

THE EVOLUTION, REGULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOVIET INTERNAL PASSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ESTONIAN SSR PART II: PASSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ESTONIAN SSR*

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Introduction: About Sources and Possibilities for their Use

This article continues the examination of the Soviet passport system, focusing on the establishment of the passport system in the Estonian SSR in 1945–1947, and the “consolidation of the passport system”. This undertaking was an extensive plan of measures that included the constant checking of the population, keeping records of the movement of people and of their locations, and imposing penalties on people caught violating the system.

Alongside the legislation and correspondence that accompanied the establishment of the passport system, NKVD, MGB and MVD, Militia Administration and Passport Department reports and statistical summaries that have thus far been little used form the primary base of sources for this study. Reports were collected quarterly from local passport departments and summary reports were drawn up on the basis of those quarterly reports. These summary reports were sent to Moscow either annually or twice a year. The forms of these reports and the types of data contained in them changed frequently, reflecting changes in legal principles and campaigns that happened to be in progress. The most gaps are found in 1944–1951. The ESSR NKVD annual report submitted to the chairman of the USSR Communist Party Central Committee (CPSU CC) Estonian Bureau contains data concerning passport work done in 1945. Reports on passport work done in the first three quarters of 1946 and in 1947 have survived. Only the report for the third quarter of 1949 survives from the years 1948–1950, which is a very intriguing time in the context of the passport system. Data associated with the passport system can also be found in general crime statistics.

Very thorough reports and statistical summaries were drawn up for 1952 and 1953, containing data concerning the checking of passports, violations, penalisations and expulsion from regimen districts, persons to whom address registration restrictions applied, the work of the address bureaus, the resolution of applications and complaints, and the movement of the population.¹ The reports for 1954–1956 are concise compared to those of the preceding years and include data concerning the primary violations of the passport regimen, and the work of the address bureaus and the Vital Statistics Office.² The form used in 1957–1960 was more thorough, containing statistics concerning penalisations as well. The report forms changed repeatedly after 1961 as well but were more or less similar in terms of content.³

How can the reliability of the sources described above be evaluated? Valdur Ohmann has analysed NKVD/MVD reports and has found that the data in those reports can be considered

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¹ Цифровые сведения о паспортной работе органов милиции УМ МГБ ЭССР за 1952 год, Department of Estonian State Archives (henceforth ERAF) 18SM.1.58, 65–66v; Цифровые сведения о паспортной работе органов милиции УМ МГБ ЭССР за 1953 год, ERAF.18SM.1.111, 21–23. The summary for 1952 contains comparative data from 1951 as well.

² ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs Militia Administration circular, 12 July 1954, ERAF.18SM.1.107, 168.

³ Reports on passport work until 1983 are preserved in the National Archives. The author has not succeeded in finding reports on later years.

reliable because they were used in operative work, and to the extent that the institution knew that this data would become known to only a small circle of persons for official use, there was no visible motive for distorting them.⁴ While agreeing with this in general, it must at the same time be recognised that all passport statistics were not necessarily usable in operative work and that the nature of each type of data must be the reference point in appraising reliability. Very strict records were kept of the issuing of identification documents to the population and especially of the movement of document blanks. I therefore venture to consider the statistics concerning issued passports to be correct, although there is a certain possibility for mistakes – for instance, local passport desks could have tried to cover up the misplacement of passport blanks.

I do not venture to make the same claim regarding statistics concerning checking of passports. Figures in the reports extended up into the millions and it is difficult to believe that the attitude towards work in the Soviet militia made it possible to take figures of single digit precision seriously. At the same time, there was no motive for submitting incorrect data, and there was no plan that would have prescribed the number of passport checks. Instead, the regions, categories of the population, or institutions that were subject to checks were prescribed and thus these numbers could not be completely made up. It is possible that officials may have wanted to stand out in terms of uncovering violations but in this regard, no tendency is apparent from the documents that might refer to possibilities that officials tried to indicate a decrease in violations, more effective discovery of offenders, or other such factors.

It is also pertinent to ask what should be done with this material? Gathering data from hundreds of documents in tens of archives (if we include local passport desks as well) is terribly labour intensive and before undertaking such a task, it is a good idea to consider if it is worthwhile.

In terms of institutional history, it helps to understand the mechanisms by which institutions function and the relationships between them. In terms of social history, it helps to study the behaviour of people under the conditions of a regime that sets restrictions. Data concerning violations of the passport system is a part of general crime statistics. A great deal of attention has been directed at the faultiness of those general crime statistics (all crime statistics in the Soviet Union were declared secret in 1929). David Shearer, for instance, has drawn attention to the noteworthy value of militia archival documents in research work in social history.⁵ Demographers have drawn attention to the faultiness of population statistics in post-war Estonia, especially the period prior to the first post-war census in 1959.⁶ The passport system, first and foremost permanent address registration of persons arriving in and departing from any given area, was the basis for keeping records of population movement. In 1945, the ESSR Statistics Administration started processing statistical index cards of address forms filled out by the militia at the time of address registration of arriving or departing persons. Thus population statistics can actually be considered a by-product of the passport

⁴ Valdur Ohmann, *Eesti NSV Siseministeeriumi institutsionaalne areng ja arhivaalid, 1940–1954* (Institutional Development and Records of the Estonian SSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1940–1954) (Master's thesis, University of Tartu, 2000).

⁵ David R. Shearer, "Crime and Social Disorder in Stalin's Russia: A Reassessment of the Great Retreat and the Origins of Mass Repression", *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol 39, no 1–2 (1998), 119–148.

⁶ Ene Tiit, "Eesti rahvastik ja selle probleemid" (The Population of Estonia and its Problems), *Akadeemia*, no 8 (1993), 1654.

system.⁷ Statistics concerning the issuing of passports and address registration provide opportunities for analysing both internal immigration and immigration abroad. Attention should also be paid to records of population movement, which are particularly thorough in the early 1950's. Alongside the annual statistics of the ESSR, the reports of local passport desks should be thoroughly examined in this case. Passport registers are also an interesting subtype, which was not preserved permanently and which does not exist anymore to a great extent for this reason.⁸

The Beginning of Sovietisation

There was no compulsory internal personal identification document in the Republic of Estonia. Owning an identity card was voluntary and a passport was needed only for travelling abroad. Citizens were generally free to move about within the country and choose where they wanted to live. The obligation to register residents in cities and hamlets was in effect and apartment building owners and householders had to maintain a register of building residents. In the spring of 1940, the government decided to implement the compulsory registration of residents in the countryside as well but due to the occupation of Estonia by the Red Army, it could not be implemented in the form the government had planned.⁹

The regulation issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs on 17 August 1940 can be considered the beginning of sovietisation. It established the obligation of persons arriving in cities to register their arrival within 24 hours (the Soviet passport system also prescribed this kind of deadline). A regulation in the spirit of the passport system was also issued on 19 November 1940 concerning expelling "nonworking substances" from the cities, among which "former representatives of the class of exploiters and persons wielding power" were included together with the members of their families, as well as the "bourgeoisie who do not live off of payment for work". The latter category included private entrepreneurs or apartment building owners who received income from renting out apartments.¹⁰

The actual implementation of the passport system began with the establishment of address registration: on 8 January 1941, the ESSR Council of People's Commissars (hereinafter referred to as CPC) established compulsory address registration within 24 hours of arrival in

⁷ Lembit Tepp, "Statistika NSV Liidu riigiplaani teenistuses, 1944–1948" (Statistics in the Service of the USSR State Plan, 1944–1948), *Eesti Statistika Kuukiri* (Estonian Statistical Monthly), no 3 (2001), 7; Alis Tammur, "Sisserände suundumused 20. sajandil ja 21. sajandi algul" (Immigration Trends in the 20th Century and the Beginning of the 21st Century), *Eesti Statistika Kuukiri*, no 12 (2008), 7; Allan Puur & Liivi Uuet, "Eesti NSV 1940.–1950. aastate valimiste materjalid rahvastikuloo allikana" (Materials Concerning Elections in the Estonian SSR in the 1940's and 1950's as a Source of Population History), *Tuna*, no 2 (2010), 71–72.

⁸ Aadu Must has drawn attention to the usability of 19th century passport registers in researching internal migration. The application of the same method could be attempted in researching the Soviet period, although the passport registers of that era are significantly less informative. – See: Aadu Must, *Eestlaste perekonnalo allikad* (Sources for Researching the History of Estonian Families) (Tartu: Ajalookirjanduse Sihtasutus „Kleio“, 2000), 182–204.

⁹ Personal identification and movement act, 1 July 1930, *Riigi Teataja* (State Gazette), no 48 (1930), art 308; Regulation of the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs concerning keeping registers of building residents, 12 July 1930, *Riigi Teataja*, no 54 (1930), art 365; Personal identification and movement act, 22 April 1940, *Riigi Teataja*, no 36 (1940), art 309.

¹⁰ Regulation amending the regulation issued concerning keeping registers of building residents, 17 August 1940, *Riigi Teataja*, 104 (1940), art 1059; ESSR CPC Regulation no 32 "Concerning the expulsion of nonworking substances from cities", 19 November 1940, Estonian State Archives (henceforth ERA) R-1.5.10, 229.

any location and penalties for violators of the rules for registering persons arriving and departing from locations.¹¹ On 8 February, the USSR CPC extended the passport system to the Baltic union republics with its regulation. At the same time, Tallinn, Vilnius, Kaunas, Riga, Liepāja and Ventspils were declared first category regimen cities where strict address registration restrictions were in force. Address registration and the issuing of passports had to be completed in the cities by the end of August.¹² The ESSR NKVD Militia Administration organised 42 passport stations and began issuing passports but they managed to issue them to only a portion of the residents of Tallinn and Nõmme before the outbreak of war and the flight of the Soviet regime from Estonia.

After the Red Army had recaptured Estonia in the autumn of 1944, the passing of regulative legislation concerning the registration of the population introduced the establishment of the passport system. The main key words of this legislation were obligation, speed (the 24-hour obligation) and restrictions. For instance, people who did not have a job were forbidden to register themselves as residents in cities.¹³ According to NKVD records, the registration of the population was completed by the end of the year but its results are different in the documents of the NKVD itself as well. According to a report drawn up immediately after the completion of registration, 885,727 people (251,018 men, 404,799 women and 229,910 children) were registered by 1 January 1945. According to the report drawn up in 1948, 834,596 people (228,259 men, 369,786 women and 236,558 children) were registered. According to ESSR Statistical Administration data, which was based on figures actually obtained from the NKVD apparatus, the population on 1 January 1945 was 851,349 instead.¹⁴

The First Stage of Issuing Passports: Cities

The issuing of passports began at the end of 1944 and was carried out in stages over the course of three years. First of all, the issuing of passports and registration of registers of apartment building residents began in Tallinn on 9 December. Reports had to be drawn up for every day over the course of the campaign with particular emphasis on data concerning persons subject to “expulsion” from cities according to Articles 38 and 39 of the passport regulations, and other detrimental elements – for instance, persons who had collaborated

¹¹ ESSR CPC Regulation no 47 concerning compulsory address registration of arriving and departing residents in Militia organs in the territory of the ESSR, 8 January 1941, *ENSV Teataja* (ESSR Gazette), no 5 (1941), art 63.

¹² USSR CPC Regulation no 272, 8 February 1941, ERA.R-1.1.14, 16; ESSR CPC Regulation concerning the implementation of the unified passport system in the ESSR, 26 March 1941, *ENSV Teataja*, no 35 (1941), art 528; ECP CC circular to county committee secretaries, 4 June 1941, ERAF.1.1.167, 2.

¹³ Instructive letter from the ESSR NKVD Militia Administration on registration of the population, 19 October 1944, ERAF.17SM.4.1, 20; ESSR CPC Regulation concerning keeping of records in bureaus of the registration of citizens and the calculation and distribution of manpower, 27 October 1944, *ENSV Teataja*, no 7 (1944), art 70.

