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1. The first Estonian collective farm I know of was established in the Tallinn area in 1947, but the main collectivization drive came in 1949 following a mass deportation of Estonians. I believe that the first collective farm in Abja Rayon was founded at the end of 1948 or the beginning of 1949, and [] was collectivized in 1949, the year when the kolkhoz in Halliste was established. 50X1
2. Collectivization in Abja Rayon, as in other regions of Estonia, was all but completed by 1950. By then only a few private farms were still in existence. Most of these farms were quite isolated, being located in forest clearings, because of which their owners were probably not subjected to the usual pressures. I do not believe that any farms remained in private hands in Estonia in 1953. At least I was unaware of the existence of any private farms at that time.

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3. I heard that the actual collectivization of farms in my village was preceded by intensive and prolonged propaganda efforts on the part of Estonian and Russian Communists. When the time came to join the kolkhoz, a peasant was required to sign a statement (zayavleniye) that he was taking this step "voluntarily". The statement also included an inventory of all of his farm property which he was "voluntarily" turning over to the kolkhoz. I think that a peasant was allowed to retain only a cow for his private use.
4. The overwhelming majority of Estonian peasants were against collectivization but were forced into this move by direct and indirect pressures. A large deportation action had been carried out through Estonia shortly before the main collectivization drive. Many farmers feared the same fate if they failed to join. In response to a leading question, [redacted] this deportation action occurred in March 1949. Then the taxes and obligatory delivery quotas imposed on private farms were sharply increased following the main collectivization drive, forcing the remaining private farmers to give in. If they did not, their property would have been confiscated for taxes and the end results would have been the same. This tax policy had been anticipated by the peasants during the main drive and was a factor in its success. The Estonians had been told by Russian settlers about the collectivization methods previously used in the USSR and realized that it would be futile to hold out.
5. So, the great majority of peasants in my village joined the kolkhoz because it was a lesser evil. To hold out meant that a peasant would run the risk of deportation and would see his property confiscated for taxes.
6. It is my impression that a very small minority of the farmers in my area - no more than two or three per cent - were in favor of collectivization at the time it was carried out. It is possible that a larger percentage of farmers were in favor of this move in other areas of Estonia, but such variations, if they existed, were very slight. By 1953 the Estonian peasantry was even more opposed to the collective farm system than was initially the case. The standard of living in rural areas had dropped sharply after 1949. Collective farm life was far worse than they had expected.
7. The first peasants to join the collective farm in my village, Halliste, were people who had received land under the land reform put through by the Soviet authorities. They previously had been landless peasants. Most of them had received from four to six hectares and a small amount of livestock as a result of this redistribution. I think that these individuals were the first to join because they wished to demonstrate their loyalty and their gratitude to the Soviet regime for the land parcels which they had received. They were told by Communist propagandists that the Communist Government had so far done well by them, that it would look after their welfare in the collective farm, and they believed the claims of the propagandists that collectivization would improve their economic life.
8. However, this group was only a small minority of the peasants in Halliste. Peasants who had owned land prior to the Soviet regime did not believe the propagandists' claims that collectivization would be to their advantage. But they knew that many of their relatives and friends had been deported, and they had been told by Russian Communists about Soviet collectivization methods in the past. They recognized that it was futile and dangerous to resist.

