

POLITICS AND TOURISM IN MSSR: A CASE STUDY OF THE TOURISTS FROM THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA (1964-1979)*

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Rezumat: Politică și turism în RSSM: cazul turiștilor din Republica Socialistă România (1964-1979)

Perioada ce a urmat celui de-al doilea război mondial a fost una tumultoasă și destul de greoaie în ceea ce privește raporturile dintre Chișinău și București. O învioreare a relațiilor turistice dintre aceste a fost sesizată abia pe la sfârșitul anilor '60. Din 1964 și-a început activitatea Direcția turismului extern de pe lângă Consiliul de Miniștri al RSSM, iar aceasta s-a ocupat direct de deservirea și primirea turiștilor străini care soseau în RSSM Moldovenească sau mergeau în afara țării. Activitatea acesteia s-a focusat în special pe deservirea turiștilor din RSR, deși în rapoartele de activitate apar menționate datele și despre restul turiștilor. Prezentarea numărului de turiști care au ajuns la Chișinău prin prisma raporturilor dintre Moscova și București sau a anumitor evenimente care aveau loc pe arena internațională este în măsură să ne faciliteze înțelegerea fluctuațiilor numărului acestora în anii '60-'70. Iar politica de distanțare față de Kremlin dusă de Nicolae Ceaușescu, considerată una dușmănoasă nu a făcut decât să intensifice controlul față de „oaspeții” din România.

Abstract: *Although the period following World War II was turbulent and defined by a difficult relation between Kishinev and Bucharest an improvement concerning touristic relations between those two has been established during '60s. In 1964 Department for External Tourism has started its activity as part of The Council of Ministers of the Moldavian SSR and handled directly the accommodation and services for international tourists visiting Moldavian SSR or tourist going abroad.*

The main activity of the Department was to accommodate tourists from Romanian Socialist Republic although in their reports you also can find information about other international tourists. Presenting the number of the Romanian tourists visiting Kishinev as being influenced by the relationship between Bucharest and Moscow might facilitate the understanding of the tourists' number fluctuations in "60s and '70s. As Nicolae Ceausescu

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set out to distance Romania from Kremlin and it was considered as a threatening policy the result was an increase of control towards visitors from RSR.

Résumé: La politique et le tourisme en République Socialiste Soviétique de Moldavie (RSSM): le cas de touristes de la République Socialiste de Roumanie (1964-1979)

Après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale a suivi une période tumultueuse entre Chisinau et Bucarest. Une amélioration des relations touristiques entre ces deux villes a été notifiée qu'à la fin des années '60. Depuis 1964, le Département du Tourisme externe du Conseil des ministres de RSSM a commencé son activité, celui-ci a traité directement la réception et l'accueil des touristes étrangers arrivant en République Socialiste de Moldavie ou allant à l'étranger. Son activité a été axée sur l'accueil des touristes du RSR, cependant dans les rapports d'activité on peut trouver des données sur les autres touristes.

Les statistiques sur les touristes qui sont arrivés à Chisinau en termes de relations entre Moscou et Bucarest ou de certains événements qui ont eu lieu sur la scène internationale est en mesure de faciliter la compréhension des fluctuations de leur nombre dans les années 60-'70. Et la politique de distanciation du Kremlin menée par Nicolae Ceausescu, a été considéré comme une politique hostile et celle-ci simplement a intensifié le contrôle vers les «invités» de Roumanie.

Keywords: RSR, Moldavian SSR, tourism, Kremlin, activity report, Department for External Tourism within MSSR's Council of Ministries.

Introduction

The year of 1964 is an important milestone for the development of external tourism of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic as it is also the year when within the Council of Ministries (CM) of USSR, on August 22, 1964¹, the Department for External Tourism was established under the CM resolutions. On September 26, 1964 under resolution no. 376-26 the Department for External Tourism had its activity officially started within CM of Moldavian SSR (MSSR). Department's responsibilities and staff hierarchy has been approved by the chief of MSST Council of Ministries A. Diordytsa². The main tasks performed by the Department concerned improvement of the accommodations for the foreign tourist coming to MSSR and work with soviet tourist that went abroad. The joint stock company *Inturist* was one of Department's main partners for working with tourists.

In 1945-1953, before the Department for External Tourism was established there were few visitors from foreign countries. If speaking strictly

¹ Arhiva Națională a Republicii Moldova (ANRM) [National Archive of the Republic of Moldova], f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 1, p. 2-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11-18.

about touristic relations between MSSR and RSR, in the written press of '50s we can find some data concerning the arrival of delegations from RSR.³ Those were specialized delegations or groups and their staying was in the least for touristic purposes. Practically the beginning of the touristic relations between MSSR and other countries started when the Department for External Tourism was established. Therefore, starting with 1965 *Inturist* Jsc. began writing reports on accommodation and services for foreign tourists be they from soviet or capitalist countries. We should mention that *Inturist* Jsc. was also responsible for preparing the documentation necessary for soviet tourist in order to go abroad.

In order to organize the tours during tourist season *Inturist* Jsc. and Department for External Tourism cooperated with specialized organization and institutions from the countries willing to send their citizen to visit the republic. For example, responsible for this activity in RSR was the National Office for Tourism (NOT) *Carpati*.

It is important to mention that during 1964-1979 the Bulgarian tourist was the main contingent to visit Kishinev, followed by tourists from RSR. The number of tourists from Polish People's Republic, Hungarian People's Republic and from German Democratic Republic was low as we can see it from statistical data provided by *Inturist* Jsc. for the period of time specified.⁴

Groups visiting the republic had their activities managed according to the program given by the *Inturist*. Tourist attractions open for visiting were those included in the list drafted by local authorities and approved by MSSR's Council of Ministries. The responsibility of the guides- translators was to entertain the tourists and at the end of the season to submit activity reports. The reports presented not only statistical data about international tourists but also tourists' opinions about sightseeing tours and even citations of people who weren't afraid to talk about sensible topics such as Bessarabia problem. The importance of these opinions was determined by the guides when it captured their attention and they were very precautious when it came to Romanian tourists. Therefore, the characteristics given to Romanian tourists haven't changed substantially during the years. The groups from the left of Prut were thought of being the most difficult as they were the groups who complained the most about provided accommodation. Also the relationship between *Inturist* Jsc. and *Carpati NOT* wasn't one of the best: in the reports submitted by *Inturist* Jsc. often will be mentioned complaints about the activity of the Romanian firm, especially, concerning the organization of the tourist groups visiting Kishinev.

³ „Советская Молдавия” [Soviet Moldova], Nr. 209 (3561), 07 сентября1956.

⁴ Arhiva Organizațiilor Social-Politice din Republica Moldova (AOSPRM) [Archive of Socio-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova], f. 51, inv. 47, d. 11, p. 130-138.

