

# Family Members of “Exploiters” and “Enemies of the People” in the Fetters of the Soviet Regime

Eli Pilve

## Introduction

Throughout their history, Estonia’s inhabitants have repeatedly had to experience the sudden change of political power, sometimes even several times over the course of one lifetime. Although the changes in political power that took place in 1940, 1941, 1944 and 1991 can broadly and generally be considered cultural traumas, they are not by any means comparable. In all of these cases, people invariably had to adapt to changed conditions. Often, but not in all cases, political attitude coincided with linguistic divisions. In 1940 and 1944, the Estonian-speaking population, with a few exceptions, was shocked and in opposition to the new regime, and was forced at least outwardly to replace its former convictions with new ones. This, in turn, conditioned the development of an odd parallel consciousness where people learned to carefully monitor when, where and to whom they could divulge their real thoughts, when to present the imposed ideology, and what to keep secret altogether. It was prudent to keep information secret that nowadays can be considered entirely innocent, such as speaking of the occupation of one’s parents, because in the spirit of the Soviet ideology of class struggle and by virtue of Soviet methods of repression, the declaration of one family member as an enemy of the ruling regime marked the entire family in a negative light. Large numbers of memoirs are deposited at the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Literary Museum describing how people have had to suffer because of their social origin through being deprived of education or employment. It is also easy to gather oral heritage in researching this topic. There is, however, little documentary evidence because the repression of family members was covered up by the authorities. In reference to the Communist Party platform of 1919, Lenin clearly stated that the bourgeoisie had to be suppressed, but the way to accomplish this was not prescribed at all.<sup>1</sup> Thus persecution due to one’s origin became standard Soviet practice, where documents did not reflect reality, or the connection was very much distorted. For instance, the reason given in decisions on the exmatriculation of university students who had been deported was failure to attend lectures. Similarly, the reason for firing someone from their job could be presented as failure to satisfactorily fulfil his work duties, even though the actual reason for dismissal was the employee’s unsuitable social background. This is why it is methodologically difficult to

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Lenin, “Kõne partei programmist VK(b)P VIII kongressil 19. märtsil 1919 (Speech on the Party Platform at the Russian Communist (Bolshevist) Party VIII Congress on 19 March 1919)” in Vladimir Lenin, *Valitud teosed II* (Selected Works II, Tallinn: Poliitiline Kirjandus, 1946), 364.

research the setting up of obstacles in everyday life due to social origin since in most cases, documents were not drawn up concerning such procedures, at least not the kind that would be accessible nowadays to Estonian historians. There is, however, a relatively large number of recollections concerning such hindrances, but they are not always entirely reliable. It is human to blame circumstances that are independent of us for our failure to fulfil our ambitions. By comparison, there are examples of people whose parents were not “socially suitable” yet who were accepted to universities even during the Stalinist era, such as the former President of Estonia Lennart Meri. It would be unfair to suspect them all of agreeing to compromises with the authorities, even though this is at first glance one of the possible explanations.

### **Class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat**

According to Karl Marx, private property was what enabled one person to exploit another and thus it had to be liquidated in order to do away with antagonism.<sup>2</sup> In the Soviet Union, however, class struggle was not at all restricted to doing away with private property. The aspiration was to liquidate all manner of dissent along with the people involved in dissent. During the first year of Soviet rule, the Communist Party suppressed even the slightest sign of resistance with the help of the Red Army, favouring public terror in this endeavour. The creation of the so called classless society took place within the framework of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, which in reality, however, created a far more rigid class society. Thereat, the use of any kind (*sic!*) of restrictions on liberty was permitted for suppressing exploiters. According to the official rhetoric, this was a temporary measure, and the Party platform promised that as the possibility for one person to exploit another disappears, so the need for violence would also disappear.<sup>3</sup> Until then, however, according to the constitution of the Communist International, the proletariat was supposed to intensify class struggle in order to retain power, making the struggle particularly widespread, acute and merciless. Representatives of the bourgeois class were to be dislodged from their jobs even more resolutely than before, even by replacing them with incompetent workers if necessary if the new workers could be relied on ideologically.<sup>4</sup>

When the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party adopted the party's first platform at its second congress in 1903, the principles for joining the party were also regulated. Lenin

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<sup>2</sup> Henn Käärrik, *Klassikaline ja nüüdisaegne sotsioloogiline teooria* (Classical and Modern-Day Sociological Theory, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2013), 38–40.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Service, *Seltsimehed : Maailma kommunismi ajalugu* (Comrades: the History of World Communism, Tallinn: Varrak, 2010), 97–98.

<sup>4</sup> *Kommunistlise Internatsionaali resolutsioonid ja põhikiri : Wasta wõetud Kommunistlise Internatsionaali teisel kongressil 17. juulist 7. augustini 1920. a* (Resolutions and Constitution of the Communist International: Adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International from 17 July to 7 August 1920, St. Petersburg: Kommunistlise partei Eestimaa keskkomitee Kirjastus (Communist Party Estonian Central Committee Publishing House), 1920), 5, 7.

demanded that the party should systematically and persistently cultivate people little by little who would be suitable for the party's central body so that he could see the entire activity of each candidate for a higher post like the palm of his hand and familiarise himself even with their individual peculiarities. A party member had to belong to a single party organisation, meaning that he was not permitted to be in several elementary organisations simultaneously. The reason for this requirement was that in this way, it was possible to make sure that the party had strong central control over the activity of every member and that this activity was guided firmly.<sup>5</sup> The same requirement remained in effect in the Communist Party platform that was adopted in 1961.<sup>6</sup>

Party members and candidate members were indeed kept watch over as if they were in the palm of the hand. For instance, the acceptance of Arvid Laatsit into the Party was discussed in 1945. Laatsit had fought in the ranks of the Red Army in the Second World War and had been decorated with two medals but he was deleted from the list of candidates for party membership as a random person who had ended up on the list by mistake because his father had served in the Estonian Police and his sister and brother had belonged to the Naiskodukaitse (Ladies' Defence League) and Kaitseliit (Defence League) respectively.<sup>7</sup> This is one of many examples that characterise the situation at that time, where on the one hand, people were solicited to join the Party, and evasion of the Party or being left out of it caused problems. On the other hand, when one was already in the Party, expulsion from the Party marked a person, and this in turn could cause him to lose his job and made it more difficult to find a new one, to say nothing of making it impossible to climb the ladder of social position. Of course, as always, there were exceptions here as well.

