously studying our theatre while simultaneously studying our whole country, our entire order." Kurts was clearly alluding to the broader political significance of the festival beyond its cultural and economic significance.

Another element of the success of the 1934 festival, according to Kurts was that each theater had a folder, compiled by its directors and translated by Intourist, which allowed the guests to form an impression about each theater that interested them. According to him, "the aggregate of all of our activities allowed us to provide for the foreigners enough serious information about our theaters to focus their attention, through our theater festivals, on our stage art," focusing again for this particular audience on the alleged artistic and cultural orientation of

the festival.

Kurts then described how Intourist was expanding its efforts to acquaint foreigners with Soviet art and culture through activities it was planning such as a “week of dance” and a film festival. However, Kurts made clear that, “against the background of all these activities, theater [would] maintain the preeminent position, still play a special role.” He continued:

Our theater has already, in its own right, earned a place of honor abroad, therefore our exhibitions of Soviet theater, our festivals, have an especially important significance. The success of our upcoming, third festival will depend upon our organization, upon our skillful approach, upon our accounting for all the mistakes of our previous festival.

Like Tairov earlier and Korshunov later, Kurts acknowledged the admiration of the Soviet theater abroad that had been generated in the 1920s. At the same time, he recognized that this admiration, however well earned, would not be sufficient to ensure a successful festival.

So, having provided his summary of the prior year’s festival, Kurts then introduced the agenda for the meeting: a report and discussion on the preliminary program for the third festival, discussion of organizing a photo shoot of the theaters for advertising purposes, and discussion of the process of reserving tickets for the festival. Initiating an exchange that is indicative of how the meeting proceeded, Kurts invited questions about the agenda, at least, he said, “We will be very happy to hear your opinions about [the agenda items].”

Mikhail Pavlovich Arkadyev, then head of the Directorate of Theater Enterprises (*Upravlenie teatralno-zreleshchnykh predpriyatii*) of the People’s

Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narodnyi Kommissariat Prosveshcheniya* or Narkompros) was the first to respond. Arkadyev was appointed artistic director of the MKhT by the Party when it took control from Stanislavksy and Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1936. Arkadyev had been Stanislavsky's choice for the position and was selected despite opposition from Nemirovich-Danchenko and over Litovsky, the head of the Chief Repertory Committee (*Glanvnyi Repertuarnyi Komitet* or Glavrepertkom) of Narkompros.³¹ Arkadyev only served in the position until June 1937. In response to "Today we can limit ourselves to the first of these questions, setting aside the last two for later," suggested Arkadyev.

"If it is necessary we can limit ourselves to the first question," said Kurts. "But it will be better to succeed to work out all of planned issues." In listening to Arkadyev's suggestion and essentially disregarding it in favor of his own originally stated position, Kurts succinctly demonstrated the decision-making process that seems ultimately to have governed the festival planning. Kurts or other Intourist representatives would present ideas and invite discussion, Intourist would consider the contributions, and issue a decision. Having dismissed, Arkadyev's comment, Kurts handed the floor to Yakov Osipovich Boyarskii, chairman of the Central Committee of the All-Union Professional Union of Art Workers (*Vsesoyuznyi professionalnyi soyuz rabotnikov iskusstv* or Rabis), to present a report on festival programming.

Boyarskii was himself a theater professional, having led the agitprop

³¹ Katerina Clark and Evgenii Aleksandrovich Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, ed. Andrei Artizov, Oleg Naumov, and Marian Schwartz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 222–223.

section in Tver during the Civil War. In 1937, he succeeded Arkadyev as director at the MKhT but only served in that position until 1939. Boyarskii began his report by outlining what he saw as important to think about in choosing productions for the festival. He felt they should consider the opinion of the foreigners about previous festivals, but “not base our decisions solely on it, for unlike capitalist countries, we should not view this opinion as a requirement from our customer,” he said. This tension between the economic relationship between Intourist as producer and the festival attendees as consumers was manifest constantly during the meeting. Boyarskii sought to disavow the economic aspect of the festival in favor of the cultural and political aspects. “For us the festival is more than just a display of our theatre, it is one of the opportunities to acquaint people with our Soviet culture,” said Boyarskii, hinting at the political significance of exposing foreigners to Soviet culture.

According to Boyarskii the festival program for 1934 was, “well planned because it gave us the chance to show the best in our theatre.” Nevertheless, he proceeded to bring up a series of observations made ostensibly by foreign visitors:

One of the critical observations of one of our European spectators was completely correct and we must come to terms with this observation, namely, that when we show a Soviet play, [the foreign guests] are interested in seeing in it a reflection of the actual problems of today’s Soviet country to a much greater extent than they are interested in seeing in this play a reflection of the history of the Civil War. They expressed their desire clearly: give us such Soviet plays that represent the topics that currently interest your workers and collective farmers. This

observation is completely correct. ‘You show us intervention—this is very interesting,’ they say, “but it would be still more interesting to see on the stage not the epoch of the Civil War, but what is happening today.’

Even while recommending that this desire for contemporary Soviet plays should be reflected in the program, Boyarskii admitted this was not very easy to do. Still, the tension between what was considered a political need to show contemporary Soviet plays and an artistic need to show productions chosen based upon non-ideological criteria is one that surfaced multiple times in the discussion.

The second criticism of a “foreign spectator” Boyarskii presented was in the form of a request to show theaters that were less known abroad. Here, he noted that several theaters, including Okhlopkov’s Realistic Theater³² which they had wanted to show the previous year could not be shown because it was absent from Moscow at the necessary time. Boyarskii recommended that, rather than simply accepting the theaters’ schedules as set, the committee could decide which theaters it wanted to show and those theaters should then, accordingly, plan to be in Moscow by September 1 to participate in the festival.

Boyarskii briefly touched upon “the question of the political ‘environment’ of the festival, of the great politically important work, which we are conducting with foreigners, aside from the exhibition of our theaters.” He indicated they would have to dedicate more time to that separately. Still he indicated this work would in large part determine the “resonance” achieved by the festival.

Boyarskii again emphasized the importance of only responding to the

³² Also known as the Krasnaya Presnya Theater (*Teatr Krasnoi Presni*).

feedback of foreigner's as long as it did not cause them to compromise their standards of taste or ideology. Rather, when the desires of foreigners were felt to conflict with what the committee thought appropriate, Boyarskii advocated for the "need to in this relation to reconstruct and reeducate the desires of the foreigners." He used the example of a desire to see the Gypsy Theater for the sake of exoticism. He suggested that the festival planners should show the Gypsy Theater then from the perspective of the socialist ideology of race and nationality, showcasing the Soviet policy of supporting the development of distinct national cultural identities.

Having presented the "basic preliminaries" that he wanted to share before presenting his tentative festival program, Boyarskii then moved on to describe some specific productions he recommended for inclusion in the festival as well as his reasoning behind them. First, however, he provided a disclaimer about the challenge of programming the September festival in January. They sought to present at the 1935 festival the best works of the 1934-1935 theatrical season. However, because they were trying to choose productions in the middle of that season they could not be assured that productions of the season's second half would not be better than those already performed. Boyarskii wondered of Intourist if it might be possible to announce only the festival and provide the names of the shows later. He felt that "with each month [they would] have a more and more sure foundation for [their] decision." The final challenge Boyarskii pointed out before presenting his proposed program was that when the same play was scheduled for performance in multiple theaters there was no way of knowing

which production would be superior.

Boyarskii noted that the Bolshoi Theater might be under repair and therefore have to be excluded from the program. If the Bolshoi would be operating during the festival, Boyarskii suggested showing the opera *Sadko*, by Rimsky-Korsakov because it was “interesting musically.” He also recommended the ballets *Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky and *Three Fat Men* by Oranskii. Boyarskii felt the Malyi Theater’s season included a series of interesting productions, mainly from the classics – Shakespeare and Ostrovsky. He recommended, from the Soviet repertoire, *The Fighters*. From the MKht he felt Gorky’s *Enemies* was best since the theater would not be offering a Soviet play. Because he felt Europeans would want to see it, at the Kamerny Theater, he chose *Egyptian Nights* – a production that combined Pushkin’s *Egyptian Nights*, Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Shaw’s *Caesar and Cleopatra*. He believed that Europeans had the literary preparation necessary for the play. The situation at the Meyerhold Theater Boyarskii described as “very bad” since the next production being offered was a Chekhov vaudeville, which he felt would not interest Europeans and *Lady of the Camellias* by Dumas, films had already been shown.

Shostakovich’s Soviet opera, *Katerina Izmailova* (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), was the choice for Nemirovich-Danchenko’s Musical Theater. Boyarskii expressed concern that the Theater MOSPS did not have anything new enough from the Soviet repertoire, but felt that *Chapaev* by Furmanova might be an option, given the popularity of the eponymous film, though it was set in the

frequently dramatized period of the Civil War. At the Theater of the Revolution, Boyarskii recommended Pogodin's *My Friend* because the "theme is contemporary and very interesting for Europeans. He suggested *Aristocrats*, also by Pogodin, at the Realistic Theater because he considered it "characteristic of their specific directorial approach." He chose the Jewish Theater's production of *King Lear* despite its lack of contemporary topic. "From an artistic standpoint it is very strong and important," reasoned Boyarskii. "From a political standpoint, such theater is possible only here." At the Gypsy Theater he suggested *Carmen* or *The Gypsies*, depending on how the production turned out, since he found it "more interesting than *Carmen* because it's Pushkin."

At the Theater of the Young Spectator, Boyarskii recommended Calderon's *His Own Jailer* by Calderon. He also felt it wrong to include only the Moscow Children's Theater of all the children's theaters. At the Children's Literary Theater he suggested *Krylov's Fables*.

Of all the plays in the festival program, *Upturned Virgin Soil* at the Simonov Theater was to be the only play about collective farm life. According to Boyarskii, it was politically necessary to have at least one such play. Korneichuk's *Destruction of the Squadron* what he termed a "heroic play" was to be shown at the Red Army Theater.

The Vakhtangov Theater illustrated well the difficulty of choosing productions. Based on what was then playing in the repertory, Boyarskii suggested Gorky's *Yegor Bulychov and Others*. However, he noted that though the play had not been shown the previous year, it was not new in the theater's

repertory. So Boyarskii suggested “if it turns out successfully, then we should show *Aristocrats*.” But if they then had to choose between showing *Aristocrats* in the Vakhtangov or the Realistic, then it would be better to show *Aristocrats* in the latter, Boyarskii believed. He did not feel a need to show the Stanislavsky Opera Theater as it had been shown the prior year, but said they needed to show the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater this year. At the Zavadskii Theater, Boyarskii recommended Shaw’s *The Devil’s Disciple* if they were to choose a non-Soviet play. If not, the theater did not have any Soviet repertoire, and he said, “there’s no sense in showing the classical repertoire.” Thus, of the more than twenty productions Boyarskii suggested, he explained they needed to choose just ten to twelve.

Once the floor was opened, Arkadyev was quick to comment about the dates of the festival. “The beginning of September is difficult for theatres,” he claimed. “Many are just getting back. The productions are still in poor shape. They can’t get the necessary repertoire prepared in time.” Having said that, he conceded that the date could not be changed so they would just have to deal with it. A comrade Diamant, responded, “It is unclear to me what Com[rade] Arkadyev wants. On the one hand, he wants to change the date, but on the other hand, he wants to leave it.” Diamant suggested moving the festival to October to prevent having to call theaters back to Moscow early.

Sergei Mikhailovich Bogomazov, head of the arts section of Intourist, provided some context around the decision of the festival dates. He explained that it would be easier to accomplish the festival’s artistic goals by holding the festival

at a time more convenient for the theaters. However, Intourist had determined that the only way to attract foreign visitors to the festival was to hold it during the tourist season. This meant the short overlap of the tourist season and the theater season in late summer or early fall, September at the latest, was the only possible time the festival could be held. He also pointed out that Intourist had conducted three festivals previously, two in Moscow, and one in Leningrad, and that the Moscow Theater Festival dates had been chosen after analyzing the guests' responses to surveys conducted after these festivals. Moreover, the previous festivals proved that theaters could perform during the summer and early fall, Bogomazov concluded.

Still, the representative of the Jewish Theater, Rainer, objected that the company returned to Moscow by September to participate in the previous festival only with great difficulty. Many of the company members, including theater leader Solomon Mikhoels, had significantly shortened or had no vacations because of the festival, Rainer claimed. "This year the theater cannot take part in the festival, as it will be touring Leningrad during that time," he said. He suggested there might be an opportunity to include the Jewish Theater in the Leningrad festival planned for that summer. That this theater did participate in 1935 and 1937 Moscow Theater Festivals demonstrates clearly how Intourist overruled the desires of the theaters when necessary.

Another major point of discussion at the meeting was the scope of the festival in terms of which theaters should participate. Arkadyev believed the festival should be expanded to include non-Moscow theaters such as those in

Leningrad and the theaters of the national republics. Among the national theaters he wanted included were the Ukrainian, Georgian, Gypsy, and Jewish, considering those sufficiently representative. Diamant recommended adding performances to implement Arkadyev's suggestion without leaving the Moscow theaters inadequately represented. On the question of showing the national theaters, Bogomazov reasoned that this would only be possible if the theaters were able to tour to Moscow. Otherwise, he suggested conducting the third theater festival as a festival of Moscow theaters and holding a special festival with all the theaters of the national republics in Moscow the following year showing only one or two Moscow theaters.

Evsei Osipovich Lyubimov-Lanskoi, director of the Moscow Council of Trade Unions Theater (*Teatr Moskovskogo Soveta professionalnykh soyuzov* or Theater MOSPS) proposed combining this possible special festival with the Olympiads of national and amateur theater that had first been held in 1930. Diamant recommended organizing an evening of amateur workers' theater, which he felt was necessary because of the political meaning it would carry. And Betti Nikolaevna Glan, director of the Central Park of Culture and Recreation, said the foreigners wanted to see more amateur theater, in general, and at the Green Theater, a massive open-air arena, in particular. "You will impress them more with amateur theater than with a production of this or that classical thing," she claimed. Of course, she believed it was necessary to present one production in the Green Theater. Bogomazov concluded his comments on the topic of what types of theaters to present by noting that Intourist had begun conducting festivals in

Leningrad, obviating the need to show the Leningrad theaters in the Moscow festival.

The other major item of debate at the meeting was what types of productions to show at the festival. Boyarskii had introduced the opinion that post-Revolutionary Soviet plays should predominate. Arkadyev agreed that the festival program should feature the Soviet repertoire, but emphasized that they should still exhibit the best of their classical work, singling out the Jewish Theater's *King Lear* and the Malyi's *Othello*. Arkadyev's aim was to provide a "sufficiently full" representation of Soviet "theatrical culture." Diament stated, "if we want to attract a broad circle of the artistic intelligentsia, then they are interested most of all in contemporary Soviet themes." Consequently, he stated, "We have to show, in the first place, our new Soviet theatres in plays showing Soviet reality," using the rhetoric of the official Soviet aesthetic doctrine of Socialist Realism.

Intourist staff member Georgii Ilich Adreichin³³ criticized Boyarskii's suggestion of showing *Sadko* at the Bolshoi. He claimed, "The foreigners want to see our new achievements, new schools of theater, new ballet, new opera." "We know that we have a great wealth and diversity in theatrical work," explained Andreichin. "But we cannot show everything that we have, we must choose carefully." Natalya Sats, director of the Central Children's Theater and innovator in children's theater in the Soviet Union and internationally, agreed with Adreichin regarding the need to show new Soviet productions. "When I was

³³ He would be dismissed from the Party in 1935, arrested in 1949, convicted of spying and executed in 1950 and then rehabilitated in 1958.

abroad I heard a lot about the festival. The festival had great impact, especially because it attracted a lot of journalists,” she said. The problem with the last festival she claimed was “the lack of Soviet plays.” Lyubimov-Lanskoi corroborated this saying, “I know from my conversations with foreigners, that they consider it a deficiency, that they did not see our newly formed Soviet theaters.” Of course, he recognized the necessity of showing certain theaters, that foreigners went to the MKhT “by tradition, like going to worship at [the Iverskaya icon].”

Ilya Yakovlevich Sudakov, an actor and director at the Moscow Art Theater, felt obligated as its representative to the meeting “to point out that the Moscow Art Theater was currently struggling to know which of its Soviet repertoire to show.” The theater leaders thought it should present Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* or Ostrovsky’s *The Thunderstorm*. However he agreed “the festival should be first and foremost an exhibition of Soviet, post-October productions and an exhibit of theaters, presenting primarily Soviet themes.” In fact, he had introduced most of the Soviet repertoire that was produced at the MKhT during the period. His approach proved so offensive to the MKhT veterans that he was transferred to the Malyi Theater in 1937.

The argument over the extent to which the festival should focus on socialist Soviet repertoire, reflected an understanding of the opportunity the festival provided for both cultural diplomacy and domestic social(ist) construction in the minds of the new Soviet citizens. Thus, Bogomazov encouraged the committee to reserve adequate time in the festival attendee’s schedules “for

visiting rehearsals, for discussions and meetings with directors and artists, and for getting acquainted with the new Socialist life of our Union.” As Bogomazov pointed out, “the foreigner wants, in addition to the theatre, to become acquainted with the new developments in our social life, with the situation in which our theatrical art is developing and flourishing.” He referred to this time as a “serious part of the festival.” Interestingly, this alleged guest preference aligned perfectly with the political purpose of the festival. It is possible that Bogomazov, and others, simply fabricated this preference to create an economic justification for a politically motivated programming policy. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, several festival attendees openly expressed a regret that the festival had not included more contemporary Soviet plays. Admittedly, other attendees criticized the overtly political tone of some of the programming choices. Regardless of the extent to which the attendees actually wanted to see Soviet plays on contemporary Soviet themes, this desire was constantly evoked as the primary justification for programming choices.

After hearing from the representatives of many of Moscow’s theaters who attended the meeting, Boyarskii and Kurts made some final remarks. Boyarskii began with the items he considered “indisputable.” The first was the scheduling of the festival for September 1 to 10. He emphasized that Intourist had chosen the date, and that their expertise should be respected. In response to the question of which theaters to present, Boyarskii commented, “It would be incorrect to show only those theaters that arose after the revolution.” Rather he said they must recognize the legitimate desire of foreigners to see theaters such as the Moscow

Art Theater, especially if the foreigners are visiting the Soviet Union for the first time. However, he also stressed they needed “to remember that foreigners are interested in the first place, not so much in the theaters that arose after the revolution, as they are interested in Soviet problems, those actual problems, which stand before the workers and collective farmers of our country.” Therefore, if, at the Moscow Art Theater, a play reflecting Soviet problems was playing, Boyarskii said they “should surely show it”. “We should rejoice in such a production,” Boyarskii said, emphasizing again that foreigners were primarily interested in Soviet problems.

He then moved to items still to be finalized. In terms of compiling the program, he suggested they should be “guided by a desire to present performances of principal significance.” He used the Jewish Theater’s *King Lear* as an example. He felt the production had “principal significance” because nothing like it could be seen in any other country. He did not support the idea of showing Leningrad theaters at the festival, nor did he consider it feasible to include the theaters of the national republics. So he supported holding an Olympiad of national theaters the next year.

Boyarskii inquired of those Intourist workers there if it would be possible to create a “double program” so that two performances would be offered each evening, giving foreigners the opportunity to choose. He pointed to the diversity of the festival attendees and suggested, “It is only possible to satisfy their demands with a large selection of performances.”

Further, Boyarskii insisted they should work with Narkompros to secure

the participation of theaters, when necessary. For example, regarding showing *King Lear* at the Jewish Theater, he proposed asking Narkompros to intervene in the scheduling of the theater's tour. Boyarskii also suggested that if there were theaters that were in their interest and in the state's interest to show at the festival, then the state might provide any needed funds, though he does not indicate what these funds might be used for specifically. He concluded by recommending they not make a final decision on the program but consider all the opinions exchanged and clarify the possibility of including up to twenty-five performances. Then they could convene another meeting to make a firm list of participating theaters and performances, Boyarskii suggested.

Kurts then had the final words in the meeting, in which he effectively ratified Boyarskii's proposals. He indicated they would work on the questions Boyarskii raised, discuss them in Narkompros, and call another meeting because it was necessary to finalize the program far in advance. Knowing the program exactly would significantly "lighten their work, since foreigners want to know exactly what is being offered to them," said Kurts. He gave Intourist's approval to the suggestion of expanding the program with the introduction of "parallel performances," explaining this would allow them both to expand the contingent of participants and to fulfill the interests of the foreigners. On the subject of involving the national theaters, Kurts said, "we must decline their participation this year because it requires very significant organizational preparation; we simply cannot manage." He said they could conduct the 1936 festival under the theme of "our national theaters."

Since they had not addressed the events and sightseeing planned for the festival attendees outside of the performances, Kurts asked Boyarskii, as president of the organizing committee, to call a special meeting on that subject, which he considered “one of the biggest questions.” Kurts informed those present that after it considered all the questions raised, Intourist would convene another meeting of the larger group. With that he declared the meeting finished.

This January meeting had unfolded like an elaborate performance that blended sincere expressions of opinions related to the festival with politically-motivated comments indicative of the roles they were expected to play within the new Soviet culture and society. At best, Intourist won a little more acceptance of the scheduling by the theater representatives. The situation was similar for the programming. The question of the extent to which they should feature the national theaters seems to have been a legitimate question without a foregone conclusion. However, the decision to focus on Soviet plays in post-Revolutionary theaters while also showing some pre-Revolutionary theaters seems to have been acknowledged from the start as the programming policy they had to adopt. Since they did not vote on or otherwise select the specific productions for the program, their discussion on programming seems an exercise in generating some kind of consensus or allowing the theater representatives to feel they had a voice in the process. That Boyarskii ultimately drafted the program leads one to wonder how much he considered the opinions expressed by the theater representatives in doing so. The final program was approved by a small group representing Intourist and VOKS.

This performance of Soviet governance, the quasi-ritualized behavior in conformity to ideologically proscribed social roles, seems manifest also in the interactions between the organizing committee and the Central Committee. For example, in a letter dated July 10, 1935, N. N. Kulyabko, vice chairman of VOKS and Kurts requested approval of the festival program and organizing committee composition from the Central Committee. The proposed committee consisted of Aleksandr Yakolevich Arosev—chairman of VOKS—as president, Kurts as vice president, and as members: Arkadyev—head of the Directorate of Theater Enterprises of Narkompros, Boyarskii, Kulyabko, I. I. Onotskii—vice chairman of Intourist, B. E. Shumyatskii—head of the General Department of Cinema and Photography Industry, Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko—heads of the Moscow Art Theater, Meyerhold—head of the eponymous theater, Ivan Moskvina—actor and director at the MKhT, Tairov—head of the Kamerny Theater, Lyubimov-Lanskoi—head of the Theater MOSPS, Mikhoels—head of the Jewish Theater, V. I. Mutnykh—director of the Bolshoi Theater, Sergei Amaglobeli—director of the Malyi Theater, Bersenev—head of the Second Moscow Art Theater, Sats—head of the Children’s Theater, Okhlopkov—head of the Realistic Theater, Yekaterina Vaneeva—director of the Vakhtangov Theater.³⁴

The letter itself was not an empty formality. It was written to gain the official approval needed to publicize the festival program and organizing committee membership abroad. What the letter revealed as performance was the

³⁴ N. N. Kulyabko and V. A. Kurts to Central Committee of the Communist Party (b), July 10, 1935, Fond 5283 Op. 1a Delo 277, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

publicizing of the organizing committee membership. A committee had clearly been meeting since January to organize the festival. Many of these members were then proposed for the official committee. However, many of the persons on the proposed list, such as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Nemirovich-Danchenko, played no role in organizing the festival. Thus, the proposed official organizing committee was in large part ceremonial, its publication – a performance authorized by the Party. It is common to designate honorary committee members in order to demonstrate their support for an event despite their not being actively involved in its planning. In this case, no indication of honorary membership was given. Rather, just as was indicated in the *Moscow Daily News* story, the inclusion of prominent members of the theatrical community on the committee was specifically intended to suggest their participation in planning the festival. Their cultural capital was appropriated for marketing purposes most likely based solely on the authority of the Party without securing their individual permission, which they would have only perilously withheld in any case.

On August 25, 1935, less than a week before the event, the organizing committee of the third Moscow Theater Festival met to make final preparations.³⁵ Kurts, Kulyabko, Onotskii—vice chairman of Intourist, Bogomazov, Gebhardt from the Service Division of Intourist, and Shimberg from the Printing Division of VOKS attended. They made several decisions and delegated various tasks to specific individuals and organizations.

³⁵ “Minutes of a Meeting of the Organizing Committee for Conducting the Third Moscow Theatre Festival”, August 25, 1935, Fond 9612 Op. 1 Delo 25, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

One of the most significant actions of the meeting was the confirmation of the festival program, which is outlined in table 2. Comparing the final program with the suggestions made during the January meeting suggests the festival planning politics. The first thing to observe is that despite being accepted by Kurts the suggestion to develop a “parallel program” with two alternatives for each performance slot was not realized that year. Many of the productions initially suggested by Boyarskii made the festival program. The programmed productions at the Bolshoi, Jewish, Nemirovich-Danchenko, Maly, Kamerny, Realistic, and Vakhtangov Theaters were all as suggested by Boyarskii.³⁶ However, the productions at Moscow Art, Second Moscow Art, and Gypsy Theaters as well as at the Theater of the Young Spectator deviated from his initial suggestions. For example, at the Moscow Art Theater, Boyarskii had suggested they show Gorkii’s *Enemies*, written in 1906 and inspired by the Revolution of 1905. Instead, the theater showed Ostrovsky’s *The Thunderstorm* from 1859, as had been suggested by the theater’s representative at the January planning meeting. Given that one of the intervening steps in the establishment of the program was a discussion that Kurts was to have with Narkompros and that several months had passed since the initial meeting, it is difficult to say precisely what motivated the changes to the program that Boyarskii proposed, but it is during this period that the Party would have provided its approval of the festival program.

