



Part of the German map of the occupied territories of the Baltic States, the Polish Republic and the Soviet Union (1944). National Library, Warsaw, Poland, polona.pl

Toomas Hiio

Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, Tallinn, Estonia
Estonian War Museum - General Laidoner Museum, Tallinn, Estonia



Peeter Kaasik PhD

Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, Tallinn, Estonia
Estonian War Museum - General Laidoner Museum, Tallinn, Estonia

DOI: 10.48261/INRR230520

ESTONIA 1944–1946: FROM “LIBERATION” TO PEACETIME

Abstract

This paper is an overview of the situation in Estonia in 1944–1946. Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 and by Germany in 1941. In 1944, the Soviets returned. The attempt of re-establishing of the Estonian statehood in September 1944 failed, though a government in exile was formed in Sweden. Estonia lost about 20% of its population during 1940–1945. In the summer of 1941 more than 50,000 Estonians were mobilised to the Red Army or evacuated to the rear area of the Soviet Union. As part of the Sovietization plan, they were subsequently recruited and trained to fill in positions in the administration. In addition to that, a party and Soviet cadres were dispatched to Estonia by various Soviet offices and institutions. The real command and control of Estonia as well as other Baltic countries was firmly in the hands of special plenipotentiaries of the CC of the CPSU as well as the representatives of the NKVD and NKGB. Between 1944–1946, the Soviet terror continued. 20,000 individuals were arrested and most of them were to the GULAG camps outside of Estonia, more than 400 were deported to Siberia as Germans and their family members. Thousands of individuals were repatriated to Estonia from Germany and other European countries or transferred through a control-filtration camp in Estonia to the Soviet

Union. Many corps and divisions of the Red Army as well as units of the Baltic fleet were stationed in Estonia. Crimes committed by the military, from the robbery and plundering to rape and murder, were a serious problem not only for the population but also for the powerless local communist and Soviet authorities.

Keywords: Estonia, Soviet Union, World War II, Sovietisation, Red Army, Baltic Fleet, Soviet State Security, Soviet terror, German occupation, GULAG

Introduction

Little research has been done in Estonia on the years immediately following World War II. More often than not, this period has been treated as part of larger processes, either beginning with the re-invasion of Estonia by the Red Army in 1944, or as a continuation of what had started with Estonia's occupation and annexation in 1940. Meanwhile, many individual events that took place during that time have been explored, for example, the military action on Estonian territory in 1944; the battles fought by the Estonian units of the Red Army in Estonia and in Courland in 1945; the large-scale exodus of Estonians from Estonia in 1944 and the evacuations; the combat activity of Estonian units in the German armed forces in occupied Bohemia and southwest Poland, as well as in Germany towards the end of the war; the emergence of Estonian refugee communities in Germany, Sweden, and elsewhere; Estonian soldiers and refugees in prisoner of war camps and displaced persons' camps; and many more. The general bias towards military activities, as well as political repressions and the resistance movement is understandable. Indeed, these events had a massive impact on Estonian society and the "politics of memory" at different times. An overview of these topics also takes up a large part of this article. However, we have intertwined them with more peaceful elements of the concurrent Soviet annexation. No comprehensive study of the immediate post-war years in Estonia has been written to date, and the following article cannot fill this gap either, although it does focus on a timeframe ranging from the cessation of military activities on the Estonian territory between September and November 1944, to the declaration of the end of the war in the annexed Baltic States, and the western provinces of Ukraine and Byelorussia in the summer of 1946 (*O priznanii Ukaza 1947*).

In June 1940, the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States, including Estonia, due to a secret agreement with Germany. On 23 August 1939, a non-aggression pact was signed between Germany and the Soviet Union. This pact contained a secret protocol dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence and assigning the Baltic States and Finland, as well as eastern Poland and Bessarabia, to the Soviet sphere of influence. In August 1940, the Soviet Union incorporated the three Baltic States into the USSR as Soviet republics. On 22 June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. From 7 July to early September 1941, having conquered Lithuania and Latvia in two weeks, the Wehrmacht occupied mainland Estonia. By 21 October 1941, the Wehrmacht had completed the invasion of the islands of western Estonia.

Under German occupation, in 1941, Estonia was handed over to the German civilian administration, the *Generalkommissariat Estland*, part of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland* (The Reichskommissariat Ostland covered roughly the territories of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Byelorussia, although some areas close to the front remained the rear areas of specific armies; for example, Estonia's easternmost city, Narva, was part of the rear area of the German 18th Army from 1941 to 1944. The institutions of the local Estonian administration, subordinated to the German civilian occupation government, operated there, but not the civilian occupation government itself). The Estonian Self-Administration was subordinated to the Estonian Commissar General. Unlike the rest of the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, Estonia was considered an operational area, and the Wehrmacht also played a role in the government of occupied Estonia. The highest military power in Estonia was exercised by the Commander of Army Group North Rear Area, with headquarters in the town of Võru in southeast Estonia, and the 207th Security Division, with headquarters in Tartu, subordinated to the Commander (Hiio 2014, 273-306).

In January 1944, the Red Army launched an attack against the Army Group North from Leningrad with the aim of breaking through to the Baltic Sea. By early February, the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS units were able to stabilise the front in northeast Estonia along the Narva River and the Lake Peipus line. The German high command recommended that Estonia be abandoned, thereby shortening the front line considerably, but Hitler opposed this for several reasons. First, abandoning Estonia would have led Finland, German's ally, to pull out of the war, not least because the Estonian and Finnish coasts are separated by only 50–100 kilometres in the narrowest parts of the

Gulf of Finland. (In the Finnish Winter War of 1939–1940, Soviet air forces had flown bombing runs against Finland from the bases in Estonia.) Second, most of the Baltic Sea was still under the control of the German navy at the beginning of 1944; in addition to Germany and its occupied territories, the Baltic Sea was bordered by Finland and a neutral Sweden (Wolke 2013, 433–446). The Soviet Baltic Fleet was backed up in the far eastern corner of the Gulf of Finland. If the Germans surrendered Estonia, this would allow the Soviet fleet to enter the Baltic Sea and threaten German maritime transport, which is what happened in the autumn of 1944 after the German surrender of Estonia and an armistice between Finland and the Soviet Union. Thus Hitler only agreed to abandon Estonia in mid-September 1944, after the Army Group Centre had been crushed in Belarus in the summer (as a result of the Red Army's Operation Bagration), and and the Red Army had reached the Vistula threatening to cut off the remnants of the Army Group North in Latvia and Estonia. From October 1944 to 11 May 1945, the remnants of the Army Group North (subsequently renamed Army Group Courland) were trapped in the Courland Pocket. The third reason for holding on to Estonia was the oil shale in the northeast of the country, whose importance increased as German fuel deposits fell to the Allies (Hiio 2006, 1035–1094; Frieser 2007a, 284–293; Frieser 2007b, 623–641).

From February to the end of September 1944, mainland Estonia was on the front line or very close to it. The battles on the islands of western Estonia raged on until the end of November 1944. In the summer of 1941, the front line stopped for a while in Estonia. It took the Wehrmacht more than seven weeks between crossing Estonia's southern border and reaching Tallinn on 28 August. Meanwhile, the Red Army managed to mobilise over 30,000 Estonian men fit for combat who were brought to the Soviet rear (Estonia's total population was approximately 1,100,000 at the time). In 1942 and 1943, more than 10,000 men joined various Estonian battalions of the German armed forces either through voluntary enlistment or forced conscription under the guise of work duties (as a rule, the inhabitants of the occupied territories were not admitted to the Wehrmacht, but there were exceptions). At the end of January 1944, general mobilisation was announced for men born between 1904 and 1923. In August, boys born in 1926 were recruited in the army and boys born in 1927 in the air force auxiliary service. (The men born in 1925 and 1924 had been mobilised in the autumn and winter of 1943.) The highest-calibre recruits were used to strengthen the Estonian brigade of the

Waffen-SS, formed in 1943 and subsequently reformed as the 20th Estonian SS Division. (The voluntary Estonian Legion was established in August 1942. About 1,000 men, who were trained in Heidelager (SS-Truppenübungsplatz Pustkow, Pustków), near Dębica, Poland, were sent to Ukraine as the Estonian SS-Battalion “Narva” in the summer of 1943. The manpower for Estonian brigade of the Waffen-SS, trained in Heidelager from spring 1943, were mainly the men born in 1919–1924, who were conscripted under the guise of work duties. They had to choose between the work in the military industry, auxiliary service – the so-called *Hilfswilliger* – in the Wehrmacht or Estonian SS-brigade). The remaining men were put to work in various units subordinated to the Ostland Higher SS and Police Commander, including front-line police battalions, border guard regiments, and *Omakaitse* (Home Guard – an auxiliary police formation) combat battalions. In the summer, many German units fighting in northeast Estonia were replaced by Estonian units and sent to other sections of the Eastern Front. When the Red Army invaded southeast Estonia starting from 10 August, some Estonian units were also deployed there. The total number of Estonian men serving in the German forces between 1941 and 1945 is estimated at about 70,000; by the end of September 1944, more than 20,000 of them were deployed outside of Estonia, and the rest either deserted during the retreat and stayed in Estonia or fought in units that were unable to leave Estonia because they were cut off or lacked the necessary transport (Noormets 2006a, 431–444; Noormets 2006b, 769–999).

From 1943 to 1944, more than 3,000 Estonian men fled to Finland in order to escape German forced recruitment and mobilisation. Rather than extradite them to the German occupying powers, the Finnish government used them to form an Estonian volunteer infantry regiment in the early 1944. The regiment fought against the Red Army as part of the Finnish Army. In August 1944, most of the men voluntarily returned home to fight the invading Red Army in Estonia. The German occupation authorities promised not to punish them for evading German mobilisation earlier. The men returning from Finland were used to strengthen the units of the 20th Estonian SS Division. In September 1944, there were clashes between German soldiers and Estonians in German uniform in and around Tallinn, in Haapsalu, and elsewhere, with casualties on both sides. A number of Estonian soldiers were unwilling to go to Germany and either considered their obligation fulfilled when the Germans left Estonia or continued resistance even though the situation was hopeless. Among

Tallinn, September 1941 – view of the seaport destroyed during German-Soviet hostilities. German press photography. National Digital Archives, Warsaw, Poland, collection Wydawnictwo Prasowe Kraków–Warszawa, ref. no. 3/2/0/-/1776

the latter, there were many who had returned from Finland (Larr et al. 2010). A lot of former Estonian soldiers of the German or Finnish armies were hiding in the forests. There were also men who had deserted from the Estonian Rifle Corps of the Red Army, German deserters or who stayed in Estonia for a variety of reasons, and others.

In May 1945, most of the Estonian soldiers sent to Germany found themselves in northern Bohemia with the 20th Estonian SS Division. The division's reserve regiment was in Denmark and northern Germany. Many of the Estonian prisoners of war in Bohemia ended up in Soviet prisoner of war camps; the rest were fortunate enough to find themselves in the US, British, or French occupation zone (Piirimäe 2006, 1019–1032). In addition to the military, tens of thousands of civilians were evacuated or fled from Estonia to Germany and Sweden in August and especially September 1944. In 1945, after the end of the war, the total number of Estonian refugees in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, and elsewhere (including the men in prisoner of war camps in the Western occupation zones) was estimated at over 70,000 (Kumer-Haukanõmm 2014, 50–56).

In 1944, the Germans removed Red Army prisoners of war from the camps in Estonia; their number is unknown (Maripuu 2006b,



739–766). Roughly a thousand Estonian prisoners were taken from Estonian prisons to concentration camps in Stutthof and elsewhere (*A database of Estonians*).

Most of the Jewish prisoners who had been transported to the Vaivara concentration camp in northeast Estonia since the autumn of 1943 as slave labour for the oil shale industry and to other facilities, were deported from Estonia in the late summer of 1944. Most of them came from the ghettos of Kaunas and Vilnius. The survivors arrived at the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig. But not everyone did. On 19 September 1944, nearly 2,000 Jews, whom the SS never managed or even intended to move out of Estonia, were massacred in the Klooga camp, a branch of the Vaivara concentration camp, near the port of Paldiski about 40 km west of Tallinn (Västrik and Maripuu 2006, 719–738). Another chapter in the history of the Holocaust on Estonian soil involves a few hundred French Jews brought to Tallinn in May 1944 (*Le Convoi 73*), less than a month before the Normandy landing. Most of them were murdered in Estonia (Maripuu 2006a, 717–718). The largest Estonian cities – Tallinn, Tartu, and Narva – came under Soviet air raids in 1944. Tallinn and Tartu experienced fewer casualties and less damage than Warsaw did during its methodical destruction by the Germans, or than major German cities and industrial hubs did under carpet bombing by the British and US strategic air forces. The city of Narva, however, whose civilian population was evacuated in the early 1944, was on the front line from February to the end of July and was almost completely destroyed by artillery fire.

Paving the Way for the Return of the Soviet Rule: the Leadership of the Estonian SSR in the Soviet Rear

The Soviet methodology for occupying new territories was formulated in 1929 by Vladimir Triandafillov, a military theorist and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Red Army, in his book *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*. Among other things, the book envisaged the establishment of a local political apparatus in the occupied territories. Added to this was the conviction that the local Bolsheviks could not be relied on, based on the assumption that the enemy had destroyed all local revolutionary organisations. Therefore, all the responsible staff and even some of the technical staff was to be brought in. The political apparatus to be set up was meant to be not only reliable but

also qualified (Mertelsmann 2007, 13–29). The idea of an “internal revolution” was not been abandoned altogether, but the revolution had to be led and controlled, and largely carried out, by imported “revolutionaries” of local descent. All this, of course, had to be done with the support of the Red Army and the Soviet security services. The plan for the occupation and annexation of eastern Poland, the Baltic States, Romanian Bessarabia, and Finland in 1939 and 1940, was very much in line with this scheme. According to the Soviet doctrine, invasion and Sovietisation were not imperialist power politics but stemmed from Marxism-Leninism: the triumph of socialism (or even world revolution) was seen as a matter of historical necessity. During the occupation and annexation of the Baltic States, Sovietisation was discussed quite openly.