The same kind of practice was also implemented outside the "more responsible governmental positions", as they were referred to in the constitution of the Communist International.<sup>8</sup> The cadre department that had already been established at the University of Tartu in January of 1941 can be pointed out as an example. Its job was to staff the university's personnel with lecturers who would be competent both in their specialty and ideologically. Since it was difficult to fulfil both requirements in Estonia in 1941, the latter became decisive. The cadre department kept personal files on lecturers containing characterisations, political complaints, anonymous

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<sup>5</sup> B. N. Ponomarov et al. *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei ajalugu* (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Tartu: H. Heidemanni nimeline trükikoda, 1975), 57, 597.

<sup>6</sup> *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei põhikiri : Kinnitatud NLKP XXII kongressi poolt, osalised muudatused sisse viidud NLKP XXIII kongressi poolt* (Constitution of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: ratified by the CPSU XXII Congress, partial amendments introduced by the CPSU XXIII Congress, Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1966), 13.

<sup>7</sup> Affiliated Branch of the Estonian National Archive (hereinafter ERAF) 1.4.931, pg. 90, Minutes no. 88 of the ECP CC Bureau, 25 February 1950.

<sup>8</sup> *Kommunistlise Internatsionaali resolutsioonid ja põhikiri*, 7.

letters and statements obtained behind people's backs. Under such conditions, many lecturers considered it wiser to resign on their own initiative before being fired.<sup>9</sup>

A massive purge of cadres began when the Soviet occupation was restored in 1944. The university's cadre department was required to submit proposals to the Party Bureau for purging the university of professors and lecturers with anti-Soviet attitudes, along with university students and postgraduates from the families of kulaks, merchants and businessmen, and persons who had served in the German Army. Over 700 students were exmatriculated from the University of Tartu during the first post-war year, often on the pretext of failure to attend lectures. The actual reason may have been the concealment of biographical data, service in the German Army, escape to the West, or also deportation in 1949.<sup>10</sup>

Repressions of students became more frequent when the former head of university cadres Jenny Nõu was replaced by Helene Kurg. The personal file became the primary means for making staffing decisions. Anti-Soviet attitudes or unsuitable information that could among other things reflect social origin that did not meet requirements were inferred from the personal files of employees. Control was extended to also include the university's technical employees and auxiliary staff.<sup>11</sup>

The greater portion of teachers at general education schools was also replaced. So called bourgeois teachers were fired or forced to leave "of their own accord". They were sometimes arrested and replaced with reliable cadres that oftentimes did not even have secondary education, to say nothing of specialised professional training.<sup>12</sup> One example of many is the proposal made by the EC(B)P Tartu County Committee secretary to Comrade Pärt, who served at that time as head of the education department of the Executive Committee of the Tartu County Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, to dismiss from school two female teachers whose unsuitability for the vocation of teaching lay in the fact that the father of one teacher and the husband of the other had been imprisoned for 25 years as "henchmen of the Germans".<sup>13</sup>

Loss of employment due to social origin was a threat in every walk of life. In 1946 for instance, EC(B)P Tartu County Committee Secretary Peeter Tiido demanded that the head of the Tartu County Communications Office fire an employee of the Tabivere post office because that employee's social origin did not meet requirements: "Herewith we inform you that citizen Karin

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<sup>9</sup> Lembit Raid, *Tartu Ülikool kommunistlikus parteipoliitikas aastail 1940–1952* (The University of Tartu in Communist Party Politics in 1940–1952, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 1995), 12–13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; Karl Siilivask, Hillar Palamets *Tartu Ülikooli ajalugu III, 1918–1982* (History of the University of Tartu III, 1918–1982, Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1982), 201.

<sup>11</sup> Lembit Raid, *Tartu Ülikool kommunistlikus parteipoliitikas aastail 1940–1952*, 94.

<sup>12</sup> Väino Sirk: „Haritlaskond osutus visaks vastaseks (Intellectuals Proved to be a Tenacious Opponent)“, *Tuna*, 1 (2010), 61–63.

<sup>13</sup> ERAF 12.7.24, pg. 33, EC(B)P Tartu County Committee Secretary Kurvits to Comrade Pärt, head of the Educational Department of the Executive Committee of the Tartu County Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, confidential, 8 January 1947.

Pöder, who works at the Tabivere post office is from the family of an enemy of the people. Her mother has been arrested and banished from our SSR. Why do you employ such persons? You are to report what you have undertaken to staff the communications apparatus with reliable cadres.” Five months later, a handwritten note was added to this notice: “Citizen Pöder has been dismissed effective immediately. Basis: a telephone conversation with Comrade Tcherbanov, head of the Communications Office.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Liquidation of the exploiting class**

According to the resolutions passed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Communist International in 1920, there were three main tasks for the achievement of socialism as the first stage of communism. The first of these contained within it the overthrow of “exploiters” and the bourgeoisie. Mustering the entire working class under the ideas of the Communist Party was only the second task. Thirdly, the suspicious position of the smallholders and small entrepreneurs between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and Soviet power, had to be liquidated. The only measures that could bring about the complete achievement of the first task were the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the expropriation of all private property, the annihilation of the bourgeois state apparatus, and the banishment of the most dangerous and tenacious exploiters from the state or their internment in prison camps.<sup>15</sup>

At a conference of agrarian Marxists in 1929, Stalin said that the time was ripe to switch from the policy of restraining the exploitative tendencies of the kulak class to a policy of liquidating the entire class. Kulaks were not to be allowed to join the kolkhozes under any circumstances.<sup>16</sup> There were allegedly 5 618 000 kulaks in total, including their family members, in Russia in 1928.<sup>17</sup>

Probably in the spring of 1950, the head of the ECP CC Agriculture Department Aleksandr Sokolov gave a speech about kulaks, nationalists and other enemies of the people who had secretly wormed their way into the kolkhozes. He also briefly mentioned suspicious persons who were suspicious only because they were related to “anti-Soviet elements”. Among other things, connections to anti-Soviet elements also proved to be fateful for Milla Palu, a member

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<sup>14</sup> ERAF 12.7.24, pg. 52, EC(B)P Tartu County Committee Secretary Tiido to the head of the Tartu County Communications Office, 10 December 1946.