³⁶ In the transcript, Boyarskii refers to the Krasnaya Presnya Theater, which was the name of the Realistic Theater from 1930-1934 when it reverted to the name Realistic Theater. I believe Boyarskii may have been referring to the Realistic when he made his recommendations. *Need Source*

In addition to changing some of the productions Boyarskii suggested, some of the theaters he proposed were not selected. Of course, he initially presented more theaters than could be shown, at least without a parallel program. Among those theaters that did not make the final program, though suggested by Boyarskii, were the Moscow Council of Trade Unions Theater (Theater MOSPS), Theater of the Revolution, Simonov Theater, Red Army Theater, and Stanislavsky Opera Theater. Interestingly, most of these were “Soviet theaters,” meaning those founded after the revolution. And the Simonov Theater was to show *Upturned Virgin Soil*, as the only work representing collective farm life, which they initially considered vitally important to present. Thus, the final program included no productions touching that topic. In general, the final program seemed to back away from a commitment to Soviet plays and post-Revolutionary Soviet theaters.

Table 2. Program of the 1935 Moscow Theater Festival

Date	Time	Production/Event	Theater
Sep. 1	Day	City tour by car	
	Night	<i>Sadko</i>	Bolshoi Theater
Sep. 2	Day	<i>Free Flemings</i>	The Theater of the Young Spectator
	Night	<i>King Lear</i>	Jewish Theater
Sep. 3	Day	Art museums	
	Night	<i>Katerina Izmailova</i> <i>The Tale of the Fisherman</i>	Theater of Nemirovich-Danchenko
Sep. 4	Day	<i>and the Fish</i>	Children's Theater
	Night	<i>The Spanish Curate</i>	Second Moscow Art Theater
Sep. 5	Day	<i>Life on Wheels</i>	Gypsy Theater
	Night	Exhibition of mass amateur art	Green Theater of Central Park of Culture and Recreation
Sep. 6	Day	<i>Three Fat Men</i>	Bolshoi Theater
	Night	<i>Aristocrats</i> Visit to major industrial enterprises	Realistic Theater
Sep. 7	Day		
	Night	<i>The Fighters</i>	Malyi Theater
Sep. 8	Day	<i>Kashtanka</i>	Puppet Theater
	Night	<i>The Thunderstorm</i>	Moscow Art Theater
Sep. 9	Day	Visit to Museum of the Revolution and social	

service establishments

	Night	<i>Egyptian Nights</i>	Kamerny Theater
Sep. 10	Day	<i>Yegor Bulychov and Others</i>	Vakhtangov Theater
	Night	<i>Platon Krechet</i>	Moscow Art Theater Studio

Source: "Minutes of a meeting of the organizing committee for conducting the Third Moscow Theatre Festival", August 25, 1935, Fond 9612 Op. 1 Delo 25, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

Although the representation of Soviet theater and Soviet life presented by the festival programs will be subject of the next chapter, it is worth noting presently that many of the productions were of pre-Revolutionary Russian or foreign works. Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko* shown at the Bolshoi was composed in the late nineteenth century based upon an old Russian folk tale. *Free Flemings* at the Theater of the Young Spectator was based on *Til Eulenspiegel*. The works shown at the Jewish Theater and Second Moscow Art Theater, *King Lear* and *The Spanish Curate* are by Shakespeare and Fletcher, respectively. Tairov's *Egyptian Nights* combined elements from Shakespeare, Pushkin, and Shaw. Theoretically, these classical and foreign offerings were balanced by productions such as Pogodin's five-year-plan themed play *Aristocrats* at the Realistic Theater and Romashev's *The Fighters* depicting the Red Army at the Malyi Theater.

While the archival material demonstrating all the interim iterations of the festival program between the January meeting and the final program in August has yet to surface, Intourist was very active in promoting the festival during that time. Consequently, they announced an interim version of the festival program that is interesting to compare to the final program. The differences are few. This interim program seems to have been in place as early as January 29 when it was

shared in a general form in a letter from Bogomazov to a foreign tour leader.³⁷ This program was then published in publicity material for the festival, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The differences between this interim program and the final program are that in the final program the Gypsy Theater and Moscow Art Theater Studio were added, the mass amateur art show replaced *City of Winds* by Kirshon at the Theater MOSPS, and *Yegor Bulichov* replaced Afinogenov's *Far Taiga* at the Vakhtangov. The addition of a national theater seems to reflect the desire expressed by many at the January meeting to show the national theaters. Similarly, the showing of amateur performance was likely in response to what several, including Glan, saw as a foreign desire to see workers' theater and the like. The change from Afinogenov to Gorky at the Vakhtangov could have been motivated by any number of factors. It was likely related to the fact that the Afinogenov play was a brand new production while the Gorky was solidly established though, as had been pointed out by the theater's representative to the planning meeting, it had already been seen by many foreigners. It could have been that the new production was simply not ready. In any event, at this August 25 meeting, the committee was at last able to finalize the program.

The committee then addressed a number of topics. They decided to conduct film showings on the third and eighth of September, and delegated responsibility for negotiation with the General Directorate of the Film Industry to VOKS. VOKS was then to present the programs of both film showings to the

³⁷ Sergei Bogomazov to Henry Dana, January 29, 1935, MS Thr 402, Box 31, Folder 26, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

committee no later than August 27. They also decided to ask Glan from the Central Park of Culture and Recreation to provide an indoor location for the exhibition of mass amateur theater in case of inclement weather. They decided the festival should be opened with an address by Bulganin, president of the Moscow Soviet. Kurts was designated the backup in case they were unable to secure Bulganin through negotiation with the Cultural Enlightenment division of the Central Committee (Kultprosvet). The committee also decided it was necessary to distribute translations of the theater directors' speeches to all the festival participants and to inform Kultprosvet of the speeches. VOKS was assigned to approach the Central Committee about having the festival covered in the Soviet press.

For the opening of the festival, the committee decided to send 400 invitations to the festival opening to the diplomatic corps, foreign correspondents, the Soviet press and society. They decided to distribute tickets to the remaining performances as follows: ten to VOKS, ten to Intourist, and thirty to the Soviet and foreign press. They also decided to invite thirty-six participants of the Topology Congress to the festival performances on the seventh, ninth, and tenth of September. Though they considered holding a special reception for the foreign press, they decided instead, given the lack of time for planning, to invite the foreign press to the general reception for festival participants. In addition to the festival guests and foreign press, the theatrical society and Soviet press were also to be invited to the reception, which was tentatively planned for September 8 in the Colonnade Hall of the House of Unions. The event was going to be sponsored

by VOKS and Intourist with the cost split equally between them, provided Kultprosvet granted permission to organize it.³⁸

Intourist held another meeting on August 27 to continue planning for the festival.³⁹ Kurts, Bogomazov, and Gebhardt were joined by Feldman and Golyshev from Intourist's Moscow Bureau. Bogomazov presented a report and then several decisions were made primarily delegating tasks to Bogomazov. The group accepted his suggestion that each theater publish its own programs under the heading "Third Moscow Theater Festival" and assigned him to distribute a number of programs to the hotels to be displayed in the most visible places. Bogomazov was also assigned to prepare a report and to contact the directors of participating theaters for a meeting to be held on August 29. He was also to provide separate coat racks for festival participants at all performances, with the cost born by the Moscow Bureau where necessary. The Moscow Bureau was also to assign three workers to Bogomazov for the duration of the festival. They decided to have oral interpretation of the pre-performance speeches and that Bogomazov would arrange for translation and duplication of the texts of the speeches as. Bogomazov would then distribute these translations to the hotels, which were then to distribute them to the festival guests by noon for that day's performance. Bogomazov was also to provide the opportunity for the major festival groups to meet with the directors of the theaters and for all the festival

³⁸ "Minutes of a Meeting of the Organizing Committee for Conducting the Third Moscow Theatre Festival."

³⁹ "Minutes of a meeting with c. Kurts V. A. on the subject of conducting the Third Moscow Theatre Festival - 27 August 1935", August 27, 1935, Fond 9612 Op. 1 Delo 25, State Archive of the Russian Federation.

participants to have the opportunity to meet with the theater troupes on the stage of the theater, which meetings were to be photographed by the Moscow Bureau along with the rest of the festival. The Moscow Bureau was also responsible for selling food, books, photographs, theatrical puppets, and other souvenirs at each performance. Except the food, these same items were to be sold at the hotels. The Printing Division was instructed to prepare a collection of all the libretti for the festival performance by August 30, for distribution to all the hotels. Bogomazov was also to provide information from visa lists and lists of invited participants with numbers by country attending the festival, including all personal characteristics, to the Moscow Bureau no later than noon on August 29. The Moscow Bureau was then to give Bogomazov a list of all the festival visitors by hotel category and language, and also to conduct a daily accounting of all changes in the composition of festival participants.

The next topic covered was the strict controls that would be in place for the distribution of tickets, which was to be overseen by Kurts personally. They scheduled a brief meeting with Kurts to determine a specific number of tickets required by the Moscow Bureau in the coming days. For the Moscow Bureau the distribution of tickets were to be overseen by Feldman, who was to organize a strict accounting of the use of all tickets provided to him for distribution. He was also responsible for limiting the tickets provided to Intourist staff to only those tickets needed for legitimate festival needs. Tickets were to be given to the Moscow Bureau on three dates: August 31, September 3, and September 7. For every set of tickets, they decided to record the number of seats by row, their

pricing, the total number and total cost. Bogomazov was to give the tickets to Feldman personally. He was also authorized by Intourist to receive tickets from the theatres and was accountable for tracking them. Upon receipt of the accounting from the Moscow Bureau, Bogomazov was to provide an accounting to Intourist. The Soviet and foreign press, as well as the leading workers of all organizations interested in the conducting of the festival would receive tickets from the Intourist administration, separate from those reserved and given to the Moscow Bureau.

The group decided the Moscow Bureau would conduct “detailed training” on August 31 for the guides assigned to the festival guests. On August 29, a meeting was to be held with the workers of the Intourist service division on conducting the festival. The timing of these meetings and trainings suggests that though they may have aimed at providing “detailed training,” those being trained did not have very much time to absorb significant amounts of information or significantly alter the way they did their work. Particularly in the case of the guides, unless they had experience in the prior festival and were already knowledge in the theater, they would not have had time to gain a knowledge of the Moscow theaters sufficient to answer the more detailed questions their foreign theater festival guests might ask them.

The committee concluded the meeting by discussing the first day of the festival, the film showings, and publicity. Feldman was assigned to contact the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party about procuring 500 tickets to the International Youth Day demonstration on Red Square and passes for cars for

festival participants. The first day of the festival was scheduled to include a ride around the city, trip on the subway, lunch, free time, the International Youth Day Demonstration, dinner, and then the theater. Bogomazov received the assignment to work with the First Art Cinema-Theatre to secure and arrange the facility on September 3 and 8 for morning exhibitions of cinema for the festival participants. Kurts was left responsible for the program of the cinema exhibition in which they planned to show at the first showing, two films –*Maksim's Youth* and *Happy Youth* and at the second showing – a newsreel of the opening of the subway, the May 1 celebrations, the return of the sailors of the *Chelyuskin* that had been stranded in the Bering Strait, and the arrival in Moscow of twenty-eight Turkmen horse riders who rode the 2,700 miles from Turkmenistan in 84 days; and the moving picture *The Pilots*. In terms of publicity, the Print Division was assigned to organize the filming of the festival including the arrival of the foreigners, individual leading figures, their meetings with theatre workers, their visit to theatres and other objects. Bogomazov was to conduct international radio broadcasts with prominent festival participants during the course of the festival.⁴⁰

Thus, through a series of meetings and correspondence Intourist, in conjunction with VOKS, and under the approval of the Central Committee and Narkompros, planned the 1935 theater festival. While it is likely there were changes in the planning process between 1933 and 1935 and between 1935 and 1937, it is also likely the general contours of the process remained the same. For example, as Korshunov's 1937 letter shows, Intourist was clearly still in charge of

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the process in 1937. Also, an August 14, 1934 letter to the directorate of the Malyi Theater from Bogomazov suggests that a similar process of quasi-obligatory requests from Intourist to the theaters still obtained.⁴¹

In the letter, in regards to advertising, he requested that the text “A Performance of the Moscow Theater Festival” be placed above the title of the performance in the playbills when displaying information about the performances included in the festival program. He recommended including the text “Moscow Theater Festival” at the top of playbills published specifically for the festival, as some theaters had been planning, and asked that several copies of such playbills be provided to Intourist “in advance for distribution in hotels, at train stations, and other locations for meeting and serving tourists coming to the festival.”

Bogomazov indicated that several open questions would be addressed at a meeting with directors of the theaters at the very end of August. Some of the topics that were to be addressed at the meeting included receiving foreign guests of the festival at performances, meetings with the troupe, and the decoration of the theater building. Concerning the last topic, he informed the theater that Intourist would be sending twenty to twenty-five posters to hang on the building facade. In addition, he said, “it would be desirable at the entrance or vestibule of the theater to display a welcome message in three languages” although the exact text would be determined at the aforementioned meeting.

Bogomazov told the theater that Intourist needed to receive, in advance, the Russian text of the welcoming address the leader of the theater would give

⁴¹ S. Bogomazov to State Academic Maly Theatre, August 29, 1934, Book Collection, State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow, Russia.

before the festival performance. He emphasized this was necessary in order for the timely translation of the address into three languages and distribution to the foreign guests in advance of the performance. In terms of the content of the address, Bogomazov recommended, “a short Russian speech, the contents of which will be easily understandable to the foreigners, who have the corresponding translations in their hands.”

Bogomazov concluded the letter with a passive appeal for the theater to create in its foyer “an exhibition of models, designs, costumes, and other exhibits characteristic of the creative path of the theater in all the stages of its artistic development.” Rather than requesting or demanding, he said this “would be desirable.” The reason he gave for this was that seeing one performance alone would be insufficient “to form an impression of the artistic image of the theater.” Bogomazov expressed that photographs would be especially desirable. He encouraged the theater to contact Intourist if it had such materials so that they could acquire copies to sell in the kiosks of their hotels.⁴²

It appears that in 1934, as in 1935, Intourist’s approach was to coordinate the activities of the theaters through letters and meetings in which it would issue requests and hear, though not necessarily heed, the theaters’ opinions concerning the festival. In both years, many of the details were left to the last few days before the festival. Still, perhaps the most significant aspect of the planning, the selection of the program, occurred through a process that involved a performance of collaboration (perhaps just as Soviet socialism involved a performance

⁴² S. Bogomazov to State Academic Maly Theatre, August 14, 1934, Book Collection, State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow, Russia.

democracy), but that was ultimately controlled by a small number of individuals at Intourist and subject to state and Party approval. With Intourist leading the effort, while involving the theatrical community, it is clear that the process and resulting programs were intended to meet political, cultural, and economic aims. Having addressed how the promotion of the festival advertised the festival's cultural and political significance to achieve economic goals, and how the planning of the festival took economics into consideration while focusing on political and cultural goals, the next chapter will consider how the foreign guests responded to the festival.

CHAPTER 3: THE VISITORS SPEAK

Given the complicated intents and purposes of Intourist in conducting the Moscow Theater Festival, gaining a full understanding of the festival requires considering the responses of the festival attendees to what they experienced. Many of the productions that comprised the onstage component of the festival were then known to theater professionals and are now known to theater historians. Soviet theater of the 1920s and 1930s has been the focus of significant attention from theater historians, in part because of the rejection of avant-garde aesthetics and the adoption of Socialist Realism as the official Soviet artistic policy, which occurred during the period.¹ Therefore, rather than focusing on an aesthetic

¹ For examples of works that focus on the theater of the period overall see Houghton, *Moscow Rehearsals: An Account of Methods of Production in the Soviet Theatre*; Paul Gsell, *Le Théâtre Soviétique* (Paris: Editions sociales internationales, 1937); van Gyseghem, *Theatre in Soviet Russia*; Tatyana Borisovna Zabozaeva, ed., *Iz Istorii Russkoi Sovetskoi Rezhissury 1930-kh Godov: Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov* (Leningrad: LGITMiK, 1979); Arkadii Anastasev and Konstantin Rudnitskii, eds., *V Poiskakh Realisticheskoi Obraznosti: Problemy Sovetskoi Rezhissury 20-30-kh Godov* (Moskva: Izd-vo "Nauka," 1981); Konstantin Rudnitskii, *Realnost i Obraznost: Problemy Sovetskoi Rezhissury 30-40-kh Godov* (Moskva: Izd-vo "Nauka," 1984); Nick Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage: Tairov-Vakhtangov-Okhlopkov* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); David Zolonitskii and Valentina Mikhailovna Mironova, eds., *Iz Opyta Russkoi Sovetskoi Rezhissury 1930-kh Godov: Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov* (Leningrad: Leningradskii gos. in-t teatra, muzyki i kinematografii im. N.K. Cherkasova, 1989); Nataliya Aleksandrovna Yastrebova, *Teatr 30-kh: Zerkalo i Zazerkalye: Iskustvo, Publika, Pressa, Vlast* (Moskva: Tip. Inion, 2000); Boris Yanislav Wolfson, "Staging the Soviet Self- Literature, Theater, and Stalinist Culture, 1929--1939" (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2004); For works on specific theaters and artists see Daniel C. Gerould, "Literary Values in Theatrical Performances: 'King Lear' on Stage," *Educational Theatre Journal* 19, no. 3 (October 1, 1967): 311–321; Judith Zivanovic, "GOSET: Little-Known Theatre of Widely Known Influence," *Educational Theatre Journal* 27, no. 2 (May 1, 1975): 236–244; Lois Adler, "Alexis Granovsky and the Jewish State

analysis or historical reconstruction of the festival productions, this chapter will explore the published comments of festival attendees.² An examination of the marketing tactics employed to promote the festival enabled consideration of the Stalinist regime and Intourist's economic motives. A look at the process of planning the festival allowed a discussion of the political and cultural motives behind the festival. Exploring the festival attendee's comments, proceeding from the first festival to the last, permits an investigation into how the attendees viewed the purposes and results of the festival and how those views changed over time. This investigation will proceed alongside a review of the coverage of the festival in the Soviet press.³

Theatre of Moscow," *The Drama Review: TDR* 24, no. 3 (September 1, 1980): 27–42; Lynn Mally, "The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Youth Theater TRAM," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 3 (October 1, 1992): 411–430; Lynn Mally, "Autonomous Theater and the Origins of Socialist Realism: The 1932 Olympiad of Autonomous Art," *Russian Review* 52, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 198–212; Alaina Lemon, "Hot Blood and Black Pearls: Socialism, Society, and Authenticity at the Moscow Teatr Romen," *Theatre Journal* 48, no. 4 (December 1, 1996): 479–494; Lynn Mally, "Exporting Soviet Culture: The Case of Agitprop Theater," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 324–342.

² While there are certain evidentiary concerns with using only published commentary, unpublished commentary has proven difficult to acquire. Nevertheless, careful consideration of the circumstances of publication of these comments along with the perspectives of multiple commentators helps to mitigate some of these evidentiary concerns.

³ At performances there was a book where festival guests could leave their impressions of the performance. These comments would then be reviewed, presumably by Intourist, and circulated to the various daily papers to run the most positive comments in the next day's paper. Consequently, generally speaking, all the different papers featured the same audience feedback. For example see "Teatralnyi Festival," *Izvestiya*, September 8, 1935; "Na Teatralnom Festivale," *Vechernyaya Moskva*, September 7, 1935.

1933

The first year of the Moscow Theater Festival coincided with the first year of the second five-year plan. The first plan was to run from 1929 through 1933. However, Stalin mandated the completion of the five-year plan in four years. This tactic of psychological manipulation proved successful. The Party, government, and industry all worked to furiously to meet the plan's objectives in 1932. The "impossibility" of the goals motivated people to concerted action rather than discouraging them. In the heavy industry sector, the targets were over-fulfilled. However, the production of consumer goods fell short of the targets.⁴ Still, Stalin declared the first five-year plan a success after four years. The second five-year plan thus began in an atmosphere of official (and perhaps genuine) optimism and enthusiasm.

The first five-year plan succeeded not only in producing material economic benefits for the regime, but it also demonstrated that the regime's socialist ideology was indeed strong enough to control time. Under the Soviets, time became just another aspect of reality that was planned by the Party. The teleology of socialism promised a happy, prosperous, utopian future that was being built in the present. Some of the material benefits of the utopian future were being provided to a select portion of the population now with the promise that they would eventually be extended to all. Consequently, there was a constant confusion between "soon" and "now."⁵ The regime constantly sought to produce

⁴ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, 42.

⁵ Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers : Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, vol. 1st (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 187–192.

evidence of the future's imminent arrival in order to justify the people's present sacrifices.

Beginning in 1932, the society was reoriented towards the pursuit of individual as well as collective happiness along bourgeois lines. Personal hygiene, cosmetics, perfume, recreation, consumerism, fashionable clothing, private homes, and personal family life became acceptable and even desirable elements of Soviet culture. This new culture of happiness required the creation of a new Soviet man and woman. And Stalin enlisted artists as "engineers of the soul" to accomplish this task.⁶ The proletarian artists organizations of the 1920s such as the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (*Rossiskaya Assotsiatsiya Proletarskikh Pisatelyei* or RAPP) no longer served the purposes of the regime. To exert greater and more direct control of the arts, these organizations were abolished in April 1932 and a union was created for each branch of the arts. However, the establishment of these new unions was not immediate. The first Moscow Theater Festival occurred in the interval between the abolishment of various proletarian groups and the operation of the new unions such as the Union of Soviet Writers (*Soyuz Sovetskikh Pisatelyei*) headed by Gorky.

This did not mean though that there was a significant lessening of Party oversight of culture. For example, the Politburo of the Party's Central Committee was constantly concerned with the work of the Main Administration for Matters Concerning Literature and Publishing Houses (*Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatelstv* or Glavlit). In April 1933, Glavlit triumphantly reported that

⁶ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, 48; Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 291.

it had extended its operations not only to the censorship of Soviet works but also to controlling the import of foreign works. The organization was proud of the expansive scope and aggressive tenor of its activities. In 1937, the Party criticized the zealotry of Glavlit as excessive and took more direct control of literary censorship decisions.⁷ However, well before 1937, the Party and Stalin personally and frequently intervened in questions of theatrical censorship. The cultural environment of the first festival was thus one of uncertainty over specific aesthetic policy coupled with a mandate for art that reflected in the present the socialist utopia of the future. And all culture, including the theater festival, functioned under the close supervision of the Soviet authorities.

After some sightseeing around the capital, the first Moscow Theater Festival opened on June 1, 1933 with a performance of Scribe's *Adrienne Lecouvreur* at the Kamerny Theater founded and led by director Aleksandr Tairov, who, along with his theater, had acquired fame and recognition from tours of Europe in 1923, 1925, and 1930. The next day of the festival began with sightseeing including a trip to the Tretyakov Gallery. At the first festival sightseeing was scheduled for most mornings. Seeing sights of cultural and social significance were a hallmark of the festival program. In what became another standard component of the festival, the day continued with a film showing, in this case, *The Road to Life*. That evening, the festival guests attended the opera *Pskovityanka* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the Bolshoi Theater. In the English-language Soviet daily newspaper, *Moscow Daily News*, Molly Picon, American

⁷ Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 261–265.

star actress of Yiddish theater and film, said of the production that she “had never seen a chorus who at the same time were actors. Every person on the stage,” she continued, “plays a part from the most insignificant beggar to the prima donna.”⁸ Picon’s observation of the acting skill of Soviet opera performers is one that would be repeated by many attendees to the festival over the years.

The next performance the festival guests attended was *Armored Train* by Vsevolod Ivanov at the Moscow Art Theater on June 3. Perhaps the most renowned theater of the time and one of the biggest draws of the festival, the guests’ expectations for the Moscow Art Theater performances were high. American writer and theater critic and historian Oliver Sayler was not disappointed. He called the “scene on the church roof where the Communists are waiting for the explosion that is to destroy the railroad bridge ... the most striking bit of theater I have seen.”⁹ Saylor headed a Party of twelve Americans at the theater festival. After the performance of *Armored Train*, MKhT company actors Olga Knipper-Chekhova, Ivan Moskvina, Vasilii Kachalov, and younger company members entertained a group of festival attendees, though Konstantin Stanislavsky was absent due to illness.¹⁰

Stanislavsky’s long standing animosity with fellow MKhT founder and artistic director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko motivated Stanislavsky to use illness frequently as an excuse to stay away from the theater and to avoid contact with Nemirovich-Danchenko. However, in this case he was legitimately out of

⁸ “Plays of Old and New Russia for Festival,” *Moscow Daily News*, June 10, 1933.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

theater due to illness.¹¹ Since he could not greet them in person, Stanislavsky sent a letter to the festival attendees upon their first visit to the MKhT to view

Armored Train in which he said:

Today's performance will give you an understanding of our first experiments in the new political repertoire. As concerns the acting of our artists, I hope they will try to help you understand the what we are seeking to accomplish through our method of dramatic art.¹²

Despite Stanislavsky's inability to attend the festival, the opportunity not only to witness performances but also to interact with the performers was a feature of the festival much anticipated by the festival guests. And while, the absence of Stanislavsky was undoubtedly disappointing, the chance to see productions under his direction and to meet with the performers he trained was a highlight of the festival for many attendees. Along with visiting with theater artists, the festival attendees also had the opportunity to visit other cultural institutions. For example, at the Moscow Theater School the guests saw a performance by a group of students from the Ossetian National Republic, who were training at the school along with groups from Kazakhstan and Yakutsk before returning to their home republics to found national theaters there.¹³

The next day of the festival, June 4, took the guests back to the Bolshoi, this time to see the Soviet Revolutionary ballet *The Red Poppy* with music by Reinhold Gliere. The following day included the film, *The Peasant Woman from*

¹¹ I. Vinogradskaya, *Zhizn i Tvorchestvo K.S. Stanislavskogo. Letopis v Chetyrekh Tomakh, 1863-1938*, vol. 4 (Moskva: Vserossiiskoe Teatralnoe Obshchestvo, 1976), 336.

