

Aili Aarelaid-Tart

Cultural Trauma And Life Stories

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Cultural Trauma and Life Stories

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CPSU | Communist Party of Soviet Union |
| CT | cultural trauma |
| ECP | Estonian Communist Party |
| EstR | Estonian Russians: Discourse III “Fall of the Dreamland for the Estonian Russians” |
| ESTO | World-wide Estonian Days (Ülemaailmsed Eesti päevad) |
| KGB | People’s Commissariat of Internal affairs (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti) |
| Komsomol | Young Communist League |
| NKVD | National Committee for Interior Affairs (Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennih Del) |
| PTSD | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| SovE | Soviet Estonians: Discourse I “Testimonies from the Soviet Estonia Realities” |
| SweE | Swedish Estonians: Discourse II “The Refugee Romance” |

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Preface

The fate of the Estonians in the 20th Century, like that of many other Central and Eastern European (CEE) peoples, has had to go through several sharp turns and tragic twists. The current work is based on two important turning points, the after effects of which are still visible today: the second violent establishment of Soviet rule in Estonia in September 1944 and its later collapse in August 1991. These events have deeply touched every Estonian family, laid the foundations for the development of the self-consciousness of several generations, and caused more than a half-century of segregation between the annexed natives and the Soviet colonists. Both of these events of radical change in the political system have provoked cultural traumas, the nature and management of which I shall reflect in detail in this work.

The aforementioned historical events have been interpreted in many ways by different social and ethnic groups. These distinct points of view have caused the formation of various public discourses over the years. What was the price the homeland Estonians had to pay for their Soviet adaptation? Was exile Estonian-ness merely a mirage developed to hide the real and rapid assimilation of boat refugees from 1944 into Swedish society? What should the identity of the Soviet colonists be like after the restoration of the Republic of Estonia? Several generations have sought usable answers for managing their nightmarish past in discourses full of such questions. The post-restoration period has demonstrated that these two stormy events still have an important place in shaping the life ideologies of a great many Estonians both in Estonia and in Sweden. In recent years there has developed a new “occupier”-discourse – the discourse of the non-Estonians who settled in Estonia during the forty-seven Soviet years.

The present book is based on 148 biographies, in which, in one way or another, both the forced liquidation and the rebirth of the Republic of Estonia have played a role. Every life story is a part of the collective mem-

ory. Some recall the horrors of the Red terror, others tell of the widening establishment of the Soviet way of life, or of the mentality of the singing nationalism and the keeping of national continuity.

The biggest thanks go to the interviewees from among both homeland Estonians, Swedish Estonians and Estonian Russians. Had these people not trusted me/us with their life stories, this book would have never become a reality. The collecting of biographical interviews has accompanied and influenced my life for the last ten years. I am deeply grateful to American researcher Hank Johnston, under whose supervision I dared to enter the field at all. While extending my studies to Sweden, I soon found that sharing a common language by no means guarantees an adequate understanding of the exile world. I am glad to have had the following great assistants in entering the world of Swedish Estonians: Aleksander Loit, Anu Mai Kõll, Juhan Eelend and Diana Krull from Stockholm University, but also other Swedish Estonians and boat-refugee companions, Gunna Maria Haabma, Leelo Andrén, Ilmar Roostal, Peeter Tõnus and Hans Sarap. I have had the assistance of the diligent pathfinders Aida Hatchaturyan, Irina Belobrovtsseva, Grigori Utkof, Boriss Baljasnyi and Maria Tolbast and also students from Tallinn University in finding my way to the Estonian Russians. For many years I have had the good company of enthusiastic biographical researchers to discuss the interviews with, from the society “Estonian Life Stories”. They include Rutt Hinrikus, Ene Kõresaar, Terje Anepaio, Aigi Rahi, Merle Karusoo, Marju Lauristin, Tiina Kirss, etc. My special thanks belong to my confidant for thirty years, the *grand old lady* of Estonian history – Ea Jansen, who passed to eternity in 2004.

When the winds of freedom started to blow in Estonia again, I had left behind my life’s fortieth milepost. The new era in both my life and in that of my people was promising, yet complicated. When I look back now, I can say that my path as a researcher has been divided into two nearly equal parts: the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In Soviet times, the thing that kept me going was my mission to study Estonian culture and then to return my findings to the people in their mother tongue. In the 1990s I was presented with the new challenge of making the “Estonian cause” visible in the international arena. The publishing of a book in English marks the end of my personal transition period.

To help me reach the finish line, the following outstanding Finnish social scientists have supported me with their friendly but demanding hands: J. P. Roos, Elina Haavio-Mannila and Markku Kivinen. I have also received good advice from their colleagues from Helsinki University: Laura Assmuth, Risto Alapuro, Risto Heiskala and others. Since Finland is still a foreign country for me, I needed someone to guide me in the new

cultural space. Two months before the re-establishment of the independence of Estonia I happened to make the acquaintance of theatre researcher Pentti Paavolainen at the World Semiotics Congress in Imatra in 1991. As it turned out, we had children of similar ages and the next fifteen years of “comparative family studies” have been a solid support for my understanding of our northern neighbours.

I have had the good fortune of personally meeting both creators of the theory of cultural trauma. Piotr Sztompka, academician of the Polish Academy of Sciences, gave me a very warm welcome, going as far as to agreeing to review this book. The key-person of US sociology Jeffrey Alexander has given me the opportunity to introduce my ideas at a very high level of academic discussion.

But most of all, this book bears the trademark “Made in Estonia”. The study would not have been possible without four successive research grants (numbers 1142, 3171, 4750 and 5950) from the Estonian Science Foundation and without the Estonian state target financing project 0132116As02. I have also received significant financial aid for publishing the book from the research fund of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Tallinn University. My numerous academic exchanges have been successful largely due to the co-ordinating aid of Anne Pöitel from the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Besides the conferences of the European Sociological Association, International Sociological Association, Association for Cultural Studies, International Institute of Sociology and other international organisations, I have had the opportunity to present my ideas at their freshest primarily to other Estonian researchers. My thanks go to the organisers of the annual conferences of the Estonian Social Scientists, the mission conferences of the “Two Estonias” and others. My colleagues from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of Tallinn University have been involved in the analysis of this book most directly. For this I thank them, especially my colleague Anu Kannike for her contribution in translating the life stories presented in the Appendix.

The technical development of this work has been a burden I have carried together with my family. My son Lauri and my daughter Liisi have assisted me as they could in translating, editing the references and making up the schemes. My husband Indrek Tart has been a good critical reader and has helped with the tedious and pedantic tasks in the layout.

My English Language editor Marcus Denton and Elina Kahla from the Kikimora Publications have added the last polish to this book. They have my sincerest gratitude.

I. Introduction

I.1. My life story: the framework for my field of study and research interests

I got the idea to frame this study with my own life story from a Norwegian colleague, Marianne Gullestad (Gullestad, 1996:24-29). I am a child of the third spring of peace. My first childhood books told me about dear Uncle Stalin and the ideal Soviet citizen, Uncle Stjopa. My parents had been born during the Tsarist era and had grown up in the atmosphere of independent Estonia. All the expensive furniture, nice carpets, porcelain plates and silverware that we used in our apartment came from the pre-war period. Because of the atrocities and deportations of the 1940s my parents were afraid to tell me anything about either the lost Republic or those close relatives who had been killed by Russian or German soldiers. But the family library and photo-albums allowed me to glimpse into a world irrelevant to the one I met daily outside my home. I remember that one day the monument of beloved Uncle Stalin near our railway-station was pulled down and I did not really understand what had happened. Soon afterwards my mother said that a neighbour had come back from Siberia – the latter was a new word and a new question mark for my young mind. Mother's beautiful shammy-leather gloves from the independence period bore something of double meaning to me; they were both a sign of good times and a relict of "false" bourgeois luxury.

I had the education of a normal Soviet schoolgirl together with regular brainwashing and Soviet activities like Young Pioneer assemblies and competitions for the best singer of Komsomol songs. During secondary school we were proud to live in the conditions of social liberation: reading the verses of a new generation of Estonian poets, listening to the gramophone records of the officially forbidden "Beatles", discussing the fate of a

contemporary hero in the literature club. We were quite aware of there being two realities: an official one and an imaginary one. We could not understand the borders between them because we as post-war kids were strongly imprinted to be *double thinkers*.

In my undergraduate studies I started to follow the Europe-wide students' rebellions and the triumphs of left-wing thinking. My political baptism of fire happened during the Czech events of 1968. My peers and I dreamed of discovering another, more just, reality behind the Soviet one. Yet, as prisoners of the system we could not raise the Iron Curtain to see the other side.

The spiritual atmosphere in Tartu University was paradoxical – orthodox Marxists and free thinkers coexisted side by side, forcing us to develop the skill of maintaining the equilibrium as a compulsory part of our studies. There was a deep ideological rivalry between my own two mentors – one a brilliant professor of philosophy and the other the founder of the world-famous school in semiotics. This disharmony encouraged me to find my own way, which culminated with my escape into the less political “ivory tower” of humanities. I discovered cultural anthropology for myself, which at that time was considered “a (false) bourgeois discipline”. It was hidden in the resources of the special funds of the libraries in Tartu, Tallinn and Moscow. While preparing my diploma work (MA equivalent) on the *theory of anthropology* (inside the Soviet system!) in 1972, I had the good fortune to open the heavy doors leading to these collections and thus could read outstanding Western authors in the original. Thus I acquired a quasi-freedom from the paths of official ideology, but still realising that I had no true contact with the accompanying Western mentality.

At the end of the 1970s, as a promising young Estonian researcher, I began to present myself in broken Russian in the Union-level scientific arena. I defended my Cand. philos. thesis on the anthropological problems of collective memory and human time in Leningrad State University (this was the equivalent of a PhD thesis in the western countries). Cultural anthropology as a discipline had no official acknowledgement in the USSR and thus the scientific commission on philosophical problems of natural sciences examined my work. Multiple visits to Leningrad allowed me to experience the dichotomy between orthodox misery and the dissident grandeur of Soviet philosophy. In these conditions, unfavorable for intellectual accomplishment during the later stagnation period, I left that arena and concentrated my research interests around the *methodological problems of studying Estonian culture*. From 1978 to 1989 I was a member of an excellent research group on the cultural history of Estonia, which in these ideologically difficult years failed in its attempts to establish a complex approach to the subject matter. In the 1980s I also got married and

had a son and a daughter. Thus my very dull and unpromising scientific public sphere was well compensated for by my lovely private life.

The outburst of the Singing Revolution in 1988 thrust me as an essayist into a pen-and-ink war against the Kremlin authorities. The following year I re-established myself as a researcher with a fresh subject matter – *voluntary associations*. Throughout the whole Soviet period the Estonians viewed voluntary activities as the only “archipelago” of free self-determination for the indigenous people. After getting a research grant from the newly instituted Estonian Scientific Foundation I was happy that these studies managed to reach one of the kernels of the “Estonian cause”. Soon, the social democratically inclined Väinö Tanner Foundation from Finland also supported these studies.

Along with the restoration of the Republic of Estonia the gates into the Western world opened up for me and I had good opportunities to travel and experience social research in different European countries. Live contacts with the other side of the Iron Curtain had been denied me for almost twenty years and were at last viable. My first foreign research partners were Martti Siisiäinen (Aarelaid&Siisiäinen, 1993) and Henrik Stenius (Aarelaid, 1995) from Finland who kindly and patiently explained to me that behind the network of voluntary associations there is the important social phenomenon called the *civil society*. The interpretation of Estonian-centered subject matter according to the internationally accepted theoretical frames was equivalent to a mental U-turn for me. During the next five years our small research group was involved in the comparative interpretation of civic initiatives and organizations in Estonia and other countries, which resulted in several collections of papers (Aarelaid, 1993; 1996; 1999).

My contacts with an American researcher Hank Johnston from San Diego State University were totally unexpected. One day in 1995 he called me and asked for help in doing life story interviews with Estonian intellectuals. I took this challenge without hesitation and by doing that incidentally discovered for myself a new subject matter – *biographical research*. It was an excellent research experience to work on and later to write a joint article with a person possessing a totally different cultural and scientific background. This greatly helped me to overcome the gap that existed in my mind between the Soviet and Western paradigms in social sciences. This process took four years and ended with my first peer-reviewed article in collaboration with Hank (GENERATIONS¹). After listening to 72 Soviet life stories of intellectuals, I understood that this store of memories should be collated and recycled. The book *Still Thinking*

¹ Hereafter my original articles are referred by “NICKNAMES”, which are shown in the end of every title in Contents.

About Culture (in Estonian) was completed in 1998. I tried to take a social historian stance in the book and portray the four Soviet decades as seen through the eyes of actual living people (Aarelaid, 1998). The same biographical fieldwork formed the basis of the articles about Soviet double thought and the split world-view of Estonian-inclined Communists (STANDARDS, COMMUNISTS). According to dialectical logic I repeated the canons of the double mental standards of my formative years but now at a new level of the development spiral/helix: I deconstructed them.

Next I was eager to know more about the fates of the people living on both sides of the Iron Curtain, simultaneously on one hand but absolutely separately on the other. I mixed my biographical interests with the anthropological ones and made some comparative analyses (ADAPTATION, CIVIL). I began to gather biographical interviews from Estonians who had escaped to Sweden during the war and from the Russians who had come to Estonia with the Soviet rule (DIALOGUE). Thus, two more worlds that had lasted for the four decades after WWII unfolded before me, significantly different from that of the Estonians who had stayed in Estonia.

On the threshold of the new millennium I achieved success in both English- and Russian-speaking scientific communities. I was asked to publish in high-quality issues and to participate at a high-level in conferences and workshops. It was a great honor for me as a representative of a mere one million strong nation. But as far as the actual passage of my life was concerned, this break-through took place obviously too late.

The spring of 2001 was very unfortunate for me as my enduring disability from childhood, polio, escalated and I became more paralysed than I had been before. At the same time this personal misfortune opened my eyes to the parallels between individual and collective trauma. I had a substantial need to understand the mechanisms of psychological trauma to cope with mine and I glanced over the relevant literature. I chanced upon an article of the Polish academician Piotr Sztompka concerning the topic of *cultural trauma* (THEORY). I came to understand that this was the theoretical point of departure I needed to re-interpret my previous empirical and methodological studies in collective memory and human life spans, in Estonian cultural history, in civil society and in the biographical field. The large-scale implementation of the theory of cultural trauma was completed like a polyphonic *coda* and aligned all three decades of my scientific endeavours and empirical recordings of the cultural reality of Estonians. My personal diachrony (past) was re-shaped into a new synchrony (present).

I found several new associates in Professors J. P. Roos, Markku Kivinen and Professor Emerita Elina Haavio-Mannila from Finland, Professors Baiba Kangere and Anu Mai Kõll from Sweden and others. They encouraged me to put my earlier and new research results together and to launch a

new explanation of the “Estonian cause” in mainstream scientific publications.

The life story presented above is a new version of my personal self-myth. It was impossible to interpret this particular life period in that way in the 1970s, 1980s or even in the 1990s. Within, there is substantial continuity in my self-determination, although outside one could find real discrepancies between different periods of my life. This tale includes several rapid social changes in the history of Estonians as well as in my own life. As a member of a particular ethnic community I have taken part in the realization of coping with several cultural traumas. In my late fifties I could define myself as a bricoleur, tinkerer (using a notion of Claude Lévi-Strauss) of these chances and challenges that history in its good and bad has allowed me, interweaving in a complete life story. To conclude I would like to cite the well-known Finnish social researcher Pertti Alasuutari: “Life-story narrating makes a point in a situation where role expectations radically vary from one social encounter to another, but one nevertheless holds on to the moral obligation to maintain face.”(Alasuutari, 2004:115)

I.2. Research design

I.2.1. The composition of the sample. Collaborations

The completion of this book is the end result of the last ten years of my research. It reflects my quest, as a social scientist who has passed through the Soviet-time educational system, roaming the world of previously rather inaccessible ideas of Western authors and searching for support to explain the passage phenomena of my home society.

Thus I discovered the biographical method for myself at a rather mature age in the middle of the 1990s. Since then I have conducted three relatively extensive instances of gathering biographical interviews:

1. in 1995-1998 I carried out a survey of Estonian intellectuals, a number of the interviews were done in collaboration with a researcher from the USA, Hank Johnston (of the 72 interviews 30 are in English; to make interviews I used help of assistance staff of our unit under the administration of the Institute of International and Social Studies – Kristin Kuutma, Piret Viljamaa and Erle Rikmann as well as investigators of the ESF grant 1142 MA Liivi Soova, MA Indrek Tart and PhD Enn Siimer). In 2005 an interview with Heino was added;
2. from 2000 to 2005 I worked with the Swedish Academy of Antiquity and Letters as part of the academic exchange and interviewed foreign Estonians, mostly living in Stockholm, recording altogether 34 interviews (in Estonian);

3. in 2000-2005 on my initiative there were biographical recordings of 41 individuals who live in Estonia but speak Russian at home. Only one of them is done by myself, 33 are recorded by the persons thanked in preface and 7 by the students of Tallinn Pedagogical University who participated my seminars in 2000-2001 and 2004.

Most of the recorded interviews are roughly three hours in length. There are some extreme examples, like a twelve-hour interview with an aged historian of literature from Tallinn and a quick hour-and-a-half interview with a historian in Stockholm.

In finding respondents for all of the three cases I have tried to use similar criteria. Firstly, the age limit has been important. As a rule, interviewees over fifty years of age and thus possessing a long and rich life experience have been preferred. In the case of the Swedish interviews I also wished to observe the generational aspect of the preservation of Estonian-ness, although I met with only moderate success. Often the reason was due to the fact that the Estonian language frequently started to disappear in the second generation of these boat refugees, not to mention the third. Therefore I did not manage to obtain a generational record of the nation-based connections between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, since by 2000s the Estonian language skills of those born in Sweden were rather modest.

The other data collection specialty was that I never tried to find respondents proportionally from all social strata. On the contrary, I have preferred those with a strong motive for self-realization and who have within their cultural sphere reached the public acknowledgement as an artist, scientist or the other leaders of cultural life. For the interviews conducted in Estonia we chose our respondents according to the snowball method, i.e. at the end of each interview we asked the interviewee to name 2-3 people whom we might see for another similar interview, and then contacted one of them. During the fieldwork in Sweden I followed the same principle. But I could not do that for the Russians in Estonia, since I encountered resistance to that idea right from the start. Despite my command of Russian I do not have enough access to non-Estonians living here for getting such an intimate thing as a biography and was forced to use other interviewers.

I had already encountered a certain barrier of mistrust in Sweden, where the previously sharply anti-Communist people remained out of reach to some extent. The obstacle in this instance was my homeland Estonian origin, which was even after ten years of re-independence connected with some hazy concept of working “for the authorities”. With the Estonian Russians such “danger of espionage” appeared much more distinctly and caused the principles of choosing the sample to change also. For obtaining the interviews I used people with Russian as their language

spoken at home, though they were not necessarily ethnically Russian (they could be Jewish, Azeri or Armenian). There have been a total of nine interviewers, and the number of respondents per person has varied from one to ten. Every interviewer spoke with people with whom they had a trusting relationship, and even in the case of good acquaintanceships the interviews were often refused.

Table 1. Number of respondents by generation and gender

| Generations Communities | Born between 1918-1939 | Born between 1940-1960 | N |
|--|--|--|-----|
| Living through the Soviet period, Estonians (interviewed 1996-98 & 2005) | Republican Generation 31 males + 14 females | Generation of Soviet Liberation ("Thaw") 18 males + 9 females | 73 |
| Boat refugees to Sweden in 1944 (interviewed 2001-2004) | Republican Generation becoming First Generation in Exile 12 males + 11 females | Second Generation in Exile 6 males + 5 females | 34 |
| Russians living in the Republic of Estonia (interviewed 2002-2005) | Generation of Victory of WWII 6 males + 1 female 2 born in Estonia 5 born in Russia | Generation of Soviet Colonists 15 males + 19 females 12 born in Estonia 27 born in Russia 2 born in East Germany | 41 |
| | | | 148 |

Some of the Russian interviews were gathered in 2001-2003 in the course of writing biography-oriented pro-seminar theses with the history (5) and sociology (2) students of Tallinn University. The students were tasked with recording a three-hour biography with a person they knew well, and they also had to transcribe the material later on. We familiarized ourselves with the basics of the biographical method, where after everyone had to write an interpretation of the interview based on the historical context. An example of the students' work, the transcript of Vera's biography is presented in this book. A collection of pro-seminar works includes the life stories of communal Russians (11), which together with the other sub-sample of ex-military personnel remaining in Estonia and their children (10) make the Russian database different from the others. One

interviewer, Aida, has been inspired to transform her work into an article as a very interesting inside look at the life in closed Russian garrisons (Hachaturyan-Kisilenko, 2003).

Additionally I have conducted a series of focus-group interviews in order to fix the mental changes in post-Socialist society, the latter primarily for preserving the profound changes in attitude taking place in folk culture. The heightened interest in this area of culture is due to the fact that in the Soviet period, preserving folk traditions functioned essentially as a form of national resistance. The development of folk dancing, handicraft and choir singing in order to uphold the “Estonian cause” is a leitmotif that is reflected in many of the biographies, both from homeland and foreign Estonians.

Some of the interviews have been stored in the Estonian Cultural History Archive of the Estonian Literary Museum, yet others in the Department of Modern Languages of Uppsala University. The goal for all three subgroups has been to attain a complete life story, including memories of their parental home, school years, working careers, family life and raising children, possible participation in voluntary associations and political organisations, but also the reactions to the sharp changes of 1940-1945 and 1988-1991, and the in-between Czechoslovakian and Hungarian events. In the case of homeland Estonians a major topic has been the encounters with Soviet terror: imprisonments, deportations, interrogations by the security organisations etc. Since the interviews have been made in 1995-1998, many of the interviews included a discussion of the motives for Komsomol and Party membership, an object of intense public discussion in the Estonian society at that time. I have personally interviewed 22 former members of the CPSU, including 6 leading figures of the group of Estonian-inclined Communists (COMMUNISTS), and two leading functionaries of Estonian Komsomol.

The interviews conducted in Sweden were primarily a dialogue between Estonians who had been destined to live on different shores of the Baltic Sea and at different sides of the Iron Curtain. The major topic of biographical storytelling was the survival of Estonian-ness and possibilities for its development both homeland and abroad, the Swedish Estonians’ civil initiatives and brief visits to Soviet Estonia, but also the arrangement of everyday life and the rites of passage. The respondents included 3 persons who had been politically active in the Swedish society, 2 chairmen of exile organisations, 5 medical doctors, three university lecturers, one composer, four high-level managers etc.

The interviews with the Estonian Russians proved to be the least organised, because statements on the Socialist past and the political system of the Republic of Estonia frequently interrupted the telling of the facts of one’s life. Another characteristic of the Russian interviews is the presence of long

nostalgic interludes and self-analyses. This is rather natural, because almost half of the interviewees were members of the intellectual community.