<sup>15</sup> Kommunistlise Internatsionaali resolutsioonid ja põhikiri : Wasta wõetud Kommunistlise Internatsionaali teisel kongressil 17. juulist 7. augustini 1920. a, Kommunistlise partei Eestimaa keskkomitee kirjastus, 1920, pp. 2–3.

<sup>16</sup> Jossif Stalin, *NSV Liidu agraarpoliitika küsimustest. Kulakute kui klassi likvideerimise poliitika küsimusest* (On Questions of the Soviet Union's Agrarian Policy. On the Question of the Policy of Liquidating Kulaks as a Class, Tallinn: Punane Täht (Red Star), 1948), 23–27.

<sup>17</sup> Pavel Tšeremnohh, *Kuidas tekkisid klassid ja miks toimub klassivõitlus* (How Classes Were Formed and Why Class Struggle Takes Place, Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1954), 54–55.

of the Võimas Jõud (Mighty Force) kolkhoz belonging to the Kureküla village soviet, whose husband Osvald had been arrested. A general meeting was held at the kolkhoz on 4 March 1952, where Comrade Tiits, the chairman of the board, raised the question of Osvald Palu, “whether he is still fit to belong to the collective of the kolkhoz or whether he should be expelled from the kolkhoz”. Thereafter people took the floor to condemn Palu’s crime and to admonish the participants in the meeting to give the matter careful consideration before making their decision. Thereat, someone named Glass made the proposal to expel Osvald Palu’s wife Milla from the kolkhoz as well for the offences of her husband, and that is indeed what transpired: “There are no objections and the general meeting decides without any opposing votes to expel the kolkhozniks Palu, Osvald, son of Jaan, who is already arrested, and his wife Palu, Milla, daughter of Kusta, for hiding a wanted robber-murderer in their household.”<sup>18</sup> Milla Palu managed to find work at the Kureküla sovkhos, the chairman of which was an Estonian who had come from Russia named Anton Konijärv, who consented to hire her. This is a vivid example of the fact that where humaneness remained, it was possible to conceal dangerous social connections.

## The second stage of class struggle

Stalin’s personality cult was condemned at a secret night session of the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in 1956 but at the same time, it affirmed that the Party’s policy up to that point had been correct.<sup>19</sup> The decision was passed at the XXI CPSU Congress held in 1959 that socialism had achieved complete victory in the Soviet Union and that the process had reached the era of the extensive building of communist society. The same claim was made in the CPSU’s third platform adopted in 1961, which also repeated that continued progress needed to be made towards communism, which was to be a classless society where the common public ownership of the means of production and the social equality of all members of society are in effect.<sup>20</sup> Class struggle as the destruction of the stratum of exploiters was no longer mentioned. Instead, the platform preached that the remaining classes were approaching one another. A new wording of the Party platform was adopted in 1986. It stated that overcoming the differences between classes and the creation of a classless society meant the disappearance of differences between cities and the countryside, the ever increasing similarity between the lifestyle of the farm population and the way of life of the working class. It meant doing away with differences between life in the city and in the countryside, and the

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<sup>18</sup> Estonian History Archive (hereinafter EAA) T-794.1.48, pp. 102–107, Minutes no. 4 concerning the general meeting held at the Elva rajon Kureküla village soviet kolkhoz *Võimas Jõud* on 4 March 1952.

<sup>19</sup> B. N. Ponomarov et al. *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei ajalugu*, 563.

<sup>20</sup> *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei programm (vastu võetud NLKP XXII kongressi poolt)* (Platform of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (ratified by the XXII Congress of the CPSU), Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1961), 4–5, 19, 58.

ever more organic alignment of physical and intellectual workers in production activity.<sup>21</sup> This is essentially the same thing that Lenin had said in 1919 when he asserted that it was necessary to do away with all manner of private property, to do away with differences between cities and the countryside and also between those who did physical and intellectual work.<sup>22</sup> The farming population and workers, and persons who did intellectual and physical work were indeed presented as classes in the platform of 1986.<sup>23</sup>

The Party's first platform had promised that according to how the possibility for one person to exploit another disappears, the need to use temporary measures, in other words various violent coercive measures, would also disappear, and the Party would strive to limit them and cast them aside altogether.<sup>24</sup> By the 1980's, the massive violation of human rights had indeed decreased but political liberties, the right to freely express one's opinions, actual religious freedom, the equal treatment of citizens, freedom of movement, and other such rights, cannot be considered to have existed in the Soviet Union until its collapse.

### **Legal basis for repression of family members**

Examples of how people were punished for the fact that persons connected to them had been convicted as opponents of the state by the Soviet Union's court system have already been described above. Legally speaking, direct repressions carried over initially to the family members of military personnel, thereafter extending to civilians as well.

According to the RSFSR Criminal Code, adult family members of military personnel could be punished by imprisonment for five to ten years in the event that the member of the armed forces in question had fled abroad and his family member had assisted him in this or had known of it but failed to alert the authorities. Thereat, those adult family members who had lived with an escaped member of the armed forces at the time that the crime was committed or were being supported by him lost their voting rights and they were banished into exile to the most distant rajons of Siberia for five years.<sup>25</sup> When war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, provisions for punishing the family members of military personnel were augmented.

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<sup>21</sup> *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku partei programm : Uus redaktsioon : Vastu võetud NLKP XXVII kongressi poolt* (Platform of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: New Version: ratified by the XXVII Congress of the CPSU, Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1986), 36–37, 50–51.

<sup>22</sup> Pavel Tšeremnõhh, *Kuidas tekkisid klassid ja miks toimub klassivõitlus*, 78–79.

<sup>23</sup> *Liidu Kommunistliku partei programm : Uus redaktsioon*, 58–60.

<sup>24</sup> *Wenemaa Kommunistlise (enamlaste) Partei programm : vastu võetud partei VIII kongressil Moskvas, 18–23. märtsil 1919* (Russian Communist (Bolshevist) Party Platform: ratified at the Party's VIII Congress in Moscow, 18–23 March 1919, St. Petersburg: Kommunistlise Partei Eesti Keskkomitee Wenemaa Büroo (Communist Party Estonian Central Committee Russian Bureau), 1919), 8–9.

<sup>25</sup> *VNFSV Kriminaalkodeks : muudatustega kuni 15. novembrini 1940* (RSFSR Criminal Code: with amendments through to 15 November 1940, Tallinn: ENSV Kohtu Rahvakomissariaat (ESSR People's Commissariat for Justice), 1941), § 58<sup>1v</sup>.