¹² Ibid., 4:337.

¹³ "Plays of Old and New Russia for Festival."

Ryazan, and another production at the MKhT, Gogol's classic *Dead Souls*. Next on the program was Dmitri Furmanov's civil war play, *Revolt*, at the Theater of the Moscow Council of Trade Unions. To represent the Soviet Union's policy of encouraging the development of the culture of minority nationalities, the penultimate performance on the festival program was the Rustavelli Theater of Georgia's production of Grigor Robakidze's play *Lamara* in a production directed by Sandro Akhmeteli. The play, first produced in 1925, based upon an ancient legend immortalized in poetry by Vazha Pshavela, was considered a landmark in the development of Soviet Georgian theater and was recognized as one of the best performances of the 1930 Soviet Theater Olympiad in Moscow.¹⁴ Charles Ashleigh, a writer and editor at the *Moscow Daily News* described *Lamara* as "that startlingly novel synthesis of acting, poetic declamation, dance and song."¹⁵ The theatrical program of the festival concluded with Tchaikovsky's classical ballet *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi.

Attendance at the first festival was relatively modest—about sixty guests from eleven countries. Among the festival guests from the United States were the aforementioned Molly Picon and Oliver Sayler. The dramatic critic of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* William F. MacDermott and writer Alice Ware were other Americans known to have attended the festival. The Scandinavian countries were well represented at the festival. Actress Elli Tomburi and actor and theater manager Kosti Ello came from Finland; the director of the National Theater of

¹⁴ J. Kleiner, "The Rustaveli Theatre," *Soviet Culture Review*, July 1933, 64.

¹⁵ Quoted in Charles Ashleigh, "Theater Festival Gives Intimate View," *Moscow Daily News*, June 15, 1933.

Norway, Agnes Mowinkel, and director of the Norwegian Theater in Oslo, Hans Jacob Nielsen, came from Norway; dramatic critic Viola Markelius and actress Paulina Bruinius attended from Sweden. Theatrical designer André Boll from France and Spanish playwright Max Aub also visited the first festival. As Intourist and the Soviet press did throughout the existence of the festival, they generally only reported the festival guests who were theater professionals. However, in 1933 and subsequent years, a significant number of festival attendees were curious tourists, as interested in the Soviet Union as they were in Soviet theater. Neither their attendance nor their opinions were publicized; consequently their voices are largely lost to history. From the record of those whose attendance was captured, the festival was a cultural and political success, if not a financial one.

According to journalist Ashleigh the days of the festival were “marked by a sense of intimate and comradely friendship between visitors and directors, actors and scenic artists.”¹⁶ He points out that visitors got the behind the scenes as well as “out in front” view of Russian theater in addition to becoming acquainted with the “stupendous living background to the Soviet theater, from which it draws its sustenance and its inspiration.”¹⁷ The festival guests expressed similar enthusiasm. Their responses were primarily, though not exclusively, positive. William S. MacDermott, dramatic critic of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* said, “No city in the world has the theatrical vitality of Moscow.”¹⁸ For Oliver Saylor, the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Quoted in “Plays of Old and New Russia for Festival.”

miracle of Soviet theater was that it retained the diversity and excitement of pre-Revolutionary Russia:

After a decade and a half of the Soviet the Russian theatre is the same – with a difference... But the difference while real is trivial compared to the similarity. It is this phenomenon of continuity in the face of all the dictates of rhyme and reason that strikes me as the most absorbing and significant aspect of the subject of the Russian theatre.... Whatever storms these stages have encountered and weathered in their efforts to preserve their artistic integrity and their specific personality-and they have been many—the experience has left inconsequential scars. ... The Moscow Art Theatre is still devoted to that spiritualized realism, the Kamerny to that stylization tending toward mechanization, and so on through the others, as before the Revolution.¹⁹

Molly Picon felt that Soviet theaters were the best in the world in acting, directing, and staging, but that the plays were inferior because they tended towards propaganda. “You have the feeling that however the play started it was certain to wind up waving a red flag,” said Picon.²⁰ Picon and Sayler both touch upon two ideas about the Soviet theater that the Soviet Union likely sought to convince festival attendees were misconceptions: that the Soviet regime required aesthetic sameness and that Soviet theater was merely propaganda not art.

Ashleigh, an English fellow traveler, expressed the connection between the misconceptions and the festival’s effect on them:

¹⁹ Oliver Martin Sayler, “Drama By the Kremlin,” *New York Times*, July 30, 1933.

²⁰ Quoted in “Molly Picon Finds A New Melting Pot,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1933.

Some of them [festival attendees] had expected a certain rigidity, a canalizing of the spirit within a framework enforced by political exigencies. ... This preconception has, I think, been utterly dissipated by the experiences of the last few days. ... It is true that our theaters house revolutionary plays, and old plays rendered in new forms. But this is because the upsurging spirit of the revolution affects both producer and player, and these would be false to their convictions and their emotions did they not express it.²¹

Sayler's comments about the continuity of Russian theater supports Ashleigh's assertion that the festival demonstrated that Soviet theater was not constrained to be uniform. Rather, Sayler recognized the special role of the Soviet theater within the larger project of social(ist) construction, suggesting this role could account for some of the perceived homogeneity within the Soviet theater.

Sayler wrote, "The Russian theatre, 1933, ... is a carefully nurtured child of [the Soviet] government, an integral part of the new social structure...and one of the most effective mouthpieces of that new social structure."²² Picon concurred with this sentiment saying, "Russia might be called the land of actors and tractors. ... They seem to be the most important things in Russia. Tractors to cultivate the land, and actors to cultivate the people."²³ However, where Picon saw propaganda in all the plays, Sayler saw only a theater intimately connected with its people and society:

²¹ Ashleigh, "Theater Festival Gives Intimate View."

²² Sayler, "Drama By the Kremlin."

²³ Quoted in "Molly Picon Finds A New Melting Pot."

The theatre in Russia today is not propagandist except in so far as a theatre that reflects the topics and points of view of its contemporary life and scene is propagandist. The artists of the Russian theatre are free artists, and if their playwrights do not write about sex and murder mysteries it is because they are not interested in those subjects.²⁴

Of course, considering the time Sayler had spent in the Soviet Union and his continuing interest in studying and writing about the Soviet theater, he surely understood how publishing too strong a criticism of Soviet theater would have endangered his access to information on Soviet theater and to the Soviet Union itself. In addition to providing information on the arts in the Soviet Union, VOKS and Intourist also tracked the comments made by foreigners on Soviet art, particularly comments by those who had visited the country. Sayler seems to have caught the vision of the future of Soviet theater, which was articulated by Ashleigh as “a future when new men, new social forms—yes, and new problems—shall occupy the stage, and when the theater, as all the arts, shall flow directly from the intense and varied life of a united people.”²⁵ The tension between variety and unity in the Soviet theater is one to which festival attendees were constantly attuned and which they discussed throughout the festival’s existence.

The first festival was programmed to highlight the diversity of Soviet theater with theatrical works both contemporary and classical, foreign and native, ethnically Russian and ethnically other, musical and dramatic, naturalistic and

²⁴ Sayler, “Drama By the Kremlin.”

²⁵ Ashleigh, “Theater Festival Gives Intimate View.”

stylized. Still for all this variety, festival attendees were disappointed not to be able to see the Meyerhold and Vakhtangov theaters which were on summer tours, though some planned to go to Leningrad where they could see the Vakhtangov players on tour.²⁶ The challenge of showing the best Soviet productions in the summer, when a significant number of theaters were largely absent from the capital, and the disappointment this caused were the principal causes of moving the festival from June to September for the subsequent festivals. Thus, the experiment of the first festival confirmed for Intourist that the festival might be a viable commercial venture due to the cultural interest in Soviet theater. This experiment also clarified a need for rescheduling the festival and assuring the participation of critical theaters to be able to present the ideologically desirable (for the Soviets) balance between variety and unity.

While the 1933 festival may have landed more on the side of variety, the increasing acceptance of Socialist Realism as the only acceptable style and/or method for Soviet art would further complicate this issue in subsequent festivals. In its May 1933 issue the VOKS foreign-language magazine *Soviet Culture Review* published an excerpted speech by then chief of the Arts Sector of Narkompros, Mikhail Pavlovich Arkadyev. The published speech was an abridgment of one he had given to a recent Conference of Arts Workers. The excerpt that follows is particularly helpful in illustrating the difficulty and imprecision surrounding the task of defining Socialist Realism coupled with the determining role the concept was coming to play in Soviet culture:

²⁶ "Plays of Old and New Russia for Festival."

Art, which in the USSR has become the common property of millions of people should in this sense play the role of an active factor of tremendous force and incisive significance. ... To this end it is necessary, firstly, that the creative forces of the artistic intelligentsia take the stand of the proletariat, and secondly, that art should give a true reflection of our life as it is in reality. ... We understand realism not in a vulgar, banal sense; we do not reduce the role of art to the function of photography. We need a type of realism, which shall mirror the leading socialist tendencies of our time. ... It is wrong to believe that socialist realism does away with all the previous trends in art--impressionism, naturalism, etc., bearing in mind their achievements in regard to mediums of expression (colour, setting, etc.). Socialist realism is the style of the art of our socialist epoch, and it determines all the forms, all the means of artistic expression. Yet we cannot impose any definite form upon the artist. The Soviet artist has the right to choose any artistic form, any medium of expression, for his work.²⁷

As will be shown below, both the development of the Moscow Theater Festival after 1933 and the Soviet regime's treatment of artists over the same period would call into question the artist's "right to choose any artistic form."

1934

In August 1933, the Joint State Political Directorate under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (*Obyedinyennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie pri SNK SSSR* or OGPU), the state intelligence service

²⁷ Mikhail Pavlovich Arkadev, "Art in the Service of Socialist Construction," *Soviet Culture Review*, May 1933, 32.

and secret police, organized a trip for 120 leading Soviet writers to the White Sea Canal.²⁸ The canal was still under construction by inmates in forced labor camps overseen by the OGPU. The purpose of the trip, proposed by Stalin, was to inspire the writers by showcasing the reformatory power of forced labor.²⁹ The group, which included Mikhail Zoshchenko, Viktor Shklovskii, Aleksei Tolstoi, and Valentin Kataev, was treated to plentiful, high-quality food and luxury accommodations at no cost to them. In addition to inspecting the technical aspects of the project, the writers were able to observe convicts working. However, they were not allowed to speak to them. This and other features of the trip alerted most of the writers to the fact that they were being shown a “sanitized version of camp life,” though few of them voiced any concern or doubt.³⁰

After the tour, many of the writers were requested to contribute to a speedily produced book extolling the redemptive power of penal labor to remake criminals and dissenters and into socialists. The writers named above and others complied with the requests and the book was presented to the seventeenth Party Congress in January 1934 as evidence of Soviet writers’ preparedness to serve the cause of socialism.³¹ The rehabilitation of White Sea Canal workers was also taken up as the theme of Nikolai Pogodin’s *Aristocrats*. The play premiered in 1934 under the direction of Okhlopkov at the Realistic Theater. This same production was shown to festival guests in 1935. The following year the

²⁸ See Figs, *The Whisperers : Private Life in Stalin’s Russia*, 1st:192–196.

²⁹ Ibid., 1st:192–193.

³⁰ Ibid., 1st:193.

³¹ Ibid.

production of the play at the Vakhtangov Theater was featured on the festival program.

Between the conclusion of the first festival in June 1933 and the start of the second in September 1934, Soviet artists were more concertedly pressed into service by the Soviet regime. They were essential to projecting the image of a newly prospering society to the Soviet people. In 1934 Stalin argued that socialism meant “not poverty and deprivation, but the elimination of poverty and deprivation, and the organization of a rich and cultured life for all members of society.”³² Thus, *Pravda* announced, “We endorse beauty, smart clothes, chic coiffures, manicures.... Girls should be attractive. Perfume and make-up belong to the ‘must’ of a good Komsomol girl. Clean shaving is mandatory for a Komsomol boy.”³³ In the spring of 1934 skilled workers were given a new means of improving their ability to purchase consumer goods. A new wage system, the progressive piecework system, was introduced. Wages became tied to the number of pieces a worker produced, but higher-producing workers were also paid more per piece.³⁴

As always, the Soviet representation of present reality was a combination of projection and fact. On the heels of the successful completion of the first five-year plan in four years, the second five-year plan, which foresaw the completion of socialist construction, was published on January 1, 1934.³⁵ In fact, the years 1934 through 1936 became known as the “three good years” because of improved

³² Quoted in *ibid.*, 1st:158.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 1st:159.

³⁴ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 263.

³⁵ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, xiv.

material circumstances. By the end of 1934, the rationing of bread and other products ceased.³⁶ From January 26 to February 10, 1934, the seventeenth Party Congress convened in Moscow. Also called the “Congress of Victors,” the meeting’s highlight was a speech by Stalin in which he proclaimed that the Soviet Union had been transformed from an agrarian to an industrial state.³⁷ Stalin also declared the Party more unified than it had ever been.³⁸ Also in February, Stalin approved the final version of the winning plan for the competition to design the “Palace of Soviets.” The monumental building with 1,250-foot tower topped by a 300-foot statue of Lenin was to be built on the site of the Cathedral of Christ, the Savior. The cathedral had been demolished in 1931, the same year that the competition was announced.³⁹

However, all of this so-called progress came at great human and political costs. The Soviet regime conveniently omitted much in its depiction of its current condition. By early January 1934, approximately 300,000 members in Siberia and the Soviet Far East had been expelled from the Party in recent a recent purge.⁴⁰ More than half of the attendees of the “Congress of Victors” were eventually executed as part of the Stalinist Terror. And 98 of the 139 individuals elected to the Central Committee at the congress were shot in the following years.⁴¹ Construction of the Palace of Soviets never progressed beyond the laying of the

³⁶ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 266.

³⁷ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, xv.

³⁸ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 280.

³⁹ Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era*, 190.

⁴⁰ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, xiv.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

foundations,⁴² though the site had many uses during the Soviet period including as a swimming pool. Ultimately, the cathedral was rebuilt at its original location.

The year 1934 saw the role of artists in the construction of this new socialist society become more defined. At the first Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in April 1934, both Gorky and Andrei Zhdanov laid out the responsibilities of writers, and by extension all artists, to use Socialist Realism to create “more efficient constructors of socialism.”⁴³ Artists were to portray the unfolding of the socialist future in the present.⁴⁴ This echoed a sentiment expressed by Anatolii Luncharskii in February 1933 that Soviet artists did not “accept reality as it really is,” but “as it will be.”⁴⁵ Zhdanov reminded those at the congress that Soviet literature (and art) was (and must be) characteristically optimistic.⁴⁶ And while the regime relied upon artists for the proper education of Soviet citizens, it also strengthened and centralized its massive penal system for those who failed to be adequately indoctrinated.

In July 1934, the OGPU and the regular civil police were incorporated into the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (*Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennykh del* or NKVD). The NKVD, led at the time by Stalin’s dependable ally Genrikh Yagoda. Five months later the NKVD assumed control of all the penal facilities throughout the Soviet Union and established the Main Administration of Labor

⁴² Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era*, 190.

⁴³ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, 48.

⁴⁴ Figes, *The Whisperers : Private Life in Stalin’s Russia*, 1st:188.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Boobbyer, *The Stalin Era*, 188.

⁴⁶ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 292.

Camps (*Glovnnoe upravlenie lagerei* or GULag).⁴⁷ The institutions and ideas that enabled the Great Terror were falling into place just as the Moscow Theater Festival was seeking to become its own established institution.

After its inaugural outing, the Moscow Theater Festival was off to an auspicious start. It benefited not only from the positive feedback of festival visitors but from increasing interest in and tourism to the Soviet Union. As Europe and the United States continued to recover from the Great Depression more citizens were in a position to travel abroad. Furthermore, the Soviet Union continued to be one of the more affordable travel destinations. In terms of Americans alone, going to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1934, the anticipated 10,000 tourists was expected to be double that of 1933.⁴⁸ Building on the favorable economic environment, Intourist worked more aggressively to bring guests to the festival, including partnering with VOKS and the central committee of the Union of Arts Workers (Rabis) to invite leading theatrical figures to the festival.⁴⁹ It certainly did not hurt festival attendance that, according to Oliver Sayler, the Soviet Government was not then allowing major Soviet theatrical and musical groups to tour to the United States.⁵⁰ To increase attendance further at the second festival, Intourist compelled theaters participating in the festival to open their seasons earlier than had been customary to accommodate the festival.⁵¹ From

⁴⁷ Ibid., 281.

⁴⁸ Diana Rice, "Russia Gains in Tourists," *New York Times*, July 8, 1934.

⁴⁹ "Moskovskii Teatralnyi Festival," *Teatralnaya Dekada*, August 1, 1934, 11.

⁵⁰ "Fall Festival In Moscow to Attract World: All Theaters to Take Part; Sophie Before Royalty; Amusement Chat. (Reprinted from Yesterday's Last Edition.)," *Washington Post*, May 9, 1934.

⁵¹ "Soviet Theatres to Open Early," *New York Times*, July 12, 1934.

1934, the festival dates of September 1 to 10 would become permanent, at least for as long as the festival continued to be held.

Intourist, of course, took multiple opportunities in the Soviet press to publicize its success in attracting foreigners to the festival. An August 27 article in *Pravda* announced that Intourist was organizing the festival and that workers in art and literature from sixteen countries were coming to the festival. The article also described some of the major groups and their leaders.⁵² Characteristic of these groups was the one led by Hubert Freeling Griffith, English playwright, dramatic critic, and nonfiction writer. Griffith described the group with which he sailed for the Moscow Theater Festival from Hays Wharf, London Bridge on August 25, 1934 as follows:

Among them are the dramatic critics of four leading London newspapers; a contingent from the British Drama League; a few experts in Russian drama, keenly interested to see its latest developments; a great many more non-experts who are prepared to be keenly interested in Russian theatre—and in as much else as Soviet life as they may see incidentally; and yet another section keenly interested in nothing at all, simply regarding the trip as a cheap and adventurous holiday.⁵³

In addition to groups from Great Britain, countries represented at the festival in 1934 included the United States, France, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Holland, Rumania, Lithuania, Latvia, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium,

⁵² “Teatralnyi Festival «Inturista»,” *Pravda*, August 27, 1934.

⁵³ Hubert Griffith, “The Moscow Theatre Festival,” *Fortnightly*, October 1934, 437.

Italy, Turkey, and Austria.⁵⁴ The following chart illustrates approximately how many tourists came from the countries with the largest numbers of the visitors to the festival:

Table 3. Festival Attendees by Country

Country	Number of Attendees
England	80
France	47
United States	44
Scandinavian Countries	25
Czechoslovakia	22
Other Countries	250

Source: *Pravda*⁵⁵

In addition to attracting foreigners to the Soviet Union specifically for the festival, the festival also drew attendance from other groups of foreigners already visiting Moscow, such as American students, French teachers, and Italian doctors.⁵⁶

Among the individuals who attended the second festival were Emil Burian, Communist Czech poet, journalist, singer, actor, musician, composer, dramatic adviser, playwright, director, and founder of the leftist theater D.34 and Stanislav Lom, Czech playwright, writer, critic, publicist, and director of the National Theater in Prague from 1932 to 1939. From England, the 1934 festival attracted, among others, *Star* dramatic critic Albert Wilson; Geoffrey Whitworth, the founder and president of the British Drama League, lecturer and promoter of amateur and professional theater, and later a leading voice for the founding of the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 438.

⁵⁵ “Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 5, 1934.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

National Theater; Huntley Carter, theater critic, author and lecturer on Russian theater who travelled extensively in the Soviet Union between 1921-38; Marie Seton, actress, critic and later biographer of Sergei Eisenstein, Paul Robeson, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Satyajit Ray; and Patrick Hughes, dramatic critic for the *Daily Herald*. Writer, composer, librettist, actor, and Secretary of the International Theater Society André Mauprey; Vice President of International Theatre Society Henri Clerc; and dramatist, critic, and General Secretary of International Theatre Society Paul Gsell represented some of the most prominent visitors to the festival from France. The United States saw a number of high profile members of the arts community attend the festival including actress Blanche Yurka; *New York Times* dramatic critic Brooks Atkinson; playwright Elmer Rice; theater scholar and lecturer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana; actress, and cofounder and director of the little theater group the Wisconsin Players, Laura Case Sherry; theater scholar, director, producer, designer, and later founder of Off-Broadway's Phoenix Theater, Norris Houghton; Moscow Bureau Chief of the *New York Times* Walter Duranty; and cowboy, vaudeville performer, humorist, social commentator, and motion picture actor Will Rogers. Other notable attendees of the 1934 festival were Johan Huijts, editor of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* in Holland; Guido Salvini, Italian theater and film director; Sidney Barnett Potter from South Africa, editor of *Natal Witness*; and Ertuğrul Muhsin Bey, producer, actor, and director from Turkey. The increased attendance and presence of more individual world artistic figures meant increased coverage of the festival and of the visitors' opinions.

The second Moscow Theater Festival began on International Youth Day, September 1, with a performance of *Prince Igor*, the opera by Borodin, at the Bolshoi. The anonymous festival correspondent to the London *Times* said of the festival's opening performance that, "the almost excessively conventional presentation swept from the mind of the foreigners among the audience all recollection of the red banners, the slogans, and the strains of the Internationale in the streets [celebrating International Youth Day]." ⁵⁷ Perhaps it was the traditional nature of the work that caused the festival planners to have the Bolshoi orchestra play the Internationale before the performance of *Prince Igor*. ⁵⁸ Hubert Griffith said of *Prince Igor* that the "lavishness of the spectacle was extreme." ⁵⁹

The festival continued the next day with Lev Slavin's play *Intervention* at the Vakhtangov Theater. Although the ballet *The Flames of Paris* had been scheduled for September 3 at the Bolshoi, *Pravda* reported that the festival attendees were shown *Swan Lake* instead without explaining the reason for the change. ⁶⁰ The following day, the festival attendees went to the Central Children's Theater run by Natalya Sats. They saw a matinee performance of *The Negro Boy and the Monkey*, a play by Sats and S. Rozanov. Before the performance, the guests were able to watch as children played games, performed songs, recited poetry, and otherwise performed. ⁶¹ Griffith described *The Negro Boy and the Monkey* as "a combination of theatre, cinema-cartoon, and music; animals,

⁵⁷ "Moscow Theatre Festival 'Prince Igor'," *Times*, September 12, 1934.

⁵⁸ "Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival."

⁵⁹ Griffith, "The Moscow Theatre Festival," 438.

⁶⁰ "Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival."

⁶¹ Ibid.

clowns, dancing and gaiety.”⁶² Moscow Bureau Chief of *The New York Times* Walter Duranty wrote of the play that it is “Pollyanna stuff, plus an overdose of race equality propaganda, but it is a bright little play, nevertheless.” He continued, “The whole movement of the Children’s Theatre has energy and purpose - not to say actual success - which makes it far from negligible.”⁶³

In the evening after having attended the Children’s Theater, the guests were treated to *200,000*, a play by Sholem Aleichem at the Jewish Theater. Duranty felt the theater was “amazingly good” and wrote that the production “gives full play to the star actor Mikhoels, who yields’ nothing in talent to the best of the Art Theatre.”⁶⁴ One of the American visitors said, “There was so much color, brightness, energy, cheerfulness in the performance, that even without understanding the language you understand everything.”⁶⁵ The next evening’s performance was of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* at the Second Moscow Art Theater. *Pravda* represented the Second Art Theater’s production of *Twelfth Night* as a fresh, new, critical reading of history, thus justifying its continued presence in the repertoire of a theater in the new socialist society.⁶⁶ According to *Pravda*, this approach was tremendously successful, and the foreigners refused to leave the hall for so long after the performance that the actors made dozens of curtain

⁶² Griffith, “The Moscow Theatre Festival,” 440.

⁶³ Walter Duranty, “Theatre Festival Opens at Moscow,” *New York Times*, September 3, 1934.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 6, 1934.

⁶⁶ “Vchera Zakonchilsya Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 11, 1934.

calls.⁶⁷ However the criticism was not universally positive. While Hubert Griffith described the production of *Twelfth Night* as “shining, alive, and original,”⁶⁸ he also said, “The mistake had been made of ignoring Shakespeare’s exquisitely balanced scheme of the play, and lumping all the Sir Toby-Sir Andrew-Maria-Malvolio clowning scenes together in the middle of the play into an hour or so of pure knockabout.”⁶⁹

Continuing the trend of classical works rather than contemporary ones, the next festival performance, on September 6, was Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* performed by the Stanislavsky Opera Theater at the Palace of Culture of the Proletarian District. The next day featured yet another classical work, *The Lady with the Camelias* by Dumas-fils, performed at the Meyerhold Theater, which had been compelled to participate in this year’s festival after the foreigners expressed disappointment over the theater’s absence from the first festival. Concerning the heavy programming of classical works, English playwright, dramatic critic, and nonfiction writer Griffith commented, “In these circumstances it was perhaps the best and subtlest propaganda of all to let the foreign visitors see that the classics—unadulterated—are repeatedly played in the Russian theatre and are appreciated and respected.”⁷⁰

The chain of classical works was broken by the presentation of the Soviet play *Lyubov Yarovaya* by Konstantin Trenyev at the Malyi Theater on September 8. That evening, Intourist and VOKS had organized a gathering of festival

⁶⁷ “Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 7, 1934.

