



Student worksheet

Arrests

Source A: Arrest in the street and the first interrogation

I was arrested in the evening of April 2, 1946, in the dark unlit street, the moment that Ilmar Vasser had stepped away from me, while whistling a melody unknown to me. Three took part in the arrest – two grabbed my hands, while the third pressed a gun against the back of my head. I was walked to the militia, where I was searched. Next I was handcuffed and dragged between three men to the KGB¹ centre in Võru. Captain Sissas was waiting and ordered that I be taken to the second floor kitchen, which had a red-hot hob. They promised to roast me alive, unless I started talking at once. On the ground floor I saw a glimpse of Lembit Muuga, Rein Visk, Hans Jaik. One thing was clear – this was a major failure.

At the same time, Tormiste-Pehka's (who was the Geography teacher in the Võru High School) girls had also been brought to the Võru KGB headquarters, they tried to prove their connection to the SMV², but I had no idea of their participation in the resistance.

I was kept cuffed in the Võru KGB for two days, hit in the face a couple of times, given suggestions to 'stop playing stupid and tell everything'. I was taken to the Tallinn Patarei prison on an open vehicle, handcuffed and in a forced position – a fellow victim was sitting on my knees. From the Patarei to the prison in Pagari street, I was driven by a "raven", which had BREAD painted on its door in capital letters.

In Pagari, I was closed in a steel cabinet: three holes, each 4–5 mm in the middle, had been drilled in the door for air, the bench was no wider than 12 cm. The cabinet was no more than 140 cm in height, the breadth might have been approximately 40–45 cm. The guard used force to push the door closed and shut the bolts. Soon a special "concert" began: screams of pain, moans, the echoed sounds of beating, interrupted by the monotonous sentence with a jeering undertone 'how long must I wait', followed by the detailed "confession", [---] a new beating again.

Exercises

1. What were the reasons for the arrests?
2. Why did some people avoid asking –what were they arrested for?
3. How was it possible to arrest victims without resistance?
4. Which year had the highest number of arrests, which had the lowest? What could be the reason?
5. What kind of Human Rights were violated during arrests?

¹ KGB – *Komitēt gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (Russian: *Комитет государственной безопасности (КГБ)*), Committee for State Security, was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its break-up in 1991.

² SMV – *Sini-Must-Valge Blue-Black-White* (the combination of colours of the Estonian flag, what was not allowed during the Soviet time), the name of the undercover pupils' organisation in Võru.



Source B: Arrest – what for?

We never asked: ‘What were they arrested for?’ when hearing about the latest arrest – but we were an exception. Most people, mad with fear, only asked the question to give them a little bit of hope; if others were arrested for a reason, then they wouldn’t be arrested, because they couldn’t have done anything wrong. They would compete in making up all kinds of inventive reasons for arrest: ‘Hey, he really is a smuggler’, ‘He really went pretty far’ or ‘This was to be expected, he is an awful person’, ‘I always felt that there is something suspicious about him’, ‘He is not even one of us...’

This is why we disapproved of the question: ‘What was he arrested for?’

‘What for?’ shrieked Ahmatova with indignation every time somebody asked this question in light of the atmosphere of our group.

‘What do you mean by that: what for? It is about time you understand that people are arrested for nothing at all!’

Anna Ahmatova – a poet, who was quoted by the widow of another poet above – was right, and at the same time she was wrong. On the one hand, starting from the middle of the 1920-s – by this time the apparatus of the Soviet repression run well – the Soviet rule no longer grabbed people from the streets and threw them to the prisons without giving a single explanation or clarification: there were arrests, cases, court procedures and punishments. On the other hand, the “crimes” that people were convicted of were idiotic and the procedures used to interrogate these people were absurd, even surreal.

Exercises

1. **What were the reasons for the arrests?**
2. **Why did some people avoid asking –what were they arrested for? What was the reason for some people to discuss the possible reason of the arrests?**
3. **How was it possible to arrest victims without resistance?**
4. **Which year had the highest number of arrests, which had the lowest? What could be the reason?**
5. **Discuss, what kind of Human Rights were violated during arrests? Why were the arrests wrongful? Please give examples.**



Source C: First imprisonment and KZ³

/.../The German Security Service, the SD, with its Estonian collaborators, had been keeping an eye on the activities of the Estonian national underground for a long time. In April 1944 several hundred people, including Enn Sarv, who were active in the national underground, were arrested by the SD. Sarv was under investigation until the retreat of the Germans from Estonia in September 1944. Many absurd things gained importance under totalitarian regimes. Enn Sarv was initially investigated not for his nationalist activities, but for his alleged Jewish background, due to his Polish mother and “non-Estonian look,” and his detailed genealogy was compiled by the SD. During the last days of the German retreat in September 1944 many prisoners were simply released by the Estonian prison guards. But some of them, including Enn Sarv, were transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp in Poland. /.../

Second imprisonment and the Gulag years

/.../ Enn Sarv was demobilised from the Red Army in October 1945; he returned to Estonia and continued his interrupted studies at the sovietised University of Tartu. However, in January 1946 he was arrested by the Soviet secret police for his participation in the national opposition during the Soviet occupation in 1940–41 and the German occupation, was sentenced to 7 years in the Gulag for espionage and served his time in the Vorkuta camp. His father was deported with other family members in the course of the mass deportation of March 1949 from Baltic countries; he died the following year in a forced settlement in Eastern Siberia./.../

Exercises

1. **What were the reasons for the arrests?**
2. **Why did some people avoid asking –what were they arrested for? What was the reason for some people to discuss the possible reason of the arrests?**
3. **How was it possible to arrest victims without resistance?**
4. **Which year had the highest number of arrests, which had the lowest? What could be the reason?**
5. **Discuss, what kind of Human Rights were violated during arrests? Why were the arrests wrongful? Please give examples.**

³ KZ – *Konzentrationslager* (Concentration Camp)



Source D: Kogu Me Lugu Mari Pukkonen <http://youtu.be/zQyzUd21uCc>

Source E: Kogu Me Lugu Tatiana Meinert <http://youtu.be/dRSQJNMz6q4>

Source F: Kogu Me Lugu Silvi Teesalu <http://youtu.be/qnVmcw3vXHA>

Source G: Statistical Summary of Wrongful Arrests and Deportations by the Soviet Union in Estonia 1940–1990

Year	Arrested/Deported	Year	Arrested/Deported
1940	1328	1950	3312
1941	5038	1950	1563**
1941	10 000*	1951	2606
1942	665	1951	281*
1943	654	1952	902
1944	5267	1953	632
1945	12 115	1954	78
1945	407*	1955	70
1946	2645	1956	52
1947	1642	1957-1959	186
1948	2561	1960-1969	183
1949	3118	1970-1979	129
1949	20 700*	1980-1990	152

* – deported persons

** – deported persons from Estonian and Latvian territories, united with Pskov area (oblast). Only the general number is known.