The cards were reshuffled as the Soviet Union and Germany went to war in June 1941. During the war, the Soviets began to conceal their goals of conquest and expanding the sphere of influence. Sovietisation was now presented as a result of internal developments in the occupied countries, or the will of the people. This also involved a change in the concept of “liberation” (Mertelsmann 2007). The myth of the Red Army as a liberator from the fascist yoke began to be cultivated. As part of the myth, Red Army national units were formed in the Soviet rear during World War II; these were intended to demonstrate the initiative of the peoples who had fallen into the Soviet sphere of influence. The primary focus was on Eastern European countries, where the “socialist revolution” had yet to take place (Piiirimäe 2004). In the territories occupied and annexed in 1939 and 1940, the stage of “liberation from the yoke of capitalism” had been completed; now Sovietisation lay ahead. (Sovietisation included the persecution of suspected as well as actual “enemies of the state”, the nationalisation of businesses, measures against the free market and private enterprise, state control over prices, altering the composition of society, strict censorship, all-encompassing political agitation, imposing specific canons in cultural life, and much more).

In addition to suppressing possible resistance, the Soviets also needed international recognition of the conquests of 1939/1940. The tiny Baltic States were not a major concern for the United States and Great Britain. The fate of Poland was a much more serious issue; the lack of agreement over its future would have made it impossible to build a post-war Europe. At the end of 1943, a general agreement on Poland was reached at the Tehran Conference, whereby the United States and Great Britain implicitly recognised the *de facto* boundary before the

German invasion in June 1941 as the Soviet Union's western border. No particular decision was made about the Baltic States, but Roosevelt and Churchill had indicated that neither the British nor the Americans intended to go to war with the Soviet Union over the Baltic States. After the Tehran conference, the Baltics were no longer on the agenda, and a solution was found that satisfied all parties at least until the end of the war. The Allies kept the matter quiet so as not to stir up domestic political opposition in Britain and the United States (Piirimäe 2009).

By the time of the Tehran Conference in the autumn of 1943, the Red Army was approaching the western border of the Baltic States. In 1944, the Red Army expelled German troops from Right-bank Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Baltic States, reached the Vistula River, forced Romania and Bulgaria to switch sides, made an armistice with Finland, and arrived at the German border in East Prussia.

In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the Soviets sought to create the impression that the Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians were assuming power themselves. As the authorities considered it impossible to employ the local residents who had lived under German occupation, the task fell to a carefully vetted cadre dispatched from the Soviet Union. For Estonia, a fairly large pool of people was available. In the summer of 1941, more than 20,000 civilians had been deported from Estonia. An equal number mobilised from Estonia had survived in the Estonian national units of the Red Army (8th Estonian Rifle Corps and reserve units) (Kaasik 2006, 885–907). In addition, more than 100,000 Estonians lived in the Soviet Union. (According to the 1939 census, there were 143,589 Estonians living in the Soviet Union). Known as Soviet Estonians or Russian Estonians, they were late 19th- and early 20th-century emigrants and their descendants, as well as Estonians who, for various reasons, had found themselves in Soviet Russia after World War I and the Russian Civil War, and had stayed there and raised families (Raag 1999). The ranks of the communist elite of these Soviet Estonians – employees of Communist Party and other Soviet institutions and security agencies, as well as senior officers in the military – had been severely damaged by the Stalinist purges of the late 1930s. The communist elite of the Soviet Estonians had been assimilated; many no longer spoke Estonian but retained their Estonian nationality (in Soviet passports, nationality was indicated). Soon, their Estonian nationality would allow many of them to reach dizzying career heights in the occupied Estonia. Despite their possibly modest professional skills, their “clean” record (i.e., their lack of personal or even family ties with the “enemies of the

working class”) was a strong advantage, which received a great deal of attention in the post-war period. As they or their parents had come to Russia only a generation or two earlier, they usually still had close relatives in Estonia, some of whom may well have been stigmatised as capitalists and “kulaks”. This wrecked the careers of more than a few people coming in from Russia.

The first plans for the re-evacuation of people evacuated from Estonia in the summer of 1941 were already drawn up by the end of the year. At the same time, the selection and preparation of personnel suitable for work in the party and government began. The training initially took place in special educational complexes (*учебный комбинат, учебnyi kombinat*) in the Soviet rear. Later, officers of various levels were gathered in Leningrad, Moscow, and other cities; there, these prospective officials attended training courses and were also put through background checks. In the case of the future personnel of the power structures of Soviet Estonia, an attempt was made to at least maintain the appearance of their Estonian background. The only exceptions were the Estonian SSR subdivisions of the NKVD (the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) and NKGB (the People’s Commissariat for State Security), where Estonians were clearly a minority. However, from the very beginning, Soviet functionaries, mostly Russians, were inserted into the Soviet Estonian agencies as overseers and actually ran these institutions (Tannberg 2007, 225–272).

From the point of view of the continuity of Soviet institutions, it was important for the higher party, state, and government bodies of the Estonian SSR evacuated in 1941, to continue to operate in the Soviet rear. At first, this was only happening on paper, because the cadre of the Estonian SSR was scattered all over the Soviet Union, and many had died in retreat battles or during evacuation. In 1942, the survivors began to be concentrated in Moscow. The *de facto* highest body of the Estonian SSR was the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP), which discussed and decided most of the issues at the level of the Soviet republic, but often also rather small matters. The Bureau of the Central Committee of the ECP held a total of 23 meetings behind Soviet lines. The apparatus of the Central Committee – the apparatchiks – continued to work, but with reduced personnel.

In wartime, the importance of the ECP Central Committee’s military department increased. In 1942, the Bureau of the Central Committee appointed Artur Vaha (1900–1976), head of the Military Department, as the organiser of the Estonian partisan movement. In April 1942,

a special assignment unit was formed in the Ural military district and began training future Estonian partisans and saboteurs. The partisans sent to Estonia were given a wide range of assignments: to organise the communist resistance movement, perpetrate acts of sabotage, and pass on intelligence. On 3 November 1942, the State Defence Committee of the USSR (GKO) established the Estonian Partisan Movement Headquarters (EPMH), which was subordinated to the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement located at the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command (Stavka) and was responsible for equipment and weapons. Due to scarcity of local Communist partisans and lack of support from the population at large, the Soviet partisan movement in Estonia never achieved its objectives. The EPMH was more successful in another assignment: the preparation of personnel for the future power apparatus of the Estonian SSR.

The apparatchiks of the ECP Central Committee and its Bureau were mostly responsible for maintaining continuity and coordinating propaganda, as well as organising party political work in the Estonian national units of the Red Army. A much more active body operating behind, in the Soviet rear, was the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR – in other words, the government, which held its first meeting on 14 October 1941, in Leningrad. By the end of October, the members of the government of the Estonian SSR were moved to Chelyabinsk (then to Moscow in January 1942, and Leningrad in 1944).

The Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, formally the highest authority of the republic, never convened in the Soviet rear. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the ESSR held a few meetings and approved the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the ESSR (Liivik 2014, 59–92; Liivik 2005, 43–45; Kaasik 2016, 26–31).

Special Assignment Groups

In 1942, specific preparations for the future civilian rule in the currently lost Estonian SSR began in the Soviet rear: the ECP Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the ESSR initiated the “registration of cadres”. From 1942, preparatory courses were organised for those registered; these took place in Myshkino, Yaroslavl Oblast, Yegoryevsk in Moscow Oblast, and Pushkin in Leningrad Oblast. Hundreds of future leaders of the Estonian SSR were trained there. Thus the re-occupation and recruitment for the power structures were prepared well in advance. The activities on the ground were carried



Front brigade of Estonian artists near Velikiye Luki, Russia (1943). Estonian Art Museum, ref. no. EKM j 55320 FK 610.

out by special assignment groups (*оперативная группа, operativnaya gruppа*) moving behind the Red Army units. These groups included the personnel of a specific agency or local authority, who had already been appointed to their positions in the Soviet rear. Alongside recruitment, another primary task of the special assignment groups was to prepare for the registration of war damage and to organise the re-evacuation of assets evacuated from Estonia to the Soviet rear in 1941.

The Central Committee of the ECP and the Council of People's Commissars of the ESSR produced their plan for special assignment groups in October 1943. In all, 27 groups were to be formed for the restoration of the central institutions of the Estonian SSR, and 15 groups for the executive committees of the 11 Estonian counties and four major cities. By June 1944, there were 952 people in special assignment groups for the central institutions. The special assignment groups of counties and cities were understaffed and had far fewer members. In July 1944, the groups were brought together in Leningrad, where they were divided into two bigger groups: Group A would move to Estonia from the north of Lake Peipus and Group B from the south of the lake. Moving behind the Red Army units in August and September, the special assignment groups gradually took over the institutions of power. However, it took a few more months for the institutions to become operational. The authorities in rural municipalities were set up by the members of the county special assignment groups or by the executive committees that had already started working at the county level (Paavle 2009, 92–94; Siilaberg 2011, 28–31).

The Propaganda Role of the Red Army National Units

By the early 1940s, the previously existing national units of the Red Army had been disbanded, with the exception of the territorial rifle corps formed on the basis of the armed forces of the Baltic States annexed in 1940. These rifle corps were intended to comprise downsized peacetime divisions and regiments to be used for “cleansing” the armed forces of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and merging them into the Red Army within a year (Prikaz Narkoma Oborony SSSR S.K. Timoshenko [Order of the People’s Commissar of Defense of the USSR S. K. Timoshenko]. No. 0191, August 17, 1940. Vol. 2. In: *Rossiya: XX vek. Dokumenty*. 1998, pp. 178–181). The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian territorial corps were designated as numbers 22, 24, and 29, respectively. As war broke out, they were formed into full-strength units using conscripts and reservists mobilised from Russia, and were deployed to less active sections of the front. However, they were soon defeated. Many Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian soldiers surrendered as prisoners of war or went over to the German side. In the early autumn of 1941, all Red Army corps were temporarily disbanded as command structures; any remaining Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were sent to the rear.

After Germany invaded the Soviet Union, other units began to be formed on a national or territorial basis. These can be divided into three types: national units formed from Soviet citizens; units formed from the citizens of other countries (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia); and national units formed from the citizens of annexed countries. With certain qualifications, the latter may be said to also include Finnish units. The units formed from foreign nationals were intended to prepare personnel for the post-war takeover of power under the leadership of the Communists of the respective countries who received training in the Soviet Union during the war. Among them were the Comintern veterans who survived the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, but many Communists from Eastern Europe had also fled to the Soviet Union to escape the invading Wehrmacht between 1939 and 1941. Many of the soldiers and officers of the national units of Hungary, Romania, Croatia, and Slovakia had fought on the German side on the Eastern Front in their national units and had been captured (Romania and Hungary participated in the invasion of the Soviet Union as German allies. Slovak and Croatian units established in 1939

and 1941 also fought on the Eastern Front. Therefore, a large part of the soldiers and officers of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav national units formed in the Soviet Union were Slovaks and Croats, respectively). For many, joining the national units in German service was a way to escape starvation in a prisoner of war camp. No national units were formed from the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union. However, the peoples of the North and South Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Volga region, as well as the Koreans in the Far East, did have their designated units in the Red Army. These experienced severe problems due to linguistic and cultural differences. The Soviet supreme command was also sceptical about the loyalty of these nations. Most of the units never saw front-line action.

The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian national units only played a secondary military role. The 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division was sent to Lithuania in August 1944, and fought there until November 1944. After that, the division briefly saw front-line action in Courland, Latvia, but was soon deployed back to Lithuania to “liberate” Klaipėda. In February 1945, the division was once again sent to Courland and remained there until the end of the war. Courland was also where the Latvian and Estonian national units of the Red Army fought out the war. Thus the Lithuanian division played what was above all a propaganda role – participating in the liberation of the key cities in Lithuania. The same applies to the Latvian and Estonian national units in 1944 and 1945. Ethnic Lithuanians made up a third of the 16th Lithuanian Division, and almost half when also counting Lithuanian Jews. The 130th Latvian Rifle Corps consisted of only 36% Latvians as of July 1944, and its units were largely understaffed. Latvians became a majority in the unit in 1945 with the influx of men mobilised from Latvia. The share of Estonians in the Estonian national unit, the 8th Estonian Rifle Corps formed in 1942, always remained between two-thirds and three-quarters. In the summer of 1941, the Red Army managed to mobilise approximately 30,000 men from Estonia. Lithuania and Latvia were conquered by the Germans in two weeks and the Red Army never managed to properly carry out mobilisation there (Kaasik 2015a; Gosztony 1991).

Estonians, similarly to other minorities in the Soviet Union who had their own statehood or a large ethnic group outside the USSR, were considered unreliable. In 1941, the mobilised citizens of the Baltic States, as well as Finns, Germans, Poles, and others, were sent not to training and then to the front, but to prison camp-like work and construction units deep inside the Soviet Union (so called *stroybaty*,



Awarding the units of the 8th Estonian Rifle Corps with Guards' banners in 1945 (2nd from the left Colonel General Mikhail Kazakov, Commanding Officer of the 10th Guards Army; 3rd from the right Nikolai Karotamm, 1st Secretary of the CC of the EC(b)P). Estonian National Archives, ref. no. EFA.280.0.62816

i.e. *stroitel'nye batal'ony* – 'construction battalions'). This amounted to a kind of internment. As soon as there were signs that the tide might turn in favour of the Red Army, in December 1941, the State Defence Committee of the USSR issued a decree to form Estonian national units within the Red Army. National units were also created for other nations, except the Germans.