⁶⁸ “Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 9, 1934.

⁶⁹ Griffith, “The Moscow Theatre Festival,” 443.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 437.

attendees and Soviet art workers at the Metropole Hotel. The event was attended by more than 500 people including Soviet directors, artists, dramatists, journalist and the appropriate officials from Intourist and VOKS. Speeches were given by various Soviet officials and foreign guests including Aleksandr Arosev, chairman of VOKS; Yakov Boyarskii, chairman of the central committee of Rabis; Hubert Griffith; Huntly Carter; Paul Gsell; Moizhish, director of the Czech national theater in Prague; Henry Dana; and Szletinski, a Polish director.⁷¹ The next day, the festival program featured another contemporary play, *The Optimistic Tragedy*, by Vsevolod Vishnevskii at Tairov's Kamerny Theater. Hubert Griffith dubbed it the best production of the festival, calling the acting "bright" and the "setting and mise en scène wonderful."⁷² Gorky's *Yegor Bulychov and Others* at the Moscow Art Theater was programmed to conclude the festival. However, due to a cast-member illness, it was replaced by Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro*, also at the MKhT.

In addition to the performances on the official program, the visitors were also programmed with a full and exhausting schedule of sightseeing excursions to sites of cultural and socio-political significance as in the previous festival. But tourists were free to deviate from the assigned agenda and to venture about by themselves without guides or interpreters if they chose.⁷³ This included the freedom to see other performances. Recognizing that many would do so, Intourist provided not only a schedule of official Moscow Theater Festival productions but

⁷¹ "Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival," *Pravda*, September 10, 1934.

⁷² "Vchera Zakonchilsya Vtoroi Teatralnyi Festival."

⁷³ Geoffrey Whitworth, "The Moscow Theatre Festival," *Drama* 13 (1934): 2–3.

also a list of suggested alternatives to the official program. This list included Bulgakov's *Days of the Turbins* at the MKhT, Schiller's *Don Carlos* at the Malyi and *Love and Intrigue* at the Vakhtangov, Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* at the Kamerny, Aleksei Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan the Terrible* at Second Moscow Art Theater, *Measure of Severity* by A. Bergenson at the Jewish Theater, Ostrovsky's *The Forest* at the Meyerhold and *Talents and Admirers* at the Simonov Theater, and *Uriel Acosta* by Karl Gutzkow at the New Theater. Although also not a part of the official festival program, which ended on September 10 in Moscow, Intourist arranged for some of the festival view some productions in Leningrad. The productions selected were Shostakovich's opera *Katerina Izamailova* (also known in English as *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) at the Leningrad Malyi on September 11, the ballet, *The Fountain of Bakhchiserai* by Boris Asafyev at the Theater of Opera and Ballet on September 12, and a contemporary Revolutionary play on September 13.

Along with performances, sightseeing, and meetings with Soviet theater artists, the festival was accompanied by a series of radio broadcasts on the Comintern channel. The broadcasts included speeches from leading theatrical figures like Tairov and Sats, music from festival productions, as well as performances by major actors. The first of these broadcasts was on September 2, with subsequent broadcasts on the sixth, eighth, and ninth.⁷⁴

Intourist took care to collect and publish as much praise of the festival from its visitors as it could. In a collection of articles titled "Foreign Artists on

⁷⁴ Aleksandr Tairov, "American Playwrights on the Soviet Stage," *Moscow News*, September 7, 1934.

Soviet Art” leading figures of the Western arts world sung the praises of the theater and other arts in the Soviet Union and the relationship between the socialism and these artistic successes. Among the foreign contributors to the collection were attendees of the 1934 festival including Henry Dana, Paul Gsell, and Stanislav Moizhish, who lauded the festival.⁷⁵ Even praise originally published abroad was republished in *Pravda*. Upon returning from the second festival, Turkish director and actor Ertuğrul Muhsin Bey provided a detailed account of his experience at the festival and declared that at no other time or place has theater reached such heights as it had in Soviet Russia.⁷⁶

Though much praised, the festival was also criticized. While the festival planners tried to learn from the first festival how to meet the desires of the foreign guests in terms of programming, they could not please everyone. *New York Times* correspondent Duranty lamented the absence of Art Theater’s productions of *The Cherry Orchard* and Bulgakov’s *Day of the Turbins* as well as Afinogenov’s *Fear* from the program. He also found it a pity that the theater of the national republics was not showcased.⁷⁷ Overall, his was one of the most critical voices commenting on the festival. He did not soften his criticism for political or other reasons, as suggested by the title of his collection of pieces written as a correspondent in the Soviet Union, *I Write as I Please*.⁷⁸ His assessment was that while no other

⁷⁵ “Inostrannye Khudozhniki o Sovetskom Iskusstve,” *Pravda*, September 12, 1934.

⁷⁶ “Mukhsin-bei o Sovetskom Teatre,” *Pravda*, September 19, 1934.

⁷⁷ Duranty, “Theatre Festival Opens at Moscow.”

⁷⁸ Walter Duranty, *I Write as I Please* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935).

European capital could offer the same collection of plays from a production standpoint, the Russians did not excel in “individual acting.”⁷⁹

Festival attendees were also divided as to whether the Soviet theater’s connection with the Soviet regime promoted propaganda over art or art over commercialism. “At the conclusion of the tour, one had the distinct impression,” wrote Geoffrey Whitworth of the British Drama League, “that the Russian Theatre is not so free from censorship as ours, regarded as it is by the Soviet Government as an engine of social propaganda, rather than as an entertainment that lives to itself alone.”⁸⁰ Griffith, on the other hand, expressed how impressed he was by the efficiency with which the Soviet theater was able to function as a social and educational force due to its having the “whole authority of the State behind [it].”⁸¹ And American actress Blanche Yurka described the Soviet theater as “free” because it was not dependent on “financial dictatorship, on the theatrical market, on its capricious competition.” She wrote that Soviet theater contained “the powerful keys of genuine art, which pave the way for the beautiful and great future of the theaters of all nations and peoples.”⁸²

Ultimately, the rapid expansion of the number of attendees from approximately 60 in 1933 to more than 230 in 1934 coupled with the prominence of some of the attendees made the festival a success in its second instance. The scheduling move from June to September had proven successful. The festival

⁷⁹ Duranty, “Theatre Festival Opens at Moscow.”

⁸⁰ Whitworth, “The Moscow Theatre Festival,” 3.

⁸¹ Griffith, “The Moscow Theatre Festival,” 437.

⁸² Blanche Yurka, “Strana Podlinnogo Iskustva,” *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 16, 1934, 3.

programming was generally well received. The variety of different works and different theaters suggested some degree of artistic freedom with respect to aesthetic approaches. This was reflected in Geoffrey Whitworth's comment, "In the theater...novelty and experiment hold the field, though the exaggerations of constructivism have already had their day."⁸³ Nevertheless, the festival attendees did perceive the effects of censorship in the ideological content of many of the plays. A statement by Hubert Griffith usefully summarizes the impression formed by the second Moscow Theater Festival; he attributed the success of the theater in Moscow to three factors: "a vivid Russian artistic imagination...official state support (coupled with considerable liberty)... and immense popular approval."⁸⁴

1935

Just a few months after the conclusion of the first festival, the murder of Leningrad Party secretary Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934 radically altered the internal political atmosphere of the Soviet Union. Kirov's murder was used to justify the widespread execution of Party members deemed enemies of the state and enemies of Stalin. Prior to this, Marxist ideology generally prohibited the execution of Party members though they could be expelled from the Party.⁸⁵ The newly enhanced NKVD intensified its efforts to locate and destroy political dissenters. The NKVD's elaborate network of agents was aided by individual members of society who took it upon themselves to inform and denounce their family, friends, and neighbors. These denouncers had motivations ranging from

⁸³ Whitworth, "The Moscow Theatre Festival," 3.

⁸⁴ Griffith, "The Moscow Theatre Festival," 445.

⁸⁵ McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*, 49; Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 281.

sincere commitment to building socialism to the desire to acquire more living space in remarkably cramped communal apartments.⁸⁶

During this time that Stalin was becoming increasingly paranoid concerning political opposition, he was also the Party official over theater and all the arts. From the middle of 1934, he was assigned oversight of the administration of cultural affairs in the Soviet Union as part of his responsibilities as a secretary of the Central Committee of the Party.⁸⁷ The Moscow Theater Festival thus fell under his personal and direct purview.

An article in the *Moscow Daily News* on the opening day of the third festival repeated the already established narratives about the growth of the festival and about the place of Soviet theater in the world. It concluded:

The Moscow Theater Festival is not only a review of some of the best productions of the Soviet stage; it is at the same time an exchange of ideas on an international scale, a cultural event which plays its part in promoting friendly relations among the nations of the world.⁸⁸

For as much as Intourist had crafted a particular—and not entirely accurate—narrative about the festival that it disseminated through multiple publications, including the *Moscow Daily News* and *Pravda*, some elements of that narrative were true. From 1934 to 1935, the festival increased in popularity seeing a rise from 234 guests representing eighteen countries to 310 guests representing

⁸⁶ See Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 4 (December 1, 1996): 831–866.

⁸⁷ Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 141.

⁸⁸ “Moscow Theater Festival a Great Cultural Event,” *Moscow Daily News*, September 1, 1935.

twenty-six countries. Likewise, all indications suggest that attendance by theater professionals also increased. What may have been overstated in Intourist's carefully constructed narrative was the extent to which theater professionals dominated the festival audience. Intourist continued to market heavily to ordinary tourists and to rely upon VOKS to specially invite theater professionals. These invited guests not only helped to raise the cultural profile of the festival, but also, in doing so, made the festival more attractive to ordinary tourists. Further, the leading theatrical figures frequently led tour groups, comprised significantly of tourists who were not theater professionals. To continue to strengthen this narrative in 1935, Intourist announced in *Pravda*, on multiple occasions in advance of the festival, how many guests were anticipated and from where, as well as the names of prominent theatrical figures expected to attend.⁸⁹ And on August 29, *Soviet Art* ran a piece by Sergei Bogomazov, director of the arts section of Intourist, presenting the established festival narrative and emphasizing the diverse and illustrious nature of the festival attendees, who were, he claimed, the leading figures in theater and journalism from around the world.⁹⁰

Among the theater professionals and other notable attendees to the third Moscow Theater Festival were several repeat visitors including Emil Burian, Huntly Carter, Henry Dana, and Walter Duranty who continued to live in Moscow as bureau chief for the *New York Times*. Several significant persons from England attended the festival for the first time in 1935 such as actress Sybil Thorndike and

⁸⁹ "Na Teatralnyi Festival Yedut Turisty Is 19 Stran," *Pravda*, August 23, 1935; "Teatralnyi Festival Otkryvayetsya 1 Sentybrya," *Pravda*, August 27, 1935.

⁹⁰ "Nakune Festivalya," *Sovetskoe Isskustvo*, August 29, 1935.

her husband—actor and theater director—Lewis Casson; Communist actor, director, and writer André van Gyseghem; and Malcolm Morley, a director and artist. The new American contingent featured figures such as impresario and theater producer Morris Gest; one of the leaders of the Theatre Union, theatrical manager Zelda Dorfman; as well as two professors from the historically black college for women, Spelman College—Anne M. Cooke, the director of dramatics (who later led the department at Howard) and Billie B. Geter, a professor of French. Scandinavia continued to be well represented with Communist writer Martin Andersen Nexø from Denmark; Gerda Ring, director and actress at the Royal Theater from Norway; and Paulina Briunius—stage and film actor, screenwriter and film and theater director (later managing director of the Royal Dramatic Theater), Zarah Leander—actress and singer, and Carl August Forsell—journalist—all from Sweden. Other notable attendees included French dramatist Henri-René Lenormand; French journalist and novelist Simone Téry; Mexican actor, director, and author on Soviet theater Alfredo Gomez de la Vega; director at the Czech National Theater in Prague Voita Novak; Australian writer Marjorie Bulcock; and Turkish composer and conductor Hasan Ferid.

The first performance of the festival was a matinee performance at the Theater of the Young Spectator, though the real opening of the festival took place at the Bolshoi later that evening. The matinee performance was of *Free Flemings*, based on the Tyl Eulenspiegel legend. In this dramatization Tyl was set as “the leader of a people’s revolt against their Spanish conquerors and the Inquisition.”⁹¹

⁹¹ Lewis Casson, “Moscow Theatre Festival,” *Drama* 14 (1935): 19.

The real first production of the festival was a new production of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko* at the Bolshoi.⁹² Before this performance, Kurts, the chairman of Intourist, addressed the festival attendees, officially welcoming them and opening the festival.⁹³

A welcoming speech before the festival performances, usually by the director of the theater, had become commonplace by 1935 with *Pravda* generally reporting on the content of these speeches. The paper focused on the directors' expressions of loyalty and gratitude to the Soviet regime and to the socialist society for their attention to the theater and for an environment in which the theater could flourish. Naturally, covering the speeches in *Pravda* was a means of ensuring the directors kept their remarks within the accepted ideological and political framework of the Soviet regime, while also publishing more praise of the regime. Kurts's remarks from the opening of the 1935 festival were a perfect example of the sentiments expressed in such speeches, which the Soviet press most frequently published:

In coming to the USSR foreigners want to see this great process of reconstruction, (sic) that is taking place on a scale hitherto unknown in world history on the basis of principles that stand in sharp contrast to those of the capitalist system.

...

⁹² Walter Duranty, "Moscow Festival Draws Foreigners," *New York Times*, September 2, 1935.

⁹³ "Otkrylsya Tretii Sovetskii Teatralnyi Festival," *Pravda*, September 2, 1935; "Kurts Greets Guests at Opening of Moscow Theater Festival," *Moscow Daily News*, September 2, 1935.

The ten days of the Moscow Theatre Festival is not a long time... but even these ten days spent by our foreign guests in Moscow, – the capital of the Soviet Union, will undoubtedly aid in giving them a correct and fuller acquaintance with the grand work of building a new society that is going on in our coming under the leadership of Communist Party under the leadership of the wise and brilliant architect of the Socialist construction of our land – Comrade STALIN.⁹⁴

Curiously, the conclusion to the speech, as published in the *Moscow Daily News*, did not mention Stalin, but ends with the statement, “Ten days is not a long time, but we hope they will help our guests toward a correct and complete understanding of the huge structure of our new society and of the achievements of Soviet culture.”⁹⁵ On the one hand the removal of the hyperbolic Stalinist language limited the extent to which the paper participated in cult of Stalin worship. On the other hand, by altering the quote this way, the paper also obscured the extent to which the political tone of the Soviet Union had shifted from devotion to Marxist-Leninist Communist ideology to the worship of Stalin as supreme leader, protector, and embodiment of that ideology. In essence, although there was evidence elsewhere, in this instance, the *Moscow Daily News* omitted information that could have indicated the rise of a political culture ripe for abuse, such as the abuse that would come in the form of the Stalinist Terror or Great Purge of 1937-1938. It is not clear whether the translation made in advance

⁹⁴ V. A. Kurtz, “Opening Address of V. A. Kurtz Chairman of the Direction of Intourist at the Opening of the Third Moscow Theatre Festival in the Bolshoi Theatre of the USSR”, 1935, 1, 4, MS Thr 402, Box 25, Folder 4, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁹⁵ “Kurtz Greets Guests at Opening of Moscow Theater Festival.”

and distributed to festival visitors or the version in the newspaper afterward was the closest to the speech as actually given by Kurts. However, if Kurts did engage in such high praise of Stalin, many of the festival attendees would have been attuned enough the political circumstances of the Soviet Union at the time to assess Kurts's sincerity in making the remarks.⁹⁶ Whether sincere or not, such comments were becoming increasingly compulsory for public figures in the Soviet Union.

After the celebratory opening at the Bolshoi, the theatrical portion of the festival continued the next evening with the performance of *King Lear* at the Jewish Theater. The festival guests were divided in their opinion of the Jewish Theater's *King Lear*.⁹⁷ The day after seeing the performance, British critic and author of books on the Soviet theater Huntly Carter, called the Soviet theater the truest interpreter of Shakespeare, among other praises, in the *Moscow Daily News*.⁹⁸ Actor and director Lewis Casson, also from England, claimed to dissent from the majority of critics who he said praised the Jewish Theater's *King Lear*. Casson's main criticism was of Mikhoel's acting of the title role:

Mikhoel's gave a very fine display of the actor's art, but he seemed to me entirely mis-cast. He is quite a little man, with a mobile, slight simian face, little natural suggestion of dignity, and none of splendour. The tragedy is surely the breaking of a great man, not a mere study in senility. Lear was a man in the prime of life who tried to evade the

⁹⁶ That becomes much more difficult, of course, when analyzing only the documentary traces of the event.

⁹⁷ "Itogi Festivalya," *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 21, 1935.

⁹⁸ "British Critic Lauds Soviet Theater," *Moscow Daily News*, September 3, 1935.

responsibilities of kingship while retaining its privileges. To show the failure of that enterprise is good propaganda. To make Lear a fool, just because he was a King, is not.⁹⁹

One detects, possibly, a whiff of anti-Semitism in Casson's description of Mikhoels, but Casson was not alone in criticizing the acting in the production. The anonymous correspondent to the London *Times* also found the acting somewhat lacking. He wrote, "The characters never grew; from the first moment, when the emotions were raised suddenly to their highest pitch, to the last scene there was no rise and fall, no acceleration or diminution of the play's rhythm." Overall he described the production as "a trifle tedious."¹⁰⁰

English actor, director, and writer, André van Gyseghem, who was also a Communist, felt that in this the Jewish Theater had abandoned its individual approach to theater in favor of a more traditional approach to which the company was unsuited. He may have suspected the Soviet theatrical environment was becoming less hospitable to the wide variety of aesthetic approaches that had characterized early Soviet theater. "Characteristic gestures are replaced have been displaced by naturalism, and the fine rhythmic and musical use of sound which was so integral a part of the old Jewish theater is gone," he writes. "In its place is the sonorous verse delivery of tradition." He felt the style of acting was so foreign to them that it produced a "feeling of disharmony" with the behavior and voices

⁹⁹ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 19.

¹⁰⁰ "Moscow Theatre Festival 'King Lear'," *Times*, September 10, 1935.

of the actors.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, he did receive some aspects of the production remarkably positively, even some of the acting.

He was taken by the acting of Mikhoels, in which van Gyseghem felt the actor delivered “a new rendering of Lear insofar as he makes him a mind decayed from the very first scene.” Van Gyseghem continued:

His first entrance and the subsequent dividing of the crown is a masterly piece of acting ... we see not a great mind but a loving, warm human being at conflict with the world and cracking under the strain. The otherwise incomprehensible blindness of his treatment of Cordelia then attains some probability. Here in the early part of the play, Mikhoels rises to great heights, and it must be noted that he cannot be restrained by the naturalistic form but frequently relapses into gestures and tones of pure formalism.¹⁰²

While “formalism” would very much become, within a few months, a term of derision used by the Soviet regime, a term that threatened serious consequences for artists and arts companies, van Gyseghem, used “formalism” as a compliment. However much van Gyseghem appreciated Mikhoel’s performance, he claimed to most admire the acting of Zuskin in the role of the Fool. He described the performance as “sheer genius.” “When Lear and his Fool are on the stage together

¹⁰¹ André van Gyseghem, “Individuality Gives Place to Tradition in Jewish Theatre Production of ‘King Lear’,” *Moscow Daily News*, September 4, 1935; cf. his appraisal in *Theatre in Soviet Russia*.

¹⁰² van Gyseghem, “Individuality Gives Place to Tradition in Jewish Theatre Production of ‘King Lear’.”

we are seeing no ordinary acting, but the perfect coordination of two imaginations who are creating out of each other and in perfect harmony,” he wrote¹⁰³

Van Gyseghem also felt the set designs by Aleksandr Tyshler “revealed a stroke of genius.” He was impressed by Tyshler’s ability to depict different settings from towers and battlements to streets and courtrooms on such a small stage. He felt the coloring and materials used captured well the mood of the play. Similarly, he wrote, the “carven figures that support the whole structure and serve as staircase and banner-bearers are terrific in their immobility” and “dominate the play because they have more of its spirit than the actors who strut in front of them.”¹⁰⁴ The London *Times* festival correspondent also admired the scenic design, which the correspondent called “magnificently inspired” and felt gave the performance “gravity.”¹⁰⁵ Taking the opposing viewpoint to van Gyseghem, Australian writer Marjorie Bulcock admired the production for the “power and intensity in the acting” but found the scenic design “disturbing.”¹⁰⁶ Overall she found the performance less than moving,¹⁰⁷ a sentiment which van Gyseghem likely shared.

As in previous festivals, this one also included the showing of films such as Kozintsev and Trauberg’s *Maksim’s Youth* and the documentary *Happy Youth*,

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “Moscow Theatre Festival ‘King Lear’.”

¹⁰⁶ Marjorie Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” *The Australian Quarterly* 8, no. 29 (March 1, 1936): 115.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

both shown in the Art movie theater on September 3.¹⁰⁸ That evening Shostakovich's opera *Katerina Izmailova* (known in English as *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) was presented by the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater. The same opera had been shown in a different production in the unofficial Leningrad segment of the previous festival. According to Casson, the 1935 production was "one of the three most beautiful and thrilling performances of the festival."¹⁰⁹ He was impressed by witnessing such a high level of acting in an opera as well as by the scenic design and staging of the chorus. He contrasted this with the Bolshoi's productions of the Rimsky-Korsakov opera *Sadko* and the new ballet *Three Fat Men*, both of which he found mediocre and disappointing.¹¹⁰ The London *Times* critic found that all the elements of the production contributed to effective storytelling. Claiming the opera was chosen as a product of Socialist Realism to show how Stanislavsky's psychological approach to acting could be applied to opera, the critic felt the performers acted the opera as well as could be expected. Overall, he felt the production deserved "nothing but praise."¹¹¹ Swedish actress Pauline Brunius said that although premieres of the opera were being prepared in Stockholm and Copenhagen, she did not feel they had opera performers capable of giving acting performances that were as effective as those of the Soviet

¹⁰⁸ "Vtoroi Den Teatralnogo Festivalya," *Pravda*, September 3, 1935; "Tretii Den Teatralnogo Festivalya," *Pravda*, September 4, 1935.

¹⁰⁹ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 18.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹¹ "A Soviet Opera 'Lady Macbeth Of Mtsensk'," *Times*, September 13, 1935.

performers.¹¹² Bulcock agreed that *Katerina Izmailova* was “one of the highlights of the festival.”¹¹³

The next day began with a visit to the Central Children’s Theater where the festival visitors viewed *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* by Polovinkin. Before the start of the performance, the director of the theater Natalia Sats discussed—in Russian, German, and French—the theater’s history and its relationship with its viewers.¹¹⁴ That evening, the festival attendees attended *The Spanish Curate* by Fletcher at the Second Moscow Art Theater. Despite the prevalence of classical works at the previous festivals, presentation of such works increasingly required justification. Ivan Bersenev, one of the actors and artistic directors at the Second Moscow Art Theater, published a statement in *Pravda* the day after the opening of the festival that mostly praised the role of the Soviet theater in the new socialist society but ended with a defense of presenting Fletcher’s *Spanish Curate* to the festival audience. Bersenev argued that the Jacobean play reflected the joy and youth present in the new society, and that this would be obvious to the foreign guests of the theater festival.¹¹⁵

According to several festival visitors, the performance did just that. Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexø felt the Second Moscow Art Theater actors represented “actual joyful life depicted as great art.” He said he had never before

¹¹² “Itogi Festival’ya.”

¹¹³ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 113.

¹¹⁴ “Chetvertyi Den Teatralnogo Festival’ya,” *Pravda*, September 5, 1935.

¹¹⁵ Ivan Bersenev, “3-i Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 2, 1935.

experienced such a “joyful uplift” from a theatrical performance.¹¹⁶ Dana felt the performers had “poured new life” into an “ancient play.”¹¹⁷ In response to the performance Czech director Voita Novak reportedly said that the Soviet theater was the example from which the theater of the entire world should learn.¹¹⁸ In the opinion of The *London Times* correspondent, the production was a “great success.” He wrote that there was a “lightness of touch that redeemed the grossest bawdiness, and the brilliance of each individual performance invited comparison with the Compagnie des Quinze.”¹¹⁹ And Casson felt it was one of the top two productions of the festival, describing it as a “rich, ripe, glowing re-creation of a full-blooded time and climate.”¹²⁰ Marjorie Bulcock felt the performance succeeded in spite of the play’s weakness. She wrote, “The story is unintelligible and certainly not funny to the average reader, but staged with the utmost theatricalism and vigour, with the bawdy boisterous humour underlined, with brilliant stage settings and high comedy acting, it was one of the gems of the festival.”¹²¹ After the performance a large group of festival guests met with Bersenev to discuss the theater’s approach, its methods, and the living conditions of the actors.¹²²

¹¹⁶ “Chetvertyi Den Teatralnogo Festivalya,” *Vechernyaya Moskva*, September 5, 1935.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ “A Fletcher Comedy ‘The Spanish Curate’ In Moscow,” *Times*, September 20, 1935.

¹²⁰ Casson, “Moscow Theatre Festival,” 20.

¹²¹ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 113.

¹²² “Chetvertyi Den Teatralnogo Festivalya.”