¹⁴ Data on population figures, 22 January 1945, ERAF.1.3.437, 9; Доклад о работе органов МВД ЭССР за период с 1940 по 1. X 1948 год (Report on the activities of the ESSR MVD organs during the period of 1940 to 1 October 1948), October 1948, ERAF.1.47.38, 169; Итоги за 1946 год о естественном движении населения ЭССР (Summary of the natural movement of the population during 1946), 12 July 1947, ERA.R-10.18.16, 3. The chronologically last MVD report also contains a calculation error. The difference between the two MVD figures is 51,131, which could be the actual decrease in population due to the separation of the rural municipalities of Petseri and Virumaa from the Estonian SSR (Estonia lost territory with a population of 56,200), yet the population of Tallinn (120,680) matches in both reports, since the figures for other cities and counties are smaller in later reports.

with the German occupying authorities.¹⁵ In March, passports that had already been issued had to start being reregistered (special registration papers were glued into passports in the process). The stated justification for this was Tallinn's status as a first category regimen city.

The issuing of passports got underway in other cities in the spring of 1945. Work began in county centres, where registration of men subject to military service – reservists and conscripts – had to be carried out at the same time. Neither one of these tasks proceeded at the pace that had been hoped for because there were few passport officials available and other institutions did not provide sufficient additional manpower since they themselves suffered from a shortage of personnel. For this reason, the authorities managed to open only 23 of the planned 32 passport issuing stations in Tallinn and the passport desk was open in Tartu for only two hours a day. Other obstacles emerged as well. For instance, there was nowhere for people to have their passport photographs taken.¹⁶ The deadline set for completing all the required tasks was the end of April, which was unrealistic, yet by the end of 1945, the first stage of establishing the passport system – issuing passports in cities, workers' settlements and settlements where machinery and tractor stations were located as required in the passport regulations – had for the most part been completed. During that year, 279,784 passports were issued, of which 126,128 were issued in Tallinn, where the number of residents at that time was 150,963 according to MVD records.¹⁷

The Second Stage of Issuing Passports: the Border Zone

The passport regulations also required the issuing of passports to the population in areas along the state border.¹⁸ The restriction of living and movement in the vicinity of the border began in the Soviet Union with the state border defence regulations issued in 1927. Control

¹⁵ ESSR CPC and ECP CC Regulation no 347, 5 December 1944, ERA.R-1.1.52, 318–319; Ежедневные сведения (Daily data), ERAF.17SM.4.9, 259; ESSR People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Directive no 04, 8 February 1945, ERAF.17SM.1.3, 14; ESSR CPC and ECP CC Regulation, 10 February 1945. ERAF.1.4.163, 71–72. The basis for the reregistration of passports was CPSU CPC Order no 20845, 1 November 1944, "Concerning the reregistration of the passports of citizens living in Tallinn".

¹⁶ ESSR People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Directive no 05, 8 February 1945, ERAF.17SM.1.3, 15–16; Resev to Karotamm and Veimer, 23 March 1945, ERAF.1.3.437, 14–14v. The passport desk in Tartu was open on business days from 3 pm to 5 pm, on account of which people with jobs were unable to get there before closing time. In Valga, 6000 people had to be issued documents but there was only one photographer in the town. Complaints also circulated that private photographers are expensive (five passport photos cost 25–30 roubles) and that there are no other photographers in town.

¹⁷ Отчет об итогах работы наркомата внутренних дел Эстонской ССР за 1945-й год (Activity report of the ESSR NKVD for 1945), 8 March 1946, ERAF.17SM.4.40, 17–18; Доклад о работе органов МВД ЭССР за период с 1940 до 1. X 1948 год, 169–170.

¹⁸ The "border zone" concept is firmly established in colloquial speech but a distinction was made in official documents between the border belt and the border zone. The terms "border belt" (*пограничная полоса*) and in the context of the ESSR "sealed off coastal border belt" (*запретная пограничная береговая полоса*) were used in legislation in the 1940's–1950's. The new USSR border defence regulations of 1960 differentiated the "border belt" from "border zones" (*пограничная зона*). Territories of administrative units adjacent to the state border were part of the border zone with certain exceptions (like Tallinn, for example). Permits were required from the militia to live in the border zone and the corresponding stamp bearing the letters "ПЗ" had to be stamped in the passports of residents. Permits were also required for entering the border zone but many local exceptions applied. The border belt meant territory in the direct vicinity of the border that was subject to even stricter control. The extent of this territory varied but it could not extend farther than 2 km from the border or coastline. People were permitted to live in and enter the border belt only with permission from border guard forces.

was tightened in 1935 with the regulation issued jointly by the USSR Central Executive Committee (hereinafter referred to as the USSR CEC) and the CPC, which dealt with living in areas along the border and entry into such areas.¹⁹ This regulation also formed the basis for establishing the border regimen in the ESSR in the autumn of 1940. On 26 September 1940, a Militia Administration regulation prohibited entry to “territories along the border and forbidden territories” without permission and ordered that a corner stamp functioning as an entry permit be stamped in the identification documents of permanent residents of such territories. The ESSR CPC specified the extent of the restricted area and established a 24-hour registration requirement in it by way of its regulation of 29 November. All of Estonia’s maritime islands, Pakri Peninsula up to Vasalemma River, a couple of highways, and the Türisalu coastal region were defined as “restricted zones” under the pretext of creating a “coast guard regimen”.²⁰

The post-war restoration of the border zone began in the autumn of 1944 at the initiative of the Red Army, which initially endeavoured to have the two-kilometre coastal belt cleared of its permanent population along the entire coast but this initiative nevertheless did not go through.²¹ *De facto* restrictions on movement were in effect in the coastal border belt in 1945. New legislation was not passed but the NKVD Militia Administration issued over 39,000 permits for entering the border belt in the course of the year.²² Legislation did not go into effect until the autumn of 1946.

The ECP CC and the ESSR Council of Ministers issued a joint regulation on 28 September 1946 concerning the establishment of the passport system in the restricted areas of the coastal border. The issuing of passports began in mid-October. Similarly to Tallinn, citizens to whom Articles 38 and 39 of the passport regulations applied had to be ascertained in the course of the operation and removed from the border belt. According to MVD estimates, 60,000 passports had to be issued, including 12,000 in Viru County, 8000 in Harju County, 27,000 in Saaremaa, and 13,000 in Lääne County and Hiiumaa. Even this undertaking was not successfully completed by the deadline set for it, in other words within two months, whereas barely half of Saaremaa’s population had received passports by the end of the year. The ESSR Council of Ministers regulation issued on 26 October 1946 formulated the border regimen in its final form. The border belt was defined in accordance with administrative units and included 36 village soviets in 21 rural municipalities in Viru, Harju and Lääne counties, and all the islands in the Baltic Sea that belonged to the Soviet Union.²³

¹⁹ USSR CPC and CEC Regulation “О въезде и проживании в пограничных поселках” (On entry into and living in villages near the border), 17 July 1935, *Собрание законов и распоряжений* (Collection of Legal Acts and Directives), no 45 (1935), art 377.

²⁰ ESSR Militia Administration Regulation, 26 September 1940, ERA.R-34.1.5, 1–3; ESSR CPC Decision no 34, 29 November 1940, ERA.R-1.5.10, 244–247.

²¹ ESSR CPC Regulation no 029, 21 December 1944, ERA.R-1.5.90, 106. Over 33,000 people were subject to resettlement. See also: Kaljo-Olev Veskimägi, *Kuidas valitseti Eesti NSV-d* (How the Estonian SSR was Ruled) (Tallinn: Varrak, 2005), 124–125.

²² Permits were drawn up regardless of the fact that the local militia did not know how to draw them up because they did not have the pertinent instructions. They did not receive the missing instructions until the summer of 1946 when the head of the Passport Department asked the USSR MVD Secretariat in Moscow to quickly send 13 copies of the USSR MVD directive of 1939, according to which local militia departments were supposed to issue permits. – Отчет об итогах работы наркомата внутренних дел Эстонской ССР за 1945-й год, 8 March 1946, ERAF.17SM.4.40, 17; ERAF.17SM.4.42, 25–26.

²³ ESSR Council of Ministers and ECP CC Regulation “О введении паспортной системы в местностях, включенных в запретную береговую пограничную полосу СССР” (Concerning the introduction of the passport

Many rules associated with the border zone were issued in the subsequent years but they did not lead to fundamental changes. The issuing of permits and control of the passport regimen in the border zone together with guarding the border remained the voluminous task of the militia until the end of the Soviet era. The number of permits issued annually grew in general. For instance, less than 17,000 permits were issued in 1952 (as a matter of fact, the issue of permits was refused in 154 cases during that same year, thus only people who had definite reason for having a permit applied for permits and people did not go to the coast to go vacationing on the beach), but over 80,000 were issued in 1954. While an average of 30–50,000 permits were issued annually in the 1950's and 1960's, the number of permits issued started growing significantly towards the end of the 1960's and already exceeded the 100,000 mark in 1973. Changes in the extent of the border zone and the increase in population affected statistics but the attitudes of the regime can also be seen here. The attitude became more accommodating over time in terms of allowing people to go to the seashore.²⁴

Third Stage: Provision of Passports to the Entire Population

On 4 October 1945, the USSR CPC granted the request of the Lithuanian SSR for providing the rural population with passports. The directive issued shortly afterwards that ordered the use of “temporary provision of passports” for ascertaining bandits, members of the nationalist underground, foreign intelligence agents and the criminal element helps to explain the background of the decision. Records had to be created of bandits and other illegal elements discovered in the course of issuing passports but their arrest was not permitted so as not to precipitate a backlash to the legalisation of bandits.²⁵ The Latvian SSR also requested passports in February of 1946 but its proposal was rejected due to opposition by the USSR NKVD, since it was found that compared to Lithuania, “banditry” was already under control in Latvia.²⁶

A draft letter with the same sort of content addressed to Beria was drawn up in the Estonian SSR as well in December of 1945 but it was apparently not sent. It was sent to Molotov later on in April of 1947 without changing its stated justifications. Karotamm and Veimer applied for the issuing of passports to the entire population of the ESSR and justified their proposal by referring to Estonia's legal tradition, distorting the truth in explaining that “in the past, all adults had passports”, that they were the primary personal identification document, and

system in areas which are included in the sealed off coastal border belt of the Soviet Union), 28 September 1946, ERAF.1.4.322, 206–207; ESSR Minister of Internal Affairs Directives no 00147 and no 0177, 27 September 1946, 28 December 1946, ERAF.17SM.1.3, 50–51, 56–57; ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs Passport Department statement, November 1946, ERAF.17SM.4.61, 228; ESSR Council of Ministers Regulation no 058 “Concerning the ESSR's sealed off coastal border belt and its regimen”, 26 October 1946. ERA.R-1.5.118, 233–239.

²⁴ Цифровые сведения о паспортной работе органов милиции УМ МГБ ЭССР за 1952 год (Numerical data concerning the passport activities of the Militia organs of the ESSR MGB Militia Administration), ERAF.18SM.1.58, 66р; Сведения о движении бланков строгой отчетности, 8 February 1955, ERAF.18SM.1.159, 20.

²⁵ Top secret circular to the heads of NKVD-NKGB operative sectors, heads of Lithuanian SSR NKGB-NKVD county departments, heads of Lithuanian SSR MKGB-NKVD operative departments, 23 November 1945, Lietuvos Ypatangasis Archivas K-1.3.177, 36–37. Pay attention to the wording that speaks of “temporary provision of passports”. The somewhat exaggerated impression occurs as if the plan was to initially cynically issue passports to everyone and then deal more thoroughly with circumstances that come to light.

