Conscience to Commerce: ‘Soviet’ Tourism in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

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Outline of Presentation

Research Background

The Baltic States/Republics

Soviet Tourism

“Remembrance” Tourism

Soviet “Nostalgia” Tourism

Implications

Conclusions

Future Study
‘Soviet’ Tourism in **Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**

- **Baltic States**
  - Similarities and Differences
  - Economic Successes/ Failures
  - *Tourism sector*
‘Soviet’ Tourism in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

Baltic State Tourism

- Ethnic/heritage tourism
- Cruise ships /day trippers
- Regional/Russian tourism
- Soviet “nostalgia” tourism
Tourism in the Soviet Union

- Tourism was primarily seen as a means of educating Soviet citizens into promoting “Homo Sovieticus” and not economic ends – leisure tourism was viewed as “non-productive”

- For foreign tourism, Intourist was established in 1929 as the goal was for foreigners to meet people from their own sectors of life (farmers, teacher, etc.)

- In the 1950s travel increased with the realization that the Soviet Union could profit, both financially and propagandistically, from tourism - result was the building of hotels, resorts, and transportation systems.

Source: Kostiainen, 2002; Hall, 1991
Tourism in the Soviet Union (cont.)

- International tourism as a way to access hard currency

- Soviet concerns with “rich” Westerners demonstrating their thoughts on the shortcomings of the Soviet system

- Criticism of lack of focus on tourism research in socialist states – challenges of conducting empirical research – lack of confidence in published statistics

- Began to emerge in late 1980’s, early 1990’s as communist system was deteriorating

- Few conceptual frameworks for analysis

Source: Hall 2004, de Kadt, 1979
Tourism in the Soviet Union (cont.)

OLYMPIAD 80
MOSCOU MOSCOW MOCKBA

LENINGRAD
INTOURIST U.S.S.R.

USSR HEALTH RESORTS

CAUCASUS
INTOURIST USSR

KIEV
INTOURIST U.S.S.R.
Tourism in the Soviet Union (cont.)

- Batum, Caucasus, USSR
- Leningrad, Hotel "Europe"
“Remembrance” Tourism
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

Estonian Occupation Museum – Opened 2003

“This is a place where coming generations will be shown what once was, but also what will never be again”
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

KGB Museum “Grey House” - Tartu
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

KGB Museum
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

Vangistus 0,8 m² üksik-kongis ehk kartseris kes-tis tavaliselt 5 kuni 10 päeva. Kartseri sisustusse kuulusid ainult parask ja pink, toitu anti reeglina üle 3 päeva.

1. päev - külma vett 0,5 l
2. päev - külma vett 0,5 l
3. päev - suppi 0,5 l + leiba 200 g

- In isolated punishment cells 0.8 m² in size prisoners were often incarcerated for 5-10 days, receiving food once every 3 days.

1. day – cold water 0.5 l
2. day – cold water 0.5 l
3. day – soup 0.5 l + bread 200 gr
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

KGB Museum – Gulags in USSR
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism

Estonian TV Tower Museum
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism?

Estonian Bronze Soldier Memorial
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism?

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Estonian Bronze Soldier Memorial
Estonian “Remembrance” Tourism?

Estonian Bronze Soldier Memorial
Latvian “Remembrance” Tourism

Museum of the Occupation – Opened 1993
Latvian “Remembrance” Tourism

Museum of the Occupation
Latvian “Remembrance” Tourism

Museum of the Occupation
Latvian “Remembrance” Tourism

Culture in all its forms must provide support for the Sovietisation policies, sing their praises, attack all opponents, promote the cult of the leader, class struggles and similar ideas.

The trappings of Soviet culture (“red” bulletin boards, campaigning in the streets, the politicised press, flattering poems etc.) are alien to the Latvian people and hard to accept. Literary and fine arts associations are formed to control the intelligentsia, to support those faithful to the system, and to punish and “re-educate” the defiant.
Latvian “Remembrance” Tourism?

Victory Monument
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism

Former KGB Building – Museum of the Genocide Victims
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism

Former KGB Building – Museum of the Genocide Victims
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism

Former KGB Building – Museum of the Genocide Victims

MAY THE NAMES OF LITHUANIAN PATRIOTS, SHOT TO DEATH IN THIS FORMER KGB BUILDING, BEAR WITNESS TO DUTY FULFILLED TO THE MOTHERLAND, ITS HONOUR, FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE.