An analysis of the dossiers on Department's for External Tourism activity allowed us to operate with data about international tourists visiting the republic gathered during the years. It's interesting to analyze the touristic relations between RSR and MSSR especially in the context of all the events from that period of time when it's highly necessary for us to relate to the Romania and Soviet relations. The relation between Bucharest and Moscow was extremely tense during 1964 until 1979. Such problems as cooperation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), Czechoslovak invasion, and also reintroduction on Romanian-Soviet agenda of some of the subjects that Moscow didn't like led to Romania's estrangement from Soviet countries. The mentioning of the territorial dispute during Romanian and Soviet delegations' meetings was something that annoyed the soviet authorities. In this context it is easier to explain the attitude towards Romanian tourists visiting Kishinev.

In 1979 the hostility between Bucharest and Moscow become visible on August 1 during the meeting of Nicolae Ceausescu and Leonid Brezhnev in Crimea. The problems both leaders were concerned about referred to territorial disputes and also some historical publications from both RSR and USSR that were contrary to the agreements made between countries' leaders. Nevertheless, the number of Romanian tourists was still high comparing to other socialist countries.

Statistical data on the number of Romanian tourist who visited MSSR (1964-1979)

Further we will present data on tourists' movement between Socialist Romania and Moldavian SSR from 1960 until 1970. The year of 1964 was marked by many disputes between Bucharest and Moscow and it's also the year of publication of *Notes on Romanians (Unpublished manuscripts)* by Karl Marx, edited by academicians A. Otsetya and S. Schwann under the auspices of Romanian's People Republic Academy of Sciences.⁵ The publication had some critical remarks about tsarist policies concerning Bessarabia and it irked Moscow at that time. Even if the year was full of disputes during the touristic season in particular in 1964 the *Inturist* Jsc. accommodated 4830 international tourists from 25 countries: 4116 tourists from socialist countries and 714 tourists from capitalist countries⁶, when next year until October 15th, 1965 the

⁵ Vasile Buga, *Pe muchie de cuțit. Relațiile româno-sovietice 1965-1989* [On the edge. Romanian-Soviet relations in 1965-1989], București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2013, p. 342.

⁶ ANRM, f. 2782, inv 3, d 3, p. 53-58.

Inturist Jsc. subsidiary in Kishinev accommodated 5141 international tourists including 4129 tourists from soviet countries and 1012 tourists from capitalist countries. ⁷ In 1964, 1028 Romanian tourists visited MSSR. The next year there were only 514 tourists - half of the previous year's number. ⁸

Table 1. Tourist form socialist countries who visited MSSR in 1964 and 1965⁹

Country	1964	1965
Bulgaria	2645	3236
Czechoslovakia	149	311
Romania	1028	514
GDR	60	32
Poland	234	27
Hungary	-	9
Total	4116	4129

Despite the changes within the Communist Party of Soviet Union in October 1964 after Nikita Khrushchev's dismissal and the changes within Romanian Worker's Party, in March 1965 after the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, in 1966 MSSR accommodated 6319 tourists from socialist countries and 734 tourists from capitalist countries, according to the statement from March 14, 1968 of the deputy chief of the Central Committee's (CC) department for administrative bodies submitted to the Moldavian Communist Party's CC secretary. In 1967 MSSR was visited by 11.283 international tourists from 35 countries including 9642 tourists from socialist countries and 1491 tourists from capitalist countries. Most of the tourists were from Bulgaria: 4804 tourists in 1966 and 6154 tourists in 1967. In the second place were Romanian tourists: 988 people in 1966 and 2454 people in 1967.¹⁰

We can see an improvement of the relation between Kishinev and Bucharest during 1966-1967. A proof of the improvement is also the project proposed by CC of the MCP regarding the friendship relations between border districts of MSSR and border counties of RSR for the year of 1967. According to its plan Vulcanesti District would receive during the second semester of the year a visit from a group of party officials, specialists and employees in agriculture from Galati County. There will be 3-5 group members and the visit will last for 5 days in order to share experience in the field of farming, animal husbandry,

⁷ ANRM, f. 2782, inv 3, d. 4, p. 137-139.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 29, d. 240, p. 74-75.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

rational use of technology in agriculture, constructions of cultural and industrial objectives.

Groups from Vulcanesti were also expecting to share the same experience during a visit to Galati. These groups exchange were meant to improve the collaboration between border cities. The main interest represented areas such as viticulture, crops of fruits and vegetables, their harvesting and also the construction of industrial and cultural buildings.

The time for the visits had to be well calculated in order to overlap with proposed activities. For example, Leova District from Moldavian SSR had to invite for the III trimester of the year a group of party officials and specialists in agriculture from Husi County to share experience in the field of mechanized harvesting for arable farming, viniculture and animal husbandry. In the same period a group from Leova District should have been sent to Husi County. The number of visitors and the duration of the visit had to be the same.

Ungheni District had to invite for the same period a group of party officials, specialists and citizen working in agriculture from Iasi County. The objectives of this group were to share experience in agriculture.

Cahul District from Moldavian SSR had to host during the 3rd trimester of the 1967 a group of workers from the party, specialists and citizen working in agriculture from the Barlad County. The main goal of this group was to learn about the District's achievements in agriculture, industry, culture during the Soviet Union. At the same time, Cahul District had to send a group to the Barlad County in order to share experience on vegetable and fruits production, viticulture, crop storage and building of special places for preservation.

Friendly sports meetings were expected to take place at the same time in border counties Iasi, Galati from Romanian Socialist Republic and in the border districts from Moldavian SSR: teams would be sent according to a previous agreement.

It was also discussed the possibility of inviting a group of pioneers and pupils from Iasi and Galati to visit the republican festival of pioneers and pupils from Moldavian SSR.¹¹

Another suggestion was to invite a delegation of 3-5 people from Iasi si Galati to celebrate 49 years of activity of the Union of the Communist Youth (Komsomol) following an exchange of komsomolist and pioneer delegations between Iasi-Kishinev-Galati-Cahul.¹²

It was also meant to organize a meeting between delegations of members of Academy of Sciences of Moldavian SSR and members of the Romanian

¹¹ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 27, d. 98, p. 119-123.

¹² *Ibid.*

Socialist Republic's Academy of Sciences, Iasi subsidiary, where issues of common interest would be discussed.

Professors and students from Agricultural Institute of Kishinev had meetings with professors and students from Agricultural Institute of Iasi in order to discuss the analysis and studies on educational process.