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- 50X1 9. The peasants who resisted collectivization to the last, those who held out the longest, were not confined to any one economic group. Such individuals included both poor peasants and the so-called middle peasants. The one thing which they had in common was their character. They were the stubborn people who were not afraid to risk the consequences. [It was pointed out [redacted] at this point that, according to other sources of information, the richer peasants had been the first to join collective farms in Lithuania and the poor peasants had held out to the last. The former were most afraid of being deported while the latter were in a relatively strong position in this respect. [redacted] that this was not the case in his village.]
- 50X1 10. Large landowners and so-called kulaks did not come under consideration because their fate had been decided by deportation prior to collectivization. I am not aware of any standard which identified a farmer as a kulak - for example, the number of hectares of land owned. The term "kulak" was applied not only to relatively prosperous peasants (farmers who owned more than 50 hectares or who employed farm hands) but also to poorer peasants who had black marks on their political records; that is, people who had demonstrated anti-Soviet sympathies in such ways as employing Russian prisoners of war during the German occupation or collaborating with the Germans. In short, a person was called a kulak according to the whim of the local Communists.
11. Deportation lists were drawn up by the local NKVD (sic) in Abja Rayon primarily on the basis of information furnished by a single man. This man, a local Communist named Elmar KURG, had formerly been a laborer on a large farm in the Abja region. He was tall and thin (about 1.80 to 1.90 m. tall), with thin blond hair, blue eyes, and sharp features. He was born about 1918 in Abja and completed 8 or 10 years of education at the local school. As of summer 1953, he was working with the Abja Rayon administration in some capacity. I am not sure whether he worked for the Rayon Executive Committee or the Party Committee, but I am inclined to think he was an official of the latter organ.
12. KURG was the main source of information used by the secret police in drawing up deportation lists for the Halliste population, although he undoubtedly had some secret helpers in the village. KURG was also in charge of organizing the "volunteer" assistance to collective farms which was required of workers in the town of Abja. Apart from KURG's collaboration in the deportations, I cannot recall any specific act of injustice or cruelty on his part. KURG was, of course, intensely disliked, but no one dared to show this to his face because of his responsible position.

General Features of the Täht Collective Farm

13. My mother was a member of the Täht (Star) Collective Farm and lived in the village of Halliste. I am not at all certain but I think that the population of Halliste consisted of about 80 households. This was a considerable drop from the pre-World War II situation and was a result of deportations, war casualties, and a steady drift to urban areas. There had been rumors of establishing a central village in Halliste. The farm houses there, as throughout Estonia, were not found in a central village but were isolated, being located on the individual landholdings. It was planned to relocate all these farm houses in a central spot. The authorities had even chosen a site for the village near the railroad stop. However, no concrete steps had been taken in this direction prior to my departure. Rumors*and plans had not been realized.

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14. Two collective farms had initially been established in the village of Halliste. The two farms were amalgamated in about 1951 as part of the general move to consolidate collective farms in Estonia. After consolidation the Täht Kolkhoz occupied an area about seven kilometers long and four kilometers wide, or approximately 2,800 hectares. It was good land with relatively little timbered area, and I believe that about 70% of the land was arable.
15. Relatively few people in Halliste actually worked on the collective farm. I would estimate that the Täht Kolkhoz had only 40 active workers who occupied themselves the year round with collective farm work. I would further estimate that about 70% of the kolkhoz members were over 40 years of age and in this group 60% were women. The other inhabitants were either too young or too old to work on a full-time basis, found some reason to excuse themselves from full-time work in the kolkhoz fields, or worked elsewhere and lived on the collective farm with their families. The latter case was particularly true of the younger people who were not registered members of the collective. None of the young people wanted to stay on the kolkhoz and they were free to leave although I have heard that the regime was about to take measures to prevent their leaving. It is true that many children and older people worked on the farm but not on a full-time basis. They merely helped in the summer. In addition and to alleviate the manpower shortage resulting from the above situation, city workers were brought to the farms to help with the work in the summer. These workers were paid half their usual salaries by the plant for which they worked; the other half was supposed to be paid by the kolkhoz but this actually amounted only to an obligation to feed them during the summer months.
16. Most of the kolkhoz members were Estonians but frequently Russians were installed as chairmen of the kolkhoz or as brigadiers. The chairman was an Estonian who was arrested because of the number of cows that died during the winter of 1953. After his arrest the Party selected a new chairman who was supposed to be paid a salary of 1,200 rubles a month by the kolkhoz whereas formerly the chairman had been paid on the basis of workdays. Orders and instructions were given to the chairman by the Rayon Executive Committee which controlled his work. The chairman was a Communist and from time to time agitators and Communists visited the kolkhoz. On the other hand there were no Communists at all among kolkhoz members, and although they hated the Communists I know of no violent action taken against them. (I have heard of Communists who committed suicide. One Communist official in Abja Rayon shot himself in the spring of 1953 because he was about to be arrested.) And I know, despite the fact that I have never attended a kolkhoz meeting, that no one would dare criticize the chairman. The kolkhoz had one agronomist and three brigades of about 20 persons each. The only plan fulfilled in 1952 was that for delivery of hides; the hides were from animals that died of starvation.
17. A family could be deprived of its 60-acre homestead plot if no member of the family contributed labor to the collective farm. On the other hand, one was not disqualified for receiving payment if he failed to accumulate the minimum number of workdays set for a year. A person was always paid for his labor even if he accumulated only 10 workdays. I do not know what the minimum number of workdays was for kolkhoz members but I think it was between 120 and 150 a year. There were many who did not fulfill this minimum. This could be attributed to various reasons: many of the people were old and unable to work hard; there were a number of jobs for which only a fraction of a workday was recorded. I know of no