In an effort to showcase the work of the national minority theaters, the next production in the festival on September 5 was *Life on Wheels* by Aleksandr Germano at the Gypsy Theater. To Casson, the political agenda that motivated showing the Jewish Theater and the Gypsy Theater—to demonstrate that the Soviet regime supported the national minorities in their autonomous development—was transparent.¹²³ And in the visitor's book at the performance, Carter expressed the politically correct sentiment that the creation of such a theater would have been impossible before the Revolution.¹²⁴ As for the actual performance, Casson called it "a naïve, semi-amateur affair." He singled the acting out for its amateurishness though he found the "setting, music and dancing ... characteristic and charming in a simple way."¹²⁵ Bulcock believed the performance "delighted the sophisticated audience with its freshness and whirlwind vitality."¹²⁶

After a matinee performance of Kirshon's *The City of Winds* at the Theater MOSPS, an exhibition of amateur folk dancing and acrobatics had been planned for the evening of September 5 at the Green Theater in the Gorky Central Park of Culture and Recreation. However, the performance had to be relocated to the Children's Theater due to rain, which disappointed both performers and spectators.¹²⁷ Still the audience appreciated the performance. Bulcock thoroughly enjoyed the display of amateur performance. "It was great fun to hear a chorus of

¹²³ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 19.

¹²⁴ "Theater Festival Guests Visit Gypsy Theater, Park of Culture," *Moscow Daily News*, September 6, 1935.

¹²⁵ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 19.

¹²⁶ Bulcock, "The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival," 115.

¹²⁷ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 21.

tram drivers singing old folk songs, or a group of engineers from the Stalin plant giving an acrobatic display of quite a professional standard. A husky young girl formed the base of one acrobatic pyramid, and seemed to enjoy it,” wrote Bulcock.¹²⁸

The next production, on September 6, of Pogodin’s *Aristocrats* at the Realistic Theater headed by Okhlopkov was one of the most anticipated before the performance and most talked about after. Though widely known abroad, the theater was appearing for the first time as part of the formal festival program.¹²⁹ English actor and director André van Gyseghem called *Aristocrats* “the only experimental work being shown in the Theater Festival” and described the production’s aesthetic approach as follows:

The lights are on—there is no attempt at the illusion we are apt to think so necessary to the theater, and the audience is called upon to supply such scenery as it needs from its own imagination. All that the producer supplies are three huge panels up one wall which are painted with designs symbolic of the changing seasons. On this bare stage the art of the actor becomes enlarged and intensified; he must create out of himself; he gets at times very little help from the dramatist whose style is radically economical. ...

Okhlopkov has done a magnificent piece of work. He has based his production on the conventional Kabuki theater. The players are accompanied by a crowd of uniformed attendants who perform a

¹²⁸ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 116.

¹²⁹ One of the theater’s productions was on the list of alternative options for the previous festival.

functional part in the action of the play. Leaping on the stage and flinging showers of white confetti high in the air, they thus create the Karellian blizzards; a tablecloth stretched between two kneeling figures and we have a table....

For sheer theatrical beauty there has been nothing in the festival to rival the inspired creation of the canal through which Kostia and Lemon are struggling for their lives; a simple black cloth with holes cut in it, through which we see the head and shoulders of the swimmers or a hand reaching for a gleaming knife. Spellbound, the audience watched this superb theatricalism, and applauded spontaneously when the lights faded. ...

It is the most significant move made towards a real mass theater since the early Meyerhold productions.¹³⁰

The aesthetic individuality of this production displayed the type of experimentation that festival attendees expected and appreciated. Dana reportedly called *Aristocrats* the best performance in the festival to that point, while Lenormand admired Okhlopkov's creation of a new "fruitful scenic form," referring to the episodic dramatic structure of the play.¹³¹ This experimentation in theatrical form still had to contend with the propagandistic nature of the play's content. Bulcock, who found *Aristocrats* to be "the most original performance" she saw at the festival discussed the interaction between aesthetic experimentation and propagandistic content as perceived by the audience:

¹³⁰ André van Gyseghem, "'Aristocrats' Significant Move Towards Real Mass Theater," *Moscow Daily News*, September 1935.

¹³¹ "Na Teatralnom Festivale."

This play was in the wildest melodramatic style, with incredible contrasts of good and bad, extreme exaggeration of the emotions, and flagrant propagandist appeal. It depicted the reformation of apparently hopeless characters in a Soviet prison camp, and it was over-acted to the last possible degree. In spite of all that I was converted against my will. Such passion, such terrible sincerity was intensely moving once intellectual surrender had been made, and the form accepted without further question. In the atmosphere of an hysterical revival meeting passions were surely torn to tatters, but the play went deep, and it overwhelmed a most critical audience.¹³²

The *Times* correspondent recognized the risks Okhlopkov took in staging the production this way and called *Aristocrats* the “least successful and most exciting” of the contemporary Soviet plays due to the experimentation in minimalist scenic design.¹³³

The next day, September 7, the festival program featured a new Soviet ballet at the Bolshoi. According to American expatriate journalist Anna Louise Strong, the ballet, *Three Fat Men*, by Oranskii was based on a Revolutionary story in which Capitalism, Clericalism, and Militarism, personified as three fat men, are overthrown by the people’s hero, Prospero, who rallies the workers against their oppressors. However, she felt the ballet lost all the revolutionary feeling leaving “just good orthodox ballet dancing.”¹³⁴ Others were not even convinced the ballet dancing was good. The London *Times* critic wrote of the

¹³² Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 115.

¹³³ “A Fletcher Comedy ‘The Spanish Curate’ In Moscow.”

¹³⁴ Anna Louise Strong, “‘Three Fat Men’ Good Entertainment But Lacks Soviet Note,” *Moscow Daily News*, September 1935.

ballet, “there was little to charm or stimulate in this incoherent and grandiose spectacle.”¹³⁵

That same day, a meeting of festival guests and others in Moscow at the time was held at the Malyi Theater to discuss ways of supporting and promoting “progressive art.” The festival’s gathering of theatrical figures from around the world, many of which held leftist political and artistic inclinations, provided a unique opportunity for international artistic collaboration outside the boundaries of the festival. This meeting was one such opportunity. While total attendance figures are not available, the membership of a preliminary committee formed to lead the effort provides some information as to who attended. The committee included Dana, Lenormand, van Gyseghem, Nexø, Okhlopkov, German director Erwin Piscator, Mexican actor and director Alfredo Gomez de la Vega, German actor Alexander Granach, as well representatives from Poland, Canada, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, and the Soviet Union.¹³⁶ This committee then met on a subsequent day to decide how best formally to organize themselves to “support the demands of progressive art for the defence (sic) of culture in the struggle against reaction in the field of art.” The organization was committed to supporting those “who aspire to artistic freedom” while barring

¹³⁵ “A Soviet Opera ‘Lady Macbeth Of Mtsensk’.”

¹³⁶ “Minutes from Meetings on Sept 7 and 9, 1935 on Defending Progressive Art”, September 7, 1935, MS Thr 402, Box 25, Folder 4, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

from membership “propagandists of ideas of a facist (sic), reactionary and imperialist character.”¹³⁷

The evening performance of Romashev’s *The Fighters* at the Malyi Theater went largely unremarked upon. Bulcock noted that perhaps the most interesting feature of the production was its use of a battle film as the background for the last scene.¹³⁸ Ostrovsky’s *The Thunderstorm* at the Moscow Art Theater the next evening evoked more of a response. Lenormand called the work of the Art Theater, the “art of the deepest truth.”¹³⁹ However, others disagreed, at least as it pertained to this production. The popularly expressed sentiment after the Moscow Art Theater’s 1923 American tour was that the audiences’ unfamiliarity with the language was not an impediment to their appreciation of the theater’s work. However, Bulcock claimed that owing to the “quietness and restraint” of the performance of the *The Thunderstorm*, “one felt here most keenly the deprivation of not knowing the language.” She continued, “In other theatres, where the acting was more vigorous and the methods more original, one’s ignorance of the text seemed far less important.”¹⁴⁰

On the morning of September 9, the festival attendees divided into groups, a part of which visited socio-cultural institutions in the capital while another part visited the Children’s Literary Theater and the Children’s Theater.¹⁴¹ Later in the day, a reception with secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 114.

¹³⁹ “Itogi Festivalya.”

¹⁴⁰ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 112.

¹⁴¹ “Devyatyi Den Teatralnogo Festivalya,” *Pravda*, September 10, 1935.

(*Tsentralnyi Ispolnitelnyi Komitet SSSR*) Ivan Alekseevich Akulov was held for several guests of the theater festival. Dana, Lenormand, Carter, Casson, Ferid, Leander, Forsel, Novak, and Finnish dramatic critic Toivola attended the gathering where they were invited to provide their honest evaluation of Soviet theater, which according to *Pravda* consisted of sincere praise with some requested criticism. For his part, Akulov spoke of the Communist Party's interest in making the best achievements of world cultural available to the masses including the classics of bourgeois culture. He described art as an important aid in "forming the new man of the classless socialist society."¹⁴²

The September 9 performance was *Egyptian Nights* at the Kamerny Theater, a play that combined Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Pushkin's poem "Egyptian Nights." Casson found the production a "hotch-potch" with mediocre acting though he admired the sets and the music by Prokofiev.¹⁴³ Similarly, Bulcock called Tairov's experiment in intercultural theater an "unfortunate performance."¹⁴⁴

The final day of the festival was scheduled to begin with a morning performance of a new production, *Far Taiga*, by Afinogenov, at the Vakhtangov Theater. Instead the theater presented Gorky's *Yegor Bulychov and Others*, which had been scheduled for the prior year's festival in a production at the Moscow Art Theater, but was unable to be shown because of the illness of a performer. After

¹⁴² "Priem Uchastnikov Teatralnogo Festivalya Tov. I. A. Akulovym," *Pravda*, September 10, 1935; "Akulov Discusses Soviet Theater With Festival Visitors," *Moscow Daily News*, September 10, 1935.

¹⁴³ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 21.

¹⁴⁴ Bulcock, "The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival," 114.

the performance at the Vakhtangov Theater, Bulcock felt The play had been “produced with restraint and economy, but powerfully acted.”¹⁴⁵ *Platon Krechet* by Korneichuk at the Second Moscow Art Theater was the final performance of the third Moscow Theater Festival.

Soviet theater critic and then deputy chief for the department of theater administration, Pavel Novitskii, wrote an article published in *Pravda* summarizing the results of the festival. Novitskii acknowledged that the festival initially began as primarily a tourist attraction with some interest from the international theater community. However, he claimed that by the current festival, the event had attained a higher cultural and political profile attracting a larger contingent of theater professionals who shifted the balance of the festival attendees away from curious tourists. And while the festival was not officially competitive, that did not stop Novitskii from reviewing the feedback of the festival guests and declaring winners, or those most favored by the audience: *Aristocrats*, *The Spanish Curate*, and *Yegor Bulychov and Others*.¹⁴⁶

Likewise, Intourist was quick to pat itself on the back publicly through an article in *Teatralnaya Dekada* authored by Sergei Bogomazov the head of the arts section of Intourist. Bogomazov provided Intourist's interpretation of the festival's growth into cultural and political significance relative to previous festivals and other European arts festivals. Like Novitskii, Bogomazov emphasized the the alleged predominance of theater professionals among festival attendees. In addition, he focused on the festival's role in increasing the foreign cultural

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 113.

¹⁴⁶ Pavel Novitskii, “Itogi Teatralnogo Festivalya,” *Pravda*, September 11, 1935.

community's awareness of Soviet culture. While he felt it was too early to proclaim the results of the festival, those would be manifest through the words and actions of the guests when they arrived home, Bogomazov did conclude his article with the following statement on the festivals's impact:

The festival program, like a mirror, reflected the main lines of the art of the Soviet theater, the flourishing of which became possible only thanks to the exclusive conditions, in which our country's art is situated, led by the wise politics of the Communist Party and the genius leader of the laborers of the entire world, comrade Stalin.¹⁴⁷

The same ideology that infused Bogomazov's comments, some festival attendees felt infused the festival program, perhaps negatively. For example, Casson said the Soviet theater had great potential but feared that it was tending towards using propagandistic content as the measure of artistic merit.¹⁴⁸ Likewise, he was worried that this move towards unified propagandistic content also meant a move away from aesthetic variety and experimentation. Like many others, Casson wished the festival had included more of the work of the newer theaters whose approaches departed from that of Stanislavsky and exhibited more of a spirit of experimentation.¹⁴⁹ Still others were impressed by the diversity evident in the Soviet theater as demonstrated at the 1935 festival.

Izvestiya republished French journalist and novelist Simone Téry's appraisal of the festival. Téry went to Moscow expecting theater that was "new

¹⁴⁷ Sergei Bogomazov, "Teatralnyi Festival," *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 11, 1935, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Casson, "Moscow Theatre Festival," 22.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

and interesting” but also “standardized and unified.” She was surprised by the diversity of dramatic forms present in the Soviet theater and represented in the festival.¹⁵⁰ Majorie Bulcock, correspondent to the *Australian Quarterly* described the Moscow theater scene, as she experienced it in the festival, as one where, “each theatre is known for its individual style, and follows a fixed policy in its choice of plays and type of production, and the leader of each theater can “give rein to his personality, and experiment as daringly as he pleases.”¹⁵¹ Bulcock’s mistake was taking evidence of some experimentation as evidence of full artistic freedom, which others festival attendees observed was lacking. The language of the pre-performance curtain speeches, the rhetoric and narrative of the news stories covering the festival, and the programming of the festival itself all suggested a shifting political environment towards a political and cultural dictatorship, not of the Proletariat, but of Comrade Stalin—a dictatorship that was to have lethal consequences artistically and personally.

1936

The Rise of Socialist Realism as the official method and/or style of Soviet art brought with it a campaign against “Formalism,” which term was as nebulously defined as Socialist Realism. With the consolidation of government and Party oversight of all the arts under the All-Union Committee for Arts Affairs (*Vsesoyuznyi komitet po delam iskusstv*) created in December 1935, the anti-Formalist campaign took on new vigor at the start of 1936. Among the

¹⁵⁰ “Moskva -- Teatralnaya Stolitsa Mira Москва--Театральная Столица Мира,” *Известия*, September 16, 1935.

¹⁵¹ Bulcock, “The 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival,” 112.

campaign's first victims were Shostakovich and his opera, *Katerina Izamailovo*—one of the favorites of the 1935 festival. The opera and its composer were denounced in *Pravda* and other publications; other artists distanced themselves from Shostakovich through critical remarks that were recorded by the secret police and reported back to Soviet authorities. Those artists and intellectuals who publicly praised the opera recanted their statements in light of the government's new disapproval. However, Shostakovich was fortunate that the attack on his work at the time was not accompanied by a personal attack. Shostakovich was able to continue working, even if his commissions suffered. Still, this anti-Formalism campaign had a chilling effect on the artistic environment going into 1936.¹⁵²

By the start of the fourth theater festival the rhetoric used in the press to promote the festival had become more overtly ideological in tone. For example, in an article in *Pravda* Yakov Boyarskii, chairman of the central committee of Rabis, not only emphasized the increasing artistic significance of the festival in world culture but also contrasted the morally and artistically degenerate theater of capitalist countries with the artistically and ideologically superior theater of the Soviet Union. He argued the Soviet theater was freed from commercial demands due the support and administration of the Soviet government. And of course, Boyarskii attributed all the success of the Soviet theater to the “tremendous

¹⁵² For more on the anti-Formalism campaign and Shostakovich see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 183–215; Andrew B. Wachtel, “The Adventures of a Leskov Story in Soviet Russia, or the Socialist Realist Opera That Wasn’t,” in *Epic Revisionism : Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 117–139; Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 229–248.

growth of our country on the basis of its socialist transformation, performed under the brilliant leadership of the great Stalin.”¹⁵³

On the first day of the fourth festival, the Russian theatrical periodical *Teatralnaya Dekada* ran a cover story titled “To Expose the Enemies of the People.” The article expounded the necessity of and triumph in the August 24 conviction of Leon Trotsky, Grigorii Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev and thirteen others in the first Moscow Show Trial in which the sixteen were accused of forming a terrorist organization that killed Sergei Kirov and conspired to kill Stalin and other Soviet leaders. All sixteen were sentenced to death and executed the next morning, with the exception of Trotsky who had already been exiled from the Soviet Union. In *Teatralnaya Dekada*, the Moscow theater community took another opportunity to affirm its allegiance to the Party and Stalin in the highly charged environment where the consequences for disloyalty were severe and often fatal. Natalya Sats, director of the Central Children’s Theater, reportedly said, “Together with all the citizens of our country, we, the workers of Soviet art, even more closely encircle our Stalin. He is in the heart of each one of us. We love Stalin. We trust Stalin – we follow him. Stalin is ours!”¹⁵⁴ The article expressed the Soviet theater’s commitment to increased vigilance in defense of communism and against the enemies of the people. It was in this environment that the fourth Moscow Theater Festival unfolded.

¹⁵³ Yakov Boyarskii, “Chetvertyi Sovetskii Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 1, 1936.

¹⁵⁴ “Razoblachat Vragov Naroda,” *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 1, 1936, 2.

The fourth festival was the highest attended. In March 1936, travel columnist Diana Rice of the *New York Times* called the festival the “star attraction of the country,”¹⁵⁵ reflecting the festival’s popularity with ordinary tourists. In addition to the continuing economic recovery from the global depression, the festival also likely benefited from increased international tourism owing to the Berlin Olympics held the month prior to the festival. Intourist reported in *Pravda* that the number of tourists visiting the Soviet Union in the first quarter of 1936 represented a seventy percent increase over the same period the previous year. The company anticipated a significant increase over the previous year during the tourist season as well. Up to forty percent of the tourists anticipated for the year were expected to come from the United States, providing the largest number of tourists from a single country.¹⁵⁶ According to Brooks Atkinson, 150 of the 600 festival attendees in 1936 were Americans.¹⁵⁷

Among those who returned to the festival were Huntly Carter from England, Paul Gsell from France, Brooks Atkinson from the United States, and Henry Dana also from the United States. Notable new attendees included Venig, Czech artistic director of the dramatic theater in Prague; President of the International Archive of Dance Rolf de Mare from France; theater critic Emile Vuillermoz also from France; docent of the Theater Academy in Amsterdam Edvard Katan from Holland; director van der Vis from Holland; actress Nell

¹⁵⁵ Diana Rice, “Random Notes for the Summer Traveler,” *New York Times*, March 29, 1936.

¹⁵⁶ “Inostrannye Turisty v SSSR,” *Pravda*, April 9, 1936.

¹⁵⁷ Brooks Atkinson, “Drama Festival Opens in Russia,” *New York Times*, September 2, 1936.

Knoop from Holland; Iranian theater worker Abdul Hussein Han Nushim; Gösta Ekman, theater manager, actor, and first real star of Swedish theater; Olof Molander, director of the Royal Dramatic Theater in Stockholm; and Herbert Kline, editor of *New Theatre*; Harold Erenspenger, leader of a Drama League tour group; Pete Sandborne, theater critic; Albert Hirschfeld, caricaturist; Carleton Smith, Oxford professor of music history; and Dorothy Brewster, English professor at Columbia, all from the United States.

The festival opened with a performance of folk songs and dances at the Theater of Folk Art with approximately 700 performers.¹⁵⁸ As at prior festivals, in 1936, Kurts once again greeted the guests before the first performance to open the festival.¹⁵⁹

Of the whole festival, the *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent reserved praise only for the children's theaters and the Theater of Folk Art, which opened the festival with a display of folk songs and dances by amateur and semi-professional performers selected through Olympiads held throughout the Soviet Union. However, even the praise of the Theater of Folk Art was reserved and coupled with a criticism of the removal of Okhlopkov as artistic director. Under Okhlopkov, the different acts were crafted into a "unified spectacle," while after his removal, the acts merely "follow one another in the fashion of a music hall,"¹⁶⁰ according to the anonymous correspondent. At the start of the festival, Atkinson found the amateur performers at the festival's opening performance at

¹⁵⁸ "Moscow Theatre Festival New And Old Plays," *Times*, September 18, 1936.

¹⁵⁹ "Teatralnyi Festival Otkrylsya," *Pravda*, September 2, 1936.

¹⁶⁰ "The Moscow Theatre Festival," *Christian Science Monitor*, Unknown date 1936.

the Theater of Folk Art “distinguished by a vitality and a disarming pride in their native land.”¹⁶¹ However, by the end of the festival he called the folk art performance an “artless travelogue and an inept beginning to a notable theatre event.”¹⁶² While Huntly Carter admired the Soviet politics of rehabilitation as illustrated in *Aristocrats* and Soviet art’s ability to absorb the best of Russian classical music and literature as epitomized in *Eugene Onegin*, the display of folk art made the biggest impression on him.¹⁶³ Similarly, for Dorothy Brewster, professor of English at Columbia University, the amateur folk performances at the Theater of Folk Art artistically justified “the Soviet policy of fostering the peculiar cultural heritage of the immensely diversified national groups within the USSR.”¹⁶⁴

The next performance of the festival was a production of *Aristocrats* by Pogodin on September 2, this year at the Vakhtangov Theater as opposed to the Realistic Theater in which the play had been shown the previous year. Atkinson called *Aristocrats* at the Vakhtangov a “brilliant example of acting and staging.” Though he considered it “a little sentimental,” he wrote it presented an “unforgettable depiction of life.”¹⁶⁵

The next evening featured Aleksandr Griboyedov’s *Woe to Wit* at the Meyerhold Theater. Brooks Atkinson found the production “boring and

¹⁶¹ Atkinson, “Drama Festival Opens in Russia.”

¹⁶² Brooks Atkinson, “Moscow Nights,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1936.

¹⁶³ “Inostrannye Gosti o Sovetskom Teatre,” *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 21, 1936.

¹⁶⁴ Dorothy Brewster, “Theatre Festival-1936,” *Soviet Russia Today*, November 1936, 21.

¹⁶⁵ Brooks Atkinson, “Три Спектакля,” *Правда*, September 11, 1936.

pedantic.”¹⁶⁶ He thoroughly savaged the production in his report for the *New York Times*:

In this production Meierhold’s stage is cluttered and cramped with warehouse materials that impede the actors. The chief feature of his setting is a pair of staircases on either side of the stage; they not only make entrances and exits unbearably wearisome, but they are a hazard for the actor with slippery shoes.

Being in the presence of a literary classic, which happily also contains the seeds of revolution, Meierhold has encouraged his actors to play as sluggishly as possible, climbing or descending five steps before delivering a line, or pretending to play five bars on the piano before saying “da” or “nyet.” Although Meierhold has had an acting organization to work with for many years, his actors are not good ones. If they ever had vitality or magnetism, it has been knocked out of them. Their gestures are perfunctory, their voices unpleasant. Here in the Soviet Union “the trend” may be said to be away from fourth-dimensional wizardry and toward more intelligible forms. Poor Meierhold is only the husk of a director when he crooks his knee to a classic.¹⁶⁷

During the day on September 4, roughly 200 festival guests attended a reception at the All-Union Committee on Arts Affairs where there were greeted in English and French by the committee’s chairman, Platon Mikhailovich Kerzhentsev. He then gave a report on the state of theater in Soviet Union.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Atkinson, “Moscow Nights.”

Boyarskii also attending the meeting as vice-chairman of the committee.¹⁶⁸ That evening, the festival visitors were scheduled to attend Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin* at the Bolshoi. The piece was "performed with exquisite harmony of singing, acting, and setting," according to Brewster.¹⁶⁹ She found the operas *Eugene Onegin* at the Bolshoi and *Quiet Flows the Don* in Leningrad some of the most "completely satisfying of all the performances" at the festival.¹⁷⁰

While a performance at Tairov's Kamerny Theater was not included on the festival program for 1936, the festival visitors were able to attend an open rehearsal on September 5. That evening's performance was *Arsen*, a play by Sandro Shanshiashvili, performed by the Rustaveli Georgian Theater. The artistic director of the dramatic theater in Prague, Venig, admired most of all the "dynamism and temperament, with which the artists performed the entire play." He also felt the sets of the first and third acts were especially good. "We can expect a lot from this young theater," he said.¹⁷¹ The next morning the guests had a choice of seeing a dramatization some of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales at the Children's Theater or *The Wandering School* by Lev Kassil at the Theater of the Young Spectator. That evening the festival featured Ilya Selvinskii's play *Umka*, *The White Bear* at the Theater of the Revolution. The Moscow portion of the festival closed on September 7 with a performance of *Ressurrection*, based on the novel by Tolstoy, at the Moscow Art Theater.

¹⁶⁸ "Chetvertyi Teatralnyi Festival," *Pravda*, September 5, 1936.

¹⁶⁹ Brewster, "Theatre Festival-1936," 54.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ "Uspekh Teatra Um. Rustaveli Na Teatralnom Festivalya," *Pravda*, September 6, 1936.

In 1936, for the first time the festival included performances in Leningrad as part of the official program. On September 8, the Leningrad Malyi Theater presented Ivan Dzerzhinskii's opera *Quiet Flows the Don*. The next afternoon the festival attendees saw *Timoshka's Mine* by L. Makariev at the Leningrad Theater of the Young Spectator. That evening they had the choice of *Othello* at Radlov's Theater or *Destruction of the Squadron* by A. Korneichuk at the Franko Theater of the Ukraine. The festival concluded on September 10 with a performance of Asafyev's ballet *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* at the Theater of Opera and Ballet.

Though not officially part of the festival, a trip to Rostov-on-Don after the conclusion of the festival by some of its participants allowed them to experience the theatrical scene beyond Russia's two cultural capitals, Moscow and Leningrad.¹⁷² The group, which found the trip well worth it, included Huntly Carter, French theater critic Emile Vuillermoz, Dutch director van der Vis, and Carleton Smith, an American who was then professor of music history at Oxford.¹⁷³

The 1936 Moscow Theater Festival attracted some praise. Albert Hirschfeld was most interested in the scenographic elements of the productions, which he felt were most "successful and interesting" at the productions of *Eugene Onegin* and *Umka – the White Bear*. He felt the weakest element of design he observed was the lighting; he was particularly disturbed by the abuse of

¹⁷² "Uchastniki IV Teatralnogo Festivalya v Rostove," *Pravda*, September 15, 1936.

