

Estonia under occupation of a totalitarian regime and the reinstatement of open society

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Pre-perestroika situation

Regime characteristics pre- and post-perestroika

Towards the end of the rule of the Secretary General Brezhnev, the Soviet totalitarian communist regime had reached the highest level of stagnation, finding itself on the verge of an economic and political collapse. The attempts of Andropov, succeeding to the post of Secretary General after Brezhnev died, to improve the situation failed whereas the year of the geriatric reign of Chernenko further aggravated the situation. The course taken towards glasnost and perestroika introduced in 1985 by the new young Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev soon got out of control and opened path to processes that led to the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the end of the occupation of Estonia, annexed after World War II.

In order to correctly understand the events and processes that occurred in Estonia one must take into account that unlike a majority of other countries subjected to communist or fascist totalitarian regimes, in Estonia those regimes were not of national origin but occupational, forced on Estonia under agreements signed by the Great Powers. The Estonians viewed those regimes as foreign and put up a resistance.

The Soviet system was a central, one-party and very strictly regulated rule. Nominal “people’s power” which was designed to function via the structure of soviets in fact was subordinated to the policy-making bodies or Party committees as they were called in the Soviet context. This also applied to the Executive that was organised in the form of executive committees (“workers councils”) of administrative units. In reality, the only right vested in the republics of the Soviet Union was that of implementing the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party with local conditions only slightly taken into account. By the way, it should be mentioned that although formally there was the Estonian Communist Party, then in fact, under its charter, it was not independent but just a territorial organisation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Courts, although formally independent, were in practice subordinated to the Party committees as the judges – members of the Communist Party – had to obey corresponding Party committees. The penitentiary system was paramilitary, centralised and subordinated to the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Soviet Union.

The legislative power was vested in the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union and in the Supreme Soviets of the republics. Laws of the Soviet Union prevailed over republican legislation. The Supreme Soviet of a republic had no right to adopt laws

contrary to the Soviet law. All the laws were in fact prepared and prior agreed in corresponding Party committees and then unanimously adopted at the Supreme Soviets.

Control over economic and financial activities of all enterprises, institutions and organisations was exercised by the State Control Committee (at one time it was called «People's») by the Council of Ministers (government) and the Audit Agency by the Ministry of Finance. Prosecutor's office had also supervisory power. Heads of all the institutes that had controlling/supervising functions were included in a nomenclature and appointed to offices by corresponding Party committees; they were members of the Party and obeyed the orders of higher Party committees.

Structure, functions and nets of security structures

In Estonia, the basic force behind the Soviet structures of security was the National Security Committee (KGB) within the Council of Ministers of the Estonian SSR, which in fact obeyed only the corresponding federal security committee. The leading role of the Party was carried out in such a way that the head of the KGB was a member of the Bureau (the main directing body) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Estonia whereas the heads of local bodies were members in the bureaux of corresponding regional Party committees.

In Estonia, KGB personnel were composed of members of the Communist Party who mostly were Russians.

In the Soviet Union, police was called militia, which was the main unit of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Militia was in charge of securing public peace, handled criminal and economic offences, accounted for and supervised the technical condition of transport vehicles, etc. Grave crimes – from the standpoint of the authorities – such as political, large-scale economic crimes involving foreign currency, banditism (which in Estonia meant armed resistance to the rule of occupation), terrorism, sabotage, mass riots, etc. were under the jurisdiction of the KGB.

On the territory of Estonia, a substantial part of the Soviet Army was present, mainly missiles, aeroplanes and tanks and some units that had a special assignment. The exact number of military is unknown but is estimated to have been around 120-150 thousand people. However, it is fair to say that those troops did not interfere with the events and processes that occurred in Estonia and some officers of the army of occupation even had fellow feelings for the national liberation movement. A good example of this is the Major-General Dzhokhar Dudayev of the Tartu division of strategic aviation troops, who later was to become the president of the Chechens and who was very much interested in the strategies and tactics of the national movement for freedom. Another proof of this side of the army of occupation in Estonia is the fact that during the 1991 putsch, the leaders of the *coup d'état* in Moscow summoned a division of aerial-amphibious troops Pskov to suppress the Estonian national movement for freedom and did not use the local troops of occupation for this purpose.