Compared to other Red Army units, the Estonian corps took a very long time – almost a year – to form. Initially, the corps was to be sent to the front line. The Red Army's massive losses played a big role here; there was simply a shortage of soldiers. In the late autumn of 1942, the supreme command considered sending the corps to Stalingrad, which would have meant its rapid annihilation. As a result of correspondence between the ECP leaders and Stalin, the Estonians were sent to battle in December 1942, in a somewhat calmer section of the front line under Velikiye Luki, where the Red Army had surrounded a German garrison, and the Germans attempted to break the siege from the outside. Within a few weeks, the corps suffered heavy losses, with several thousand men dead or missing. A massive wave of defections to the German side ensued. The German garrison at Velikiye Luki surrendered in January 1943. After that, the 8th Estonian Rifle Corps was restored to battle readiness but did not see combat for another year and a half. In

early 1944, the corps was positioned near the Estonian border behind the front line in northeast Estonia but was not sent to the front. In its correspondence with the higher commands, the leadership of the Estonian SSR requested that the national corps be not sent to battle, as this would lead to irreparable losses in the “reserve cadre”. The Red Army suffered heavy losses in the battles on the Narva front between February and April, and the fear that the national corps would be destroyed as soon as it reached the Estonian border was well founded. Scepticism about the reliability of the Estonians in the Red Army had not disappeared either. Moreover, on the Narva front, they would have been fighting their compatriots on the German side (Kaasik 2015a, 207–213).

The Estonian Rifle Corps was finally sent into battle in September 1944, when a German withdrawal from Estonia was imminent. Among other assignments, a small advance force (a strengthened battalion, five rifle companies) from the Estonian Corps invaded Tallinn with other Red Army units on 22 September. (The Estonian Corps advanced from southeast Estonia under the 2nd Shock Army, while Tallinn was taken by the 8th Army, advancing from northeast.) In 1948, a small war of words broke out in Communist Party circles over who had raised the red flag on the Pikk Hermann (“Tall Hermann”) Tower of Toompea Castle, the highest point in Tallinn. The official propaganda of the Estonian SSR credited Lieutenant Lumiste of the Estonian Rifle Corps, but the Russian-language press in Estonia had circulated photographs showing two Russian soldiers of the Red Army hoisting the flag (Hiio 2008, 32–33; Miil 2011).

The Estonian corps of the Red Army had to fight bloody battles in the autumn of 1944 in Saaremaa, where the Germans stubbornly resisted, and also in the spring of 1945 in Courland. By that time, however, the corps had already served its propaganda function as the supposed liberator of the Estonian SSR (Kaasik 2011, 128–133). Sent to cultivate this image of liberator were political workers and politically reliable model soldiers from the Estonian corps; they took part in rallies all over Estonia and were glorified in the press and, quite soon, also in political publications. The veterans of the Rifle Corps met with workers and schoolchildren on public holidays and memorial occasions until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The effectiveness of the propaganda is difficult to estimate in retrospect. It cannot be said to have had no effect at all. One of the goals was to offset the impact of the propaganda during the German occupation. This propaganda had claimed that Estonians mobilised into the Red Army had all been killed in Russia and that if the Red

Army ever returned, the Estonian people would be exterminated or deported to Siberia. In the end, however, life had also been difficult during the German occupation, and the end of the war was a joyous occasion in itself.

Military Commissariats in Estonia and the 1944–1945 Mobilisation into the Red Army

Military commissariats, which arrived in Estonia with the special assignment groups, played a major role in consolidating Soviet rule. Their main task was to establish the record keeping of conscripts and mobilise several decades worth of conscripts into the Red Army. Preparations for the establishment of the Military Commissariat of the Estonian SSR began as early as February 1944, with the initial decision to mobilise into the Red Army all men aged 17–50 in the liberated territory of Estonia. The personnel of the Military Commissariat were recruited from the reserve of officers of the 1st Estonian Reserve Regiment in the Moscow military district in April and May 1944. Local military commissariats were set up for the 11 Estonian counties and four major cities.

The target was to mobilise 30,000 troops in Estonia. On 25 August 1944, the ESSR Council of People's Commissars announced the registration of residents. Men born between 1896 and 1904 were entered in the military register; men born between 1905 and 1926 were mobilised; and boys born in 1927 were registered as conscripts. On 11 November 1944, the Estonian SSR Military Commissariat started its additional registration of conscripts in the entire "liberated territory of the ESSR" (parts of Saaremaa were still in German hands). The draft human resources were estimated at approximately 120,000 men. By 1 February 1945, the Military Commissariat had registered 105,833 reservists and conscripts born between 1897 and 1927.

In the autumn and winter of 1944, about 20,000 men were mobilised into the Red Army from Estonia and sent for training or to the front. Initially, no one objected to the fact that many of them had worn a German or Finnish uniform just a few months earlier (Kaasik 2011, 133–136). However, as many of them were suspected of having served in the German army, most of the mobilised men were brought together in the 63rd Reserve Regiment, where they underwent a background check and awaited the decision on their future deployment. Some of them were sent to reinforce the 8th Estonian Rifle Corps and reached the front line in Courland in the early spring of 1945 (Kaasik 2012, 405–444).

The Attempt to Restore the Republic of Estonia in September 1944

In the autumn of 1944, it was still far from clear what the Soviet Union's borders and spheres of influence or international position would be after the war. By 1944, the Estonian independence movement was clearly oriented towards the then-allies of the USSR: Great Britain and the United States. Pro-independence forces placed their faith in the Atlantic Charter signed by US president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill on 14 August 1941, which proclaimed the restoration of sovereignty and the chosen political order to all nations from which it had been taken away. The independence movement espoused the ideology of the "third way": since Estonia could not seek independence by relying on either of the dictatorships that had occupied it – the USSR or Germany – pro-independence figures intended to appeal for help from Western democracies. The diplomats of the Republic of Estonia, who remained in exile in 1940, formed an Estonian foreign delegation, whose members followed developments in Estonia and sought to inform the governments and the public of Western countries. Finally, real steps had also been taken to restore independence. The most important political figure remaining in Estonia was the last Estonian prime minister, Jüri Uluots, who had led the government in 1939–1940 and had evaded Soviet persecution in Estonia in 1940–1941. Constitutionally, he was the acting head of state in a situation where the president was unable to perform his duties. Jüri Uluots was the bearer of the continuity of Estonian statehood and had the authority to form an interim government and declare the restoration of independent statehood. In the summer of 1941, it became clear that the German occupation authorities did not intend to restore the Republic of Estonia. Uluots withdrew from public activities and avoided efforts to form a government or declare independence. He opposed any cooperation with the German occupation authorities but did not consider it possible or necessary to take direct action against the Germans. This passive model was followed by most of the pro-independence opposition during the occupation. While Germany had occupied Estonia, it was also the only power that could plausibly repel the threat of the Soviet Union and the Red Army.

When the front line reached the Estonian border in early 1944, the creation of a political movement uniting all pro-independence circles

was put on the agenda once again. Uluots remained passive, and the National Committee of the Republic of Estonia emerged as the centre of the pro-independence forces and the basis for the subsequent formation of a government. By the end of March 1944, it had become a hub of pro-independence resistance and was recognised as a proxy parliament by Jüri Uluots and others. The formation of the National Committee allowed the Estonian foreign envoys to act on its behalf.

The Committee's activities did not go unnoticed by the German security police and SD, and in April 1944, several hundred of its leaders and activists were arrested; the National Committee suspended its activities for a while. The arrests were seen as a threat to maintaining the continuity of statehood. On

20 April 1944, Jüri Uluots called a constitutional electoral committee, which confirmed that the occupations had not changed the legal status of the Republic of Estonia as a sovereign state and appointed Uluots prime minister on the grounds that he was acting president.

The National Committee resumed activity in July 1944. A declaration, "To the People of Estonia!"; issued in August and printed on posters, announced the establishment of the National Committee to administer state power until the constitutional bodies of Estonia were restored. In August 1944, Uluots also appointed a government headed by Otto Tief as deputy prime minister. The composition of the government was announced at a National Committee meeting on 25 August, but due to the ongoing German occupation, it was not yet made public.

By 17 September, it was clear that the Germans were withdrawing from Estonia (Hitler had ordered the troops of Army Group North to abandon mainland Estonia the day before). On 18 September, Jüri Uluots appointed ministers, the Secretary of State, the Chief of



Jüri Uluots
(1890–1945),
President of Estonian
Parliament
(1938–1939),
Estonian Prime Minister
(1939–1940).
Photo (1938–1939),
National Digital
Archives, Warsaw,
Poland, collection
Koncern Ilustrowany
Kurier Codzienny
– Archiwum Ilustracji,
ref. no. 3/1/0/17/2971



The government of the Republic of Estonia in exile, Oslo 1953. August Rei is sitting in the middle. The last Prime Minister, acting President of the Republic in 1990–1992 Heinrich Mark is standing on the right. Estonian National Archives, ref. no. ERA.4962.1.46.80

Internal Defence, the Auditor General, the Chancellor of Justice, the President of the Bank of Estonia, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Uluots, suffering from cancer, was taken on board of a boat to Sweden the same evening with Minister of Justice Johannes Klesment and arrived in Stockholm a few days later. At a meeting convened on the morning of 20 September, the National Committee was dissolved. All powers were transferred to the government of the Republic. The government decided to start performing its duties, although the situation was hopeless both militarily and politically. The first orders were published in *Riigi Teataja* (*State Gazette*) No. 1 (publication was a prerequisite for government decisions to enter into force). On 20 September, the government issued a declaration announcing the continuation of the independent Republic of Estonia, the government's entry into office, and Estonia's neutrality in the ongoing war; it also protested the Red Army invasion. The blue, black, and white national flag was hoisted once again on the Pikk Hermann Tower in Tallinn. Given the hopelessness of the situation, the government itself never intended to remain in Estonia. However, the boat that was meant to pick up the members of government on the western coast of Estonia and take them to Sweden on 22 September could not depart from Sweden due to stormy weather. On 25

September, Otto Tief proposed to the members of government that they disperse in order to avoid being captured together. The boat did arrive a week later, on 29 September, but only Secretary of State, Helmut Maandi, escaped to Sweden on it. The rest of the members of government, who remained in Estonia, fell into the hands of the Soviet security services. Most of them were sentenced to many years in the Gulag; some were executed.

Jüri Uluots died in Sweden on 9 January 1945, and in accordance with the constitution, his post was taken over by Foreign Minister August Rei, the oldest member of the government. The leader of the Estonian socialists, Rei (1886–1963) had been the last Estonian envoy to Moscow. In the summer of 1940, when Estonia was occupied, he fled to Sweden through Riga, Latvia. In 1953, August Rei appointed the government of the Republic of Estonia in exile at a meeting that took place in the Norwegian capital, Oslo (Paavle 2014; *Tootan ustavaks jääda...* 2004; Sarv 2006). The government in exile terminated its activities in October 1992, following the parliamentary and presidential elections in accordance with a new constitution adopted by referendum in summer 1992.

The Administration of the Estonian SSR 1944–1946

The most important administrative body in Soviet-occupied Estonia was the Estonian Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party (from 1952 Communist Party of the Soviet Union, henceforth CPSU), which operated from 1944 to 1947. The Estonian Bureau was a supervisory body overseeing the activities of the top officials of the Estonian SSR and also an intermediary between the local leadership and the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and the Central Committee apparatus in Moscow. From 1944 to 1946, the head of the Bureau was Nikolai Shatalin, who simultaneously headed a similar bureau in Latvia; he was succeeded by Georgi Perov. The other members of the Bureau were the Estonian SSR Joint Commissioner of the People's Commissariats for Internal Affairs and State Security of the Soviet Union (Lt. Gen. Nikolay Sazykin from 1944 to 1945 and Lt. Gen. Nikolay Gorlinsky from 1945 to 1947); Estonian SSR party leader, 1st Secretary of the ECP Central Committee, Nikolay Karotamm; and the head of the government, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR, Arnold Veimer (Tannberg 2007, 231–246).

The highest authority in Estonia was the Central Committee apparatus of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP) – the local branch of the CPSU – and above all the Bureau of ECP Central Committee. All the most important decisions about Estonia were made by the Bureau, either under the authority and permission or with the knowledge and approval of the CPSU Central Committee; the decisions were then formally adopted and implemented through the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR and the Council of People's Commissars (from 1946, the Council of Ministers), which were the nominal legislative and executive body, respectively. In 1944, the members of the Bureau were Nikolay Karotamm, 1st Secretary of the ECP Central Committee; Sergei Sazonov, 2nd Secretary; Eduard Päll, Secretary for Agitation and Propaganda; Nikolai Puusep, Secretary for Cadres; Johannes Vares (known by his pen-name Vares-Barbarus), Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; Arnold Veimer, Council of People's Commissars; Boris Kumm, Head of the NKGB in Estonia; and Admiral Vladimir Tributs, Commander of the Baltic Fleet. Most of the Bureau's meetings were also attended by the chairman or deputy chairman of the Estonian Bureau of the CPSU. Johannes Vares, a doctor and a poet, was the only member of the Bureau who did not have a long career in the party. Although a wealthy medical professional, he was a left-wing intellectual and enjoyed good relations with the Estonian left-wing socialists, who had sought contacts with the Comintern since the mid-1930s and later with Soviet representatives in Estonia. In the spring and summer of 1940, he was chosen out as the head of the Estonian puppet government and appointed prime minister by the Soviets. In August, when Estonia was formally incorporated into the Soviet Union, the communist Johannes Lauristin became the head of the executive branch. Vares-Barbarus was appointed to the ceremonial position of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR.

Veimer, Kumm, and Lauristin were all former members of the Communist underground and had been imprisoned for subversive activities from 1924 to 1938. (They were convicted in the autumn of 1924 in the "Trial of the 149" and released by the amnesty granted in the spring of 1938, when Konstantin Päts was elected president). The rest of the members of the Bureau had been sent to Estonia from the Soviet Union. Nikolai Karotamm had a more colourful background. He left Estonia for the Netherlands in 1925 and joined the Communist Party of the Netherlands. Soon after, he went to the Soviet Union, studied at party educational institutions, and worked in the Comintern.

In the late 1920s, Karotamm spent a short period of time in Estonia as a member of the Communist underground and returned in the summer of 1940 with the Red Army (*EKP KK büroo istungite registid* 2006, 68–76; *Kõrgemad võimu vahendajad ENSV-s* 2000).