²⁶ Yelena Zubkova, *Прибалтика и Кремль: 1940–1953* (Moscow: РОССПЭН, 2008), 139.

that this kind of ordering of affairs made keeping records of the population easier and disciplined the population. They declared that people in Estonia are “used to the passport system” and the lack of passports leads to questions that are often posed to representatives of the Party and the soviets. They also appealed to the difficulties in holding elections, for which special certificates had to be issued, and they declared that issuing passports to the rural population would help to improve the ascertainment of the “hostile, bandit and criminal element”.²⁷

The letter also presented figures concerning the population that had been issued passports. These figures need to be re-examined because they have already gone into academic circulation.²⁸ The numbers were namely incorrect. According to Karotamm’s letter, there were 273,000 bearers of passports at that moment (191,000 in cities and workers’ hamlets, and 82,000 in the countryside and the border belt) and 420,000 adults without passports. In actual fact, 279,784 passports had been issued by the end of 1945 and 62,888 passports during the first three quarters of 1946 (the undersigned has not succeeded in finding statistics for the fourth quarter), with an additional approximately 60,000 passports issued in the border belt at the end of 1946. If we add the extrapolated missing data for the fourth quarter of 1946, at least 420,000 passports had been issued in Estonia by the beginning of 1947, and in excess of 34,000 additional passports were issued during the first quarter of 1947.²⁹ If we take emigration into account as well, for instance 15,758 people moved from cities in the ESSR to places elsewhere in the Soviet Union in 1946 according to data from the Statistics Administration,³⁰ then the proportion of the population with passports to those without passports was almost exactly opposite to that which was presented to Molotov. The number of passports that were actually issued later also confirms this.

Perhaps this was a mistake on the part of the person who drew up the letter. Perhaps the MVD was incapable of adding up the total of passports issued and approximated the figures. As a matter of fact, when the actual implementation of the passport system began later on, a large number of extra passport blanks were ordered – Resev submitted an order to Moscow for 550,000 passport blanks which according to him were needed for issuing passports to the entire population of the ESSR.³¹ Yet it could also be true that Karotamm reported the population without passports as being larger on purpose, in other words that he lied to Molotov. If this is true, then receiving a positive reply must have been very important to him.

In any case, Karotamm achieved his goal. USSR Minister of Internal Affairs Sergey Kruglov supported the proposal and the passport system was expanded over the entire territory of the ESSR by order of the USSR Council of Ministers issued on 12 July 1947. The authorities in the Latvian SSR used these favourable circumstances and also submitted a new application, receiving a positive response from Moscow in December.³²

²⁷ Karotamm and Veimer to Beria, December 1945, ERAF.17SM.4.20, 73; Karotamm and Veimer to Molotov, 12 April 1947, ERAF.17SM.4.61, 90–91.

²⁸ Zubkova, 139.

²⁹ Справка о работе Паспортного Отдела УМ МВД ЭССР за 1947 год (Certificate concerning the activities of the ESSR MVD Militia Administration Passport Department), 15 January 1948, ERAF.17SM.4.87, 94–98.

³⁰ Итоги за 1946 год о естественном движении населения ЭССР, 3. According to the same report, 345,300 people lived in cities and 611,844 people in the countryside in the Estonian SSR on 1 January 1946.

³¹ Resev to deputy head of the USSR MVD GUM Zuyev, ERAF.17SM.4.61, 134.

³² Zubkova, 140.

The ECP CC and the ESSR Council of Ministers issued a joint regulation “Concerning issuing of documents to the rural population of the ESSR” on 18 August and the Minister of Internal Affairs issued the corresponding implementation directive on 29 August. The issuing of passports had to be carried out from 15 September to 20 December 1947. The end of the campaign was connected to the approaching election of the local soviets in the Estonian SSR, which took place on 18 January 1948. It required thorough preparations because it was the first such election and to some extent, there was the risk of making mistakes. The issue of passports and the checking of registers of apartment building residents were supposed to guarantee that there would not be a single person without a passport or whose address is not registered by the time of the election. The Militia Administration set up 65 mobile passport stations in Estonia, each of which was supposed to cover 3–5 rural municipalities and work out “measures for ascertaining and creating records of the criminal element”. The USSR MVD brought 100 senior officials to Estonia to carry out the campaign, and they participated in running the passport stations. State institutions, local executive committees and Party authorities had to find furnished rooms and allocate employees who knew Estonian and Russian. Problems emerged in fulfilling the latter requirement. People were not provided for the job, or the kinds of people were provided who were unsuitable due to advanced age, poor health or scant education. In some places, the authorities even engaged in counteraction. For instance, the chairman of the Lääne County Party Committee refused give local citizens the documents required for receiving a passport before the local quota of the state grain purchasing plan had been fulfilled. The chairman of the Paide Rural Municipality Executive Committee also refused to issue the required documents and told the head of the passport station that “the main job right now is the grain harvest and the fulfilment of the state grain purchasing plan, we’ll issue the passports later”. The chairman of the Elva Executive Committee threatened local people at a meeting: “Whoever doesn’t give us his state grain purchasing quota won’t get a Soviet passport!”³³

All in all, the Ministry of Internal Affairs considered the campaign a success, the political attitude of the population was appraised as being good, and anti-Soviet attitudes in terms of the issuing of passports were not identified. The campaign was terminated ahead of time by 10 December 1947. Generally speaking, people wanted passports. The passport had managed to acquire the halo of a document that is inevitable and can provide certain freedoms. Ordinary people did not even find out that the issuing of passports could be used for other objectives and for establishing greater control over the population

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania now found themselves in an exceptional situation compared to other republics of the union because the issuing of passports to the entire population was carried out here 30 years earlier than in the rest of the Soviet Union. According to Russian historian Yelena Zubkova, the authorities hoped to win greater trust in the eyes of the local

³³ ECP CC and ESSR Council of Ministers Regulation, ECP CC Bureau meeting minutes, 18 August 1947, ERAF.1.4.444, 228; Resev to Karotamm and Veimer concerning the fulfilment of the ECP CC and ESSR Council of Ministers Regulation of 18 August 1947 “Concerning the issuing of documents to the rural population of the ESSR”, 9 October 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34, 50–53; Directive issued by the ESSR Minister of Internal Affairs, 24 September 1947, ERAF.17SM.1.3, 137–142. The fulfilment of the state grain purchasing quotas was the most urgent problem for the local authorities and they tried to devise all manner of means for resolving this problem. – See concerning this: Indrek Paavle, “Vili ja munad režiimi teenistuses. Sundandam 1940. aastate Eesti külas” (Grain and Eggs in the Service of the State. Compulsory Tribute in Estonian Villages in the 1940’s), *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, no 1/2 (2009), 213–229.

population by taking this step.³⁴ Estonian historical literature has attempted to view Karotamm's and Veimer's initiative as a good deed for the Estonian people by which these men, who realised that collectivisation was inevitable, gave rural people the chance to avoid having to join the collective farms when they were ultimately established.³⁵ This was most likely not the case. Having a passport did not in and of itself guarantee notably greater freedom of movement. On the other hand, the passport system did indeed make it easier to trace people, in other words it could be used for the purpose for which it was worked out and by which, among other things, Karotamm and Veimer had also justified their proposal. The proposal that Karotamm made in 1949 to add a restricting notation in the passports of kulaks that would prohibit them from living in certain regions of Estonia is but one example of the fact that Karotamm was aware of the possibilities that the passport system offered.³⁶

The rural population was issued 283,241 passports and the addresses of 313,387 adults and 114,516 children were registered in the course of the campaign. A total of 343,057 of the people whose addresses were registered were Estonians. Yet according to the MVD report, a total of 386,982 passports were issued in 1947, in other words an additional 103,741 passports were issued after the campaign.³⁷ The total number of people who turned 16 and of people who had lost their passports over the course of the year in territory where the passport system had previously been established could be perhaps up to 15,000. Demobilisation accounts for a few thousand, and about 10,000 are accounted for by the establishment of the passport system in the border zone, which was completed in early 1947. The remaining approximately 75,000 people have to thus be people who had entered the country officially from elsewhere in the Soviet Union and who arrived from territories where the passport system had not been established yet. These people would have been provided with temporary identification cards for travel purposes which were exchanged for passports upon arrival. According to data from the Statistics Administration, 41,563 people arrived in ESSR cities from elsewhere in the Soviet Union over the course of 1947 (for purposes of comparison, 46,158 people arrived in 1946).³⁸ There were no records of the people who arrived but they had to receive passports as well in the course of the overall issuing of passports and the statistics had to reflect that fact. Demographers have calculated that a total of over 77,000 people arrived in Estonia from the east in 1946–1947 (and a total of 241,000 in 1945–

³⁴ Zubkova, 140.

³⁵ Veskimägi, 186.

³⁶ Meelis Saueaak, "О роли Коммунистической партии Эстонии и проведении мартовской депортации 1949 года" (Concerning the role of the Communist Party of the ESSR in carrying out the March Deportation in 1949), *Тупа, Спецвыпуск по истории Эстонии XX века* (Special volume on 20th century Estonian history) (2010), 158. Although the passport regulations precisely enumerated the information that was to be entered into passports and prohibited all other data, Resev explained (in fact ignoring the passport regulations) that if necessary, an entry concerning a ban on living in the ESSR has to be entered in the column of the passport for special notations, referring to a court verdict by which this kind of ban had been imposed. Circular from the Minister of Internal Affairs, 2 August 1949, ERAF.17SM.4.27, 155–156.

³⁷ Докладная записка о проделанной работе органов МВД Эстонской ССР по выдаче паспортов населению сельских местностей Эстонской ССР (Report on the activities of the ESSR MVD organs in issuing passports to the rural population in the ESSR), 20 December 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34.61–63; Справка о работе Паспортного Отдела УМ МВД ЭССР за 1947 год, 96–97. The number of people whose addresses had been registered in 1947 was not certain. The report indicates that they numbered 417,903, which does not match the total of children and adults, yet it is not clear which of the figures contains the error. Another report states that 417,000 people had their addresses registered over the entire course of 1947.

³⁸ О механическом движении населения ЭССР за 1948 год (Concerning mechanical movement of population in the ESSR), ERA.R-10.18.16a, 25.

1950, of whom 170,000 were new settlers).³⁹ Passport statistics indicate that in very broad terms, at least 33,000 immigrants are not accounted for, thus referring to the possibility that the extent of immigration was greater than has been thought thus far. According to the report, many passports were issued in the 3rd quarter of 1947 in particular (nearly 65,000 compared to less than 16,000 in the 2nd quarter) when the previous campaign for issuing passports had ended and the subsequent campaign had not yet begun. Summer, however, is known to be a very good time for travelling.

The First Consequences: the Passport System in the Service of Mass Repressions

As Karotamm had promised, the passport system was immediately put to use in the service of repressive policy. In the course of issuing passports in 1947, 4274 persons “with a hostile background” were discovered and put on record, including 2160 former members of the *Omakaitse* (Home Guard), *Kaitseliit* (Defence League) and the *Isamaaliit* (Pro Patria Party), 1487 persons who had served in the German Army or in the police and 250 members of their families, and 137 persons who had returned from banishment on their own accord, in addition to deserters from the Red Army, draft dodgers, and others.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the issuing of passports coincided temporally with the campaign that began in May of 1947 in the course of which Ingrians and Finns who had been forcibly evacuated from the city and *oblast* of Leningrad prior to the war yet had later returned were expelled from Leningrad and Leningrad *oblast*.⁴¹ Many of them had fled to Estonia and a curious situation now arose for them – they received a passport together with a restriction on place of residence contained in it. Nathalie Moine has cursorily considered this question and finds that receiving the desired passport also meant immediate banishment for them.⁴² The situation was most likely not quite that bad and they were forbidden first and foremost to settle in Tallinn, which was, of course, a blow for many of them because they hoped to escape to Finland by way of Tallinn. In 1947, 5415 “Finns and Ingrians” were put on record, of which 2351 were sent to the place of exile where they were assigned. According to the explanation of the ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, people who worked on farms or were still looking for work were expelled. Workers in industry or in large agricultural enterprises, however, were left in peace. Danger lurked for Ingrians later on as well: prior to the passport replacement campaign of 1952, special instructions repeated that a stamp concerning Article 38 was to be

³⁹ Alis Tammur, “Eesti välisrände alates 1920. aastatest” (Migration in Estonia since the 1920s), *Eesti Statistika Kuukiri*, no 8 (2008), 7; Ott Kurs & Eiki Berg, “Etnilised vähemused ja uusasukad Eestis” (Ethnic Minorities and New Settlers in Estonia), *Akadeemia*, no 2 (1995), 266; Kulno Kala, “Eesti rahvastiku koosseisust pärast Teist maailmasõda” (About the Composition of Estonia’s Population after WWII), *Akadeemia*, no 3 (1992), 511.