The Estonian KGB was organised in the same way as the KGB of the Soviet Union. The Estonian KGB too had Division 1 which was responsible for intelligence, however, unfortunately we know virtually nothing of its activities. We can only guess that it

performed espionage activities through the Estonians who lived abroad. We know more about the activities of the second division, which was responsible for counterintelligence. The competence of this division included monitoring the foreigners, who entered the territory of Estonia, and the tourist organisations Inturist and Sputnik (which can be called KGB subdivisions), authorising and organising the trips of Soviet citizens to abroad, opening and closing so-called “exit files”, etc. The fourth division was responsible for combating “banditism”. After the suppression of the armed resistance of the Estonians by the occupants in the second half of the 1950s, this division lost its importance. The fifth division, which monitored participants in the Estonian movement for freedom, press, political disposition of the people, etc. is of special interest for us. There were several other subdivisions that tapped telephone lines, perused the letters exchanged by citizens, maintained state secrets in enterprises and organisations, bodyguarded Party bosses, etc.

The boundary troops of the KGB on the territory of Estonia were included in the Northwest border command. We do not have reliable data on their repressive activities except the fact they were involved in mass deportations.

In Estonia, there were troops of the Soviet Army with special assignments, subordinated to the General Intelligence Administration of the General Staff (GRU) but we do not have information regarding their interference with local affairs. Their main task was allegedly to conduct intelligence activities and acts of sabotage on the territories of the North European countries.

The Prosecutor’s Office had a special role in the Soviet system of repressive bodies. Formally, the Prosecutor’s Office supervised compliance of all the government authorities, the KGB included, with the Soviet law. The Public Prosecutor of the Estonian SSR was appointed by the Prosecutor General of the Soviet Union and was accountable only to the latter. The Prosecutor of Estonia was also a member of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party.

During the perestroika, special militia units (OMON, SOBR) were formed in the Soviet Union, however, not in Estonia. Similarly, there is no evidence of the operations of the special units of the KB and GRU called Alfa and Vympel in Estonia.

In Estonia, places of confinement were classified into the places of preliminary confinement, investigative wards in which persons suspected of crimes were kept, corrective labour institutions in which persons convicted by a court were kept. All of them were subordinated to the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Soviet Union. Soviet terminology did not know the expressions “political crime” or “political prisoner”. People accused of crimes against the Soviet power were persecuted by the KGB and considered to be criminal offenders guilty of “crimes against the state”. After the KGB prisons were liquidated in mid 1950s, those prisoners were kept in general investigative wards of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. After court sentenced them, they were taken from Estonia to Russian special prisons and camps. In the final years of the Soviet power in Estonia, no such inmates were kept in the corrective labour institutions.

The Soviet Union used the ideology of praising and idolising of the state security organs, calling them the “battle unit of the Bolshevik party”, “brave institutions that protect what the workers has achieved”, “the knights of revolution”, “the shield and sword of the

proletarians”, etc. This propaganda had no effect on the Estonians. Although some Estonians-collaborators worked for the KGB, a majority of the Estonians condemned them.

We do not have reliable information on the scope Estonian society was impregnated with a net of KGB informants as towards the end of the occupation, the KGB took the archives containing records on operative work and the files of agents to Russia. However, knowing the situation of Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic where virtually every tenth person worked undercover for security organs, we guess that the situation could not have been much better in Estonia. Nevertheless, perhaps Estonia was not so utterly immersed with agents because the Czechoslovakian and German authorities, albeit totalitarian, were still of the same nationality as the population whereas the Estonians, even those who collaborated with the Soviet power, referred to the Soviet power as “Russian” and never as “Estonian”. The language barrier probably played some role too. Russian, being a Slavonic language, is difficult to master by an Estonian as it belongs to another linguistic system. Many Estonians could not learn it even during the fifty years of occupation.

The role of the KGB in Estonian society should not be overestimated. Many researchers tend, maybe even knowingly, to blame the KGB for all the crimes and cruelties of the Soviet power. They forgot that the KGB or “the armed battle unit of the Bolshevik party” as Lenin so figuratively said was always controlled by the Communist Party and just obeyed the directions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee although maybe its powers were greater during Stalin compared with the Brezhnev or Khruchev’s eras. The decisions regarding the extent of admissibility of dissident thinking or punishability of crimes and the forms of punishment were always made in Moscow by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the KGB just fulfilled them. During Khruchev’s “thaw”, certain nonconformity of political thinking was allowed but after the “Prague Spring” of 1968, the clocks were quickly turned back. In Estonia, it was the “bourgeois nationalism” that was persecuted especially eagerly.