Officially, the highest legislative body was the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, formed in the summer of 1940. (After Estonia was occupied in July 1940, a new lower house of the parliament, officially still called the Riigivolikogu of the Republic of Estonia, was formed through rigged elections. All 80 seats were given to the electoral list of the Estonian Working People's Union, whose candidates had been approved by the Soviet emissaries in Estonia (envoy Kuzma Nikitin; adviser and later representative of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of People's Commissars, Vladimir Bochkarev; and most prominently, Member of the Politburo Andrei Zhdanov, who had led the occupation and annexation of Estonia). The opposing candidates nominated by the Estonian democratic forces were removed by Zhdanov's order; only one candidate was left in each constituency, following the example of Soviet elections. Most of the opposing candidates were soon arrested and sent to the Gulag. In August 1940, Estonia was incorporated into the USSR as a Soviet republic, and the lower house of the parliament (Riigivolikogu) was renamed the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR). By 1944, at least 25 of its 80 members had been killed in various ways. Following the example of the Soviet Union, each constituency had one candidate with no substitutes. On 17 September 1944, a session of the Supreme Soviet was held in Võru, southeast Estonia, declaring the continuity of the Soviet rule in Estonia. On the morning of the same day, while most of Estonia was still under German occupation, the Red Army launched an attack on the Tartu front, which ended with the capture of Tallinn five days later. The chairman of the permanent body of the Supreme Soviet – the Presidium – and the nominal head of state of the Estonian SSR was still Vares-Barbarus (who committed suicide in November 1946). In the summer of 1945, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet extended the term of the Supreme Soviet until new elections (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu esimese koosseisu volituste pikendamise kohta. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the extension of the term of the first composition of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR]. 14 July 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. [ESSR Gazette]. 1945, 25, 374), which did not take place until 1947. In 1944, a new Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR, the executive

body, was appointed. Arnold Veimer, the former deputy chairman, now became chairman of the Council (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus sm. Arnold Veimer'i nimetamise kohta Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu esimeheks. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the appointment of Arnold Veimer as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR]. 26 September 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1944, 1, 3). (Johannes Lauristin, who was appointed chairman in August 1940, was killed during evacuation from Estonia in August 1941. From 1942 to 1944, Oskar Sepre, Chairman of the Planning Committee of the Estonian SSR, performed the duties of the chairman of the CPC).

The session of the Supreme Soviet meeting in Võru on 17 September 1944, formally decided to establish the ESSR People's Commissariat of State Defence and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The order for the formation of the defence and foreign ministries of the Soviet republics had already been issued by the senior leadership of the USSR at the end of January 1944, after the Tehran Conference, when Ukraine and Byelorussia as well as the Baltic countries and Moldova were still under German occupation. The 27 January 1944 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU decided to form national military units for the Soviet republics (The national units of the Soviet republics within the Soviet armed forces were abolished in 1956. By that time, only the Baltic and Transcaucasian Soviet republics still had their national units. These were training units that were part of the general command and control system of the Soviet armed forces. The Soviet republics did not have their own military command.) and to give the republics formal foreign policy powers, thereby reorganising the All-Union People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs and Defence into union-republic commissariats with subordinate people's commissariat in each Soviet republic ("O preobrazovanii Narodnogo Komissariata Oborony i Narodnogo Komussariata Inostrannykh Del iz obshchesoyuznykh v soyuzno-respublikanskii narodnye komussariaty [On the transformation of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs from all-Union into Union-Republican People's Commissariats]. *Protokol* 1992,; 61–62, 64; Tannberg 2007, 225–226; Kaasik 2009a, 109–110). This was part of Stalin's plan for shaping the post-war world. The foreign policy reason for promoting the status of the "Soviet republic statehood" became clear during the talks held in connection with the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. One of the Soviet Union's proposals to the Allies was that all Soviet republics receive



full representation in the United Nations. The Americans proposed, in turn, that all 48 US states should then also become members of the United Nations. In the end, a compromise was reached: in addition to the Soviet Union, only the Ukrainian SSR and the Byelorussian SSR, the parts of the USSR that had suffered most during the war, would become the founding members of the United Nations (Piirimäe 2014, 113 ff; *The Kremlin Letters* 2018).

All this was a mere formality. The top leadership of the Soviet Union retained full control over defence and foreign policy. At a meeting on 17 September 1944, its first since the spring of 1941, the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR officially adopted the decision handed down by the top leadership in January, passing laws on the formation of the People's Commissariats for State Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Estonian SSR (Eesti Nõukogude Sotsialistliku Vabariigi ülemnõukogu seadused Eesti NSV liiduvabariikliku Riigikaitse Rahvakomissariaadi moodustamise kohta ja Eesti NSV liiduvabariikliku Välisasjade Rahvakomissariaadi moodustamise kohta. [The Acts of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic on the establishment of the People's Commissariat for State Defence of the Estonian SSR and the establishment of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the Estonian SSR]. 17 September 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1944, 2, 8, and 9). The constitution of the

Members of the Supreme Soviet of the ESSR in Võru, 17 September 1944. From the left: Johannes Vares-Barbarus, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Rudolf Jurtom, Professor Hans Kruus, Rector of the University of Tartu; Valentin Volkov. Estonian National Archives, ref. no. EFA.205.0.37877

Estonian SSR was amended in the summer of 1945, incorporating the ESSR People's Commissariats for State Defence and Foreign Affairs into the Council of People's Commissars (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu seadus Eesti NSV Konstitutsiooni (Põhiseaduse) § 45 ja 48 muutmise kohta. [Act of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on amendments to Sections 45 and 48 of the Constitution of the Estonian SSR]. 6 June 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1945, 23, 341).

On 28 October 1944, Hans Kruus (1891–1976) was appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus sm. Hans Kruus'i nimetamise kohta Eesti NSV Välisasjade Rahvakomissariiks. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the appointment of Hans Kruus as the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Estonian SSR]. 28 October 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1944, 10, 106). Kruus, an ordinary professor at the University of Tartu, was a well-known Estonian historian who, in the summer of 1940, chose to collaborate with the Soviet occupying powers and was appointed deputy prime minister in the Vares-Barbarus puppet government in June. (The reason for this choice was that, from 1917 to the early 1920s, he had been one of the leaders of the Estonian socialist revolutionaries and later the left-wing socialists, until he left politics to teach at the university). From September 1940, he was the rector of the University of Tartu, formally retaining this title in the Soviet rear and after returning to Estonia in 1944, until he was appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. After the founding of the United Nations, the office of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet republic was a mere sinecure, as is confirmed by the fact that Kruus simultaneously held the position of the President of the Estonian SSR Academy of Sciences as of 1946. In 1950, he was dismissed from all positions and imprisoned by the Ministry of State Security (MGB), accused of "bourgeois nationalism". He was detained in Moscow for four years and released in January 1954, after Stalin's death. Kruus was restored to the Academy of Sciences and continued his research on Estonian history (Liivik 2009, 113–129).

The People's Commissar for State Defence was not appointed for the Estonian SSR until the end of the war. In late June 1945, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU appointed a former commander of the Estonian Rifle Corps of the Red Army, Lembit Pärn (1903–1974), People's Commissar for State Defence of the Estonian SSR. Following this, the Presidium of the ESSR Supreme Soviet also issued a decree to that effect (Kaasik 2009a, 109–112; Eesti NSV

Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus kaardiväe-kindralleitnant Lembit Pärn'a nimetamise kohta Eesti NSV Riigikaitse Rahvakomissariiks. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the appointment of Guards Lieutenant General Lembit Pärn as People's Commissar for State Defence of the Estonian SSR]. 19 July 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1945, 28, 414). However, from the beginning, the People's Commissar (or Minister) of State Defence at the Soviet republic level had no more than a titular role the function of a chair at the cabinet table. His ministry consisted of a handful of officers and clerks. After most of the men were demobilised in 1946, the wartime Estonian Rifle Corps of the Red Army (It was known as the 8th Estonian Tallinn Rifle Corps from 1942 to 1945 and the 41st Guards Tallinn Rifle Corps from 1945 to 1946) was transformed into the 22nd Guards Estonian Rifle Brigade, where Estonian conscripts did their compulsory military service. In 1948, Lembit Pärn was reassigned to the Voroshilov Military Academy of the General Staff in Moscow for further training and was later retained there as a lecturer. The position of the Minister of State Defence was maintained in the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR until the appointment of a council in 1951; after that, it no longer existed. The position of Foreign Minister was merged with the position of Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu otsus Eesti NSV Valitsuse – Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu moodustamise kohta. [Decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the establishment of the Government of the Estonian SSR – the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR]. 29 March 1951. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1951, 4, 38; Kaasik 2009a, 112).

Lieutenant General Pärn was born into the family of an Estonian settler in the Stavropol Governorate in Russia and was one of the few Estonian senior officers in the Red Army who escaped Stalin's purges in the late 1930s. In the late autumn of 1941, he was appointed to form Estonian national units in the Soviet rear and was the commander of the Estonian Rifle Corps since 1942.

In 1946, across the Soviet Union, the People's Commissars were renamed "Ministers" and the Councils of People's Commissars became "Councils of Ministers" (Zakon SSSR ot 15 marta 1946 goda "O preobrazhenii Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov SSSR v Sovet Ministrov SSSR i Sovetov Narodnykh Komissarov soyuznykh i avtonomnykh respublik – v Sovety Ministrov soyuznykh i avtonomnykh respublik", *Sbornik zakonov SSSR* 1956, 77–78; Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride

Nõukogu ümberkujundamise kohta Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukoguks. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the reorganisation of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR as the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR]. 25 March 1946. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1946, 19, 144).

The Red Army and the Baltic Fleet in Estonia

The Estonian Rifle Corps constituted just a small part of the Soviet soldiers deployed in Estonia from the autumn of 1944. Most of the Corps fought in Saaremaa in October and November, and from March 1945, in Courland, returning only around the Midsummer's Day 1945. The Corps was demobilised in 1946.

From September to November 1944, the corps, divisions, and smaller units of the 2nd Assault Army and 8th Army of the Leningrad Front also fought in Estonia. After the the fighting ended in mainland Estonia, the 2nd Assault Army was deployed to Poland, near the city of Ostrów Mazowiecka, and subordinated to the High Command of the 2nd Byelorussian Front. The command and corps of the 8th Army, which fought in northern Estonia and the islands, remained in Estonia until the summer of 1945; it was then moved out and disbanded in September. The 8th Army headquarters was set up in Tallinn, and the army comprised the 6th and 109th Rifle Corps (three rifle divisions each) among its many other units. In the summer of 1945, the 8th Army headquarters in Tallinn was replaced by the 10th Guards Army headquarters, and its 19th and 15th Guards Rifle Corps, as well as the 2nd Guards Tank Division, were deployed to Estonia. Estonian airfields served as bases for some of the units of the 13th Air Army: the 275th Fighter Division (armed with Jakovlev Jak-9 aircrafts) was based on the west coast of Estonia near Haapsalu from May 1945 and remained in Estonia until 1957; there were also regiments of the 281st Assault Air Division there, and one at Tartu airbase. In total, there were about a dozen military airfields in Estonia. In the autumn of 1944, units of the 77th Air Defence Division, based in Leningrad Oblast, were brought to Tallinn, Tartu, and Tapa. In addition, there were a number of military hospitals, construction battalions, and other smaller military units in Estonia.

A large portion of the Soviet forces in Estonia were units of the Baltic Fleet. In 1944, the fleet covered the naval defence areas of Kronstadt, Tallinn, the western Estonian islands, and Riga and also controlled



the Porkkala naval base on the Finnish coast. From September 1944 to February 1946, the fleet headquarters was established in Tallinn, and another important naval base was in Paldiski. In addition to warships and naval units deployed on the coast, the Baltic Fleet's coastal artillery with a number of batteries of various sizes was also deployed in Estonia. Part of the air force of the Baltic Fleet was stationed in various airbases across Estonia.

Subordinated to the People's Commissariats for Internal Affairs and State Security were also a number of special military units in Estonia, from prison guards and the 392nd Convoy Regiment to construction battalions, which in 1946 also took some of the prisoners of war from the Baltic States who had fought in the German or Finnish army (Pärn 2005). From the summer of 1946 until its dissolution in December, the command of the 63rd Internal Troops Rifle Division (counterinsurgency troops) was located in Tallinn. The division's three regiments were based in Paide, Tallinn, and Tartu. (The division was formed in January 1945 in the Bialystok region of Poland to clear the rear areas behind the Red Army's advance, and was awarded the Gdańsk title of honour in May 1945. In June 1945, a consolidated battalion was formed from one of the regiments of the division for the guard service at the Potsdam Conference; *63-ya strelkovaya diviziya*).

From the left: Chairman of the ESSR Council of the People's Commissars Arnold Veimer, Commanding Officer of the Baltic Fleet Admiral Vladimir Tributs and Chairman of the Praesidium of the ESSR Supreme Soviet Johannes Vares-Barbarus during a military parade in Tallinn, 1945. Estonian National Archives, ref. no. EFA.203.0.64439

From 1944 to 1950, the command of the Baltic District Border Guard Force of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR was located in Tallinn; subordinated to it were three border guard detachments (*пограничный отряд*, over 500 men each) and two squadrons of patrol vessels (Pärn 2005). The total number of the Red Army and the Baltic Fleet personnel in Estonia is unknown, and in fact, it changed constantly, but it has been estimated at approximately 100,000. For comparison: as of 1 January 1945, Estonia had the population of 851,349, according to the Statistics Administration of the Estonian SSR (Paavle 2011).