It was also suggested to organize a meeting of the employees and technical engineering workers from textile enterprises of Iasi and Kishinev. Moldavian Societies of friendship and cultural relations with foreign countries together with border districts of Moldavian SSR had to send to the Romanian border counties materials presenting the achievements of the Moldavian people in areas such as industry, sciences and art during the Soviet Union.¹³

Besides agricultural cooperation between RSR and MSSR an important part of their relations was the tourism therefore it was proposed to organize systematically within kolkhozes, sovkhozes, industrial enterprises, educational institutions or other institutions with Romanian-Soviet friendship societies from border regions, especially in places for tourists to visit, literature and photography exhibition about achievements of the Romanian people towards strengthening socialism.

Special activities were proposed to take place on days of national importance to MSSR and RSR. For example, on August 23, 1967, at the border Districts centers were planned to take place meetings and to organize parties dedicated to the liberation of Romanian people from fascist occupants at the kolkhozes, sovkhozes, industrial enterprises and other institutions.¹⁴

On November 30, 1967, the Secretary of the Moldavian Central Committee I. Melkov submitted to the CC of the Soviet Union Communist Party the scheduled activities for the year 1968 to consolidate the friendly relations between the Districts Tiraspol, Kotovsk and the RSR's Counties.¹⁵ According to the schedule, in order to develop and improve the quality of the experience sharing between workers' groups from MSSR's and RSR's border areas it was recommended to organize in the 3rd trimester of the 1968 exchanges of delegations between the districts and counties – Vulcanesti and Galati, Cahul and Barlad, Leova and Husi, Ungheni and Iasi, all from border areas of Moldavian SSR and Romanian SR. Delegations, including workers, specialist and citizen from the districts and counties mentioned, will be of 3-5 members and the duration of the visit will be of maximum 5 days. There will be discussed topics such as industry,

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 28, d. 91, p. 189.

agriculture, construction of industrial and cultural premises and political activity for the population.

Union of the sports societies and organizations from Moldavian SSR together with border districts according to the agreement with Iasi and Galati counties from Romanian SR were expected to organize exchanges of sport teams for football, volleyball, tennis, basketball, swimming, free style and Greco-Roman wrestling competitions.

An active youth was desirable for the implementation of the scheduled plans; therefore a proposal was submitted in order to organize youth delegations exchanges including youth from Kishinev and youth from border counties Iasi and Galati. The young will discuss political activity and young generation's involvement.

According to the scheduled plan Moldavian societies for friendship and cultural relations with foreign countries together with party's administration and soviet administrations from border districts of the republic had to send systematically to the friendly Romanian counties informational materials presenting the development of the industry, agriculture, science, culture and art in Moldavian SSR.

On the occasion of national holidays and also because of the concluded Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance between Bucharest and Moscow a variety of thematic meetings, friendship parties, lectures, reports and discussions were planned to take place.¹⁶

In spite of being a promising developmental plan for a friendly relationship between border areas of the RSR and MSSR, in 1968 the relation between Bucharest and Moscow has come to a critical juncture and therefore it affected the relation with Moldavian SSR. The crisis that affected the Romanian-Soviet relation in 1968 was determined by the invasion of Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia and later by the visit to Bucharest of the American president Richard Nixon. In a few months after the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance between Romania and Soviet Union sensible topics related to the Romanian-Soviet/Russian history came in focus again but it hasn't affected their touristic relations. Eventually in 1968, 2856 Romanian tourists visited the country and 4115 tourists visited in 1969.¹⁷ Local authorities highlighted the fact that 1969 was the year with the highest number of Romanian tourists visiting MSSR since 1959 when the *Inturist* Jsc. was established.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 192-193.

¹⁷ ANRM, f. 2782, inv 1, d 40, p. 21-22.

In 1970's there's a visible increase of the number of international tourists visiting the republic, except years 1970¹⁸, 1977 and 1978. Historians such as Gheorghe Negru consider the year 1970 as a culmination of the Soviet's propagandistic war from 1970 to 1975¹⁹ started by Soviet authorities against "nationalism" in MSSR and "peculiar politics" of the RSR. Nevertheless, in 1974 the number of Romanian tourists for the first time in the period we analyze exceeded the number of Bulgarian tourists. This data is confirmed by Department's for External Tourism notice *Concerning the accommodation of RSR tourists in Moldavian SSR in 1968-1978* from December 11, 1978 submitted to Central Committee of MCP, MSSR's Council of Ministries, and General Directorate for External Tourism within MSSR's Council of Ministries.²⁰

According to the informative note on accommodation of the Romanian tourists visiting Moldavian SSR for the period 1968-1978 overall the numbers are as shown below.

Table 2. Number of Romanian tourists who visited MSSR in 1968-1978

Year	Number of people
1968	4.877
1969	4.310
1970	3.326
1971	4.249
1972	6.369
1973	10.955
1974	16.617
1975	22.548
1976	26.612
1977	14.837
1978	17.829

The table below shows how the number of international tourists from other socialist countries who visited MSSR in 1968-1978 compares to the number of tourists from RSR for the same period of time.

¹⁸ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 19, p. 1-21.

¹⁹ Gheorghe Negru, „Cursul deosebit” al României și supărarea Moscovei. Disputa sovieto-română și campaniile propagandistice antiromânești din RSSM (1965-1975). *Studiu și documente* [Romania's „Peculiar politics” and Moscow's anger. Soviet-Romanian dispute and anti Romanian propaganda from MSSR. (1965-1975). Study and documents], Chișinău, 2012, 48.

²⁰ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 47, d. 11, p. 130-138.

Table 3. Tourists from socialist countries who visited Moldavian Republic in 1968-1978

Country	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
RSR	4.877	4.310	3.326	4.249	6.369	10.955
PRB	7.503	10.672	6.472	16.548	16.000	17.000
GDR	14	273	599	253	458	960
PRU	3	40	37	177	179	77
PRP	245	115	118	621	350	347
CSR	90	17	223	1.010	1.375	1.212
SFRY	337	85	83	120	61	99
Capitalist countries	1.366	1.009	995	1.276	1.586	2.379

Country	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
RSR	16.617	22.548	22.612	14.837	17.829
PRB	15.452	14.793	9.273	11.336	11.984
GDR	1.183	1.526	855	891	560
PRU	487	432	306	414	410
PRP	419	668	465	1.125	1.024
CSR	792	1.946	1.863	2.925	2.513
SFRY	401	187	16	118	56
Capitalist countries	1.992	2.064	4.026	2.536	3.694

We can conclude therefore that until 1976, especially in 1973-1976, there is a constant and substantial increase of the number of Romanian tourists who visited MSSR. Moreover, in 1972-1976 the number of tourist increased from 6369 people to 26.612 people otherwise the number increased by 4.18 times.²¹

Tourist from PRB occupied the top position on the chart until 1973; from 1974 the top position was occupied by tourists from RSR.²² Numbers continued to increase until the end of 1978. In 1977 there was a significant decrease of tourists from RSR: the numbers represented only 56% of the number of tourists who visited MSSR in 1976. Nevertheless, they still represented the largest group of international tourists. As reported by the tourists this decrease was due a new international travel law enforced in 1976-1977 that forbid traveling more than once in two years and also because of the earthquake's consequences.