Unfortunately, to this date we do not know much about KGB activities within the economic sphere. We know that the tenth directorate of Division 5 of the KGB was responsible for combating corruption and speculation. It was one of the channels via which security organs could penetrate to the economic life. Many experts believe that such penetration and the creation of “umbrella” companies as well as the transfer of monies to personal accounts started already in mid 1980s.

Opposition to the Soviet power

In 1939, the government of Estonia, unlike the government of Finland which rejected the Soviet ultimatum and faced the armed attack of the Soviet Union, decided to follow in the footsteps of Czechoslovakia and surrender to the aggressor hoping to avoid the horrors of war. Unfortunately, such hopes were short-lived. In the first year of the Soviet occupation alone more than sixty thousand citizens of Estonia, i.e. about 6% of its population, were shot, arrested or deported to Russia by the communists. Loss of sovereignty and atrocities brought along spontaneous mass resistance, including armed resistance, which became especially active when the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union went to war.

The Germans refused to restore the sovereignty of Estonia and occupied it for three years during which another six thousand Estonians perished. Movement towards independence continued and became organised despite the German persecution. In 1944, an underground government was formed which, after the Germans withdrew their troops, was arrested and shot by the Russians.

An attempt to re-establish the independence of Estonia in the short period between the withdrawal of the Germans and entry of the Red Army failed.

1944 saw the beginning of the second Soviet occupation. In the second half of the 1940s and in early 1950s, resistance to the occupants was mostly armed. It was a guerrilla war that the Russians managed to neutralise only after the mass deportations of 1949 in the course of which almost 25 thousand people were deported to Russia – mostly women, children and old people, and after the establishment of collective farms which cut the partisans off their supplies. The bloody suppression of the Hungarian riots by the Soviet Army in 1956 to which the States parties to the Atlantic Charter turned a blind eye meant that Estonians lost their last resort - hope that the Western democracies would fulfil their promises of support - and demonstrated clearly that after Yalta, the Charter had no meaning for East Europe any more. Nevertheless, individual small groupings continued to hide in forests until the 1960s. The last famous “forest brother” was shot by the KGB in 1973.

After the defeat of the armed resistance, patriotic anti-Soviet activities continued, especially amongst the students of secondary schools. Underground groupings were spontaneously formed to publish leaflets, etc., but all those groupings were discovered quickly due to lack of conspiracy and their members were convicted. Nevertheless, those attempts continued until the Soviet dissident movement emerged in the 1960s. In Estonia, this movement was welcomed eagerly and it soon turned into a fight for national liberation.

The main ideological motives behind the resistance movement were patriotic – re-establishment of Estonia’s independence, resistance to the Communist terror and to Russification.

During the entire period of the Soviet occupation, Estonians did not manage to form one central movement of resistance. All the attempts to do this failed and those involved were arrested by the KGB. Perhaps this was even good because due to the absence of one central organisation it was not possible to destroy the whole movement. New groupings were formed instead of those that had been destroyed, not connected with their predecessors.

Towards the end of the German occupation in 1944, a large number of Estonians (almost 8% of the population, i.e. 80 thousand people) had managed to escape abroad. They set up Estonian communities in Sweden, Germany, USA, Canada and Australia. They formed an exile government which, however, had no effect on what was going on in annexed Estonia. Nevertheless, Estonians in exile did a great job in informing the public about the events that had occurred in Estonia and won international support in damning the Soviet aggression and annexation of Estonia.

In strictly regulated conditions of the Soviet totalitarian system it was naturally not possible to plan activities for the liquidation of the occupations. The rapid collapse of the Soviet Union came as a surprise to everybody, including those involved in dissident, and national liberation movements as well as in movements for protection of the rule of law.

Collapse of the Soviet system. Transition period

The root of the collapse

The political system of the Soviet Union was on the decline when Mikhail Gorbachev became the Secretary General of the Communist Party in 1985. The communist ideals which inspired the Russians before and during World War 2 had become completely valueless by the 1980s. The economy of the Soviet Union could no longer pay for the enormous military outlays. The system of collective farms had proved to be ineffective. The supplies of consumer goods to and the general living standard of the population dropped. The law machinery – militia, prosecutor's offices and courts – was corrupted. Corruption was the greatest within the Party. The army was tied up in a hopeless war in Afghanistan and suffered from contagion of morals. Security bodies were the only ones which understood the depth of the crisis of the Soviet system.