Crimes Committed by Members of the Armed Forces

Shortly after the Soviet forces conquered Estonia, the ECP leaders and heads of other Estonian SSR institutions were forced to send reports and memoranda all the way up to the CPSU Central Committee, as the arrival of the Red Army “liberators” unleashed a wave of (war) crimes: killings, rape, robberies, public theft, drunken riots, demolition of property and so on. Not only did the civilian population fall victim to violence, but government institutions and other public buildings were also looted and the property stolen or destroyed. It was not easy to explain to the Red Army soldiers that they were not in hostile territory but had liberated a Soviet republic from German occupation. On 6 September 1945, 1st Secretary of the ECP Central Committee Nikolay Karotamm said at a meeting of the Central Committee Bureau:

“I received a letter from the deputy prosecutor of the Estonian SSR reporting that, when convicted by a tribunal, a Red Army soldier made the following statement: How come I am being tried because of some Estonian?” (Stenographic record of the meeting of the Bureau of the EC(B)P CC, 6 September 1945, point 1. [On the strengthening of the contacts between the local Party, Komsomol and Soviet organisations and the units of the Red Army and the Baltic Fleet]. Estonian National Archives. RA, ERAF 1.4.234).

The deputy prosecutor's report shows that this was not just the case of random acts by individual soldiers. It involved a more general mentality spread by wartime propaganda and wanton liberties taken

by the military, which was either intentionally ignored or it was out of control. The correspondence between the local authorities of the Estonian SSR and the military authorities shows that they were unable to stop the looting – the former did not have the power, and the latter lacked either the will or ability. There are only a few known cases of the Red Army soldiers being punished for marauding. In most cases, the officers chose to justify the actions or omissions of their subordinates. It was even claimed that local “bandits” were behind the marauding.

For the Estonian communists, the pillaging committed by the Red Army soldiers was a double concern. It was clear that the marauding had to be stopped somehow; at the same time, they needed to communicate to the public that “liberators” had arrived. Reports to party authorities arriving in the autumn of 1944 contained ideologically unacceptable comparisons between the “liberators” and the German occupation authorities, combined with the conclusion that the Estonian people had fallen out of the frying pan into the fire (Kaasik 2013).

The correspondence shows that, at least in 1944, only a fraction of the incidents of looting and violence were recorded. In most cases, civilians did not see the point of complaining or had nowhere to turn, or were simply frightened, because the looters were armed and the local Soviet bodies’ complaints to higher authorities were evidently getting them nowhere. Analysis of the statistics of “manifestations of banditry” compiled by the local NKVD shows that, out of 219 registered cases, 206 were robberies committed by the Red Army soldiers against private individuals and farms; the remaining 13 were attacks on military personnel or Soviet activists. However, the summary of official statistics claimed that the “nationalist underground and its armed bandits” were behind almost all the crimes. The official statistics of 1944 were deliberately falsified (Kuusk 2007, 323–324).

Ongoing Soviet Terror

The various institutions of the Soviet state security system were intertwined – through continuous mergers and divisions – and in competition with each other. In 1943, the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs was once again split into two (the first time was from February to July 1941): the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD (MVD, after it was renamed Ministry for Internal Affairs in 1946), and the People’s Commissariat for State Security, or

Boris Kumm, ESSR
People's Commissar
of the State Security
(photo from 9
October 1940).
Estonian Sports and
Olympic Museum, ref.
no. ESM F 136:63/B
753

NKGB (renamed MGB). From 1943 to 1946, the Red Army and the Soviet Navy had counterintelligence agencies of their own, known as Smersh, which were subordinated to the People's Commissariat of Defence and the People's Commissariat of the Navy respectively (They consisted of the main directorate in the case of the People's Commissariat of Defence of the Soviet Union, a directorate in the case of the People's Commissariat of the Navy, and a department (for internal troops) in the case of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs).

The NKVD supervised the ordinary prisons in Estonia, as well as 10 prisoner of war camps for German POWs, a screening and filtration camp No. 0316 outside Paldiski (approximately 40 km from Tallinn, closed in 1946), the Baltic Naval Base Construction Directorate (Baltvøyenmorstroy) with its construction battalions, the above-mentioned convoy and internal forces units, and the border guard. An important role was played by the NKVD Anti-Bandit Combat Department (OBB), whose main task in the occupied Baltic States was to fight the armed resistance, or "political banditry", as it was described in Soviet parlance. However, the OBB also pursued deserters and draft evaders, alongside various Smersh departments.



The Smersh subdivisions operating in Estonia were those assigned to the Red Army and Navy units located on Estonian territory, including the Smersh departments of the Estonian Rifle Corps and its two divisions. They were subordinated to the Smersh directorate of the Leningrad Front and the Smersh department of the Baltic Fleet. In addition to the subdivisions of its central office and the Estonian SSR office, the NKGB also supervised the NKGB Transport Department of the Estonian Railways and the NKGB Waterways Department of the Estonian Basin.

The NKVD/MVD and NKGB/MGB were union-republican ministries, meaning that the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR had both a People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and a People's Commissariat for State Security. From 1944 to 1951, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (later Minister of the Interior) was Aleksander Resev (1905–1969), and the People's Commissar (later Minister) for State Security from 1944 to 1950 was Boris Kumm (1897–1958). Both had been imprisoned from 1924 to 1938 for communist subversion in Estonia. They played a secondary role: outside ordinary law enforcement, firefighting, and the like, the entire field of internal affairs and security was run by the central authorities in Moscow, represented locally by the above-mentioned NKVD/NKGB commissioner in the Estonian SSR, Lieutenant General Sazykin, and, after his promotion, Lieutenant General Gorlinsky.

The leadership of the ESSR NKGB and NKVD was not subordinated to the government authorities of the Estonian SSR. Their positions were part of the CPSU Central Committee nomenklatura, which meant that these men were appointed by the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party or even by its Politburo. In December 1945, Lavrenti Beria was replaced by Sergey Kruglov as the USSR People's Commissar of the NKVD. In May 1946, the People's Commissar of the USSR NKGB, Merkulov, was dismissed and replaced with Viktor Abakumov, the former head of Smersh. Smersh was dissolved



Aleksander Resev, ESSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (1945). Estonian National Archives, ref. no. ERAF.2.1.2726.4.

and Abakumov reassigned a number of Smersh officers to the local departments of the NKGB/MGB. Subsequently, the MGB's influence over the MVD increased, and several areas of activity previously subordinated to the MVD were transferred to the MGB. However, these details are outside the scope of this article (Saueauk 2009a, 91–92).

In the cases of political prisoners, the Military Prosecutor of the NKVD Forces in the Estonian SSR brought charges and acted as the supervisory body. The sentencing was done by several different tribunals: the Estonian SSR military tribunal of the NKVD forces, but also the military tribunals of the Leningrad Front, the Tallinn garrison, and the Baltic Fleet, as well as those of different armies and corps. Some of the cases were referred to the Special Board of the People's Commissar of the NKVD of the Soviet Union. The Special Board was an extrajudicial sentencing body. The military tribunals were not courts in the familiar sense; they handed out mostly pre-determined punishments, and they processed cases secretly, often without legal representation. But unlike these tribunals, the Special Board passed sentences in the absence of the accused (Saueauk 2009a, 87–90).

In 1944, on the heels of the Red Army, the local NKVD and NKGB special assignment groups entered Estonia and the other Baltic States. Working alongside them was an operative group of the USSR NKGB under Vsevolod Merkulov, People's Commissar of the NKGB of the USSR, who occasionally made personal visits to Tallinn. As early as 3 March 1944, he had issued instructions on operational work in the Baltic republics, which identified 19 categories of individuals to be arrested immediately. These included people who had collaborated with German intelligence and counter-intelligence services, leaders of the Estonian Self-Government under the German occupation, and officers of the Estonian units of the German army, as well as prominent members of Estonian society during the years of Estonian independence (who had escaped the terror of 1940–1941). The number of people to be arrested turned out to be too large, and the list soon had to be shortened. This does not imply that the Soviet authorities had become more tolerant of the “traitors to the homeland” and “former people”. The arrest of all those on the initial list would have simply jeopardised the entire project of the Sovietisation of Estonia, since too few people would have been left behind. Mass arrests would have also undermined the “liberation” propaganda (Saueauk 2013, 98–99).

The tasks of the NKVD and NKGB special assignment groups activated in Estonia in August and September 1944 were as follows:

- suppressing civilian resistance;
- pursuing German intelligence agents and collaborators with the German occupation authorities;
- fighting deserters, marauders, and local criminals;
- ensuring public order;
- organising the registration of residents and establishing a passport regime;
- arranging the guarding of infrastructure and enterprises of military importance;
- setting prisoner of war camps and filtration camps (Saueauk 2013, 95).

Estonian territory was divided into operational sectors, and mass arrests began. By 1 January 1945, there were already 4,218 prisoners in the NKVD prisons in Estonia, but other security branches also had their own detention facilities. In 1945, the local NKGB imprisoned more than 6,500 people, in addition to the nearly 5,700 people imprisoned by the OBB (Saueauk 2013, 90).

Resistance, which was both active and passive, was not much of a threat to the Soviet rule in Estonia, which was based on a large-scale military presence and the activities of security agencies. However, resistance posed a threat to Sovietisation. The main objectives of the Soviet regime were to break the old way of thinking – labelled “bourgeois nationalism” – and to fight its proponents. Communist ideology made it impossible in Soviet view to conceive of anti-Communist resistance happening without foreign support and central leadership on the ground. Initially, Germany was seen as being behind the resistance activity; later, after the outset of the Cold War, it was the intelligence services of capitalist countries, in collusion with Estonian refugees abroad. The alleged local centres of underground activity were perceived by the Soviet security agencies as local agents of foreign intelligence services or anti-Soviet organisations with close ties to such services, which in turn supposedly formed and led “armed bandits”. This idea was not completely fabricated: the Baltic refugees in the West and many people in Estonia initially did hope for an imminent armed conflict pitting the United States and Great Britain against their former ally, the USSR – a conflict that would free the Baltics from the Soviet clutches and restore their independence. The US and British intelligence services also sent their agents to the Baltics, as well as other western regions of the

Soviet Union, who made contact with armed resistance fighters. This was a natural part of intelligence activities on both sides at the beginning of the Cold War. However, the idea that there were thousands of highly motivated armed resistance fighters hiding from the Soviet authorities and maintaining constant contact with Estonian refugees, as well as US and British intelligence services, was not true (*Eesti metsavennad* 2014; Kuusk 2009; Noormets and Ohmann 2009, 227–244, 265–288). In most cases, these people were only hiding from the authorities and hoping for the Soviet rule to collapse in a clash with the West, or perhaps even without such a clash. These hopes were fuelled by foreign radio stations and even more so by popular rumours (Tammela 2009, 151–162).

The year 1945, which saw more than 12,000 people put in prison under Soviet terror, would remain the pinnacle of political terror in terms of the number of arrests. In 1944, close to 5,300 people were imprisoned, and in 1946, more than 2,600. By 1947, the number of prisoners dropped somewhat but then began to rise again. In 1949, more than 20,000 Estonians, including whole families, were deported to Siberia. In addition, more than 3,000 people were arrested in both 1949 and 1950 (Saueauk 2009b, 309).

The Deportation of Germans in 1945

In August 1945, 407 people – Germans and their families – were deported from Estonia. Overshadowed by the mass arrests of 1945, this may have gone relatively unnoticed, especially because many of the deportees were not particularly prominent throughout Estonia or even more locally. This operation can be seen as a continuation of the deportation of the Soviet Union's German minority that started in the summer of 1941, when people were removed from their homes along the Volga and the Black Sea, in the North Caucasus, Bessarabia, and elsewhere. Alternatively, it can be seen as a parallel operation that coincided with retaliations against German minorities in Eastern European countries freed from German occupation. A connection with the former is more plausible, however.

There was a small German community in Estonia and Latvia until the beginning of World War II. They were the descendants of Crusaders, Teutonic nobles, and Hanseatic merchants who were arriving since the 13th century, as well as craftsmen and other simple folk. Later, they were joined by intellectuals who immigrated

to Estonia as of the second half of the 18th century, and their descendants. The Lutheran German-speaking upper class ruled the “Russian Baltic” provinces until World War I; they made up the absolute majority of the large landowners and upper classes in the cities. After Estonia and Latvia won their independence, the Baltic German minority lost all of its former privileges. This minority had already started emigrating to Germany in the 1890s, during the Russification of the Baltic Governorates. In addition to the “real” Baltic Germans, there were also many Germanised Estonians and Latvians, and also Russians, in the cities. This is reflected in the statistics for Estonia. The 1934 census shows 16,346 Germans living in Estonia, or 1.5% of the Estonian population. As a result of resettlement in 1939–1940 and again in 1941, approximately 21,000 people, whose nationality was verified by German representatives in charge of approving the transfer lists, left Estonia at the invitation of the German government. All Germans were supposed to leave Estonia by April 1941. Those who did not, however, still had the opportunity to do so during the German occupation or with the retreating German forces, or by joining the Estonian civilians fleeing to Germany or across the sea to Sweden in the autumn of 1944. But as life rarely goes according to plan, NKVD officers and bureaucrats still found 261 Germans living in Estonia in 1945 (The best-known person on the list was Edgar von Wahl (1867–1948), a Baltic German nobleman and mathematician, the inventor of the artificial language Interlingue. He chose not to resettle to Germany in 1939, was admitted to a mental hospital in Tallinn during the German occupation, and spent the rest of his life there. He escaped deportation, probably because he was an elderly man and a psychiatric patient). They were deported to Russia along with 146 non-German family members. They were allowed to return home after Stalin’s death (Rahi-Tamm 2009, 415–428).