Three of the articles presented in this work are written collaboratively. In the article with Hank Johnston (GENERATIONS), I must credit him with the idea of creating the micro-cohort to observe the intergenerational continuity. My part was to extract and outline such micro-cohorts from a rich and to a foreigner somewhat unclear material (interviews conducted in broken English and including many keywords only I could recognize), and therefore bringing out the different ways of preserving Estonian-ness during the Soviet regime. In the article co-written with Irina Belobrovtseva (DIALOGUE), she wrote the parts concerning the cultural dialogue from the perspective of Russian theoreticians, but also the overview of the positions of contemporary Russian mass media concerning the situation of the Baltic Russians living in the “near abroad”. My part in that article was the analysis of leitmotifs based on the interviews, reflecting the adaptation difficulties of the Russian population in present-day Estonia. In the article written with Anu Kannike (SINGING), the main starting points were the materials concerning the focus-group interviews I conducted, supplemented by Anu with Internet-based material and extracts from mass media concerning the positions on the possible changes of direction in the folk culture. I proposed the Robert Merton scheme of four strategies of coping with cultural trauma and she added the exit and voice division from Albert Hirschmann. By crossing these two principles we could outline 9 different strategic approaches for adapting with the shattering of the ideals of the singing nationalism that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

I.2.2. Theoretical objectives

The distinct peculiarity of the biographical method is that the interpretation of the empirical material (i.e. life stories) is multilevel and depends on how the researcher can constantly discover new features while exploring the material, and apply diverse theoretical conceptions. I have also started with different problems at varying times in my work with life stories, and consequently based every single article on a certain theoretical framework. At times I have been more interested in intergenerational transmission, at other times my attention has been focused on public-private relations and social mobilization, and I have also devoted significant time and effort to studying the mechanisms of cultural transmission. According to the goals of the articles I have also grouped together and singled out parts of the empirical material.

While assembling the eight articles into a complete book, I have thought it to be important to create a new conjoint theoretical framework. In tying the articles together with the common title “Cultural Trauma and Life Stories”, I have brought to the fore the question of how these two phenomena relate to each other. Essentially, this is the classic problem of the relations between social reality and individual agency, in the current context more specifically the issue of how radical social change affects concrete human lives. The separate articles do not fully develop my complete vision of cultural trauma (CT), and there is no detailed discussion of the ability of biographical research to reflect the individual and collective articulation of cultural trauma. Providing the empirical material with a new and more general theoretical interpretation is a naturally inductive process, which can be undertaken only after acquiring sufficient research experience in the field of biographical research. The main goal of this concluding study is to mark the boundaries of the CT discourse, because it is in the latter that I can begin to see a unifying structure for both the social and the individual. This time the life stories have been grouped in a way that makes it possible to compare the three CT-touched discourses.

Since both the life story and any cultural trauma discourse express the discreteness and continuity of being a social subject, I have been interested in the **macro-level** theoretical interpretation of the temporal dimension of society. I have sought aid from studies concerning **human time**, such as social and individual memory, historical and collective consciousness, the development of the rituals for ordering collective life etc. My position is that human time is a social construction, taking into account both the natural life span of the *homo sapiens* and the peculiarities of cultural formation. I have deemed it necessary to separate several modes of appearance of human time (cultural, political, generational, etc.) and I have tried to apply thus principles to my empirical sample. I claim that the nature of human time is paradoxical. This appears in the cognitive ability and desire of *homo sapiens* to establish control over the temporality of its being, yet this desire collides with the barrier of randomness and perishability of human life. I was interested in how this mechanism of the social actor’s activity based on the dialectics of continuity and discreteness works in the case of such a sharp and radical social change, culminating in the dissonance between old and new value worlds. Through the concrete analysis of the life stories, I have sought confirmation to the hypothesis that while an actor cannot change whatever social reality has already developed, as an active subject he or she still desires to control his or her present and therefore future. To achieve that goal even traumatic and unpleasant social events are in later periods of life reinterpreted as a usable past.

In most of the interviews I have collected, there appears the value dissonance due to quick changes in political regimes, which people have wanted to overcome by continuing to live their daily lives. The creation of new behavioural patterns and symbolic constructions to go on is only possible through a laborious social interaction, assuming the interplay of remembering and forgetting. As the basis for the analysis of the long-term process of collective management of value dissonance, I have chosen the **meso-level** theory of cultural trauma that was put to use during the change of the millennium. By widening the scope of this theory, I have viewed cultural trauma as a social practice, and also a collective discourse for creating new interpretations of the past, more suitable for the new social reality. By applying the **paradigm of cultural trauma** for the empirical material connected with Estonia, I want to set the scope of three different trauma discourses. The discourses under consideration have developed in different cultural and linguistic contexts, offering the opportunity for cross-cultural comparisons. At the meso-theory level I seek empirical confirmation for the claim that despite the contextual differences in the articulation of the cultural trauma discourses, the coping strategies are still quite similar.

The trauma discourses appearing at the level of the collective subject are in my study presented as certain numbers of told stories about lived lives. My goal has not been determining whether the respondents have given honest and adequate descriptions of their lives after political turns and cultural traumas. I assume that the subject's lived life and told life are still relevant to each other, although people constantly change the interpretations of their past lives, dependent on their age and a perpetually transforming social context. The life stories touched by cultural trauma are interesting because in these stories people offer explanations on the possibility of living in the aftermath of drastic social events. I base my **micro-level** theory on **frame analysis**, diversely applied in social sciences, and try to adapt it to the present sample. I claim that by using the principles of frame analysis one can create a special "tool kit" for interpreting post-traumatic life stories.

In the following I shall present a scheme of the relations between the theoretical and empirical levels. The arrows labelled A, B and C indicate the use of theoretical conceptions of different levels for the empirical in a way that centres in the analysis of the CT discourse. Working with the empirical material in turn enriches the theoretical level with new knowledge, the most significant of which would be: (1) at macro-level, a conception of usable past; (2) at meso-level, specification of the coping strategies; (3) at micro-level, a scheme for analysing CT-type life stories.

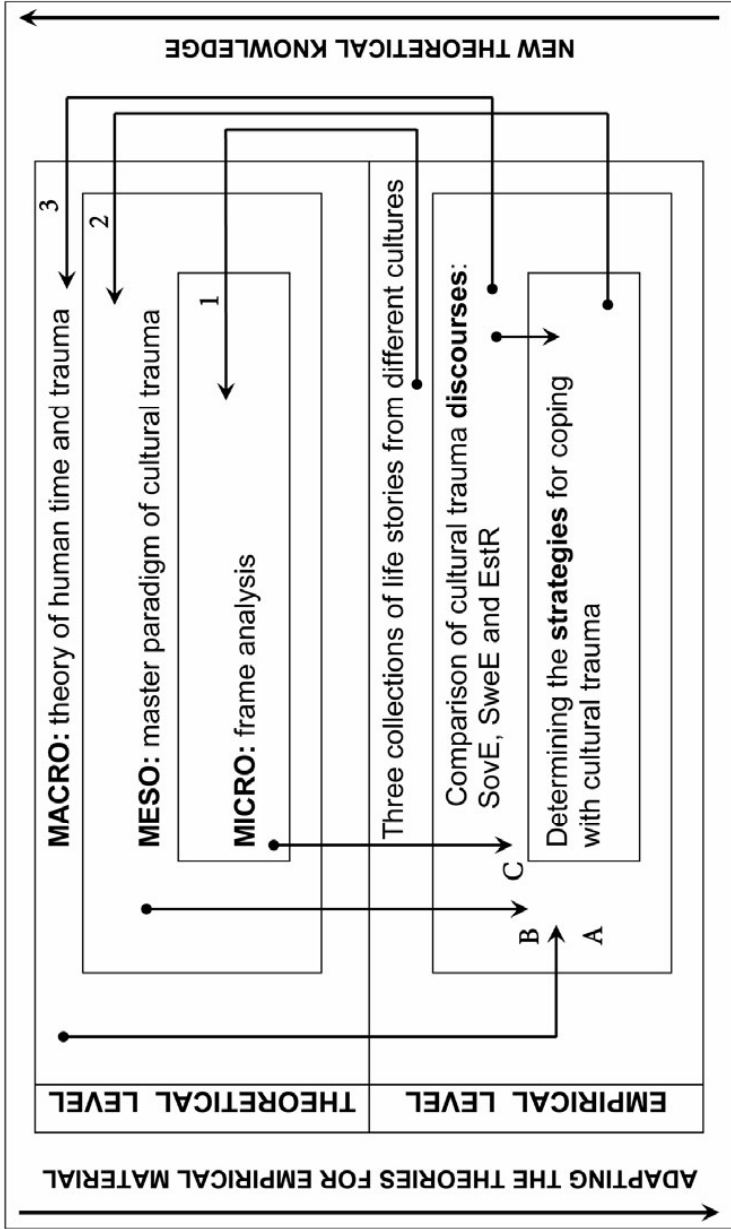


Figure 1. Connections between theoretical and empirical levels

II. Human time and life course

II.1. Human time: the compass within uncertainty

In order to understand the deeper structural relations of biographical narration and cultural trauma, it makes sense to propose the question of human time, of its modes of order and of where an individual life span lies in the time structure of the human reality (Elder, 1994:5; Kohli, 1986:272). Concurrently we try to interpret the changes that accompany the human ordering of time, both individual and collective, in relation to cultural trauma (Hardy&Waite, 2003).

Human time is a fundamental property of human reality, defined by Pertti Alasuutari as “the entire reality that we face and experience as human beings” (Alasuutari, 2004:2). Human time is a stronghold system of co-ordinates for fixing social order, which frames every individual as well as collective form of existence. “Humans differ from other species precisely in their ability to exceed the physical and mental limits of individuals” (idem, 5). The humans’ ability to successfully adapt to the environment is tied to the skills and capacities of storing gathered experiences and information in an interpersonal way. The social institutions and language (sign) systems in social experience create a specific order for transmitting everyday practices – the collective memory. Anthony Giddens assumed that “people [are] not only living in the time, but having an awareness of the passing time which is incorporated in the nature of their social institutions” (Giddens, 1981:36).

Temporality is an integral aspect of social interaction and the construction of meaning (Adam, 2004:66). “The more complex human society becomes, the greater is the importance of temporal ordering” (Sztompka,

1993:44) Human time can be measured both by biological as well as social “clocks” (Gell, 1992). The natural “clocks” would be:

1. adaptation of human organisms to diurnal, seasonal, climatic, lunar and other variations;
2. regularities inside an individual organism such as metabolic circulation, heart beating, emotional fluctuation, the cycle of sleeping and waking, menstrual rhythms, etc.;
3. growth, ageing and death for every particular human organism;
4. regularities of the functioning of the human brain, including diverse scales from information processing rates to complicated cognitive procedures.

Among the social “clocks” we should mention:

1. repetition of everyday routines for institutionalising collective life;
2. rites of passage for institutionalising the individual life course;
3. presupposed “ideal” life trajectories in certain societies;
4. regular renewing of collective experience occurring each generation;
5. clocks and calendars for tracking and controlling the quantity of continual processes of social life, etc.

The biological and social “clocks” work in a mutual dependence and integrity (Kohli, 1986:275) and their separation is necessary primarily for cognitive purposes. The application of the theory of cultural trauma to biographical narratives means undertaking a cognitive analysis in which the researcher must necessarily unite both kinds of clocks to measure the scope of radical and violent changes in real human lives.

The activity of *homo sapiens* is notable first for its variety of time-recording means and secondly for fixing time both for itself and some hypothetical observer (Fabian, 1983; Houle, 1995). Only a human being creates as a result of its activity such forms of fixing time as graves, pyramids, mausoleums, churches, temples, runic scripts, chronicles, biographies of saints and great men, museums, libraries etc. Obviously only human time progresses on a past-present-future axis, the human tries to pre-order what is going to happen by recording the regularities that have already taken place, or tries to face the unknown and uncertain through the known and certain. Despite the human desire to see both life course and history from an observer’s position and control them by any means available, the temporality of human reality is still hard to perceive, mostly due to the inevitable finality of every instance of human life. Although a person wants to order and measure its time of individual and collective existence as precisely as it can be done, it is not always (even in most cases)

possible. Time and again such contingencies happen that are impossible to interpret for the current social or individual experience and memory, where order may become disturbed by the “clots” of disorder that in turn clog the desired visions of the arriving future. Cultural trauma as a collapse of the previous routinisation and value constellations is one of the biggest “clots” erasing the clear time structure in a particular social community.

The organisation of human time is characterised by such all-penetrating parameters as continuity and discreteness (discontinuity). Continuity could be taken as the recognition of the permanent alteration of generations, as the perpetual circle of seasons to arrange working activities, or as the belief in the progressive evolution of humankind, etc. Discreteness may be revealed as a rapid change in the political regime (revolution, coup d'état), as a huge technological innovation that changes the everyday routine (the steam engine, electricity, the Internet, etc.), as an invention of unfamiliar traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983; Calhoun, 1991), etc. From one side everyday life is framed by certain continual repetitions such as routines, rituals, the regular renewing of the social body, etc. From the other side social currents (a notion due to Durkheim – cit. Layton, 1997:20) meet the discrete events like the pairs of birth and death, of flourishing and decay, etc. The dialectic of continuity and discreteness of the temporal fabric of human reality has plenty of reifications both in the biological and social processes. Time as an orchestrating principle of bio-social life of *homo sapiens* has a complicated structure of modes like religious, historical, calendrical, economical, etc. times. Below I outline only some of these modes that are necessary for the current work, which concerns the relations between lived and told individual lives in the context of cultural trauma.

II.2. Modes of human time

For theorising human time it is possible to evoke very many distinct levels, aspects and reckoning systems, which all are relevant to each other. The differentiation of distinct modes of human time is merely a result of abstraction; in reality they are tightly intertwined, partially overlapping, generate each other etc. The presentation of the different modes of human time could metaphorically be taken as the turning of a kaleidoscope: the finite amount of structurally related parts can be turned to present new variations within certain invariance.

II.2.1. Cultural time

places the emphasis on the continuity of human time and sets its goal to arresting and controlling the duration of time (Adam, 2004; Gell, 1992; Fabian, 1983; Zerubavel, 2003). Humans live inside their *Umwelt* (term coined by Jakob von Uexküll, see - Sebeok, 1989:194), i.e. specific mental environment as semiosphere (term coined by Yuri Lotman, 1992b), and try to reduce uncertainty by creating order, which has both spatial and temporal dimensions. Although the conscious production of order is specific for a species, its actual realisation is still confined to the life experiences of a locally and historically determined population (a clan, an ethnos, a nation), which we can treat as culture. Alasuutari noted that “a culture is a home, an order people try to maintain in the anarchy and disorder of human reality” (Alasuutari, 15).

Cultural time is closely connected with the collective memory and community identity. It is through the repeated-ness, sequentation, rhythmicity, etc. within any particular collective experience that the process of patterning takes place, diminishing the role of uncertainty inside this social reality. The source of a sense of security, trust and identity in community is based on the institutionalisation and maintenance of certain value-normative constellations in the collective memory and the stereotyping of everyday behaviour according to these. “Human values are seen to join the perennial attempts of our species to oppose the passage of time” (Russell, 2005:122). Culture creates such existential value-normative frameworks for a concrete human population that are capable of actively specifying future tendencies by revisiting and utilising the past experiences. Cultural time could be interpreted as a consensus between the living generations and the generations of the dead (Misztal, 2003:95).

Thus, culture is a self-regulating system that tries to face transience and chaos by increasing order and lessening the unfamiliar influences from outside. It may be conjectured that cultural time is unfolding in its continuous and discrete axes in a complementary manner. On one hand, in every culture there is the desire to routinise and ritualise activity, which could be viewed as the creation of *habitus*. On the other hand, every culture tries to deal with the perpetual waves of uncertainty (invasions of other cultures, abrupt changes in the environment, etc.) pertaining to its semiosphere as a realm of active meanings. Cultural time in its discontinuous axes accepts mutual changes, but still tries to create material and intellectual means for adapting the society to the inevitable variability and divergences from the assumed invariance. Against modestly progressing changes cultures have usually worked out adaptive mechanisms like stockpiling food and other vital supplies, rituals for softening the socio-psychological impact of poor climatic and seasonal circumstances (long

periods of rain, droughts and cold, etc.), defence mechanisms for managing an “alien” invasion etc. But against large-scale, violent, irreversible and rapid change culture must create unknown from previous experiences the new complex of coping with strategies (Vago, 1980:352). Thousands of individual lives make up the social laboratory where these strategies are tested and implemented. The most effective of them reverberate as common coping with practices in told stories.

II.2.2. Political time

expresses mostly the discrete dimension of the human temporal fabric. The demiurges of political time are the power-holders who as a rule try to stress the speciality of their reign and define the boundaries between eras and the destiny of history. Political time appears as the continuing rule of dynasties, empires, nation states and particular rulers. In this mode the “discontinuity between the past and the present” (Misztal, 2003:38) is stressed, because the change in political regime is accompanied with a desire to rewrite history and only take the “usable past” (idem, 56) from the previous social experience. The mode of political time clearly demonstrates the dialectics of memorisation and forgetting: these parts of the collective past that are unsuitable for the current power-holders must be eliminated, the suitable parts glorified (Shotter, 2003). The new period of power is usually connected with promises of a bright future (Communism, Democracy, National Socialism, welfare society, etc.) and an end to the false past (bourgeois inheritance, mistaken faith in the arrival of Communism, etc.). In order to detach from “the false past”, a new legal system is introduced, moral or physical (ethnic, property, ideological) terror is used, and a new set of institutions is built up. A very common practice during the last centuries in countries with advanced public educational systems has been the re-writing of official history textbooks. Most political U-turns are followed by the demolition of the memorials of the old regime and the establishment of new objects of commemoration like the monuments to war heroes, certain power-holders, victims of persecution, etc. (Edkins, 2003; Jordan, 2005). The aftermath of WWII and the shock following the collapse of Socialism are both typical cases of the realisation of political time in Estonia.

II.2.3. Generational time

is a many-featured scientific problem, which is dealt with in demography, history, cultural studies, anthropology, political science, sociology, etc. (Attias-Donfut, 1988; Bertaux, 1995; Corsten, 1999; Gullestad, 1996; Hollway&Jefferson(1999); Kertzner, 1983; Mannheim, 2003; Roos, 1985;

Scott&Schuman, 1989; etc.). Generational time demonstrates the connection between biological and social determination of *homo sapiens* in an especially prominent way. Generational time could be interpreted to be continuous as much as life itself in its permanence, reflecting both biological and social self-reproduction chains. At the same time the historical change of generations is not reducible “to the biological law of the limited life-span of man and the overlap of new and old generations” (Mannheim, 2003:24). Generational time is also discrete as it occupies a very concrete historical niche and every following generation passes through its circle of life in a more or less different manner than its predecessors. Each generation can choose not only “to accept but also to reject their transgenerational inheritance” (Thompson, 1993:15), thus expressing the changeability, plasticity and flexibility of a human being. Bryan Turner defines a generation “as an age cohort that comes to have social significance by virtue of constituting itself as cultural identity (Turner, 2002:15-16). So the latter is biologically determined as a cohort’s (an age-homogeneous group) life cycle, but at the same time it is the basis for building up a specific organisation of mental differentiation and stratification order within a particular “social and intellectual current” (Mannheim, 46). While going through a genetically given life cycle, every generation has some freedom of choosing between past meanings to interpret the present for themselves. Generational time as a specific *habitus* gains meaning as a “cluster of opportunities or life chances” (Edmunds &Turner, 2002:5) within predetermined inevitable historical conditions, which the given cohort can freely transform to a degree.

The given mode of time clearly illuminates a fundamental property of human time – multilinearity. The timescape of every society is filled with the complex of generational *habitus* (as durably installed generative principles) and develops according to several different age groups going through their life cycles at the same time, but with a distinct age shift. On one hand, within every cohort there is a continuous and age-dependent social acknowledgement of the past-present-future axis, i.e. how a group becomes conscious of its location in the historical process – (see Freire, 1988). For example, what happens to the participants of a youthful protest movement when they reach middle or old age (Marshall, 1998:252). On the other hand, the inter-generational interpretation of the past-present-future axis is permanently changing together with identity, correcting certain cohorts (e.g. a father-son relationship and attitudes towards the political, economical, etc. events in their shared lifetime is different for age ratios e.g. 45:20 or 70:45). That kind of multidimensional disposition of the cohorts’ interpretations of social reality and its past is the main motivating force of social change as “every age-group creates

new collective impulses and formative principles original to itself and adequate to its particular situations” (Mannheim, 51).

Karl Mannheim has presented the idea that the basis of the generational consciousness is their relation to the political or other historical events important for the development of the society that take place in their formative years. Different authors have interpreted that idea from different angles, analysing the children of the Great Depression (Elder, 1974), the Hitlerjugend generation (Sieder, 1993), WWII survivors in Germany (Giesen, 2000b, Mayer, 1988), the baby-boomers (Hoikkala et al, 2002; Wattenberg, 1986), the sixties’ generation (Marwick, 1998; Wyatt, 1993), grouping up of two generations on the different sides of Berlin Wall (Borneman, 1995), etc.

Outlined in the current work there are two articles tied to generational time: 1) in collaboration with Hank Johnston I have examined the post-WWII conception of two types of Estonian-ness and its transmission through several micro-cohorts (GENERATIONS); 2) the development of the Soviet-period strategic generation (a term coined by Bryan Turner, 2002:14), the so-called Estonian-inclined Communists (COMMUNISTS).

In the following I shall present a scheme of how I have treated the relations between generational time and time connected to political events (P.T.). How the generations are born and grow up in conditions that do not prepare them to live in sharply changed political and social circumstances can be seen in the corresponding Figure 2. People belonging to the same birth cohort acquire different life ideologies through adapting to different social contexts, although their initial habitual disposition still follows them throughout their lives. In placing the Estonian-related generations on the axis of historical time (H.T.) I simultaneously introduced as an explanatory parallel the development sequence of Finnish generations, as mapped out by J. P. Roos (Roos, 1985). For Soviet Russia, I used the distribution of generations due to Daniel Bertaux, which is unfortunately fragmentary and in mid-scheme passed from determining birth time to determining the beginning of activity (Bertaux, 2004). It is still a good scheme for showing the habitual backgrounds of the Russian generations that arrived in Estonia. For determining the circumstances of the generational consciousness of the Estonian generations that fled to Sweden in 1944 I constructed the periods of the history of their new homeland, which is significantly different from that of annexed Estonia. In doing so I made use of the works of Marianne Gullestad (1996) and Michelle Micheletti (1995). At the same time I want to emphasise the difference between the country that accepted the boat-refugees and the other countries under consideration: the last battles to take place there happened during the Great War that ended in 1721, i.e. the Swedes had no war-experience in 1944.