Situation in Estonia from the mid-eighties to the collapse of the Soviet Union

Armed resistance to the Soviet power had been suffocated. In the course of pre- and post-war mass repressions, around 80 thousand people had been arrested and deported to the Siberian concentration camps and another 40 thousand people had been deported to Russia, i.e. 12 % of the population. Many of the survivors (about 50%) had returned to Estonia but the demographic situation had changed. In pre-war Estonia, the Estonians constituted 97% of the population – a figure which now soon dropped to 64%. In Tallinn, Russians formed 50% of the residents. In some towns (Narva, Paldiski, Sillamäe) and regions (East Virumaa) the Russians gained absolute majority. The Russian language became rooted. A large part of the Estonians lost all hopes for independence, reconciled with the occupation and tried to adjust to the Soviet power. There was a danger that the Estonian nation would assimilate with the Russians just like the Karelians, Vepsians, etc.

The course towards “perestroika and glasnost” taken by Gorbachev gave rise to a new increase in national morale and led to mass movement against Russification. The first of those movements was the movement for the protection of national heritage in 1986, which in fact grew into a campaign that soon penetrated all the strata of the Estonian population. Then, in 1987, the so-called “Phosphorite War” broke out. Northeast Estonia has large deposits of phosphorite. The Soviet government planned to extract the phosphorite with help of labour imported from Russia. This exposed the environmental and demographic situation of Estonia to a great risk. The fight against operating these deposits soon involved all of the Estonians.

The first public mass demonstration was held in Tallinn on 23 August 1987. The demonstrators demanded disclosure of the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. In September of the same year, a project advocating the economic

independence of Estonia (“self-sustaining management of Estonia”) was introduced to the public. Towards the end of the year, the youth held their first demonstrations to commemorate the Estonian War of Independence of 1918-1920. At these demonstrations, they carried the blue-black-and-white national flag which, at the time, was prohibited. The army of occupation did not interfere. The KGB watched the events keenly. The attempts of the authorities to suppress the national movement by publishing articles in the press that discredited the ideals of the national liberation movement or, in some cases, by scattering the demonstrators, failed.

In 1988, the Estonian liberation movement split in two. The first of these wings in which the decisive role was played by the progressive administrators and officials of the Communist Party, believed that liberation could be achieved gradually via the democratisation of the Soviet system and eventual withdrawal from the Soviet Union. The second trend was radical, led by the former dissidents, political prisoners and young humanists and ultimately became the force that put an end to the Soviet occupation and re-established of the Republic of Estonia (restitution) that had been annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

In spring 1988 came the idea to create the People’s Front. The idea was initially conceived by the Communist Party and KGB to control the national movement and to muffle it into a superficial reform of the Soviet Union. But the People’s Front outgrew its conceivers and started to express the real interests and demands of the people. The Front was led by the representatives of the first wing.

The second trend was mainly represented in the Society for Protection of Antiquities which by that time had become a mass political organisation. It was set up in the summer of 1988 without the permission of the authorities. The second trend was openly expressed by the Estonian Party of National Sovereignty (PNS).

Irrespective of the principal ideological discrepancies between these two trends, there was no open hostility between them and they even pooled their efforts in organising many of the events.

We should especially mention the song festivals organised by the People’s Front at which tens of thousands of people sang patriotic songs. It was due to them the period 1988-1991 is now called the “singing revolution”. Another notable undertaking was the organisation of the “Baltic chain” – a chain formed of people from Tallinn to Vilnius under the aegis of the People’s Fronts of Estonia and Latvia and the Lithuanian Sąjūdis on 23 August 1989 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement.

Campaigners for the preservation of the Soviet Union and continuation of the occupation of Estonia organised the International Front (later renamed International Movement) in 1988. The organisation was led by the heads of the Estonian military and heavy industry - established in Estonia during the years of occupation - and the Russian members of the Communist Party. The membership of the organisation comprised mostly Russians who had migrated to Estonia during the occupation. Unlike the Estonian organisations which did not have combat units, the International Movement set up assault teams which, in May 1990, tried to take the power but had to retreat under pressure from the Estonian hordes of people.