¹⁷³ "Telegramma Uchastnikov Chetvertogo Teatralnogo Festivalya," *Pravda*, September 17, 1936.

projectors, which he felt ruined the theatrical illusion by concentrating too much light on one part of the stage. Still he felt the design in the festival demonstrated the advanced development of the visual arts in the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁴ Olof Molander, director of the Royal Dramatic Theater in Stockholm, felt the festival allowed the guests to witness the fine craftsmanship and giftedness of Russian actors. Overall he concluded, “I consider, that after what I have seen at the festival, world theater cannot work without a creative connection with the Soviet theater.”¹⁷⁵ However, much of the praise was qualified by a sense that something was missing from the festival and from Soviet theater. Bogomazov, director of the art section of Intourist, referred to the theater showcased by the festival as the “theater of the great Stalinist era,”¹⁷⁶ and the significance of this description for the state of the theater was becoming more apparent to the festival attendees.

While Brooks Atkinson felt the festival’s program represented a move away from a “preoccupation with the fierce task of creating a new State,”¹⁷⁷ overall, he said, “the festival has been a disappointment to those who attended it in expectation of seeing vital works of theatre art.” He found the “glorious production” of the opera *Eugene Onegin* at the Bolshoi Theater the only “example of finely written drama.” Otherwise, he said the festival confirmed his belief that “there can never be genuine creative art under a dictatorship” and the Soviet directors, actors, and designers were “wasting their genius on stuff that from the

¹⁷⁴ “Inostrannye Gosti o Sovetskom Teatre.”

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Sergei Bogomazov, “Chetvertyi Festival,” *Teatralnaya Dekada*, September 1, 1936.

¹⁷⁷ Atkinson, “Drama Festival Opens in Russia.”

artistic viewpoint is scarcely worth producing.”¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the special correspondent to the *Christian Science Monitor* covering the festival described the fourth Moscow Theater Festival as leaving an “impression of staleness,” as if the theaters and their directors were “marking time.”¹⁷⁹ The correspondent to the London *Times* considered the acting of the festival impressive but the quality of the drama – lacking.¹⁸⁰

In part, in reaction to the critical response of guests of the fourth theater festival, Boyarskii, aired some of the Soviet theater’s dirty laundry in *Pravda*, publicly chastising both theaters and dramatists for the lack of new Soviet plays of high artistic merit dramatically. He called upon them to work together to produce plays for the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution that would be worthy of the occasion.¹⁸¹ This reaction reflected a misunderstanding of the general tenor of the foreign criticism. While some of the festival attendees sought plays that represented contemporary Soviet life, for many of them, the propagandistic nature of much of the contemporary Soviet dramaturgy was becoming increasingly difficult to overlook and to appreciate.

Not everyone found the new Soviet plays overly propagandistic. Dorothy Brewster, an English professor at Columbia University, described the sympathy for Revolutionary characters in the plays as “as natural and inevitable as sympathy with the ragged soldiers in Valley Forge would be in an American

¹⁷⁸ Brooks Atkinson, “Drama in Moscow Fails to Impress,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1936.

¹⁷⁹ “The Moscow Theatre Festival.”

¹⁸⁰ “Moscow Theatre Festival New And Old Plays.”

¹⁸¹ Yakov Boyarskii, “Teatry i Pyesy,” *Pravda*, October 22, 1936.

play.” One example of this, Brewster felt, was the “sympathy with peasant revolt against landlord and Tsarist officers” in the Georgian Theater production of *Arsen*.¹⁸² And Atkinson recognized the prominence of Soviet ideology in the theater, but highlighted the difficulty of assessing the sincerity of those who espouse Soviet ideology, whether they are playwrights or ordinary citizens:

But it is stupid to assume, as visitors from a harum-scarum democracy are likely to do, that a playwright’s radiant preoccupation with Soviet virtue is necessarily insincere or inscrutably directed. A priest who does not believe in God leaves the church or remains silent.¹⁸³

Of course, Atkinson’s comment did not take into consideration how artists might act when the possible consequences of leaving or remaining silent are artistic—or literal—imprisonment, exile, or death. He was right to question the assumption that all the Soviet ideology espoused in the theater was insincere, but he was also naïve in assuming that expressing this ideology was a free choice indicating ideological agreement.

Whatever the extent to which the Soviet populace accepted Stalinist ideology, the Soviet theater and the Moscow Theater Festival demonstrated an unmistakable commitment to social(ist) construction, at least on the part of the Soviet government and the Communist Party. Atkinson wrote, “All that the casual visitor can be certain of is that there has been a revolution, that it has succeeded,

¹⁸² Brewster, “Theatre Festival-1936,” 21.

¹⁸³ Atkinson, “Drama in Moscow Fails to Impress.”

that everyone has had to pay a terrible price for it and that those who won it mean to achieve the spirit and letter of what they set out to do.”¹⁸⁴

1937

The decision to hold the 1937 festival was officially announced in *Pravda* on March 1, 1937.¹⁸⁵ *Vechernyaya Moskva* reported on a conversation it had with Kurts regarding the festival. He announced several innovations for the new festival including the expansion of the festival to Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, and Rostov-on-Don; the scheduling of two performances each evening in Moscow, and recognition of Pushkin’s centenary in the festival programming. The work of the national theaters and children’s theaters would continue to be featured.¹⁸⁶ Because of its expanded geographic scope the festival was often referred to as the Fifth Soviet Theater Festival, retroactively renaming the previous festivals.

Other than these announcements, there was little advance coverage of the festival in the Soviet press. The press almost completely stopped reporting numbers of expected festival attendees along with their countries of origin. Nor were there notices about the notable theater professionals planning to attend the festival. As Stalin and the Soviet regime became increasingly wary of war with Germany, the search for internal and external enemies of the Soviet state increased. There was also an increasing tendency towards Russian nationalism in Soviet culture beginning in 1936 and intensifying thereafter along with

¹⁸⁴ Atkinson, “Moscow Nights.”

¹⁸⁵ “Pyatyi Sovetskii Festival,” *Pravda*, March 1, 1937.

¹⁸⁶ “Pyatyi Teatralnyi Festival,” *Vechernyaya Moskva*, March 3, 1937.

apprehension of impending war.¹⁸⁷ While the government continued to welcome foreign tourists, Soviet citizens increasingly saw contact with foreigners as a risky activity. This view, along with the constant uncertainty about what constituted good Soviet art and what qualified someone as an enemy of the state, could account for the decreased attention paid to the festival in the press.

The diminished press coverage means less is known concerning who attended the fifth festival and what they thought of it. It is clear that although the festival had representatives from twenty-five countries, with 202 attendees, only the first festival had lower attendance. Some previous attendees such as Paul Gsell and Huntly Carter returned. Henry Dana had intended to attend but decided against it when he was unable to secure adequate subscription for the tour group he was going to lead. Some of the members of the international cultural community that attended included the French minister of education, and later co-founder of the Cannes Film Festival, Jean Zay and his wife, Madeleine; from the United States, actress and amateur director Julia Dorn and William Challee, one of the founders of the Group Theater; and actress Gloria Alvarez, playwright and poet Miguel Hernandez, theater manager Miguel Prieto, and playwright and director Cipriano Rivas Cherif, all from Spain. Sir Barry Jackson, founder and director of Birmingham Repertory Theater and director of the Malvern Festival came from England, theater director Ali Daryabegi from Iran, and playwright Yao

¹⁸⁷ Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 148.

Sin-Kun from China. Paul Robeson was also said to have attended the opening performance of the festival while in Moscow to arrange for his son's education.¹⁸⁸

The festival opened with a celebration of amateur performance at the Bolshoi Theater. American expatriate Anna Louis Strong, founder of the *Moscow News*, wrote of the opening night of the theater festival that it “was successful because it expressed in song and dance the great artistic wealth of a multi-national country, each people finding free and rich expression of the vigorous joy of the people who have seized all the tools of life in their hands and are able to keep them.”¹⁸⁹ Undoubtedly, this was the ideological intent of such a display.

Most evenings of the 1937 festival featured two performances from which attendees could choose. On September 2, guests had a choice of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Vakhtangov Theater or *Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man* by Ostrovsky at the Malyi. An American journalist named Creighton said of *Much Ado About Nothing* that he had never seen a better interpretation of Shakespeare at any other theater or in any other country.¹⁹⁰ Likewise, the correspondent to the London *Times* called the performance “an evening of riotous entertainment” noting that the Russians gave “a lighter and more wistful contribution to the drama [of Shakespeare] than is known in England.”¹⁹¹

The Vakhtangov Theater’s production of *Yegor Bulychov and Others*, which had been shown at the 1935 festival, was offered against Viktor Gusev’s

¹⁸⁸ Anna Louise Strong, “Fifth Soviet Theater Festival’s Opening Program Reflects Vitality of Folk Art,” *Moscow News*, September 8, 1937.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ “Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, September 5, 1937.

¹⁹¹ “Shakespeare in Moscow,” *Times*, September 11, 1937.

verse play *Glory* at the Malyi. Chinese playwright Yao Sin-Kun said that seeing *Yegor Bulychov* at the Vakhtangov for himself confirmed that all the praise that he heard regarding the production did not do it justice.¹⁹² And Swedish director Lindberg called the performance one of the best he had seen, remarking that he had known the play earlier but never understood it until he saw it in Moscow.¹⁹³

Few other comments were published about the productions of the fifth festival. Swedish director Lindberg indicated his intention to stage *The Golden Key* in Stockholm after seeing it performed at the Central Children's Theater.¹⁹⁴ Paul Gsell considered the Jewish Theater's production of Abraham Goldfaden's *Shulamith* one of the Jewish Theater's best productions.¹⁹⁵ And even with its four-and-one-half-hour running time, the Moscow Art Theater's production of *Anna Karenina*, as adapted for the stage by Volkov, "succeeded in holding the attention of the audience," according to the correspondent to the London *Times* who praised the production.¹⁹⁶

Below is the full program for the 1937 festival:

¹⁹² "Teatralnyi Festival."

¹⁹³ "Teatralnyi Festival," *Pravda*, September 6, 1937.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ "Teatralnyi Festival," *Pravda*, September 7, 1937.

¹⁹⁶ "Moscow Theatre Festival 'Anna Karenina'," *Times*, September 21, 1937.

Table 4. Program of the 1937 Festival

Production	Author	Theater	Date	City
Opening Celebration at Bolshoi		Bolshoi Theater	Sept. 1	Moscow
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	Shakespeare	Vakhtangov Theater	Sept. 2	Moscow
<i>Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man</i>	Ostrovsky	Malyi Theater	Sept. 2	Moscow
<i>Yegor Bulychyev and Others</i>	M. Gorky	Vakhtangov Theater	Sept. 3	Moscow
<i>Glory</i>	V. Gusev	Malyi Theater	Sept. 3	Moscow
<i>His Own Jailer</i>	P. Calderon	Theater of the Young Spectator	Sept. 4	Moscow
<i>The Golden Key</i>	A. Tolstoi	Central Children's Theater	Sept. 4	Moscow
<i>Shulamith</i>	A. Goldfaden	Jewish Theater	Sept. 5	Moscow
<i>Aristocats</i>	N. Pogodin	Realistic Theater	Sept. 5	Moscow
<i>A Wedding in the Camp</i>	I. Rom-Lebedev	Gypsy Theater	Sept. 6	Moscow
<i>The Year 19</i>	I. Prut	Central Theater of the Red Army	Sept. 6	Moscow
Exhibition of Children's Work		House of the Pioneers	Sept. 7	Moscow
<i>Anna Karenina</i>	N. Volkov	Moscow Art Theater	Sept. 8	Moscow
<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	K. Trenyev	Moscow Art Theater	Sept. 9	Moscow
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	P. Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi Theater	Sept. 9	Moscow
<i>Ruslan and Lyudmila</i>	M. Glinka	Bolshoi Theater	Sept. 10	Moscow
<i>The Forest</i>	A. Ostrovsky	Pushkin Theater of Drama	Sept. 11	Leningrad
<i>Partisan Days</i>	V. Asafyev	Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater	Sept. 12	Leningrad
<i>The Marshal's Childhood</i>	I. Vsevolozhskii	Theater of the Young Spectator	Sept. 13	Leningrad
<i>The Tsar's Bride</i>	N. Rimsky- Korsakov			
<i>Give the Heart Freedom</i>	M. Kropivnitskii	Malyi Opera Theater	Sept. 14	Leningrad
<i>Natalka-Paltavka</i>	M. Lysenko	Shevchenko Ukrainian Theater of Drama	Sept. 12	Kharkov
<i>Woe from Wit</i>	A. Griboyedov	Kharkov Theater of Opera and Ballet	Sept. 13	Kharkov
<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i>	I. Dzerzhinskii	M. Gorkii Rostov Theater	Sept. 15	Rostov
<i>The Blue Bird</i>	M. Maeterlinck	Theater of Opera and Ballet	Sept. 17	Kiev
<i>Karmeliuk</i>	A. Sukhodolskii	Ukrainian Children's Theater	Sept. 18	Kiev
		Franko Theater of the Ukraine	Sept. 18	Kiev

Towards the conclusion of the festival, a banquet was held for the attendees by the All-Russian Theatrical Society at House of the Actor in Moscow.¹⁹⁷ After the festival guests returned to their home countries, the Soviets hoped their enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and its theater would be shared. In *Pravda*, a reporter claimed the effects of the festival could be seen in the local productions of Soviet plays in countries including Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, and Lithuania after the festivals as well as in the use of the “approaches of Soviet directors” by foreign directors such as Emil Burian in Prague.¹⁹⁸ However, foreign reception was decidedly mixed as evidenced as much by what was said and by the general lack of commentary on the festival.

A major concern to many of the festival attendees was the effect of the political environment on the Soviet theater. The London *Times* correspondent to the festival described the atmosphere as one of “political insecurity if not of actual revolution.”¹⁹⁹ Addressing the issue of government influence over the theater, the correspondent wrote:

The Russian theatre is strictly controlled by the State. A department of the All-Union Committee on Art Affairs exercises direct control over the principal theatres of the country. The committee itself is attached to the Council of People’s Commissars. Few theatres have escaped the recent political “purge.” ... A Russian producer must be patient. After a year’s

¹⁹⁷ “Festival Guests Entertained by Theater Society”, 1937.

¹⁹⁸ Aleksei Morov, “Pyatyi Sovetskii Teatralnyi Festival,” *Pravda*, August 31, 1937.

¹⁹⁹ “The Mirror Of A People A Soviet Theatre Festival, Art And Politics,” *Times*, October 2, 1937.

rehearsing of a particular play, the interference of a high political authority to stop the piece is a constant possibility.²⁰⁰

Still the correspondent wrote positively of the Soviet theater. “Though isolated from the flow of ideas in other countries and subject to Government interference and persecution, the Russian theatre is to-day the most accomplished, the most colourful, and the most audacious in the world.” He then went on to say, “the Russian theatre is the mirror reflecting the soul of a country.”²⁰¹ This was true in a way the author likely did not intend. Even with its showcasing of pre-Revolutionary theaters and repertoire, the festival could not conceal the simultaneous dominance of Socialist Realism and instability of official Soviet artistic taste as well as the precarious position in which this placed ghd artistic directors of Soviet theaters as a result.

The fate of the Realistic and Kamerny Theaters was indicative of this volatile environment surrounding the 1937 festival. On September 4, in the middle of the festival, it was announced in *Pravda* that Okhlopkov's Realistic Theater was being combined with Tairov's Kamerny Theater by order of the Directorate of Arts Affairs of the Moscow Council despite the extremely divergent aesthetic approaches of the directors.²⁰² The building of the former Realistic Theater was to go to the Central Puppet Theater. Tairov was named artistic director of the new combined theater with Okhlopkov as assistant artistic director. The new theater's season would commence the next day, September 5. In essence, the Realistic Theater ceased to exist and performances were given

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² “Ukrupnenie Moskovskikh Teatrov,” *Pravda* (Moskva, September 4, 1937).

under the name of the Kamerny Theater at that theater's building under Tairov's leadership. Thus, when the festival program for September 5 included the Realistic Theater's production of *Aristocrats* it was likely that theater's last performance, and technically the first performance of the new theater company. No theaters were protected from government control. Even control of Moscow Art Theater was taken from Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1936 when Mikhail Arkadyev was made artistic director. Thus, in addition to low attendance, the 1937 festival suffered from the complicated political environment of the Stalinist Terror and the cultural environment of ambiguous artistic policy.

Despite the results of the disappointing 1937 festival, Pavel Semenovitch Korshunov, vice chairman of the board of Intourist, wrote to Andrei Andreevich Andreev, a secretary of the Central Committee on November 3, 1937 requesting permission to hold the 1938 festival. Whether or not the permission was eventually given is unknown. However, on August 10, 1938 the London *Times* published the following statement concerning the cancellation of the Moscow Theater Festival:

Since 1933 playgoers and theatrical producers of other countries have been invited each year to attend in Moscow a festival of drama, opera, and ballet. This year, however, the festival has been abandoned. No reason for this unexpected step is given, but it is known that during the last few months the management and artistic control of several theatres

in Moscow and Leningrad have been subjected to criticism, with the result that certain changes in personnel have been made.²⁰³

The situation was, of course, much worse than the phrase “changes in personnel have been made” would suggest. It extended far beyond the theater, and began before the fifth festival.

Several theater directors were victims of the Stalinist repression around the time of the final theater festival. Arkadyev was dismissed as artistic director of the Moscow Art Theater in June 1937²⁰⁴ and arrested in July. In September, he was convicted of participating in a counter-revolutionary terrorist organization and executed. The Soviet authorities became increasingly suspicious of Sandro Akhmeteli, leader of the Georgia Rustavelli Theater, after its production of *Lamara*, which was performed as part of the first festival, was invited to tour the United States. In 1935, Akhmeteli was removed from his post. He was arrested in November 1936 and executed in June 1937. After her husband’s arrest for counter-revolutionary activity on November 3, 1937, Natalya Sats, director of the Central Children’s Theater, was arrested and sentenced to five years in a labor camp after which she was not permitted to return to Moscow. Meyerhold was denounced in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* on December 17, 1937 and on January 8, 1938, his theater was ordered closed by the Politburo of the Party. He was subsequently arrested in 1939, convicted of anti-Soviet and Trotskyite activity

²⁰³ “The Theatre In Moscow Cancellation Of This Year’s Festival,” *Times*, August 10, 1938.

²⁰⁴ Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 224.

and executed in 1940.²⁰⁵ These are just some examples of theater professionals affected by the Stalinist Terror.

Other organizations involved in the festival faced similar losses. Kurts, the chairman of Intourist, was arrested on November 3, 1937, the same day on which Korshunov requested permission from the Party to hold the next festival. Kurts was convicted of participating in a counter-revolutionary nationalist organization and executed in 1938.²⁰⁶ Like Arkadyev, Aleksandr Arosev, the chairman of VOKS, also was arrested in July 1937 and, in 1938, was convicted of participating in a counter-revolutionary terrorist organization and executed. Though not a victim of Stalinist repression, Kerzhentsev was dismissed as head of the All-Union Committee on Arts Affairs in January 1938, and in September Zhdanov became head of the reorganized Central Committee Directorate for Propaganda and Agitation, which placed all the branches of the arts under Party control.²⁰⁷ Thus, the heads of the two organizations that had led in planning and conducting the festival were both arrested just a few months after the fifth theater festival and executed before the festival would have been held in 1938, and administration of the arts in the Soviet Union fell to new leadership.

If the loss of significant members of the Soviet cultural community is not enough to explain the cancellation of the Moscow Theater Festival after 1937, the foreign relations condition in the Soviet Union at the time provides additional

²⁰⁵ He was rehabilitated in 1955.

²⁰⁶ He was rehabilitated in 1957

²⁰⁷ Clark and Dobrenko, *Soviet Culture and Power: a History in Documents, 1917-1953*, 148.

reasons why holding the festival after 1937 would not have been expedient. Stalin and the Soviet regime desperately sought to avoid war with Germany. The First World War and Civil War had already taken a significant toll on the Soviet Union. Plus, the costs and energy of fighting a war would have diverted resources from necessary resources from Stalin's push toward rapid industrialization under the five-year plans. As early as 1936, Czechoslovakia felt the pressure of German aggression over a portion of its territory occupied by ethnic Germans, the Sudetenland. Stalin and the Soviet regime were convinced that war with Germany was imminent. The Soviet Union shifted from focusing on preventing war to preparing for it. Both cultural diplomacy and profiting from tourism, the primary aims of the Moscow Theater Festival, were deprioritized in the face of military exigencies. By October 1938, Nazi Germany had won control of the Sudetenland, and war between the Soviet Union and Germany would prove inevitable. Though evidence is lacking as to the specific reasons the decision was made to discontinue the festival after 1937, internal political, cultural, and economic circumstance combined with the external political affairs made for a set of historical conditions far from conducive, if not outright inhospitable, to continuing to host the festival.

CONCLUSION: THE REALITY OF SOCIAL(IST) CONSTRUCTION

The Moscow subway far exceeds the limits of the usual conception of a technical structure. Our subway is a symbol of the new socialist society that is now being built. Our subway embodies all of the power of the new reigning working class, which builds and works on new fundamental principles.

The subway symbolizes a new phase of our socialist construction... symbolizes not only a beginning, but a real, already lively period of construction for the direct use of the millions of the masses.

—Lazar Kaganovich¹

In August 1936, while Intourist was completing its final preparations for the fourth—and highest attended—Moscow Theater Festival, Nazi Germany was welcoming people from around the world to its capital, Berlin, for its own international festival. August 1 through 16, the Nazi regime hosted the eleventh modern Olympic Festival, as the Olympic Games were often referred to, an international event that was in many ways similar to the theater festival. Beginning almost immediately after the rise of Hitler and Stalin to power and continuing to the present, many outside of Germany and the Soviet Union,

¹ Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich, “From a Speech Given at the Celebratory Meeting Dedicated to the Opening of the Subway,” *SSSR Na Stroike*, August 1935, inside cover. Kaganovich, the secretary general of the Moscow Communist Party was charged with overseeing the construction of the first phases of the Moscow subway, which was named in his honor.

especially in the United States, have compared the two regimes.² Some have viewed them as different manifestations of the same ideology—totalitarianism.³ Others have seen the regimes as entirely distinct, despite the use of terror and repression in governance, which they had in common. Given this constant comparison of the regimes, the chronological proximity of the Nazi Olympics and the Moscow Theater Festival, and the events' similar international nature, a brief comparison of the two events will help to illuminate the nature of social(ist) construction as manifest in the theater festival.⁴

The honor of hosting the 1936 Olympics was officially given to Germany in 1931, before Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in January 1933. After his appointment as Chancellor, Hitler supported the hosting of the Olympics as an opportunity for cultural diplomacy. Even more than the theater festival, the Olympics attracted a large international audience of athletes, coaches, support staff, and spectators. While their attention was focused on the athletic

² Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (April 1970): pp. 1046–1064.

³ See, for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1958).

⁴ The 1936 Olympics have received significant popular and scholarly attention. Therefore, the discussion here will be very focused and necessarily brief. For more on these games, see Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics*, 1st U.S. (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); Susan D. Bachrach, *The Nazi Olympics : Berlin 1936*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2000); Arnd Krüger and W. J. Murray, *The Nazi Olympics : Sport, Politics and Appeasement in the 1930s*, Sports and Society. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Christopher Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics: The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games* (Stroud: Sutton, 2006); Anton Rippon, *Hitler's Olympics: The Story of the 1936 Nazi Games* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2006); and David Clay Large, *Nazi Games : the Olympics of 1936*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

competitions, the foreign visitors were also treated to theatrical performances, concerts, receptions, museum exhibitions, and other cultural events put on by Germany as well international organizations.⁵ Through hosting an international event, celebrating the accomplishments of nations that represented a variety of races, religions, and cultures, the Nazi regime sought to demonstrate the hospitality and tolerance of the German state and its people. However, it could do so only through deception.

The Nazis had begun persecuting political dissenters, homosexuals, Jews and all other non-Aryans as early as 1933, when the first concentration camp was established at Dachau.⁶ Therefore, the Nazis had to take efforts to conceal their extreme nationalist, racist, homophobic, and anti-Semitic beliefs and actions. For the Olympics, the Nazis cleared the streets of anti-Semitic signs and Gypsies. The campaign against Jews was temporarily suspended in Berlin and hidden from the foreigners' view, and the German press was prohibited from making racist comments regarding Black and other athletes.⁷ The Nazi regime sought to project, for a brief time, the image of a tolerant, prosperous, and happy people, and they

⁵ Organisationskomitee für die XI. Olympiade Berlin 1936, *The XIth Olympic Games, Berlin, 1936 Official Report*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Published by Wilhelm Limpert, 1937), 504–511.

⁶ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936 | Germany 1933-1936”, n.d., <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/olympics/detail.php?content=germany&lang=en>.

⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936 | The Facade of Hospitality”, n.d., http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/olympics/detail.php?content=facade_hospitality&lang=en.

went to extreme measures to do so. In this way, the Olympics were unlike the Moscow Theater Festival.

Whereas the Nazis sought to hide their true ambitions and beliefs from the visiting international public, the Soviet regime sought to showcase what it believed to be social, economic, and cultural progress towards the realization of a just socialist society. Stalin, of course, was motivated by a complex personal psychology that included an intense need to maintain control and accumulate power at any cost. The extent to which he was a true believer in Marxist-Leninist socialist ideology has been, and continues to be, hotly debated. Nevertheless, a widespread commitment—sometimes genuine and sometimes coerced—to socialism and social(ist) construction held by many people at different levels of Party hierarchy and Soviet society motivated the cultural diplomacy of events like the Moscow Theater Festival.