According to the directive issued on 16 August 1941 by the General Staff of the Supreme Command, the family members of commanders and political instructors who had been taken prisoner were to be arrested. The same sort of practice was implemented during the Second World War in Germany as well according to the so called *Sippenhaftung* (kin liability) principle, where the punishment of political opponents extended to their families.

Family members of Soviet soldiers and non-commissioned officers who had been taken prisoner were in danger of being deprived of state handouts and means of assistance, which was a severe punishment in the starving wartime rear area under conditions of nonexistent supplies for civilians.<sup>26</sup>

The penalties applicable to the family members of civilian “traitors of the homeland” were gradually made more severe. For instance, according to the CPSU CC Politburo decision issued on 13 May 1939, the spouses of “especially dangerous” persons who had been convicted of treason were to be sent to prison camps.<sup>27</sup> The CPSU CC Politburo decision issued on 17 August 1940 extended this to all family members.<sup>28</sup> USSR People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs Lavrenti Beria sent Stalin a special notice in December of 1940 in which he said that previous lenient measures, according to which the family members of persons who had fled abroad were not subject to repression if they had not known about the escape, had not produced the desired results. Thus Beria proposed to bring criminal charges against the family members of all persons who had fled abroad and give the NKVD jurisdiction over deciding the punishments for such cases.<sup>29</sup> The CPSU CC Politburo handed down the decision on 7 December 1940. According to this decision, the family members of persons who had fled from the Soviet Union were subject to banishment into exile for three to five years together with the confiscation of all their property. If aggravating circumstances came to light, the family member of the “traitor of the homeland” was subject to arrest. The NKVD Special Counsel handed down such verdicts.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Peeter Kaasik, *Nõukogude Liidu sõjavangipoliitika Teise maailmasõja ajal ja sõjajärgsetel aastatel: Sõjavangide kinnipidamissüsteem Eesti näitel ja hinnang sõjavangide kohtlemisele rahvusvahelise õiguse järgi* (The Soviet Union’s Prisoner of War Policy during the Second World War and the Postwar Years: Detention System of Prisoners of War Using the Example of Estonia and Assessment of the Treatment of Prisoners of War According to International Law, Tallinn: University of Tallinn, Humanitaarteaduste dissertatsioonid (Dissertations in the Humanities), no. 29 (2012)), 221.

<sup>27</sup> „Постановление Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) „О женах изменников родины“, 13 Мау 1939“ in *Лубянка : Сталин и НКВД, НКГБ, ГУКВ „Смерш“ 1939–март 1946: Документы высших органов партийной и государственной власти / составители, А. Н. Яковлева и др.* (Москва : МФД : Материк, 2006), 81.

<sup>28</sup> „Постановление Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) „Об изменниках родине,“ 17 August 1940“ in *Лубянка : Сталин и НКВД, НКГБ, ГУКВ „Смерш“ 1939–март 1946*, 184.

<sup>29</sup> „ЦК ВКП(б)–товаришу СТАЛИНУ, 4 December 1940“ in *Лубянка : Сталин и НКВД, НКГБ, ГУКВ „Смерш“ 1939–март 1946*, 202–203.

<sup>30</sup> „Постановление политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) “О привлечении к ответственности изменников родине и членов их семей” с приложением спецсообщения Л. П. Берии И. В. Сталину, 7 December 1940“ in *Лубянка : Сталин и НКВД, НКГБ, ГУКВ „Смерш“ 1939–март 1946*, 201–204.

The parents, husband/wife, children, brothers-sisters, mother-in-law and father-in-law of a “traitor of the homeland” were considered to be his family members in the event that they lived together in a single household. If there were no aggravating circumstances, they were subject to banishment into exile from the Soviet Union to the northern regions of the state. The NKVD Special Counsel handed down the verdicts on banishment into exile and people were to be sent into exile under escort by a convoy of guards. It was not permitted to separate underage children from adults. The underage children of family members of arrested traitors of the homeland were not sent to prison but rather were placed in orphanages. The property of family members who were banished into exile was subject to confiscation.<sup>31</sup>

The USSR State Defence Committee decision issued on 24 June 1942 stressed that this applied to both military personnel and civilians. Family members of “traitors of the homeland” who had been convicted by the NKVD Special Counsel in accordance with Section 58<sup>1a</sup> (espionage, defection, service in German penal or administrative organs, attempted treason, and other such offences) were subject to internment and banishment into exile for five years. The NKVD Special Counsel handed down the verdict concerning banishment into exile. Parents, husband/wife, children and brothers-sisters, who lived in the same household together with the so called traitor of the homeland at the time when the crime was committed, were considered to be family members. Those family members of the “traitor of the homeland” who were themselves Red Army soldiers or partisans were not subject to arrest and being sent into exile.<sup>32</sup>

The provisions of the criminal code and the above-mentioned decisions were nevertheless not completely implemented. The different categories of “traitors of the homeland” and their family members included millions of people across the Soviet Union and the investigation and punishment of all these cases was physically not within the means of the NKVD, NKGB and Red Army counterintelligence. Thus punishment was to a great extent random. It is not possible to give the exact numbers of arrests of family members.

## **Socially alien elements**

In addition to banishment into exile, several groups of society that were qualified as “socially alien elements” to the new socialist society were publicly pilloried, deprived of civil rights and liberties, work and places to live, and demoted in the social hierarchy. People from all walks of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> „Постановление ГКО „О членах семей изменников родины.“ 24 June 1942” in *Лубянка : Сталин и НКВД, НКГБ, ГУКВ „Смерш“ 1939–март 1946*, 350–351.

life who for some reason did not fit in with the new society that was to be created suffered in the revolution against capitalism and in the class struggle.<sup>33</sup>

A population group existed in 1918–1936 that on the basis of the Constitution of the Soviet Union had been deprived of voting rights (*lišennõje izbiratelnyh prav*) and started being known as *lishentsys*.<sup>34</sup> They were people who (formerly) “lived off of income not acquired by way of work”, whose income accrued from landed property, business, capital, and other such sources. This stratum included merchants, clergy, tsarist era policemen, particularly employees and agents of the gendarme corps and secret police (*ohranka*), members of the tsar’s family, but also the mentally ill, wards and persons that had been punished for certain crimes. From the latter half of the 1920’s onward, persons who not only currently used hired labour but also those who had done so prior to the revolution were added to the category of deprived persons. In the latter half of the 1920’s, former officers of the tsarist army, whose voting rights had in the meantime been restored, were once again deprived of those rights. These former officers were seen as potential internal enemies in the event of war. At the same time, in order to carry out the collectivisation that had begun, kulaks were defined as a social stratum that was stripped of all civil rights and liberties in addition to voting rights. Their property was confiscated and they were forcibly resettled. In the 1930’s, even organists who were responsible for some other tasks associated with the religious ceremony in addition to playing the organ for church services were deprived of their voting rights.<sup>35</sup>

