

## **Czechoslovak Tourism in Socialist Yugoslavia: 1945-1960s**

### **A political reading of its development and significance**

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Six long years of occupation and war (1939-1945) diverged Czechoslovak tourists<sup>1</sup> from the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea and from the rest of Yugoslavia. The reconstruction effort and problems of many kinds marginalized the question of tourism in the first months after the liberation.<sup>2</sup> However, the continental Czechoslovak population soon voiced the desire to find again the Adriatic sun. It is indeed true that many hotels and resorts, built for the most part during the interwar period, were properties of Czechoslovak individuals and associations, and that the question of their management was becoming urgent with the anticipated arrivals in Yugoslavia of sick children and survivors of Nazi camps. It was a journey with a specific goal: to rest and to recover after the war restrictions. However, this type of inflows soon gave way to a recreational type of tourism, which was sometimes orchestrated by actors ideologically close to the “new” Yugoslavia of Tito such as the Czechoslovak *Revoluční odborové hnutí* (ROH)<sup>3</sup> which organized vacations for workers. It is also true that at that time Yugoslavia benefited from an undeniable capital of sympathy in Czechoslovakia. The two states in question had living trade<sup>4</sup> and cultural<sup>5</sup> relationships. Moreover, tourists from this country represented the largest group of foreign tourists in Yugoslavia between 1946 and 1948.<sup>6</sup> Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia faced however important issues in 1948 with the complete nationalization of Czechoslovak Real Estate and the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Kominform. After some hesitations, Tito and his advisers understood at the beginning of 1949 that the break-up was complete and irreversible. The fear of a Soviet invasion and severe economic problems brought Yugoslavia closer to the West. Yugoslavia’s search for legitimacy resulted in the introduction of self-management, in raising the standard of living of its citizens, in leading the setting up of non-alignment movement, and by opening the borders of the country. These reorientations will have important

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<sup>1</sup> Most of them were Czechs. I use the term Czech when it specifically refers to a Czech phenomenon, otherwise I employ the term Czechoslovak.

<sup>2</sup> But Čedok and Putnik would have already organized trains to Opatija for Czech tourists in September 1945. Archives of Serbia-Montenegro (ASCG), fond 50, fascicle 61, unit 127, folio 3-4. Kardelj confirmed in December 1945 that Yugoslavia would be opened to Czechoslovak tourists.

<sup>3</sup> Revolutionary Syndicate Movement

<sup>4</sup> Jan Pelikán, *Hospodářská spolupráce Československa a Jugoslávie v letech 1945-1949 (The Economic Co-operation of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1949)*, Praha, Univerzita Karlova, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> See Slobodan Selinić, “Jugoslávská kultura v Československu 1945-1950” (The Yugoslav culture in Czechoslovakia 1945-1950), *Slovanský Přehled*, vol. 92, n.2, p.249-272.

<sup>6</sup> See appendix A for an overview of Czechoslovak tourists in 20<sup>th</sup> century Yugoslavia and in present-day Croatia.

consequences on international tourism in Yugoslavia: while Czechoslovak tourists, and all those from people's democracies, were virtually absent from 1949 to 1955<sup>7</sup>, the tourists from Western countries who, at the moment, served the purpose of Yugoslav propaganda, became numerous and important.

Having been cut off for almost thirteen years from the Dalmatian coast (1939-1945 and 1948-1955), the population of Czechoslovakia, and Czechs in particular, converged again to Yugoslavia from 1956 and onwards, despite the restrictive administrative conditions which they had to face in order to go abroad for vacations. What we find there today is a particular tourist culture: Czech tourism in Yugoslavia. This culture which emerged already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not be circumscribed in any case only to the Cold War. Czech tourism, however, assumed, during this last period, specific aspects calling for a detailed analysis of this phenomenon. Once this hurdle is crossed, some criteria which characterized this type of tourism can be determined. Keeping this background, I propose to undertake a political reading of the development of foreign tourism, Czechoslovak in particular, in Socialist Yugoslavia between 1945 and the late 1960s. To fully cover these two decades of history in so few a pages is hardly possible. I will, therefore, focus on, as my current research allows it, some significant features of it leaving aside the aspects of domestic tourism, its internal (federal, republican, local) structure and national problems and rivalries which were stirred by tourism.

The first aim of this paper will be to assess how Yugoslav authorities and Czechoslovak, to a lesser degree, perceived tourism, and what other political or symbolic significances were assigned to it. I will evaluate the extent to which Yugoslav governance considered tourism to be a solely economic activity. In doing so, I will first put stress on Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia between 1946 and 1948 to pursue my investigation by assessing the Yugoslav stance towards foreign tourism and the re-establishment of tourism agreements between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the 1950s.

A cross-examination of the international conjuncture of immediate post-war and cold war periods with the development of international tourism in Socialist Yugoslavia reveals several manifestations of a multi-level interaction between tourism and politics. If tourism had followed general trends of Yugoslav policies, it would have developed, nonetheless, its own dynamics. The phenomenon of dependence was clearly visible when tourism served the political and ideological aims of Yugoslav authorities. This trend is evident in the years following the break-up with Moscow. The Yugoslav stance on Western tourism also illustrates how tourism was instrumental in responding to the Yugoslav policies. The 1950s witnessed, however, a gradual

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<sup>7</sup> The process of reconciliation between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union followed the Declaration of Belgrade of June 1955. The second period of tensions with Moscow (1957-58) had less severe consequences on tourism.

decline of the ideological spin given to tourism.<sup>8</sup> Even if matters of economy and consumption took the centre stage, tourism continued to embody political and ideological expressions. In this regard, the second aim of this paper will be to address the question of consumption patterns in socialist tourism, the problems that resulted from it, and how Yugoslav and Czechoslovak authorities dealt with this particular matter. The presence of tourists of both blocks in accordance to the development in Yugoslavia of a society of consumption<sup>9</sup>, is of particular interest. This also calls for some interests about representations of the consumption phenomena and the role that its representations could have in tourism.