In 1989, the advocates of restitution started to register lawful citizens of the Republic of Estonia and set out committees of citizens. The movement culminated in the spring of 1990 when the Estonian Congress – the representative assembly of the citizens of the Republic of Estonia – was elected and called. Almost simultaneously were held elections to the highest administrative body of the Estonian SSR – the Supreme Soviet. After the elections, a new government of the Estonian SSR was formed from the leaders of the People's Front.

Break-up of the Soviet system

The 1990 elections to the Estonian Congress and Supreme Soviet were mostly carried out in line with democratic principles. The election campaign was relatively democratic as the Soviet repressive organs like KGB and Glavlit (censorship) did not interfere publicly. The military of the Soviet Army on the territory of Estonia also participated in the elections of the Supreme Soviet, electing four deputies.

The Communist Party of Estonia split. The Estonian wing of the Party resigned from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and declared themselves independent.

The Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution on the beginning of a transit period for the re-establishment of Estonia's independence. The People's Front and the Estonian Communist Party which formed the majority in the Supreme Soviet did not contemplate restitution but withdrawal of Estonia from the Soviet Union after the end of the transition period. The Estonian Congress, representing 900 thousand registered citizens and candidates to the citizenship categorically denied the idea of establishing new Estonia by the withdrawal of the Estonian SSR from the Soviet Union. They demanded the restitution of the Republic of Estonia that had been annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

Negotiations with the Soviet Union for the establishment of independence were started but soon dropped. Latvia and Lithuania also moved towards liberation. The Soviet government addressed several threat-filled statements to the Baltic republics. In Lithuania and Latvia there were even armed conflicts and victims but this did not happen in Estonia. Apparently the federal government decided not to employ arms against the national liberation movements, fearing that the situation may get out of control and lead to unpredictable consequences.

On 19 August 1991, there was a putsch in Moscow. The putschists sent to Estonia a division of aerial-amphibian troops from Pskov. The troops of the Soviet Army present in Estonia stayed at their quarters. The directing body of the Estonian Congress – the Estonian Committee – and the Supreme Soviet finally came to an agreement in fear of military action. On 20 August, the Supreme Soviet adopted, with the consent of the Estonian Committee, a resolution that declared the Republic of Estonia, annexed in 1940, sovereign. For the purpose of establishing lawful bodies of state (the Supreme Soviet was an administrative body of the Soviet power while the Estonian Congress representing the citizens of the Republic of Estonia had been formed spontaneously and did not believe itself to be lawful to act as a legislative body) it was decided to establish a Constituent Assembly on parity basis (30 members each from the Supreme Soviet and the Estonian Committee) to prepare a new constitution of the Republic of Estonia, submit the

constitution to a referendum and, after the referendum, organise elections to a legitimate legislative body – the *Riigikogu* – during the summer of 1992.

On 21 August, the putsch was suppressed in Moscow and the Pskov division returned home without having resorted to any violence in Estonia except the conquest of the television mast of Tallinn. The Russian government and subsequently the government of the Soviet Union recognised the re-establishment of Estonia's sovereignty. Thereafter, the whole Soviet Union dissipated.

On 20 June 1992, Estonia conducted a monetary reform, introducing the Estonian kroon which was fixed to the German mark at an exchange rate of one German mark equalling eight Estonian kroons. A new constitution was adopted by a referendum on 28 June and the *Riigikogu* was elected on 20 September. The transit period had come to an end and the sovereignty of the Republic of Estonia had been restored by restitution.

At the elections, the right-wingers and national parties won. The Democratic Labour Party, formed on the basis of the former Estonian Communist Party, did not pass the 5% threshold and did not get to the parliament. By the way, the Democratic Labour Party did not make it to the *Riigikogu* at the 1995 elections either. During the Soviet occupation the Estonians evidently became allergic not just to the word “communism” but even to the word “socialism”. There are still not any political parties in Estonia whose name would include the word “socialist”. Even the social democrats call themselves Moderates.

The coalition government formed after the 1992 elections started to restore and form the state structure in line with the constitution. The exile government abdicated and delivered its authorities to the new government.

Security bodies in the transition period

During the transition period, the KGB continued its activities on the territory of Estonia. As the KGB was subordinated to Moscow, the Estonian government of the transition period did not have any influence on it and could not control its activities or appointment of officials. The GRU also continued to operate on the territory of Estonia.