The first half of the year 1978 brings an increase in number of the

²¹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 41, p. 147-172.

²² *Ibid.*

Romanian tourists: their number for 11 months of 1977 reaches to 12.648 people and for 11 months of 1978 that number is 17.829 people what is by 5.181 people or 40.9 % more.

An important aspect to consider was the diversification of cities and counties where tourists were coming from.²³ Until 1974 the majority of the tourists were from Bucharest but during the second part of 70s tourists were coming from almost all Romanian counties.

Age range and professions of the tourist group members remain the same during the period specified. Most of them were representatives of intelligentsia: doctors, engineers, professors, commercial workers. Although during the second part of the period we can see more tourists who work in service sector and mid-level technical staff from small enterprises. Usually the group had many retirees and housewives. On rare occasions there were workers, students, and pupils in a tourist group and almost never peasants.²⁴ As about age range, mostly the groups were of middle aged or old people and the young people would come scarcely ever.

Starting with 1974 we can distinguish a substantial increase of the number of Hungarian tourists.

NOT Carpati would usually organize mixed groups of different age, professions and nationality and it was unacceptable for the responsible from Kishinev: it was difficult to interest all the members at the same time. Therefore, they suggested organizing specialized groups.²⁵ As a solution it would satisfy both parts: on the one hand tourists would be able to visit the sights they'd like and on the other hand they'd participate at the tours where guides' propaganda work would flourish. Surely specialized groups meant an easy work for guides and translators from Kishinev. Even so, there were few such groups during the period mentioned, 1-2²⁶ groups per year mostly and seldom were they made of members with same specializations.

For this period of time *NOT Carpati* never changed the duration of the visit nor the itineraries.

Itineraries for train travelling:

1. Ungheni – Kishinev – Kiev – Moscow (1.5 days in Kishinev)
 2. Ungheni – Kishinev – Kiev – Ungheni (2.5 days in Kishinev)
- Ungheni – Kishinev – Odessa – Ungheni (2 days in Kishinev)
3. Ungheni – Kishinev – Rostov on Don – Volgograd – Moscow – Ungheni

²³ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 31, p. 20-23.

²⁴ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 30, p. 55-60.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 34, p. 1-15.

(from 1978, 1 day in Kishinev)

4. Ungheni – Kishinev – Kiev – Baku – Erevan – Tbilisi – Moscow – Ungheni
(from 1978, 1 day in Kishinev)

Itineraries for bus travelling:

5. Leuseni – Kishinev – Odessa – Kishinev – Leuseni (3 days in Kishinev)
6. Leuseni – Kishinev – Tiraspol – Kishinev – Leuseni (2 days in Kishinev
and 2 days in Tiraspol)

7. Leuseni – Kishinev – Balti – Chernovtsy – Porubne (2 days in Kishinev, 1
day in Balti)²⁷

Car travel became popular from 1974. In 1975 only 46% tourists traveled by bus but 50-51% in 1977-1978.

It was important that during their visit in MSSR Romanian tourists would receive the maximum information about soviet reality, soviet life style, CPSU's and Soviet Government's domestic and foreign policy, successful implementation of the provisions established during the XXV Congress of CPSU and XIV Congress of MCP, history of Moldova's revolutionary struggle, about national flourishing during Soviet Union and Moldavian's people success as part of the soviet republics family, about Leninist solutions for nationality problem in USSR following MSSR's example.²⁸

Romanian tourists' view on MSSR

Tourism cooperation between MSSR and RSR had an interesting start. On the one hand there were tourists who visited Kishinev once in interwar period and who were very surprised to find many changes at their second visit on the other hand the first time visitors weren't as impressed neither by the sightseeing nor by the accommodation.²⁹ *Inturist's* activity reports show that Romanian tourists were displeased by the program proposed for their staying in Kishinev.³⁰ Guides, in their turn, found working with Romanian tourists being difficult, as they were, according to them, disorganized and their main goal seemed to be meeting their family and friends from republic which interfered with guides' propaganda work.

In order to familiarize the tourists with MSSR's achievements during Soviet Union visiting Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy was mandatory. And usually Romanian tourists were under good impression after

²⁷ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 41, p. 147-172.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 6, p. 43-44.

³⁰ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 14, p. 11-20.

visiting EANE. For example, Gologan – a Romanian tourist from group E-232 – confessed after seeing eren: “*What I’ve seen needs no additional comments. I’d never realized that Moldova produced such equipment. We need some of it in our country...*”

Gradually the tourists’ number visiting Kishinev increased significantly therefore *Inturist’s* usual tours had to be changed. For example, in 1975 tourists with the itinerary Kishinev- Kiev and Kishinev-Odessa and all tourists travelling by bus had a schedule that besides city tour also included museum visits, visit to the Glory Memorial, EANE tour, and visit to the youth center “Iu. A. Gagarin”, documentary movies about Moldova, and other activities organized in partnership with Friendship Society and Cultural Center. A new touristic attraction for Romanian tourists was the possibility to participate at the wine tasting while visiting fabrics and sovkhoszs such as *Romanesti*, *Peresecina* and other.³¹ This being possible because *NOT Carpati* bought the right for wine tasting. Tourists were thrilled by the possibility to learn from up close about local enterprises. These kind of practical activities were the best way to show Moldova’s achievements during Soviet Union. At the local kolkhozes and sovkhoszs tourists could meet farm workers and compare work conditions in MSSR and RSR.³²

In the late 70s tourist were more interested by the tours proposed. If previous years less than a half of a group would’ve participated at the activities proposed, now every member followed the schedule.³³ The group leaders were also responsible for tourist thoroughly following the schedule.

Romanian tourist were really impressed by everything seen in Moldavian SSR: the grandeur of the buildings, achievements in industry and agriculture, social realities, friendly relations between different nationalities and different people living together in Moldova, party and government’s interest in citizen problems, MSSR flourishing as equal in a union of friendly soviet republics.

Important to mention that in 1974-1975 Romanian tourists openly complained about lack of information about USSR.³⁴ However later in 70s because tourist were thoroughly prepared before going abroad there were few remarks of that kind. Even so, judging by reviews given Romanian tourists still had little knowledge about what was happening in USSR and MSSR- every trip brings a new discovery.³⁵

³¹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 41, p. 95-98.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 147-171.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 185-201.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 39, p. 1-17.