### ***Developments of Czechoslovak tourism in Post-war Yugoslavia***

Even if several initiatives for developing tourism came into being from 1945 and onwards<sup>10</sup>, tourism stayed marginalized in post-war Yugoslavia because of incentives given to the industrialization.<sup>11</sup> Tourism was first and foremost domestically-oriented; foreign tourists were by far and few and mostly from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Tourism and Hotel Management became integral parts of the first Yugoslav Five-Year Plan (1947-1951). Therefore, further nationalization of April 1948 which targeted private resorts and hotels was stressed upon helping the state to reach set objectives by increasing the rooms available for the plan.<sup>12</sup> This third wave of nationalization of April 1948 hence concerned all Czechoslovak hotels and recreational centers.<sup>13</sup> This led to many Czechoslovak requests, however unsuccessful, to exempt their properties from being nationalized in the spring and summer of 1948.

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<sup>8</sup> Similar conclusions were made on culture in post-war Yugoslavia. See for instance, Carol S. Lilly, «Propaganda to Pornography: Party, Society, and Culture in Postwar Yugoslavia», in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia 1945-1992*, ed. by Melissa Bokovoy, Jill Irvine and Carol S. Lilly, Hampshire, Macmillan Press, 1997, p. 139-162.

<sup>9</sup> Igor Duda asserts that a society of consumption slowly took root in Croatia during the 1950s and the 1960s with its particular set of legislation, needs, usages, mentalities, and behaviors. See Igor Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem, O povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih (In Pursuit of Well-being: On History of Leisure and Consumer Society in Croatia in the 1950s and 1960s)*, Zagreb, Srednja Europa, 2005, p. 60 and the conclusion.

<sup>10</sup> With the reestablishment of Putnik in 1945, the development of local tourist organizations and early incentives for domestic tourism such as the 1946 decree of paid vacations for workers and office employers. See for details: A. Kobašić, *Turizam u Jugoslaviji*, Zagreb, Informator, 1987, Stevan M. Stanković, *Turizam u Jugoslaviji*, Beograd, Turistička Štampa, 1990 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), Boris Vukonić, *Povijest Hrvatskog Turizma*, Zagreb, Prometej, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> B. Vukonić, *ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>12</sup> One Yugoslav tourist official underlined in reports (August and October 1948) to the Federal Commission of Control that nationalization of private sector gave 24 000 more beds. He however estimated that it was far to answer the present needs. He noticed that private accommodation provided room for many tourists, but he considered that it still was the only way to reach or surpass plan's objectives. ASCG, f.19, f.186, u. 1700. Boris Kidrić, President of the Yugoslav Economic Council, specified that this nationalization affected around 550 hotels, 40 seaside enterprises and 15 recreational centres. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, (AMZV), KO (Consular section), Yugoslavia, 1945-64, box. 44, report of June 1948.

<sup>13</sup> Among the most important there were: The resort of the Hotel and Seaside Dubrovnik Society in Kupari, the Centre "Marijan Dvorac" for children on Lapad and the convalescent home of Marie Stejskalová at Crikvenica.

Economic cooperation with Czechoslovakia was of major importance for Yugoslavia's reconstruction<sup>14</sup> and the relatively sizable Czechoslovak tourist presence in 1946-48 can be seen in this optic although other elements also played their part: the tradition of Czech tourism on the Adriatic and the communist leanings of certain Czechoslovaks.

Meetings of the Yugoslav Politburo underlined the role which Czechoslovakia would play for the economy of Yugoslavia. In this vein, Tito visited Prague and signed the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak friendship agreement in May 9<sup>th</sup> 1946. This agreement was followed by implementation of visa facilities.<sup>15</sup> Tourism was therefore combined to a vast array of economic and socio-cultural exchanges. For instance, in 1947, the Yugoslav proposed that young Czechoslovaks may reside in a villa near Dubrovnik for summer vacation. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Social Affairs saw in this a first measure to "thank" its government of having welcome close to 3000 young Yugoslav apprentices between March and October 1946.<sup>16</sup>

The organization of Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia was structured in the scope of economic bilateral clearing agreements. Yugoslavia with its limited economic resources accommodated tourists in order to facilitate imports of Czechoslovak goods. However, these relations were complicated, among other things, by the ever-lasting negotiations for an agreement of Czechs and Slovaks re-emigration to Czechoslovakia.<sup>17</sup> The Yugoslav authorities first refused to compensate re-emigrants financially. However both parties agreed in 1947 to create at the Yugoslav National Bank a "re-emigration account" consisting of income from re-emigrants' sold goods. This account would cover 50% of expenses of Czechoslovak tourists in Yugoslavia.<sup>18</sup> The "re-emigration account" was in use in 1947. It was also used in 1948 but only after difficult negotiations because by then the Yugoslavs had turned more reluctant to this kind of an agreement. In brief, Yugoslavs had the feeling that they were literally "paying off" Czechoslovak tourists for coming to Yugoslavia.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Czechoslovakia became between 1946 and 1948 the second economic partner of Yugoslavia after the USSR.