The declaration of one family member as an enemy of the regime marked the entire family, and the members of the families of such persons were also reduced to deprived status. At the turn of the years 1929 and 1930, 3.7 million people were classified as deprived persons. Family members under the age of 18 accounted for 44% of this group. By 1932, deprived persons together with their families numbered seven million.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Stéphane Courtois et al, *Kommunismi must raamat : kuriteod, terror, repressioonid* (Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repressions, Tallinn: Varrak, 2000), 173.

<sup>34</sup> *Wenemaa Sotsialistlise Föderatiwse Nõukogude Wabariigi põhjusseedus (Konstitutsion)* (Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, St. Petersburg: 13<sup>th</sup> State Publishing House, 1918), § 65.

<sup>35</sup> С.А. Красильников, *На изломах социальной структуры: Маргиналы в послереволюционном российском обществе (1917–конец 1930-х гг.)*. (Новосибирск: НГУ, 1998). The electronic version at <http://zaimka.ru/soviet/krasiln1.shtml> has been used for this paper (last accessed on 13 May 2012); Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА : Конец 1920-х–первая половина 1950-х годов : Собрание документов в семи томах*, том 5, 42; „Письмо наркома внутренних дел СССР Н.И Ежова и прокурора СССР А.Я. Вышнинского И.В. Сталину и председателю СНК СССР В.М. Молотову об изменении правового положения трудпоселенцев в цвязи с утверждением новой Конституции“ in Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА*, 236–237; „Справка но 4 ГУЛАГ ОГПУ об организационных формах и правовом положении спецперселенцев, 4 February 1931“ in Н.Н. Покровский и др. *Политбюро и крестьянство: высылка, спецпоселение 1930–1940, книга 2* (Москва: Росспэн, 2006), 509–511; „Раз’яснения к инструкции цик ссср о перевыборах в советы“, Правда но. 345 (4790) (1930) <http://www.oldgazette.ru/pravda/16121930/text2.html> (last accessed on 7 April 2016).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*; Stéphane Courtois et al, *Kommunismi must raamat*, 178.

The group of deprived persons was formally done away with when the constitution of 1936 went into effect, but there were exceptions. The rights of kulaks who had been banished into exile were restored but regardless of this, they were allowed to change their place of residence only within the region that they had been exiled to. They were not considered equal to the owners of passports with unrestricted rights to movement within the borders of the state.<sup>37</sup>

Deprivation of voting rights was used to stigmatise one part of society and the importance of having voting rights did not lie in its literal meaning but rather in not belonging to that branded group of people. Setting aside the mentally ill, wards and criminals, representatives of the “former exploitative classes” and ideological enemies of the Bolsheviks formed the nucleus of the deprived persons.<sup>38</sup> Reduction to the status of deprived persons brought with it the loss of one’s job, deprivation of medical care, expulsion from trade unions and cooperatives, which under the conditions of the ration card system in effect in 1929–1935 also meant loss of the right to purchase staple goods, including food, at state prices. In the course of their eviction from municipal housing and apartments, and the “purging” of large cities, deprived persons were also driven out of the larger cities. Their tax rates were increased and additional taxes were imposed on them.<sup>39</sup>

The deprivation of their parent(s) of voting rights was grounds for the expulsion of their children from educational institutions. The principle of class selection also had to be strictly observed when mobilising conscripts into the army. Only working class persons were to be accepted into the army. Kulaks and other “parasitic elements” had to be sent to special labour battalions.<sup>40</sup> In 1930–1937, the sons of deprived persons who were at the age for military service were sent to rear area defence (*тылоополчение*) units that were established separately for them. This was in turn accompanied by the imposition of war taxes on their parents because their sons were left out of the Red Army. Although the members of labour battalions were not exactly outlaws, the rest of society perceived their defencelessness and lack of rights. Superiors often treated them more brutally. There were cases where men recruited as

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<sup>37</sup> The new places of residence of forcibly resettled kulaks were known as *trudposelenie* in the early 1930’s and this term also came to refer to the banishment of kulaks into exile in general. Smaller scale resettlements had taken place earlier but the use of resettlement of people on a large scale in the name of fulfilling the regime’s security, ideological, economic, demographic and other objectives began with the kulaks.

<sup>38</sup> С.А. Красильников, *На изломах социальной структуры*, <http://zaimka.ru/soviet/krasiln1.shtml> (last accessed on 13 May 2012); Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА : Конец 1920-х–первая половина 1950-х годов : Собрание документов в семи томах*, том 5, 42; „Письмо наркома внутренних дел СССР Н.И. Ежова и прокурора СССР А.Я. Вышнского И.В. Сталину и председателю СНК СССР В.М. Молотову об изменении правового положения трудпоселенцев в цвязи с утверждением новой Конституции“ in Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА*, 236–237; „Справка но 4 ГУЛАГ ОГПУ об организационных формах и правовом положении спецпереселенцев, 4 February 1931“ in Н.Н. Покровский и др. *Политбюро и крестьянство: высылка, спецпоселение 1930–1940*, 509–511; „Раз’яснения к инструкции цик ссср о перевыборах в советы“.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*; Stéphane Courtois et al, *Kommunismi must raamat*, 178.