That is not to say that the Soviet regime did not conceal activity from its own citizens and the international public, but it was upfront about its aims and general methods. Further, the Soviets recognized and publicized that, as a society under construction, many aspects of their reality did not conform to socialist ideals. Thus, they had a ready explanation for much of the criticism that could be levied against them for conditions in the country at the time.

While the Soviet Union undertook cultural diplomacy to secure the international political recognition and financial cooperation necessary to fulfill its internal goal of building “socialism in one country,” the purpose of Hitler’s cultural diplomacy in the Olympics was to deceive the West into believing that

Germany was committed to peace and international recognition and lacked expansionist military ambitions. However, at the very time the games were being hosted in Berlin, Hitler issued a top-secret memorandum insisting that Germany had to be economically and militarily prepared for war within four years.⁸ The cultural diplomacy of Soviet social(ist) construction, as exemplified by the Moscow Theater Festival, was animated by the principle of revealing Soviet aims and progress. Nazi cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, as exemplified by the 1936 Olympic Games, operated on the principle of concealing Nazi ideology and military preparations. However, as will be discussed below, the lack of deception in Stalinist cultural diplomacy did not make Stalinist ideology any less dangerous than its Nazi counterpart.

Both the Moscow Theater Festival and the 1936 Olympics were efforts at cultural diplomacy by their respective regimes. However, there were also political and economic goals attached to the Moscow Theater Festival that were absent from Hitler's Olympics. The attraction of famous theater professionals and knowledgeable theater scholars from around the world to the theater festival provided an opportunity for the Soviet Union to press its argument of the superiority of socialism over capitalism to its own citizens. The artistic preeminence of the Soviet theater, as demonstrated by the popularity of the festival, was used as evidence of this superiority and as justification for the continued political power of the Party.

⁸ Klaus P Fischer, *Hitler & America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 58.

The Berlin Olympics, in contrast, required the regime to make concessions that threatened to weaken its political position in the eyes of its citizens (except that the regime maintained its political power through violence and coercion). For example, the Nazis were pressured into allowing Jews and Blacks to compete and temporarily relaxed its anti-Semitic policies. Economically, Intourist launched the Moscow Theater Festival with the intention of generating revenue to help it meet its targets that were mandated by the five-year plan. The Nazi regime, however, understood that conducting the Olympics, a one-time event, on the scale necessary to make the impression the regime desired would require the expenditure of much more money than it could ever hope to recover in ticket or other revenue. Both the political risks and economic expense of hosting the games were justified by the importance of the games' cultural diplomatic mission. The Moscow Theater Festival, on the other hand, was conducted with explicit cultural, political, and economic goals. Indeed, this combination of types of goals within a single endeavor is characteristic of the projects of social(ist) construction.

One question yet to be addressed is why the primary theatrical festival of the Soviet Union was held primarily in Moscow as opposed to Leningrad, a city also rich in theatrical activity and sites of social significance. From the beginning of the Moscow Theater Festival, many felt that theaters from Leningrad should be included. Both the 1936 and 1937 festivals included Leningrad components. However, Leningrad could never match Moscow as the quintessential site of the social(ist) construction that the Moscow Theater Festival was designed to showcase.

The effort to reconstruct Moscow according to socialist and particularly Stalinist ideas was a central aspect of the project to remake Soviet culture and build a socialist society. The symbolic significance of Moscow as the capital of the Soviet Union and therefore, according to Soviet ideology, the center of the future international socialist world, was recognized beginning in the 1920s. Moscow was “regarded as the international centre of the Third International.”⁹ And, as Katerina Clarke has argued in her perceptive monograph on the subject, Moscow in the 1930s was the center of a unique Soviet internationalism that was strangely cosmopolitan within a Stalinist culture that was, simultaneously, characterized by Russian nationalism.¹⁰

The discussion of Moscow’s fate and plans for its reconstruction were begun in conjunction with efforts to devise a general plan for economic development in the Soviet Union and with the acceleration of industrialization under the first five-year plan¹¹ and resulted in the adoption of a General Plan for the reconstruction of Moscow in 1935 which officially codified the process of Sovietization or the steps that were to be taken to transform the city into a socialist utopia. According to the plan, the very space of the city was to be restructured to orient its inhabitants towards the central figure of power, that of the Communist Party. The reconfiguration of space and architecture were used as

⁹ Yurii P. Bocharov, “The 1935 General Plan of Moscow Reconstruction,” *Moscow: 850th Anniversary* (Moskva [Moscow]: Publishing House Moscow Textbooks, 1997) 98.

¹⁰ Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹¹ Bocharov, 98.

tools of expressing Soviet ideals and therefore impressing them upon the inhabitants of the city. The Communist Party sought to alter the behavior of the population by altering the social realities of the space which they inhabited—ontological social(ist) construction—as well as by attempting to inculcate in them Soviet ideology—epistemological social(ist) construction.

This reconstruction of Moscow, undertaken by Stalin, was only part of his larger cultural project to re-create everyday life. Svetlana Boym effectively describes this project:

It is in Stalin's time that the word "culture" acquired an important suffix, and the slogan of the 1920s "cultural revolution" turned into the advocacy of kul'turnost'. This term includes not only the new Soviet artistic canon but also manners, ways of behavior, and discerning taste in food and consumer goods. Culturalization is a way of translating ideology into the everyday; it is a kind of Stalinist "civilizing process" that taught Marxist-Leninist ideology together with table manners, mixing Stalin with Pushkin...Moscow was proclaimed to be the premier Communist city of the future and the most "cultured city in the world." Moscow citizens were encouraged to discover new pleasures in rides in the Metro and walks in the Parks of Culture and Leisure, where they could taste delicious newly imported ice-cream. Culturalization offered a way of legitimizing the formerly despised bourgeois concerns about status and possession; it both justified and disguised the new social hierarchies and privileges of the Stalinist elite.¹²

¹² Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 105.

Under Stalin, very few aspects of daily life were exempt from scrutiny. The Communist Party undertook to radically transform people's domestic lives by moving them into communal apartments. It tried to remold people's working lives through rapid industrialization and forced collectivization, and through other transformations meant to bring about a socialist economy in accordance with Marxist-Leninist ideas. The regime also sought to transform people's public and social lives by encouraging specific forms of recreation, controlling artistic production, etc. All of these efforts to control the everyday life of the population were aimed at creating a new particularly Soviet form of daily life or what in Russian is called *byt*. Moscow was intended to provide the model of the Soviet daily life as the capital of the Soviet Union and the symbolic center of world socialism.

Thus, after the October Revolution of 1917 there began an effort to create a New Daily life, a Soviet daily life which was "based on a complete restructuring of both time and space; from Gastaev's utopian schedules of everyday life to the total design of the new communist space (the all-people's house commune) to the construction of new men and women."¹³ Central to this project was the reconstruction of Moscow that meant to capture Soviet ideology in spatial form. The reconstruction was aimed at creating spaces for collective experiences and at orienting everyone spatially and ideologically towards the central figure of the future Palace of the Soviets, which was to represent the glory of Soviet power and the ideological superiority of socialism; it was, however, never completed. Indeed

¹³ Ibid., 32–33.

it was in the General Plan of 1935 for the reconstruction of Moscow that extensive focus was placed upon the importance of parks, stadiums and squares, places where people would engage in collective activities.¹⁴ These spaces were constructed as spaces where people could escape the tedium and difficulties of life and enjoy the peace and happiness, which should abound in the socialist utopia. They were created as symbols of the ability of the Soviet daily life to transcend ordinary life. Further with their massive scale and the scope of the reconstruction they functioned as symbols of the power of the Communist Party, which possessed the ability to conquer, as it were, and transform already occupied space.

Thus the Stalinist reconstruction of Moscow had both symbolic significance and a practical effect. It created or began to create a distinctly Soviet space shaped to Soviet ideology that encouraged those activities and attitudes that were deemed appropriate for Soviet citizens. Soviet leaders used architecture “both as a practical means for securing the population and as the spatial-expression of a new center-based system of values.”¹⁵ In this way the Communist Party could create its new daily life by structuring the space in which daily life occurred as well as by indoctrinating the masses with Soviet ideology.

The Moscow subway became a central part of the creation of a new Soviet daily life. After the subway opened in May 1935, a subway ride became a regular part of the sightseeing component of the Moscow Theater Festival. The newsreel

¹⁴ Yurii P. Bocharov, “The 1935 General Plan of Moscow Reconstruction,” in *Moscow, 850th Anniversary*, ed. Yurii Luzhkov and V. A. Vinogradov (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo AO “Moskovskie uchebniki,” 1996), 108.

¹⁵ Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xxiv.

showing the opening of the subway was even shown as part of the 1935 festival. The subway offered the Soviet regime a unique opportunity to create a mini-metropolis, a utopia in microcosm beneath the city. It was to function as the circulatory system of the Moscow body moving the working masses from place to place. Although it was repeated often that the subway was for the benefit of the working masses and that its main aim was to alleviate the transportation difficulties that had arisen in Moscow after years of uncontrolled development, the first subway stations were intended not so much to move workers between vital locations such as between work and home, but to move them from one location of recreation to another or between points of symbolic significance, such as squares and governmental centers.¹⁶

One of the first two lines of the first phase of subway construction began in the south at the Gorky Park of Culture and Recreation and ended in the northwest at the Sokolniki Park of Culture and Recreation and made stops at, among other places, the site of the never completed Palace of the Soviets, the main library in Moscow--the Lenin Library, Red and Manège Squares near the Kremlin, and Komsomol Square which had three railway stations.¹⁷ The placement of these stations suggests that although the subway would certainly provide for easier transportation throughout the city, it also facilitated the enjoyment of these new Soviet sites for recreation and collective activity, while

¹⁶ Ilya Kattsen, *Metro Moskvyy*, Harvard Russian and Soviet Humanities Preservation Microfilm Project ; 02743. (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1947), 15–24.

¹⁷ *SSSR Na stroike*, August 1935.

emphasizing the importance of the government. The very location of the early subway stations perpetuated the new Soviet daily life with its emphasis on recreation for the masses in the parks of culture and sites of public gathering.

At the same time, unlike with the reconstruction of Moscow which required significant demolition in order to truly create new Soviet spaces and even then still did not provide for the total restructuring of space along Soviet ideological lines, the creation of the subway *ex nihilo* gave Stalin and the Communist Party the opportunity to create a new and solely socialist space. The subway became a new symbolic space the meaning of which was supplied solely by socialist utopian ideology. It was a site where the new Soviet daily life would reign unhampered by previously developed and inherently anti-Soviet patterns of behavior and signs.

The Moscow subway was intended to move the citizens of Moscow through spaces that reflected the same spirit of recreation and happiness which the systems of parks and stadiums above ground reflected.¹⁸ The subway stations were intended, in a way, as an answer to the boredom and unpleasantness, which characterized earlier conceptions of daily life. Thus, Kaganovich expressed the following sentiments at the ceremony held before the opening of the subway:

The subway in capitalist nations, he announced to a cheering crowd was intended to generate the highest possible profit and its interior was therefore monotonous, dirty, dim, and altogether “cryptlike.” Such a gloomy atmosphere, he maintained, could in no way offer the worker

¹⁸ Karen Kettering, “Sverdlov Square Metro Station: ‘The Friendship of the Peoples’ and the Stalin Constitution,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 2000): 5.

repose after a long day, but would instead further exhaust the pitiable proletarian in London or New York. Conversely, in a socialist society, with its greater consideration for its workers, the government would naturally choose to build more splendid and therefore expensive structures that would assure the population not only convenience but a “palatial” architecture creating feelings of joy and happiness, or *жизнерадость*.¹⁹

Kaganovich defined the interior aesthetics of the subway as a function of the economic base and its accompanying ideology. Thus, the aesthetics of the Soviet subway were motivated by the ideals of socialism. In the above passage, he links the aesthetic aims of the subway with the Stalinist program of creating a new socialist everyday which includes both labor and pleasure. The Soviet subway was to be both functional and beautiful. It is difficult even to make the distinction between the technical function and the aesthetic function of the Moscow subway. The subway had three main functions of equal importance: an economic function—to transport people from place to place, a cultural function—to provide an atmosphere of happiness, and a political function—to stand as a symbol of the developing Soviet utopian society

The title of a 2002 exhibition of photographs of Moscow subway interiors of the Stalin period at the Museum of Architecture in Moscow, “The Underground Paradise of the Proletariat,” reflects the atmosphere that architects and designers of the period aimed to achieve through the architecture, decoration and lighting of the subway stations they created. They employed various

¹⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 8.

architectural and design devices to create a sense of grandeur and to negate wholly the sensation of traveling deep beneath the surface of Moscow. The sum of these effects created stations that are often described as palatial.

The stations of the Moscow subway provided an alternative to the boring and aesthetically uninteresting daily life, which the Soviet government promised to eradicate in all aspects of life. Therefore, the joy and radiance embodied in the subway stations were a microcosm of the future socialist society where happiness and collective recreation would abound with collective work and prosperity. In a sense, riding the subway one could experience the ideal Soviet daily life that was to come through Stalin's program of culturalization and through the economic reforms of the five-year plans. Thus, the construction of the subway was not only a way to symbolize the future onset of a new Soviet daily life but to create a solely Soviet space where the new Soviet daily life could be experienced in the present.

In addition to altering the material daily life of the workers of Moscow—a project of ontological social(ist) construction—the Moscow subway also sought to alter more directly the way people make sense of the world through indoctrination of Soviet ideology—a project of epistemological social(ist) construction. It provided a vehicle for explicit ideological indoctrination, through didactic art and visual symbols of socialist ideology. For example, the subway is full of images from the “history” of the Revolution. These images present a Socialist Realist depiction of historical events of great importance to the Revolution and therefore to both the new Soviet state and the Soviet individual.

These images helped to create a shared Revolutionary past. This is critical. Since Soviet ideology was teleological it proposed an entire meta-narrative for society and history that ultimately ended in the creation of the Soviet socialist utopia. To accept then the beginning of the narrative, or the Revolutionary past, was also to accept one's place in the Soviet present, moving towards the Soviet future. A collective memory of one sort or another is a significant feature of any integrated society, and a Revolutionary collective memory was central to the formation of a unified Soviet society.

The Moscow subway, with all of its socialist symbolism, had become part of the new Soviet daily life of Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union and the symbolic center of the socialist world. The subway succeeded in altering the daily life of the people. It succeeded in creating a world beneath the city charged with symbolic power, filled with symbols of Soviet ideology and Soviet power. The subway not only symbolized the promise of a socialist utopia but also created a microcosm of it beneath the streets of Moscow. During the reign of the Communist Party, the Soviet government pursued what it perceived as a course leading to the achievement of this socialist utopia and the subway remained below as the foundation of this future socialist society. The Moscow subway was the perfect example of how for early Soviet leaders, especially Stalin, the project of establishing an ideal socialist society was inseparable from the project of rebuilding Moscow as the ideal socialist metropolis.

Like the building of Moscow subway, the Moscow Theater Festival was a project of both ontological and epistemological social(ist) construction. By

conducting the festival, Intourist and the Soviet regime sought to transform both the material reality in which the Soviet citizens lived and the ideological framework by which they understood that reality. Materially, the festival was intended to generate the foreign currency revenue needed for industrialization. Ideologically, the festival demonstrated the superiority of socialist ideology by producing evidence of the pre-eminence of Soviet socialist theater. At the same time, the festival was shaped and guided by socialist ideology as an object of social(ist) construction. The Moscow Theater Festival both constituted and was constituted by social(ist) construction.

Intourist initially undertook the Moscow Theater Festival as a commercial project intended to help the state-owned company meet its targets for foreign currency revenue and tourist acquisition. Stalin's ideological victory over Trotsky in establishing "socialism in one country" as the official policy of the Soviet Union cleared the way for the pursuit of rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization. However, this pursuit necessitated an infusion of capital in the form of foreign currency. The nationalization of the entire tourism industry through the incorporation of Intourist and the subsequent targets imposed on it were tactics the Soviet regime employed as part of its strategy of central planning as enacted in the five-year plans. The Moscow Theater Festival was one of many of Intourist's efforts to succeed financially as a for-profit company.

However, as Intourist and the representatives of the Moscow theaters planned the festivals they focused on the festival's increasing cultural and political significance. During the period of the festival's existence, the Soviet

Union's cultural diplomacy was primarily the domain of VOKS, though Intourist's pursuit of foreign currency led it to seek increasing control over the foreigner's experience in the country.²⁰ The Moscow Theater Festival was a clear case of how Intourist's economic mandate often pushed its activities into the realm of the cultural diplomacy.

The pre-Revolutionary Russian and new Soviet theater's renown allowed the festival to capture the interest of leading theater professionals and other cultural figures throughout the world. The cultural prominence of the Russian theater not only made the theater festival marketable and attractive to Intourist as a commercial venture, it also made the festival a unique opportunity for cultural diplomacy. The festival guests had the opportunity to experience Soviet culture as well as to become acquainted with the social, industrial, and agricultural institutions born of the October Revolution. Winning the sympathy, if not outright support, of the festival guests for the political mission of the Soviet Union became a significant objective of hosting the festival. Both onstage and off, the festival was meant to present and to represent the very best aspects of social(ist) construction, thus justifying its negative aspects, many of which could not be concealed from the festival attendees (just as they could not be hidden from the Soviet citizenry).

²⁰ For an exploration of the work of VOKS during the period and its relationship with Intourist see V. I. Fokin, *Mezhdunarodnyi Kulturnyi Obmen i SSSR v 20-30-e Gody* (Sankt Peterburg: Izd-vo S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 1999); A. V. Golubev, "Vzglyad Na Zemlyu Obetovannuyu": *Iz Istorii Sovetskoi Kulturnoi Diplomatii 1920-1930-kh Godov* (Moskva: Institut rossiskoi istorii RAN, 2004); and Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

What both the Moscow Theater Festival and the construction of the subway demonstrate is the way that cultural, political, and economic aims became inseparable, though still distinguishable, in social(ist) construction. The totalizing and unifying nature of the Soviet socialist project, its tendency to collapse different types of transformation—material, ideological, cultural, political, economic, social, religious, etc.—into the single concept of social(ist) construction is akin to the modernist artistic goal sought by Richard Wagner, the *gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art. Thus, Boris Groys in *The Total Art of Stalinism* considers the Stalinist project, to completely transform reality, an artistic project with Stalin and the regime as its artists:

The world promised by the leaders of the October Revolution was not merely supposed to be a more just one or one that would provide greater economic security, but also and in perhaps even greater measure meant to be beautiful. The unordered, chaotic life of past ages was to be replaced by a life that was harmonious and organized according to a unitary artistic plan. When the entire economic, social, and everyday life of the nation was totally subordinated to a single planning authority commissioned to regulate, harmonize, and create a single whole out of even the most minute details, this authority—the Communist Party leadership—was transformed into a kind of artist whose material was the entire world and whose goal was to “overcome the resistance” of this material and make it pliant, malleable, capable of assuming any desired form.²¹

²¹ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3.

While Groys's analogy compares the work of Stalinism to visual art, the art of theater is, perhaps, a more apt analogy.

As sociologists such as Erving Goffman and theater/performance theorists such as Richard Schechner have observed, as in theatrical performances, certain aspects of human life are guided by socially constructed scripts that organize, giving meaning to, and guide the interpretation of reality.²² We can discern certain kinds of social activity by the degree to which they are scripted and the nature of the scripting. For Schechner, certain activities—play, games, sports, theater, and ritual—are all distinguishable from daily life by the scripts, of various kinds, that guide these activities.²³ Goffman's typology labels these types of activities make-believe (which includes theater), contests, ceremonials, technical redos (including rehearsals and practice), and regroundings.²⁴

Social(ist) construction strove to eliminate the boundary between daily life, or real life, and these scripted activities. Stalin sought to recreate Soviet daily life such that it was always a type of socialist ritual, ceremonial, or rehearsal. Social(ist) construction did not work to abolish real life but to imbue it always with socialist significance (hence the concept of Socialist Realism as a depiction of reality in its socialist actuality). Under Stalin, Soviet life moved towards this aim with the result of inflicting widespread disorientation and anxiety, both on

²² Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Anchor Books (New York: Doubleday, 1959); Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory*, Rev. and expanded. (New York: Routledge, 1988).

²³ Schechner, *Performance Theory*, 9–18.

²⁴ Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 47–77.

individual and societal levels. Life had become an art, but the tastes and rules governing the making and interpretation of that art were constantly shifting and rarely articulated. This invoked an epistemic terror of not knowing how to make sense of reality, with which individuals and institutions were constantly coping. Given that the consequences for making bad art (both in the traditional sense and in the sense of life as art), art that did not conform to the official tastes and rules, were often execution, exile, or forced labor, this epistemic terror fueled a culture of fear, denunciations, informing, false accusations, performed ideological conformity, and paranoia. This was the culture that was developing during the Moscow Theater Festival. This was the culture that the Moscow Theater Festival helped develop as a project of social(ist) construction.

APPENDIX A: MOSCOW THEATER FESTIVAL REPERTOIRE 1933-1937

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Date	Work	Genre	Author	Theater	City
Jun 1, 1933	<i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i>	Play	Scribe	Kamerny	Moscow
Jun 2, 1933	<i>The Road to Life</i>	Film			Moscow
Jun 2, 1933	<i>Pskovitianka</i>	Opera	Rimsky-Korsakov	Bolshoi	Moscow
Jun 3, 1933	<i>Armored Train</i>	Play	Ivanov	Moscow Art	Moscow
Jun 4, 1933	<i>The Red Poppy</i>	Ballet	Gliere	Bolshoi	Moscow
Jun 5, 1933	<i>The Peasant Woman from Ryazan</i>	Film			Moscow
Jun 5, 1933	<i>Dead Souls</i>	Play	Gogol	Moscow Art Council of Trade Unions	Moscow
Jun 7, 1933	<i>Revolt</i>	Play	Furmanov	Georgian	Moscow
Jun 8, 1933	<i>Lamara</i>	Play	Rabakidze	Rustavelli	Moscow
Jun 9, 1933	<i>Swan Lake</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 1, 1934	<i>Prince Igor</i>	Opera	Borodin	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 2, 1934	<i>Intervention</i>	Play	Slavin	Vakhtangov	Moscow
Sep 3, 1934	<i>The Flames of Paris</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 4, 1934	<i>Negro Boy and the Monkey</i>	Play	Satz and Rozanov	Children's	Moscow
Sep 4, 1934	<i>200,000</i>	Play	Scholom-Aleikhem	Jewish Second	Moscow
Sep 5, 1934	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 5, 1934	<i>Swan Lake</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi Stanislavsky	Moscow
Sep 6, 1934	<i>The Barber of Seville</i>	Opera	Rossini	Opera	Moscow
Sep 7, 1934	<i>The Lady with the Camelias</i>	Play	Dumas-fils	Meyerhold	Moscow
Sep 8, 1934	<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	Play	Trenyev	Malyi	Moscow
Sep 9, 1934	<i>The Optimistic Tragedy</i>	Play	Vishnevskii	Kamerny	Moscow
Sep 10, 1934	<i>Marriage of Figaro</i>	Play	Beaumarchais		Moscow
Sep 10, 1934	<i>Yegor Bulychyov and Others</i> (programmed but not presented)	Play	Gorky	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 11, 1934	<i>Katerina Izmailova</i> (<i>Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk</i>)	Opera	Shostakovich	Malyi Leningrad Opera and Ballet	Leningrad
Sep 12, 1934	<i>Fountain of Bakhchiserai</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Young Spectator	Leningrad
Sep 1, 1935	<i>Free Flemings</i>	Play	De Coster		Moscow
Sep 1, 1935	<i>Sadko</i>	Opera	Rimsky-Korsakov	Bolshoi	Moscow

Date	Work	Genre	Author	Theater	City
Sep 2, 1935	<i>King Lear</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Jewish	Moscow
Sep 3, 1935	<i>Happy Youth</i>	Film			Moscow
Sep 3, 1935	<i>Katerina Izmailova</i> (<i>Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk</i>)	Opera	Shostakovich	Nemirovich-Danchenko	Moscow
Sep 3, 1935	<i>Maksim's Youth</i>	Film			Moscow
Sep 4, 1935	<i>The Spanish Curate</i> <i>The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish</i>	Play	Fletcher	Second Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 4, 1935		Play	Polovinkin	Children's Central Park of Culture and Rest - Green Theatre	Moscow
Sep 5, 1935	Exhibition of Amateur Performance			Gypsy Moscow Council of Trade Unions	Moscow
Sep 5, 1935	<i>Life on Wheels</i>	Play			Moscow
Sep 5, 1935	<i>The City of Winds</i>	Play	Kirshon		Moscow
Sep 6, 1935	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Realistic	Moscow
Sep 6, 1935	<i>Three Fat Men</i>	Ballet	Oranskii	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 7, 1935	<i>Fighters</i>	Play	Romashev after Chekhov	Malyi Puppet Theater	Moscow
Sep 8, 1935	<i>Kashtanka</i>	Play	Ostrovsky		Moscow
Sep 8, 1935	<i>Thunder Storm</i>	Play	Shakespeare, Shaw, Pushkin	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 9, 1935	<i>Egyptian Nights</i> <i>Yegor Bulychov and Others</i>	Play	Gorky	Kamerny	Moscow
Sep 10, 1935	<i>Platon Krechet</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Vakhtangov Second	Moscow
Sep 10, 1935	<i>Far Taiga</i>	Play	Afinogenov	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 1, 1936	<i>Theatre of Folk Art</i>	Various		Vakhtangov Folk Art	Moscow
Sep 2, 1936	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Meyerhold	Moscow
Sep 3, 1936	<i>Woe to Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov		Moscow
Sep 4, 1936	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Opera	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 5, 1936	<i>Arsen</i>	Play	Shanshiashvili	Georgian Rustavelli	Moscow
Sep 6, 1936	Andersen's fairy tales <i>The Wandering School</i>	Play		Children's Young Spectator	Moscow
Sep 6, 1936	<i>Umka, The White Bear</i>	Play	Kassil		Moscow
Sep 6, 1936	<i>Resurrection</i>	Play	Selvinsky	Revolution	Moscow
Sep 7, 1936		Play	L. Tolstoy	Moscow Art Leningrad	Moscow
Sep 8, 1936	<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i> <i>Destruction of the Squadron</i>	Opera	I. Dzerzhinski	Malyi Ukrainian	Leningrad
Sep 9, 1936	<i>Othello</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Franko	Leningrad
Sep 9, 1936		Play	Shakespeare	Radlov	Leningrad

