

Re: A Trip to Ukraine, May-June 1970

Date: 15 June 1970

Source: A young architect ~~fr~~ who works for the Puerto Rico Planning Board, took part in a three-week tour of Ukraine organized by M. Kolankiwsky (Toronto) for the purposes of viewing Ukrainian art galleries, museums, and monuments and meeting Ukrainian painters. The group travelled to Kiev via Sabena Air Lines via Brussels- Vienna- Kiev, arriving in Kiev on May ~~19th~~ 16th.

1. On arrival in Kiev, the group was officially greeted by representatives of the Ukraina Society and the Artists' Union. They were joined by an official Intourist guide ~~(Zoya)~~ (Raya - surname unknown, but apparently the only Raya at Intourist), a newspaper reporter (Zoya - surname also unknown) and a radio reporter (Fedir - surname unknown). These three travelled with the group throughout their entire stay in Ukraine. No one was searched at customs. (at the hotel "Ukraina")
2. The group stayed in Kiev ~~(for three days,~~ during which time they visited all the museums and art galleries. Several local ~~painters~~ Artists' Union members joined the group in all their tours. Here the visitor met Hryhoriy and Yuriy Lohvyn. He asked Hryhoriy Lohvyn to put him in touch with Hryhoriy Kochur for whom he had a book. Lohvyn agreed to do this. At the end of othe three day stay in Kiev, during which time Kochur had not gotten in touch with the visitor, the latter asked Lohvyn to arrange a meeting for some day after the group's return to Kiev. He also gave Lohvyn the book to give to Kochur along with a short note in which he asked for a meeting.
3. Kolankiwsky had arranged an appointment for the visitor at Kiev Project - the Kiev Planning Board. There the visitor met a planner named Shylo who showed him the various planning projects for Kiev.
4. From Kiev the group travelled by bus to Kaniv, where they were taken on a tour of the Shevchenko museum.
5. From Kiev the group travelled by train to Lviv. There they were joined by the head of the Lviv Artists' Union, Mys'ko and a number of other artists. In addition to museums and galleries, they visited the workshops of the painters Ostafiychuk, Patyk, Mys'ko,. Onhis own the visitor also visited the studio of

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Slava Muzyka. The visitor became friendly with Mys'ko. Various people (mostly artists whom he met) told him that Mys'ko has a good reputation because he usually takes the part of young artists in defending their works. The visitor got the impression that Mys'ko is very concerned about the measures applied against artists who are found lacking in social realism, as well as about Russification in Ukraine. However, Mys'ko takes no stand officially.

6. In Lviv the visitor managed to have more time to himself (the group was highly organized everywhere). He met a group of young artists and their friends with whom he socialized a bit in the evenings. They told him that they were constantly followed by two KGB men. One evening while they were having a party in Ostafiychuk's private home, someone got the idea to take down a drink to the two men. One of the local residents took down a bottle to the two ~~KGB~~ KGB men and came back with it half-empty and their thanks. No one in the group seemed very concerned about the tailing, taking it with humor.

7. From Lviv the group travelled to Odessa (2 days), Tbilisi-Surami (2 days), Yalta, Zaporizhya, Kharkiv. In each city they were joined by an Intourist guide, in addition to the one travelling with the group, and local painters. In Yalta one of the group members, Ulyana Dychok (from Toronto) met a man who told her he had been imprisoned in Mordovia. They spent a lot of time together against the advice of other group members who suspected that the man was a plant. On the group's return to Kiev, the man showed up "accidentally" again.

8. On their return to Kiev, the visitor asked Lohvyn what arrangement he had made for a meeting with Kochur. Lohvyn said that Kochur had been told and given the book, but ~~he~~ he did not show up for a meeting with the visitor. The visitor thought it might be on account of the official ~~firm~~ "following" that this group constantly had.

9. In Kiev the word was out that Valentyn Moroz had been arrested on June 1st.

3....

Everyone seemed to know about it, but no one was willing to discuss the matter or the reasons for the arrest. There the visitor also heard from Lohvyn, that the "Program for a Democratic Movement for Ukraine, Russia and the Baltic countries" was a "plant", that no one of the Kiev dissidents had anything to do with it and that they suspected that this was the work of the KGB.

10. On their last evening in Kiev the group was hosted at a reception at the Ukraina Society where Smolych spoke to them about the need for cultural ties and relations between Ukraine and Ukrainians abroad. While members of the group were at the reception, the luggage of a number of members was thoroughly searched. The visitor had already packed his ~~xxx~~ suitcase and left his films and camera in the room. On his return he found his luggage unpacked and scattered all over the bed, and his camera tampered with. He does not know about the film yet. The luggage of Mr. and Mrs. Kolankiwsky was searched in a similar manner. When he complained to the floor attendant, she claimed to have no knowledge of anyone entering his room. Next day, at customs the luggage of those who had had their suitcases searched in their rooms was not opened. Those who had not been searched ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ underwent thorough customs checks. Mrs. Kolankiwsky's handbag was opened in spite of her ~~xxx~~ protests over the previous night's search. Ulyana Dyshok (mentioned above) was made to undress and was questioned by the custom's personnel for some time. Because of this the entire group missed their plane connection in Vienna (the Aeroflot flight was held up in Kiev) and arrived in Toronto one day later than planned: June 6th.

11. On the whole the visitor did not come across anyone who was willing to discuss the present situation in Ukraine vis-a-vis Russification, repressions, samizdat, etc. The members of the group had little chance of meeting anyone other than the artists who joined their group on various excursions. These stuck to discussions of art, architecture, and avoided any "delicate" subjects.