IVYKDYtą PAREIGA TĘVYNĘI, Jos GARBIEI, LAISVEI IR NEPRIKLAUDOMYBEI, TELIUDIJA SIAME BUVUSIO KGB PASTATE SUŠAUDYTŲ LIETUVOS PATRIOTŲ PAVARDĖS.
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism

Former KGB Building – Museum of the Genocide Victims
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism

Former KGB Building – Museum of the Genocide Victims
Lithuanian “Remembrance” Tourism?

Bridge Statues in Vilnius
Return to Independence and Tourism

- 1991, all three states re-established as independent Republics
- Tourism was seen as a stimulation to transition
- Natural and cultural tourism increased
- 2003, “Song Festivals” declared by UNESCO as “masterpieces of intangible cultural heritage”
- Impact of membership in EU in 2004

Source: Hall, 2001; Hall et al 2006
“Nostalgia” Tourism
Estonian Soviet “Nostalgia” Tourism

Stories of Soviet Legacy

How was the life in a former Estonia, occupied by the Soviet Union? What are the remains of this period? Our guide takes you to find the remains of Soviet heritage in Tallinn.

We take you to find out the secrets of Paldiski – a restricted city, where the Soviet Union’s submarine training centre was located. The city opened its gates to public in 1994 after the departure of last Russian battleship.

INCLUSIONS

- English speaking guide
- day trip with sightseeing in Paldiski
- transfer with Soviet time car Lada
Best Estonian Travel Experiences

KGB package

Different guns from soviet KGB and militia, even the legend itself (AK47) is presented!

1) Pistol ”MAKAPOB” - Pistol from Soviet KGB and militia

2) Pistol ”TT” 8 - The ”official gun” of the russian mafia. The bullet can penetrate body armour.

3) AK47 aka Kalashnikov, caliber 7,62mm 5 rounds - World famous assault rifle. No comments needed, it is the LEGEND!
Latvian Soviet “Nostalgia” Tourism

Liepaja Beach Hostel Soviet Prison Adventure

You will having a tour in the city of Liepaja checking out the historic and interesting sights. Then you will be arrested and taken to a 100 year old prison.

At the prison you will be processed for a period of about two hours. You will be locked in a cell, interrogated, and photographed.
Stay at Brezhnev’s Dacha

The private dacha, located in a secluded spot a few minutes’ walk through pine forest from the main sanatorium is certainly fit for the leader of the Eastern Bloc.

A clock with hammer-and-sickle pendulum ticks in the corner just as it did during the Brezhnev era 40 years ago and a portrait of Lenin stares down from the wall.

Downstairs is a private cinema, upstairs is an office – complete with ‘nuclear emergency‘ telephones – and just around the corner is a lecture room with a podium ideal for practicing those all-important speeches to the Communist Party congress.

Anyone with the necessary cash can follow in the footsteps of politburo members who stayed here and enjoy authentic Soviet cuisine and entertainment. Guests can even have 1970s news bulletins shown on the period television sets.
Grutas Park "Stalin's World"

Visitors traipse along two miles of wooden walkways resembling those in Siberian prison camps to get from one exhibition to the next.

Statues of Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin and other Soviet leaders glower at visitors, and the barbed wire fences and guard towers surrounding the park help give it the feel of a Soviet Gulag.

"Why I am doing this? It's my gift to future generations," said park founder and owner Viliumas Malinauskas, a Lithuanian millionaire. "People can come here and joke about these grim statues. This means that Lithuania is no longer afraid of communism."
Soviet spirit comes back to its square in Vilnius

Monument to Vincas Kudirka, the author of the Lithuanian national anthem unveiled in the Municipality Square

There was previously a statue of some soviet general

People have already noticed that the statue follows the 'best' characteristics of soviet ideological sculpture
What can we take away from this?

- argument that all “Soviet” was not bad?
- role of art – the reality of what it is
- impact of “Soviet” tourism on country image and branding (significance of Russian market)
- growth of niche tourism
- “Communist heritage tourism”; “Red Tourism”
- “Balanced views” of communist period – i.e. Hungary
- “Identity vs. Economy”

Source: Young and Light, 2006; Smith, 2003
Future Study

- Ethnographic research (observation, interviews, focus groups) with Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanian
- Archival study of Baltic Soviet era “tourism”
- Cross-cultural analysis
  - openness to “remembrance” and “nostalgia” tourism
- Comparative studies
  - Baltic States and other former Soviet states
  - Socialist states – Cuba; Vietnam; Belarus
- Additional Niche tourism
  - Education tourism – language, history
Thank you
Questions/Discussion

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