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COUNTRY: USSR  
SUBJECT: General Information on Esthonia (USSR)

DATE OF INFO:

PLACE ACQUIRED:

EVALUATION:

SOURCE:

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1. General

a. In 1949 the Communist Party was purged of bourgeois elements and Ponomarenko, of the Politburo in Moscow, came to Tallinn to supervise the process. Almost the entire Party leadership in Esthonia was changed, the General Secretary, Nikolai Karotas, being replaced by an Esthonian from Moscow. Karotas' assistant, a Soviet named Kedrov, was also dismissed and arrested. A similar purge was carried out in the government, the Vice-Premier, Alik Henrik, being sentenced to 25 years imprisonment and the Minister of Trade, Hansen, to 12 years. Hans Kruas, a professor of history and President of the Academy of Science in Esthonia, a well-known Social-Democrat leader who had always cooperated with the Communists, was also arrested at this time and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment.

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- b. Tallinn was one of the capital cities with a "special regime" in which persons with prison records or who were otherwise considered undesirable were not permitted to settle. Residents who had served a term of imprisonment were usually expelled on their release.
- The islands off the Esthonian coast were considered part of the frontier security zone and special permission had to be obtained to visit them.
- c. The Petzeri district, which formed part of Esthonia from 1918 to 1940, has been detached from that country and incorporated in the Pskovskaya Oblast of Bielo-Russia.
- d. A nationalist underground movement existed in Esthonia and was effective until 1948. It was considerably weakened among the farmers by the effect of the collectivization and subsequent deportation of about 100,000 kulaks to Siberia, and also by the deportation of intellectuals. The underground was responsible for the blowing up of the statue of Lenin at Tartu on the anniversary of the October Revolution in 1950.
- e. Only the normal age groups were being called up for military service during 1951 and no special military preparations of any kind were to be seen. The only military work of any dimensions in Esthonia was in the port of Tallinn which was completely cut off and rigorously guarded. The population was careful to keep away from the port area.

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f. Prices in 1951 were as follows:

Bread (rye)	per kilogram	2 rubles
Bread (white)	" "	4 rubles
Butter	" "	37 rubles
Beef	" "	18 rubles
Pork	" "	27 rubles
Milk	" litre	3 rubles
Vodka	" "	45 rubles
Man's sport shirt		65 rubles
Woolen cloth, coarse		100-150 rubles
Woolen cloth, fine		500 rubles
Leather shoes		220 rubles
Leather shoes (Czech manufacture)		470 rubles
Cost of having suit made		300 rubles
Exchange rate of dollar (market value)		30-35 rubles

2. Agriculture

a. In 1946 agriculture was controlled by four separate ministries:

- (1) Industrial plants (linen, hemp, sugar beet and straw).
- (2) Livestock.
- (3) Cereals.
- (4) Collective Farms (Sovkhozes).

b. In 1947 the first three ministries listed above were united and a single Ministry of Agriculture set up to replace them, only the Collective Farms Ministry remaining a separate body. The new Ministry of Agriculture consisted of the following sections:

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- (1) Potatoes and Fruit. CONTROL U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY
- (2) Seeds and Fodder.
- (3) Industrial Plants.
- (4) Plant Selection.
- (5) Plant Protection.
- (6) Orchards
- (7) Livestock.
- (8) Horse-breeding

Certain of these sections were under the direct control of the appropriate organization in Moscow. Sugar beet was first planted in Esthonia in 1946 on an area of 2,000 hectares and a refinery is to be built in 1953. These arrangements were made in coordination with the Sugar Beet Institute in Moscow, which organized sugar production throughout the Soviet territories.

- c. Collectivization was begun on a small scale in 1948, greater pressure being brought in the succeeding years. Resistance by the farmers was mainly passive but there were cases of sabotage. To a large extent this took the form of farmers slaughtering their cattle and preserving the meat rather than give up their herds to the kolkhoz. As a result they had sufficient stocks of food during the first two years and refused to perform more than the required minimum of 120 days work per year. Production dropped off sharply and food was imported from the USSR to conceal the shortage. By 1950 the farmers' reserves were used up and they

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were forced to turn to the kolkhoz for their livelihood. 1951 production was almost back to the 1948 level, except for the cattle population which was still much reduced. Excess agricultural production, mainly butter and meat, was already being exported to the USSR.

Persons wishing to move to the towns had to obtain permission from the Village Council to leave. It was possible to leave a kolkhoz but only very small sums were paid in such cases to compensate farmers for the value of the land and stock they contributed and for their houses. Many of the young people did leave, however, and became factory workers in town.

The Estonians are dour and determined individualists and objected almost as much of the enforced contacts of the kolkhoz as to the loss of their farms.

- d. Mechanization has been successful as the average level of education among the Estonian farmers is high, most of them having attended a secondary school at least for a few years. Considerable additional areas of land are being ploughed with the aid of tractors and total production seems likely to rise in the long run. Private farmers are permitted to hire tractors from the State Tractor Stations.

The agricultural machinery supplied to the kolkhozes is mainly of Russian manufacture though some was Czech. The first tractors sent from the USSR had been designed for the loamy soil of the

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Ukraine and broke almost at once in the stony Esthonian fields. The average life of a Russian tractor is about four to five years.

