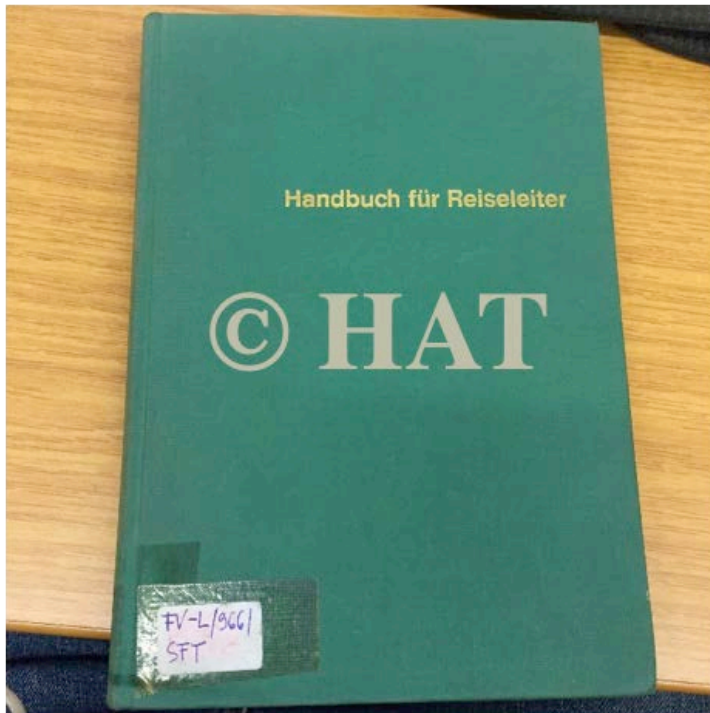


Educating the modern tourist. The political and pedagogic role of the tour guide in post-war mass tourism



In 1966, a manual for tour guides was published under the auspices of *the Studienkreis für Tourismus*, a social-scientific research institute that focused on promoting and studying tourism critically. In the manual, the tour guide is conceptualized as having an implicit political and pedagogical role: by ways of an informal education of tourists, the tour guide had the potential to improve international relations and fellow feeling. This manual is an exponent of a hitherto relatively neglected aspect of the history of tourism, which focuses on the political dimension of tourism.

The problems of mass tourism in the 1960's

Whereas the holiday abroad was still the privilege of the relatively well off in the first half of the twentieth-century, the post-war BRD witnessed a gradual democratization of tourism. Both the extended phase of economic expansion and increase in wages and the development of the travel infrastructure, in the form of travelling companies, disclosed traditional holiday destinations, like Italy and Austria, for broader segments of the German population.¹ This travel wave received considerable attention in the public sphere and politics. In the 1950's, post-war West-German tourists, predominantly of a lower middle-class background, were criticized by government officials and journalists, for the behavior they exhibited: frequently they demonstrated sheer ignorance of and interest in culture and

¹ Hasso Spode, 'Der Aufstieg des Massentourismus im 20. Jahrhundert', in: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Claudius Torp (ed.), *Die Konsumgesellschaft in Deutschland 1890-1990* (Frankfurt and New York, 2009), 114-128, 126-127. and Christopher Kopper, 'The breakthrough of the package tour in Germany after 1945', *Journal of Tourism History* 1 (2009), 67-92.

even made insulting remarks on the recent war to the local populace. Much feared, by government officials and journalists alike, was the detrimental influence their behavior could have on the image and international reputation of West Germany.² This trend continued in the 1960's, as the travel intensity of West Germans increased drastically. The stream of German tourists focused on Austria and Italy, which rapidly became omnipresent as a vacation paradise in the media and popular culture.³ Contemporaries noted with some anxiety that these new tourists differed markedly from the traditional travelers to, for example, Italy: rather than being interested in the local culture, they travelled in order to pursue sun, sea and sex. Concomitant with the expansion of the tourism industry, was the increase of the scientific interest in tourism as a social and economic phenomenon. In 1961 for example, the *Studienkreis für Tourismus*, situated in Starnberg, was founded as a social-scientific interdisciplinary research institute, which focused on promoting and critically studying international tourism.⁴ The circle was premised on the notion that tourism could function as a motor for international understanding and fellow feeling. In order to gauge this potential of travelling, the circle organized and funded several ethnographic field studies, during which researchers applied the method of participant observation to study tourists in their natural habitat.