<sup>40</sup> B. N. Ponomarov et al. *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei ajalugu*, 276.

independent manpower, so to speak, took the credit for work done by labour battalions. They were fed more poorly than independent manpower and a great deal of labour accidents occurred due to the fact that the attitude towards the occupational health and safety of members of the labour battalions was indifferent.<sup>41</sup>

Voting rights were restored successively and in the mid-1920's, the voting rights of some deprived persons were restored as part of a campaign. In 1930, the restoration of the voting rights of adult offspring who were not living with their parents was allowed. This bore the aim of generating conflicts between generations through the creation of a new society and the destruction of the old. Additionally, the voting rights of men who served in the labour units were restored after three to four years of working, and of former officers and officials of the white armies who had served in the Red Army and actively participated in defending the Soviet Union. The remainder were allowed to apply for the reinstatement of their voting rights five years after the deprivation of their rights.<sup>42</sup> Stigmatisation continued more covertly by the addition of a question in questionnaires concerning previous loss of rights.<sup>43</sup>

### Proving social origin

A questionnaire system was set up in occupied Estonia immediately in 1940 for verifying social origin. A comprehensive questionnaire concerning the respondent himself and people in his household had to be filled out when taking a job or enrolling in school, applying for some sort of permit or financial support, etc. For instance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs demanded information from police prefects in August of 1940 concerning among other things the social origin of police commissars, deputy commissars and constables, and warned that “/.../ inclusion of incorrect notifications in the information will bring serious complications for the official filling out the declaration”.<sup>44</sup> When the police apparat was liquidated once and for all in September of 1940 and the militia of workers and peasants was formed, militia candidates also had to submit

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<sup>41</sup> С.А. Красильников, *На изломах социальной структуры*, <http://zaimka.ru/soviet/krasiln1.shtml> (last accessed on 13 May 2012); Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА : Конец 1920-х–первая половина 1950-х годов : Собрание документов в семи томах*, том 5, 42; „Письмо наркома внутренних дел СССР Н.И Ежова и прокурора СССР А.Я. Вышниского И.В. Сталину и председателю СНК СССР В.М. Молотову об изменении правового положения трудпоселенцев в цвязи с утверждением новой Конституции“ in Ю. Н. Афанасев и др. *История сталинского ГУЛАГА*, 236–237; „Справка но 4 ГУЛАГ ОГПУ об организационных формах и правовом положении спецперселенцев, 4 February 1931“ in Н.Н. Покровский и др. *Политбюро и крестьянство: высылка, спецпоселение 1930–1940*, 509–511; „Раз'яснения к инструкции цик ссср о перевыборах в советы“.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Facsimile copy of the questionnaire,

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Анкета\\_СпН\\_НКВД.jpg?uselang=ru](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Анкета_СпН_НКВД.jpg?uselang=ru) (last accessed on 30 September 2013).

<sup>44</sup> ERA 27.3.2812, pages not numbered, Tallinn-Harju prefecture of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the police commissar of the Keila police station, 8 August 1940.

their *curriculum vitae* when applying for work, indicating their social origin, previous membership in political parties and/or organisations, financial status and other such information.<sup>45</sup> The same kinds of questionnaires also had to be filled out by teachers, who were warned against submitting incorrect or incomplete information: “Thereat the Administration of Rural Schools asks you to warn and direct the serious attention of persons filling out this questionnaire to the fact that the information given must correspond completely to reality and that not a single question should be left unanswered nor should any answer be partial or incomplete for the purpose of deviating from reality.”<sup>46</sup>

School pupils and university students also had to submit questionnaires concerning themselves and their family. The Soviet Union declared the availability of education for all, which was nevertheless accomplished with reservations. According to the temporary regulation issued in 1940 governing the work of ESSR secondary schools, the parents or guardians of pupils wishing to enrol in secondary school were required to submit an application to the school principal indicating the pupil’s education, personal status and social origin and including a certificate indicating the financial status of the parents.<sup>47</sup> The same sort of requirement also applied to enrolling in university. A certificate issued by the local government indicating which social stratum a person belonged to and that person’s financial status prior to 21 June 1940 had to be submitted for both the candidate himself and his parents. Preference was given in university enrolment to representatives of workers, the poorer sort of peasants and working intellectuals.<sup>48</sup> Hans Kruus, who was appointed rector of the University of Tartu in 1940, has recalled that the aim was to enrol more children of workers and peasants as far as possible and that perhaps the requirements for the children of intellectuals were somewhat more demanding, to say nothing of the offspring of the petit bourgeois.<sup>49</sup> The comprehensiveness of the questionnaires changed over time. In 1954 for instance, applicants for a place at the University of Tartu had to submit a detailed overview of the activities of their parents prior to 21 June 1940, giving notice among other things of the former social position of their parents, their primary field of activity, whether they owned land and livestock and if so, how much, whether they used hired manpower and if so, how much, whether they owned an industrial enterprise and if so, then which one, how many workers it employed, etc. Additionally, notification had to be given whether any of the applicant’s relatives had served in the German

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<sup>45</sup> Peeter Kaasik, “Eesti politsei (Estonian Police)” in *Sõja ja rahu vahel II* (Between War and Peace II), ed. Enn Tarvel (Tallinn: S-keskus, 2010), 384–386.

<sup>46</sup> ERA R-967.1.103, pages not numbered, circular from the Viljandi County Government Department of Education, 14 September 1940.

<sup>47</sup> *ESSR Teataja*, 1940, 3, 27, Temporary regulation for organising the work of secondary schools, 3 September 1940.

<sup>48</sup> *Riigi Teataja* 1940, 97, 957, Regulation concerning the acceptance of students to universities, 6 August 1940.

<sup>49</sup> Jüri Ant, Toomas Hiio, „Tartu ülikool esimese Nõukogude Liidu okjupatsiooni ajal 1940–1941 (The University of Tartu during the First Period of Soviet Occupation 1940–1941)” in *Universitas Tartuensis 1632–2007*, ed. Toomas Hiio, Helmut Piirimäe (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus (University of Tartu Publishing House), 2007), 428.

Army or was living abroad. The same kind of questionnaire had to be filled in concerning the applicant himself, who also had to answer the question of whether the person submitting the information harboured any doubts regarding the implementation of the Party line.<sup>50</sup> This sort of questionnaire regimen lasted until the end of the 1960's, when the authorities started requiring university applicants to fill out questionnaires covering only the most important personal data. More thorough background checks were shifted to the time when people were starting their working lives or entering postgraduate education.<sup>51</sup> In 1976 for instance, university applicants had to give notice of only the place of employment and place of residence of their parents.<sup>52</sup> There are no differences in the questionnaire for 1983, though admittedly it now had to be filled out in duplicate, meaning in both Estonian and Russian.<sup>53</sup>

In the post-Stalin period, working class youth status became increasingly more important than social origin since the Party was annoyed by the fact that the university student body was comprised more and more of young people who were not of working class origin. While previously, favourable social origin and active political participation in the activities of the Komsomol could help gain acceptance to university even if the results of the entrance examinations were not the best,<sup>54</sup> starting in 1957 according to regulations for accepting students to university, those applicants who after completing secondary school had worked in manufacturing or served in the army for two years started gaining preference in acceptance to institutions of higher education. Otherwise, that working experience had to be acquired in institutions of higher education alongside one's studies.<sup>55</sup> The social status of one's parents was no longer of such importance if they did not happen to belong to a group that was under the particular scrutiny of the regime, such as the clergy.<sup>56</sup>

## Credentials Committee

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<sup>50</sup> University of Tartu Archive (hereinafter TÜA) 9/56-318, Student's personal statement no. 50231, pp. 13–15p, Personal questionnaire for registering cadres, 21 December 1954.