<sup>15</sup> B. Petranović, *ibid*, p.161.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives in Prague (NA), Ministerstvo místního hospodářství, (Ministry of local economy) (MMH), box. 808.

<sup>17</sup> Close to 10 000 Czechs and Slovaks established in Yugoslavia re-emigrated to Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948.

<sup>18</sup> J. Pelikán, *ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia-Montenegro (AMIP), Political Archives PA-ČSR, 1948, fascicle 32, file 2, folio 32/34 to 41.

Political and ideological considerations were also on the agenda of tourism. Zděnek Nejedlý<sup>20</sup>, whose conception of culture combined new Slavism and the rejection of German and Western cultures, asserted that travels of Czechoslovak children, youths and workers must target first and foremost Yugoslavia rather than Western countries.<sup>21</sup> The Yugoslav legation in Prague did not overlook the political effects of those travels. Knowing that plans for Italy, England or Switzerland were already prepared, or on their way to being so, the legation stated, in April 1946, that it “would be necessary for political reasons that a minimal number [of Czechoslovak children] come to our Adriatic”<sup>22</sup>. The political significance of this statement should however not be overestimated because such collaboration was on the agenda of Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments in the spring of 1946. Moreover, the economic assets generated by foreign tourism were taking a large part in the development of tourism’s perspectives. In regards to a request from a Czechoslovak scout association to carry out its 1948 summer camp in Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav state official Vladimir Velebit answered the embassy in Prague that “last year’s usage showed that such requests from Czechoslovakia were so many that they could harm the interest of our tourism”.<sup>23</sup> As a matter of fact, some coastal regions, such as the island of Rab, would have been designed as so-called “currency regions” aimed at foreigners, both individuals and families. The construction of centers for the masses and especially for children would have been forbidden in such regions.<sup>24</sup> Another concern among the Yugoslav leadership was the position of Yugoslavia among Europe’s tourist destinations. The ambassador Černej in Prague clearly expressed his fear in May 1946 that Czechoslovak tourists may target the Italian Riviera, which was already being promoted in Czechoslovakia, if the Adriatic would not be opened to Czechoslovak tourists.<sup>25</sup> This type of concern remained valid during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century since Yugoslavia had to compete with Italian and European markets before it became, in the 1960s, a tourism country of middle importance on the European scene.

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<sup>20</sup> Czechoslovak politician and chief ideologue of the KSČ. See P. Belina, P. Čornej and J. Pokorný, eds., *Histoire des pays tchèques*, Paris, Seuil, 1995, p.432.

<sup>21</sup> NA, MMH, box. 808.

<sup>22</sup> ASCG, f. 50, f. 61, u. 127, f. 83, report from April 11<sup>th</sup> 1946.

<sup>23</sup> AMIP, PA-ČSR, 1948, fascicle 32, file 1, folio 32/27. Letter from February 16th, 1948. He also said that it is why this form of rapprochement has not been included in the supplementary Protocol on cultural collaboration. He however specified that already agreed exchanges between youths, syndicates or mass organization would be carried out. Vladimir Velebit was at this time President of the Federal Committee for tourism and hotels and assistant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>24</sup> NA, MMH, box 808.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from May 15<sup>th</sup> 1946. Černej also wrote that Tito, on the occasion of his visit to Prague in May 1946, answer to many people that travelling to Yugoslavia and especially to the Adriatic sea would be made possible for Czechoslovak tourists. AMIP, PA-ČSR, 1946, fascicle 18, file 8, folio 18/223.

Of course, fluxes of tourists were also shaped by tourist agency agreements.<sup>26</sup> In 1946, if not in 1945 (see note 2), Čedok and Putnik concluded an agreement which stipulated that 10 000 Czechoslovaks would visit the Adriatic. This type of agreement covered every aspect of travel - food, accommodation and transport. The tourist agreement of March 1948 between Čedok and Putnik stipulated that two tourist trains would be sent every week to Rijeka and Split in order that Czechoslovak tourists would then be directed to Rab and Dubrovnik respectively. This same agreement specified that neither destination nor time period, two weeks, could be altered.<sup>27</sup> This example shows how the territory offered to tourism was narrowed by limited transport facilities, a long-lasting problem in 20<sup>th</sup> century Yugoslavia, but most acute in the first post-war years. Dispersion of Czechoslovak tourists on the Slovenian, Croatian and Dalmatian coasts at the beginning of August 1948 can be broken down into 16 sites from which six tourist spots (Opatija, Crikvenica, Selce, Novi<sup>28</sup>, Dubrovnik and Kupari) attracted close to 60% of these tourists.<sup>29</sup> This relatively narrow spatial distribution can be explicated by a limited offer of sea resorts available, by a limited transport network, and also by tradition since resorts such as Crikvenica, Dubrovnik and Kupari stood among the most favorite places of Czech tourists during the interwar period. This spatial distribution also expresses the motives of most tourists: to enjoy the Adriatic Sea. In 1955, 21 out of the 23 places in Yugoslavia where foreign overnights totalled at least 25% of overnights were all located by the sea with a strong concentration in Istria and in the Kvarner region.<sup>30</sup> As a matter of fact, 80 % of Czechoslovaks' overnights in 1964 were taking place in coastal places while this proportion even reached 93% in 1984.<sup>31</sup> However, there is a close relation, often mentioned but rarely demonstrated, between the development of tourism and transport facilities. Singleton illustrated the relation between the overnight stays of foreign tourists and the completion of the Magistrala, the Adriatic Highway in two tourist localities, Biograd na Moru and Kaštel Stari. As a matter of fact, overnights increased roughly by 50% once the highway reached these localities in 1962 and 1964 respectively.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Besides Čedok, different Czechoslovak organizations organized tourist trips to Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1948. There were the tourist agency Travema, the Association of Friends of Tito's Yugoslavia, the Hotel and Seaside Dubrovnik Society and the ROH.