Things were different with militia and internal troops which were subordinated to the Ministry of Interior Affairs of the Soviet Union. Unlike Latvia and Lithuania, special militia units (OMON) serving as instruments for armed conflicts had not been formed. Internal troops were in Estonia used for security purposes and for escorting inmates but, as we already said, there were not political prisoners in Estonia as they were kept in Russia. On 1 August 1990, the Prime Minister of the transitional government and the Minister of Interior Affairs of the Soviet Union signed an agreement for transferring the MoIA structures located on the territory of Estonia to the jurisdiction of the Estonian government. Militia was renamed police and started strictly to fulfil only the functions of the police. The internal troops of the MoIA were withdrawn from Estonia. Estonians or citizens of Estonia became to be appointed to the highest directing positions, later they were used to fill vacancies of lower ranks too.

In 1991, after the re-establishment of independence, the Prime Minister of Estonia and the Chairman of the KGB of the Soviet Union concluded an agreement for the liquidation of the KGB in Estonia by 1 December 1991 and for the transfer of the files and property

of the KGB to the Estonian government. By that time, the personal files of the staff and the network of agents and the records of the operations of the KGB on the territory of Estonia had already been removed to Russia. Estonia received the assets of the KGB plus just 28.5 thousand archive files on political prisoners, some accounts and records – mostly of historical and scientific significance. It should be mentioned that the committee organised for the acceptance of the assets and documents of the KGB was ineffective and its work was justly criticised.

During the transition period, the KGB naturally worked against the national liberation movement, implanting informers in the organisations that were established, using intrigue, provocation, false rumours and misinformation to interfere with the activities of patriotic organisations. However, as all the documents were taken away from Estonia and all the KGB leaders left Estonia it is not possible to give examples of actual operations.

The sabotaging/assaulting units of the Soviet Union, subordinated to the GRU, were withdrawn from Estonia only in 1994 when the troops of occupation left Estonia. It is possible that they were not just passive watchers but also carried out intelligence operations against Estonia and implanted their agents – although these are only guesses.

Similarly, we can only make speculations about the intelligence agency of the KGB and GRU left in Estonia and about its transfer to corresponding bodies of the Russian Federation.

Remedy of the consequences of the occupations

Demolition of secret networks

The re-establishment of the Republic of Estonia meant that all structures of the occupation power were destroyed and abolished. However, the secret structures remained in Estonia. This is confirmed by the exposure and deportation of a Russian intelligence agent, who used diplomacy as a shield, and the disclosure of his Estonian informant by the security police in 1997.

Towards the end of 1995, for the purpose of purifying the morals of the nation, the Riigikogu adopted a special law on the registration of persons who co-operated with or informed special intelligence or counterintelligence services of the countries that occupied Estonia, i.e. Germany or the Soviet Union. The law lists all such services and organisations in those countries. The law prescribes that those people who voluntarily appear before the security police until 1 April 1996 and confess their activities in such organisations will be provided with legal immunity. It means that the names of those persons become a state secret and cannot be disclosed by the State (unless, of course, such persons have committed crimes against humanity, war crimes or felonies while fulfilling assignments in such organisations). By the deadline, 1,153 people had appeared in the security police. After 1 April 1996, the security police started publishing the names of people who collaborated with special services of the occupants but did not confess it. To date, 32 names have been published.

Even before that, Estonia had adopted a law on oath. This law prescribes that a person who seeks the office in certain governmental bodies listed therein must take a written

oath that he or she had not been in the service or an agent of a special service of a state which has occupied Estonia, nor participated in the persecution of citizens of Estonia.

The assets of the KGB were transferred to the re-established security police which, under law, was prohibited from hiring persons who had collaborated with the special services of foreign states. Exception was made for certain specialists in maintaining the special equipment if so personally granted by the Prime Minister.

All the archives of the KGB, Ministry of Interior Affairs and Communist Party were delivered to a branch of the State Archive established specifically for this purpose. Access to the documents in the archive is regulated by law and is granted to historians, researchers and law-enforcement officers under special conditions that prevent the misuse of personal information. Besides, a person for who there exists a file may examine this file. It is also possible to examine the files of one's perished relatives.