Date	Work	Genre	Author	Theater	City
Sep 9, 1936	<i>Timoshka's Mine</i>	Play	Makariev	Leningrad Young Spectator	Leningrad
Sep 10, 1936	<i>The Fountain of Bakhchisarrai</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Leningrad Opera and Ballet	Leningrad
Sep 2, 1937	<i>Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Malyi	Moscow
Sep 2, 1937	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Vakhtangov	Moscow
Sep 3, 1937	<i>Glory</i>	Play	Gusev	Malyi	Moscow
Sep 3, 1937	<i>Yegor Bulychov and Others</i>	Play	Gorky	Vakhtangov	Moscow
Sep 4, 1937	<i>His Own Jailor</i>	Play	Calderon	Young Spectator	Moscow
Sep 4, 1937	<i>The Golden Key</i>	Play	A. Tolstoi	Children's	Moscow
Sep 5, 1937	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Realistic	Moscow
Sep 5, 1937	<i>Shulamith</i>	Play	Goldfaden	Jewish	Moscow
Sep 6, 1937	<i>A Wedding in the Camp</i>	Play	Rom- Lebedev	Gypsy	Moscow
Sep 6, 1937	<i>The Year 19</i>	Play	Prut	Red Army	Moscow
Sep 8, 1937	<i>Anna Karenina</i>	Play	Volkov	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 9, 1937	<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	Play	Trenyev	Moscow Art	Moscow
Sep 9, 1937	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 10, 1937	<i>Ruslan and Lyudmila</i>	Opera	Glinka	Bolshoi	Moscow
Sep 11, 1937	<i>The Forest</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Pushkin	Leningrad
Sep 12, 1937	<i>Give the Heart Freedom</i>	Play	Kropivnitski i	Dramamatic Shevchenko Ukrainian	Kharkov
Sep 12, 1937	<i>Partisan Days</i>	Ballet	Asafayev	Kirov Opera and Ballet Kharkov	Leningrad
Sep 13, 1937	<i>Natalka-Paltavka</i>	Opera	Lysenko	Opera and Ballet Leningrad	Kharkov
Sep 13, 1937	<i>The Marshal's Childhood</i>	Play	Vsevolozhsk ii	Young Spectator	Leningrad
Sep 14, 1937	<i>The Tsar's Bride</i>	Opera	Rimski- Korsakov	Leningrad Malyi	Leningrad
Sep 15, 1937	<i>Woe from Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov	M. Gorkii	Rostov
Sep 17, 1937	<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i>	Opera	I. Dzerzhinski	Rostov Kiev Opera and Ballet	Kiev
Sep 18, 1937	<i>The Blue Bird</i>	Play	Maeterlinck	Ukrainian Children's	Kiev
Sep 18, 1937	<i>Karmeliuk</i>	Play	Sukhodolski i	Ukrainian Franko	Kiev

BY THEATER

Theater	Work	Genre	Author	Date	City
Bolshoi	<i>Pskovitianka</i>	Opera	Rimsky-Korsakov	Jun 2, 1933	Moscow
	<i>The Red Poppy</i>	Ballet	Gliere	Jun 4, 1933	Moscow
	<i>Swan Lake</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Jun 9, 1933	Moscow
	<i>Prince Igor</i>	Opera	Borodin	Sep 1, 1934	Moscow
	<i>The Flames of Paris</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Sep 3, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Swan Lake</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Sep 5, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Sadko</i>	Opera	Rimski-Korsakov	Sep 1, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Three Fat Men</i>	Ballet	Oranskii	Sep 6, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Opera	Tchaikovsky	Sep 4, 1936	Moscow
	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Sep 9, 1937	Moscow
	<i>Ruslan and Lyudmila</i>	Opera	Glinka	Sep 10, 1937	Moscow
Central Park of Culture and Rest - Green Theatre	Exhibition of Amateur Performance			Sep 5, 1935	Moscow
Children's	<i>Negro Boy and the Monkey</i>	Play	Satz and Rozanov	Sep 4, 1934	Moscow
	<i>The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish</i>	Play	Polovinkin	Sep 4, 1935	Moscow
	Andersen's fairy tales	Play		Sep 6, 1936	Moscow
	<i>The Golden Key</i>	Play	A. Tolstoi	Sep 4, 1937	Moscow
Folk Art	Folk Art Performance	Various		Sep 1, 1936	Moscow
Georgian Rustavelli	<i>Lamara</i>	Play	Rabakidze	Jun 8, 1933	Moscow
	<i>Arsen</i>	Play	Shanshiashvili	Sep 5, 1936	Moscow
Gypsy	<i>Life on Wheels</i>	Play		Sep 5, 1935	Moscow
	<i>A Wedding in the Camp</i>	Play	Rom-Lebedev	Sep 6, 1937	Moscow
Jewish			Scholom-Aleikhem	Sep 4, 1934	Moscow
	<i>King Lear</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Sep 2, 1935	Moscow
			Abraham		
	<i>Shulamith</i>	Play	Goldfaden	Sep 5, 1937	Moscow
Kamerny	<i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i>	Play	Scribe	Jun 1, 1933	Moscow
	<i>The Optimistic Tragedy</i>	Play	Vishnevskii Shakespeare, Shaw,	Sep 9, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Egyptian Nights</i>	Play	Pushkin	Sep 9, 1935	Moscow
Kharkov Opera and Ballet	<i>Natalka-Paltavka</i>	Opera	Lysenko	Sep 13, 1937	Kharkov
Kiev Opera and Ballet	<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i>	Opera	I. Dzerzhinski	Sep 17, 1937	Kiev
Kirov Opera and Ballet	<i>Partisan Days</i>	Ballet	Asafayev	Sep 12, 1937	Leningrad

Theater	Work	Genre	Author	Date	City
Leningrad Malyi	<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i>	Opera	I. Dzerzhinski Rimski-	Sep 8, 1936	Leningrad
	<i>The Tsar's Bride</i>	Opera	Korsakov	Sep 14, 1937	Leningrad
Leningrad Opera and Ballet	<i>Fountain of Bakhchiserai</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Sep 12, 1934	Leningrad
	<i>The Fountain of Bakhchisarrai</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Sep 10, 1936	Leningrad
Leningrad Young Spectator	<i>Timoshka's Mine</i>	Play	Makariev	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
	<i>The Marshal's Childhood</i>	Play	Vsevolozhskii	Sep 13, 1937	Leningrad
M. Gorkii Rostov	<i>Woe from Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov	Sep 15, 1937	Rostov
Malyi	<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	Play	Trenyev	Sep 8, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Katerina Izmailova (Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk)</i>	Opera	Shostakovich	Sep 11, 1934	Leningrad
	<i>Fighters</i>	Play	Romashev	Sep 7, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Sep 2, 1937	Moscow
	<i>Glory</i>	Play	Gusev	Sep 3, 1937	Moscow
Meyerhold	<i>The Lady with the Camelias</i>	Play	Dumas-fils	Sep 7, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Woe to Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov	Sep 3, 1936	Moscow
Moscow Art	<i>Armored Train</i>	Play	Ivanov	Jun 3, 1933	Moscow
	<i>Dead Souls</i>	Play	Gogol	Jun 5, 1933	Moscow
	<i>Marriage of Figaro</i>	Play	Beaumarchais	Sep 10, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Yegor Bulychyov and Others (programmed but not presented)</i>	Play	Gorky	Sep 10, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Thunder Storm</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Sep 8, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Resurrection</i>	Play	L. Tolstoy	Sep 7, 1936	Moscow
	<i>Anna Karenina</i>	Play	Volkov	Sep 8, 1937	Moscow
	<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	Play	Trenyev	Sep 9, 1937	Moscow
Moscow Council of Trade Unions	<i>Revolt</i>	Play	Furmanov	Jun 7, 1933	Moscow
	<i>The City of Winds</i>	Play	Kirshon	Sep 5, 1935	Moscow
Nemirovich- Danchenko	<i>Katerina Izmailova (Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk)</i>	Opera	Shostakovich	Sep 3, 1935	Moscow
Puppet Theater	<i>Kashtanka</i>	Play	after Chekhov	Sep 8, 1935	Moscow
Pushkin Dramatic	<i>The Forest</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Sep 11, 1937	Leningrad
Radlov	<i>Othello</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
Realistic	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Sep 6, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Sep 5, 1937	Moscow
Red Army	<i>The Year 19</i>	Play	Prut	Sep 6, 1937	Moscow
Revolution	<i>Umka, The White Bear</i>	Play	Selvinsky	Sep 6, 1936	Moscow

Theater	Work	Genre	Author	Date	City
Second Moscow Art	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Sep 5, 1934	Moscow
	<i>The Spanish Curate</i>	Play	Fletcher	Sep 4, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Platon Krechet</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
Shevchenko	<i>Give the Heart</i>				
Ukrainian	<i>Freedom</i>	Play	Kropivnitskii	Sep 12, 1937	Kharkov
Stanislavsky					
Opera	<i>The Barber of Seville</i>	Opera	Rossini	Sep 6, 1934	Moscow
Ukrainian					
Children's	<i>The Blue Bird</i>	Play	Maeterlinck	Sep 18, 1937	Kiev
Ukrainian	<i>Destruction of the</i>				
Franko	<i>Squadron</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
Ukrainian					
Franko	<i>Karmeliuk</i>	Play	Sukhodolskii	Sep 18, 1937	Kiev
Vakhtangov	<i>Intervention</i>	Play	Slavin	Sep 2, 1934	Moscow
	<i>Yegor Bulychov and</i>				
	<i>Others</i>	Play	Gorky	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Far Taiga</i>	Play	Afinogenov	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
	<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Sep 2, 1936	Moscow
	<i>Much Ado about</i>				
	<i>Nothing</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Sep 2, 1937	Moscow
	<i>Yegor Bulychyov and</i>				
	<i>Others</i>	Play	Gorky	Sep 3, 1937	Moscow
Young	<i>Free Flemings</i>	Play	De Coster	Sep 1, 1935	Moscow
Spectator	<i>The Wandering</i>				
	<i>School</i>	Play	Kassil	Sep 6, 1936	Moscow
	<i>His Own Jailor</i>	Play	Calderon	Sep 4, 1937	Moscow

BY TITLE

Work	Genre	Author	Theater	Date	City
<i>200,000</i>	Play	Scholom-Aleikhem	Jewish	Sep 4, 1934	Moscow
<i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i>	Play	Scribe	Kamerny	Jun 1, 1933	Moscow
<i>Anna Karenina</i>	Play	Volkov	Moscow Art	Sep 8, 1937	Moscow
<i>Aristocrats</i>	Play	Pogodin	Realistic	Sep 6, 1935	Moscow
			Vakhtangov	Sep 2, 1936	Moscow
			Realistic	Sep 5, 1937	Moscow
<i>Armored Train</i>	Play	Ivanov	Moscow Art	Jun 3, 1933	Moscow
<i>Arsen</i>	Play	Shanshiashvili	Georgian	Sep 5, 1936	Moscow
<i>Barber of Seville, The</i>	Opera	Rossini	Rustavelli Stanislavsky Opera	Sep 6, 1934	Moscow
<i>Blue Bird, The</i>	Play	Maeterlinck	Ukrainian Children's	Sep 18, 1937	Kiev
<i>City of Winds, The</i>	Play	Kirshon	Moscow Council of Trade Unions	Sep 5, 1935	Moscow
<i>Dead Souls</i>	Play	Gogol	Moscow Art	Jun 5, 1933	Moscow
<i>Destruction of the Squadron</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Ukrainian Franko	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
<i>Egyptian Nights</i>	Play	Shakespeare, Shaw, Pushkin	Kamerny	Sep 9, 1935	Moscow
<i>Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Malyi	Sep 2, 1937	Moscow
<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Opera	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Sep 4, 1936	Moscow
<i>Far Taiga</i>	Play	Afinogenov	Vakhtangov	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
<i>Fighters</i>	Play	Romashev	Malyi	Sep 7, 1935	Moscow
<i>Flames of Paris, The</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Bolshoi	Sep 3, 1934	Moscow
<i>Forest, The</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Pushkin Dramamatic	Sep 11, 1937	Leningrad
<i>Fountain of Bakhchisarrai, The</i>	Ballet	Asafyev	Leningrad Opera and Ballet	Sep 12, 1934 Sep 10, 1936	Leningrad Leningrad
<i>Free Flemings</i>	Play	De Coster	Young Spectator	Sep 1, 1935	Moscow
<i>Give the Heart Freedom</i>	Play	Kropivnitskii	Shevchenko Ukrainian	Sep 12, 1937	Kharkov
<i>Glory</i>	Play	Gusev	Malyi	Sep 3, 1937	Moscow
<i>Golden Key, The</i>	Play	A. Tolstoi	Children's	Sep 4, 1937	Moscow
<i>Happy Youth</i>	Film			Sep 3, 1935	Moscow
<i>His Own Jailor</i>	Play	Calderon	Young Spectator	Sep 4, 1937	Moscow
<i>Intervention</i>	Play	Slavin	Vakhtangov	Sep 2, 1934	Moscow
<i>Karmeliuk</i>	Play	Sukhodolskii	Ukrainian Franko	Sep 18, 1937	Kiev
<i>Kashtanka</i>	Play	after Chekhov	Puppet Theater	Sep 8, 1935	Moscow
<i>Katerina Izamailova (Lady Macbeth of Mstensk)</i>	Opera	Shostakovich	Malyi Nemirovich- Danchenko	Sep 11, 1934 Sep 3, 1935	Leningrad Moscow

Work	Genre	Author	Theater	Date	City
<i>King Lear</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Jewish	Sep 2, 1935	Moscow
<i>Lady with the Camelias, The</i>	Play	Dumas-fils	Meyerhold	Sep 7, 1934	Moscow
<i>Lamara</i>	Play	Rabakidze	Georgian Rustavelli	Jun 8, 1933	Moscow
<i>Life on Wheels</i>	Play		Gypsy	Sep 5, 1935	Moscow
<i>Lyubov Yarovaya</i>	Play	Trenyev	Malyi	Sep 8, 1934	Moscow
			Moscow Art	Sep 9, 1937	Moscow
<i>Maksim's Youth</i>	Film			Sep 3, 1935	Moscow
<i>Marriage of Figaro</i>	Play	Beaumarchais	Moscow Art	Sep 10, 1934	Moscow
<i>Marshal's Childhood, The</i>	Play	Vsevolozhskii	Leningrad Young Spectator	Sep 13, 1937	Leningrad
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Vakhtangov	Sep 2, 1937	Moscow
<i>Natalka-Paltavka</i>	Opera	Lysenko	Kharkov Opera and Ballet	Sep 13, 1937	Kharkov
<i>Negro Boy and the Monkey</i>	Play	Satz and Rozanov	Children's	Sep 4, 1934	Moscow
<i>Optimistic Tragedy, The</i>	Play	Vishnevskii	Kamerny	Sep 9, 1934	Moscow
<i>Othello</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Radlov	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
<i>Partisan Days</i>	Ballet	Asafayev	Kirov Opera and Ballet	Sep 12, 1937	Leningrad
<i>Peasant Woman from Ryazan, The</i>	Film			Jun 5, 1933	Moscow
<i>Platon Krechet</i>	Play	Korneichuk	Second Moscow Art	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
<i>Prince Igor</i>	Opera	Borodin	Bolshoi	Sep 1, 1934	Moscow
<i>Pskovitianka</i>	Opera	Rimsky-Korsakov	Bolshoi	Jun 2, 1933	Moscow
<i>Quiet Flows the Don</i>	Opera	I. Dzerzhinski	Leningrad Malyi	Sep 8, 1936	Leningrad
			Kiev Opera and Ballet	Sep 17, 1937	Kiev
<i>Red Poppy, The</i>	Ballet	Gliere	Bolshoi	Jun 4, 1933	Moscow
<i>Resurrection</i>	Play	L. Tolstoy	Moscow Art	Sep 7, 1936	Moscow
<i>Revolt</i>	Play	Furmanov	Moscow Council of Trade Unions	Jun 7, 1933	Moscow
<i>Road to Life, The</i>	Film			Jun 2, 1933	Moscow
<i>Ruslan and Lyudmila</i>	Opera	Glinka	Bolshoi	Sep 10, 1937	Moscow
<i>Sadko</i>	Opera	Rimski-Korsakov	Bolshoi	Sep 1, 1935	Moscow
<i>Shulamith</i>	Play	Abraham Goldfaden	Jewish	Sep 5, 1937	Moscow
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Sep 9, 1937	Moscow
<i>Spanish Curate, The</i>	Play	Fletcher	Second Moscow Art	Sep 4, 1935	Moscow
<i>Swan Lake</i>	Ballet	Tchaikovsky	Bolshoi	Jun 9, 1933	Moscow
				Sep 5, 1934	Moscow

Work	Genre	Author	Theater	Date	City
<i>Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish, The</i>	Play	Polovinkin	Children's	Sep 4, 1935	Moscow
<i>Three Fat Men</i>	Ballet	Oranskii	Bolshoi	Sep 6, 1935	Moscow
<i>Thunder Storm</i>	Play	Ostrovsky	Moscow Art	Sep 8, 1935	Moscow
<i>Timoshka's Mine</i>	Play	Makariev	Leningrad	Sep 9, 1936	Leningrad
			Young Spectator		
<i>Tsar's Bride, The</i>	Opera	Rimski-Korsakov	Leningrad Malyi	Sep 14, 1937	Leningrad
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Play	Shakespeare	Second Moscow Art	Sep 5, 1934	Moscow
<i>Umka, The White Bear</i>	Play	Selvinsky	Revolution	Sep 6, 1936	Moscow
<i>Wandering School, The</i>	Play	Kassil	Young Spectator	Sep 6, 1936	Moscow
<i>Wedding in the Camp, A</i>	Play	Rom-Lebedev	Gypsy	Sep 6, 1937	Moscow
<i>Woe from Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov	M. Gorkii Rostov	Sep 15, 1937	Rostov
<i>Woe to Wit</i>	Play	Griboyedov	Meyerhold	Sep 3, 1936	Moscow
<i>Year 19, The</i>	Play	Prut	Red Army	Sep 6, 1937	Moscow
<i>Yegor Bulychyov and Others</i>	Play	Gorky	Moscow Art	Sep 10, 1934 (programmed but not presented)	Moscow
			Vakhtangov	Sep 10, 1935	Moscow
				Sep 3, 1937	Moscow

APPENDIX B: PARTIAL LIST OF FESTIVAL ATTENDEES 1933-1937

BY NAME

Name	Country of Origin	Year(s) Attended
Gloria Alvarez	Spain	1937
Brooks Atkinson	United States	1934, 1936
Max Aub	Spain	1933
Barbara Allan Bement	United States	1934
Ertuğrul Muhsin Bey	Turkey	1934
André Boll	France	1933
Dorothy Brewster	United States	1936
Paulina Briunius	Sweden	1933, 1935
Marjorie Bulcock	Australia	1935
Emil Burian	Czechoslovakia	1934, 1935
Huntly Carter	Great Britain	1934, 1935, 1936, 1937
Lewis Casson	Great Britain	1935
William Challee	United States	1937
Cipriano Rivas Cherif	Spain	1937
Henry Clerc	France	1934
Anne M. Cooke	United States	1935
Hugo van Dalen	Holland	1937
Henry Dana	United States	1934, 1935, 1936
Ali Daryabegi	Iran	1937
Zelda Dorfman	United States	1935
Julia Dorn	United States	1937
Walter Duranty	United States	1934, 1935
Gösta Ekman	Sweden	1936
Kosti Ello	Finland	1933
Harold Erenspenger	United States	1936
Hasan Ferid	Turkey	1935
Carl August Forsell	Sweden	1935
Morris Gest	United States	1935
Billie B. Geter	United States	1935
Hubert Griffith	Great Britain	1934
Paul Gsell	France	1934, 1936, 1937
André van Gyseghem	Great Britain	1935
Doris Hayball	Australia	1936
Miguel Hernandez	Spain	1937
Albert Hirschfeld	United States	1936
Norris Houghton	United States	1934
Patrick Hughes	Great Britain	1934
Johan Huijts	Holland	1934
Sir Barry Jackson	Great Britain	1937
Edvard Katan	Holland	1936
Herbert Kline	United States	1936
Nell Knoop	Holland	1936
Rose Krauss	United States	1934

Name	Country of Origin	Year(s) Attended
Zarah Leander	Sweden	1935
Henri-René Lenormand	France	1935
Stanislav Lom	Czechoslovakia	1934
William F. MacDermott	United States	1933
Rolf de Mare	France	1936
Viola Markelius	Sweden	1933
André Mauprey	France	1934
Olof Molander	Sweden	1936
Malcolm Morley	Great Britain	1935
Agnes Mowinkel	Norway	1933
Martin Andersen Nexø	Denmark	1935
Hans Jacob Nielsen	Norway	1933
Voita Novak	Czechoslovakia	1935
Abdul Hussein Han Nushim	Iran	1936
Molly Picon	United States	1933
Sidney Barnett Potter	South Africa	1934
Miguel Prieto	Spain	1937
Tom Purga	Finland	1933
Elmer Rice	United States	1934
Gerda Ring	Norway	1935
Will Rogers	United States	1934
Guido Salvini	Italy	1934
Pete Sandborne	United States	1936
Oliver Sayler	United States	1933
Marie Seton	Great Britain	1934
Laura Case Sherry	United States	1934
Yao Sin-Kun	China	1937
Pierre Siz	France	1936
Carleton Smith	United States	1936
Simone Téry	France	
Sybil Thorndike	Great Britain	1935
Elli Tomburi	Finland	1933
Alfredo Gomez de la Vega	Mexico	1935
Emile Vuillermoz	France	1936
Alice Ware	United States	1933
Geoffrey Whitworth	Great Britain	1934
Albert Wilson	Great Britain	1934
Blanche Yurka	United States	1934
Jean Zay	France	1937
Madeleine Zay	France	1937

BY COUNTRY

Country of Origin	Name	Year(s) Attended
Australia	Marjorie Bulcock	1935
	Doris Hayball	1936
China	Yao Sin-Kun	1937
Czechoslovakia	Emil Burian	1934, 1935
	Stanislav Lom	1934
	Voita Novak	1935
Denmark	Martin Andersen Nexø	1935
Finland	Kosti Ello	1933
	Tom Purga	1933
	Elli Tomburi	1933
France	André Boll	1933
	Henry Clerc	1934
	Paul Gsell	1934, 1936, 1937
	Henri-René Lenormand	1935
	Rolf de Mare	1936
	André Mauprey	1934
	Pierre Siz	1936
	Simone Téry	
	Emile Vuillermoz	1936
	Jean Zay	1937
	Madeleine Zay	1937
Great Britain	Huntly Carter	1934, 1935, 1936, 1937
	Lewis Casson	1935
	Hubert Griffith	1934
	André van Gyseghem	1935
	Patrick Hughes	1934
	Sir Barry Jackson	1937
	Malcolm Morley	1935
	Marie Seton	1934
	Sybil Thorndike	1935
	Geoffrey Whitworth	1934
Holland	Albert Wilson	1934
	Hugo van Dalen	1937
	Johan Huijts	1934
	Edvard Katan	1936
Iran	Nell Knoop	1936
	Ali Daryabegi	1937
	Abdul Hussein Han Nushim	1936
Italy	Guido Salvini	1934
Mexico	Alfredo Gomez de la Vega	1935
Norway	Agnes Mowinkel	1933
	Hans Jacob Nielsen	1933
	Gerda Ring	1935
South Africa	Sidney Barnett Potter	1934
Spain	Gloria Alvarez	1937
	Max Aub	1933

Country of Origin	Name	Year(s) Attended
	Cipriano Rivas Cherif	1937
	Miguel Hernandez	1937
	Miguel Prieto	1937
Sweden	Paulina Briunius	1933, 1935
	Gösta Ekman	1936
	Carl August Forsell	1935
	Zarah Leander	1935
	Viola Markelius	1933
	Olof Molander	1936
Turkey	Ertuğrul Muhsin Bey	1934
	Hasan Ferid	1935
United States	Brooks Atkinson	1934, 1936
	Barbara Allan Bement	1934
	Dorothy Brewster	1936
	William Challee	1937
	Anne M. Cooke	1935
	Henry Dana	1934, 1935, 1936
	Zelda Dorfman	1935
	Julia Dorn	1937
	Walter Duranty	1934, 1935
	Harold Erenspurger	1936
	Morris Gest	1935
	Billie B. Geter	1935
	Albert Hirschfeld	1936
	Norris Houghton	1934
	Herbert Kline	1936
	Rose Krauss	1934
	William F. MacDermott	1933
	Molly Picon	1933
	Elmer Rice	1934
	Will Rogers	1934
	Pete Sandborne	1936
	Oliver Sayler	1933
	Laura Case Sherry	1934
	Carleton Smith	1936
	Alice Ware	1933
	Blanche Yurka	1934

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