On November 29, 1978, Romanian tourist Radulescu as a member of the group EA-076 shares his impressions after a walk in town: *“When I saw the newly erected neighborhoods, with nice contemporary buildings and the lowest rent in the world I come to realize that your government really cares about people”*.³⁶

Maxim V. tourist from Cluj-Napoca, member of the group ACR – 239 is also impressed by the country: *I was thrilled by this country right when I entered the customs. We liked the vineyards and the fields clearly very well maintained. Obviously the government makes an effort to use mechanized support in agriculture. About Kishinev I can say that it surpassed my expectations. We don't have much information about your republic therefore we compare everything to our cities. I have to say Kishinev is far above when it comes to constructions and contemporary architecture.*³⁷

A member of the group EA – 092, Branza confessed: *“I work as a farmer and I have to say I was very impressed by your vineyards and orchards. At this time of the year you've already finished, everything is perfect. We didn't even start yet. It's unexpected to see no one on the fields but everything is already handled.”*³⁸

At the beginning people avoided trips to the historical museums and EANE sometimes more than a half of tourists from a group weren't present. Nevertheless, from 1975 the staff noticed that tourists complied easier with the proposed schedule and willingly visited EANE and historical museums.³⁹

Buliga Stefan, a tourist from E-246 group after a visit to EANE on September 21, said: *“It's hard to believe that a small country with low population can produce such diversity of high quality products. I always thought that Moldova is mostly an agrarian country and surely it progressed a lot in that field. But at the same time it has great achievements in heavy industry, electronics, and why not light industry. This shows a high economical development and by default the wealth of the nation.”*⁴⁰

After a visit to museum of MCP history, on October 18, Revilac Frantzishek from tourist group E -306 said that at the museum of RCP history Bessarabia's origins are explained differently and on the maps dating 1902 or 1903 Bessarabia is represented as a part of Romania. He claimed that *“at the MCP history museum I learned that Bessarabia was part of Romania only in 1918. Also we learned about illegal communists like P. Tkachenko that fought for reunification of the Bessarabia with Soviet Motherland. They contributed to the*

³⁶ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 47, d. 11, p. 130-138.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 41, p. 147-171.

⁴⁰ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 47, d. 11, p. 130-138.

fight of the RCP against the bourgeois government.”

Molinari Carol – group E-246 leader – talking to his guide- translator after a visit to MCP history museum said that every time when visiting Kishinev with his tourist groups he likes to visit the museum where he can always learn new things about MSSR, USSR, and Moldavian Communist Party.⁴¹ Back home he never visited a historical museum because the numbers and estimates presented there seem to be false, especially the data on country’s history from 40s and 50s.

Romanian tourists gladly visited the Youth Center *I. A. Gagarin* and watched movies about MSSR.⁴² Tourist Samsonov from group EA 076 impressed by the visit said: *It was a wonderful encounter. It felt as we became part of your country with its music and dances*⁴³

Most of the Romanian tourists appreciated the wine tasting at the farms and learning how farms work. They liked watching movies about the vineyards and visiting social servicing facilities. ⁴⁴ As from 1975 there was not a single negative opinion regarding wine tasting events. Group leaders who often visited MSSR requested organization of such events at the farms.⁴⁵

Inturist Jsc. subsidiary in Ungheni accommodated in 1968-1979 200 thousands tourists from RSR. It became a custom for tourists travelling by train on the route Kiev-Leningrad-Moscow to participate at informative and entertaining activities in MSSR. Also the subsidiary organized in Ungheni city tours and museum visits for Romanian tourist who didn’t stay in republic during their travel.

These type of visits were more difficult to organize – mention the activity reports on Romanian tourists’ accommodation. It was explained by the group composition – a lot of its members were looking forward to meet their relatives and friends from MRRS or had commercial interests.⁴⁶ However their number reduced when in 1976-1977 RSR adopted the law forbidding travelling abroad more than once in two years. This change contributed to the increase of commercial activities by Romanian tourists what was far more wide-spread than in 1968-1970.⁴⁷ In some cases an entire tourist group would come for commercial business. Some tourist would visit more than once in two years and the same individuals would use this trips for meeting relatives and chaffer.⁴⁸

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 34, p. 1-15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 41, p. 147-171.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 47, d. 11, p. 130-138.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Many of the tourists didn't bother hiding that the true reason for visiting MSSR was to buy some merchandise. They confessed that selling was necessary if they wanted to buy necessities during their stay as they were allowed to exchange only a small amount of money.⁴⁹

Guides complained that those tourists who sold things brought from home were responsible for disorganization of group's stay in MSSR. Also there was the second category of tourist: the one who came to visit their relatives. They would often miss the scheduled activities and never inform about it the soviet guides.⁵⁰ They made the group late and would go outside the town even if they were forbidden.

In response to the problems *Inturist* Jsc. offered solutions for improving accommodation for Romanian tourists. Also they suggested to improve the quality of informational activities in order to rise the propaganda effect of the tours.

To improve the quality of the informational activities there were some problems to be solved:

1. Romanian tourist who traveled by car and carried individual visits were subjected to less surveillance and usually didn't ask for guides during their stay in MSSR (except city tours for tourists with cars) therefore it was advised to decrease the number of such tourists and to stimulate them traveling by train.

2. To solve the problem with commercial activities responsible institutions had to increase the amount of money the tourist could exchange for personal use.

3. Responsible organizations should intensify their fight against soviet jobbers who undermined the results of the informational activities their activity being detrimental for the state.⁵¹

On December 26, 1978, I. Calin, secretary at the CC of the MCP mentioned in his statement *Concerning MSSR's participation and management of tourist exchanges between USSR and RSR* submitted to the chief of the General Directorate for External Tourism S. Nikitin: "an analysis of MSSR's participation at the tourists' exchanges between USSR and RSR shows a considerable increase of the number of Romanian tourists for the last eight years. In 1971 MSSR was visited by 4564 Romanian tourists accommodated by *Inturist Ltd.* and Travel agency Office from Moldova (TAOM). In 1977 Moldova was visited by 16,801 people (by 35 times more).⁵² The highest number of visits was recorded in 1975 and 1976: 24 503

⁴⁹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 19, p. 66-70.

⁵⁰ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 31, p. 10-12.

⁵¹ Next to it was written by hand „rubbish”.

⁵² According to the Notice on December 11. 1978 by Stretscul E.P., chief of the

people in the first year and 28234 people in the second year.⁵³ For 11 months in 1978 our republic has been visited by 21.150 Romanian tourists.