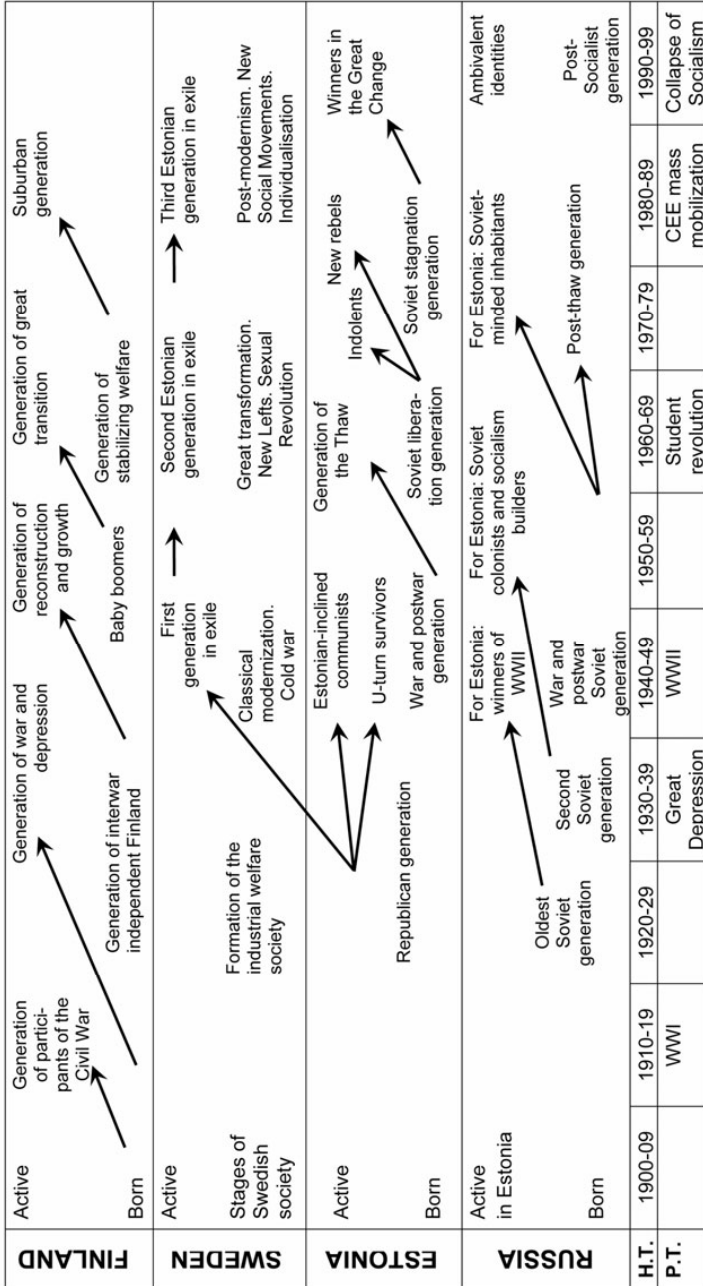


Figure 2. Comparison of generational time (in Russia, Estonia and Finland) in relation to historical and political time, 1900-1999

II.3. Individual life course and life story

An individual life course is the most real reification of the order of time in human reality: according to Jean-Paul Sartre it could be interpreted as a *universal singular* (Denzin, 1989:9). In this human time and an individual life course have the same relation as the Saussurean notions of language and parole, i.e. language as a general system of rules vs. parole as a language in use, which is individualised, contingent, and therefore intangible. (Marshall, 1998:165)

The individual life course has a very clear biological point of departure – the time of birth. This is an act of establishment when uncertainty becomes some kind of certainty. Every particular human individual is genetically programmed to go through determined states of growth and ageing, which will culminate in inevitable death. This sequentation could be understood as the main continual axis of an individual life span.

Human life course could be interpreted as a succession of given social roles connected with age grades (e.g. child, bride, mother, grandmother, etc.). Melissa Hardy assumes that “the life course represents the dynamic counterpart to the set of roles/positions that people occupy at any point of time” (Hardy&Waite, 2003:8). Going from the role or status determined by age-grade to the next one is socially institutionalised in traditional/legal rites of passage (a social order first dealt with by Arnold van Gennep in 1909). The latter could vary from one culture to another on a very large scale and may have a more or less conservative character (Grimes, 2000; Eriksen, 1995:121-128). The invention of recently founded rites could take place in the conditions of a rapid social change like cultural trauma. The examples of this in my fieldwork would be: a) the introduction of the secular Komsomol confirmation done by Estonian Komsomol leaders in the 1950s; b) the rite of golden confirmation in the Estonian Lutheran church in the last five years, intended to re-recruit the elder members of the congregations who were lost during the Soviet period.

The current work includes an article that offers a comparative treatment of the rites of passage and their changes in Soviet Estonia and among the Estonian exiles in Sweden in the era of the Iron Curtain (ADAPTATION). Life course is a phenomenon that a human wants to control in some way all the time, yet never actually manages to do so – the human life is still a “combination of accidents” (Roos, 2003:31) where randomness plays an important role. For every unique individual life course in its particular historical situation there are kinship, economic, educational and other social institutions that are designed to shape and lead it in the advisable direction. Routinisation, ritualisation, but also planning, fore-

casting, etc. are human means to lessen the randomness and foresee the life paths, but forging the future is not a definite thing. A human life is an unfinished project and uncertainty is an inevitable parameter of every life course. In order to diminish this existential uncertainty and anxiety, “a person attempts to organise those project around his or her identity or personal biography” (Denzin, 29). By constructing and narrating his/her life story a particular person changes his/her life course into 1) a socially acceptable discourse and 2) lessens the weight of all the randomness and uncertainty that took place, by interpreting his/her life so far as an ordered process with a definite goal.

The constitutive principle of the human experience of time is memory, which provides the link between past and present and thus tries to guarantee the continuity of the life course and self-identity. A body as an important host to long-term memories, such as pain, illnesses, disability, or physical pleasure, sexual experiences, distinctive tastes, is a true component of every self-identity. The next level is that of personal habitual memory (Misztal, 2003:10), which refers to the capacity of the self to reproduce certain roles and statuses, and which is an essential ingredient in a successful and convincing performance of particular cultural codes and social rules. The third level is auto/biographical memory, which could be a mirror of “how the cognition and interpretation framework of collective memory influence the individual’s sense of reality and activity” (Kőressaar, 2004:21). According to Prager the personal “memories are not solely the product of an individual mind, but are also the result of an individual’s relation both to self and to the outside world” (Misztal, 78). Auto-biographical memories are not necessarily accurate, but they are authentic, referential (Kohli, 1981:67), mostly congruent with one’s personal experience and knowledge, the main themes in life, and the sense of self-identity. Biography covers the time span from birth to present and “includes the important events, experiences, and feeling of a lifetime” (Atkinson, 1998:8). Biography as an interpretation of the individual duration of time is framed by all the other modes of human time – religious, cultural, political, economic, generational, etc. – in their concrete historical forms.

At the end of the 19th century, the French social scientist Henri Bergson, in the spirit of the relativist atmosphere, presented his conception of human time, saying it could be looked at from two angles: the inner and the outer one. *Durée* as our intuitive, subjective insight into inner duration, is constituted as a continuous emergence of the self. *Temps* belongs to the practical, material world; it is objective, reversible, quantitative and divisible into spatial units, measured by the mechanical clock, used for everyday purposes (Bergson, 1886/1998). For life story analysis this opposition of inner and outer is relevant and fruitful, because a human being

telling his/her life story differentiates between the continuity of the personal Self (self-myth) and on the other side the perpetual contrasting of this Self against outer events. Nearly a century later the English sociologist Anthony Giddens has interpreted this inner time as an introspective experience, directed towards a continuous reflecting of the living situation and the development of the self, as an internal referential process. Yet the goal of this continuous self-reflective inner time is to make “active attempts to re-embed the lifespan within local milieu” (Giddens, 1991:147).

The problem of the dialectic of inner and outer times of the self is very important for the researchers who must make sense of how the private and intimate particular life course is presented in a generally accepted public narration of personal life story. The telling of a life story takes place at a particular point of external time. At the same time it realises as a representation of the whole past life course, as a compressed and controlled unfolding of inner time, of one’s own life span against the backdrop of ever-shifting outer social events. There really is only the present of the narration, but this present is permanently implied by the past and implies the future of the storyteller. During biographical narrating the past as individually lived life is continuously recreated and reformulated into different pasts from the point of view of the emergent present, which in its turn is framed by the social agreement of a right and usable past. When telling a life story a person continuously ties together the personal past and the pasts of others. In other words, by speaking about his/her self, he/she articulates the time in an ambivalent manner, trying to remember the self most adequately and still keep in mind the possibilities of how others would have told his/her past as seen through their eyes. And when memories don’t fit people’s needs, then storytellers remember what they want to (Ross&Buehler, 2004:31-33).

Pierre Bourdieu compares a life to a subway line “where the stops have no meanings by themselves, only as parts of a larger structure”. By developing the logic of this metaphor, one could say that during an individual life course the individuality seeks the names of the stops on the way and the meaning of the structures behind these names. It could be viewed as embracing the outer time, as a personal recognition of the ways of reckoning time that were created and recorded in the social memory before this concrete journey of life began. A person seeks his/her place in the succession of generations, trying to make the spirit of the time (*Zeitgeist*) understandable, to take a position towards the current political or economic order etc. In the course of this embracing process “the self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future” (Giddens, idem, 75), which could be viewed as the construction of inner time. “The trajectory of the self has a coherence that derives from a cognitive

awareness of the various phases of the life span” (Giddens, idem). An auto/biography is a form of self-presentation as well as self-identification, where one attempts to correlate the sequence of personally lived experiences with something in the “objective truth” of social reality. According to Bourdieu’s this dialectic of inner and outer time “leads to constructing the notion of trajectory as a series of successively occupied positions by the same agent in a space which itself is constantly evolving and which is subject to incessant transformations.” (Bourdieu, 2000:302)

In the contemporary postmodernist literature, there is a lot of talk about the possibilities of incessantly reforming the self-identity and accordingly reinterpreting the personal pasts and thus acquiring different paths into one’s present. I counter this by saying that the human life is biologically too short; the existential uncertainty is too powerful to permanently reconstruct one’s life trajectory as a socially constructed supporting tissue. As the preparative period for independent social self-realisation takes at least a quarter of the life course and is strongly dependent on biological growth factors and the home in its cultural context, educational institutions, everyday routine, etc., the possibilities of multiple fundamental re-workings of self-identity are very questionable. But based on the inner time, a person definitely can – at least in a moderate scope – substantially change the self-interpretation after the intense turns or epiphanies (Denzin, 1989:70) in the life course. This is known as the individual or collective trauma’s course from the self’s point of view through “outer” time (*temps* in Bergson’s sense).

An individual life course is stored in the memory as a sequence of experiences and events that have actually taken place, and recalled when necessary. The memory itself is a genetically determined cognitive capacity of *homo sapiens* which has two alternate modes: “memory that stores chronologically sequenced events, or episodic memory, and memory based on reorganisation of information according to meaning and context, or semantic memory.” (O’Sullivan et al, 1994:178; Tulving, 1972). Every lived life can be recalled and fixed as a life story, as “the recurrent awareness of past events” (Roberts, 2004:173). Yet the lived, chronological life and the remembered life can not be the same in duration and structure. The biographical narrative as a recalling of lived life is primarily realised on the level of semantic memory and is selective in character.

The told life is like a time within time: one tries to create a semantically compressed imaginary version of the time actually lived through. It is a model of the lived life, which still cannot reflect the latter’s variety and flow of uncertainty. Every told life story is a self-edited version of the lived life in its randomness, interlaced with goals. “The told story is the way that the person presents him or herself ... by selecting certain events in

their life (and omitting others) and by handling them in a certain way (and not in another)” (Wengraf, 2000:145). Every told life tries to represent a lived life in a certain form, to smooth the inevitability of living in a particular society of one’s birth, together with companions chosen by fate, into a consciously shaped life trajectory. But as a told life can only appear in the framework of the subject’s actual lived life, then within the time of the life story “we fashion a sense of self which is never closed, but always open to another telling” (Russell, 2005:15).

After the sharp turns in a given life current it is to be expected that the self-identity presented in the biographical narrative undergoes some re-editing. At the same time an individual wants to treat oneself as a determinate subject of the past-present-future continuum and a designer of his/her life trajectory, thus being unable to give a lot of contradictory or extremely different accounts. A lived life is like a reservoir for a told life, from where one can repeatedly draw new memories to adapt them to the needs of the next self-clarification in a permanently changing social reality. The age of fifteen or the stormy beginnings of self-acknowledgement is remembered in different versions at 35, 50 or 75 years of age, although the main events remain unchanged. The packing of a personal lived life into a biographical narrative or a presentation meant for someone else (a researcher, a grandchild, a psychoanalyst, a companion of fate or on the road, an imaginary audience in case of an autobiographical book, etc.) is a dialectic process. From one side the socio-cultural framework at the time of the telling substantially influences how one wants to see and make others understand the past. But this also works the other way around: the reworking of the past within a narrative analysis that involves the effects of new insights into the past experience. “A differently understood past has its effects on current understanding, current affective life, hopes, fears and plans for the future” (Kafka, 2004:80). In other words, through creating a model of the lived life by telling it can affect the framing of the life period that is yet to come. Such an effect of double reflection appears with special clarity in such situations where the teller happens to be in a discourse of cultural trauma. Then the told life is not only a way to reflect the past, but an act of self-purification through which a person wishes to find new ways for living one’s further life.

II.4. Human time throughout the trauma prism

The ordering and regulating of life affairs through a system of parameters that can be expressed as time is human in origin, and the same holds for

trauma: acknowledging, interpreting and finding ways to cope with it. One may view trauma as a sharp negative change in the material, functional or symbolic parts of a human organism or a collective body, appearing as a destructive, limiting, violently restructuring event that the system tries to manage within a certain time-expressing unit of measure.

The American Psychiatric Association defines “a traumatic event as a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience.... would be markedly distressing to almost anyone, and is usually experienced with intense fear, terror, helplessness; ...a serious threat to one’s life or physical integrity; sudden destruction of one’s home or community...” (Ursano et al, 1994:6). Therefore traumatic events are highly intensive, unexpected and infrequent; they commonly misbalance the human system, increase the feeling of vulnerability and uncertainty, and with them continuity is overcome by discreteness. Trauma is a state that must be followed by either collapse or recovery. A traumatic event cannot last long, yet recovering from its effects can be long and chronic, i.e. a process that goes through certain phases repeatedly. Trauma induces the rupture in the expectation of safety and confidence, and in doing so creates significant digressions that often impede subsequent activity.

Where human time is concerned, the deviations caused by trauma occur most often in the realm of acknowledging the past-present-future continuum, or memory. In case of trauma the passage of time seems to split in two: from one side human existence – both individual and collective – goes on with the same irreversibility (lives un-destroyed by trauma live on). At the same time memory – the mechanism that acknowledges and co-ordinates human existence, therefore expressing temporality – transforms its operation. One period from the past begins to influence the present and the plans for the future more than other similar episodes, although its duration may be quite short compared to the whole span of life. After a sudden experience of the fear of death or helplessness people feel that they are somehow different than before: fate has left a special mark on them. “A frequently overlooked aspect of trauma is the stigmatisation of victims” (Ursano et al, 405). Overcoming a trauma takes time, which is one of the most limited resources from the point of view of human life – one cannot recover time, the time for living is finite. A traumatic event, more so the time of recovery stays permanently both in the individual and collective life course, recalling it becomes a very sensitive part of the biographical or cultural narrative. A traumatic experience will become vividly distinctive from other, ordinary events saved in the episodic memory, transforming into an engram (term coined by Endel Tulving, 1972) of semantic memory, becoming capable of significantly redesigning individual and collective identities.

For an individual psyche, the effects of trauma on memory and identity are things that researchers have tried to describe essentially from Sigmund Freud onwards. Unfortunately the conclusion so far is that in post-traumatic situations there appears a hard to describe cognitive and behavioural disorder. Memory and the changes in individual behaviour in the phase of life following the traumatic experience have been studied with notable zeal in the last decades, ranging from psychology and psychiatry to cultural studies etc. (Bracner, 1999; Caruth, 1995; Garland, 1999; Gilmore, 2001; Etherington, 2003; Herman, 1997; Holloway&Fullerton, 1995; LaCapra, 2000; Osiel, 2000; Piers, 1999; Roberts, 2004; Summerfield, 1995; Williams&Banyard, 1999 etc.). Regrettably we cannot delve into the depths of these issues too much in the current work. Let us just conclude that as far as the connections between trauma and time are concerned, most authors find “that traumatic memories are formed in some ways that are different from normal memories” (Yapko, 1997:27). It is asserted that memories touching the traumatic events exit the subject’s direct conscious control and “instead of individuals having memories, it is as if memories have agency over individuals” (Wertsch, 2002:47).

This disorder is described as the paradox that the “recall of the actual trauma may often be impaired, whereas patients may re-experience aspects of the trauma in the form of intrusive thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks” (Krystal, 1990:6). The continuation of post-traumatic personal time is ambivalent and the balance between remembering and forgetting is more or less unorganised. In the post-traumatic memory “the first is the tendency to re-experience the anxiety of the event in certain ways; the second is the tendency to numb, withdraw and avoid” (de Silva, 1999:118). The traumatic experience that often transcends the limits of human tolerance may assume a peculiar position of the further temporal realisation of the personality. “Past traumatic reactions are transported in whole form to the present and determine behaviour relatively independently of the rest of the personality” (Piers, 1999:62). Moreover, several authors concede that trauma is such an experience that generally conforms very poorly to narration as the main tool of self-presentation. The consensus of many authors is “that trauma is beyond language in some crucial way, that language not only fails in the face of trauma, but is mocked by it and confronted with its own insufficiency” (Gilmore, 2001:132).

The impact that living through a trauma has on the life course and the development of the biographical narrative has seen relatively little study from the point of view of methodology (Rogers&Leydesdorff, 2002; Skultans, 1998; Thompson, 1981a). Recently, there have been several interesting works about imprisonment (Perttin&Western, 2004), the appearance

of disability (Roberts, 2004), sudden loss of employment (Leana& Feldman, 1992), being diagnosed with cancer (Harvey&Miller, 2000) and how other similar sharp traumatic changes in life affect biographical narration. It is clear that trauma and planning how to live afterwards are extremely complicated as research topics, because life stories try to put into words the traumatic experience that is so hard to put into words, and the problems of false memories and misinterpretation are very actual. While psychiatry and psychology do use the notions of the negative effect of a traumatic event (post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD) and compensating for that, life stories studies usually do not talk about trauma, but rather about sharp and important turning points (epiphanies) in the respondent's life. In the life stories I have gathered there are often sudden deaths of close relatives or destructive reordering of the preceding life organisation. In biographical tales these are reflected as permanent traumatic traces in both the respondent's life and the way he or she talks about it. In my sample the main traumatic events have been deportation or imprisonment carried out by the NKVD, the sudden change of political regime in an undesirable direction (Soviet occupation, collapse of the USSR), the necessity of abandoning one's home and fleeing from the enemy forces etc. Such turning points may fundamentally redesign the self-recognition of a person and the traumatic experience may become the dominant leit-motif in the presentation of the whole biographical narrative.

To clarify the preceding assertion I shall present an interpretation of an interview conducted in June 2005 with a then over his eighties former Soviet political prisoner of 1941-1957. Since I knew the respondent from earlier, before the interview I thought his post-Siberia life had been successful. Heino¹ was a medical adviser, highly acclaimed in Estonia, becoming known with his work in reanimating and counselling failed suicides. In the public his writings had been carried by goodwill and optimism. During the Singing Revolution that began in 1988 he stood out with a shrewd general analysis of the Estonians' deportations to Siberia and its long-term psychological and social consequences. Political activity inspired him to become a member of the famous citizen body. Yet in 1991 there was a sharp turn in his life, not connected with the present-day realities but precisely concerning his re-experience of the past. In 1941 Heino, a very young man then, had been sent to Siberia for organising anti-Soviet intelligence service (epiphany 1). Soon afterwards NKVD killed his mother, accusing her of fighting against Soviets. Knowledge of his mother's death did reach him in his Siberia-period, but its details

¹ The permission to use this interpretation of his life story is given by the respondent in September 2006

remained unknown for years. After Estonia regained its independence and the KGB archives were opened, Heino found documents concerning both his mothers' death and its perpetrators. It appeared that his mother had been shot on his twentieth birthday, and the man who had carried out the sentence was still alive. The knowledge of his mother's killer had always haunted Heino, and now the event from half a century ago became actual again and to a significant degree influenced his further thoughts and actions (epiphany 2). Although Heino had for years offered his charismatic help to people with crises, the reanimation of the traumatic event pushed him to think of suicide. He started to view himself as a stigmatised victim and the projection of his killed mother became a kind of mental advisor in many further actions. Heino decided to avenge his mother and acquired a handgun. He intended to first shoot the killer and then leave his own dead body lying in the same place. But the mother-projection intervened with this plan, counselling him not to use extreme plans of action. Heino, as a religious person, found a much more peaceful way to materialise his mother's memory and make it accessible for others. Giving up the opportunity for a political career in the 1990s, Heino devoted himself to capturing his mother's memory in marble. With the help of the monetary compensation for the illegal treatment of himself and his mother he had received from Russia, Heino established a foundation for creating an Altar to Mother in an ancient church in his city of birth. He started a public fund-raising campaign for the memorial statue that was to be erected not only to commemorate his mother, but all the mothers that were killed by the occupying Soviet forces. For several years the respondent has served as a guide to foreign tourists, explaining the meaning of the statue in the memory of the Estonian people. My interview with this aged man ended on a pessimistic note: although he had hoped that the creation of the altar would free him of the stigma, this never happened. Despite the fact that as a medical man and a humanist Heino had returned the will to live to hundreds of people, he considered his life a failure and sometimes thought about ending it by his own hand. But as long as his dialogue with the Saviour continues, he sees his mundane mission in the commemorative activity of victims of Soviet regime as worth living for.

Heino's case is quite similar to the well-known case of Primo Levi (Cattani, 1995). In both cases the traumatic experience of one's youth (in Siberia or Auschwitz, respectively) forms the basis of the later self-realisation: Heino becomes a victimologist and Primo proceeds as a writer-methodologist. They are both lifelong prisoners of their traumatic experiences, but are still able to channel their personal stigmas into socially positive activity. And while these deeds bestow great social recogni-

tion on both of them, their traumatic experiences from concentration camps create a suicidal element in their self-reflections.

