

konsumierten, Rubel schwarz tauschten oder aber sich auf dem Schwarzmarkt zu betätigen.

Für die Estnische SSR und die UdSSR waren die finnischen Touristen zweifellos sehr nützlich im wirtschaftlichen Sinne. Auf der Makroebene erhielt Moskau über den Auslandstourismus notwendige Devisen und versuchte zugleich, mithilfe der „Spezialexkursionen“ die positiven Seiten des Sozialismus sowjetischer Prägung zu demonstrieren und die Gäste politisch zu beeinflussen. Auf der Mikroebene boten die finnischen Gäste vor allem den Tallinnern, die ja anders als die Russen Finnisch verstanden und es auch bis zu einem gewissen Grade aktiv beherrschten, vielfältige Möglichkeiten des Austausches, darunter auch der Schwarzmarkt, um die eigenen Lebensverhältnisse zu verbessern. Oft genug ergaben sich aus diesen Kontakten, die nicht immer mit dem Schwarzmarkt zu tun haben mussten, persönliche Beziehungen, die auch über das Ende der Sowjetunion hinaus Bestand haben. Zweifellos dürften diejenigen Esten, die dank ihrer Schwarzmarktaktivitäten mit den Finnen den Kapitalismus ein Stückweit kennengelernt hatten, Erfahrungen gesammelt haben, die nach 1991 durchaus von Nutzen gewesen sein konnten.

SUMMARY

Finnish Tourists Discover Soviet Tallinn

Until 1939 there was a regular ferry connection between Finland and Estonia, bringing numerous Finnish tourists to Estonia every year: in 1937 more than 26,000 visitors arrived from Finland by ferry, two years later the numbers had increased to 31,776. After the onset of World War II and the Soviet occupation of Estonia, the ferry line between Finland and Estonia was discontinued for 26 years.

Under Stalin, ordinary Soviet citizens were not allowed to visit foreign countries. In the late 1940s, according to Soviet main ideologist Andrei Zhdanov, tourism was defined as ‘sport’ or ‘physical activity’, referring to a longer Russian tradition dating back to pre-revolutionary times. Only after Stalin’s death in 1953, did the Soviet Union gradually began to open up to foreign tourism. In 1956, the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) welcomed 212 foreigners, of which 79 came from capitalist countries, a year later 22 delegations of 298 visitors including 277 Finns arrived. In 1958, 28 foreign delegations came to the ESSR, a total of 215 people of which 193 were Finnish. Despite the gradual increase of foreign visitors, the number of Finnish tourists in the mid-1960s remained marginal: approximately

300-400 Finns visited Tallinn every year. Finns formed the majority of tourists from capitalist countries.

Until the 1960s Finnish delegations to the ESSR were mainly composed of communists, union leaders, left wing intellectuals, athletes, cultural activists (musicians, choir singers) and representatives of certain occupations (farmers, teachers, doctors, technicians), who were offered 'special excursions' to visit outstanding collective farms and industrial enterprises and meet Estonian colleagues of the same field. Official delegations and 'special excursions' were categorized as 'politicized' tourism.

The amount of common tourists among Finns who visited Estonia remained low: Finnish tourists traveled mainly to Leningrad, Moscow and the Black Sea region. The key reason behind this was the poor transport link between Finland and the ESSR: in the 1960s, the only possible route was the rail link via Leningrad. Complicated border procedures, transfers and crowded trains made traveling very uncomfortable and exhausting for a common tourist. If a Finnish tourist wanted to come to Tallinn, he had to prepare for a six-day journey, of which one day was spent on traveling to and back from Leningrad, three days were allocated for Leningrad and short trips to nearby areas, leaving less than two days to visit Tallinn.

A regular ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki was reopened in 1965, resulting in a certain increase in the numbers of Finnish tourists in the ESSR. In 1965, 8,894 Finns visited Tallinn, whereas in 1975, this figure had risen to over than 61,700. During the first half of 1972, the number of tourists from capitalist countries was in Moscow: 113,984, in Leningrad: 99,916, in Tallinn: 14,075, and in Kiev: 12,369. Therefore, Tallinn had become one of the most popular foreign tourism destinations, ranking third in the Soviet Union in terms of foreign visitors. Finnish tourists increased foreign currency inflow, on which the USSR Union was increasingly dependent because of the closed planned economy. In 1966, the ESSR earned 912,500 currency rubles from foreign tourists, a year later this sum had grown to 950,600 currency rubles, mainly attributable to the Finns' consumption in the ESSR.

Finnish tourists traveling to the ESSR may be generally divided into five categories: transit tourists, cruising tourists, 'specialist groups', Estonian exiles and common tourists. The latter group gained more importance during the 1970s. The term "common tourist" was a label given by Soviet bureaucracy to those seeking entertainment and relaxation abroad. In Tallinn in particular, some of the Finnish guests were known as "vodka tourists". These people wanted to spend their time in the city's comparably cheap bars and restaurants, consume large amounts of vodka and procure Soviet rubles from black market businessmen to purchase goods and hard drinks.