⁴⁰ Доклад о результатах работы органов милиции МВД Эстонской ССР за 1947-и год (Report on the results of activities of the Militia organs of the ESSR MVD in 1947), 18 January 1948. ERAF.17SM.4.87, 7–8.

⁴¹ Ingrians were to be sent to Velikiye Luki, Kalinin, Novgorod, Pskov and Jaroslavl *oblasts*, Finns to Komi and elsewhere in Siberia. See: Natali Muan, “Внутрисоюзные границы гражданства: территориальное выражение дискриминации в Советском Союзе через паспортную систему” (Internal borders of citizenship in the USSR – territorial expression of discrimination in the USSR throughout the passport system), *Режимные люди в СССР* (Regime people in the USSR) (Москва: РОССПЭН, 2009), 262–263; Aigi Rahi-Tamm, “Küüditamised Nõukogude repressiivoliitika komponendina” (Deportation as a Component of Soviet Repressive Policy), O. Liivik & H. Tammela (eds), *Uuemaid aspekte märtsiküüditamise uurimisest. Eesti Ajaloomuuseumi teaduskonverentsi materjale* (Newer Aspects of Research into the Deportation of March 1949. Materials from the Estonian Museum of History Academic Conference), Tallinn: Ajaloomuuseum, 2009), 26.

⁴² Muan, 262–263.

stamped in the passports of Finns and Ingrians who had come from Leningrad *oblast*.⁴³ Most Ingrians gained the right to return to Estonia after 1956.

The possibilities offered by the passport system were next used after the deportation of March 1949. After that terror operation, a problem arose concerning those up to 10,000 people whom the authorities had decided to deport but who had escaped deportation. The leadership of the ESSR was confused in terms of resolving this problem and no instructions were received from Moscow. Thus Nikolai Karotamm's "first preference" was ultimately implemented, in other words some of those who had been left behind were deported later on using the possibilities offered by the passport system.⁴⁴ The directive issued on 12 July 1949 by Minister of Internal Affairs Resev gave more precise instructions. It ordered those who had escaped deportation who had not been engaged in "socially useful work" for over three months and did not have a permanent place of residence to be prosecuted according to the article of the Criminal Code concerning violation of the passport regimen (Article 192-a). Persons caught in the border zone were to be treated even more severely, in which case the regulation of 1935 was to be applied and persons who had a job and whose permanent address was registered were also to be prosecuted. Arrest was to be applied as the security measure without exception in both cases.⁴⁵

People's courts conducted a great many proceedings related to matters of this sort over the following months. According to MVD statistics, 632 criminal cases were initiated in 1949 on the basis of Article 192-a and only slightly less in subsequent years. Actual prison sentences, however, were meted out to over 1600 people according to this article in 1949–1952.⁴⁶

The ascertainment of the number of people convicted requires additional work in the archives, yet according to the initial results of research, it can be concluded that people who were accused of other crimes as well formed the greater portion of people who were imprisoned and thereafter expelled. This affected first and foremost people who owed taxes and people who had not fulfilled their quotas as well as people who did not fulfil their work duties.⁴⁷ There are, however, examples to the contrary. A typical example of a victim whose "guilt" was considered to lie in missing the deportation train was a farmer from Tartu County named Teodor Lemming. He was convicted of "eluding deportation and continuing to live in the ESSR, not working anywhere and remaining in hiding regardless of having been declared a kulak and being subject to deportation". He was sentenced by decision of a people's court according to Article 192-a of the Criminal Code to two years of imprisonment with the addi-

⁴³ Докладная записка о проделанной работе органов МВД ЭССР по выдаче паспортов населению сельских местностей Эстонской ССР, 20 December 1947, 61–63; Circular from the head of the ESSR MGB Militia Administration, 24 July 1952, ERAF.18SM.1.36, 178. A woman at the Aa home for the aged who worked as a passport official in the 1960's in Kehtna and in Viru County recalls that she was instructed to pay attention to Izhorians and not to grant them address registration (commentary made by Mait Sepp to the author). It is possible that she remembers incorrectly and that her instructions back then referred to Ingrians. I have not thus far come across any problems related to Izhorians in archival documents but this question merits further research.

⁴⁴ Pearu Kuusk, "Väljasaatmata jäänud kontingent" (The Contingent that Escaped Deportation), *Uuemaid aspekte märtsiküüditamise uurimisest*, 63–68.

⁴⁵ To the heads of the MVD municipal and county departments, militia departments in Tallinn, MVD Militia Administration and Prisons Department, 12 July 1949, ERAF.17SM.4.27, 143–146.

⁴⁶ See Table 1.

⁴⁷ See further: Paavle, 213–229.

tional clause that after serving his sentence, he was subject to deportation “to the location assigned to him”. Lemming was released from banishment in 1956.⁴⁸

Since the materials of the people’s courts have not been researched, we can rely primarily on penal statistics. The methodology of compiling these statistics is not quite clear. For instance, how did the statistics reflect persons who were convicted according to multiple clauses of the Criminal Code? This relates especially to “persons deported after the fact” that are presently under consideration. If people convicted of not paying their taxes and not fulfilling their quotas, and also according to other articles (such people have their own category in the statistics) are added to the more than 1600 persons sentenced according to Article 192-a that are reflected in the statistics, and even though all people convicted according to Article 192-a were not necessarily previously condemned to deportation, the total amount of people deported after the fact could nevertheless be considerable and the number of victims of the deportation operation – if they can be treated as such – can actually be much larger than has hitherto been agreed upon.

In addition to these people, tens of times more people were sentenced administratively and criminally in subsequent years for violating the passport regimen. This was one of the measures for consolidating the system, which was referred to as “consolidating the passport system”.

Consolidation of the Passport System

Tasks of the Passport Apparatus

The Militia Administration Passport Department supervised work involving passports. Municipal passport departments subordinate to the union republic and passport desks in cities and regions (counties until the autumn of 1950) reported to the Militia Administration Passport Department.⁴⁹ The Passport Department staff was not particularly large. For instance, it consisted of 13 people in 1948, including 9 inspectors whose job it was to check up on and supervise the local passport desks. By the end of 1953, 14 people worked in the department (including 8 inspectors), while at the same time 138 people worked at the local passport desks (including 45 passport desk supervisors and 51 passport officials). In 1952, 66% of all Passport Office employees were women, 69% were Estonians and 71% had 5th to 7th grade education.⁵⁰

The head of the Passport Department in 1940–1941 was experienced militia employee Viktor Lvov who was sent from Moscow to Estonia.⁵¹ Militia Major Mikhail Yevstratov headed the Passport Department in 1944–1947, followed by Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Lyubimtsev in 1947–1952, who was transferred to Sverdlovsk in early 1952.⁵² The independent Civil Regist-

⁴⁸ Decision of the Tartu 4th District People’s Court, 9 Sept. 1949, Estonian Historical Archives T-265.1.225, 74.

⁴⁹ The militia was part of the NKVD until 1949 (the NKVD was renamed the MVD in 1946), then part of the MGB from October of 1949 until 1953, and again part of the MVD from 1953 onward. The MVD bore the name Ministry of Law Enforcement in 1946–1949.

⁵⁰ Сведения о количественном некомплекте УМ МВД ЭССР (Data on the numeric shortage of employees in the ESSR MVD Militia Administration), 1 January 1948, ERAF.17SM.4.40, 22; Доклад о паспортно-регистрационной работе УМ МВД ЭССР за 1953 год (Report concerning the passport and registration activities of the ESSR MVD Militia Administration in 1953), 25 February 1954, ERAF.18SM.1.111, 40–41; ERAF.18SM.1.58, 1–2.

⁵¹ Personal file, ERAF.1SM.1.13908. Karl Plutus was Lvov’s deputy and died in 2010 at the age of 106, having been Estonia’s oldest man prior to his death.

⁵² Personal files, ERAF.1SM.2.18216; 18218.

ration Records Department was done away with in 1953. Its tasks were transferred to the Unified Passport Registration Department.⁵³ At the same time, personnel changes in the spirit of Beria's new nationalities policy were implemented.⁵⁴ Taras Dengin, who had served as head of the Passport Department for a short time, was sent into retirement and former deputy head of the Pärnu *Oblast* Passport Department, Militia Lieutenant Jaan Niinemets was appointed head of the new unified department.

The registration of civil records (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions) was the task of the militia until 1957, when that sphere was transferred to the jurisdiction of the local executive committees, which according to statisticians led to a decrease in the quality of registration.⁵⁵ The Passport Registration Department was renamed the Passport Department again as of 1959. The ESSR MVD Militia Administration was done away with in 1968 and the militia was placed in subordination to the local executive committees but the militia retained its vertical subordination to the MVD. The Passport Department remained as part of the MVD for supervising the work of local passport departments and passport desks.

The tasks of the Passport Office were described in militia regulations and in the separate Passport Department regulations drawn up in 1955.⁵⁶ The tasks were divided up into three subcategories – issuing of documents to the population, “address-informational work”, and supervision of passport regimen. The first of these subcategories included the issuing and replacement of passports, address registration of arriving and departing persons, and issuing border zone permits. Address-informational work was possible due to the preceding field of work. It was done by way of address bureaus and it consisted of the administration and processing of information concerning place of residence based on registration of people's place of residence, in other words *propiska*. Control of the system included the ascertainment and penalisation of violators of the passport regimen and the removal from regimen districts of persons subject to restrictions concerning place of residence.

Issuing of Documents to the Population

The issuing of passports and address registration was the routine everyday work of the Passport Office. New passports were issued mainly to persons who had turned 16 and upon the

⁵³ Доклад о паспортно-регистрационной работе УМ МВД ЭССР за 1953 год, 25 February 1954, 40–67.

⁵⁴ Beria increased the proportion of staff of local national origin in fields under his jurisdiction and this had a long term effect regardless of his imminent removal. – See concerning this: Tõnu Tannberg, “Lubjanka marssal Nõukogude impeeriumi äärealasid reformimas. L. Beria rahvuspoliitika eesmärkidest ja tagajärgedest 1953. aastal” (Marshal of the Lubyanka Reforming the Peripheral Territories of the Soviet Empire. About the Aims and Consequences of L. Beria's Nationalities Policy in 1953), *Tuna*, no 3 (1999), 22–37; no 4, 56–71; no 1 (2000), 42–52.

⁵⁵ E. M. Andreyev, E. Darskiy & T. L. Harkova, *Демографическая история России: 1927–1959* (Russian Demographic History in 1927–1959) (Moscow: Информатика, 1998), 57. The ESSR Council of Ministers Organisational Administration Countrywide Civil Registration Records Bureau was created as the central institution for supervising this sphere of activity. It was reorganised in 1977 as the Countrywide Civil Registration Administration under the jurisdiction of the ESSR Ministry of Justice.

⁵⁶ Положение о советской милиции (Statutes of the Soviet Militia), 17 August 1962, *Сборник нормативных актов и справочник материалов для оперативных работников КГБ* (Collection of Legal Acts and Reference Book of Materials for KGB Operatives) (Moscow, 1968), 134–139; “Развитие паспортной системы в условиях укрепления административно-командной системы в СССР и в период перестройки в России” (Development of the Passport System under Conditions of Strengthening the Administrative Command System in the USSR and during Perestroika in Russia), <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/history/details/38013/5/> [23 December 2010].

expiry of people's previous passports, yet also to people who entered from territories of the Soviet Union where the passport system had not yet been established, and also to a small extent to people who had lost their passports and to citizens who for some reason did not have a passport previously (for instance, people who had been released from detention centres). Labour-intensive campaigns accompanied the mass replacement of passports upon the expiry of passports or when a new passport form was implemented.