<sup>27</sup> Putnik-Čedok Agreement of 24.3.1948, AMIP, PA-ČSR, 1948, fascicle 27, file 19, folio 646-651.

<sup>28</sup> It is not specified where. There is a Novigrad in Dalmatia and one in Istria.

<sup>29</sup> Situation of tourists from Czechoslovakia on the territory of FNRJ on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948, AMIP, PA-ČSR, 1948, fascicle 27, file 19, folio 653.

<sup>30</sup> AMZV, TO-O, Yugoslavia, box 20, file 9.

<sup>31</sup> *Statistički Godišnjak SRFJ 1965*, p. 265 and *Statistički Godišnjak SRFJ 1984*, p. 348.

<sup>32</sup> Fred Singleton. "Yugoslavia's Foreign Economic Relations", in *Yugoslavia/Jugoslawien*. ed. by Klaus-Detlev Grothusen, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1975, p. 285. John B. Allcock also discussed of this relation. See: "Tourism and Social Change in Dalmatia", *Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1983, p. 48.

As said earlier, ideological motives were also at the source of tourism development. Indeed, the ROH organized vacations for its workers in Yugoslavia. Its activities on Rab island started in 1947 and the Czechoslovak Communist press underlined the political success of this first attempt.<sup>33</sup> In September 1947, the ROH received support from top Yugoslav authorities to build a vacation center on Rab in spite of the so-called “currency regions” plan. After the purchase of hotels located on Rab from Czech individuals, the ROH planned to build a model recreational center. According to ROH plans such a center would have been ready to welcome in the summer of 1948 close to 5000 or 6000 Czechoslovak workers, and projections called for 10000 to 12000 workers per season upon the completion of the plan.<sup>34</sup> The Yugoslav Ministry of Interior had reservations. To let foreigners build their own resort would create a case-law for other countries and harm the interest of Yugoslav tourism. In spite of this, the project went further. The surprise of ROH delegates was probably great at their arrival on Rab in March 11<sup>th</sup> 1948 to start organizing their resort. Indeed, the Kotar National Council which had not received at that time any approval from higher instances denied the ROH the right for any kind of work. This misunderstanding was maybe trivial. Indeed, in late March 1948 less than two weeks later, the Yugoslav Presidency reiterated building rights for ROH on Rab. This example illustrates however the lack of cohesion between the different levels of governance in Yugoslavia.<sup>35</sup> All this would hamper, to different degrees, the development of tourism in Socialist Yugoslavia.

The Rab project turned short due to the rupture of 1948. However other attempts were completed in the 1960s as illustrates the construction of a recreational center in Bečići in Montenegro for the Czechoslovak trade unions in 1965.<sup>36</sup>

### **During the waves of the June 1948 resolution: No more Czechoslovak tourists in Yugoslavia ! A turning point**

Unlike the economic relations between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia which continued until June 1949, tourist relations came to an end on August 2<sup>nd</sup> when Čedok broke up the tourist agreement of March 1948 with Putnik. The Czechoslovak Minister of Interior in consultation with the KSČ (Czechoslovak Communist Party) stopped issuing travel documents for Yugoslavia and cancelled all tourist trains for Yugoslavia on July 31<sup>st</sup> 1948. Moreover, Czechoslovaks abroad were required to come back home within a period of 14 days. But tourist

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<sup>33</sup> NA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic, Newspapers' cuts, MZV-VA II, box 469.

<sup>34</sup> NA, MMH, box 808, communiqué from 26.11.1947. Also ASCG, f. 50, f. 61, folio 273, February 1948.

<sup>35</sup> Concerning the project to purchase hotel buildings on Rab (discussions for the Rab were already engaged at the beginning of 1947), the Czech ambassador Korbela warned that the Yugoslav state apparatus was not able to work effectively and rapidly. Decisions could be taken at the highest level but their executions were not effective. NA, MMH, box 808.

<sup>36</sup> *Turističke novine*, n. 355, March 4th 1965, p. 2.

fluxes from Czechoslovakia had continued until July 1948. Indeed, Tito confirmed on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1948 that “again this year, hotel Kupari can welcome tourists from Czechoslovakia” but only under a Yugoslav management of the station.<sup>37</sup> A detailed analysis of the August 1948 quarrel will not be undertaken here. I would however emphasize the fact that this event clearly illustrates how tourism was intimately associated with ideological disputes of that time. In a report on this affair, the director of Putnik seemed very surprised by the turn of events. He was not convinced that this decision only originated from Czechoslovakia because the Hungarian travel agency Ibusz canceled, at the same time, all tourist travels to Yugoslavia. The director concluded then that this was a “common action from people’s democracies’ leadership directed against the new Yugoslavia”<sup>38</sup>.

Tourism became an element of Tito’s search to secure Yugoslavia’s new position. Tourism became a tool, both for home and foreign propaganda, for this self-legitimization work. This is why tourism continued to fulfill a socio-political task in this critical period by providing a wider horizon for the Yugoslav campaign which advocated better standards of living for all. An article from *Borba* in July 31<sup>st</sup> 1949 was simply titled: “Worker’s pleasant vacation – result of the successful building of socialism”. This article said from the onset: “The actual successes in the building of socialism let workers of our country take an annual vacation in larger numbers and more comfortably than last year”<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, the communist phraseology emphasized that tourism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was restricted to foreign and domestic bourgeoisie whereas tourism in Socialist Yugoslavia was accessible for all workers.