Without jumping to far-reaching conclusions from this example, it is still notable how living through a traumatic event can substantially change the way a person constructs his or her life trajectory with respect to the inner order of time. Coping with trauma may include the intensification of the religious dimension of time in a person's mind (reconciliation with stigma as a sin), make one search for the place of one's generation in the vortex of history, or even the economical practicality of one's usage of time to live. Peter Alheit noted that a person was not the same as he/she had been before the onset of crises. Traumatic events as crises "always affect the substance of our biography because they put at risk any reconstructable or anticipated continuity of our self-plan."(Alheit, 1994:310)

When the traumatic event is at the same time a common experience of a bigger social group or even a nation, we treat the problem as cultural trauma, and corresponding collective survival strategies as coping with it. The social experience of trauma is still not an exact analogue of the personal experience and the time paradoxes described earlier (the involuntary re-experience vs. numbing) appear qualitatively different on the social level. The analysis of biographical narratives that include a traumatic event is a possibility of perceiving the *universal* through the *singular*. To put it otherwise, when asking about the further lives of the contemporaries of a social disaster and their ways of getting over their losses, we should reach some generalisations about traumas as inevitable companions of life activity and their effect on the development of the human ordering of time.

III. Understanding of cultural trauma

III.1. Making sense of the theory of cultural trauma

III.1.1. Cultural trauma as a new master paradigm

The turn of the century, and more so the millennium, is definitely an intellectually inspiring period. During that time the interpretation of the past may acquire a special panoramic quality. Lately, a number of interesting monographs have appeared, the authors of which want to theorise about these chaotic and catastrophic moments of far-reaching social consequences that have occurred in recent history. A new master paradigm has come into use, viewing collective trauma as “moments in which the normal patterns of historical continuity are strained or broken” (Roth&Salas, 2001:2), and the former identities crumble. In recent years there has been an enormous increase in the number of publications that have used the ideas of collective trauma, disaster or deep crisis in analysing the fates of several different social groups and nations (Alexander, 2002; Antze&Lambek, 1996; Bracken, 2002; Giesen, 2004b; Edkins, 2003; Hardy&Waite, 2003; Klebner et al, 1995; Kocik, 2001; Roth, 1995; Sereny, 2000; Sulganen, 1997; etc.).

In 1996, the monumental interpretation of French history by Pierre Nora was translated from French into English. The author offered a fresh perspective to the historical turning points of the French people, like the Great Revolution, the Commune of Paris, the end of WWI, etc. as well as “the grandeur of a new beginning or the solemnity of an inaugural break with the past” (Nora, 1996:18). As a consequence of revolutions and great wars, sharp and major changes appear in the collective view of the past: “from a history that we believed lay in the continuity of some sort of memory to a memory that we think of as projected onto the discontinuity

of history” (Nora, 12). The development of a theory of cultural trauma was proceeding with an examination of the states of alarm in a very broad range of social identities. Arthur Neil (Neil, 1998) presented the concept of national trauma as a theoretical challenge in analysing the great crises of the American system of values (the Great Depression, the failures in Korean and Vietnam wars, the assassinations of president J. F. Kennedy and civil rights activist M. L. King). Jeffrey Alexander (Alexander, 2002) assisted him by showing the genocide of the Jews as transforming from a military-historical fact into a reflexive discourse of Holocaust in the consciousness of the Americans.

At the same time Ron Eyerman has worked with an extensive historical panorama on how slavery is still present in the cultural traumatic story and the identity of today’s African Americans (Eyerman, 2001). Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas published a collection of articles with strong generalising capability, where they view two traumatic turns in the history of nations: the assassination of Indira Gandhi as the culmination of an internal ethnical conflict in India, and Mao Zedong’s new policy of reforming the nature in China. As we know, the latter resulted in the flooding of hundreds of Chinese villages, interrupting their religious connection with the local environment and ancestral “spirits” that is extremely important for the vitality of the people, and lead to a widespread food shortage (Roth&Salas, 2001:2). At the turn of the millennium the very dynamic and historically erudite book by Wolfgang Schivelbusch was translated from Gemany into English. It is about the dialectic mechanisms in the collective minds of nations for surviving great historical defeats. “The elation that follows the initial post-defeat depression thus signals a recovery from collective psychological breakdown, a recovery triggered by the overthrow of atrocity” (Schivelbusch, 2003:13). The paradigm of cultural trauma is also nurtured by the interpretations of the increase in global risks, expressed in a formerly unknown terminology, with notions like global warming, nuclear winter, biological terrorism, loss of biodiversity, digitalisation of surveillance and concealment, etc. (Posner, 2004). Piotr Sztompka has contributed to this row of ‘mighties’ with his deep theoretical analysis of Eastern European nations’ traumatic value collisions that happened due to post-Socialist shock (Sztompka 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004).

III.1.2.Cultural trauma as social practice

The histories of nations are in great part just memoirs of traumatic events and the ways of managing the developmental changes that grow out of

those events. Collective memory consists of stories about unpleasant time intervals and “prominently includes wars, revolutions, economic depressions, large-scale strikes and riots, and genocide – as well as the legal proceedings often arising from such upheavals” (Osiel, 2000:19). In every collective memory there is at least a twofold structuring of time. Firstly, there is the linear time of the standard processes, meant for the routine everyday regularities and expressing social continuity. Secondly, there is trauma time, where, in contrast, we have a disruption of this linearity; where something happens in an unexpected way and does not fit the script. (Edkins, 2003:xiv) In every collective memory there are several specific moments crystallised as turning points “in which a sense of rupture with the past is inextricably bound up with a sense that a rift has occurred in memory” (Nora, 1996:1). Conversely, every collective memory also includes templates for handling traumatic events.

Just like temporality is a significant mode of regulating human activity, the presence and management of extreme turning points is also a noteworthy part of human existence. “Human beings need security, order, love, and connection. If something happens that sharply undermines these needs” (Alexander, 2004:3), people feel traumatised. Collective trauma is directly connected with mistrust and creates social instability: “national trauma evokes imagery of living in a dangerous world that is unresponsive to personal needs and interest” (Neil, 1998:5). There is no culture that has not encountered a natural catastrophe or a man-made disaster. Correspondingly, throughout history humankind has experimented with different strategies for coping with cultural traumas and has saved these experiences in the memory systems of many cultures.

Here we consider culture in a very general manner, as a system of symbolic meanings shared between subjects, including values, beliefs, rules of language construction, behavioural patterns, traditions, rites and customs, etc. Culture consists of “elements which are defined and differentiated in a particular society as representing reality – the total reality of life within which human beings live and die” (Rapport&Overing, 2000:95). Thinking and behaving outside a particular cultural valuation or a *semiosphere* is said to be abnormal, deviant, dysfunctional, meaningless, etc. The kernel of culture as a system of templates for social actions is the world-view (*Weltanschauung*). The latter is a fundamental syncretic conception of the world which ramifies “into all other thoughts and feelings about the world” (Rapport&Overing, 95). A world-view as such is a “cultural construction of reality that has developed as basis for sanctioned actions to permit survival and adaptation under particular shared living conditions, geographic circumstances, and catastrophic events” (Dana, 1998:16).

Most often it is a religious world-view that guarantees the sustainability of a culture and allows for adaptation to many traumatic events. Besides individual mortality, it is exactly the collective catastrophes that provide human fantasy with an omnipotent Other, someone to rely on in an emergency. Human experience is rich in its collections of rituals, ways of blessing and ceremonies, all designed to seek help from the gods in case of human suffering, desiring to banish the “evil spirits” from the everyday life. Mostly the sources of trauma tend to be endemic: the caprices of local nature, warlike neighbour tribes or peoples, nearby communities of a different faith. Therefore the strategies and ways for coping with traumas tend to be of local character. Very often it is not the human bodies, but the world-view of a given collective that suffers in a collective trauma. Cultural trauma is not the result of a group or a nation experiencing physical pain, anxiety, helplessness, and uncertainty. “It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity” (Alexander, 2004:10).

Christianity, as something that is perhaps most understandable from a Western perspective, may be viewed as a traumatic narrative beginning with the fall of Adam and Eve, a lasting stigma for all humanity, and culminating with Judgement Day, which ends all human time. In a manner of speaking, God itself has offered a strategy for escaping the traumatic original sin, consisting of an individual’s unconditional devotion to the Saviour and boundless love towards God. Even more, the Catholic Church makes widespread use of confession as therapy for sins (Georges, 1995:11). Like most other religions, Christianity also divides people into “right” and “wrong”, promising salvation only to the most faithful of disciples. To shape and strengthen Christian identity, people have created thousands of beautiful churches, paintings, sculptures, songs of praise; perfected the conduction of the rites of passage and the celebration of religious holidays. All this is called the European cultural tradition and whether we want this or not, it still intensely frames our everyday practices and shapes our identities (Christian morality).

The paradigm of cultural trauma first of all assumes the existence of an original culture, which has clear and maintainable economical, institutional, and spiritual systems and mechanisms for storing and transmitting the experiences of the pre-aggression period. Additionally, it is supposed that the offensive culture could radically alter the identity and sustainability of the original culture. Emerging from the challenge of the unknown and alien value-constellations of the trespasser, the rapid changes within the systems of original culture could lead to cultural dissolution, but may also be the basis for unforeseen revitalisation and reorganisation. Thus, cultural trauma is a self-reflexive outlet of the carrier of the original cul-

ture, necessary for reinforcing the identity and keeping the continuity under the conditions of an outside attack. The need for utilising cultural trauma to regulate cultural space and time (memory) becomes acute during these periods when a culture's natural balanced development along both the continuous and discrete axes becomes strongly disturbed.

The continuity of a culture is ensured by widely accepted and followed norms, customs, rituals, etc., which can be collectively labelled as tradition. In this case, one can talk about uninterrupted regular progression along the linear axis of social time reckoning. Discreteness in the temporal order of culture guarantees a chance for innovation and thus leads to the admission of another cultures' (non-traditional) influence into the given cultural space. Violent value invasions; sudden, repressive application of 'alien' axiological scales that sharply oppose age-old traditions usually first touch the discrete order of time that forms the framework for the culture's search for new adaptation strategies, first and foremost trying to preserve continuity and cultural memory. Unfortunately, axiological aggression could be so extensive that the resources of the discrete order of time are exhausted and the continual order of time – the central backer of identity – becomes under attack. The interactive unbalancing of both the continual and discrete temporal progression of a culture can reflect in the collective consciousness as cultural trauma. In such a situation the people inhabiting a concrete cultural space start to speak of nothing being sacred anymore, of the most evident of traditions not being kept, of no one being able to act under the new circumstances etc. In social reality these things manifest in the new government reorganising the calendar, renaming streets and regions, replacing some monuments with others, rewriting history textbooks, altering the criteria of loyalty and prestige etc. Outside (governmental) forces may effect a widespread transformation of cultural identities so that the participants cannot (because of the danger of being repressed) or do not want to (wishing to go along with the changes as quickly as possible) discuss what is happening. Often disagreements between generations are emphasised, with old and new schools of intellectuals or politicians opposing each other.

The theoretical setup of my thesis mainly follows the approach of Piotr Sztompka (Sztompka 2000, 2001a), where cultural trauma is connected with the negative consequences of rapid social change and its collective acknowledgement. When enriching the original psychiatry-related notion of 'trauma' with social content, Sztompka stresses the social agent's ability to cope with unfavourable social changes through recognition, its reactive creation of collective coping strategies and consequent establishment of a consistent social becoming.

Beginning with Jeffrey Alexander, the Enlightenment and psychoana-

lytic interpretations are mentioned in the contemporary theoretical literature of the phenomenon of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004:3). In the first version, the social actors perceive traumatic events consciously and their reaction lies in problem solving (rational choice). For example, Arthur Neil sees cultural trauma as a certain historical event possessing cognitive value that organises and restructures collective memory together with the cognitive-communicative atmosphere that is created around it. Cultural trauma is a volcanic disruption of everyday life, he claims, that – when recognised as a negative experience – helps the society to avoid making similar mistakes in the future (Neil, 1998:9-10). A similar interpretation belongs to Ron Eyerman, who writes: “Like physical or psychic trauma, the articulating discourse surrounding cultural trauma is a process of mediation involving alternative strategies and alternative voices. It is a process that aims to reconstitute or reconfigure a collective identity through collective representation, as a way of repairing the tear in the social fabric” (Eyerman, 2001:4).

A psychoanalytic conception is represented by authors like Cathy Caruth (1995), Caroline Garland (1999), and Saul Friedlander (1992), to whom cultural trauma exists as an unconscious emotional fear, denying the collective effort to accurately attribute responsibility for the traumatising social event at the time of its happening. Cathy Caruth and other psychoanalysts declare that trauma will be resolved when memory is repaired, setting things right in our collective self-consciousness. Thus, traumatic feelings and perceptions come not only from the originating event but also from the anxiety of keeping it suppressed (Alexander, 2004:5). “The coalition of silence” (Giesen, 2004:116) created by the unfavourable conditions as a reaction to strongly repressed collective memory is one possible result. In the current work I deal with the problem of Estonian public silence about the atrocities of Stalin’s regime, occurring after the deportations to Siberia (THEORY). It could be interpreted as an example of a long-lasting anxiety in the collective unconsciousness of the Baltic nations. After the restoration of independence in the 1990s, this hidden collective remembrance was actively revealed in public acts of commemoration, and in its representation in the mass media and people’s memoirs.

III.1.3. Cultural trauma as a discourse

Cultural trauma cannot be defined only as a given historical or social event at the time of its occurrence; rather, it develops into a distinct discourse during long symbolical arguments, dialogues between different

groups of eyewitnesses, but also through statements from post-traumatic power-holders. For the members of every society "...there are periods in the life cycle in which people are most malleable and susceptible to change, and there are historical periods in which change is endemic, regardless of where people are in their individual biographies" (Alwin, 1993:165). Thus, irrelevant of one's age or social position at the time of encountering the traumatic vortex of change, everyone through their life course is a potential participant in the discourse that takes shape after the negative events, attempting to explain and interpret the past.

Discourse analysis in the sociology of culture has been more concerned with uncovering the large patterns of thought underlying the structure of whole texts (Marshall, 1962) or larger sets of meanings that determine social practices. Cultural trauma like any other discourse could be interpreted as a cognitive instrument developed to bind together the sets of temporally distributed memories, symbols, opinions, etc. while minding the ground text of the events that proved traumatic to the society. "[D]iscourse referred both to the interactive process and the end result of thought and communication. Discourse is the social process of making and reproducing sense(s)" (O'Sullivan et al, 1994:93).

Roland Barthes, in his *Mythologies* (1957), assumed that any discourse is possible only because of the set of additional structures behind the text. Those are historically produced, loosely structured as combinations of concerns, concepts, themes, and types of statement, determining the actual use of signifiers in a particular context. The other famous post-structuralist author Michel Foucault, in his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), outlined that "...cultural discourse maintained both conventional ways of knowing the world and a network of power relations among those who did the knowing. Discourse amounted to certain conditions and procedures regulating how people may communicate and what and how they may know" (Rapport&Overing, 2000:118).

The life stories that talk about cultural trauma are framed and made commensurable by a discourse with the central topic of how one type of power relation was sharply and usually violently replaced with another type. The discourse of cultural trauma is not an abstraction, it is a possible explanation of what has happened, created in the public sphere and stored in the collective memory. In this discourse, the traumatic event is understood to be an epiphany in the history of the community or nation, "which radically alter and shape the meanings which people assign to themselves and their life prospects" (Denzin, 1992:82). Although cultural trauma is essentially a collective narrative, it is only the individual "who animates discourses by the imparting to them of personal meaning; individuals personalise discourses within the context of their discrete perspec-

tives on life, using them to make and express a personal construction of the world, a possibly original language-world, a sense particular to them at a particular time” (Rapport&Overing, 2000:124).

In the case of value aggression not causing a discussion in the public sphere about its essence and the ways of adaptation, we cannot talk about cultural trauma as a discourse at all. The traumatic event itself is preserved in collective memory, but often in a hidden form in the private sphere (e.g. items related to the tragic event kept in the family, photo albums and diaries, stories passed on from parents to children, protest-oriented art displayed only in close-knit circles). It is quite common that collective traumas “require a time of latency before they can be acted out, spoken about, and worked through“ (Giesen, 2004b:116). After the interim “coalition of silence”, in some later period a well-kept compendium of personal tragic experience may become the object of a public symbolic debate, thus being a ‘building block’ for the cultural trauma discourse. Until the deep gashes inflicted upon cultural identities are not discussed, explained and the results are not given meaning to, cultural trauma does not exist as discourse. The trauma had always existed but simply went unrecognised by the society.

The post-traumatic dialectic of remembering and forgetting is, similar to the personal level, also socially connected to two processes: the dissolution and the re-routinisation. Dissolution as a coping strategy could be defined to be the temporary drastic modification of a world-view or a sense of collective identity undertaken to avoid emotional distress, in case when excessive use of dissociation impairs the memory of the traumatic event (Romans et al, 1999:292). For instance, there were many people in the early years of Soviet Estonia (1944-1953) who thought it was only natural to destroy the previous cultural heritage by deporting “bourgeois” intellectuals and eradicating printed materials. While conducting interviews with elderly Swedish Estonians in 2001-2004, it became clear that they thought that the only Estonian way of living was what they had done in Sweden for 60 years and the homeland reality was deemed to be life in an unacceptable Other Estonia. This same moment of dissociation appeared in the biographical interviews with Estonian Russians. They often asked if it is really worth recalling their arrival into annexed Estonia when more importance should be placed on discussions about guaranteeing their future. The second significant coping strategy consists of active attempts to establish new routines after a community has experienced a stressful event (Leana&Feldman, 1992:80). “In the aftermath of traumatic events, most survivors are engaged in the arduous process of constructing a more positive, less threatening view of the world and themselves than that implied by the extreme experience” (Harvey& Miller, 2000:36). An

example of re-routinisation in Soviet Estonia is the continuing tradition of song festivals from 1947, when people used to disregard the fact that the repertoire began to focus on praise songs to the party and to Socialism (SINGING). When talking about Swedish Estonians it is important to note their zeal to go on with the Estonian-inclined Boy Scouts' movement and the student fraternities in their new country of residence (CIVIL). The Russian community that stayed in Estonia has of late begun to consolidate on May 9, the anniversary of the Soviet army's victory over Fascism. Rituals like carrying old war decorations, singing soldiers' songs and recalling soldiers' memories, laying flowers to the fallen, are carried out near the WWII memorials in Tallinn and Narva. Through dissolution and re-routinisation any sovereign power tries to create the image of the uniqueness of linear time, rewriting trauma time into a linear time narrative of national heroism (Edkins, 2003:xv), all the while pretending to bring security and trust.

The discourse of cultural trauma proceeds on all levels of the different modes of human time, with the life stories splitting into narratives of health problems appearing during the changes or premature deaths of relatives (biological time), of hoping for the mercy of God (religious time), of the material chaos in everyday life or the troubles of managing one's life during deficit economy (economical time), of the attitude towards a sharply transformed world-view doctrine (political time), etc. From the point of view of an individual life course, cultural trauma is often a period in which one should rethink the previous life trajectory. Two examples from the real life story are following:

In high school I dreamed of becoming a lawyer, but after my father had been declared an enemy of the people in 1950 and consequently imprisoned, I was happy to be able to continue in the university, although I was forced to transfer to the department of philology (a female, born 1932).

In analysing the onetime sharp change in the life values during a biographical narration, the respondent must often assume the position of his/her teachers, parents and other social actors of the previous generation. And next example:

When I reached Sweden as a boat refugee, I was yet a very young child, but my parents lost much, since they had had their own house, good jobs, their own friends in Estonia. Father could never actually adapt to Sweden. Already in the refugee camp in Germany he went down with lung asthma and soon this illness was the only thing that was really his own.

Mother had to manage three children and a sick husband alone (a female, born 1946).

III.1.4. Discourses as a search for usable past

The discourse of cultural trauma begins to take shape when the renewing (political) reality makes it necessary to give meaning to the changes in the value constellations. Then the discourse itself is interpreted as a social practice, the goal of which is to create a new, usable past for the people. When dealing with the traumatic past, a discourse including novel words, signs, leitmotifs, etc. appears, and this in turn starts to mould the active actor's conceptions and behaviour when communicating with the past. So cultural trauma becomes an analytical construct for the study of not the eventual but the instrumental (semantic) collective memory (Wertsch, 2002:57). Those memories that the society chooses to actively recall become distinguished from the ones the society actually possesses. Collective memory is not a neutral storehouse of events, but it "emerges in response to the need to create a usable past" (Wertsch, 44). The latter opens up the dualism of collective memory – on one hand, there is the reference to a concrete historical event, yet on the other hand, it proceeds through particular narratives as "cultural tool kits", placing the memories of the past into fixed and socially acceptable frameworks. There are things that people do not want to remember about the traumatic events, and other things that are constantly remembered and focused on. Thus, "we cannot think about events in our past without connecting those events to the system of ideas and meaning current in a particular social group of which we are, in the present, members" (Edkins, idem, 32). There are many participants in the creation of the discourse of cultural trauma and since an adequate recalling of the trauma itself is rather dubious according to the psychologists, many tall tales and mis-remembrances come into being, aimed at either sharpening or erasing the memories. The discourse does possess a certain function of establishing historical truth, but the aspect of collective healing is also very important, where one listens only to those voices of the past one wants to hear. The traumatic memories, like the "mermaid's voices sing beyond the human range – notes not heard, forms not tolerated, and each to each, not one to many, not above all. If we imagine the mermaids, we might almost hear them singing. Their voices blending so that each, in its own special timbre, lends to the harmony of the whole" (Gerger&Gerger, 2003:5). Also, "we compose memories that help us feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities, that give us a feeling of composure" (Edkins, idem, 29). There is no doubt "that memory recov-

ery often plays a transformative redemptive role in the lives of those who remember” (Prager, 1998:67).

The speciality of cultural trauma as a discourse is that it appears in a situation when a particular community has been defeated and as a consequence, identities are severely damaged or questioned altogether. Cultural trauma is formally recognised as a disorder, where a narrative of temporary use comes into being, and yet it must be overcome as soon as possible. Due to the transformation of the political needs after the traumatic events, the past is usually reinterpreted as black and white, and previous values lose their meaning. It is important how we remember the negative past, “and the way we acknowledge and describe what we call trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views, that is by the state” (Edkins, *idem*, 11).

Often the essence of trauma lies in a conflict between different nations, where one nation has carried out a value aggression and disparaged the other’s identities. Within the discourse that reflects such a trauma, each side creates a suitable interpretation; one which is not necessarily useful or even true for the other side. “What constituted a usable past in one socio-cultural setting is often quite different from what is needed in another” (Wertsch, *idem*, 44-45). From a nationalistic point of view, coping with trauma is closely connected with the loser’s self-heroisation. “All over the world nationalism invents stories about how to turn homelessness into action, anomie into meaning” (Inglis, 1993:207).