The first campaign of this kind was carried out during the latter half of 1952 when the expiry date arrived for the 5-year passports issued to the rural population in 1947. The work was to be completed by 1 January 1953 but the deadline was extended because work was stopped for a month by decision of the ESSR Council of Ministers for the autumn grain harvest period. By the end of the year, 194,788 new passports and 49,379 temporary identity cards were replaced and issued. Local passport desks tried to get through the work quickly and not to exceed the deadlines set for this work. The leadership, however, demanded thoroughness. The head of Militia Administration demanded that the replacement of passports should not be formal but rather that it should provide "maximum operative results". A meeting of the heads of the passport desks at the Militia Administration preceded the mass replacement of passports. The main theme of this meeting was the question of how to make maximum use of the replacement of passports to discover criminals and illegal persons, along with people who were avoiding court, investigation or the payment of alimony.⁵⁷

The campaign cannot be considered a success from the viewpoint of the regime. The statistics do not indicate a greater rate of discovery of persons in these categories in 1952 compared to other years. Even though 267 criminals were exposed in 1952 compared to 109 the following year, the results of the work done regarding the category "persons discovered and placed on record concerning whom there is compromising information" were over twice as large in 1953 (4489 and 9350 respectively).

The same situation repeated in 1957 because most passports were valid for 5 years. Over the course of the year, 202,730 passports were issued or replaced and 546,141 persons had their addresses registered, including 47,231 persons who were registered as new residents of the Estonian SSR. Passport officials discovered 34 persons who were concealing themselves from the authorities over the course of the campaign.⁵⁸ Such extensive one-off campaigns did not take place later on because the average period of use of passports had increased due to the 10-year passport that had been established in 1953 and the increment in population negated the effect of passports up for replacement at the same time. After the new passport regulations established in 1974, passports were not replaced all at one time but rather over the course of several years as the old passports expired. During 1976–1982, 1,197,757 new passports were issued.⁵⁹

Smaller scale campaigns took place in between the more large-scale campaigns. For instance, up to 10,000 persons were released in the course of the so-called Beria amnesty of 1953 and returned to Estonia, and they had to be issued passports.⁶⁰ The amnesty also

⁵⁷ Доклад по паспортной работе (Report on Passport Work), 24 January 1953, ERAF.18SM.1.58, 52–53.

⁵⁸ Statement by Niinemets concerning passport work in 1957, 27 February 1958, ERAF.18SM.1.268, 4–7. The report does not specify if deported and arrested persons returning home, which had to be topical at that time, are also included under "new address registrations".

⁵⁹ ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs directive, 22 June 1982, ERAF.17SM.14.94, 141–144.

⁶⁰ Concerning Beria's amnesty see: Tõnu Tannberg, "1953. aasta amnestia: kas ainult varaste ja sulide vabastamine?" (The Amnesty of 1953: Was it Only the Release of Robbers and Crooks?), *Tuna*, no 3 (2004), 37–51.

meant the elimination of some restrictions on place of residence. Thus a total of 2921 passports were replaced up to 1 April 1954 in connection with the removal of restrictions.⁶¹

Official statistics do not make it possible to explain so simply and with one-to-one precision how many passports were issued in total. The reports of local passport desks and those covering shorter periods need to be carefully compared in order to find this out. Annual reports at the ESSR level were not consistent, indicating the issuing of passports in some years but mostly the use of passport blanks, which also included the replacement of lost or faulty passports, or passports that were ruined as they were being filled out. The movement of passport blanks was very strictly controlled and the loss of even one blank was followed by a union-wide circular concerning the declaration of the passport blank serial number as being invalid. An investigation was always carried out and the passport desk employees who were found guilty were penalised, including the possibility of even being fired. Regardless of this, passport blanks naturally still went missing but the quantities were very small and the misplacement of large numbers of passport blanks is not recorded in the reports.⁶² Surviving passport registers indicate that passport blanks were constantly going to waste as they were being filled out as well. Altogether more people lost their passports themselves. For instance, the loss of 10,129 passports and 1860 cases of stolen passports were registered in 1951–1953. The amount of passports lost over the course of one year ranged between 3–5000 later on as well.

Relatively few forged passports were discovered and the corresponding indicators are missing altogether from most reports. For instance, 93 forged passports were discovered in 1946, 49 in 1947, 45 in 1951, 49 during the passport replacement campaign of 1957, 23 in 1960, and so on.⁶³ The likely reason for this is that there was no need to forge passports because it was possible to illegally obtain passports in other ways. A passport is said to have cost 2000 roubles on the black market in the latter half of the 1940's and local passport officials were involved in this business.⁶⁴ It is impossible to find out the amount of passports obtained in this way because they are naturally reflected in passport registers and statistics as legitimate passports but there is no reason to doubt the existence of black market speculation in passports because the necessary conditions in terms of demand and opportunities undeniably existed.

Address-Informational Work

The organisation of address bureaus that were part of the militia passport departments went through several reorganisations. Their creation began in the Estonian SSR in 1945, when address bureaus were started up in all county centres. By the end of that same year, they had already issued nearly 107,000 notices. Address bureaus remained in Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu and Rakvere by 1948. The Rakvere bureau was also shut down in 1952 in association with the formation of *oblasts*. Its card file (550,000 cards) was added to the Tallinn bureau card file. The *oblast* experiment lasted briefly and did not permit this structure to last long

⁶¹ Pork's report to Bodunov, 14 May 1954, ERAF.18SM.1.111, 109.

⁶² For instance, five passport blanks were misplaced in 1953 by the Otepää Region Passport Desk. This was attributed to the carelessness of the head of the passport desk and he was dismissed from his position. ERAF.18SM.1.111, 50.

⁶³ Statement by Niinemets concerning passport work in 1957, 27 February 1958, 4–7.

⁶⁴ Ruth Eliaser, *Passita ja pajata* (Without Passport and Kettle) (Tallinn: Vaba Maa, 1992), 138, 144.

either. The Tartu and Pärnu address bureaus were shut down in 1954 and the Central Address Bureau was formed in Tallinn.⁶⁵

The tasks of the address bureaus was to keep records of the movement of the population and the processing of data concerning them, “address-informational work”, and “mechanical searches for wanted persons”. The latter two tasks are the most interesting. They consisted of compiling card files and responding to inquiries on the basis of those card files. The card file of address forms based on *propiska* data was very large. An average of 460,000 address forms were added to the file annually in 1959–1983, and 2/3 of them were arrival forms while 1/3 were departure forms. These figures also express the extent of migration, in other words it does not differentiate domestic and foreign migration. Separate records were kept concerning the origin of address forms. For instance, all people who had legally stopped in establishments providing accommodations in the ESSR can be calculated using these separate records.

The search for wanted persons was divided into union-wide searches and local searches. The primary means for these searches and basis for the entire system was the card file of so called lookout forms (*сторожевый листок*). A lookout form was drawn up for all wanted persons and it contained the main personal data concerning that person. Alphabetical lists, or so-called *orientirovkas*, were drawn up on the basis of these lookout forms and sent out to the local address bureaus. The corresponding lookout form was removed from the card file and destroyed and a verifying statement was drawn up upon the termination of a search. An average of 34,000 lookout forms was added to the republic-wide lookout form card file of the ESSR in 1959–1983, and 97% of them referred to persons who were wanted throughout the Soviet Union. Wanted persons were most often people who avoided paying alimony (so called *alimenchiks*). Considerably fewer criminals, people who owed taxes to the state, and others were wanted. Records were kept of persons wanted for so called counterrevolutionary crimes until 1963. For instance, over 9500 such persons were added to the files in 1959, but only 99 persons were added in 1962.

It must, however, be emphasised that most of this work was fruitless and the number of people that were actually found on the basis of information from the address bureaus was microscopic compared to the volume of the card files. Considering the scales involved, not many people who were wanted union-wide could have been found in the ESSR in the first place. The most successful period remains the period when Stalin was in power when, for instance, 1328 wanted persons, including 392 “counterrevolutionary criminals”, were located in 1953 by way of “mechanical searching for wanted persons”. This work brought considerably less results in later years and became ever more marginal. While another 476 wanted persons (including 31 “counterrevolutionaries”) were located in 1959, the number of people located dropped to less than 300 per year in the 1970’s, and less than 200 per year in the 1980’s. At the same time, the number of wanted persons did not decrease noticeably.

An important part of the work of the address bureaus was helping organs to find out people’s locations, more precisely their place of residence according to the address where they were registered, by using their card files. The address bureau issued over 1.4 million notices of this kind in 1951–1953, of which 95% were at the request of security and internal affairs organs. The remainder was issued to citizens who were looking for their relatives.

⁶⁵ Отчет об итогах работы (Activity Report), 8 March 1946, ERAF.17SM.4.40, 17; Доклад о работе (Activity Report), October 1948. ERAF.1.47.38, 169–170; ERAF.18SM.1.107, 160.

Nearly 250,000 inquiries were resolved each year in 1959–1983 and a total of nearly 6.2 million responses were given, of which 4.1 million, in other words 2/3 were ordered by the KGB, MVD, or the state prosecutor's office.⁶⁶ The figures are incredibly immense but if we consider that a large proportion of the work was routine checking of the availability of the object of inquiry in the card files, most of which was done according to lists or by telephone, it was physically possible.⁶⁷

Alongside two large card files – address forms and wanted persons – ever more new, smaller card files were set up in the 1970's. Thus card files started being kept in 1971 of persons placed under administrative supervision and of violators of passport rules. In 1972, card files were set up for offenders who did not fulfil their general work obligation, in other words “persons who refused to do socially useful work”, and in 1977, card files were established for persons who avoided compulsory address registration and for people released from prison. The fundamental principle of operation of all these card files was similar: cards were constantly being added but outdated cards were also removed. In summary, all card files grew in size, and the one concerning violators of passport rules grew the most. In 1971–1983, 12,418 cards were added to the latter file and 5,650 cards were removed, and thus that card file grew by 6768 cards. The card file for people avoiding compulsory address registration received an additional 1178 cards in 1977–1983, while 1094 cards were removed over the same period.⁶⁸

Checking of the Passport System

Officials had to constantly keep tabs on the passport system. Countless directives required this and all plans contained the corresponding tasks. Raids were used along with thorough checks and random checks. A widespread method was to launch checking raids at institutions, enterprises, in apartments and dormitories carried out by passport officials in cooperation with the local militia and auxiliary manpower from the community.⁶⁹

The intensification of checking was required particularly on state holidays and on the occasion of elections and various kinds of major events (such as the Olympic Games). Special directives that were indistinguishably similar to each other were issued on such occasions year after year. For instance, the directive issued by the head of the Militia Administration provided 16-point instructions for maintaining social order on the anniversary of the October Revolution in 1951 and on the days leading up to it. The Passport Department was required

⁶⁶ Statements concerning the work of the Address Bureau for the years 1971–1983, ERAF.17SM.4, files 444, 490, 525, 568, 677, 748, 810, 870, 941, 1020, 1076 and 1126.

⁶⁷ The KGB and the MVD had the right to obtain information over the telephone, and a special password system was used for this. About half of the responses were given by telephone in the 1960's. The statistics for the 1970's even indicated notices given by telephone (*справка*) and the response to written inquiries (*запрос*) separately – each comprised about half of the total enquiries. For instance, 20 people worked in the address bureau in 1966 and 260,000 inquiries were resolved. Thus each employee, if we leave out the head of the bureau and the janitor, had to look up information concerning 50–60 people per day.

⁶⁸ Statements concerning the work of the address bureau for the years 1971–1983, ERAF.17SM.4, files 444, 490, 525, 568, 677, 678, 748, 810, 870, 941, 1020, 1076 and 1126.