Until 1973 most of the tourists from friendly countries came from PRB now the top position is occupied by Romanian tourists: 48%⁵⁴ in 1974, 55, 2 % in 1975, 55% in 1978 (11 months) from total number of tourists from socialist republics.”⁵⁵

The increase in number of Romanian tourists visiting MSSR was due the CC's decision *Concerning the implementation of provisions stipulated by CC of CPSU on developing tourism in USSR* from September 23, 1975. This decision includes a list of actions to be taken for tourism development in republic by “rising its economic and political efficiency”.⁵⁶ Central Committee's decision established also a new tourist route Ungheni - Balti-Kishinev, a new 3 days river trip Dubasari – Soroca. One of the actions was to review the list of tourist attractions and to improve the accommodation quality by modernization of routes, hotels and restaurants.⁵⁷

The fund no. 2782 of the National Archive of Republic of Moldova (related to Department's for External tourism activity in 1964-1975) preserves a large amount of information reflecting Romanian tourists' impressions on visiting MSSR. The information can be found in activity reports and guides' personal agendas. As already mentioned you can read different opinions: some of them were satisfied by the visit others were disappointed because of a tight schedule.

On intensification of ideological propaganda aimed at tourists from RSR

Soviet period was the perfect opportunity for tourism to become an

Department for External tourism within Council of Ministries of USSR submitted to CC of MCP, CM of MSSR, General Direction for external tourism in 1977 MSSR was visited by 14.837 Romanian tourists.

⁵³ According to the same Notice the number of Romanian tourists in 1975 and 1976 was 22.548 and 26.612 people.

⁵⁴ According to the activity report from Inturist Jtc. from December 25, 1975 submitted to chief of Department for External tourism within Council of Ministries of MSSR in 1971-1973, 35-37% of Romanian tourists who visited USSR also visited MSSR. In 1974 MSSR was visited by 50% of Romanian tourists who visited USSR and 60% in 1975.

⁵⁵ Elena Negru, Gheorghe Negru, *PCM și naționalismul (1965-1989). Documente [MCP and nationalism (1965-1989). Documents]*, Destin Românesc, nr. 5-6, 2010, 30-36.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

instrument of indoctrination used for international tourists visiting MSSR. Therefore, one of the main activities of the Department for External Tourism was ideological propaganda aimed at tourists. The most favorable occasions for spreading the information aimed at well established target groups were the trips and tours in republic. All the information pretended to be true and presented the achievements MSSR had since being a part of USSR.

In 1967, on October 7, CC office of MCP adopted the decision *Concerning the measures for improving the information and propaganda on Soviet Moldova's achievements aimed at foreign countries and citizens*.

According to this decision guides who worked with Romanian tourists had the main responsibility. Same year at the department for propaganda and agitation from CC of MCP was established a new section responsible for propaganda abroad. It also monitored the activity of the *Inturist* Jsc. Subsidiary in Kishinev.⁵⁸

As a result of implementing these provisions the ideological propaganda aimed at international tourist visiting MSSR in 1967 had improved claims the chief of Department for External tourism. The efforts of the external propaganda section within CC of MCP were most significant.

In a few months after the decision mentioned another one *concerning the support of Moldavian SSR on improving ideological work* was adopted by CC of CPSU on May 6, 1968. This was the next step "in the war against unfriendly influence of the foreign reactionary ideology". Hence the Department for External Tourism" within Council of Ministries had to "*focus on tourist relations between RSR and USSR, on tourists with individual visas traveling to MSSR and other soviet republics. To inform Romanian people about internal and external policy of the USSR and about Moldavian people achievements during communist government*".⁵⁹

Every commission within township and district committees had the task to "improve the quality of work with foreigners, the quality of the propaganda groups from enterprises, kolkhozes and sovkhoses and to prepare the locations for touristic visits. It was very important to inform tourist about the economical and cultural achievements of MSSR during Soviet Union".⁶⁰

Central Committee office of MCP by the decision approved on June 3, 1968 requested the Department for External tourism within CM of MSSR, the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Gheorghe Negru, *Campanie împotriva României și a naționalismului românesc din RSSM în anii 50-80 ai sec. XX*, [Campaign against Romania and Romanian nationalism in MSSR in 50-80s of XX century], Destin românesc, 2010, nr. 1, p. 55.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Moldavian Society of Friendship and Cultural relations with other countries, and the State Press Committee of Moldavian SSR to: “intensify the propaganda aimed at the foreign citizen and tourists going abroad”. Also they requested to increase “the number of publications in foreign languages for external use presenting information on economical, scientific and cultural development of MSSR.”

Given a high number of tourists in 1968-1969 local authorities decided to use any possibilities for improving ideological propaganda reach the Romanian tourists. Those who traveled by bus were taken on by guides-translators at the customs in Leuseni. For two hours while travelling to Kishinev guides would inform the tourists about the achievements of MSSR during Soviet Union government. This way the information reached even those tourists that came to visit their relatives and wouldn't participate at any tours in Kishinev. Those realities were necessary because local authorities considered that there is very little information about MSSR in Romanian Socialist Republic and Romanian citizen had no access to even basic information about soviet reality and especially Moldavian reality.⁶¹

The fact that from 1969 tourists had the possibility to visit industrial enterprises, kolkhozes sometimes an entire district – the case of group E821 meant an efficient propagandistic work. Prior to 1969 the usual schedule would include visits to some museums in Kishinev and city tour.⁶²

From 1969 new propaganda methods were introduced that would help Romanian tourists develop a certain attitude towards soviet policy and reality. In 1965-1968 the tourists were required to visit EANE but later on they were also required to visit the museum of MCP history, the underground printing house of *Iskra (Spark)* newspaper, the “civil war heroes” Kotovski and Lazo.⁶³

Comparing the current achievements with the realities before Soviet Union was one of the propaganda methods used with Romanian tourists. Quantitative indices presenting economical and cultural achievements seemed to have the most noticeable effect on Romanian tourists and therefore considered by soviet authorities as the most effective propaganda technique.⁶⁴

According to the activity reports and guides' work agendas Romanian tourist were becoming more open-minded. Some of them were ready to talk about politics even if other tourist groups showed apolitical attitude”.⁶⁵ There was also seen more revolutionary fight veterans visiting and they had “a very

⁶¹ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 14, p. 74-86.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 33, d. 90, p. 39-40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 16, p. 79-85.

*good attitude towards USSR and can appreciate at its real value the achievements of Moldavian people. For the upcoming 100th anniversary of the birth of Lenin those tourists were requesting guides pay attention to the revolutionary topics.”*⁶⁶

An increase in number of Romanian tourists in early 70s led to the intensification of ideological propaganda activities aimed at them. The large number of Romanian tourists has also become a veritable challenge for the local authorities and for the guides who had the goal to make everything work the best possible way.

The main activity of a guide still remained sharing information with tourists about Moldavian SSR's reality especially when they saw the tourists had wrong ideas about the republic. In order to reach the expected political effect, the guides had to keep in mind that Romanian tourists, as well as any other international tourists otherwise disliked “empty words”, declarations and slogans. ⁶⁷ Therefore, they had to rely not only on arguments but also on their knowledge adjusted to the needs and differences of the group members. That is why in early 70s of the 20th century the seriousness of the training courses for guides-translators increased.