The “vacuum effect”<sup>40</sup> created by the ban on Yugoslavia from Soviet satellites at first benefited domestic tourism. Workers’ and youth rest centers (*odmarališta*) mushroomed in the 1950s.<sup>41</sup> It is worth noting here that Yugoslavia had not by 1949 a clear tourist policy toward foreign tourism – and one can ask whether or not Yugoslavia ever developed a concise tourist policy. But continuous problems of organization, tense border questions, unsettled relations with Austria up to 1950, very scarce propaganda abroad, not to mention the lack of goods and the

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<sup>37</sup> ASCG, f. 50, f. 61, u. 127, folio 712. The will to put resorts in charge of a Yugoslav management goes in line with the nationalization policy of March 1948.

<sup>38</sup> ASCG, f. 50, f. 61, u. 127, f. 444. He let know that Moscow would be at the source of this decision.

<sup>39</sup> ASCG, f. 19, f. 186, u. 1705, article in *Borba*, 31.7.1949.

<sup>40</sup> B. Vukonic, *ibid*, p.136.

<sup>41</sup> See I. Duda, *ibid*, p. 120-130 for an overview.



drought of summer 1951, are factors that explain the slow progress of foreign tourism between 1949 and 1951.<sup>42</sup>

The first half of the 1950s witnessed a fierce propaganda war between Soviet satellites and Yugoslavia. The latter invited foreigners to Yugoslavia in order to show them that Moscow's propaganda was pure fiction. Defensive, the Yugoslav authorities explained *a posteriori* that the tourist conflict of August 1948 was a clear attempt by the Czechoslovak government to prevent its own citizens from seeing with their own eyes what really happened in Yugoslavia.<sup>43</sup> Less than a year later, Tito explained what this policy of "come to see the truth" was about. He said: "If someone traveling in our country looks at everything which has been accomplished and all that is going on now, then he cannot say, regardless whether he had a hostile position towards our Yugoslavia, that our workers had not given everything of themselves"<sup>44</sup>. And this explained why, according to Tito, the Yugoslav workers impressed the entire world. This kind of rhetoric points to a particular moment of the Yugoslav representational policy. An article in a magazine for tourist specialists underlined in 1951 that foreign tourists' interest in Yugoslavia reinforced its "political position" on the international scene but especially towards the USSR and its satellites.<sup>45</sup> In 1954, Yugoslav officials argued that more visits of foreign trade unions' members and contacts between them and Yugoslav workers would have political benefits.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, some concrete measures were implemented to promote tourism from Western countries: special rates for transportation and the purchase of goods, agreements with some foreign travel agencies and increased activities in the information and propaganda centers located in USA, France, England and Austria.<sup>47</sup> Western tourism in Yugoslavia clearly progressed from 1952 onwards. The international position that Yugoslavia gained in the 1960s, as shown by its leadership in the non-alignment movement, had important consequences on people's mobility. In this vein, the historian Marković asserts: "a country which claims to be one of the political avant-garde of the world cannot keep its own citizens in a ghetto"<sup>48</sup>. However, this opening was also shaped by

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<sup>42</sup> Stanko Marovt, "The possibilities of foreign tourism development in our country" (*Mogućnosti razvoja inostranog turizma u našoj zemlji*), *Veznik turizma i ugostiteljstva*, vol. 3, n.4, July-August 1951, p.209.

<sup>43</sup> On the occasion of the Yugoslav answer (27.10.1949) to the Czechoslovak note of 4.10.1949 which cancelled the Friendship and Cultural Agreements. AMZV, TO-O, Yugoslavia, 1945-59, box 8, file 8.

<sup>44</sup> Archives of the Museum of Yugoslavia, Office of Marshal of Yugoslavia, KMJ, II 1/23, Speech given in Split, 5.3.1950, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> S. Marovt, "The possibilities of foreign tourism development in our country" (*Mogućnosti razvoja inostranog turizma u našoj zemlji*), *Veznik turizma i ugostiteljstva*, vol. 3, n.4, July-August 1951, p.209.

<sup>46</sup> Archives of the Museum of Yugoslavia, Office of the President of the Republic, KPR, III-A-4-e (III K-57) /25.10-1.11.1954.

<sup>47</sup> Kosta Rakić, "Our relations with foreign countries in regards of tourist flux" (*Naši odnosi sa inostranstvom u pogledu turističkog prometa*), *Veznik turizma i ugostiteljstva*, vol. 3, n.3, May-June 1951, p. 132.

<sup>48</sup> Predrag Marković, *Београд између Истока и Запада 1948-1965 (Belgrade between East and West 1948-1965)*, Beograd, Novinsko-izdavač ustanova, 1996, p. 253-254.

economic necessity. There is a correlation between the movements of *gastarbeiter*<sup>49</sup>, the more sustained development of tourism, the severe economic crisis that struck Yugoslavia in 1961 and the market-oriented reforms of the 1960s. In this context, the positive and open stance of Yugoslavia towards Western tourism had a pragmatic economic purpose. Similar considerations also motivated the renewal of tourist relations with Eastern European countries. However, this was a delicate question and was hinged on the state of international relations.