⁶⁹ The so called brigade militia was used primarily. It was reorganised in 1960 as formally voluntary people's *malevs* ('druzhina' in Russian), each of which was composed of people from one or another institution or enterprise. The post of “social passport inspector” existed in the late 1960's and in the 1970's. The highest number of these inspectors in Estonia was 356 and this was on record in 1968. Later on there were 200–300 such inspectors.

to ensure that the passport regimen is followed, particularly in regimen districts, and surprise raids had to be carried out for this purpose. Particular attention had to be paid to persons who had arrived from elsewhere. Their passports and address registration had to be checked and in the event of anything suspicious, they were to be detained for investigation.⁷⁰

The Passport Department kept records of passport checking, the forms and methods of which changed often. Records were kept in the latter half of the 1940's of checks conducted at institutions and enterprises, and in living quarters. The year 1947 was a record year, during which 2153 institutions and enterprises and nearly 145,000 living quarters were checked. Records were kept in terms of checked persons in the early 1950's and if official statistics can be believed, the number of checked persons extended to nearly 2 million per year.

The most thorough statistics survive concerning 1967–1980. Nearly 12 million people were checked during those 14 years, in other words an average of over 800,000 people per year. Some years stand out in terms of very large numbers, for instance over 1.44 million persons checked in 1977, over 1.37 million in 1968, or over 1.31 million in 1972.⁷¹ These reflect several various campaigns, for instance the record numbers of 1968 and 1977 are associated with preparations for union-wide censuses, which took place in January of 1970 and January of 1979 respectively. In 1972, however, the so-called anti-parasite campaign reached a new culmination, and at the same time, the above-mentioned new card file of “persons refusing to engage in socially useful work” was set up.

These kinds of astronomical figures make the researcher wary and lead to the question of whether so many people really were actually checked or whether the figures were simply made up. This kind of massive checking is not impossible in and of itself, considering the fact that the greater portion of checking consisted of an official leafing through the passport. It is, of course, not possible to check the validity of the statistics after the fact and perhaps it is not even so important. These numbers indicate the objectives and attitude of the regime, and the constant and comprehensive checking of the population was definitely an objective of its own.

Campaigns also included other forms of control. For instance, complete checks of registers of apartment building residents were carried out with the aim of ascertaining the existence of the persons actually living in the corresponding living space. One campaign of this kind took place in the spring of 1954 when a check conducted in accordance with a USSR MVD directive included over half a million people. As a result, 435 people without passports and 3591 persons whose addresses were not registered were found out. Additionally, over 11,000 people who had left their place of residence without registering their departure and nearly 17,000 children who were not entered in the respective register of apartment building residents were identified.⁷²

These two categories were also the main types of violations that records were kept of for all years and which were pertinent right through to the end of the Soviet era.

⁷⁰ Instructions for Militia Administration department managers and heads of local militia units, 25 October 1951, ERAF.18SM.1.26, 82–86.

⁷¹ Reports on passport work for 1967–1983, ERAF.18SM.1, files 429, 445; ERAF.17SM.4, files 388, 424, 444, 490, 525, 568, 622, 623, 677, 678, 748, 810, 870, 941, 1020, 1076 and 1126. Naturally this should not lead to the conclusion that absolutely all residents of Estonia were checked, rather the same people could have been checked repeatedly.

⁷² Справка, 2 March 1954, ERAF.18SM.1.111, 88.

The detection of about 22,000 persons without passports was registered in 1946–1983. A record year in this respect was 1947, when almost 2000 people without passports were detected (at the same time, precise data concerning 1948–1950 is missing). The issue of passports to the entire population did not lead to a reduction in this type of crime. This kind of reduction did not come until the mid-1950's. A few hundred people without passports were detected per year in the 1950's and predominantly 100–200 people per year during the next two decades. This figure started increasing again in the 1980's and in 1983 it extended to nearly 900. Considerably more people with expired passports were caught every year, which, however, was also considered a considerably less serious offence.

An average of over 4000 people whose addresses were not registered were apprehended per year during the time interval 1946–1983, with a total of at least 160,000. The largest numbers of this category of offender, 7000–9000 per year were detected in the 1950's. Their number ranged between 1800–3600 in the 1960's and 1970's and similarly started increasing noticeably in the early 1980's. The problem of persons with incorrect address registration did not disappear from the agenda until the end of the Soviet era. A special card file for persons avoiding address registration was even set up beginning in 1977.

Who were the people who did not have passports or lived without registering their permanent addresses? A significant portion of this category, of course, consisted of forest brothers (Estonian patriotic partisans) in the 1940's and 1950's, who did not have passports and were not registered at any permanent address. Some of these people were also probably reflected in the statistics. As a rule, “decent people” had passports during the latter half of the Soviet era, even though people did on occasion happen to lose their passports. The overwhelming majority of people without passports, however, could only be illegal immigrants. Some people without passports were probably tramps. It is a somewhat different story concerning address registration. Human carelessness played its part but there were also definitely those who broke the rules on purpose. People tried in this way to get out of various kinds of obligations, such as paying alimony. According to the recollections of contemporaries of that era, however, people tried in this way first and foremost to avoid having to participate in reserve training.⁷³

The checking of the passport regimen had two main public objectives during all years – to obstruct illegal migration and to combat crime. These two phenomena were interconnected and neither struggle was particularly successful. Many researchers have reached the conclusion that the Soviet regime failed to control migration. Even though the system at the disposal of the regime offered immense possibilities, the regime was unable to use them and the passport system together with address registration did not function effectively enough.⁷⁴

⁷³ Toivo Paavle's commentary to the author of this article. Toivo Paavle was repeatedly summoned for military reserve training. Orders to report for duty were sent to his place of residence and military officials came to his official place of residence looking for him. Since he actually lived elsewhere, they did not get a hold of him and he did not attend reserve training.

⁷⁴ Cynthia Buckley, “The Myth of Managed Migration: Migration Control and Market in the Soviet Period”, *Slavic Review*, vol 54, no 4 (Winter, 1995), 896–916; Tiit Tammaru, *Linnastumine ja linnade kasv Eestis nõukogude aastatel* (Urbanisation and Urban Growth in Estonia during the Soviet Period) (PhD thesis, University of Tartu, 2001), 59–61; Olaf Mertelsmann, “Turumajanduselt käsumajandusele” (From Market Economy to Command Economy), *Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis* (The Estonian SSR in 1940–1953: Mechanisms of Sovietisation and Consequences in the Context of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe), compiled by Tõnu Tannberg, *Eesti Ajalooarhiivi toimetised = Acta et commentationes Archivi Historici Estoniae* 15 (22) (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2007), 461.

This emerged in Estonia more or less immediately after the war in connection with illegal immigrants, in other words the so-called *kotipoisid* (an Estonian word for carpetbaggers). The reason for the problem was the shortage of food that prevailed in the Soviet Union and culminated in the famine of 1946. Migration reached its climax after the wartime permit system in transportation was done away with by the USSR Council of Ministers regulation issued on 13 April 1946 and the unrestricted sale of train tickets was permitted. In connection with this turn of events, the operative groups that previously checked documents in railway stations were disbanded by a directive issued by the USSR Minister of Internal Affairs.⁷⁵ The high point of activity of the *kotipoisid* came in 1947, which was also reflected in crime statistics. Of the total number of criminals arrested by the militia, 53% were Estonian in 1946, compared to 34% in 1947, 56% in 1948, and 68% in 1949. This was also reflected in statistics that the militia had to compile concerning the social status of criminals. While 30–31% of the persons involved in criminal proceedings and 39–41% of arrested persons in the years 1946, 1948 and 1949 were “without stable work and a permanent place of residence”, the corresponding figures in 1947 were 39% and 52%.⁷⁶

This did not go unnoticed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs either. For instance, Minister of Internal Affairs Resev directed the attention of Party leader Karotamm to the fact that 64% of people who were criminally convicted in April of 1947 had arrived from elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Resev pointed out in his report submitted to Karotamm in May of 1947 that the invasion of Tallinn by the “transient element, gypsies and people without passports” continues. People without passports did not have the right to settle in Tallinn as a first category regimen city but the authorities were incapable of preventing this.⁷⁷ The militia’s difficulties can partially be explained by their shortage of employees. Militia personnel were partially understaffed, particularly in terms of the rank and file. In early 1947, there was a deficiency of 344 militia employees throughout the ESSR and 88 vacancies in Tallinn. This means that 73 rank and file positions were vacant in Tallinn.⁷⁸ In Narva, one militia officer dealt with checking every train. In Tallinn, larger militia forces were sent to Baltic Station but regardless of that, they were incapable of checking the people disembarking from the trains due to the large numbers of travellers. Resev accused the railway authorities of inactivity for not adopting any measures to prevent the arrival of such questionable characters and for not informing the local militia of them – the militia found out about the arrival of larger gangs of *kotipoisid* only after they appeared on the streets of Tallinn. Railway officials, in turn, did not have the right to check the documents of travellers and head of the railway Anatoliy Roslak accused the militia of allowing people without passports to pass through in return for bribes.⁷⁹

The authorities were also incapable of controlling labour migration and that was topical throughout the Soviet period. Limits on the import of manpower were in effect for enterprises and these limits were adhered to. It was strictly forbidden to pay wages to people without passports who were not registered at any permanent address. This theoretically enabled

⁷⁵ Churbanov to Karotamm, 28 May 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34, 43–45.

⁷⁶ Цифровые сведения об итогах оперативно-следственной работы органов милиции, 1946–1949 (Statistical data on the results of operative and surveillance work of the Militia organs in 1946–1949), ERAF.18SM.1, files 4, 5, 8, 12.

⁷⁷ Resev to Karotamm, 21 May 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34, 41–42.

⁷⁸ Сведения (Data), 28 January 1947, ERAF.17SM.4.63, 276–278.

⁷⁹ Roslak to Karotamm, 10 June 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34, 46–47.

the authorities to control manpower policy, however, this really was theoretically because enterprises seriously needed manpower, they did not care about prohibitive restrictions, and manpower was hired indiscriminately right at the factory gates, so to speak.⁸⁰ Directors of institutions were penalised every year for hiring people without passports or registered permanent addresses. For instance, 229 criminal cases of this sort were initiated in 1947, and over 800 criminal cases in 1953 against the directors of institutions and apartment building administrators (the latter broke the rules by allowing people without passports or registered permanent addresses to move into the building). In 1966, 179 directors of institutions were caught breaking hiring rules, and so on. On top of that, checking raids were carried out in factories and raids were carried out in the dormitories of institutions especially for this purpose. In addition, tens of directives were issued, but none of this succeeded in solving the problem. Migration control by way of the list of regimen cities failed as a whole in the Soviet Union, which was demonstrated by the very small difference in the growth rates of closed and ordinary cities.⁸¹

The control of manpower policy affected enterprises located in cities first and foremost and at least from time to time, the authorities related considerably more indulgently to the same kinds of phenomena in the countryside. One such trend emerged in the early 1960's. Namely, collective farmers from Pskov *oblast* had begun to flee to Estonia and found work in Estonian collective farms. They were welcomed due to the shortage of manpower, and the local authorities applied for and in most cases acquired passports and permanent address registration for them; the ESSR MVD even had a war of words on paper on this topic with its colleagues in Pskov *oblast*. At least 338 people of this sort arrived in 1961–1963. It shortly turned out, however, that the new arrivals did not stay where they were and most of them fled to the cities right away after receiving their passports. On top of that, the Pskov collective farms that these people had illegally left, in turn, protested against the Estonian collective farms for receiving them.⁸²

The role of passport officials in catching criminals was insignificant. It was considered an important operative indicator of their work and most reports included a line for crimes “discovered by way of the passport regimen” or “discovered directly by passport officials” but the result was relatively very small through all the years. In this case as well, strides were made only during the years of Stalin's reign of terror – for instance, 284 criminals were caught in 1947 in the course of passport procedures or the checking of the passport regimen, and 267 were caught in 1952. On the other hand, very few were caught in the 1960's and 1970's, 29 at the most and in the reports for several years, the number one adorns the appropriate column

The curbing of crime failed in the long run. Using MVD crime statistics as a basis, a temporary decrease took place only in the mid-1950's. While 5000–6000 crimes were registered per year in the 1940's, 2700–3000 crimes were registered in 1954 and 1955. Indicators started increasing rapidly again in 1956. The number of crimes processed in a year ranged between 5000–6000 again in the 1960's, climbed to 10,000 by the end of the 1970's, and

⁸⁰ Mertelsmann, “Turumajanduselt käsumajandusele”, 453.