- e. Kok-Sagyz, a plant of the buttercup family growing to a height of about 20 to 25 cms., is widely cultivated for the production of a type of natural rubber. It requires a good deal of water and in the main planting areas in South Russia it is grown with the aid of irrigation channels. The plant is first sown by hand broadcasting and the seedlings later thinned out by hand to develop their full height in rows. No way has yet been found to mechanize the picking as the plant must be pulled up with the roots and production is therefore laborious. The average yield of the plant before drying is four tons per hectare. The plant is not an economic proposition even in Kazakhstan where farming is in any case more primitive, but the state has pressed for its production and has made up for losses any kolkhoz has suffered in this connection. Kok-Sagyz can be grown in any part of Russia but in Esthonia, for instance, where an attempt has been made to introduce it, the farmers are unwilling to invest the amount of labor it requires and the plantations are neglected. The whole of the plant is processed for the production of rubber, and a good deal of research is being carried on in the development of the strains giving the highest rubber yield. Despite the expense, Kok-Sagyz rubber is considered very promising.

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- f. **Afforestation:** According to a fairly recent dictum of Lysenko it is assumed that individuals of the same species do not compete with each other in nature but only with individuals of different species. Experiments are therefore being carried out in forest areas with the planting of up to 200 seeds in a single hole about a meter square. It is thought that the large amount of seedlings would combine to keep out weeds while the strongest sapling would in the end survive alone.
- g. The agricultural property owned by the Esthonian Railroad is made up of government lands, such as those at Karpere, 50 kms. from Tartu, to a total of 1,200 hectares, and farms abandoned by owners who fled with the Germans (1,600 hectares). The farms were operated to supply the railroad workers and the station restaurants during the period when rationing was enforced. After rationing was abolished, the formerly private farms passed on to the kolkhozes and the old state lands have been made into holiday and convalescent homes. Foodstuffs are no longer supplied to the railroad workers and the station restaurants are run by a separate state organization.

3. The Academy of Science

- a. The Academy of Science consists of four departments:
- (1) General Science,
  - (2) Physics and Mathematics,
  - (3) Building and Architecture
  - (4) Medicine

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b. The General Branch is subdivided into the following institutes:

- (1) Historical Institute,
- (2) Institute of Language and Literature,
- (3) Institute of Economics and Law.

c. Each Institute consists of several sections. The Institute of Economics, for instance, has the following sections:

- (1) National Economy,
- (2) Industry,
- (3) Agricultural Economy.

This Section is responsible for agricultural planning throughout Esthonia and gives instructions on the types and quantities of crops to be grown in various areas. It is responsible for ascertaining that industrial crops are grown near processing plants. It establishes prices for kolkhozes, sovkhoses and Machine Centres, as well as working norms and rates of pay. It advises on mechanization and drainage and assures the supply of farm products to the towns.

The Section has three research stations at its disposal. One of these is 70 kms. from Tallinn, a second 50 kms. from Tartu, and the third near Viliand.

- (4) Law,
- (5) Finance.

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- d. At the 1951 conference of the Esthonian Academy a stormy session was caused over a paper read by an agricultural specialist who claimed that the generally accepted Williams theory of soil protection did not apply in the Esthonian climate. Williams had banned autumn plantings of rye and potatoes after grass crops in order not to lose the binding qualities of the grass roots in the dry autumn season of the continental USSR where wind erosion was the main factor in the impoverishment of the ground. The Esthonian claimed that the moist seaboard climate of his country was sufficient to prevent wind erosion and that there was no need to sacrifice the traditional autumn planting of the country's two staple crops. As a result of this stand he was accused of applying "bourgeois methods" and forced to withdraw. Some months later, however, Lysenko published an article stating that it would be a mistake to apply Williams' theories in all parts of Russia, and a return to the old methods has been permitted in Esthonia.
- e. Scientists are extremely well paid, receiving 1,000 to 2,500 rubles a month in the lowest grades, and 4,500 in specialist positions. Doctors employed on medical research receive 5,500 rubles, while an additional payment of 1,500 rubles is made to corresponding members of the Academy and 3,000 rubles to elected members, who thus earn between 7,000 and 8,000 rubles. The President of the Esthonian Academy is paid 40,000 rubles, which is more than the highest of the Party functionaries, and "too much even to spend on drink". By comparison an unskilled worker earns 500 to 700

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rubles, a clerk 400 to 500, a graded employee 800 to 1,000 and a skilled worker 1,000 rubles.

Unlimited sums seem to be available for research, though mainly for the solution of direct practical problems. There is less interest in fundamental research though this is not actually neglected. Science is a popular profession and considered to have a great future. Although it is not permitted to attack the officially approved theories, research workers obtaining results that cannot be reconciled with these do not usually conceal their findings but publish them with the explanation that they have "apparently made a mistake" and are seeking help in correcting this.

4. Personalities

- a. August Pusep      Former Minister of Agriculture in Esthonia      Esthonian from the USSR
- b. Winte Ernst      Former Assistant Minister of Agriculture in Esthonia      Esthonian from the USSR
- c. Dr. Shpungin Shalom      Head of the Veterinary Dept. in the Ministry of Agriculture
- d. Aleksander Mae      Past Minister of Agriculture
- e. Nikolai Pusep      Past Minister of Agriculture      Was Prime Minister at one time and Secretary of the Communist Party. He is now a professor.

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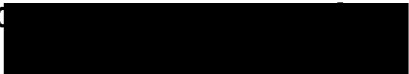
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- f. Oia                                   Minister of Agriculture  
in March 1952
- g. Komarow                           Assistant Minister of Agri-  
culture in March 1952
- h. Eichfeld                           President of the Esthonian  
Academy                               Non-Party, though he was  
once a member of the Social  
Revolution Party. Agrono-  
mist. He was sent to the  
Kola Peninsula where he  
became known as a scientist  
He is an Esthonian from the  
USSR.
- i. Buzulukow                       Political Director of the  
Nikolaj                               Esthonian Academy               Soviet, Economist.  
Stepanowicz
- j. Arnold Weiner                   Director of the Economic       A former Prime Minister of  
Institute of the                   Esthonia. His salary was  
Academy                               30,000 rubles a month.

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