### **The renewal of Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia**

A clear consensus reigned from 1955, if not in 1954, among Yugoslav circles to renew tourism from Czechoslovakia. This is shown by the numerous attempts from different Yugoslav administrative branches which established contacts with their Czechoslovak counterparts in this respect. Invitations to Party officials and journalists to spend time in Yugoslavia were the initial steps leading to a closer rapprochement. As a matter of fact, Czechoslovak journalists were invited in the spring of 1955 to visit Yugoslavia. Their Yugoslav hosts drove them mainly through “tourist roads” and made comments blaming Czechoslovaks for not visiting the Adriatic. Not surprisingly, the Czechoslovak officials appraised this invitation as a clear attempt to promote tourism.<sup>50</sup> Yugoslav travel agencies also directly contacted Czechoslovak Ministries and Čedok to reopen the question of tourism.<sup>51</sup> But a lot of suspicion and reservations governed Czechoslovakia’s relations with Yugoslavia. In May 1955, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested to the KSČ not to resume tourism before further negotiations.<sup>52</sup> In spite of the Belgrade declaration, contacts were slow to make progress during the summer of 1955 and many Yugoslav requests such as those for the renewal of tourism were not fully taken into account by Czechoslovaks.<sup>53</sup> The political climate changed at the beginning of 1956. The Czechoslovak leadership went further and a trade agreement that included a temporary tourist agreement was concluded in February 1956. Further collaboration continued in the following weeks<sup>54</sup> but, according to Čedok, directives for collective travels to Yugoslavia would have been issued only

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<sup>49</sup> “In the period between 1964 and 1975 as many as 2.3 million Yugoslav citizens, including dependent family members, might have been living and working for some time as migrants in Western Europe”, Milan Mesić, “External Migration in the context of the Post-War Development of Yugoslavia”, Allcock, Horton and Milivojević, eds., *Yugoslavia in Transition*, New York and Oxford, Berg, 1992, p.194-195.

<sup>50</sup> NA, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (PB ÚV KSČ), volume 52, unit 69, point 14 (20.7.1955). The report is very critical regarding Tito’s regime.

<sup>51</sup> Putnik agency in Zagreb contacted Čedok and the Ministry of transport several times over the summer and fall of 1955. AMZV, TO-T, Yugoslavia, 1945-55, box 7, file 2.

<sup>52</sup> AMZV, TO-T, Yugoslavia, 1945-55, box 7, file 3. Decision 17.093 (12.5.1955).

<sup>53</sup> See for instance J. Pelikán, *ibid*, p.270.

<sup>54</sup> See J. Pelikán, *Jugoslávie a východní blok 1953-1958 (Yugoslavia and the Eastern block 1953-1958)*, Praha, Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2001, p. 352-360 for a detailed analysis.

in late spring 1956.<sup>55</sup> This reprisal was unhinged by the new dispute of 1958 between Belgrade and Moscow, but not seriously, as it had been the case in 1948. Fluxes of tourists lessened between 1959 and 1962 but they did not stop. Therefore, the year of 1956 constitutes the first year of a new period of Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia.

This new period of tourism relations between Yugoslavia and people's democracies embodied some patterns which prevailed during the whole Cold War era and help us to understand the mechanisms at work. The percentage, both in numbers and in overnight stays, of Eastern European tourists in Yugoslavia remained modest for the whole Cold War period although its rate of growth was obviously high in the 1960s. In 1968, they represented 16% of all foreign overnight stays with Czechoslovak tourists making 61% of this. As said earlier, this tourism was developed in the frame of bilateral exchange of goods. Therefore, the number of tourists allowed to go abroad was planned on an annual basis by Czechoslovak officials. Requests from Czechoslovaks to travel to Yugoslavia exceeded by far the concrete possibilities offered. Being closely dependent on Czechoslovak policies, this tourism could hardly be planned by Yugoslav tourist organizations nor influenced by their propaganda. Indeed, the Yugoslav tourist organizations did not set up any particular propaganda campaign for Czechoslovakia; all efforts were overtly directed towards the Western countries. As a matter of fact, Yugoslavia did not have a concrete tourist policy towards Eastern European countries and tourist issues with these countries were solved on an *ad hoc* base.<sup>56</sup>

Exchanges among Communist Party members for summer vacations were another characteristic of tourism between socialist countries. They gained importance in the first half of the 1960s, but rapidly went out of vogue when Yugoslavs abolished it in 1967. It can be seen as an attempt to avoid mixing tourism with politics. Indeed, the Yugoslavs proposed that relations between parties belong to study groups or delegation meetings, not to tourism. Therefore, vacations of Communist leaders in Yugoslavia had to be carried out through "regular forms" of tourism.<sup>57</sup>

This set of characteristics would be incomplete without addressing the extent to which tourism answered and also created consumption needs in Eastern Europe. The concept of

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<sup>55</sup> AMZV, TO-O, Yugoslavia, 1945-59, box 20, file 9.

<sup>56</sup> Archives of the Museum of Yugoslavia, Office of the President of the Republic, KPR III-A-e. Reports on Eastern European tourism (1969 and 1970) and letter from the Yugoslav Tourist Association (*Turistički Savez Jugoslavije*) from 10.10.1966.