⁸¹ Buckley, 905.

⁸² Letter by ESSR Minister of Law Enforcement V. Ani entitled “Concerning provision of identification documents to collective farm workers who have moved to the territory of the Estonian SSR”, 21 February 1963, ERAF.18SM.1.362, 17–18. This story very closely resembles the medieval phenomenon of peasants who fled from the countryside into the cities.

surpassed the 15,000 mark by 1983 already. This kind of increase cannot be explained by population growth or by more effective registration of crimes. At the same time, the ESSR MVD itself pointed out the sad fact that the Estonian SSR was the Baltic union republic with the highest crime rate.⁸³ Broadly speaking, these trends corresponded to union-wide trends. After Stalin's death, the crime rate in the Soviet Union generally decreased, but shortly it started increasing again and in 1956–1990, the crime rate quadrupled, whereas it doubled in the interval of 1979–1983.⁸⁴

It is true that the passport system was not at fault for the rise in crime nor was it the only means that was supposed to prevent that increase. Nevertheless, all in all it raises the question of whether the resources wasted on the passport system and the restriction of personal liberty that accompanied it were justified even from the point of view of the regime itself.

Penalisation

Penal statistics can be followed by way of public archival documents from 1945 through to the end of the Soviet regime with gaps along the way. The source material is reports on passport work and crime statistics drawn up in the Militia Administration and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Material from the 1940's is difficult to use, documents contain contradictory information, data is not summed up and is not organised according to a uniform method, and contains many calculation errors. Reports were often filled out incorrectly and incompletely. It sometimes happened at the beginning of the Soviet regime that Moscow demanded the redoing of faulty reports and the resubmission of the corrected reports. Additionally, the ascertainment of the actual number of convicted persons is complicated partially due to the fact that there was no information at the disposal of the militia and the NKVD. Thus comments are found in reports that state the faultiness of the statistics because other organs (Smersh, the prosecutor's office) have not taken the trouble to inform the NKVD. Statistics compiled in the court system have also been drawn up with many gaps or many statistical reports are missing.

The compilation of statistics concerning penalisation for violating the passport regimen thus requires the careful analysis and comparison of all surviving reports. Even then the result will not necessarily be complete and archival material of people's courts also has to be included among the source materials. This requires extensive research resources and little of this has been done thus far. I will nevertheless attempt to present figures below based on the results of research done thus far. In the interests of the reader, I divide the Soviet era up into shorter time intervals, separately examining the periods 1945–1953, 1954–1960 and from 1960 onward. These periods are delineated quite clearly through changes in penal policy or in legal principles.

⁸³ Оперативные данные о состоянии преступности (Operative data on the situation regarding crime), ERAF.17SM.4.1234, 28; MVD crime statistics, ERAF.17SM.4, files 89, 208, ERAF.17SM.5, files 155, 169, 175, 254, ERAF.18SM.1.176, 342.

⁸⁴ Ando Leps, *Kuritegevus Balti liiduvabariikides* (Crime in the Baltic Union Republics) (Tallinn: Ühing "Teadus", 1990), 3–6; William E. Butler, "Crime in the Soviet Union. Early Glimpses of the True Story", *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol 32, no 2 (Spring 1992), 147; Gennady V. Dashkov, "Quantitative and Qualitative Changes in Crime in the USSR", *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol 32, no 2 (Spring 1992), 160.

1945–1953

An estimated 90,000–100,000 administrative cases and at least 3300 criminal cases were initiated in relation to violators of the passport regimen during the Stalinism era (Table 1).

As a rule, administrative penalties meant a fine assessed by the militia organ or the administrative commission of the local executive committee (as of 1962), and criminal conviction meant imprisonment according to sentences handed down by the people's court. Violation of the passport regimen was the most widespread administrative offence in 1945: 52% of all initiated cases dealt with violation of the passport regimen. Fines were levied for a total amount of 361,725 roubles, which composed 87% of the total amount of all fines (413,947 roubles).⁸⁵ The above average proportion of fines and the fact that the militia was just starting up its operations and filling out its staff in 1945 indicate that close supervision of the passport regimen was considered a priority. Registration of these kinds of violations increased during subsequent years but their relative proportion started decreasing.

Table 1. Penalisation of Violators of the Passport Regimen 1945–1953⁸⁶

Year	Administrative cases initiated	Fines levied	Criminal cases initiated	Sentenced according to §192-a	Persons sentenced to imprisonment
1945	6789	...	19	...	...
1946	8789	...	121	65	63
1947	9291	...	320	314	274
1948	Over 10,000	...	...	260	253
1949	Over 10,000	...	632	419	394
1950	Over 10,000	...	...	572	550
1951	11,095	...	508	308	299
1952	13,402	12,310	505	401	381
1953	10,080	10,996	275	...	...

Imprisonment in accordance with RSFSR Criminal Code Article 192-a was applied in the cases of 2214 persons in 1945–1952 according to MVD statistics (the actual number can also be somewhat larger due to gaps in MVD statistics). The relative proportion here was not comparable to that of administrative offences. For instance, a total of 5550 criminal cases were initiated by the militia “in all lines” in 1946.⁸⁷ Additionally, passport regimen criminal cases were processed according to the border belt regulation of 1935. Cases of this type are some-

⁸⁵ NKVD activity report for 1945, ERAF.17SM.4.40, 17–18.

⁸⁶ ERAF.17SM.4, files 40, 61, 73, 87, 93; ERAF.18SM.1, files 4, 5, 8, 12, 16, 28, 55, 58, 111. The overall number of administrative cases in 1948–1950 is partially an appraisal founded on data based on comparison and partially an extrapolation on the basis of data that has survived for each quarter.

⁸⁷ ERAF.1.47.38, 171. It must be borne in mind that this number reflects only ordinary crimes, so to speak, which were handled by the militia and this does not include so called political crimes, which were handled by security institutions and the Main Administration of Army Counterintelligence Smersh. At the same time, many “non-political” crimes often had a political undertone, also including many cases of violation of the passport regimen.

times contained in MVD statistics as violations of the passport regimen and sometimes they are listed separately. The same applies to the passport forging article (RSFSR Criminal Code Article 72), so to speak, that was applied to a lesser extent.

The ESSR authorities vehemently demanded that penal policy be made more severe. For instance, 3299 violators of the passport regimen were apprehended in Tallinn in the first quarter of 1946 but only 10 of those cases made it to court.⁸⁸ It must also be borne in mind that the people's court apparatus was going through its growing pains at the same time, for which reason it necessarily had to place the emphasis on levying administrative fines. The tightening of penal policy can be seen in more comprehensive statistics that were drawn up concerning 1949–1952 in association with the contingent of persons left behind from the deportation considered above. All in all, 40% of convicted persons were sentenced for up to two years and 59% received 2–5 year sentences. Additionally, 15 persons received even longer, 6–10 year sentences. Since Article 192-a prescribed up to 2 years imprisonment as the maximum penalty, the statistics should most likely be interpreted such that persons who were convicted according to some other article of the Criminal Code as well are the ones who received longer sentences. In this case, however, Article 192-a played a role in the deportation of those 1624 convicted persons after serving their sentences.

In addition to administrative penalties and criminal sentences, the expulsion of people from regimen districts, meaning from the City of Tallinn and the border zone, took place according to passport regulations. The corresponding statistics are very faulty because contrary to penal statistics, this is reflected only in militia passport work reports. According to those reports, 192 people were expelled from the regimen district in 1946, 319 in 1947, 47 in 1951 (this data refers to the border zone only), 73 in 1952, and 62 in 1953. In 1947, 6182 "persons who arrived in the regimen district on their own accord" who were refused address registration according to Article 38 of the passport regulations ran through the reports. This number illustrates the culmination of the problem with the *kotipoisid*. These figures should be approached with great caution because of the *kotipoisid* since it is not clear how the militia counted the expelled persons (or if they counted those persons at all). For instance, one report describes the arrival of three railcar loads of "gypsies" in Tallinn on 16 May 1947, who were loaded on a train the very next day and sent back in the direction of Pskov. In a situation where the militia suffered from a shortage of personnel, the militia had no choice but to bundle people onto a train and try to send them further away from their area of responsibility. This train, however, was emptied at Veriora Station on orders from the railway authorities, the passengers straggled out into the surrounding area and were shortly back in Tallinn again.⁸⁹ It is hardly likely that all these "gypsies" were counted and even if this was done, these matters were not processed according to official procedure. The greater portion of these *kotipoisid* certainly had to be left out of all manner of statistics altogether.

1954–1960

After Stalin's death, the regime began to ease off and this was also expressed in penal policy. The slogan of so-called *socialist lawfulness* was brought up in the leadership of the Soviet Union as part of de-stalinisation. The softening of penal policy was set as the objective. As a

⁸⁸ Докладная записка (Written report), June 1946, ERAF.17SM.4.32, 252.

⁸⁹ Resev to Karotamm, 21 May 1947, ERAF.1.5a.34, 41–42.

consequence, more administrative penalties began to be applied for less serious offences instead of criminal prosecution.⁹⁰

There is no data from 1954–1955 concerning criminal penalties administered to violators of the passport regimen and the reports on passport work do not even contain the corresponding categories. It is very possible that such penalties were not even administered temporarily and that the emphasis was placed on administrative measures in the spirit of the new penal policy. The number of offenders apprehended, however, did not decrease at all during these years. Over 13,000 offences were registered in 1954, and 1955 and 1956 were record years with over 17,000 cases initiated. The numbers in 1957–1959 remained in the range between 10,000 and 13,600, and decreased to less than half that number in 1960. The organs themselves explained this as the improved public order as the result of their good work.⁹¹

Few criminal cases were initiated: 57 in 1956, 30 in 1957, 88 in 1958, and 6 in 1960. The latter two figures also include the retightening of penal policy by the ESSR Supreme Soviet Presidium decree passed in 1958, which became the basis for administering criminal penalties in cases where offenders did not have their addresses registered or did not obey the precept from the militia for departing from the area. The decree prescribed the maximum penalty as imprisonment for up to 18 months.⁹² Already in the same year, 70 people were convicted accordingly and 800 people were issued warnings, but the effect of the decree nevertheless proved to be short-term. It was applied in terms of 6 offenders in 1960 (data concerning 1959 has not been found thus far) and the decree was repealed in March of 1961.

Even though the statistics considered here might not necessarily be complete and there is also no information concerning how many initiated cases culminated with conviction, it can be stated that penal policy was relatively lenient during those years. This may of course also be explained by the lack of necessity and it can be considered that there was nobody to convict because the phenomena that fed this sphere of activity during the Stalinist era – the forest brother movement or persons avoiding deportation – had ceased to exist. At the same time, the consistency of the number of administrative cases tends to nevertheless indicate a somewhat more lenient attitude towards convicting people.

Expulsion from regimen districts was not a relevant problem during those years. According to information from the militia, it was applied in regard to 79 persons in total in 1956–1960. At the same time, Tallinn was one of the 70 cities in the Soviet Union where very strict address registration restrictions were established in 1956.⁹³ Such a small number of expelled persons indicates that the problem of illegal immigrants was hushed up.

⁹⁰ See concerning this: Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer. Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 43–49; Tannberg, “1953. aasta amnestia”, 38–39.

⁹¹ Reports on passport work, ERAF.18SM.1, files 159, 228, 267, 268, 291, 292, 311, 312, 340.

⁹² ESSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Decree concerning the strengthening of criminal responsibility for the criminal violation of passport registration rules, 24 May 1958; ESSR Act concerning approval of the ESSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Decree “Concerning the strengthening of criminal responsibility for the criminal violation of passport registration rules”, 29 August 1958, *ENSV Teataja*, no 7 (1958), art 100; no 12 (1959), art 170.

⁹³ Buckley, 906.