<sup>51</sup> Toomas Hiio "Ülikooli asend Nõukogude Liidu valitsemisüsteemis (Position of the University in the System of Governing the Soviet Union)" in *Universitas Tartuensis 1632–2007*, ed. Toomas Hiio, Helmut Piirimäe (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2007), 460.

<sup>52</sup> TÜA 4-k, 10453, Student's personal file, matriculation certificate no. 761088, pp. 1–1p, declaration to the rector, 9 July 1976.

<sup>53</sup> TÜA 4-k, 21623, Student's personal file no. 83056, pp. 2–2p, declaration to the rector, 23 August 1983.

<sup>54</sup> Toomas Hiio "Ülikooli asend Nõukogude Liidu valitsemisüsteemis", 461.

<sup>55</sup> Anu Raudsepp, *Ajaloo õpetamise korraldus Eesti NSV eesti õppekeelega üldhariduskoolides 1944–1985* (Organisation of the Teaching of History in General Education Schools in the Estonian SSR where Estonian was the Language of Instruction, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2005), 35.

<sup>56</sup> Väino Sirk, "Stalini-järgsete aastate haritlaspoliitika kahest tahust (On Two Aspects of Policy Concerning Intellectuals in the Post-Stalin Years)", *Tuna*, 4 (2004), 52.

In addition to the questionnaire and certification of financial status, a so called credentials committee was set up in all institutions of higher education.<sup>57</sup> Its task was to ascertain the background of each individual applicant in cooperation with the state security organs. The credentials committee consisted of the head of the corresponding institution of higher education, a Communist Party organiser, a trade union representative, an ECP Central Committee representative, and others. The committee met with applicants and questioned them before deciding on each individual candidate whether to allow them to take the entrance examinations. Thus the records of Tartu State University from 1955 include a list of persons who were to be allowed to take the entrance exams “if they provide information concerning their father”.<sup>58</sup> The same sort of comments are also found in the records of the admissions commission of Tallinn Polytechnical University.<sup>59</sup> Information on both parents was sometimes required.<sup>60</sup> Applicants were often asked to appear before the commission a second time, but entries concerning repeat meetings are no longer found. With some rare exceptions, it is likely that generally speaking, denial of permission to take the entrance exams was not reflected on paper. The decision on Matti Päts<sup>61</sup> is written in black and white in the records of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute’s admissions commission: “Not to be allowed to take the exams. The admissions commission finds that he is unsuitable to be a TPI student due to his origin”.<sup>62</sup>

Professor Enn Tarvel recalls that in the course of his conversation with the credentials committee in 1950, he was asked three times if his father had served in the Omakaitse (Home Guard) during the German occupation. Tarvel answered this question in the negative each time. In answering the same question for the third time already, he added that they did not want his father since he was too old! Tarvel’s admission to university was remarkable because his brother had served in the German Army, was taken prisoner in Czechoslovakia, and subsequently served in a labour battalion, and his uncle Peeter Tarvel, a history professor at the University of Tartu, had been imprisoned and sent to Vorkuta. The members of the commission could not have been unaware of this.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> It is currently unclear whether the credentials committee was separate from the admissions commission or if it was another name for that same admissions commission. The term “admissions commission” is used in written sources, while oral sources speak of the credentials committee. Thus both terms are used in this article according to the respective source.

<sup>58</sup> Estonian National Archive (hereinafter ERA) 5311.2.9, pp. 65–76, Minutes no. 13 of the Tartu State University student admissions commission, 30 July 1955.

<sup>59</sup> ERA R-1834.3.246, pg. 7, Session minutes no. 3 of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute student admissions commission, 4 July 1952; ERA R-1834.3.246, pg. 10, Session minutes no. 4 of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute student admissions commission, 11 July 1952.

<sup>60</sup> ERA R-1834.3.246, pg. 13, Session minutes no. 5 of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute student admissions commission, 16 July 1952.

<sup>61</sup> Grandson of Konstantin Päts, former president of the Republic of Estonia.

<sup>62</sup> ERA R-1834.3.246, pg. 16, Session minutes no. 6 of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute student admissions commission, 18 July 1952.

<sup>63</sup> Author’s interview with Enn Tarvel, 14 February 2012.

A search of the archives has thus far failed to locate any decision concerning the termination of the activity of the credentials committee, but sources support the claim that this system was done away with in the mid-1950's. While even as late as 1955, the Communist Party Committee at Tallinn Pedagogical Institute reprimanded the school at one of its meetings because the credentials committee had not spoken with all candidates for admission in the previous year, and demanded improvement in this work in the future,<sup>64</sup> the question of admissions was not on the agenda even once at Party committee meetings in 1956, and the same also goes for the University of Tartu.<sup>65</sup> As a certain substitute for the credentials committee, characterisations from school Komsomol organisations started being required from university applicants by 1959 at the latest.<sup>66</sup> The reduction of background checks opened the doors of the university to quite a few people for whom they had hitherto been shut.

### **School education “free of charge”**

School education was allegedly supposed to be available to everyone and without restrictions in the Soviet state, but nevertheless, that same state immediately set about discriminating between classes among pupils and along with this discrimination restricting the availability of education, using tuition fees as one possible means.

On 25 September 1940, the ESSR Council of People's Commissars passed a decision to do away with tuition fees in secondary and vocational schools,<sup>67</sup> yet on 15 October of that same year, tuition fees were once again levied on those students in secondary schools and institutions of higher education whose parents supported themselves “by income acquired without work”.<sup>68</sup> Depending on the educational institution and the social status of the student or his parents prior to 21 June 1940, tuition fees prior to monetary reform ranged from 140 to 600 kroons per year.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> ERAF 7068.1.73, pp. 51–59, Протокол то закрытого партийного собрания первичной партийной организаций Таллинского педагогического института, 8 June 1955.