During the 70s the conflict arisen between Nicolae Ceausescu and Leonid Brejnev led to displease the soviet authorities and they disagreed with the “special course” Romanian politics had taken. As the result the anti-Romanian propaganda war ⁶⁸ became stronger in MSSR. In 1970, on November 16 CC office of CPSU adopted the top secret document *concerning further increasing of ideological propaganda aimed at Moldavian citizens and citizens from Chernovtsy area of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic*. On November 5, CC office of MCP also adopted the decision *concerning increasing of ideological propaganda aimed at MSSR citizens*.

The preamble itself contains harsh remarks about Romania's politics as *“they use actively literature, radio, television, visits of Romanians to MSSR and Moldavians visiting RSR for propaganda and spread of the “special politics” ideas among our citizens. They also would say hostile remarks about USSR.*⁶⁹ Remarkable fact is that Romanian travel agencies *would send their tourist mostly to Moldova rather than other areas of USSR.”*

⁶⁶ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 14, p. 74-86.

⁶⁷ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 14, p. 11-20.

⁶⁸ Gheorghe Negru, *„Cursul deosebit” al României și supărarea Moscovei. Disputa sovieto-română și campaniile propagandistice antiromânești din RSSM (1965-1975). Studiu și documente* [Romania's „Peculiar politics” and Moscow's anger. Soviet-Romanian dispute and anti-Romanian propaganda from MSSR. (1965-1975). Study and documents], Chișinău, 2012, p. 31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

In order to avoid "spread of nationalist ideas" by Romanian citizens visiting relatives in MSSR it was requested of Ministry of Internal Affairs to take measures "for regulation of invitations given to Romanian citizens and our citizens travelling to Romania" of course in order to reduce "significantly the mutual visits on basis of individual visas". Among other the Ministry was requested to "strictly supervise Romanian tourists' behavior during their stay on Moldova's territory: they have to respect the soviet laws and the regulations concerning the stay of foreigners on USSR's territory".

Tourist groups exchange with Romania, the increasing number of private visits of Romanians to their relatives in MSSR during 60s were considered by MCP leader as sources of "contamination" for Moldavian citizens with "nationalist" and "anti-Soviet" ideas.⁷⁰

Romanian tourists showed a favorable attitude towards their own government and that was a source of concern when the ideas were spread during their stay in MSSR. I.Bodiul emphasized "many Romanian citizens support and approve of the anti-Soviet direction their country had taken; they don't hide their negative attitude towards our country and they support openly Romania's closer relations with America and China"

Propaganda campaign from 1970 against the political tendencies in RSR and "nationalism" in MSSR aimed to reduce the contacts between Romanians from both sides of the Prut. Bodiul insisted that it was necessary "to reduce significantly" the number of RSR citizens visiting MSSR and the number of MSSR citizens who have private visits in RSR. They also requested "an increase of responsibilities for those (from MSSR) who invited their relatives and facilitated their travelling and also contributed to the spread of hostilities"; strict surveillance of RSR tourists in private visits to their relatives. Those who would show an anti- Soviet behavior will be deported. Citizens travelling to RSR were "instructed and informed on what they might encounter and requested in case they will be engaged in anti-Soviet discussions to protest vehemently and boldly retaliate."⁷¹

Institutions responsible for accommodation of Romanian tourists were requested by Ivan Bodiul to "provide for them the most qualified, politically mature, and best employees of Inturist. They should be well trained in their ability to resist unhealthy discussions. In case the international guests won't answer to their objections they will be requested to leave the country."⁷²

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁷¹ AOSPRM, fond 51, inv. 33, d. 201, p. 76.

⁷² *Ibid.* p. 77

Inturist activity reports for 1970 provide clearly the tasks every guide should perform during the tourist season. For Romanian tourist guides had to “present every detail of our realities and to offer them as much correct information as possible about our lifestyle and our state policy; to remind them in a subtle way about our help in building socialism – they will learn and accept then the friendship and collaboration between our countries. To perform these tasks properly the qualities mentioned above aren’t sufficient. They have to permanently improve their abilities because you have to find optimal methods and the right tone for these groups.”⁷³

Season finale however showed that efficient ideological propaganda aimed at international tourists depended on quality of the services provided. Data from 1970 confirmed the importance of accommodation, food and transportation in shaping tourists’ opinion about soviet reality. Based on the experience of the late touristic season when hotel services, restaurants were of high quality tourists accepted easily information about Moldavian people’s achievements and the guides were seen as trustworthy therefore the propaganda goals were reached easily. “The situation is explained by tourists’ habit to connect our achievements and our ability to solve “small” problems. Therefore, this year an extra effort was needed in order to satisfy the needs of our guests. As a result, complaint and suggestions books showed messages of positive feedback from satisfied tourists who appreciated the high quality services and warm welcome.”⁷⁴

The tourist season from 1971 become of particular importance. Preparations included a seminar for the guides-translators where the previous results were discussed. Their main task was to intensify the ideological propaganda aimed at international tourists coming this season. At the seminar close attention was paid to tours and how to lure tourists to participate by using their nationality, social position, age and profession.

In 1971 at the end of training courses for translators the participants had an exam and were able to obtain the right to organize tours in Kishinev. Department for External Tourism published teaching materials to help the guides: “Tours in Kishinev- capital of Moldavian SSR” – based on materials from CPSU’s XXIV Congress and MCP’s XIII Congress.⁷⁵

According to decision *Concerning organization of USSR 50th anniversary*⁷⁶ guides-translators had to focus on Leninist national policy based on which “republics benevolently united into Soviet Union, leading to disappearance of hate

⁷³ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 19, p. 1-21

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 21, p. 20-24

⁷⁶ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 25, p. 37-42

and mistrust and consolidation of friendly, unbreakable relations between brotherly republics where mutual help and a new life begun."⁷⁷ Those were the facts to be shared during city tours in Kishinev, visits to EANE or museums - museum of MCP history, art museum - and other touristic attractions.