1961–1991

A new legal context affected crime statistics in the 1960's. The Estonian SSR Criminal Code went into effect in 1961 in place of the Russian SFSR Criminal Code that had been in use until then. The procedure for conducting administrative cases was changed, several previous acts of legislation that had formed the basis for conviction were repealed and new ones were put into effect.

Not a single criminal case was initiated against violators of the passport regimen in 1961–1965 because the ESSR Criminal Code did not enable this – “criminal violators of the passport regimen” and “persons engaged in systematic vagabondism” could not be criminally prosecuted. The pertinent amendments were made to the Criminal Code in the summer of 1966 and Article 189 in it – “Violation of Passport Regulation Provisions” – henceforth prescribed imprisonment or corrective labour for up to one year or a fine of up to 50 roubles for living without a passport or without registering one's permanent address.⁹⁴ The opportunity that emerged was immediately put to use – 9 criminal cases were initiated in accordance with this article in the latter half of 1966, and 33 criminal cases were initiated in 1967.

In the first half of the 1960's, 4600–6000 administrative cases were conducted per year. Only in 1964 was that figure larger – nearly 7500. Records started being kept of minor offences as well in 1966, like failure to register one's departure on time in the register of apartment building residents, failure to register children under the age of 16 in the register of apartment building residents, and failure to live in accordance with one's permanent address registration. For this reason, the total number of administrative violations increased by leaps and bounds (more than 14,000). At the same time, however, practice became more lenient and changed somewhat. A record of administrative violations was drawn up for about half of these cases. In 1967–1981, 5500–8000 such administrative records were drawn up, and over 10,000 were drawn up in 1982–1984.

About two thirds of offenders were assessed fines, but a great deal of warnings were also issued, and to a lesser extent, offenders were sent to “social decision-making”, in other words to comradesly courts. These courts could levy fines of up to 50 roubles, issue censure or a reprimand, but they could also recommend dismissal as a more effective means, order the confiscation of bonuses, deprivation of vacation packages to sanatoriums, or movement towards the bottom of the waiting list for apartments. The introduction of this method began with a campaign in 1960, which was given much publicity, as part of a broader reform.⁹⁵ This method quickly became the object of ridicule among the people and became marginalised more or less immediately in resolving any slightly more serious cases. Only du-

⁹⁴ ESSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Decree “Concerning amendments to articles 189 and 201² in the Estonian SSR Criminal Code”, 29 June 1966, *Eesti Nõukogude Sotsialistliku Vabariigi Ülemnõukogu ja Valitsuse Teataja* (ESSR Supreme Soviet and Government Gazette), no 31 (1966), art 207; Справка о работе паспортных аппаратов за 1963–1967 годы (Certificate concerning the work of passport agencies in 1963–1967), 18 January 1968, ERAF.18SM.1.429, 246.

⁹⁵ CPSU CC and USSR Council of Ministers Regulation “Об участии трудящихся в охране общественного порядка в стране” (On the participation of workers and employees in maintaining law and order in the country), 2 March 1959; ÜAÜKN presiidiumi otsus 26. veebruarist 1960 “Ametiühinguorganisatsioonide tööst NLKP KK ja NSV Liidu MN määruse “Töötajate osavõtu kohta avaliku korra kaitsmisest meie maal” täitmisel” (Decision issued on 26 February 1960 by the All-union Central Council of Trade Unions “Concerning the work of trade union organisations in carrying out the CPSU CC and USSR Council of Ministers Regulation “Concerning the participation of workers in maintaining public order in our country”), *Ametiühingu aktivisti käsiraamat* (Trade Union Activist's Handbook) (Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1961), 86–90.

ring the first year of the campaign (1961) were 9% of violations of the passport regimen resolved in this way. Later on, this form was applied as filler in the case of less than 2% of violations on average per year.

Table 2. Penalisation of Violators of the Passport Regimen 1961–1990⁹⁶

	Records drawn up of administrative offences	Fined	Criminal cases initiated	Convicted according to Criminal Code §189
1961	...	4076	0	0
1962	....	...	0	0
1963	5178	...	0	0
1964	6639	...	0	0
1965	4685	...	0	0
1966	7421	...	...	9
1967	7968	5234	...	33
1968	6330	4254	45	52
1969	6047	4402	53	37
1970	6172	4159	116	106
1971	5904	3788	95	81
1972	6555	4672	87	64
1973	6965	4622	148	95
1974	6985	4902	214	148
1975	6153	3979	200	...
1976	5642	3422	269	...
1977	7143	4071	219	...
1978	6118	3541	164	...
1979	5504	3198	180	...
1980	6893	4239	267	...
1981	7378	4767	265	...
1982	10,226	6168	203	...
1983	11,102	6431	224	...
1984	10,477	...	137	...
1985	...	...	139	...
1986	...	...	135	...
1987	...	...	68	...
1988	...	...	42	...
1989	...	...	13	...
1990	...	...	13	...

⁹⁶ Сведения о зарегистрированных и раскрытых преступлениях, 1968–1974 (Data on registered and exposed crimes), ERAF.17SM.5.155, [file, page] 165, 96; 175, 91; 189, 36; 198, 3; 216, 4; 219, 5; 239, 2; 254, 5; 278, 8; 297, 10; 319, 7; 338, 27; 355, 32; 375, 36; 393, 13; 404, 10; 410, 68; 419, 6; 430, 6; 444, 3; 457, 19; 464, 5.

As of the end of the 1960's, the tightening of penal policy began again, which was expressed through the more frequent application of criminal sentences. In 1968–1974, 583 people were convicted according to Article 189, in other words, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of criminal cases ended with conviction. The numbers of convictions have not been located for the following years, but 2538 criminal cases were initiated in 1975–1990 (see Table 2). Even as late as 1990, 13 criminal cases were initiated for violations of the passport regimen, of which 2 went to court. Data is also presently missing concerning the number of cases in which offenders were sentenced to imprisonment but there is no reason to believe that imprisonment was not prescribed.

All in all, an estimated 2500 people were criminally convicted for violations of the passport regimen and in the order of 200,000 administrative penalties were meted out in 1961–1990.⁹⁷

“Systematic vagabondism” was also considered violation of the passport regimen, for which Article 201³ of the ESSR Criminal Code prescribed imprisonment or corrective labour for up to three years. Article 201², which was in effect until 1975 and applied to “criminal evasion of socially useful work by persons with antisocial, parasitic lifestyles”, prescribed the same penalty.⁹⁸ According to existing data, Article 201 was applied in 45 criminal cases in 1967, 200 in 1972, 110 in 1973, and 80 in 1974.

Expulsion from regimen districts was no longer applied in the earlier sense of the term, instead the authorities dealt with ascertaining “persons not engaged in socially useful work” and sending them to work. The basis for this was the ESSR legislation of 8 June 1961 “Concerning reinforcement of the struggle against antisocial parasitic elements”, which started up a subsequent so-called anti-parasite campaign. By the end of the very same year already, 93 people had been compulsorily sent to Viru County as miners.⁹⁹ According to data from the Militia Administration, nearly 7000 people were found to be these kinds of “parasites” in 1961–1965, of whom nearly 4300 were “sent to work”. This often meant being sent into exile (in both the linguistic and legal sense of the word) within the borders of the union republic. As of 1 January 1967, a total of 273 people were in exile according to MVD records.¹⁰⁰ “Parasites” apprehended in cities were sent by decision of the executive committee into exile (*na poselenije*) in the countryside, to state collective farms (sovkhozes), and industrial enterprises, where local militia organs had to keep track of them by way of a special journal. Exiles had to report once a month and sign a registration form. Leaving on one's own accord was cause for criminal conviction in most cases.

For instance, “parasites” were sent into exile to the Lungu state collective farm and the Rapla regional militia department had a great deal of trouble with them. In 1962, 115 incidents were entered into the journal for registering crimes, and 27 of these crimes involved persons in exile who had been sent to work. For the most part, these incidents involved escape from the location that had been assigned for exile, for which 10 offenders were senten-

⁹⁷ The number of administrative penalisations does not equal the number of penalised people because there definitely were people who were penalised more than once. In terms of criminal convictions, that was less likely but it cannot be ruled out.

⁹⁸ *Eesti NSV Kriminaalkodeks: ametlik tekst muudatuste ja täiendustega seisuga 1. jaanuar 1978* (Estonian SSR Criminal Code: Official text with changes and amendments as of 1 January 1978) (Tallinn: Eesti NSV Justiitsministeerium, 1978), 133.

⁹⁹ Справка (Certificate), 1 June 1962, ERAF.18SM.1.347, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Сведения (Data), 10 January 1968, ERAF.17SM.5.51, 25.

ced to corrective labour and another ten were actually sent to prison.¹⁰¹ Article 177 of the Criminal Code was for this purpose and prescribed up to 1.5 years of imprisonment “for escaping from exile or an exiled person settling on his own accord in a prohibited locality”.

Most of these people were definitely not law-abiding citizens, rather they tried to find other ways to make a living instead of going to work but at the same time, this article of the Criminal Code was used for political ends as well in the Soviet Union. The story of Nobel literature prize laureate Jossif Brodski is the best-known example. The court convicted him of being a parasite and sentenced him in 1964 to the maximum sentence according to the pertinent decree of the Russian SFSR, in other words he was sentenced to be sent to work along with being exiled to a “most distant location” for five years. Whether and to what extent this practice was applied in the Estonian SSR requires further research.

Summary

The mechanism of internal passports and compulsory registration of place of residence established in the Soviet Union in the early 1930’s, the so called unified passport system, remained in effect in practically unchanged form through six decades. Its primary key words were checking, checking, and once more checking. The regime tried to control migration and employment, keep crime in check, and discipline the citizenry by exercising total control over the population. The passport system formed the “heart of police authority”.¹⁰² Through keeping track of the population, the passport system was supposed to guarantee that the regime would know where any given citizen was located and what he was doing at any given moment. Tagging people made it possible to get an overview of social and ethnic groups, and created a means for eliminating unwanted elements from society.

After its annexation by the Soviet Union, the Soviet passport system was implemented in Estonia as well within a short time. Systematic issuing of passports was carried out after the war in three waves: the urban population was issued passports in 1945, the population of the border zone was issued passports in the autumn of 1946, and people in the remaining rural areas received passports in the autumn of 1947. Together with Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia formed an exception in the Soviet Union since the issuing of passports to the general population took place elsewhere in the USSR 30 years later.

Privileged status was illusory. The issue of passports to the general public, which seemingly assured that people would have more personal freedoms at the same time also made it possible to exert more effective control. From the viewpoint of the regime, the passport system was successfully applied in the service of political repressions and by using its possibilities, hundreds of people who had escaped mass deportation were sent to Siberia. Hundreds of people were imprisoned and expelled because they had broken the regime’s rules while trying to have a say in choosing their job and place of residence. In 1944–1991 during the post-war Soviet era, an estimated 5000 people were criminally convicted in the Estonian SSR for “violating the passport regimen”, to which 400,000 administrative cases must be added. This immense amount demonstrated the regime’s “readiness”.

¹⁰¹ Rapla Regional Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Executive Committee Militia Department Crime Registration Journal, 1962–1964, ERAF.34SM.3.7, 1–36.

¹⁰² Marc Garcelon, “Colonising the Subject. The Genealogy and Legacy of the Soviet Internal Passport”, Jane Caplan & John Torpey (eds), *Documenting Individual Identity. The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 88.

The system was not successful in achieving more noble objectives. The control of migration functioned with large gaps, and the curbing of crime failed. Regardless of its immense potential, the system was largely ineffective, bogged down in bureaucracy and kept records of insignificant details. The tagging of people and entering them in ever more new card files was referred to as crime prevention.

The system may have been ineffective and its control apparatus may have been faulty but it nevertheless still kept people in fetters and in fear, and disciplined them by its mere existence. The main thing was to create the impression that this control is functioning. This was achieved through campaigns and blanket checking, and again and again through card files and tagging. People complied because statistics were kept secret, information was censored and it was impossible to see the overall picture. Learning to behave within the framework set by the system remained the task of the Soviet citizen.