Tourist behavior in Italy and the pedagogic potential of the tour guide

In 1961 the pastor Paul Rieger undertook such a field study to the popular coastal town of Rimini in Italy. What he witnessed during his sojourn there worried him in several aspects. The tourists he encountered were predominantly characterized by their hedonistic stance towards the holiday. He was confronted with this during the earliest stages of the journey: on the special holiday train to Rimini, he encountered a thirty-year-old secretary, who made conversation with him, evidently with the desire for some 'amore' with Rieger.⁵ During his stay, he noted how Rimini attracted a particular type of tourist, of a predominant (lower) middle class background, who was almost exclusively preoccupied with social display and frivolous consumption. On the beach women competed in who had the smallest bikini, and tourists were incessantly seeking short contact for the duration of the holiday, be it for an affair, an 'Urlaubsflirt' or 'fun among each other'.⁶ What completely lacked, according to Rieger, was any inkling of engagement with the host populace and culture: the tourists in Rimini lived in a temporary holiday biotope, which was limited to the resort hotel, beach and café's. The holiday even seemed to confirm and consolidate stereotypes and biases of the

² Till Manning, "'...mit üblem geistig-seelisch-materiellem Mittelstand' auf Reisen. Touristische Emanzipation vom bürgerlichen Reiseideal', in: Gunilla Bude e.a. ed., *Bürgertum nach dem bürgerlichen Zeitalter: Leitbilder und Praxis seit 1945* (Göttingen, 2011), 239-254. and Till Manning, '„Behut uns Gott vor Sturm und Wind und Deutschen, die im Ausland sind!“ Anspruchsdenken und Konsumverhalten als Reisetil', *Voyage. Jahrbuch für Reise- und Tourismusforschung* 8 (2009), 98-109.

³ Sina Fabian, *Boom in der Krise: Konsum, Tourismus, Autofahren in Westdeutschland und Großbritannien 1970-1990* (Göttingen, 2016), 127-131. See also: Cord Pagenstecher, *Der bundesdeutsche Tourismus: Ansätze zu einer Visual History: Urlaubsprospekte, Reiseführer, Fotoalben 1950-1990* (Hamburg, 2003).

⁴ Hasso Spode, 'Tourism Research and Theory in German-Speaking Countries', in: Graham Dann and Giuli Liebman Parrinello, *The Sociology of Tourism. European Origins and Developments* (Bingley, 2009), 65-88.

⁵ Paul Rieger, *Urlaub in Rimini. Beobachtungen eines Theologen an der italienischen Adria* (München, 1962), 10.HAT FV-X/STFT-1962-3

⁶ Rieger. *Urlaub in Rimini*, 19.

Italian men as 'banditos' or 'unreliable', or the Italian in general as 'greasy' and lazy.⁷ This led Rieger to conclude that the potential of the holiday as instrument for 'Völkerverständigung' was rather limited at the moment.

Several contemporary accounts echo this lack of interest in the culture and population of the host destination. One of the main factors, which could counter this, was the tour guide. The tour guide, according to various researchers, could play a key role in the mitigation of these stereotypes: 'the consequences of many negative experiences and incidents with the local population can be neutralized and sometimes even prevented by ways of an accurate explanation by the tour guide'.⁸ In practice, the competence of tour guides was lacking drastically. According to Angela von Molnos, who joined a guided tour through Italy in 1962, the 'neurotic' and 'authoritarian' tour guide was responsible for spoiling the vacation for a great number of the participants of the tour. Apart from his personal deficiencies, his tendency to comment on Italy and the Italians invariably in a denigratory and even racist tone was equally disquieting.⁹ Another researcher, who joined a similar tour, confirmed this negative verdict: although his personality was not as deficient in the example cited above, his digressions during the tour were equally filled with 'negative comments which were not at all appropriate to convey a positive image of Italy to the travelers.'¹⁰ Both researchers plead for a professionalization of the occupation of tour guide in order to part with its 'reminiscences of a Bohemian character' and to improve the tourist experience and international fellow feeling.¹¹ The *Studienkreis für Tourismus* took note of their comments and sought to interfere by publishing and circulating a manual for tourist guides in 1966. This could be interpreted as an active effort at informal education and instruction of tourists and their behavior, by proxy of the tour guide.