Rather than being some sort of confrontation with outsiders, cultural trauma could be precisely a within-culture dialogue between groups of the same historical community bearing different symbolical meanings after a crucial historical event. The discourse of cultural trauma in its essence is always multivocal and polyphonic. The traumatic discourse opens whenever some groups are interested in continuing the re-dramatisation of some negatively valued past events, but the others do all they can to disremember the past as quickly as possible. In other words, for the traumatic discourse to be revealed, the cultural space itself must be divided between the supporters of the ‘golden pre-traumatic past’ and the ‘bright post-traumatic future’.

Therefore, the collective memory includes the same paradox of forced speech and silence concerning trauma, well known in the psychology of personality. But here it is expressed in a qualitatively different way. “There is, I suggest, a delicate balance between the need: (a) to use narrative imagination to revisit trauma and allow for a healing-mourning process, and (b) to respect the unspeakable evil of that trauma” (Kearney, 2002:49). On the individual level there is the temporal split characteristic to PTSD (involuntary re-remembering vs. numbing); in collective memory it appears as an opposition of different opinions put forward by dif-

ferent social groups. On the social level the traumatic event is commemorated – or forgotten – by introducing new anniversaries, memorials, historical and literary works, etc. showing how to remember the past in a way that is suitable for the present. But these same memorials can also be interpreted socially as a kind of permanently recurring nightmare, keeping the traumatic event active in the collective memory (e.g. monuments to Stalin in Soviet-occupied Estonia).

So the discourse is closely tied to two important working principles of cultural mechanisms – the accentuating and the forgetting of past events. These principles are universal and work everywhere; in cases of sudden and forceful value aggressions they merely intensify. The different groups in the culture then begin a fierce symbolical discussion about what is justly worth remembering and what should be forgotten. The supposed result of cultural trauma as a discourse should be in finding a social agreement for interpreting the usable past and rethinking collective identity based on that. The continuity should over time re-emerge in the collective memory, allowing “...to put together the memory of both perpetrators and victims in the historical sense of collective identity” (Roth&Salas, 2001:11). The strategy for coping with collective trauma lays in overcoming the initial strong polarity and recreating a kind of social consensus. When it is not possible there is a long-lasting conflict situation destabilising the whole developmental continuity of the society. To convict and then understand the offenders (Roth&Salas, 2001), to admit defeat, yet see it as a challenge for new developments (Schivelbusch, 2004) – this is what the discourse of cultural trauma should look like. We construct our present and future by domesticating the extremity from the past, focusing on the reconciliation to see an “Other with a face” (Roth&Salas, idem, 15).

III.2. Trauma and explosion: re-building the cultural fabric

In the first chapter I described the different modes of how human time may appear. Viewing culture as semiosphere i.e. a clearly fixed area of signification (also defined before as an *Umwelt*), we can use the same idea to describe the hierarchical levels of collective memory. To a degree, semiotics has dealt with the hierarchisation of collective memory and thus the passage of human time and the interaction between processes that take place at different levels. Collective memory is handled by the most notable representatives of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics, Boris Uspensky

and Yuri Lotman, as a dual occurrence of discreteness and continuity. They see the semiotic boundary being formed by making a directed choice between all the possible phenomena, i.e. certain phenomena are declared to be within the bounds of the given semiosphere and the others are not (Lotman, 1992b). Uspensky has differentiated between two working levels of the collective memory: historical and cosmological time (Uspensky, 1994:20). He defines historical time as a choice of one sequence from the myriad of events that have actually taken place, and the placement of said sequence into a cause-effect relationship (*idem*, 12). Historical time (in the current work also called cultural time) works on the basis of semiotising certain events on the account of others, and thus shaping the past-present-future as the existential time axis important for semiosis. The semiotisation of events always happens inside a particular culture, not according to some external absolute criterion for truth. In addition to historical time, almost every cultural memory also has knowledge of the cosmological dimension of time. In this work Uspensky described it as religious time, where there is a fixed starting point in the cultural memory: the mythological creation of the world, the beginning of self-manifestation for an ethnic group, but also the declaration of independence, etc. In the case of cosmological time, the future phases of collective memory are not determined by the previous events, semiotised into cause and effect relations, but through the initial event fixed through religious/ideological means within the bounds of the given semiosis. Boris Uspensky has most interestingly highlighted the so-called reverse perspective (Uspensky, 1994:13) or a goal of development placed at the eschatological “end of time” and determining the concrete lives as they actually take place. In essence, the derivations of this idea are the Judgement Day in Christianity, the self-fulfilment of the absolute spirit in the Hegelian way of thinking, the idea of progress in Enlightenment, the building of Communism as the ideological goal of the USSR, etc. My point of view is that the religious or cosmological dimension of time is generally the highest level of the cultural memory, since this is used to explain the beginning and the end as the most important criteria for determining the bounds of semiosis. Lotman talks about cultural explosion, when the bounds of semiosis and the hierarchical organization of it are to a greater or lesser degree de-semiotised (Lotman, 1992a). Hierarchies change positions and the semiosphere changes its content, the boundaries between “own” and “alien” that were developed earlier through semiosis may shift diametrically, and the cause-effect relations thought to be the diachronic of culture can regroup. I think that during the explosion the highest levels of hierarchy are positioned by the modes of time signifying discontinuity, like political or economical time, which in turn re-define the contents of

generational and cultural time. The explosion ends with the re-semiotisation following the de-semiotisation, where continuous and discrete are balanced in new dispositions. Yuri Lotman views the explosion as merely a change taking place at some level of the multidimensional cultural memory, bringing along unpredictability in the further conduct of the whole culture as a semiotical system. The level of informativity of the semiosis sharply increases at the moment of the explosion, and this property includes germs of both destruction and regeneration. Cultural explosion releases new processes of self-realisation in the cultural memory (Lotman, idem, 30) and the system begins to analyse its own diachronic development to find an explanation for the changes. Very often the explosion is accompanied by designating a new eschatological terminal point for the system (Lotman, idem, 32).

Cultural trauma (Sztompka) and cultural explosion (Lotman) are clearly analogous descriptions of similar processes. Cultural trauma/explosion is a U-turn, after which the values, norms, the *habitus*, etc. are de-semiotised and the orders of time preceding the cultural trauma are viewed as non-current, non-real. According to Bernhard Giesen, cultural trauma as “social situation” of being on the move is reflected by an increased readiness to get rid of the past and to discover something new and unheard“ (Giesen, 2004a:33-34). But since cultural memory is itself hierarchically ordered, then all modes of time do not change synchronously; some are more inert, others change faster. So a situation develops where some previous realities are still considered real, but some others are already de-semiotised, non-real. Cultural trauma/explosion can be viewed as the rule of uncertainty and the obnubilation of the boundaries of the *Umwelt*, from where a new semiosis with a strong development potential may arise, but which can also turn out to be fatal for the semiosis with its all-destructive power.

III. 3. From life stories to the discourse of cultural trauma

I have developed a view of cultural trauma as a discourse (THEORY) or an active social dialogue (DIALOGUE) taking place in uncertain temporal circumstances of collective life, aimed at unravelling the meaning of changes that seem sharp from the point of view of many individual life courses. Within such a discourse the persons living through the concrete historical shift try to cope with the value-normative constellation of this sudden and subjectively rather brutal reshaping of the semiosis. The

traumatic discourse is mediated through various forms of representation, lasts often for decades, and frequently transfers from one generation to another in a metamorphosed form (GENERATIONS). That is to say, the changes in the hierarchisation and semiotisation of collective memory are at the same time the (unconditional) parts of the life courses of individuals living their daily lives. The life stories are some of the best sources since they offer a wealth of material from real life and especially because in biographical narratives the cultural trauma discourse can be better distinguished as a process unravelling in a longer span of time. The collapses of political regimes, but also ecological catastrophes may change social circumstances in very short periods of time. Yet giving significance to the changes is a common liminal experience of many persons. At the same time there is an obvious similarity between personal and collective trauma: “the consciousness is not able to perceive or to gasp in its full importance when it is happened” (Giesen, 2004b:113). The event is understood only in retrospect and through the creation of a discourse. It is important that different people remember traumatic change from different aspects; they talk about it with each other and exchange their life experiences, but also discuss the possibilities for creating new agreements. From the point of view of an individual life course, managing a sharp change is a period of life that is filled with a search for solutions and the pain of losing. We do not interpret collective traumatic memory as a social fact *sui generis*, but as “a matter of collective representations that are the properties of the “collective consciousness”, which is itself ontologically distinct from any aggregate of individual consciousness” (Olick, 2003:6). Social remembering of the past in general and traumatic events in particular could be described more as a compendium of mnemonic practices (Olick, *idem*). There are no ready-made patterns for the members of a really existing society that would show how to remember the good or the bad past. For every person and for every new generation the traumatic U-turn of their predecessors is a past that has not been experienced, yet which can be partaken in through cultural memory. But to understand what is in the traumatic memory, it must be deciphered personally, then reconstructed and thus put into a context for one's own life course. Of course, all societies produce regimes of mnemonic practices like calendar rituals and rites of passage, placing certain artefacts into museums, establishing monuments and public events commemorating and glorifying something important from the national/ethnic past, etc. Every particular life story is a description of the personal implementation of a variety of regimes of mnemonic practices used in the society. In the case when the life story includes a discourse of cultural trauma the huge changes in mnemonic practices must be laid open. Good examples of this are the life stories' dis-

cussions with my respondents about the celebrations of calendar holidays. Prevalent in the interviews with the homeland Estonians was the leitmotif of Christmas having been celebrated in secret, behind the curtains of one's home in Soviet time. People thought that continuing the officially forbidden tradition of Christmas was a guarantee for maintaining national identity in spite of foreign rule. The Swedish Estonians emphasised the glorious celebration of the anniversary of the essentially non-existent Republic of Estonia on February 24 in all the Estonian communities in Sweden. The get-togethers with folk dancing, choir singing and passionate speeches became the key events for preserving their exile identity. From the interviews with the Russians who stayed in Estonia at the beginning of the 21st century, it appears that they believe New Year to be the most important event of the year, followed by the international Women's Day on March 8. An evident source of conflict between mnemonic practices is May 9, which for the Russians still stands for celebrating the great victory over fascist Germany, but the Estonians associate it with the final legalisation of the occupation of their homeland.

And here comes one of the more interesting questions a researcher may face: how can the individual life stories and turning points in them express collective trauma? Every biography is a separate whole, a unique experience of life. But it still remains in a specific social context, affected by era-specific mentality, and it is by laying out the latter elements that one can reach the moment of defining the discourse. Cultural trauma is precisely "a collective phenomenon, a condition experienced by a group, community, or society, as a result of disruptive events culturally interpreted as traumatising" (Sztompka, 2000, 458).

The decisive moments in traumatic societal mentality are often presented as a drama one has personally lived through. "The respondents to biographical inquiries tend to gravitate towards periods of transitions in their accounts" (Humphrey et al, 2003:3). The interviewees themselves told much about the unwilling transformations of their life and the way they thought these were brought along by both political course-changing and generation-specific credos. In the case of traumas in the life story narratives, common elements are the search for a guilty party, the creation of a hostile "Other" and the construction of a defensive self-myth.

In this sense, we could talk about the (after-) effects of personal traumas in subsequent life, but not of collective trauma. The appearance of collective trauma as a discourse is first signified by many people wishing to talk in public about the negative events that play a crucial part in shaping their lives and that they think these experiences are similar to those of their fellow citizens. Biographical aspects become manifestations of collective trauma:

1. when life stories with different birth dates speak of significant and forced change in values that fall into the same historical period (war, occupation, revolution, substantial reforms, etc.);
2. when there are sufficient similarities between recollections of violent events and consequent changes of mentality (mass deportations or fleeing, shocks in everyday life routine, ideological harassment etc.);
3. when comparable negative evaluations concerning the symbolical interpretation of the events that caused cultural trauma are put forward by different respondents (“collective shame”, “national catastrophe”, false understanding of “we”-identity, de-heroisation of the national “golden” past, etc.);
4. when individual biographies reflect collective ways of coping with trauma, like the establishment of new social movements and voluntary associations, fundamental change in everyday habits and rituals, newly fashioned political hypocrisy and doubling of mental standards, etc.;
5. when using the stories told by respondents of different generations, one can reconstruct the step-by-step unravelling of the collective coping strategy, beginning with a rigid holding on to national, ethnic or community identity and ending with total assimilation over several decades.

Cultural trauma as a discourse emerges at a certain historical moment, when political or cultural conditions are ripe. Suddenly many people find it important to speak about these aspects of the past that have been improper or forbidden in public discussion. Traumatic discourse is characterised by strong inertia, it is preserved in long-time collective memory, and it waits for suitable moments to be manifested again and again in the life stories of different generations. Yet every traumatic discourse has a tendency to de-actualise by itself after a certain time, to hide behind the new social problems rising to public attention.

IV. Framing biographical research in post-traumatic social practice

IV.1. Unbalanced social memory

IV.1.1. A double trauma discourse let loose by the collapse of Socialism

Post-Socialist cultural trauma has a diverse and multifaceted structure, since it is not just a problem set concerning the value shifts during the post-restoration era, but it also includes earlier traumas generated in the post-WWII period. Due to strong ideological control (the KGB and censorship) the trauma caused by the marching in of Russian troops and the violent establishment of Soviet rule could not be a subject of public debate in Estonia. This discourse was primarily carried out in the private sphere (e.g. conversations within one's circle of trustworthy friends and relatives), hence its compensatory effect could not amount to anything noticeable. The restoration of independence made it possible to speak about the mass repression of 1941 and 1949, as well as the mental suppression of that time. It became very popular to publish the memoirs of those who had been deported to Siberia, to conduct radio interviews centring on troubles with the KGB and lives lived in constant fear of being betrayed by someone, etc. The fervent enthusiasm to tell others of deades-old events should be viewed as the reopening of an old wound in cultural tissue and an attempt to break free from the after-effects of cultural shock only half a century after it took place (concerning post-totalitarian necessity to recover the histories of family and everyday memory (see: Bertaux&Thompson, 1993:6).

Naturally, one should not think that no collective defence strategies at all were developed to cope with the Socialist shock at the time of its occurrence. On the contrary, both the homeland community and those who had escaped to the West, running from the Russian army, worked out strategies for adapting to their new social environments and value constellations. Neither of those social activities was actually labelled as recovering from cultural trauma, however. They were rather called anti-Soviet propaganda, the blooming of nationally inclined voluntary societies, the underground propagation of exile literature, the glorification of the song festival tradition etc. The so-called suffering years of the Estonian people will open up as a cultural traumatic discourse only if the years 1944-1991 are instead seen as an un-past, an era of human and national oppression that can be rightfully discussed only in the darkest of tones.

As a dialectic controversy, it only became possible to talk about Socialist cultural trauma in a post-Socialist atmosphere. This turned the management of the earlier trauma into a part of the new trauma. A trauma-within-trauma (*double trauma*) effect was created, where the moral boundaries of the previous trauma became hazy and the generation born and raised during the Soviet period was made responsible for the mental and material damages caused by the clash of Hitler and Stalin. When the shock of Socialism re-actualised, it became the diachronic dimension of the post-Socialist moral chaos, and no one knew where the real borderline between “right” and “wrong” was.

The collapse of Socialism was harsh one way or the other and for most of its subjects it was a forced change in both economical and mental dimensions (Hanhinen, 2001; Kivinen, 2001; Kohn et al., 2004; Kornai et al., 2004; Sztompka, 1996; Verdery, 2003). In the middle of the 1990s people were beginning to discuss the topics of leaders becoming alienated from the people, to doubt the sustainability of countryside life as the basis of Estonia’s peasant identity, and to seek an escape from the dramatically decreasing birth rate etc. Thus, we can talk about the maturing of a new post-Socialist cultural trauma as a discourse with three main axes:

- 1) A farewell to the Socialist past, which was dominant in the whole Baltic region, owing to its status as the former Soviet West. Compared to Poland, Hungary, etc., Estonia is in a more difficult situation as the proportion of non-Estonians in the population is almost a third and the problems of the Russian Diaspora are more specific than those of other CEE minorities (Vihalemm&Masso, 2003). Namely, for this Diaspora the Soviet past means a monolingual secure environment given forever (Kivinen, 2001:60; Yurchak, 2003) that has now been replaced by great social insecurity and ontological anxiety, a rigorous requirement of multilinguality (not just Estonian, but also English, German and other lan-

guages) and the obscurity of national identity. Any connections and attempts at dialogue between the Estonian and Russian societies are still weak (DIALOGUE) and restricted by Moscow's rhetoric of accusing Estonian government of "practising 'social apartheid' and 'ethnic cleansing'" (Smith et al, 1998:117).

2) Globalisation, that could be interpreted as the traumatic shattering of the illusion of trying to recreate the "tiny but efficient agricultural Estonia" of the first republic in the mid-1990s. The opening of the global dimension showed that Estonia with its titular population of about one million is comparable to a middle-sized industrial city in the larger societies. This sort of scale comparison created some ontological uncertainty in Estonians. On one side, it was accompanied by the fear of Americanisation; on the other, there was the elation about the broadened scope and diversity of new opportunities. In the current study this is empirically taken into consideration (by means of focus-group interviews) as the newly established opposition between folk and mass culture (SINGING).

3) Euro-integration, that did not turn out to be a tale of the lost son returning to Europe, but a painful reorganisation of the whole Estonian society. As a primary solution people occupied themselves with tidying up the Euro-facade (Sztompka, 2004:16), including the founding of a myriad of new institutions and social rituals. The clock governing the modification of value constellations inevitably runs at a slower pace than that the clock of radical political and economic reforms. The present differences between institutional and axiological realities in turn produce several kinds of significant social conflicts like the inter-generation discrepancy in worldviews, the strong divergence of country-side and city people, as well as Estonians' and Russians' value constellations (Tart, 2005). Euro-integration also includes the so-called making of one's region (Tatur, 2004), which is yet again different for Estonians and local Russians (Nordic vs. Slavonic).

IV.1.2. A non-unified European memory as the cause of new traumas

It is extremely important to understand the double nature of post-Socialist cultural trauma, from the point of view of building up a contemporary European memory space. It has been over 60 years since the end of WWII and today different peoples and different generations have quite dissimilar views of what happened at that time. The rules that came into effect in 1945 treated the Nazis as criminals and glorified the Allies (in-

cluding Russia) as the saviours of the European people. Just ten years after that the rules of the game were already different: Western Europe was assumed to have successfully managed its war wounds (e.g. the *Wirtschaftswunder* in Germany), and Russia was defined as the embodiment of Communist evil, with CEE being an undefined area behind the Iron Curtain. The rebellions against the power-mongers of the Kremlin that took place in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, could only be suppressed by Moscow owing to the fact that the people's hopes of Western Allied forces coming to their aid were just illusions. WWII was soon followed by the collapse of the colonial system in Asia and Africa, creating a myriad of internal problems for old Europe. It was easier to resolve them in the current geopolitical mapping of the continent, without looking to the other side of the Iron Curtain. The horrors of war were to be remembered, but this did not require the creation of new memory patterns covering all of Europe.

The dominant position in recent decades has been held by the mode of memory built upon the dichotomy of "Nazi perpetrators" and "Jews as the subject of the Holocaust". There are many writings on the Holocaust as a prime example of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2001; Bauman, 1989; Edkins, 2003; Levy&Sznajder, 2002, etc.). As early as the 1950s, the McCarthy anti-Communist doctrine made Russia into a fiend, but its power plays in Eastern Europe were watched from a safe distance. Essentially, there was no interference with the internal colonial influx of ethnic Russians into the Baltic region (Mettam&Williams, 2001:134), and the taming of the ghost of Communism was left to be an internal affair of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. The repeated appeals of exile Balts concerning the occupation of their homelands were heartily acknowledged in international forums, but nothing beyond that. The West was somewhat interested in the protesting voices of a few isolated dissenters sounding from behind the Iron Curtain but did not care about the state of millions of Europeans east of the Elbe. Thus, the demiurges of the Velvet Revolution (the Singing Revolution in Estonia) were the broad popular movements of native CEE peoples (Sztompka, 1991). The emergence of these should be treated as a significant strategy of coping with the cultural trauma that was created by the division of Europe in the Allied deals of 1945 at Jalta, Potsdam and Teheran. "In the years following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Europeans from the East and the West discovered that they did not really know one another, and they did not understand one another" (Breckner&Kalekin-Fishman&Mieth, 2000:10).

The year 1991 should be the borderline for seeing not only the casualties of Nazi perpetrators, but also the victims of the Communist system. Yet the broken life stories of the Eastern Europeans have not been as

competitive as the iconography of the Holocaust (Levy&Sznaider, 2002:95). The WWII memorial events in 2005 demonstrated that the different memory modes of Western and Eastern Europe can, for example, create a peculiar question of whose collective trauma Auschwitz precisely is – does it belong to the world-wide Jewish community or to the titular Polish people?

Today, the Baltic people remain at the crossroads of European memory modes. On one hand, they face the West European memory, where Nazism has long ago been defined as the central source of war crime and where a lot of attention has been paid to de-Nazifying Germany and most of Europe. Based on that background, it is hard to see Baltic Waffen-SS legionaries as brave people fighting for the freedom of Estonia and Latvia (Onken, 2006). On the other hand, we see the conception of the usable past coming from Moscow, taking the reunion of the Baltic States and Russia in 1944 to be historically just. And thirdly, there is the CEE-specific mode of memory, where it is important to interpret the phenomenon of Soviet collaboration after the collapse of USSR. It is known, in Finland, as the dispute centred on the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line of Moscow-inclined politics called “friendly relationships” with Soviet Union, or Finlandization (Hyvärinen, 1997:25). Doing biographical research in such a maze of value constellations is not easy and requires a flexible attitude in understanding the development of post-traumatic identities. Yet it should offer a wealth of material for determining more clearly the boundaries of different memory modes and the communities of memory.

Post-Socialist cultural trauma is much more intricate than just Socialist shock due to its multi-linear structure. Still the fact that the latter is the diachronic dimension of the former makes it possible to design a method of heuristic social modelling. Namely, through studying the linear Socialist shock and the ways of coping with it in more detail (GENERATIONS, ADAPTATION, THEORY, CIVIL, etc.), one can use the findings to study the multi-linear discourse of present-day cultural trauma.

IV.2. Living through Estonia: the contours of the main CT discourses

When I found the biographical method, I first sought answers to the questions that were prevalent in the atmosphere following the collapse of Socialism in the 1990s. These touched the subjects of evaluating the lives lived in Soviet times and the “correctness” of maintaining a national cul-

ture during foreign rule. The biographies clearly demonstrated the abundance of the possibilities of preserving Estonian-ness and the mechanism for transferring national ideals through several generations.