It should be mentioned that those who have examined their files are not bound with the previously mentioned obligation of the state to keep in confidence the names of former agents of special services who confessed their guilt.

Naturally, if false or inaccurate information is disclosed about someone, this person may appeal to a court to protect his or her good name. There have already been some court cases where the plaintiffs demanded dismissal of charges on collaboration with the KGB.

How to avoid acts of aggression and a reinstatement of a totalitarian system in the future

In the past thousand years, Estonia has at least on five occasions suffered attacks from Russia the governors of which believed that the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea was a natural elongation of the Russian Empire. The major acts of aggressions were undertaken by:

- Grand Duke Yaroslav "Wise" who in 1030 conquered the stronghold of Tarbatu (Tartu);
- Tsar Ivan "Formidable" IV during the Livonian War in 1558-1583;
- Tsar Peter the Great in the Northern War of 1700-1721;
- Lenin during the War of Independence in 1918-1920;
- Stalin during World War II in 1940 and in 1944.

Yaroslav, Ivan IV and Lenin were defeated whereas Peter the Great and Stalin succeeded.

The best guarantees against new aggressions are:

- Firstly, the democratisation of Russia but as Russia has no traditions of or experience in democratic ruling (except the Provisional Government of February-October 1917) it will take a long time. Unfortunately, to date the Russian Federation pursues imperial traditions and tendencies in its foreign policy;
- Secondly, integration of Estonia into European structures such as the European Council and NATO which would rule out the possibility of agreements like those of Molotov-Ribbentrop and Yalta. Taking into account the importance of such integration for a

steadfast democratic development of the country, this facet is the strategic goal of Estonia's foreign policy.

The fifty years of occupation and the forcible introduction of the totalitarian communist ideology left their traces in all realms of life in Estonia. Demographic structure was altered. Estonia faces the challenge of converting more than 25% of its population – imported to Estonia by Russia with the goal of reinforcing its power whereas there still exist forces in Russia which view the migrants as an outpost of future expansion (“Karaganov’s doctrine”, draft law on compatriots) - into citizens loyal to Estonia and integrating this part of population into Estonian society. It is also necessary to overcome the xenophobia caused by this situation. Agriculture and traditional rural life were disrupted. It takes years to reduce our backlog with the rest of Europe. The Bolshevik ideology managed to devalue universal moral values. The number of crimes increased abruptly after the re-establishment of independence. Moral decay is perhaps the gravest consequence of the occupation. The remedy of the situation takes a lot of time and effort.

The crimes of totalitarian regimes are examined and related information is published by many state and non-government organisations in Estonia of which we should mention:

- State Commission for the Perquisition of the Crimes of Occupation Regimes formed by the Riigikogu for the compilation of the White Book. The Commission is funded by the state;
- Office for the Registration of Torture Victims in Estonia established by the Union of Torture Victims Memento which registers, compiles and publishes lists of torture victims. The organisation is funded from donations (including those made by the Estonians in exile) and receives a small subsidy from the state;
- International Committee for Revealing Crimes Against Humanity Committees on the Territory of Estonia recently formed by the President of the Republic;
- Kistler-Ritso Foundation which is a private charity foundation established for the purpose of founding a museum of totalitarianism and which collects memoirs, tangible evidence of the crimes of the communists;
- S-Centre is a non-governmental organisation uniting historians and archivists, which collects, studies, classifies and publishes archive materials and documents.

The security police also investigate crimes against humanity. About ten criminal cases have been initiated. Some of the cases have been closed as the accused have passed away. Recently, the first court process in such a case was concluded. The accused was a KGB officer and was conditionally sentenced for eight years of imprisonment for the deportation of tens of families. These crimes are difficult to investigate because most of the culprits left Estonia and their residence is not known.

International organisations such as the OSCE, European Council and others have not demonstrated very much interest in bringing the crimes committed by the communist regime of the Soviet Union in Estonia to light or in publishing related accounts. International organisations for legal protections are also disinterested.

It is highly unlikely that an international trial, Nürnberg 2, is organised for the crimes of communists and the Communist Party committed against humanity. Even in Estonia,

communist structures of power have not been declared criminal under law although attempts to that effect have been and probably will be made in the Riigikogu.