The Processing of the “Special Contingent” in Estonia: Screening and Filtration Camp No. 0316 in Põllküla 1944/1945–1946

Millions of Soviet subjects, or citizens of the countries and regions occupied by the USSR in 1939 and 1940, had either accidentally found themselves or voluntarily remained in the “territories temporarily conquered” by Germany or its allies during the war. By the end of

the war, many of them found themselves in other European countries and parts of Germany occupied by the Red Army. All of these people were suspected of treason and treated as a “special contingent” (*спец[иальный] контингент, spetskontigent*); this meant that their wartime past was investigated and they were then either sent back home, subjected to forced resettlement to distant regions of the Soviet Union, or put before a tribunal and sent to a prison camp. Special attention was paid to men who had served in the Red Army and had been captured by the enemy. They were suspected of treason regardless of the circumstances under which they were taken prisoner, and investigated with particular zeal. Men who had joined the non-German units of the German army to avoid being sent to a POW camp, or out of a genuine desire to fight Bolshevism, were usually sentenced to a prison camp. Officers were punished more severely. However, civilians returning from Germany and other European countries also went through filtration: some had ended up in the Red Army-controlled territory and were repatriated as Soviet citizens. There were also many who voluntarily returned to the USSR from the US, British, or French occupation zones. Some did so simply in the hope of returning home or for family reasons, but there were also those who were persuaded by the Soviet propaganda directed at the inhabitants of the displaced persons camps in the Western occupation zones. A separate group consisted of soldiers who had served in the German armed forces and were repatriated to the USSR from the POW camps in the Western zones for various reasons. The largest number of Estonians were extradited from POW camps in the French zone, followed by the US zone; the smallest number were extradited from the British zone.

In October 1944, a screening and filtration point was set up in Põllküla outside the town of Paldiski. Through this point, by the end of 1944, nearly 25,000 people repatriated to the USSR were returned to their homes, only a fraction of whom were Estonian residents. In January 1945, the Põllküla screening and filtration point was established as NKVD screening and filtration camp No. 0316 for the detention and processing of the “special contingent”. The processing was handled by the camp’s Smersh department. By March 1946, nearly 17,300 people had been filtered, just over 10,000 of whom had served in the German army. Smersh arrested 736 of them, including 417 former Red Army soldiers. Of these, 44 were classified as spies, seven as saboteurs, 674 as traitors, two as bandits, three as facilitators of bandits, one as an anti-Soviet element, and three as deserters; two were

arrested for other reasons. The largest national group among them were the Russians, with 286 prisoners. There were 269 Estonians, 110 Latvians, and 48 Ukrainians; other nationalities were less numerous. In all, 395 investigations were carried out concerning 417 individuals; of these, 365 cases (389 people) were referred to military tribunals or the NKVD Special Board for sentencing. Six people were sentenced to death, 99 were sent to prison camps for up to 10 years, and 275 were sent for more than 10 years. Seven persons were released due to lack of evidence. The remaining cases were handed over to other investigative agencies, mostly to the Smersh directorate of the Leningrad Front.

By the time camp No. 0316 was closed in the spring of 1946, 21,667 people had been processed. Most of the camp residents who were not arrested were sent to 12 construction battalions, which were placed at the disposal of the NKVD's Baltic Naval Base Construction Directorate (*Baltvøyenmorstroy*). The construction battalions had a total of 13,000–15,000 soldiers and NCOs and 700–800 officers. Most of the men mobilised into the Red Army in Estonia since the autumn of 1944 were sent to these battalions. When the Estonian Rifle Corps was demobilised in 1946 (see above), some former front-line soldiers were also sent to construction battalions, mostly those who had not yet completed their three-year compulsory military service. The battalions were deployed to large-scale construction sites of all-Soviet Union importance in Estonia, such as the naval base in Paldiski, the uranium enrichment plant in Sillamäe in northeast Estonia, the oil shale gas pipeline from Kohtla-Järve to Leningrad, and others. Sometimes Red Army soldiers, the “special contingent”, German prisoners of war, and civilians would work side by side on these sites. The German POWs were occasionally guarded by members of the “special contingent” who had themselves served in the German army. Some of the men worked on construction sites until the mid-1950s. The situation and working conditions in the barracks-based labour battalions were not much different from those in a prison camp, although the men were in military service rather than prisoners (Kaasik 2010; Kaasik 2009b, 333–344; Kaasik 2015b, 403–506; Schaake 2015). The main reason for the relatively lenient treatment of the “special contingent” compared to earlier and later times was the shortage of labour in the parts of the Soviet Union that had seen fighting. This also applied to the occupied Baltic States. In the autumn of 1946, the provisions of ordinary labour law were extended to part of the “special contingent”, as were the rights and benefits enjoyed by ordinary workers and employees at

companies and construction sites (Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu määrus repatrieeritud endiste sõjavangide ja sõjaväekohuslaste paremast kasutamisest tööstuses, ehitustöödel ja transpordis ja neile demobiliseeritute kohta ettenähtud soodustuste laiendamisest. [Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR on the improvement of use of repatriated former prisoners of war and conscripts in industry, construction, and transport, and on the extension to them of the benefits for the demobilised]. 19 October 1946. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1946, 53, 454).

The Continued Sovietisation of Estonia

In 1941, the German invasion of the USSR and the expulsion of the Red Army from Estonia had interrupted Sovietisation. In July 1940, all land had been declared people's property, and large industrial enterprises, banks, savings banks, larger apartment buildings, among others, had been confiscated from private owners from July 1940 to June 1941 (Kaasik and Hiio 2006, 163–174). (Most important acts were: “Riigivolikogu poolt 23. juulil 1940 vastu võetud Deklaratsioon maa kuulutamiseks rahva omanduseks”. [Declaration passed by the Riigivolikogu on 23 July 1940 announcing that the land belongs to all the people]. *Riigi Teataja*. [State Gazette]. 1940: 77, 744; “Riigivolikogu poolt 23. juulil 1940 vastuvõetud Deklaratsioon pankade ja suurtööstuse natsionaliseerimise kohta”. [Declaration passed by the Riigivolikogu on 23 July 1940 on the nationalisation of the banks and big industries]. *Riigi Teataja*, 1940: 77 and 745; “Natsionaliseerimise korraldamise seadus”. Nationalisation Act. 1 August 1940. *Riigi Teataja*. 1940: 89, 870. Later, the lists of nationalised enterprises, banks, savings banks, apartment buildings a. o. were regularly published in the State Gazette, after the incorporation of Estonia into the USSR in August 1940 in the *Eesti NSV Teataja*). A small fraction of the property had been returned to the owners during the German occupation, but as the Germans considered Estonia to be a conquered part of the Soviet Union, they were in no hurry to return expropriated property to the former owners unless it was in the interests of war economy (Maripuu 2012, 165–169; Myllyniemi 1973). In 1944, agricultural activity – the most important livelihood of the Estonian population – continued. It started, at first, on individual farms based on small land ownership, which was first introduced with the buying of farms in the second half of the 19th century and completed with the Estonian land reform of

1919, abolishing large land ownership. The nationalisation of land in July 1940, with one of the first laws passed in occupied Estonia, meant that the size of a farm was limited to 30 hectares (this was the average size of an Estonian farm), and agreements were signed with former farm owners granting them permanent use of the land. The granting of land use in perpetuity continued after the war. A 1946 regulation stipulated:

“Permanent land-use grants for farming will be issued to all peasants who own land [---] it is prohibited to issue deeds for plots larger than 30 hectares or to reduce the size of plots for those receiving land through land reform (new settlers and recipients of additional land) or for old farmers” (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu ja Eestimaa Kommunistliku (bolševike) Partei Keskkomitee määrus Eesti NSV talupoegadele maa põlise pidamise aktide andmise kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Estonian SSR and the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist (Bolshevist) Party on the issuance of permanent deeds for the farming of land to farmers of the Estonian SSR]. 8 March 1946. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1946: 18, 139.

The collectivisation of agriculture on the Soviet model (i.e., forced joining of farmers into kolkhozes) began in Estonia and the other Baltic countries in 1947. Collectivisation culminated in 1949 and 1950 after the mass deportation of the rural population to Siberia in March 1949, which scared most of those who had escaped deportation into joining the collective farms and stifled the support for the armed resistance movement. The integration of agricultural organisation with the Soviet system had been delayed for several years, because much of the population were farmers or involved in farming, and forced collectivisation would have endangered the Sovietisation project as a whole. Moreover, the post-war food situation in the Soviet Union was difficult, and the restructuring of agriculture would have meant a sharp decline in production.

One of the first acts of the returning Soviet occupation authorities in the autumn of 1944 was to impose an obligation on farms to sell their produce to the state. The quota per hectare of arable land was higher for owners of larger farms. For example, a farmer with two to 10 hectares of land was required to sell 15 kg of grain per hectare of farmland to the state, regardless of the size of their cropland used for cereals, while a farmer with more than 25 hectares was required to sell 130 kg, or eight times more. Similarly differentiated

norms were introduced for the sale of potatoes, meat, and milk to the state (Regulations of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR and the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist (Bolshevist) Party on the obligation of ESSR agricultural farms to sell grain, potatoes, meat and milk to the state. 1 September 1944. *ESSR Gazette* 1944: 2, 12–15). The yield of cereals per hectare at the time was about 1,000 kg, but no farmer grew cereals on the entire land, because meat and milk production was much more advanced in Estonia than in most of other parts of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the norm for cereals was a harsh burden for many farmers, regardless of the size of the farm. In addition, in 1945, a one-off war tax was levied on all members of farm holdings, ranging from 150 to 245 roubles, depending on the region (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus sõjamaksu määrade kinnitamise kohta Eesti NSV-s talumajapidamiste liikmetele. [Regulation of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the approval of rates of war tax for members of agricultural farms in the Estonian SSR]. 27 February 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja*. 1945: 11, 159).

Farmers owning larger plots of land – soon stigmatised as “kulaks” – were harassed with unrealistically high sales quotas until the deportation in 1949 and the mass formation of collective farms and liquidation of individual farms in the early 1950s. Agriculturally, compared to the rest of the Soviet Union, which in some regions was on the brink of famine, the Baltics were still doing well. In the first years after the war, the encumbrances were not yet overwhelming. A new policy began in 1947, aimed at bringing the wealthier farmers, or “kulaks”, to their knees with norms of quotas and forcing the rest to join collective farms (Paavle 2009). What the future would hold was announced by a regulation on the completion of land reform issued in March 1945: “The Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR and the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist (Bolshevik) Party note that the implementation of the land reform has been slow in many counties:

“Some peasants who previously had little or no land have not yet been provided with land, animals, and the necessary equipment, while many animals and pieces of equipment subject to confiscation are located on the farms of those who actively helped the German occupiers. As a result of the presence of individuals who are alien both socially and in terms of their worldview in the village councils of some municipalities and counties, instances of hiding grey barons

[“Grey baron” was a somewhat derogatory term, used in Estonia from the late 19th century onward, to describe peasants who had built up a large farm or even bought a small manor. By 1945, it had been all but replaced by the Soviet term “kulak” in official propaganda] have been discovered in the practice of the land reform. Fictitious divisions of land and attempts to assign independent holdings to underage family members are used to hide and thereby preserve kulak farms, which provokes justifiable resentment among the working peasants” (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu ja Eestimaa Kommunistliku (bolševike) Partei Keskkomitee määrus maareformi lõpuleviimise abinõude kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Estonian SSR and the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist (Bolshevik) Party on measures for the completion of land reform]. 28 March 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1945: 14, 201).

The takeover of smaller businesses that begun in 1940–1941 continued after the war. The confiscated businesses were nationalised and subordinated to either local authorities or the relevant ministries (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus natsionaliseerimisele kuuluvate tööstusettevõtete nimestiku täiendamise kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Estonian SSR on supplementing the list of industrial enterprises subject to nationalisation]. 2 October 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1946: 6, 54).

In October 1944, all radio receivers were ordered to be turned in within five days. Designated points for listening to broadcasts were established at government institutions, enterprises, community centres, and elsewhere (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrused Eesti NSV vabastatud territooriumi elanikkonna poolt raadiovastuvõtjate hoiuleandmise kohta ning ringhäälingu kuulamispunktide asutamise ja raadiovastuvõtjate hoiuleandmise tähtaja pikendamise kohta. [Regulations of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the deposition of radio receivers by the population of the liberated territory of the Estonian SSR, and on the establishment of designated points for listening to broadcasting, and on the extension of the term for the deposition of radio receivers]. 4 and 7 October 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1944: 3, 22–23). This measure was intended to strengthen control over the spread of information and prevent listening to foreign radio stations. The foreign languages most commonly understood by Estonians at this time were German, Finnish, and, increasingly, English. Radio sets had first been confiscated shortly after the war broke out in the

summer of 1941, and private radio listening was also restricted during the German occupation.

Entry into Estonia was strictly controlled, both for those mobilised or evacuated from Estonia in 1941, and for the Soviet citizens (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus Eesti NSV territooriumile sisse- ja väljasõidu korra kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the procedure for entry and exit from the territory of the Estonian SSR]. 25 August 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1944: 3, 24; Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrused Eesti NSV nõukogude, parteiliste, sõjaliste ja majanduslike asutiste ja organisatsioonide kaastöölise perekondade sissesõidu kohta Eesti NSV-sse ja NSV Liidust reevakueeritavate kodanikkude sissesõidu kohta Eesti NSV territooriumile. [Regulations of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the entry into the Estonian SSR of the family members of employees of party, military, and economic establishments and organisations, and on the entry into the territory of the Estonian SSR of individuals being re-evacuated from the Soviet Union]. 20 October and 17 November 1944. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1944: 14, 173–174). Free movement within Estonia, except for restricted military areas, was allowed starting in July 1945 (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus Eesti NSV piirides kodanike liiklemise kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the movement of individuals within the borders of the Estonian SSR]. 13 July 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1944: 24, 362). Rail travel was more restricted. Officials with assignment certificates were allowed to travel by train. Farmers were allowed to do so when taking produce to the market if they had authorisation from a municipal executive committee or village council. Everyone else was required to have a permit from the police (*militsiya*). Travel on suburban trains was not restricted (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus kodanike liiklemise kohta Eesti raudteel. [Regulation of the Council of People's Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the movement of individuals on Estonian railways]. 31 July 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1944: 29, 449).