I have used 73 stories collected on my own initiative and compiled into five different volumes of Estonians' life stories by Rutt Hinrikus (Hinrikus, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006). I also have access to the first interpretation of Estonians' life stories in English, a work going by the title *She Who Remembers Survives* (Kirss&Kõresaar&Lauristin, 2004). This is a discourse which could be called the **"Testimonies of the Soviet Reality"** and which itself was formed simultaneously with the events of the Singing Revolution from the end of 1980s, culminating with the restoration of the Republic of Estonia. Hereafter, this discourse will be labelled as SovE, i.e. the Estonians who lived in Estonia during the Soviet period.

The SovE-discourse has been described in the current work in most detail (GENERATIONS, THEORY, COMMUNISTS, STANDARDS), showing how the respondents have spoken about the different stages of the development of Soviet mentality and how they have designed strategies for dealing with the imposed situation. The following leitmotifs appeared in the homeland Estonian biographies: a) the civilisational incompetence of the Russians who came to Estonia; b) the sufferings of their family during Stalin's reign of terror, including deportations and forced collective farming; c) a constant fear of being betrayed and falling into the grasp of the Soviet reprisal system; d) the personal efforts to survive in the radically changed circumstances; e) the personal experiences with KGB officials; f) confrontations concerning the entering of Komsomol and the CPSU; g) the illusions of Soviet liberalism caused by Khrushchev's "thaw"; and h) participation in the voluntary societies keeping the resistance mentality alive. A decade after the re-establishment of independence, public interest in the testimonies of Soviet-time injustice became lukewarm (Anepaio, 2003) and the focus has shifted from journalist attention to the work of professional historians. Public attention has been briefly recaptured due to the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII, when the radically differing interpretations of the events of September 1944 by Estonian and Russian sides again became plainly visible. I wanted to understand the background for the incompatibility of homeland and foreign Estonian communities that appeared so clearly in the 1990s. In the homeland it was expected that foreign Estonians would support the reorganisation of the economy, and also the import of know-how. Unfortunately those who would return or invest anything were few in number while many more people were swift to use the establishment of a favourable legal atmosphere to regain their nationalised property – both buildings and land. It became clear that the societal split of 1944 had been more profound than expected. Estonians

had developed into two completely different social entities during the ensuing half-century, and a reunion would only have been possible without the anger, alienation and self-promotion that characterized both sides.

The second compilation of traumatic discourse could be labelled the **“Refugee Romance”** (a title borrowed from Juris Rozitis, 2003; 2005). The abbreviation used hereafter is SweE, i.e. Swedish Estonians. The SweE discourse is based on 34 life stories and 12 autobiographical books (Kadak, 1974; Kolk, 1972; Kolk, 1992; Laretei, H., 1992; Laretei, K., 1995; Mägi, 2001; Ots, 1976; Proos, 1987; Talgre, 2004; Tarmet-Toomberg, 1988; Tubin, 2000; Tõnus, 2000). It has been a great help to initially have a Swedish book that was afterwards also published in Estonian, Bernhard Kangro’s *Estonians in Sweden* (Kangro, 1976). A more detailed overview of the Estonians who escaped to Sweden at the end of WWII is given in a recently published book of Swedish historian Carl Göran Andræ (Andræ, 2005), who himself is married to an Estonian boat refugee.

People describe in their stories how they adapted to their new lives, with many dramatic events and a lot of anxiety about their homeland and any relatives left behind. From the life stories of the Swedish Estonians, an alternative traumatic discourse hatched, demonstrating that the preservation of Estonian-ness in exile was more difficult than imagined in the homeland and, therefore, the reattachment to homeland Estonian mentality was more hopeless than it had seemed. The trauma did not appear so much in the difficulty of the exodus, but in the irrefutable impact of the Swedish welfare society on the lives of the refugees themselves. The Swedish Estonian life stories most often used the following leitmotifs: 1) a detailed and colourful description of the boat flight over a stormy sea and the beginning of a new life in the refugee camp; 2) the unity of the community in the first years of exile; 3) the fear of the Swedish government handing them over to Russia; 4) the personal attitudes concerning the squabbles of the Swedish-exiled former Estonian political elite; 5) a quick integration into the Swedish education system; and 6) eager participation in the activities of the Estonian organisations. This “Refugee Romance” discourse covers historically the longest period, having a public existence of more than half a century. It is now coming to its natural end since the direct participants have mostly passed away and the identity of the refugee community is no longer very important to their children.

Based on the biographies, I have so far worked out two comparative sets of problems: the diverging paths of the development of the rites of passage (ADOPTATION) and the voluntary associations (CIVIL) among the Estonians living on both sides of the Baltic Sea. I would explain such a rather intense diversification with the fact that the homeland and exile Estonian communities had to compensate for completely different cul-

tural traumas caused by the same social event (the intervention of the Soviet Army in September 1944). The homeland Estonians inevitably had to adapt to the Moscow-dictated life in a deficit economy, even when one secretly hated such real Socialism and developed a counter culture (Rakfeldt&Rakfeldt, 1996). The boat refugees adapted rather well economically, but ideologically they have been involved in a collision of attitudes, both among themselves and with the Swedes, who for a long time suspected them of being pro-Fascist. After a while, Estonian-ness became a spare time activity, because of the Swedes' myth of a positively adaptable or vigorously assimilating Estonian community.

After observing the life stories of the boat refugees I had the thought of comparing the two integration processes. In particular, by the beginning of the 21st century, the Republic of Estonia had reached an understanding that the European Union directive for a quick integration of the non-Estonians had not been very fruitful. Inevitably I saw the parallel with the successful adaptation of the boat refugees to a new life in a new land, which evoked the following question: why, despite the attempts at democracy and liberalism, does the segregation of the two communities in Estonia still endure? I tried to find the answer by opening biographical "windows" and up to now I have managed to sketch the contours of the cultural traumatic discourse of the Estonian Russians (abbreviated EstR in the following).

Thus, the third cultural traumatic discourse opens up as the life stories of the Estonian Russians facing the question of who they are after the border with Russia has closed up and they have been deprived of the honour of being a Soviet citizen (Brednikova, 1999). This discourse might bear the name "**Fall of the Dreamland**" and it is presented as it unveils in 41 told stories. Among the three discourses it is the most current and the most painful, and, more importantly, it is yet in its stage of maturing. The last feature strongly relies on the fact that Russia has never acknowledged the occupation of the Baltic states in 1944 and on the international level wishes to depict the Russian population staying in Estonia and Latvia as victims of ethnic discrimination (DIALOGUE; Aarelaid&Hatshaturyan, 2006). The Estonian Russians' stormy and controversial search for identity began at the same time as the Estonians' mass mobilisation for restoring their national independence in 1988. Thus, a more detailed mapping of this discourse is still a work in progress. Unlike the many autobiographies and compilations of life stories of the homeland and Swedish Estonians, the Russians have just recently managed to publish their first thematic compilation *Tell Me Your Story*, initiated again by Rutt Hinrikus (Hinrikus, 2005). The Estonian Russian life stories echo such leitmotifs as: 1) an intense dissonance between the "bad" present and the "good"

Soviet past; 2) abrupt interference with habitual life; 3) a painful acknowledgement of the presence of Estonians and the requirement to learn their language; 4) the closing of the borders and its companion, the erosion of the borders of the Great Russian cultural background; and 5) the insulting labelling by Estonians, e.g. calling them occupiers.

One can observe the basis for the creation of several cultural traumas in the history of 20th-century Estonia and they are all accompanied by sharp changes in the political regime – in the 1944 and the 1991. In order to give a better overview, I shall present a scheme of the progress of the discourses in relation to the events that have been important for Estonian history. The dotted line marks the period when the discourse functioned mainly in the private sphere. For the Swedish Estonians the public appearance of the discourse can be noticed in the mid-1950s, when the first memoirs were published. In Soviet Estonia the hidden period of the discourse begins with the period of the “thaw”, when the past could be hinted at through ambivalent artistic forms. There is no hidden period in the discourse of the Estonian Russians.

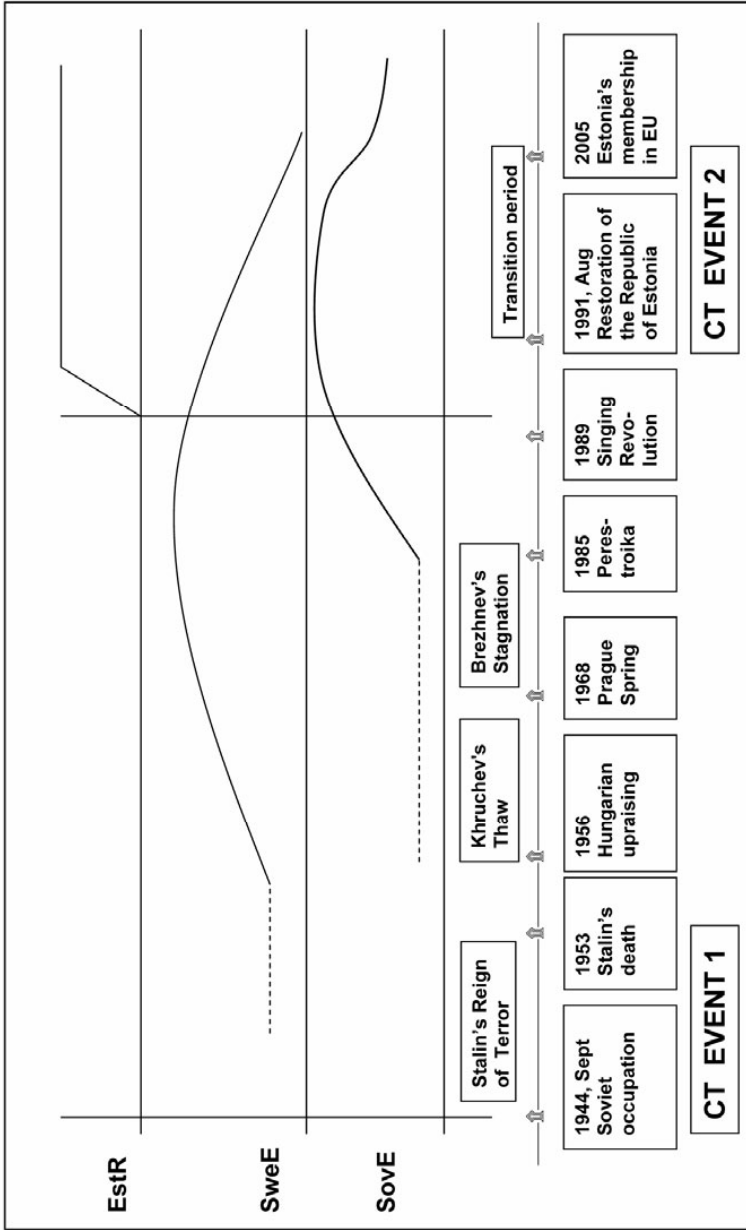


Figure 3. Formation of CT discourses in relation to historical events

IV.3. Individual reflection of the collective unpleasant past

IV.3.1. What constitutes a CT life story?

The stories of lived lives can be presented differently, as stories of studies, careers, sexual life, stories of local patriotism, stories representative of a generation or a family, etc. (Bertaux&Thompson, 1993; Haavio-Mannila, et al., 2002; Miller, 2000; Pettin&Western, 2004; Roberts, 2002; Rotkirch, 2000; Thompson, 1993). All told lives are, as a golden rule, relevant to the lived lives, but they are retouched in the necessary direction depending on the social context and the predominant requirements of the moment, depending on what a “right” life story should look like. I assume that looking at the lived life from the perspective of suffering during rapid political changes could be interpreted as a special mode of biographical narration. It is analogous to the told lives of those patients who have received a fatal diagnosis (Riemann&Schütze, 1991; Roberts, 2004; Harvay&Miller, 2000). Such life stories take into account the important aspects of an actor’s distress, and the personal description still remains within the master narrative of cultural trauma as an actual social discourse.

A CT life story can be determined as a time for revelation of biographical uncertainty (trauma time). The respondent speaks about how they have tried to maintain control of their identity and wellbeing and have striven to achieve the intellectual flexibility needed to find new foundations in a risky environment. To overcome the traumatic uncertainty, an individual must learn “how to develop and maintain his vision of life in equilibrium” (Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000a:63). The new identities need not be relevant to the former value system, and this may lead to cognitive dissonance in the worldview of the subject. In narratives, this may appear in the form of a conflicting life story where private and public are presented as being in permanent opposition (e.g. the life stories of dissidents from Soviet Estonia, or those of former high-ranking military officials of the Soviet Army who are now living in Estonia). The value dissonance may even lead to the dissolution of a person, after which many facts of one’s personal past can no longer be explained in any conceivable way and the actor tries to live on with a half forgotten life story. Usually, new ideological and political systems offer “biographical patterns of how to fit in and practical ways to make individual stories ‘fit’, to ‘repair’ them in the terms of the given subsystem” (Fischer-Rosenthal, *idem*). The following is an example of the appearance of value dissonance in a life story (EstR):

Nobody could remain indifferent to the events of 1989. Everything new frightens. The predictions of those days unfortunately came true. Firstly, that after the restoration of independence the priority of the Estonian language would be established. Our children are completely unprepared for such a life, however, they must seriously concern themselves with learning Estonian. Second, I predicted that it would become difficult to get an education in Russian. In the days of our youth anyone could enter any university or technical secondary school - and be certain of getting a job after finishing. Our children go to different kinds of schools that charge tuition, but nobody guarantees them employment. Third, I predicted a rapid decline in the standard of living - and it became a dreadful reality. Unfortunately, you have to pay for everything - be it medical care, education or anything else. (A man, b. 1950 in the district of Leningrad in a military family, lived all his life in Estonia, an engineer, graduated from Tallinn Polytechnic Institute)

CT stories generally include four essential components:

1. Fear, desperation and the presentation of the uncertainty-causing historical event as a subjectively negative experience. This “trauma exposition” (Rosenthal, 2003:916), usually consisting of a voluminous “thick description”, is meant to “re-create the sights, sounds, and feelings of persons and places” (Denzin, 1989:93);
2. A “thin” and more episodic description of the life periods following the epiphany, which “alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life” (Denzin, 70). This description of ensuing stabilisation consists of the truth-oriented narratives of different social practises of the biographer, undertaken to cope with the rapidly changed circumstances;
3. The hidden part of the life story, which is not presented to the interviewer (Josselson, 1999:xi). Hints about such concealed episodes can be found in other conversations with the same respondent or with his or her acquaintances. Usually people do not want to speak about these episodes or important decisions that contradict the social norms prevailing at the time of the interview (Khubova, 1992). For example, in the SovE discourse no one spoke to me about directly working for the KGB, in the SweE discourse they omitted their unpleasant relations with the Swedes, and in the EstR discourse nobody mentioned their real reasons for resettling in Estonia. The interviewer is usually unable to gauge the precise extent and subject(s) of the hidden part;
4. The storyteller’s evaluation of oneself as a subject of CT, with the self-reflective background analysis of adaptation strategies and the relative

success of their applications. This component of a CT story includes the moment of internal censorship, when “the author tries to explain why he must tell the story in the way he tells it” (Roos, 2003: 34).

Such self-evaluations are presented through everyday phrases understandable for both the teller and the listener of the life story in a given social environment. There are at least three relevant scales for classifying these phrases. I emphasise that the expressions of post-CT self-esteem vary from culture to culture, from generation to generation, and from one historical period to another. The following classification is illustrated by examples from the life stories I have listened to.

Firstly, there is the active person who easily adapts to the changing circumstances, claiming to be a “successful Estonian” (SweE), an expert on the Estonian state of affairs (EstR), or a skilful manipulator of Moscow (SovE). The second class is that of a simple adapter to circumstances, claiming to be an ordinary person, “just like we all are”, “my fate is similar to that of thousands of other Estonians” (SovE), “things have been more or less normal in my life, just like for the other Russians in Estonia” (EstR), etc. Thirdly, there are people either lacking or possessing an oversensitive ability to adapt, who talk about becoming bitter, of themselves as traumatic persons (e.g. Heino’s case from Chapter I.), of being misunderstood (“Well, how can I be considered to be an occupier!” (EstR), “I am not a Soviet sympathiser, thousands of other people became party members!” (SovE).

As a rule, a CT life story cannot be told immediately after the pivotal events, since the presentation of the self-myth requires a longer temporal distance and some knowledge of further happenings, and one needs to know how the situation was managed. Those people whose lives have been very difficult due to CT usually do not agree to a biographical interview. The actively adapting individuals on the other hand are ready to talk about their lives and enjoy the “aura of a positive hero”. Someone who has had traumatic value collisions can tell the life story like it was a usual working man’s career, or the tale of a renowned actor, etc. But when the story is told in a CT context, the teller consciously brings out the moments of suffering and any personal accomplishments (or, less frequently, ineptitude) in managing the frenetic circumstances. One must also acknowledge the fact that the storytellers of today cannot number among them those who failed to survive during a social U-turn.

Based on post-Socialist Estonia, one can assume that after the collapse of the previous political system, the “CT life story” becomes a rather dominant way of talking about the past. Moreover, the collectors or researchers of life stories can create a situation where a great proportion of especially the elder respondents starts to talk about themselves as victims

of the change in regime. An Estonian researcher, Ene Kõresaar, has presented a view, which shows that in the stories sent to the biography competitions in the 1990s (a list of these competitions can be found in Kõresaar, 2005:43-44) there is a leitmotif of telling about an 'interrupted life course'. The lives are told as disrupted by the Soviet authorities and only continued in a desired manner after 1991. During the post-restoration era, writing about one's Soviet-oppressed life was considered to be the accomplishment of a national mission, making it possible to again rebuild the history that had been "stolen" from the people (idem, 198). The very fact-oriented stories included prominent black-and-white appraisals of the past, with "right" tied solely to Estonian-ness and "wrong" to any implications of the Soviet regime. The presentations of the lived lives were centred on the sufferings, be it in Siberia, under constant ideological pressure or due to forced collectivisation, an individual life course was persistently endangered by some hostile external forces. Such stories included an abundance of revelations about the crimes committed by Communists and were spurred on by a desire to use the life story to erect a written memorial to those who had suffered in these repressive events, including oneself (*exegi monumentum*).

Unlike the written works presented in the life story competitions that are used by Ene Kõresaar, in the oral interviews conducted by myself and Hank Johnston in Estonia in the same period (1995-1998), there is a completely different prevalent leitmotif - the "skilful surfer in the system". Since Hank was an American researcher, he became a sort of pastor-confessor during these interviews. People wanted to give him "the testimony of the real Estonian people of real Socialism" so that he could take it back to the whole world with him (a sort of healing effect for the respondents). People presented themselves to be very cunning, capable of shrewd action in the repressive or ridiculous Soviet situations, saving both the lives and primary values of themselves and their close ones (GENERATIONS). The topics of repression and ideological pressure were frequently touched upon during the interviews. There was much talk about the cruelty and stupidity of the Russian soldiers and the KGB. The stories were told from a superior viewpoint reinforced by temporal distance and there was the leitmotif of the frame of mind that the collapse of Soviet rule had been predictable a long time before it happened (a detachment effect). The life stories of the same period and coming from the same generation may comprise even totally opposite assessments of the management of CT.

IV.3.2. Guidelines for studying life stories of culturally traumatised persons

The ambivalence of the respondents' self-assessments gives rise to the more general methodological problem of whether it is actually possible for the researcher to regard the CT life stories in a neutral manner. To do so, at first, a researcher must deconstruct the unreflective assumption that their narrators simply describe what happened (Ochberg, 1996:112). At second, it is evident that one person does not recall historical events more correctly than any other and no one can be accused of fabricating false memories. Rather, it is possible to group respondents according to their communities of memory (Burke, 1989; Irwin-Zarecka, 1994), reflecting the teller's social position and their sense of belonging together with other people who have had similar life trajectories.

In the interviews we have conducted, one can distinguish between several communities of memory. These include the people who became creative intellectuals in the Soviet period, or the people who had escaped to Sweden and retained their language and a strong Estonian inclination, or enthusiastic Russians who arrived here after WWII and began to build up a Socialist Estonia, etc. Although belonging to a community of memory is strongly dependent on one's age, every broad generation has several different micro-cohorts that present separate views of the CT (GENERATIONS). In principle, in every community of memory remembering serves both to heal (Rosenthal, 2003) and to liberate and detach members of the community from their unpleasant past. Thus the public presentations of their memoirs (publications, radio and television interviews, etc.) in the 1990s primarily served as self-therapy for the people with deportation experiences. Before that, these people had not had any legitimate outlets for their "tales of suffering", and being made into heroes in the media after this long period of silence was their redemption.

A desire to see some salvation from the past suffering is repeated in the 2000s in the case of the former Estonian Waffen-SS legionaries, who want to be considered national freedom fighters instead. But their desire for legitimacy is a lot more complicated, and moreover, they are opposed by the Russian veterans of the Great Patriotic War. The latter declare themselves to have liberated Estonia from Fascism and therefore from the Nazi plans of exterminating the whole Estonian nation. And there are Estonian men who have gone through WWII in the Soviet Army, who have been kolkhoz leaders or worked in the regional committees of the Communist Party. They also want speak about their lives in public, but in the present-day political situation, they seem to have a lesser right to their life stories

[having or losing the right to one's life story has been considered by Yuri Lotman (1991)]. In the interviews with the boat refugees of 1944 in Sweden, the respondents very much wanted to "bequeath" the details of the tragic turn in their lives to me as someone who had been born in Soviet Estonia (a kind of healing through a "thick description" of their flight). At the same time, from the point of view of an inhabitant of Sweden, it was better not to talk too much about these memories (a detachment from the status of a refugee).

In the following, I shall present a theoretical scheme that includes the main components a researcher should keep in mind when analysing an interview made with someone who has had CT-related experiences. It is a rather broad scheme, and is primarily based on the frame-theories of Erving Goffman, Olaf Struck, Gerhard Riemann and others. Goffman's classical frame-theory is telling "about the organisation of experience – something that an individual actor can take into his mind – and not the organisation of society" (Goffman, 1974:13). He described social frames as "guided doings", which "provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling efforts of an intelligence, a live agency" (Goffman, *idem*). Frames bring together both the actors who respond and the world they are responding to.

In studying the changes of self-trajectories appearing in the CT life-stories, I utilise an example from the former East Germany, presented by Olaf Struck. Struck has made the distinction between "frames as structures" and "frames in us", or framing (Struck, 2003:214), and has explained the transformation of the life-trajectories of East-Germans in the newly unified Germany. I also use Goffman's idea of keying (Goffman, 1974:43) and claim that there exists an actor's subjective "keying frame", which is created through the interpretation of the personal past as well as any present actions in the subject's biographical narration, and it contains explanations of the coping strategies. This "keying frame" is a behavioural and self-reflective personal set of conventions for finding relevant answers for how to transform the actor's behaviour to be acceptable and to conform to the new "frame in society". Keying is "the process of transcription" (Goffman, 1974:44) to answer the questions about what shall be taken as an "own" and "right" in a given social situation, and how an actor should be involved in this changing and frequently unclear reality. Similar to Struck, my scheme is also based on an opposition of "inner" and "outer" frames and thus has direct connections to the treatment of human time as internal and external, or as Bergson's *Durée* and *Temps*. The inner "frame" is relevant to *Durée* and through the procedure of keying the subject tries to align with *Temps*, i.e. find some evidence and justification for biographical continuity in situations when it becomes hard to

manage the sharply transformed temporal order of external realities.

