



## Tourist Garb ... and its Uncovering

### Vladislav Künnap

#### 1975



The poster about a foreign diversant was designed by the well-known caricaturist and poster artist Vladislav Künnap (1923-1995). It shows a man who tries to infiltrate the Soviet Union as a spy with smuggled bibles. The poster was published by the *Boyevoi Karandash* artists' association with an edition of 5,000 copies.

The poster is split in two images with an explanation below. The first illustration depicts a man who looks like a typical American tourist in an enormous, fluffy fur coat with two cameras, cheerfully king through a snowy landscape. He is introduced as a tourist. The other illustration shows the same man pinned on a barrier of a border cabinet of the U.S.S.R. A young Soviet border guard operates the cabinet. Many religious books with Orthodox and Catholic crosses fall from the "tourist's" coat. The sentences below the pictures predicate the man is not the tourist he appears to be, but a saboteur revealed during his infiltration. The short poem under

the scenery from Vladimir Alekseev notes that an unforgettable lesson was taught to the harmful enemy network of agents. Guests with such baggage were not allowed to enter the Soviet Union.

Künnap's poster suggests that enemy infiltration and espionage was a common practice during the Cold War to obtain information about the enemies. It also says that religious books were seen as a means to damage the U.S.S.R. That religion was an enemy of the system was a normal thinking at this time. Furthermore, religion was seen as a hostile force from outside to internally undermine the U.S.S.R. It collaborates with the enemies of the Soviet Union. In addition, the smuggling of bibles violated the prohibition on religious proselytizing.

The poster exposes the "diversant" not only as a representative of the American secret services. It does not just accuse religion of being its tool. More generally, religion appears to be the systematic enemy of the Soviet Union. The poster can therefore be understood as ideological support in the fight against capitalism, religion and espionage, which was seen as a cohesive unit.