In 1972 the majority of Romanian tourist groups participated at the city tour in Kishinev even if not all the members were present. Visit to EANE of Moldavian SSR was an important part of the schedule. From 48 Romanian tourist groups who visited Kishinev in first 4 months of 1972 37 groups visited EANE, 18 groups visited museum of MCP history, 13 groups visited history museum, 18 groups visited the Cinema (Film House), 2 groups visited pioneers' Palace and 9 groups visited other museums.⁷⁸

Apart from training courses designed for the guides-translators at the beginning of every new season authorities tried to find and implement new methods of work with international tourists. For example, this period was characterized by an increase of documentaries for tourists. In 1973 documentaries were still popular and tourist would see them at Union Palace and Youth Center *I. A. Gagarin*. Documentary movies were an efficient propagandistic method. They were popular among tourists and filled harmoniously the tight schedule they had visiting Kishinev. Unfortunately, the joy didn't last for long as Youth Center couldn't provide movies in "Moldavian language" and shortly after, due road repair the Center couldn't be reached at all.⁷⁹

Department for External tourism within Council of Ministries of MSSR took in consideration the specifics of propagandistic work aimed at Romanian tourists and the need to share experience between experienced guides and novices. Therefore they scheduled for March, 1974 a practical seminar for Romanian language guides-translators.⁸⁰ The necessity of this seminary was explained by the need to cope "*with anti-Soviet representatives responsible for spread of detrimental ideas and falsification of historical facts related to Moldova and to diminish their influence on uninformed citizens including Romanian citizens.*"⁸¹ They also proposed to include history of MSSR lessons with topics on "development specifics of the Moldavian socialist nation".⁸² CC of MCP submitted the proposal to involve other institutions during organization and unfold of the

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ ANRM, f 2782, inv. 3, d. 34, f. 1-15

⁸⁰ ANRM, f 2782, inv. 3, d. 36, f. 1

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

seminar. They will help with quality ideas and also their involvement complied with political perspectives.

Soviet authorities strongly believed the amount of information Romanian citizens received was insufficient; therefore the guides should share with tourists a wide range of information about soviet realities, especially information about Soviet Union's achievements in external and internal affairs of Soviet Moldova when they were near their 50th anniversary.⁸³

Tourists from Romania often refused to participate at the tours and it was the main difficulty guides encountered during their work. Tourist explained their refusal by frequent visits to Kishinev and their need to meet the relatives and friends. As the result responsible for meeting tourists used any opportunity for ideological propaganda. Guides found it to be easier working with tourist traveling by bus because they could meet them at the Ungheni customs and on their way to Kishinev tourists would receive various information and even visit tourist attractions open for visiting.⁸⁴

Following years guides-translators were trained according to the schedule established and supervised by the Methodological Council. The council was managed by the chief of guides-translators section. Responsible informational group, under the guidance of Methodological Council and with its approval would publish every month informational leaflets about events in republic and country. Guides found these informative leaflets very helpful for their work as they stayed away from Kishinev for a long time and hadn't any access to other information.

Another important task of the Methodological Council was to share their experience with tourists. Experienced guides-translators would prepare informational materials under the guidance of a coordinator and a responsible methodologist and in supervision by superior methodologists.

Methodological Council was responsible not only for the quality of propagandistic work but also for the content of the tours. In 1975 the Methodological Council analyzed and reviewed more than 30 tours organized by guides-translators of the Section. Linguistic qualifications of the guides were also important. Therefore, in 1975 Department for External tourism organized 3 months language courses graduated by more than 30 persons that year.

For the next touristic season, in 1976, of great importance was newly established examination system: all guides-translators had exams to show their theoretical knowledge and a practical exam where they had to apply their theoretical knowledge on propagandistic work in the field.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 89-99

⁸⁴ ANRM, f. 2782, inv. 3, d. 34, f. 96-104

By CC of CPSU decision to increase the efficiency of propagandistic work aimed at Romanian tourists Department of Public Relations of the *Inturist* in Kishinev organized a pan-union seminar for Romanian language guides-translators.⁸⁵ At the seminar participated Kuskevici I.V, chief of the Department for External tourism within CM of MSSR, Zavarzina N.I., deputy chief of Translations Section, Ghritsesko F.I., chief of Information and International Relations Section within CC of MCP, Barbaneagra P.A., deputy chief of the Department for External tourism, translators from Moscow, Kiev, Chernovtsy, Odessa, and Kishinev. The main topic was focused on specific problems of work with Romanian tourists, historical problems, and differences between Moldavian and Romanian languages, economic development of the MSSR.⁸⁶

From 1976 at the meeting of special tourist trains in Ungheni, Department for External Tourism together with Moldavian Society for friendship, soviet party and local administration organized demonstrations and friendly parties. At the demonstrations and parties participated chiefs and members of the Department for External Tourism, secretaries and members of the Party District committee from Ungheni, and prominent people from the city. They organized also concerts of amateur artistic ensembles and watching movies. This way during customs formalities tourist would feel happy and believe in good will and hospitality of the soviet people. This program was organized for 27 trains i.e. 8500 tourists.⁸⁷

Conclusions

In 60s and 70s of the 20th century relations between RSR and MSSR developed and extended as we can see from the data presented above. However, when we talk about tourism we have to mention the quality of those relations was different in that period of time. It was difficult to receive individual visas and only at the end of the 70s car travelling became popular. Usually a visit will last only for a few days and there was a limited list of places tourists could visit. The annex to Decision no. 35-5 from January 28, 1965 adopted by Council of Ministries of MSSR concerning *the approval of touristic attractions allowed for visiting by international tourists and delegations and improvement of the services and accommodation for them*⁸⁸ stated clearly the touristic sights. After establishing the touristic attractions allowed for visiting

⁸⁵ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 40, d. 27, f. 112-134.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ AOSPRM, f. 51, inv. 44, d. 12, f. 19-28.

⁸⁸ ANRM, F. 2782, inv. 3, d. 1, f. 27-37

the lists will be sent to the local authorities from districts and cities involved in order to prepare the locations.

This period was characterized by an increase of Romanian tourists and by mutual complaints related to services and accommodation of the tourists. Guides-translators from Department for External tourism had to be extremely careful interacting with tourists who had “wrong ideas” about Soviet realities, and MSSR in particular. They had to be well informed and able to argue every remark coming from the tourists. The receiving party usually was unsatisfied by the groups sent by NOT *Carpati*: they weren’t specialized therefore guides had to work hard.

Tourism was seen as an opportunity for ideological propaganda aimed at foreign citizens visiting MSSR. At the same time, it was an opportunity for the tourist to bring in the country merchandise for selling. Therefore, they weren’t interested in the program proposed by the *Inturist*. Having a fixed schedule was unacceptable for the most tourists who came to visit their relatives or friends in Kishinev. People who tried to reach cities not included in the program had to pay a fine.

Soviet authorities at that time were concerned with coming up with solutions for “chauvinist propaganda” coming from Romania and aimed at MSSR’s citizens, especially intelligentsia. In order to fight this propaganda, authorities established administrative penalties. Tourists were also thoroughly controlled and in extreme cases they were deported.⁸⁹

Although during 70s the number of Romanian tourist increased and soviet authorities were open for improving touristic relation between the two countries by finding common elements, unifying in their nature, and cooperation in border areas by opening new border crossings they showed an anxious attitude towards Romanian tourists, often clearly visible, that had behind it a territorial dispute – Bessarabia problem.

⁸⁹ Vasile Buga, *op.cit*, p.346.