The methodologically important notions in the research of the post-traumatic re-shaping of self-identity are:

A.

The outer frames of the value-constellations for a social actor, which are interpreted as “a potential world that answers all questions about what it is that shall be taken by participant as real, and how is that they should be involved in this reality” (Gonos, 1977:860 – cit. by Struck,). Such a frame in society has developed for an individual, but independently of their actions and it is perceived as a taken-for-granted social reality. The most characteristic feature of CT is the sharp and usually violent replacement of this frame with another, and the subject normally is incapable of quickly accepting this as real right away. There are two frames in society coexisting at the same time for a longer or shorter period, and one of them is the approved and accepted reality of the new power-holders, while the other reality is forbidden and condemned. It is often vital, for the subject, whether and how they can and are able to distinguish between the approved and forbidden outer frames. A complete inability leads to terminal punishment of the actor, but more often the subject becomes a marginal person (COMMUNISTS), “whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures” (Park, 1937: xv – cit. by Riemann&Schütze, 1991:337).

B.

When analysing the told story of a respondent, who has encountered a CT situation, one must find out the previous **habitual disposition** of the actor. *Habitus* “is the system of categorisation and thinking that are employed to order one’s perception of the social environment” (Humphrey et al., 2003:6). Certainly earlier education and professional skills are important for one’s success, but the previously cultivated worldview is also important, more so as it has to undergo some serious corrections due to the CT circumstances. While managing a CT, the habitual disposition can change a lot, which means adaptation to a new frame in society (Segert&Zierke, 2000). In the case of children or young people in a CT situation, the researcher should consider the family background more in depth, including the parents’ outlooks and behaviour patterns, in order to understand the respondent’s biographical disposition of managing the value aggression.

C.

A part of the analysis that requires a substantial knowledge of the cultural context is determining **the community of memory** of the person who is telling the life story. Iwonna Irwin-Zarecka assumed that “communities of memory formed by individuals with not only common ex-

perience but a shared sense of its meaning and relevance” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994:54). The situation is complicated by the fact that after the frame in society has changed, all communities of memory are no longer equally legitimate and the respondent may begin to hide or forget the common memories that are unsuitable in the renewed circumstances.

During my fieldwork, I experienced several restrictions in becoming involved in communities of memory that were unfamiliar to me. Thus, it proved complicated to gather the childhood memories of those raised in the Soviet garrisons, but also the stories of former party functionaries. A more drastic situation that I am only passingly familiar with was that of the Estonian national television in Canada, when they were making a series about the life stories of the Canadian Estonians. People usually refused to participate, claiming that the homeland Estonians had come to present the former refugees’ lives in a way that was “right” in Estonia. I had similar experiences of opposing communities of memory in Sweden. I could not reach those people who had considered Soviet Estonia to be so ideologically contaminated that they never wanted to go there even after the restoration, since it was so full of Communists, including the new interviewer who had come to Stockholm.

D.

It is very important to describe an actor’s **mental and behavioural capability** for re-framing self-identity according to changed outer frames. Goffman labelled it as a “capacity to affect and be affected (Goffman, 1974:9). Often this means an internal strength to intentionally act even in a hopeless situation and find the “ways of making out”, as Goffman called it. This inner capability reflects the actor’s flexibility to change their socially adapted habits and “to act in unpredictable and unfamiliar decision-making situations” (Struck, 2003:214). This “coping capability” (Vago, 1980:353) or “capacity to get back on their own feet” (Rustin&Chamberlayne, 2002:11), is released during a value crisis, and directed towards achieving a stable understanding of the actor’s life trajectory, and this reshaping of the self-identity could be perfect, or contrariwise, disadvantageous. Thus the life-trajectory is a basis for self-interpretation and self-identity, and for the actor, the sudden crumbling of the future perspectives is the culmination of CT. I give a life story example of the latter (SovE):

The coup d'état of 1940 changed everything. Then I had the feeling, that a cloud covered the sun and that no ray could be seen through. I was dreaming about a beautiful and rich house, about a husband who would love me, and about travelling, like other young girls. But the future was unknown and difficult. I had a feeling like I was being pushed to the

ground. Communist-minded people started to appear. I was astonished. We had grown up with patriotism, which had not been oppressed by any means. Love for the homeland was self-evident in both soul and heart. (Silvi Mägi b.1922, attendant – cit. by Hinrikus, 2000a: 36)

The trauma exposition is usually followed by a narration of what had happened next, which makes up the basis for how a researcher can estimate the respondent's capacity to successfully emerge from challenging situations. But the researcher must remain attentive, because the interpretation of the individual life-trajectory as a conscious development from the personal past to the anticipated future is very vulnerable in the CT atmosphere. In the conditions of discontinuity of the social frames as structures for recognising "what is actually going on" (Goffman, 1974:9), there are a lot of false self-images and elusive identities (Nora, 1996:13) that may appear. This means that the actor may act decisively during the radical changes, but that does not necessarily indicate an adequate understanding of the situation. An actor could create an "unmasterable past" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994:50) of the self and the accompanying false self-identity. An example of this is the stance of the exile Estonian political elite who fled to Sweden in 1944. There they desired to continue being the political leaders of the whole Estonian people, in a situation where they had left the majority of the people behind and thousands of refugees were apprehensively avoiding any political activities (CIVIL). The following is an excerpt from an interview, the opinion of a young man of that time, concerning the self-identity issues of these "professional leaders of the Estonian people" (SweE):

Due to my own experience, I was sceptical about the ability of the refugees to function as a political force. I had noticed that as human beings they (the previous elite – A.A.) suffered especially hard and were troubled with the lack of even minimal trust and willingness to co-operate in joint activities. Even in their own factions the forces of dispersion and disruption seemed to be stronger than the forces of focusing and convergence. (A male, born in 1932 in Tallinn, later a researcher and state councillor in Sweden)

E.

The next component of the analysis is the teller's skill of **using all available recourses** to keep their personal self-continuity during the discrete social processes. The personal sufferings in a CT situation are mostly "inner events, which are not accessible to direct empirical observation" (Riemann&Schütze, 1991:339). The most extreme events of suffer-

ing can become revealed in the life stories even as rejected or hidden memories, and these may not be talked about at all (a clear parallel with numbing in PTSD). In the told stories, there are the ‘voices of the mermaids’ that may tell about the ways to cope with a long-term difficult situation inadequately. The respondents never talk directly about cultural trauma as a hard value-dissonance, since it is hard to put that into words. They rather focus on the critical situations or sharp and important turning points in their lives. But the researcher can find out which of the realistically available possibilities (these may be viewed as economic, social and cultural capitals à la Bourdieu) for managing the situation have been presented by the respondent. The usual resources for surviving sharp turning points are education, professional skills, frequently language skills, but also the ability to use any existing social networks to fit into the changed “frames in society”.

As a textual example of how these available resources and their use appear in the life stories, I chose an intriguing case from a respondent who is a representative of the Generation of the Thaw. In this generation, it was assumed that they have already been integrated into the “frame of Soviet society” due to having been born after WWII. Yet, it was generally not so, and understanding the difference between the official and personally suitable realities was very important in the creation of self-identity. The brighter minds of that generation used the smallest of opportunities to peek behind the Iron Curtain and increase their cultural resources. Only in 1997, during the interview, did the storyteller recognise that the once created identity was still quite like the voice of a mermaid (SovE):

During the time we started to learn things about Europe, we chose our reading material accordingly. I translated the “2000 words” into Estonian. This is the manifesto of the spring of Prague that made the Soviet Union have its hackles up and send the tanks to the Czechs (in August 1968 - A.A.). The Czech were the first to be called Eurocommunists, then came Spain, Italy, France, also Swedish Communist parties, who supported the Czechs and opposed the Brezhnev-created spreading of Communism that was conducted in Eastern Europe and based on a military doctrine. A Eurocommunist was therefore someone who believed in the possibility of Communism with a human face (Dubček, Smrkovsky) and that the Communist party may come into power in their country through legitimate elections. The split between the theorists of Eurocommunism (Garaudy, Fischer, Lukàcs) and Eastern Communists was that the former believed that one could build up Socialism in a country based on the free will of its people and in the conditions of general democracy. The latter believed that the people can never voluntarily choose the better option and

Communism can only be achieved through the dictate of the proletariat. Though history has demonstrated that the people have never democratically and freely elected Communists to be their leaders, Eurocommunism was still a great branch of idealism. (A male, b. 1946, the son of leading Communist, now MP - cit. Aarelaid, 1998:169)

F.

The researcher must pay special attention to **the inner censor**, through which the biographer wishes to present oneself in a manner suitable for the context at hand. The respondent's inner censor tries to exclude the uncomfortable moments in life during the narration of the story (Roos, 1992:4; Passerini, 1992:15), and merely picture personal value decisions as having been made due to compulsion or the malice of fellow citizens. In most cases, the past is also retouched to better fit into recent political currents. Peter Burke has pointedly said that "we all rewrite our biographies all the time in the manner of the *Soviet Encyclopaedia*" (Burke, 1989:109), i.e. according to the official censorship.

After having conducted field studies in three different cultural contexts, I claim that an interviewee pays a lot of attention to the interviewer's person and changes the story according to these perceptions. For instance, in analysing the interviews with the boat refugees in Sweden, it appeared that these versions of the lived lives had been specifically created for me as a homeland Estonian. This means that people told me about their lives in the outer frame of exiled Estonian community, not inside the frame of Swedish society. They highlighted the names and actions of successful Estonians, they proudly spoke of such common activities as the public meetings during the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, or singing days. Yet, they omitted their failed marriages with the Swedes, their communication troubles with Swedish colleagues, the problems they had with their children when they tried to keep the Estonian identity alive, etc. So most of the respondents censored their tales to accommodate me and proclaimed themselves "successful Estonians". The aforementioned version of an "interrupted life story" according to Ene Kõresaar has also passed by a strict inner censor to fit into the currently approved public CT-discourse of lives wrecked by the Soviet regime.

Although recognising such a hidden inner censor is the task of the researcher, it may also occur openly in the life stories. The latter situation is especially relevant in these cases when the respondent cannot present a picture they think would be suitable for the public discourse. The following example is an excerpt from the story of a former Russian military officer who stayed in Estonia (EstR):

Then, we were needed. Then, everyone called me Victor Mikhailovich, but not an “occupier”, ...an occupier does not have rights... But in principle I am not an occupant. Occupier – that’s someone, who came with a bayonet, killed somebody, made someone work for himself. That’s an occupier! These expressions have a certain meaning by international standards. They are rooted in the juridical vocabulary. Only a muddler would say that we occupied Estonia. We came at the locals’ request, signed a peace treaty. The Estonians themselves agreed, president Päts signed himself, allowing the Soviet forces to relocate. (A male, b. 1933, constructed the military city of Paldiski, naval officer)

To conclude this segment, I will explain how this “keying” or inner framing actually works. CT creates a situation when the subject must as clearly as possible acknowledge the limits of both the old, no longer legitimate frame of society, and the new frame of society that emerged from the changed social power relations. In order to successfully cope with CT, it is important to find “a way of figuring out what we are from what we are no longer” (Nora, 1996:13). To re-determine one’s identity and life trajectory, the individual must by means of inner framing develop the new freedoms and limits of existence and a new self-image. Such a fitting together of the outer frame and the inner framing can also be viewed as *biographical work* (a term coined by Anselm Strauss – cit. by Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000b:114). Biographical work is mostly memory work, where one remembers the past and tries to align it with the newly legalised and institutionalised biographical patterns of the changed society. Biographical work itself is a life-long procedure, and in the critical moments like CT, it intensifies tremendously in order to make the subjective present and past meet each other. I would like to interpret “keying” by utilising Patrick Baert’s ideas about the relations of self and time, as an act of self-reflection, when the subject reconstructs the rules of the past, rewrites them (Baert, 1992:23-24). During this “keying” the subject builds up the past as a past-for-now (idem, 325) and asks questions formerly unasked and impossible, sees the preceding life course in previously unknown ways.

I found some supporting ideas for my concept of a “keying” from the article of Melvin L. Kohn, Valeri Khmelko, Vladimir Paniotto and Ho-Fung Hung, investigating the relationship between social structure and personality during a period of radical social change in Ukraine (Kohn et al, 2004). The authors define social change as “change in the *structure* of the society, not merely as an eventful or dramatic period in the life of society” (idem, 240). During this internal structural change, the attendants of the transformation experience extreme instability in personal *self-*

directedness of orientation as well as in their *sense of well-being*. As for adapting to new situations, the authors highlighted “the most stable facet of personality – *intellectual flexibility*” (idem, 279). These three components are somewhat analogous to the components of my “keying” through which the subject copes with CT.

Every subject presents the life story many times, for different institutions, for loved ones, acquaintances, children, cellmates and travelling companions. Every act of remembering the lived life includes the aspects of self-explanation, healing and detachment from the past (Josselson, 1996:64-65). In a CT life story, all three may be exaggerated and can lead to the versions of a “broken life“(SovE), a “failed Estonian” (SweE), or a “betrayed compatriot” (EstR). I claimed, in Chapter I, that one of the principal needs of every human life is to subject the uncertain outer reality to a personally controlled inner reality. Through biographical work, a subject makes the life into a “combination of accidents” that is more understandable and reliable for both the subject and the surrounding institutions. The results of biographical work are the different versions of the life story, in which the subject tells about how they became whoever they are in the given social conditions. After a CT, people often talk about themselves as adequate actors in a newly legalised “frame in society”. For example, most Estonians in homeland easily invented formal life descriptions (something similar to a CV) in the 1950s for the Soviet authorities. They claimed to be the children of peasants, workers or civil servants, because the Soviet biographical pattern did not allow one to be the descendant of an industrialist, banker or landowner, and that new social norm was widely internalised.

Everyone tries to present themselves in the told story as somebody who has integrated “both consistent and contingent” (Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000b:115), even after a clearly discontinuity-producing CT. A subject who lives in the turmoil of a changing society must rapidly cope with losses of all kind: economic restrictions, compulsory educational reshaping, ideological pressure, etc. Biographical work as “inner framing” allows an actor to find new practical orientations and to survive within an unfamiliar “frame in society”. The goal of the “re-framing” is to react both adequately and self-protectively in changing social circumstances. I propose that a personal life-trajectory undergoes a fluctuation in the process of remaking these “frames in us” within a CT. The efficiency of the reshaping of self-identity depends on the congruence between the frames in society and the framing, fermented by the habitual factors (the personal habitual memory) and the availability of necessary recourses.

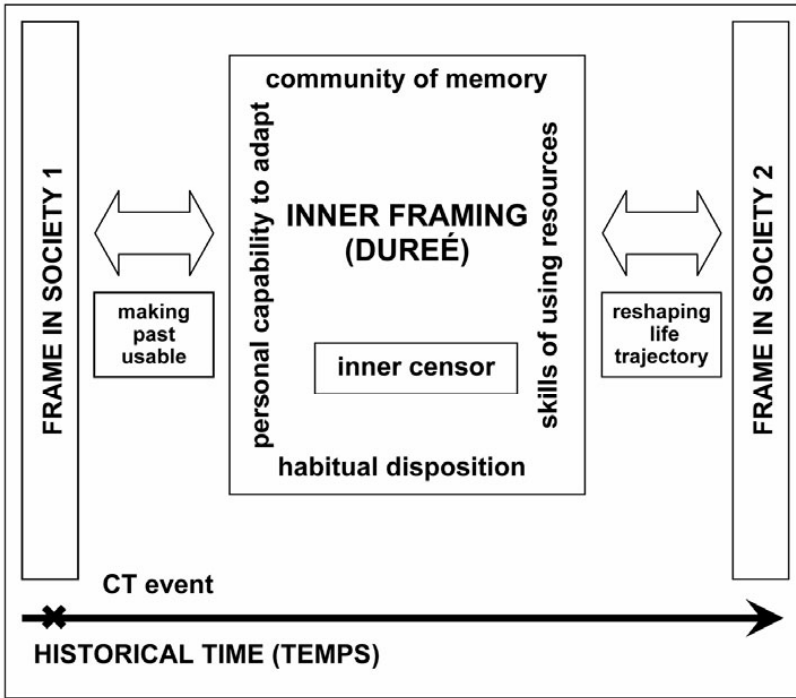


Figure 4. Relations between components in the frame analysis of a CT life-story

V. The manifestation of Post-Socialist cultural trauma in life stories

V.1. The appearance of discourses in told stories

It is characteristic of the CT life stories that the recollection of those historical events that caused uncertainty and mistrust is not direct. The life stories are instead built up as continuations of the theme of value aggression and adaptation strategies of one's parents or relatives (or even a whole nation or ethnic group). The further lives of people with immediate CT experience influence, in one way or another, the development of the life ideologies (a term coined by Pierre Bourdieu, 2000:298) of their children. In the last few years there have appeared several interesting monographs on how the terror and forced world-view accompanying the Soviet regime impacted on the life ideologies of the next generation (Bertaux&Rotkirch&Thompson, 2004; Borneman, 1998; Breckner&Kalekin-Fishman&Mieth, 2000; Humphrey&Miller&Zdravomyslova, 2003; Johnston&Snow 1998; Kõresaar, 2005; Skultans, 1998; Voronkov& Chikadze, 2003; Yurchak, 2003; etc.).

Below, I shall analyse three life stories, linked together by the fact that the tellers all belong to the second post-CT generation. It becomes evident in these stories, how the parents' strategic choices in the 1940s are connected with the children's strategic choices both during the cold war period and in the restored Estonian Republic. The three different tales clearly demonstrate how, as a result of the political turn of 1991, the respondents change their life trajectories: a) from a member of the nomenclature to a businessman (b.in the 1950s Marko - SovE); b) from a refugee child in Sweden to a university lecturer in the newly free Estonia, (b.in the 1940s Anni - SweE); c) from a successful Soviet woman to a member of a minority group with adaptation difficulties (b. mid-1940s Vera- EstR).

V.1.1. Testimonies from the reality of Soviet Estonia (Marko's case)

The analysis of Marko's life, is the only case where I can apply my personal knowledge and experience. Since I was born four years earlier than Marko, we spent most of our days within the walls of the Tartu State University together, but owing to the four-year age difference I see and remember many things from another angle, and therefore obviously belong to another community of memory. Although theoretically we might be considered to be part of the same generation, the way the consciousness of individual post-war micro-cohorts was shaped is quite varied (GENERATIONS), and it was also directly influenced by the rapid changes in the political states of the society. I consider myself to belong to the generation of the stormy 60's, and I see Marko as a child of the tamed 70's.

I am very grateful to Marko that he, as a former Komsomol and party functionary, agreed to retell his life story in 1997 the way he understood it, in the new post-restoration era of singling out the "formers". In his interview, one can find all the significant leitmotifs of Soviet-time people: the inevitability of double thought, the affairs with the KGB, the negative attitude toward the officials of Moscow, the necessity of pursuing the Estonian cause, and a respect for the Estonian culture. Yet, some seventeen years of Marko's life were spent working as a member of Komsomol and party leadership, a fact that could draw suspicious looks ten years after the occurrence of the national independence movement. In his story, Marko does not consider himself to be a "red" scapegoat; rather, he wishes to interpret these years in a human dimension, refuting some common myths about the "fat" life of party functionaries.

Marko's parents (his mother was born in 1905 and his father in 1907) clearly belong to a generation whose self-consciousness was shaped during the first years of the Republic of Estonia and who reached their middle years by the time of the Soviet occupation. They clearly remembered all that had happened and by the time of Marko's birth, had already to a degree managed to adapt to the new frame in the Soviet society. It was definitely important for the development of Marko's worldview that his father had participated in the war on the "red" side and so his family was not accompanied by any shadow of "wrong" in the past. His father's career as a goldsmith was also flawless, and in the 50's her mother's status as a housewife was still acceptable. Since Marko was the child of rather old parents, who were already retired by the time he reached his teens, his parents' career issues did not influence his own career. His father, after returning from the war as a member of the winning side, took the posi-

tion that one should respect the new order and his son should not be bothered with any long musings about lost independence. His mother and father, as was typical of Estonian households, had somewhat differing opinions on the lost republic. These issues were sometimes discussed, but without being overly emotional. Truth be told, his father's first wife and two sons had been lost during the war and that was one reason why it was not proper to speak about the old times in the family (Giesen's the "coalition of silence"). As a side remark, the lost sons did find their father in Estonia in the early 1990s, and Marko now has two English-raised half-brothers.

Marko's father had repeatedly refused the offers to enter the Communist Party (CPSU), claiming in private conversations that it was some kind of dubious Russian business. But he did not obstruct his son in his participation in Russian organisations and as a man with experience supposed that this was what young people were supposed to do under the new regime. His father's attitude formed the basis for Marko's habitual disposition towards double mental standards. By the time Marko went to school, there were very few parents left who in principle did not allow their children to become Young Pioneers. There were no such children in Marko's class, and those who were in mine were looked upon with contempt as some kind of white crows. Yet, it cannot be denied that there was a "frontier" between different homes, and the children of extremely Estonian-minded parents were very determined in their course of action. Marko saw Komsomol as his only chance of being an active young person.

Marko was a talented youngster, able to compete for a place in an elite school and in the University. The early departure from home made him receptive to the moods that prevailed in the university city of Tartu in the 1960s. While still studying in high school, he participated in the rebellious actions of the university students in 1967-1969. The Czech events opened his eyes to a more critical view of the Soviet society. He began to listen to foreign radio broadcasts and to seek additional information from half-public Russian publications. Marko was not an orthodox Communist wearing blinders, he was the same kind of hopeless seeker of truth that many other smart youngsters of his age were and are, chained to the System.

In 1997, Marko explained the beginning of his Komsomol career as a random event (*inner censorship*). He agreed, as a freshman, to become the Komsomol secretary for the students of that year, in his second year the active young man was elected as the secretary of the chemistry department, in his fifth year he accepted an offer to become the university-employed Komsomol secretary. That made him a successful Komsomol

functionary throughout his university studies, followed by the logical acceptance of the post-graduation offer to become the head of a department of the Central Committee of Komsomol. This was a clear-cut choice between the careers of a chemist and a Soviet functionary. Being the latter lasted for a long time (from 1974 to 1991), ending just a short time before CPSU itself ceased to exist. But the end of his party career did not mean Marko found himself in a “losing” position. On the contrary, he was open to new challenges and, after trying his hand at sociology for a time, became a private entrepreneur. This quick and fundamental turn demonstrates Marko’s high-level inner capability to cope with rapid social changes.