<sup>65</sup> ERAF 7068.1.73 Протоколы партийных бюро, 6 January–26 December 1956; ERAF 7068.1.305 Протоколы заседаний партийного бюро, 23 January–11 December 1956.

<sup>66</sup> ERA R-1834.3.562, Session minutes of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute student admissions commission, 1959.

<sup>67</sup> *ENSV Teataja* 1940, 14, 137, decision issued by the ESSR Council of People's Commissars, 25 September 1940.

<sup>68</sup> *ESSR Teataja* 1940, 27, 311, Estonian SSR Council of People's Commissars ordinance concerning the establishment of tuition fees for the children of citizens who live off of income acquired without work in the senior grades of secondary school and in institutions of higher education, and the establishment of scholarships for university and technical school students whose parents do not live off of income acquired without work, 15 October 1940.

<sup>69</sup> *ESSR Teataja* 1940, 27, 315, Instructions for doing away with tuition fees for the children of workers, working peasants and working intellectuals and for assigning tuition fees for those pupils and university students whose parents live off of income acquired without work, 16 October 1940.

In 1946, tuition fees were restored in all secondary schools and institutions of higher education from the eighth grade upward, ranging from 150 to 500 roubles per year.<sup>70</sup> Recipients of all manner of pensions were exempted from tuition fees if the pension was their only source of income. Veterans of the so called Great Patriotic War, disabled persons, the children of soldiers killed in the war, and active military personnel were also exempted. Children from orphanages could study free of charge in secondary schools and technical schools, but not at universities.<sup>71</sup> Working intellectuals could apply for exemption from tuition fees, but “keepers of so called spiritual occupations (pastors, etc.)” and persons who had previously been part of the senior staff of the police and the Kaitseliit were not included.<sup>72</sup> Tuition fees were not completely done away with in secondary schools until 1 September 1956.<sup>73</sup>

## Summary

In Soviet ideology, class struggle envisaged the destruction of the so called class of exploiters and the achievement of a classless society through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Social groups that had owned property or belonged to the class of intellectuals before the revolution

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<sup>70</sup> Some wage levels and prices of foodstuffs are provided here to give an idea of the relative size of tuition fees under the conditions of that time. For instance, the net salary of the Estonian Leninist Communist Youth Society (hereinafter ELKNÜ) Tallinn Municipal Committee accountant for two weeks was 236 roubles and 47 kopeks in January of 1946. A janitor’s net wages for two weeks was 75 roubles. [ERAF 176.4.33, wages of ELKNÜ Tallinn Municipal Committee technical manpower, 15–30 January 1946]. The salaries of employees in responsible positions were naturally higher. The net salary for the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the ELKNÜ Tallinn Municipal Committee for half a month was 418 roubles, and 450 roubles for the propaganda secretary [ERAF 176.4.33, salaries of ELKNÜ Tallinn Municipal Committee employees in responsible positions, 1–15 March 1946]. At the same time in 1945, the free market price per kilogram of potatoes was 7–8 roubles and the price per kilogram of pork was 120 roubles. The same price had to be paid for one egg as for a kilo of potatoes. Conditions in the countryside were not at all better. Farms were required to give the state tribute in kind at prices that essentially meant giving them as gifts. The state “purchased” potatoes at the price 5.5 kopeks/kg, pork at 0.83–1.18 roubles/kg, and eggs at 24 kopeks/egg. While the situation until the monetary reform of 1947 was complicated but nevertheless still tolerable, market prices admittedly dropped after monetary reform, but incomes also decreased and people started accumulating debts. This in turn meant fines that were beyond people’s means or imprisonment for up to two years. Starting in 1948, the penalty was already banishment into exile and in just the summer of that same year, 12 000 peasants from the Russian SFSR were sent into exile for not fulfilling their obligations. (See further: Indrek Paavle, “Vili ja munad režiimi teenistuses. Sundandam 1940. aastate Eesti külas” (Grain and Eggs in the Service of the State. Compulsory Tributes in Estonian Villages in the 1940’s), *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, ½ (2009), 213–229.

<sup>71</sup> *ESSR Teataja* 1946, 26, 214, Estonian SSR Council of Ministers ordinance concerning the collection of tuition fees from the students of institutions of higher education, technical schools and other special curriculum schools, and pupils in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades of general education secondary schools, 25 April 1946.

<sup>72</sup> *ESSR Teataja* 1940, 27, 315, Instructions for doing away with tuition fees for the children of workers, working peasants and working intellectuals and for assigning tuition fees for those pupils and university students whose parents live off of income acquired without work, 16 October 1940.

<sup>73</sup> ERA R-14.1.1, directives issued by the Soviet Union’s Minister of Higher Education (5 January–19 October), 1956.

were counted as exploiters: farmers, teachers, clergymen, entrepreneurs, politicians, and others – in principle, everyone who was not a poor peasant or a worker. According to contrived theory of communism, which claimed to be implementing Marxism, the bourgeoisie and the workers formed classes that were opposed to each other. Their peaceful coexistence could not be possible. In the new society that was to be created, the bourgeoisie were not supposed to have any place whatsoever. They were to be liquidated. During the initial years of the Red Terror, executions by firing squad and banishment into exile were spoken of openly. Later this became vague rhetoric concerning the destruction of class society. The rules for carrying this out were admittedly not phrased very precisely, but the Soviet Union never started honouring the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed in 1948, according to which all people are equal in terms of their rights.

After Stalin's death, repression under the label of class struggle admittedly became more concealed but did not completely disappear until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Social origin quite often became a hindering circumstance in acquiring an education, in working, participating in public life, and other such fields. The milder form of class struggle generally was not reflected in the documentation or was represented there in a form that distorted reality. For instance, candidates that were unsuitable in terms of their social origin were eliminated from among university applicants even before the entrance examinations, imparting the decision to them verbally. In cases of dismissal from work due to social origin, the reason for this was often presented in the decision as not coming to grips with the requirements of the job. Thereat it should be recalled that the making of the decisions described above frequently was reduced to the capacity for empathy of the persons making the decisions and their skill in steering a middle course. A person expelled from one kolkhoz as a member of the household of an enemy of the people could find work in another kolkhoz. It depended on the chairman. Similarly, a young person left behind the closed door of one institution of higher education due to unsuitable social origin could enrol in another if someone with a heart could be found there whose word counted.