The political and pedagogic role of the tour guide

The manual was compiled by a group of thirty experts affiliated to the *Studienkreis*, ranging from psychologists and sociologists to representatives of the travel branch. The *Studienkreis* conceptualized the holiday as an ideal opportunity to broaden one's cultural horizon and recuperate from the preoccupations of everyday life.¹² As the research reports mentioned above illustrated, vacationers focused in many cases on baser and banal amusements during their holiday. Tourists needed help to learn to right way of enjoying the correct vacation. The tour guide was a 'key figure' in this process, considering the 'inexperience and ineptitude' of many tourists, and should instruct them in seeing, acknowledging, exploring and feeling correctly during the holidays.¹³ In order to do so, the tour guide should have a broad range of personal qualities and factual knowledge, ranging from a 'inner calmness, love and sympathy for the people' to 'pedagogical skills' and a 'comprehensive familiarity with art

⁷ Rieger, *Urlaub in Rimini*, 16-17.

⁸ Angela von Molnos, *Eine Reise durch Italien. Beobachtungen einer Psychologin während einer Gesellschaftsreise* (Munich, 1962), 63. HAT FV-X/STFT-1962-6

⁹ Von Molnos, *Eine Reise durch Italien*, 34-41.

¹⁰ Suitbert Ertel, *Romantische Italienfahrt. Beobachtungen eines Psychologen-Ehepaares während einer Gesellschaftsrundreise durch Italien* (München, 1962), 35. HAT FV-X/STFT-1962-4

¹¹ Ertel, *Romantische Italienfahrt*, 37.

¹² Studienkreis für Tourismus, *Handbuch für Reiseleiter* (München, 1966), 14-18. HAT FV-L/966/SFT

¹³ *Handbuch für Reiseleiter*, 15.

history.¹⁴ In order to ensure that tourists had a fruitful holiday in terms of cultural education, the tour guide ought to promote understanding of the host location and encourage interaction with the host culture and population. The tour guide was able to forge closer personal ties between the tourist and the host destination and 'promote understanding, or even love' for their host country.¹⁵ To do so the tour guide was advised to encourage the curiosity of tourists and draw his information from a broad corpus of literature. From this perspective, the tour guide was in a position to alter the imagery of holiday destinations, mediated by popular culture, and amounting to, in the case of Italy, to 'Chianti, fisherman from Capri, palm trees and Amore'. The guided tour was an excellent 'opportunity to reduce existing prejudices by providing accurate information.' The 'conventional German stereotype of the lazy Italian' could for example be dismantled if the tour guide could relay a more 'humanitarian attitude' to the tourists and sharpen 'their powers of observation and their judgment'.¹⁶ In a similar vein, the tour guide should encourage tourists look beyond the typical representations of a holiday destination and engage more intensively with the 'actual' host culture: rather than visiting a "'typical inauthentic bar, intended for tourists', he should bring them to an authentic restaurant, where no fishing nets or ships swinging in the air ensured considerable prices.'¹⁷

Conclusion

As opposed to contemporary critical accounts of tourism, the *Studienkreis für Tourismus* accentuated the positive aspects of tourism. Travel, they argued, could in the first place contribute significantly to physical and psychological restoration. Secondly, it had a considerable educative potential, as it enabled tourists to literally broaden their horizon and gain insight in other cultures. However, the actual conduct tourists exhibited did not correspond to this ideal conception of travel. *The Studienkreis für Tourismus* actively sought to remedy this discrepancy by ways of informal mass education such as analyzed in this text. From this perspective, this manual and similar publications highlight the fascinating moral and political debates and discourses which surrounded the question of how leisure time should be correctly employed and the interrelation of tourism with politics.

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¹⁴ *Handbuch für Reiseleiter*, 9-10.

¹⁵ *Handbuch für Reiseleiter*, 14.

¹⁶ *Handbuch für Reiseleiter*, 71-76.

¹⁷ *Handbuch für Reiseleiter*, 77.