<sup>57</sup> The year of 1965 saw the highest affluence so far with 63 members of Communist Parties (157 in total with family members) spending their vacations in Yugoslavia. The relative part of Czechoslovak party's members was low as only 8 members planned to go to Yugoslavia for their vacations. These trips were often the occasion to meet Yugoslav officials and to talk about different issues. ASCG, f.507, Central Committee of the Communist League of Yugoslavia, CK SKJ, Commission for the international relations, Czechoslovakia, see IX, 22/I-1-115, 116-155, 156-245, (1945-1968).

shopping tourism<sup>58</sup> helps with the conceptualization of an aspect of the socialist consumer culture. But to talk about socialist consumer *cultures* would be more appropriate since there were discrepancies among socialist countries on the one side, and between Yugoslavia and Moscow's satellites on the other side. Commercial tourism (as opposed to social tourism) could have been awkwardly integrated to a socialist planned type of economy. Tourist practices of consumption and advertising (needed in commercial tourism) could hardly have been merged with the socialist ethic. This clash did not hamper the development of a socialist consumer culture / tourist culture, but tensions were constantly felt both by Czechoslovak tourists, and Czechoslovak officials who set up tourist relations with Yugoslavia and capitalist countries. These tensions were less significant in Yugoslavia, which leant towards Western socio-economic models. The efforts of self-legitimization of the Yugoslav governance explained, for instance, its permissive attitudes towards smuggling activities on the occasion of travels.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Tito's mode of governance, which did not directly intervene in the economic and cultural fields and which let republican and local authorities deal with tourism, is definitely a factor that contributed to the development of tourism.

Tourism did not serve as a space of political resistance, far from it. However, the patterns of consumption embodied in the meaning of tourism did undermine the principles on which socialist societies found legitimacy, by highlighting the differences of living standards between individuals or national groups. Indeed, Yugoslavia, as a meeting place for Western and Eastern tourists, was a particular destination for tourism. The latter was not circumscribed to a movement of people and goods. Representations (of consumption behaviors, foreign tourists, etc) also circulated and were also, as the next examples show, the concerns of political authorities.

A survey on tourism in Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary presented by Barák<sup>60</sup> at a Politburo meeting underlined some negative consequences of tourism in Yugoslavia. It was said that behaviors of some Czechoslovaks made a bad impression of their country when they went abroad. The survey reported tourists fleeing to the West while touring in Yugoslavia<sup>61</sup> and selling goods once in Yugoslavia in order to pay for their trip.<sup>62</sup> Those smuggling activities

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<sup>58</sup> "Shopping tourism [...] means travel abroad with the explicit aim to buy goods that are unavailable or difficult to find in one's home country. [...] Shopping tourism is one of the manifestations of an informal *private economy* within the socialist system". Anna Wessely, "Travelling people, travelling objects", *Cultural Studies*, 16 (1), 2002, p.6.

<sup>59</sup> A. Wessely, *ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>60</sup> Czechoslovak Minister of Interior from September 1953 to June 1961.

<sup>61</sup> This paper does not address this question.

<sup>62</sup> NA, PB ÚV KSČ, volume 126, unit 162, point 7.

would become a common element in reports on tourism in Yugoslavia. This mercantile behavior created prejudice against Czechoslovakia as the embassy in Belgrade reported.<sup>63</sup>

Similar concerns were echoed by Antonín Novotný when he met Tito in September 1964. To tackle the smuggling problem, Novotný asserted that bigger allowances would be secured for Czechoslovak tourists in order to assure them a decent journey. Therefore, they would have no needs for smuggling. The latter activity was perceived negatively not only for the image it made of Czechoslovaks but also because of contacts it generated with Americans, English and Western Germans. Novotný judged these contacts simply as “bad” and he added that strict orders would be issued to tourist organizations in regard to the smuggling question. Not surprisingly, he advocated for the collective form of tourism in Yugoslavia rather than “individual” tourism.

Yugoslavia definitely enjoyed a positive image among both Western and Eastern citizens for different reasons. Yugoslavia projected itself as a meeting place appearing to some as a version of non-soviet socialism and to others as space of liberty, an accessible doorstep for Western goods in the socialist world. In regards to the presence of Yugoslav *gastarbeiters* in Western Europe and of Western tourists in Yugoslavia, it is not a surprise to hear from Marković that “Yugoslavs were the first in Eastern Europe to be seduced by the charm of Western consumption”<sup>64</sup>.

In a crowded meeting place, it is better to look one’s best. The Czechoslovak consul in Zagreb wrote, for example, that the presence of well-maintained Czechoslovak cars on Yugoslav roads served the purpose testifying to the high level of living and technical developments in Czechoslovakia.<sup>65</sup> It is worth noting here that, by 1970, Czechoslovakia reached an average of five individuals per car, an average which closely resembled those of Western countries.<sup>66</sup> Not surprisingly, a report from Czechoslovak radio on tourism in Yugoslavia emphasized that one in every twelve cars on the Magistrala was from Czechoslovakia.<sup>67</sup>

The consumer goods which tourists could afford were a strong indicator of the standard of living. In this vein, tourism can be understood as a particular form of communication. Very informative here is a report from a Yugoslav official on discussions about tourism with members of Khrushchev’s delegation in September 1963. In unofficial talks, the Soviet staff criticized their tourism: why, they asked, cannot a Soviet freely travel, when a Yugoslav can? Regarding the possibilities for Soviet tourists to come to Yugoslavia, the Soviets officially underlined a lack

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<sup>63</sup> Report from the Czechoslovak embassy in Belgrade, AMZV, TO-O, Yugoslavia, 1945-59, box 22, file 4.

<sup>64</sup> P. Marković, *ibid*, p. 255.

<sup>65</sup> AMZV, TO-T, Yugoslavia, 1965-69, box 2, file 1. Report of 31.1.1966, p.5.

<sup>66</sup> I. Duda, *ibid*, p. 103. The average was 56 inhabitants per car in 1960 Czechoslovakia.