The Soviet Union exercised stricter control over its citizens than democratic societies. In the cities, everyone had to have an identity pass ('internal passport'), which had to contain a residence permit, known as the "inscription" (*propiska*), indicating the holder's permanent residence. The passport was also required for any travel within the country. A person without a passport could be detained

by the *militsiya* and, in the best-case scenario, compelled to return to her or his permanent residence. It is worth noting that it took the Soviet Union until the 1970s to issue passports to the entire rural population. Before then, many of these people had no freedom of movement; they were unable to leave the area where they lived without a specific reason, such as for military service or to continue their studies. Estonia and the other occupied Baltic States were the exception: all the residents there were “passported” (i.e. issued passports) in the post-war years. By the end of 1945, Soviet passports were issued to the residents of cities and larger rural settlements in Estonia, and by the end of 1947, to the rest of the population. “Passportisation” and the introduction of inhabitants’ registers listing both the permanent and temporary residents of a single house or apartment building were the measures of Sovietisation. Employers were not allowed to hire individuals who had no passport. Alongside the normal registration of residents, this was a supplementary measure to combat the underground resistance movement, making it easier to identify those evading the authorities. Furthermore, as “elections” of local councils were held in January 1948, the fact that all Estonian residents had passports made it easier to conduct this propaganda event (Eesti NSV Rahvakomissaride Nõukogu määrus passirežiimi kindlustamise kohta. [Regulation of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Estonian SSR on the consolidation of the passport regime]. 31 May 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1945: 22, 321; Paavle 2011, 48–53).

In 1944/1945, part of its territory was taken from the Estonian SSR. On 23 August 1944, as most of Estonia was still under German control, Pskov Oblast was formed within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. With the same legal act, the Estonian county of Petserimaa was formally abolished and most of its territory transferred to the Pskov Oblast of the Russian SFSR (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus Eesti NSV Petseri maakonna likvideerimise ja endise Petseri maakonna valdade ja vallaosade Võru maakonnaga liitmise kohta. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the liquidation of Petseri County of the Estonian SSR and the amalgamation of the rural municipalities and parts of rural municipalities of the former Petseri County with Võru County]. 18 January 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1945: 5, 58). On 24 November 1944, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet issued a decree by which the Estonia territory east of the Narva River was annexed to the Russian SFSR (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi

seadlus piiri kindlaksmääramise kohta Eesti NSV Viru maakonna ja Vene Nõukogude Föderatiivse Sotsialistliku Vabariigi Leningradi oblasti vahel. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the demarcation of the boundary between Viru County in the Estonian SSR and Leningrad Oblast in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic]. 18 January 1945. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1945: 5, 59). These territories had been incorporated into Estonia with the 1920 peace treaty between the Soviet Russia and the Republic of Estonia.

The oil shale industry, which had been developed as a priority during the last years of German occupation, was also a focal point for the Soviet occupation authorities. An oil shale gas pipeline was quickly built from northeast Estonia to Leningrad to resolve the heating problems of the war-torn city. The population of the oil shale region grew rapidly, mainly due to immigration from other parts of the Soviet Union. As fast-growing oil shale industry hubs were given town status, Estonia gained two new towns – Kiviõli and Kohtla-Järve – in 1946 (Eesti NSV Ülemnõukogu Presiidiumi seadlus Kiviõli ja Kohtla-Järve linnade moodustamise kohta Eesti NSV-s. [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on the establishment of the towns of Kiviõli and Kohtla-Järve in the Estonian SSR]. 15 June 1946. *Eesti NSV Teataja* 1946: 33, 262).

Characteristically for the post-war period, there were severe problems with sanitation and the spread of infectious diseases. These were exacerbated by the movements of many people to and from Estonia, as well as poor housing conditions. The Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR addressed this issue with regulations concerning both gastrointestinal and venereal diseases. Compulsory treatment was introduced for venereal patients (Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu määrus elanikkonna hulgas mao- ja sooltenakkushaiguste tekkimise ärahoidmise kohta. [Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR on the prevention of gastrointestinal infectious diseases among the population]. 3 June 1946. *ESSR Gazette* 1946: 33, 269; Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu määrus suguhaiguste vastu võitlemise abinõude kohta. [Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR on measures against venereal diseases]. 10 May 1946. *ESSR Gazette* 1946: 28, 227).

In 1946, the five-year plan for 1946–1950 was adopted. It declared that the main objectives for the Estonian SSR were to rebuild the devastated economy and to restore and surpass “by a considerable

extent” the pre-war level of industry and agriculture. The ESSR five-year plan followed the objectives specified in the USSR Five-Year Plan Act with respect to four main points:

1. Restoring and developing the oil shale and oil shale chemistry, mechanical engineering, and construction materials industries and transport as a priority. These areas were considered to be the most important prerequisites for the recovery and development of the national economy.
2. Expanding the consumer goods industry to ensure the well-being of people and the production of more basic consumer goods.
3. Expanding and developing agriculture; restoring and exceeding the pre-war levels in livestock, acreage, and soil fertility; increasing the role of machine-tractor stations (Machine-tractor stations were state enterprises that allowed farmers and later kolkhozes to rent tractors and other agricultural machinery and to hire people to operate them. These stations had another function that was at least as important – spreading communist propaganda in rural areas – which they did with

Staff of the machine-tractor station of Kanepi (Southern Estonia), about 1950. Karilatsi Open Air Museum, ref. no. PTM F 78:26/F3-279



their political departments, posters, and newspapers. The machine-tractor stations were abolished in 1958, when agricultural machinery was transferred to the collective farms) in all farm work; and developing collective agricultural activities.

4. Promoting the improvement of the USSR's defence capability by making the Estonian SSR an "unshakable outpost and fortress on the shores of the Baltic".

It is worth pointing out that the accelerated establishment of collective farms, which began just a year later, in 1947, is not even mentioned in the five-year plan (Seadus ENSV rahvamajanduse taastamise ja arendamise plaani kohta 1946.–1950. a. [Act concerning the Plan for the Recovery and Development of the National Economy of the ESSR in 1946–1950]. 7 August 1946. *ESSR Gazette* 1946, 39, 332).

Conclusion

In general accounts of the history of Estonia, the attitude towards the years 1944–1946 is ambivalent. On the one hand, this was a period of continued annexation, major population losses, political terror, and the Red Army crimes against civilians. This time witnessed a failed attempt to restore Estonia's independence in September 1944, and the emergence of an armed resistance movement, the Forest Brothers. On the other hand, it witnessed the end of the war and the return of the Estonian men mobilised into the Red Army, which restored hope that post-war life would not be the same as it was during the first year of the Soviet terror in 1940–1941. The new leadership appointed for the Estonian SSR included men who had been known in Estonian cultural life in the 1930s (such as Johannes Vares-Barbarus, Hans Kruus, and Nigol Andresen) or at least were local Estonian communists who had been imprisoned for subversion in Estonia (such as Arnold Veimer and Paul Keerdo). Despite such fears, the entire Estonian people were not deported to Siberia (Tammela 2009, 151–162) and initially, they were not even forced into collective farms. The Soviet propaganda slogans touting the unprecedented flourishing of Estonian science and culture in the fertile conditions of socialism may have aroused false hopes. Finally, even a local foreign ministry and defence ministry had been set up. In Potsdam, the Americans, British, and French were negotiating

the future of Europe with the Russians, and back in 1941, the first two had pledged to restore the independence of all the peoples who lost it as a result of World War II.

These hopes proved to be misplaced. The West left Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe within the Soviet sphere of influence. The Cold War in Europe never turned into a hot one. By the time Stalin died in 1953, the machinery of political repression had claimed more than 35,000 Estonians who were either sent to the Gulag or hauled before a firing squad. More than 20,000 men, women, and children were deported in 1949. Farmers lost their land, and those who were not deported were forced to join collective farms. In 1950, in the rising tide of the campaign against “bourgeois nationalism”, the vast majority of men and women of Estonian descent, including the above-mentioned Arnold Veimer, Hans Kruus, Boris Kumm, Aleksander Resev, and many others, were ousted from power and replaced by Soviet Estonians sent in from Russia, Russians or other nationalities from the USSR. The 1949 deportation gave the final blow to the armed resistance movement; the security agencies’ campaign against the resistance fighters had, over the years, left several thousand dead, with casualties on both sides. Stalin’s death in 1953 brought relief, and the survivors began to return from the Gulag and deportation, but Estonia had been subdued, and most Estonians living in Estonia came to realise that nothing would topple the Soviet rule in the near future.

Chart 1. Estonian SSR in the structure of the USSR party, executive, legislative, state security and military institutions 1944–1946 (simplified)

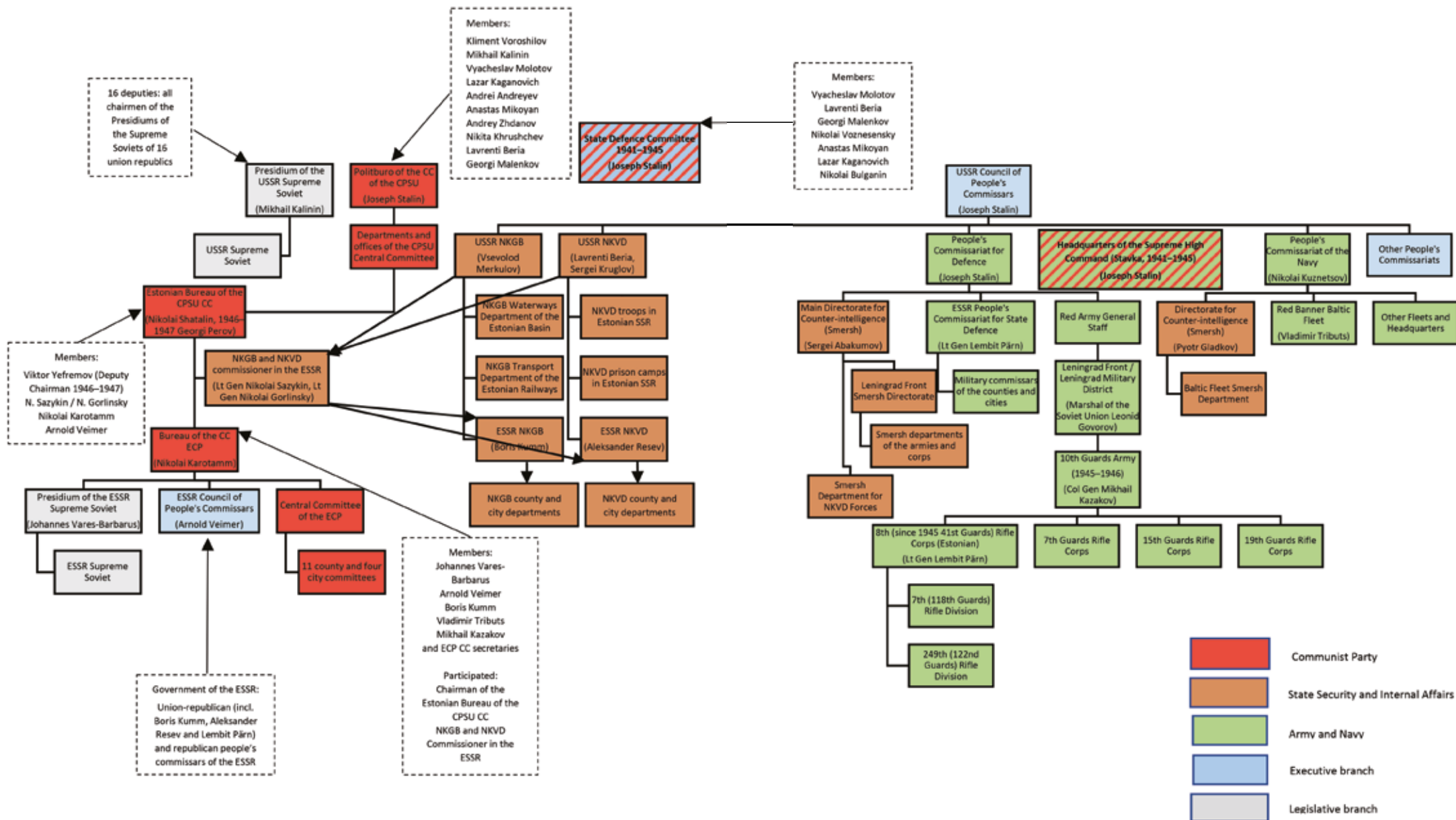
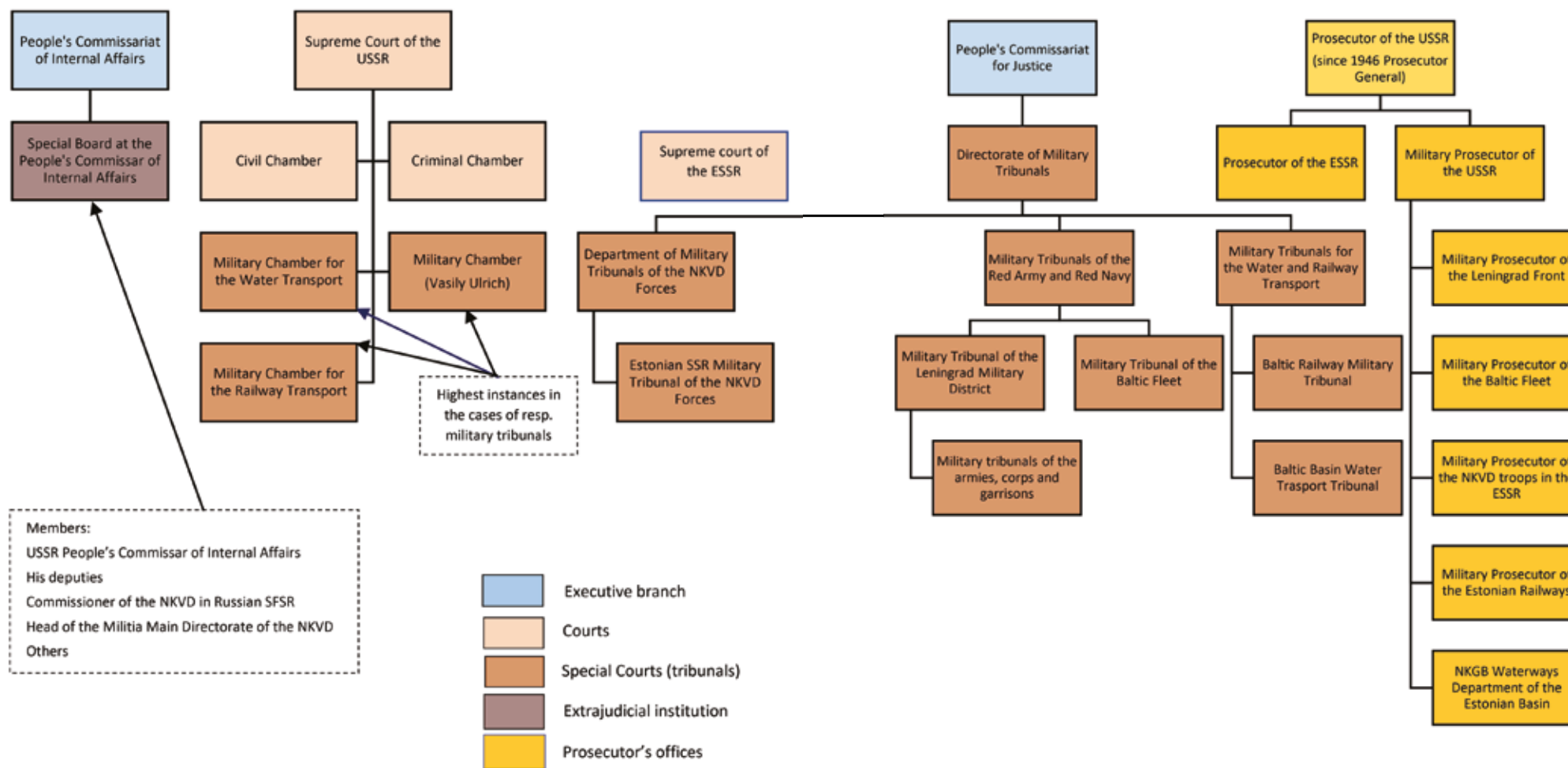