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punishment given for not fulfilling workday norms. On the other hand, a kolkhoznik could be penalized for failing to show up for work. He might be subjected to the usual criticism in wall newspapers or he might be denied the right to borrow a kolkhoz-owned horse for use on his homestead plot. Punishment was also inflicted for stealing kolkhoz property, for example, for taking produce to feed individually-owned cattle. I know of one man 60 years of age who was sentenced to 18 years for taking some oil cake from the railroad station. In 1950 the kolkhoz members received two kilograms of grain and 40 kopeks per workday. In 1951 they received one-half kilogram of grain and 20 kopeks per workday; in 1952 they received no money at all. (Despite the fact no money was received, the kolkhoz members were required to subscribe from 25 to 100 rubles to the state loan.) This decrease stemmed from the fact that kolkhoz members were "fed up" with the system and worked less and less each year. Last year my mother received 70 kg. of grain from the kolkhoz in payment for her workdays. Very few old people received help from the state; I know of only one old woman who was paid 40 rubles a month as a pension because her son had served in the Army during the war and had been killed. ^{50X1}

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19. I wish to emphasize that the consolidation of the two collective farms coincided with a decrease in living standards in Halliste. This was partially the result of two factors. First, many youths continued to look for work in the towns and cities, thus aggravating the existing labor shortage on the Täht collective farm. And secondly, many kolkhozniks had learned in the two years of collectivization that harder work did not necessarily mean higher pay for them, and were unwilling to exert themselves for the benefit of the kolkhoz. Even more important was the fact that the state had raised the delivery quotas imposed on the collective farm at the same time consolidation was effected. The production plan for the consolidated kolkhoz was more demanding than previous production plans of its two component parts combined. Conditions deteriorated to such an extent in the two years following consolidation that about 25% of the kolkhoz's arable land was not put into production because of labor shortage. This shortage was so serious that a 1952 potato crop could not be harvested until 1953. As a result half the cows and half the pigs died of starvation since potatoes were used to feed the livestock. The stock that died was mostly kolkhoz stock; members usually managed to care for their privately-owned stock. For example, when the kolkhoz failed to gather the hay, individuals took it for themselves, and in the spring of 1953, potatoes which had remained in the ground all winter were dug up to feed to the pigs. It was a common saying among the Täht kolkhozniks that "this year the cattle are dying and next year it may be us".

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20. I am not certain whether machine-tractor stations were set up in this part of Estonia in the same way they were in the older parts of the Soviet Union. There was an MTS in Halliste but it served only the one kolkhoz. It had assigned to it about 10 tractors, 10 combines, drill plows, and certain other machinery. Most of the plowing was done by tractor but it was not as well done as it formerly had been with horses. The tractor drivers were paid by the MTS and received three kilograms of grain and one ruble per workday. In 1952 the kolkhoz failed to realize its requirements by 120 tn. of grain and the debt had to be canceled by the government. This failure was due to the fact that the kolkhoz had been unable to harvest the grain so individual farmers had gathered much of it for themselves.

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