<sup>67</sup> Archives and Program holdings of Czech Radio, report by Karel Jezdinský, 29.6.1969.

of means of payments, but, in unofficial talks, they let Yugoslavs know that Soviet leadership cannot let its citizens freely travel because the differences in living standards would be to the Soviet Union's disadvantage.<sup>68</sup> This last example shows how tourists became willy-nilly propaganda vectors in the context of the Cold War which was definitely not only an arms race.<sup>69</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Studies on the history of tourism have at their disposal of a vast array of sources. Posters, postcards and pictures provide hints as to how tourism was presented and what values were given to it by advertising. Travel accounts and printed guidebooks provide information on the circulation of representations and the evolution of tourists' practices. The interaction between tourism and transportation can be studied through a detailed analysis of road infrastructures, as the example of Singleton shows. My endeavor here was to show how sources from diplomatic and top-political organs can enrich the writing of the histories of tourism. Indeed, some diplomatic reports or top official meetings such as the one between Tito and Novotný in September 1964 point out some political side-effects of tourism, call attention to how a nation is perceived by others, and indicate to what extent the issues of consumption and tourism were a matter of importance among officials. The examples shown illustrated that an ideological spin was often ascribed to tourism up until the early 1950s. Even if it somehow declined, it never totally lost ground. There was, indeed, a close connection between Yugoslavia's foreign policy and tourism. However, one can understand the development of international tourism in Yugoslavia as an expression of economic pragmatism. It is true that the economic advantages deriving from the development of international tourism were constantly emphasized by Yugoslav tourist workers. Their perspectives logically inscribed tourism first and foremost as an economic phenomenon, since their reports stressed the income of foreign currency generated by tourism and aimed to promote the tourism industry in general. But one must not forget that tourism kept interacting with a larger spectrum of forces such as the political ones, as it was shown by the political and diplomatic sources. Moreover, the latter fill in for some lacks or unavailabilities of other archive materials.<sup>70</sup>

The choice of working on the case of Czech tourism in Yugoslavia is not fortuitous. Many factors endorse the idea that we are dealing here with a specific tourist culture whose roots are found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The importance of the Adriatic for Czechs can be assessed by their

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<sup>68</sup> ASCG, f.580, Federal Committee for Tourism (*Savezni Komitet za turizam*), fascicle 1.

<sup>69</sup> Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds., *Being Elsewhere, Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Being not classified, the archives of the *Turistički Savez Jugoslavije (Tourist Association of Yugoslavia)* are not unavailable in the Archives of Serbia and Montenegro. Being not located in the main storerooms of the Archives of Serbia and Montenegro, the holdings of the *Savezni komitet za turizam (Federal Committee for tourism)* have only been recently handed out to the author of this paper.

numerous initiatives which ranged from the building of hotels, and the publishing of numerous guidebooks, to the composition of poems and music dedicated to the Adriatic. The importance of the presence of Czechoslovak tourists in 1946-1948 can thus be seen as a continuation of interwar tourism.<sup>71</sup> However, the bases of post-1956 Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia were utterly different. Czechoslovak tourism in Yugoslavia would be included, for the next three decades or so, in the model of socialist tourism. The tradition continued but under different conditions.

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<sup>71</sup> But from the point of view of domestic tourism, the question of continuity is appraised differently since the Second World War “broke the continuity of tourist development” with the interwar development. Vukonić, *ibid*, p. 134.

## Appendix A

### Overview of Czechoslovak tourists in Yugoslavia and their respective percentage among foreign tourists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century for present-day Croatia

Years	Czechoslovak tourists [in number]	Percentage of Czechoslovaks among foreign tourists [%]
1930 <sup>a</sup>	43 708	17.1
1933	63947	29.5
1936	68337	26.4
1938	39901	13.9
1946	2533	
1947	19335	31.3
1948 <sup>b</sup>	22258	36.2
1955 <sup>c</sup>	1895	
1956	11009	2.7
1957	11552	2.3
1958	13871	2.3
1959	3932	0.4
1960	4162	0.4
1961	3629	0.3
1962	5728	0.4
1963	12794	0.7
1964	65758	2.9
1965	180491	6.7
1966	247972	7.2
1967	253363	6.8
1968	310045	7.9
1969	454419	9.5
1970	165620	3.4
1980	246000	3.8
1985	431000	5.1
1989	245000	2.8
2000 <sup>d</sup>	710958	12.2
2005	615535	7.2

<sup>a</sup> Data are provided by John B. Allcock, "The Historical Development of Tourism in Yugoslavia to 1945", in John B. Allcock, *The Studies in the History of Tourism in Yugoslavia*, Bradford, 1989, p.16.

<sup>b</sup> Until August 5<sup>th</sup> 1948. See *Vesnik Turizma i ugostiteljstva*, 1949, number 2.

<sup>c</sup> The *Statistički Godišnjak SFRJ 1965* mentions this number for 1955 (p. 262). This number counts however as number of visitors from Czechoslovakia. For Yugoslav statistics, a foreign visitor consisted of each visitor who came from abroad for a temporary stay regardless of the aim of it. Yugoslav statistics kept a loose definition of the category 'tourist' since numbers of visitors and tourists are, in other statistic data, alike. Data for the 1955-1989 period are provided by Zvonimir Jakopović, ed., *Turizam u Jugoslaviji : statistički podaci : 1960-1977*, Beograd, Turistički savez Jugoslavije, Privredna komora Jugoslavije, 1978, p.51, *Statistički Godišnjak SRFJ 1965 and Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1990*.

<sup>d</sup> Statistics for 2000 and 2005 are taken from the Croatian Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development. See data available in the tourism section. <http://www.mmtpr.hr/>