Special services of Estonia and combat of crime

After the Soviet annexation, all the Estonian structures of state, including special services, were destroyed and their personnel executed. After regaining its independence, Estonia had to recreate those structures. Of course, people who had worked for the Soviet services could not be used and there were practically no people with this kind of experience in Estonia. Therefore, great difficulties were encountered and mistakes made in creating security services.

Today, the special services of Estonia include:

- The Security Police, founded on the basis of law, acting by its Statutes and subordinated to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The Security Police is responsible for counterintelligence, investigation of offences against the state, corruption, organised crime and large-scale economic crimes;
- Information Service (foreign intelligence);
- Government Communication Service;
- 2nd unit of the Staff of Defence Forces (military intelligence).

The law on persecution and search activities entitles, besides the police and security police, only the customs, border guards, military police and prison board to undertake such activities within the limits of their competence.

The activities of all special services are co-ordinated by the head of State Chancellery.

There exists a draft law on special services. The law prescribes the structure, interrelations, functions, subordination, rights and obligations of all the special services of Estonia. The draft is still worked on and will be presented to the Riigikogu in the near future.

Riigikogu has a committee responsible for supervising the activities of the security police in their persecution/search activities. Parliamentary control over all special services is vested in this committee.

Crime status

As crime-related statistics was classified information during the occupation, we don't know the concrete numbers. Street crime was relatively low. Corruption among the Party elite, Soviet nomenclature and red tape was high. Militia controlled street and household crime quite efficiently. Malfeasance and corruption were greater problems and the KGB was responsible for combating this type of crime. In order to investigate a case of corruption that involved a person included in the nomenclature, warrant from the corresponding Party unit had to be obtained. Not infrequently, the culprits were just subjected to punishments by the Party, e.g. reprimanded or transferred to another post.

After the re-establishment of independence, the number of crimes has increased due to several reasons:

- a slight deterioration of the economic situation amongst certain strata of the population;
- increase of unemployment, especially amongst non-Estonians who lost their well-paid jobs in the military industrial complex and cannot find a new job because they cannot speak Estonian;
- uncertainty of the position of Soviet immigrants – they have lost their privileged social status;
- abolishment of Soviet and creation of Estonian structures of legal protection and a period of ineffective operations connected with this situation;
- opening of borders, better perspectives for certain types of crime, etc.

The crime rates increased until 1994, after that there was a small decrease. However, while the number of certain serious criminal offences (homicide and rape) somewhat decreased in 1994-1996, other types of offences such as drug-related crimes are the upward trend. The number of economic crimes is high too. Their investigation is often very slow due to low quality and lack of experience of investigating staff. There have been some corruption-related scandals.

Conclusion

During the years of totalitarian occupation, the state and people of Estonia suffered serious damages. All of the state institutions were abolished and replaced with authorities of the Soviet occupation. About one-fourth of the pre-war population was killed, deported to Russia or escaped to the West. Ethnic purges altered the ethnographical composition of the population – the percentage of Estonians dropped from 97% to 64%. Agriculture was destroyed and traditional rural lifestyle was ruined due to collectivisation. Economic development was not in concord with the needs of Estonia. Compared with neighbouring countries, e.g. Finland and Sweden with which Estonia's economy was comparable before World War II, economy was sent spinning back some ten years. Perhaps the gravest consequence is the deterioration of moral and ethic values of the people due to the communist ideology.

Thanks to coincidences and the stamina of the people and their leaders, the reign of occupation terminated and Estonia's independence were re-established without victims. Riots and bloodshed were avoided also upon restoring the legal order and government structures.

Soviet special services were liquidated without undue excesses, however, most of the archives and records of them were taken away to Russia. Many leaders and collaborators of those services also departed to Russia, probably leaving a secret net of agents behind subordinated to corresponding Russian services.

Estonian special services were practically built from scrap with many difficulties encountered on the way due to lack of specialists and experiences. Today, these difficulties have mostly been overcome.

The period of occupations and the crimes of the communist totalitarian regime are investigated by many public and social organisations of Estonia. They issue publications and reports, organise exhibitions and establish museums.

A few criminal cases have been initiated in respect of crimes against humanity. However, their investigation is complicated as many of the documents and culprits are missing.

Today, Estonia has restored constitutional order and all state structures. In all major respects, Estonia is a stable and open society that guarantees fundamental freedoms and democracy. However, lot of time and effort is needed to be able to overcome the consequences of the occupation in all realms of life and to combat economic backlog.