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A VISIT TO THE CRIMEA

The following information was obtained from members of a group of Ukrainians in Sweden who visited in the Crimea in the summer of 1964 (14 through 29 July 1964). The group was composed of the following: Mr. and Mrs. Fedor SHOFA of Goeteborg; Mr. and Mrs. Victor CHEPLYAK of Orebro; Mr. and Mrs. Mykola NACHERNIY of Ramnes. They travelled with a group of Swedish tourists who are members of the Swedish-Soviet Friendship Society. The tour was arranged through Nyman Shults, a bureau accredited by Intourist. The group travelled by plane from Arlande directly to Moscow. Customs check on arrival in Moscow was superficial. After a change in Moscow, the group continued from Moscow to Yalta where they were met by representatives of Intourist who took them by bus to the hotel TAVRIDA where they lived for ten days.

According to the original itinerary, the group was to visit Symferopol. That part of the trip was cancelled, however, at the very last moment. In response to inquiries as to why, the tour guide merely said it was forbidden at that time of year.

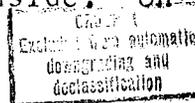
Russian was the language spoken by the local population. In a conversation with a Soviet female who said she came from Kiev, Mrs. SHOFA asked why the woman was speaking Russian. The reply was, "It's just that we are already accustomed to it." Mrs. SHOFA told the woman, "We have been living in a foreign country more than 20 years but still haven't forgotten our mother tongue." Switching to Ukrainian, the Soviet then told Mrs. SHOFA that she had spent a long time in Berlin and that she has a good knowledge of the German language. When Mrs. SHOFA told her that she came from Sweden, the woman said she was aware of the good living conditions in Sweden but, "We cannot all go where life is good. Some of us must stay here also." A stranger was seen approaching and the Soviet woman immediately cut off the conversation and walked away.

One day at the seashore Mrs. SHOFA was told by a woman who learned that the former was visiting from Sweden, "You know it is very dangerous here (Soviet Union). A person can disappear from sight any day. There are many such types for whom an individual has no meaning." She also said that tourists were not allowed to use the beach and swim with Soviet citizens in the area which was fenced off as there is a fear of tourists because there are many Americans among them. The Soviet woman suddenly left when she noticed a stranger approaching.

The group was taken to visit a sanatorium. On arrival they were met at the door by a nurse who refused to admit them stating that she was not prepared for them that day. However, another nurse soon appeared and invited them inside. On the surface,

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conditions looked good. Rooms were clean, flowers were seen on the tables and they even had TV sets. The sanatorium housed mainly retired or convalescing miners.

Soviets with whom Mrs. SHOFA spoke said that Soviets do not fear the Chinese, even though there are so many of them since China is not as well armed as the USSR. On the other hand, one must be concerned about the United States because it is probably even better armed than the USSR.

Everyone seems to be waiting for a big change but no one can say what it will be. Anti-Khrushchev comments are frequently heard -- from chauffeurs, in restaurants and on the streets. The complaint against him is that he has been promising improvements for the past 8 years but in fact things are worse. "He won't be at the feeding trough much longer." Malenkov is recalled as the one man who had brought relaxations.

Mrs. NACHERNA whose parents arrived from Kharkov to visit her in Yalta were very apologetic for not bringing something freshly baked with them. They said they had the flour but couldn't obtain yeast. Others later complained about having yeast but no flour or other necessary items. The impression was that there are shortages of one thing or another in all cities in the Soviet Union. NACHERNA said she saw more people barefooted than in shoes, and everyone complained about theft and fraud, in spite of the fact that the guilty are punished severely.

NACHERNA's uncle came to Yalta from Moscow where he has been living for the past 40 years. They later visited him in Moscow. "When we arrived in Moscow we saw what life there is really like -- not in the heart of Moscow, which is a showplace for foreigners, but on the outskirts. It is hard to believe! Do you think they have curtains like in Sweden? No. Windows are shaded from the sun with newspapers. All of us Ukrainians were there together and we were amazed that people were living like that right in Moscow."

During dinner one day in a Moscow Restaurant for tourists, a Soviet called attention to the group of capitalists. The tour guide turned to inform those with him that these were "not capitalists but ordinary workers just like you." One of the restaurant patrons came over ^{and} apologized for the remark made by the Soviet. On leaving the restaurant, the group saw a queue of workers waiting their turn to enter a restaurant. They were disappointed to learn there was such discrimination between eating facilities available to tourists and those available to the general working public, and they couldn't help but wonder how much food, if any, would be left for the last man in line.

When the group visited Lenin's Tomb, they were surprised by the strict silence imposed. The group caused consternation and much sh-sh-ing from the guards when they broke out into hilarious laughter. Clara CHEPLYAK had explained to one of the Swedes who inquired about it that the reason for the great silence was that it was feared Lenin might jump up on his feet.

The group returned to Sweden on 29 July 1964 after a 15 days trip. There was practically no baggage check on the return trip. SHOFA said he returned with at least 16 bottles of liquor and was not questioned about them at all.

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GROUP 1
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