Chart 2. Military tribunals and prosecutors active in the ESSR in 1944–1946 and their subordination (simplified)



References

- 63-ya strelkovaya diviziya vnytrennikh voysk MVD SSSR. <http://voenspez.ru/index.php?topic=80349.0;wap2>
- A database of Estonians: "A database of Estonians in German concentration camps". Estonian Institute of Historical Memory. Accessed October 10, 2020.
- O priznanii Ukaza Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR "Ob ob"yavlenii v otdel'nykh mestnostyakh SSSR voennogo polozheniya" [On recognizing the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On declaring martial law in certain localities of the USSR" as no longer in force]. 4 July 1946., *Sbornik zakonov SSSR I ukazov Prezidiuma VS SSSR 1945—1946 gg.* Moscow, 1947
- Eesti metsavennad 1944–1957: dokumentide kogumik.* Ed. Noormets Tiit. Ad fontes 18. Tartu: Rahvusarhiiv, 2014.
- EKP KK büroo istungite regestid, I, 1940–1954.* Ed. Roots Velly. Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2006.
- Frieser, Karl-Heinz. "Das Ausweichen der Heeresgruppe Nord von Leningrad ins Baltikum". In *Die Ostfront 1943/44: Der Krieg im Osten und an den Nebenfronten.* Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. 8. Ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007.
- Frieser, Karl-Heinz. "Die Rückzugskämpfe der Heeresgruppe Nord bis Kurland". In *Die Ostfront 1943/44: Der Krieg im Osten und an den Nebenfronten.* Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Vol. 8. Ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt. Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007.
- Gosztony, Peter. *Stalins fremde Heere: das Schicksal der nichtsovjetschen Truppen im Rahmen der Roten Armee 1941–1945.* Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 1991.
- Hiio, Toomas. "Combat in Estonia 1944". In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Hiio, Toomas. "Sõjategevus Eestis 17.–22. septembrini 1944". In *Löögiüksus "Admiral Pitka".* Eesti sõjamuuseumi – kindral Laidoneri muuseumi toimetised 4. Viimsi: Eesti Sõjamuuseum – Kindral Laidoneri Muuseum, 2008.
- Hiio, Toomas. "Relationship of Military and Civilian Authorities in Estonia during the German Occupation in 1941–1944". In *The Baltic States and the Second World War.* Tartu Historical Studies 4. Ed. Corum, James S., Mertelsmann, Olaf and Piirimäe, Kaarel. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014. <http://mnemosyne.ee/old/rahvuskaaslased-saksa-koonduslaagrites>.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Formation of the Estonian Rifle Corps in 1941–1942". In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Postwar Militarised Society". In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Special Contingent: "Traitors to the Homeland"". In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* Ed. Hiio,

- Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Erikontingendi filtreerimine ja töölerakendamine Eesti NSV-s kontroll-filterlaager nr. 0316 näitel". *Tuna* 4 (2010): 24–36.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Eesti rahvusväeosade formeerimisest Nõukogude armee koosseisus aastatel 1940–1956". *Eesti sõjaajaloo aastaraamat* 1 (7). Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2011.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Eesti NSV liiduvabariiklikud sõjaväeasutused ja rahvusväeosad ning nende funktsioonid Teise maailmasõja järgsetel aastatel". In *Eesti ajaloost 19.–20. sajandil: uurimusi historiograafiast, allikaõpetusest ja institutsioonidest*. Eesti Ajalooarhiivi toimetised 19(26). [Acta et commentationes Archivi historici Estoniae]. Ed. Tannberg Tõnu. Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2012.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Nõukogude sõjaväelaste sooritatud kriminaalkuritegudest Eestis aastatel 1944–1946". *Tuna* 3 (2013): 50–64.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Rahvuslikud üksused Punaarmee koosseisus ja välisriikide üksused NSV Liidu territooriumil II maailmasõja ajal". In *I maailmasõda Ida-Euroopas – teistsugune kogemus, teistsugused mälestused*, Eesti sõjaajaloo aastaraamat 5 (11). Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2015: 187–253.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs Control-Filtration Camp No. 316". In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2015.
- Kaasik, Peeter. "Partisaniliikumine Eestis 1941–1944". In *Eestlased Vene sõjaväes 1940–1945*. Represseeritud isikute registrid (RIR) 12. Ed. Öispuu, Leo. Tallinn: Eesti Represseeritute Registri Büroo, 2016.
- Kaasik, Peeter, and Hiio, Toomas. "Beginning of sovietisation of the economy, agriculture and social policy". In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006: 163–174.
- Kõrgemad võimu vahendajad ENSV-s: Eestimaa Kommunistliku Partei Keskkomitee sekretärid 1940–1990*. Tallinn: Kistler-Ritso Eesti Sihtasutus, 2000.
- Kumer-Haukanõmm, Kaja. "1944. aasta suur põgenemine ja eliidi lahkumine Eestist". *Tuna* 3 (2014): 50–56.
- Kuusk, Pearu. "Julgeolekuorganite võitlus vastupanuliikumisega sõjajärgsetel aastatel: Banditismivastase Võitluse Osakond (1944–1947)". In *Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: Sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis*. Ed. Tannberg, Tõnu. Tartu: Estonian Historical Archives, 2007.
- Kuusk, Pearu. "Soviet security structures' struggle against the resistance movement in Estonia in 1944–1947: the Department of Anti-Banditry Struggle". In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Laar, Mart, Pillak, Peep, Rebas, Hain, and Saueauk, Meelis, *Soomepoisid: võitlus jätkub: II maailmasõjas Soome armees võidelnud Eesti vabatahtlike ajalugu 1939–2010*. Tallinn: Grenader, 2010.
- Le Convoi 73*. <http://www.convoi73.org>

- Liivik, Olev. “Eestimaa Kommunistliku Partei Keskkomitee aparaat 1945–1953”. MA thesis. Tartu: University of Tartu, 2005.
- Liivik, Olev. “Campaign against ‘Bourgeois Nationalism’ and Repressions in Estonia”. In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Eds. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Liivik, Olev. *Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu institutsionaalne areng ja kaadrid 1940–1953*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2014.
- Maripuu, Meelis. “French Jews at the Tallinn Central Prison in 1944”. In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Maripuu, Meelis. “Soviet Prisoners-of-War in Estonia in 1941–1944”. In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Maripuu, Meelis. *Omaavalitsuseta omaavalitsused: halduskorraldus Eestis Saksa okupatsiooni ajal 1941–1944*. Dissertationes historiae Universitatis Tartuensis 26. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2012.
- Mertelsmann, Olaf. “‘Sovetiseerimise’ mõistest”. In *Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: Sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis*. Ed. Tannberg, Tõnu. Tartu: Estonian Historical Archives, 2007.
- Miil, Marek. “Mäng mäluga: 22. september 1944 Eesti NSV päevalehtedes ajavahemikul 1945–1989”. *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 2 (136) (2011): 189–222.
- Myllyniemi, Seppo. *Die Neuordnung der baltischen Länder 1941–1944: zum nationalsozialistischen Inhalt der deutschen Besatzungspolitik*. Dissertationes Historicae 2, Historiallisia tutkimuksia 90. Helsinki: Societas Historica Finlandiae, 1973.
- Noormets, Tiit. “Mobilisation into the Red Army in Estonia in 1941”. In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Noormets, Tiit. “Estonian Military Units in the Soviet and German Armed Forces”. In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Noormets, Tiit and Ohmann, Valdur. “Soviet destruction battalions in Estonia in 1944–1954”. In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Paavle, Indrek. “Vili ja munad režiimi teenistuses. Sundandam 1940. aastate Eesti külas”. *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1/2 (127/128) (2009): 213–229.

- Paavle, Indrek. *Kohaliku halduse sovetiseerimine Eestis 1940–1950.* In *Dissertationes historiae Universitatis Tartuensis* 19. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2009.
- Paavle, Indrek. “Ebaühtlane ühtne süsteem: sovetliku passisüsteemi rakendamine Eesti NSV-s”. Part II: “Passisüsteemi kehtestamine”. *Tuna* 2 (2011): 46.
- Paavle, Indrek. *Õiguse ja omariikluse eest: Otto Tief (1889–1976)*. Tartu: Rahvusarhiiv, 2014.
- Pärn, Jüri. “NSV Liidu relvajõud Eestis Teise maailmasõja järel”. Manuscript at the Estonian War Museum: General Laidoner Museum, 2005.
- Piirimäe, Kaarel. “Kui teil on võimalik seda vältida – vältige...’ Nõukogude Liidu poliitika Ida-Euroopas ja külma sõja algus”. *Akadeemia* 3 (2004): 467–493.
- Piirimäe, Kaarel. “Estonian Prisoners of War in Germany after World War II”. In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Piirimäe, Kaarel. “1944. aasta ‘autonoomiaseadused’. Liiduvabariigid Kremli älispoliitikas liitlastevaheliste suhete kontekstis”. *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1/2 (127/128) (2009): 24–27.
- Piirimäe, Kaarel. *Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Baltic Question: Allied Relations during the Second World War*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- “Protokol No. 7 zasedaniya Plenuma TsK VKP(b). 27.01.1944.” *Istoricheskiy arkhiv: Nauchno-publikatorskiy zhurnal* 1 (1992).
- Raag, Raimo. *Eestlane väljaspool Eestit: ajalooline ülevaade*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 1999.
- Rahi-Tamm, Aigi. “Deportation of Individuals of German Nationality from Estonia in 1945”. In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Rossiia: XX vek. *Dokumenty*. Ed. Naumov, V.P. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond “Demokratiya”, 1998
- Sarv, Enn. “Eesti Vabariigi Rahvuskomitee”. *Akadeemia* 2 (2006): 338–359.
- Saueauk, Meelis. “Nõukogude julgeolekuorganid Eestis 1944–1953: ülesanded, struktuur ja juhtimine”. *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1/2 (127/128) (2009).
- Saueauk, Meelis. “Data about the Persons Arrested in Estonia during the Soviet Repressions in 1942–1990”. In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Eds. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Saueauk, Meelis. *Nõukogude julgeolekuorganite ja Eestimaa Kommunistliku Partei koostöö Eesti sovetiseerimisel aastatel 1944–1953*. *Dissertationes historiae Universitatis Tartuensis* 29. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013.
- Sbornik zakonov SSSR i ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR: 1938 g. – iyul’ 1956 g.* Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo yuridicheskoy literatury, 1956.
- Schaake, Rudolf. “Sõjavangina Tallinnas: katkend mälestustest”. Annotated by Kaasik, Peeter. *Vana Tallinn* 26 (30) (2015): 189–204.
- Siilaberg, Ardi. “Maakondlikud operatiivgrupid Nõukogude võimu naasmisel Eestisse”. MA thesis. Tartu: University of Tartu, 2011.

- Tammela, Hiljar. "Estonians' Views on Events Abroad and in the Soviet Union in 1944–1950". In *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus, 2009.
- Tannberg, Tõnu. "Moskva insitutsionaalsed ja nomenklatuursed kontrollmehhanismid Eesti NSV-s sõjajärgsetel aastatel". In *Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: Sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis*. Ed. Tannberg, Tõnu. Tartu: Estonian Historical Archives, 2007.
- The Kremlin Letters: Stalin's Wartime Correspondence with Churchill and Roosevelt*. Ed. Reynolds, David and Pechatnov, Vladimir. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Töötan ustavaks jääda... Eesti Vabariigi Valitsus 1940–1992*. Ed. Orav, Mart, and Nõu, Enn. Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, 2004.
- Västriku, Riho, and Maripuu, Meelis. "Vaivara Concentration Camp in 1943–1944". In *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Ed. Hiio, Toomas, Maripuu, Meelis and Paavle, Indrek. Tallinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2006.
- Wolke, Lars Ericson. "Swedish Responses to Soviet Moves East of the Baltic Sea: The Baltic States in Swedish Military Planning, 1939–41". In *Northern European Overture to War, 1939–1941: From Memel to Barbarossa*. History of Warfare 87. Ed. Clemmesen, Michael H. and Faulkner, Marcus S. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013.