While speaking about his Komsomol career, Marko took a detached position and presented the past as consisting of mostly inane management. The prevailing tone in the interview was that we did not take it all very seriously (*inner censorship*), but we managed to do it rather intelligently and did not do any damage. This, of course, leads to the question as to why Marko wanted to become an apparatus worker if he did not take it very seriously himself. There are several answers. First, a Komsomol career was a considerable sphere of action for the young people of that period. It allowed them to later achieve leadership positions in other areas. Secondly, Marko came from a family with a neutral attitude towards the regime and did not have any conflicts with his close ones on those grounds, and Komsomol work had been a good form of socialising at school. Thirdly, Marko’s habitual traits of personality – reputable conduct, punctuality, the ability to get along with others, his peaceful mentality, and solid organisational skills – favoured his rapid promotions. Fourthly, as a child of Estonian-era parents, the keeping of Estonian-ness was important to him and the spiritual atmosphere of the young people of Tartu at that time was clearly culturally oriented. Marko spoke a lot of how in the Komsomol committee he mainly organised cultural events. Fifth, Marko was serious about the preceding cohort’s intellectuals’ views that Komsomol should be treated as their own organisation and one should use this framework to offer one’s fellow students the most diverse range of events for self-education. But the social environment around Marko began to freeze over in the 1970s, as the whole Soviet Union stagnated under the ruling gerontocracy. These years saw the smarter of the young intellectuals pull back to apolitical spheres and the Komsomol membership shifted towards people of more talk than action. Marko still continued his career, reasoning that someone had to reduce the stupidity emanating from Moscow (the older generation Estonian-inclined communists have also spoken about their position as a cork-fender, see COMMUNISTS). Marko did not speak much of his work in the very Rus-

sian-inclined CPSU Central Committee of the late 1980s (*hidden part in life story*).

Marko's attitude towards orthodox Marxists was belittling, but he was not overly radical himself, leading to his easy opinions of many of the power holders of that time. His opinion, for example, and mine on Rector Arnold Koop differ greatly. That man for me was a typical producer of Soviet word bubbles and an active participant in the Russification of the Tartu University; for Marko he was an attendant companion and an attentive follower of Komsomol life (*clearly different communities of memory*).

The comrades from KGB were annoying travelling companions for Marko, to be taken with a stoic peace of mind. The KGB presence in tourist groups going abroad, in Komsomol affairs, in teams of the Building Brigade, etc., was so customary for the Soviet young people that it was always taken into account and therefore one's words and actions were always somewhat guarded. As a typical representative of the seventies' generation Marko did not want to irritate the KGB officials and to get into any needless ideological trouble. This is a distinct difference from the sixties' generation, who were more eager to take ideological risks and who liked to brag about their ideological "conversations".

Marko's interview is full of names that he uses in trying to create a common understanding with me, since most of these names also mean something for me. But this parade of names is also evidently self-justification, demonstrating that all the people who have important positions today were once Komsomol functionaries. That was often the case, but most of those who had Komsomol dealings as students did not become career officials for seventeen years.

In the mid-1990s, there was a short-term public understanding that many of the new key positions had been taken by former Building Brigade bosses. In his interview, Marko gives a thorough explanation of the nature of the Estonian Students' Building Brigade, how he, as the regional chief organiser, arranged the tasks and how the ideological control worked. This again has a clear background of self-justification. But it also demonstrates the pattern of activity of how during the time of the Building Brigade Marko developed in him these resources that later allowed him to take the bold leap into a Russian-oriented private enterprise. These resources include experience in organisational work, a moderate willingness to take risks, and language skills. The years as a Komsomol functionary also created a functioning circle of acquaintances in Russia (*a later network resource*).

The penultimate secretary of ideology of the ECP went back to the field of sociology in 1989, and soon after Marko did the same. This did not last long, since his former supervisor caused another sharp turn in his life and

went to do scientific work in the US. Marko began working in a Russian-oriented know-how company.

Estonian-ness has never left Marko indifferent, and it takes on a new shape in the winds of independence. Namely, he began to assist his wife's eager creation of a voluntary society of women's handcraft and supported it in a managerial position. The activities of the society have found widespread recognition and Marko has succeeded in accompanying his wife in the reception of the President of the Republic, wearing a full national costume. Today he is creating an ethno-retro farmstead with his wife – it is a new trend that has come to Estonia through the Nordic countries. Marko is always going along with the Estonian ideal and inspired by new things, which means that he continuously has the inner capacity for re-framing.

Marko has two talented daughters, and both have been raised in a strongly national environment. By now they have both gone abroad. Marko's English half-brothers have played some role in this, helping the girls to get out of Estonia during their high school days. At the time of the interview in 1997, Marko was assisting his older daughter in preparing to enter one of the US universities, wishing to provide his children with a better education than that of his own in Soviet Estonia. The daughters went to stay, and so Marko has also assisted the outflow of talented people that was actually quite widespread in Estonia at the end of the 1990s.

V.1.2. The refugee romance (Anni's case)

Anni did not have the usual life of a child of the boat refugees. As a rule, this leads to strong integration into the new home country's culture in the second generation and completes assimilation in the third generation. Anni is special, in that she is one of the few of those descendants of the war refugees who have returned to Estonia after the restoration of independence. Moreover, she was accompanied by her husband and one daughter, and her other three children also have strong ties to Estonia. They have, despite being third generation migrants, kept their Estonian language and spirit alive and are passing it along to their own children.

Anni was an active interviewee, she herself analysed how everything happened, which were the main turning points in refugee life, when becoming Swedish was the choice of most of the people who had left Estonia in panic in 1944. Anni's tale is one of creating a double social framework, which is the central strategy for managing long-term cultural trauma (*intergenerational transmission of habitual disposition*). One framework is based on the memory modes that keep the culture and language of the home country (*frame in society 1*) alive through several generations. The

other framework develops as a sequence of pragmatic adaptations, where one has to avoid emigration anxiety and wailing for the past (*frame in society 2*).

Her parents' escape from Estonia in 1944 was inevitable, since her father had worked in the state propaganda service, a fact that guaranteed – in the instance of staying behind and being captured – certain deportation to Siberia. Anni, one year of age at that time, began her new life with her mother's mother, mother, father and young uncle. As a child, she lived in a kind environment that was later termed "Little Estonia" (*a community of memory*). The latter was essentially an imagined community in the sense of Benedict Anderson (2002), created in the first ten years of exile of the Estonians. "Little Estonia" was a typical conservative Diaspora, where people prevalently hoped for a quick return, since it was unimaginable that the Allies would leave the Baltic people to the Russians. Encouraged by that illusion, many middle-aged and elderly Estonians did not want to learn Swedish, and created only a bare minimum relationship with the Swedes. The inter-Estonian communication was very strong in the first years. People offered council and assistance to each other and there was a lot there that inspired voluntary activity. Anni's main playmates were other Estonian children and it was her grandmother who stayed at home and raised her. Her rather young parents (some 25 years old) managed to quickly find professional work appropriate for their Estonian education and training (*strong capacity to cope*). Many refugees did not succeed in that and the corresponding fall in social hierarchy created widespread bitterness in the Estonian communities. Her grandmother's fate was similar to that of many other middle-aged female immigrants who could only get temporary jobs to do at home (*weak capacity to cope*).

Her childhood spent with her housekeeping grandmother and her companionship with other boat-refugees built the foundation of this part of Anni's consciousness that knows and remembers everything about Estonia (including some things she actually should not be able to remember). Unlike many other families, her home did not have the characteristic migrant enmity towards the host nation à la "these full-of-themselves Svenssons". Anni's parents soon realised that there was no way back and therefore they had to practically and actively establish themselves in the Swedish society (*her parents' capacity to cope*). They tried to understand the finer details of Swedish customs and habits so as not to commit any breach of etiquette. But they still emphasised that among Estonians one should behave like an Estonian.

The six-year-old Anni was sent to a Swedish school, despite her rather modest language skills. Her parents were loathe to educate her in the Estonian School in Stockholm for the following reasons: a) in that school

there were too many older Estonian-era teachers with adaptation problems of their own; b) a child was expected to make a clear distinction between the languages used in school and at home; c) the school was too far from home. Anni adapted quickly in her new school, and neither the teachers nor other children made an issue of her lacking Swedish. In half a year she was already creating an acting group with her class. She associated with Swedish children at school, but when she got home she hurried to play with other Estonian kids (a formation of habitual disposition toward multi-culturality).

When Anni spoke about her schoolwork, she emphasised her mother's smart decision of using Estonian to check what she had learned from the Swedish textbooks. Her parents had set their goal to teaching their two daughters (Anni's younger sister was Swedish-born) flawless Estonian with a rich vocabulary, so that it would not be a "kitchen language" so common among refugees. Walking along the line between the two languages and cultures, they developed double mental and behavioural standards in Anni's mind, without leading to contradictions or competition. When Anni became a young lady, she could act equally well as an Estonian or a Swede; she did not suffer from the migrant complex.

Anni went to university as a member of a large cohort, since there were many escapees from Estonia who had small children. When choosing a major, she was somewhat stuck, since as a young person with a broad outlook she tried to embrace too many things. Generally speaking, many people of her age had trouble choosing their specialties, since there was great pressure from home to only choose professions that would be necessary under any political regime. The "good" professions included dentists, dental technicians, engineers, doctors and other apolitical occupations; the "bad" ones were those in human and social sciences. The majority of Estonians considered it absolutely necessary to provide a university education for their children, since that was supposedly the only way to be successful in Sweden. Mostly the parents succeeded in doing this, but it could also leave a negative mark on the future lives of their children. The conversation with Anni also touched the "biological" losses due to refugee trauma: the collapses under parental pressure (insanity, suicides).

The first university degree Anni obtained was that of a pharmacist. The university period was rather active and happy for her, and her double culture was dominant in every sphere of her life. She had distinct circles of friends among both Estonians and Swedes and she even had Estonian and Swedish boyfriends at the same time. Her habitual Estonian-ness found an outlet in the newly created Estonian student society of the Stockholm University (*a community of memory*). It should be mentioned here that many of the former Estonian fraternities were re-established in exile

(CIVIL), but several of them did not accept new members and developed into memorial societies of a kind. The Swedish-raised young people inevitably had to create their own societies if they wanted to have any Estonian-language-oriented student life. The cohort-based student society developed into an exclusive bride market and soon after young Estonian-minded families began to emerge. Anni married a young man a little older than herself, one who studied a “bad” field of social geography and who was also the son of a prominent member of the exile community. The members of that student society constituted a significant social network in her later life. They reaffirmed their life-long friendships by becoming the godparents of each other’s children.

After a few years as a pharmacist, Anni stayed at home, because she had borne four children with only a few years between each birth. She repeated her mother’s strategy in choosing her children’s language and cultural space (*habitual disposition as an intergenerational transmission belt*). Her children’s first language was to be Estonian and to achieve this Anni decided to stay at home and raise them herself. It was easy to create an Estonian-language environment, since both grandparents gave their full support. The playmates of her children were the children of her acquaintances from the student society and as a preparation for the Swedish environment, a few times a week she took her children to a Swedish playing circle.

As she stayed at home with the children, Anni developed an interest in the then popular bilingual issues. Estonians were one of the first big refugee groups after the Great War (1701-1721), but by the 1970s Sweden had become a society of many migrant communities. This in turn developed the needs to find appropriate methods for teaching Swedish as a secondary target language to people with very different backgrounds. Anni had even earlier taken an interest in how the Estonian language changed in the Swedish environment. Now it became clear that this interest could have applications and Anni entered the university for a second time. At first, she did so timidly, and more in the spirit of self-improvement and for stimulating her cultural orientation that had been left into the background earlier. But soon it became clear that despite having four children, the help of her parents allowed her to devote her full attention to school-work and even have a part-time job. Anni followed the path of social linguistics, and her own double culture became a valuable resource (*skill to use resources*). The transformation of the Estonian language in successive generations of exile Estonians became the theme of her PhD thesis.

Her experience of double culture opened up another interesting field of work – teaching Swedish to immigrants. By teaching Swedish to Arabs, she significantly improved her competence in interpreting multiple cultures.

But before she reached the point of applying her new experience more extensively in Sweden, another sudden turn approached. Her husband as a renowned regional planner was invited to work in Africa. The family was glad to accept that offer and together they went to study the possibility of life in a completely different cultural space. Owing to the strong education policy of Sweden, Anni found work in Lesotho and taught Swedish to the Swedish children in the local international school. The African travels of the family lasted for three and a half years, after that it was time for another turning point.

While Anni was in Africa, the winds of independence began to blow in Estonia. A fantastic turn of events had the whole international community in Lesotho sympathising with her family and commenting on the BBC news. Another trick of fate was that Anni's family was planning to visit Tallinn in the summer of 1991 during their vacation in Stockholm. The trip was booked on precisely the day the Republic of Estonia was restored - August 20. The accompanying confusion postponed the trip, but Anni was right in the middle of the events even in Stockholm. She met the leaders of the People's Front, participated in the pro-Baltic demonstrations and felt that the developments in her original homeland were personally important to her.

Anni's husband went from Africa straight to Estonia in 1992, and became a government counsellor. Anni represented Estonian interests in Sweden for a while and soon came to Estonia as well, together with her daughter. Her three sons also have connections to Estonia either through study or work. Anni and her husband had no doubts about coming back to their homeland, which at that moment was rather chaotic. All their lives had been in preparation of this return. Anni claims that if her husband's father had been active in building up the republic in the 1920s, it was natural for the son to help restore that republic.

V.1.3. The fall of the dreamland for the Estonian Russians (Vera's case).

It is a typical story of a woman who, by a turn of fate, has settled in Estonia. The development of the early life trajectory clearly marks her as a carrier of Soviet values and a person who in the long run is able to create the resources needed to lead a successful life in the Soviet society. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a catastrophe for her, because this changed the general frame of structure and her quality of life. Her life trajectory went head over heels. Yet, in the time of the Republic of Estonia she could

find some adaptation strategies, she reassessed her values, acquired new economical and cultural resources and utilised them. She finishes her life story on a positive note, finding that at the moment she does just as well as most of the Russians living in Estonia.

Vera was born as an unwed child in the late forties in Tallinn. Her mother, who was a young specialist recently assigned there to do pedagogical work, coming from the Leningrad district, belonged to the first generation of Russian invaders. Vera herself notes that she saw the light of day only because abortion was strictly forbidden in Stalinist times. Her mother sent the unwanted and unhealthy child off her hands to her own mother in the Novgorod district and with this act placed the cornerstone of Vera's later cultural trauma, just because she did not want to deal with an unwanted child while being in the middle of her own migration-related adaptation difficulties. Living with her grandmother, Vera's first habitual disposition was shaped by the atmosphere of a very small and very poor Russian village, which was common in the post-war conditions in USSR. Two mandarins and a small bar of chocolate were real New Year presents for her. Despite the destitute conditions, her grandmother raised Vera in an ambitious spirit: getting a "four" at school was a disgrace. Vera's childhood relations with her "long-distance" mother were episodic: she couldn't even recognise her mother when she was sent to meet her in the railway station. Her relations with mother's new husband and her new half-sister were extremely superficial and so Vera's formative years lacked such an essential resource as the familial network of relationships.

At sixteen Vera reached the age of getting her own passport. It turned out that she had never been registered as living with her grandmother, as if she had been in Tallinn the whole time. So Vera travelled to her mother with the goal of getting her passport. She fell in love with Tallinn at first sight and she wanted to live with the family of her mother and to go to high school in Estonia. Her mother reluctantly agreed, on the condition that she would find a job for herself. So Vera's life of scarce resources continued: living in the shacks, having a job as a postal worker, the paltry clothes, and poor progress at the evening school, her mother's chilly attitude. Vera's first attempt at studying in a university bore no fruit.

Vera's mother came to Tallinn at a time when the presence and the unique living environment of the Estonians were still visible to the newcomers. Sixteen years later, the Russians had already managed to create their own separate living order, excluding the knowledge of the Estonians' lost independence and any necessity to use Estonian in public dealings whatsoever. Vera's *habitus* was constantly shaped by the living conditions of the common Russian people in Tallinn. She worked in an engineering

plant manned by Soviet migrants and later on the railway, which was also primarily the domain of immigrated Russians. When she was 20 years old, she found herself a boyfriend from the Sailors' Club, something very characteristic of the Russian community. Soon afterwards Vera married him hastily and the man promptly went to serve his compulsory years in the Soviet army. The relationship with her mother went from bad to worse, and Vera found herself in a place so typical of the foreign labour brought to Estonia – an *obshhezhitije* (worker's dormitory). The strained mother-daughter relationship ensured that Vera's mother's experience of living in a culturally different post-war atmosphere was not transmitted. Vera knew nothing about the Estonian ideals, she did not need to speak Estonian and she had no Estonian acquaintances. She truly integrated the official Soviet values, and she was also a part of the merry-go-round of the deficit society, where everyone tried to create more suitable living conditions for themselves, using only very limited resources (*community of memory*).

After a few years of living in Estonia, Vera was able to start looking for some better living resources. Her superiors gave her a letter of recommendation for entering the extramural studies at the Leningrad Institute of Engineers of Railway Transportation. Her husband returned from the army and they had their first child. Soon after they got a very modest one-room apartment for their own. They were madly happy, since at that time, one usually had to wait in a queue for a flat for many years. The first in line were the war veterans, work heroes or the authorities.

Through the clever use of the frames of structure of the Socialist society, Vera's life trajectory clearly appears to be adequate for her thirties. She had with higher education become a professional. She also had a husband and two children, a secure job with good pay at a military factory, and a new state-given two-room apartment in a newly built house. And she had managed to bring the one, personally most close person of her to Estonia – her grandmother. On a side note, Vera never mentioned her grandmother's relationship with her mother and her family (*hidden topic*), though some relations had to exist. A once abandoned child, disfavoured by fate, had become a grown woman, successful in settling in Estonia and believing in herself, and in a better future (*good enough capacity to cope with the circumstances*).

Then a crisis hit - her grandmother died, her husband began to drink, and she got a divorce. Vera was resolute and wanted to leave Estonia forever. She took her children and travelled to a female friend in the Urals, trying to begin a new life. Soon she realised that it was not all that simple and consequently returned to Tallinn. Despite her divorce she returned to the same man and lived in the same apartment. An additional bonus from

the trip to the Urals, was falling in love with the beauty and vastness of Russia. Thus Vera acquired a new cultural background besides her Estonian one, which developed into a temporary resource for managing the economical chaos at the beginning of the 1990s. She considered the next ten years of her life to be good, with the obvious exception of the death of one of her children. To compensate for this tragedy, she had another child, again with her ex-husband.

A new turning point occurred in her early forties. For Vera, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the independence of Estonia meant a collapse of her general frames of structure and a gloom in her life trajectory. She had never questioned the essence of the Soviet way of life; everything had been taken for granted forever and life had mainly consisted of everyday routine and overcoming occasional hardships (habitual disposition). The restoration of the Republic of Estonia came out of the blue for her: everything had been fine, what kind of independence do these Estonians want! It appears that she was lacking a resource essential for managing the changed conditions – some command of the Estonian language. The establishment of Estonian as the official language seemed unjust and ruinous, and as a result the Estonians and their state became repulsive to her.

The change of regime cost her the advantageous job, which had meant not only good pay but also plentiful trips to the commodity-rich Moscow. Their family survived the beginnings of the market economy rather well, because they managed to set up a Russian-oriented family business in rubber technology. The business started to fail after 1992, when, in an act that Vera considered as insult to Russian national pride, the Estonian kroon replaced the rouble as the national currency.

The Russian economic blockade of Estonia put Vera and her husband in an extremely difficult position, as their capacity to utilise new resources was seriously diminished. The family was simultaneously hit by unemployment, the danger of losing their apartment, and health problems. As a result of this social and cultural shock Vera's husband developed a heart disease within a single year. The Russian army's departure from Estonia in 1994 seemed both frightening and oppressing: the last serious stronghold disappears, and they are amazed by the brutality of the departing soldiers.

Vera had identity problems, and owing to her weak link with her mother, these were more pronounced than those of other Estonian-born Russians of the same age. Life in Russia had not been unknown to Vera, yet she had twice decided in favour of Estonia. Her being cut off from the Motherland, the expanding Estonian nationalism, and the obligation and necessity to learn at least some Estonian all disturbed her. She felt herself a member of a frightened ethnic splinter, in danger of being alienated from the Great Russian identity. Vera felt she was an unhappy Russian

who did not dare use her Russian on a tram.

Then, a few years after the restitution, she realised that the Russian community in Estonia was big enough to stand up for their rights. It happened during a Russian Easter celebration in a cemetery full of other Russians. It is notable, that it was the traditional rites of the whole family going to the cemetery and holding a feast with the deceased in celebration of the religious holiday that awakened a new feeling of identity in Vera. She understood that they, as a nation, would not disappear in Estonia, because they were numerous (*the use of an inherited cultural resource*).

The transition period and the accompanying loosening of double cultural trauma were unleashed for Vera in 1988. It was then that her eyes opened to the fact that she lived in a foreign territory and could not understand the aims of the Estonians. Another trauma arrived a few years later, when she faced the fact that her position and material benefits, the result of 20 years of work, had lost their meaning with the departure of the Soviet order.

Vera and her husband have managed to struggle through their post-Socialist cultural traumas. In that process, they have lost several of their earlier resources, like their professional skills due to the Soviet higher education, the Russian work environment, their acquaintances and business partners in Russia, their well-paid state-guaranteed jobs etc. Their coping strategy has been that of active adaptation in the conditions of changed social frameworks. Vera has acquired new, though less-qualified skills at accounting, her husband has become self-employed and, despite his university diploma, works as a solitary entrepreneur in the field of repair works for private apartments. Vera has learned a minimum of Estonian necessary for her work and adapted to her Estonian work community. Their income still remains notably below average, but they manage to make ends meet. Despite several crises, she still lives with the same man whom she married in her twenties and with whom she has raised three children together (though one of them has already died). Their habitual disposition has barred them from being more successful in the Estonian cultural space, and so they have not managed to obtain Estonian citizenship. This fact bothers them, but does not prevent them from being sufficiently tolerant in their attitude towards the Estonian state. Their self-identity that seemed to be on the verge of vanishing has once again obtained a clear shape. Their younger daughter, born in the 80's, is an undergraduate student with Estonian as the language of instruction.

V.2. The appearance of strategies for coping with cultural trauma in life stories

None of my respondents talk about strategies for coping with cultural trauma – I can't even ask that kind of theory questions (Wengraf, 2001). Every biographer rather tells the story from the point of view of suffering in the conditions of rapid political change. The told life is a sequence of everyday events, real episodes taken from critical situations, but the narration imposes a new order on them, one that is significant for the subject at that moment. Crises in the society “always affect the substance of our biography because they put at risk any reconstructable or anticipated continuity of our self-plan” (Alheit, 1994:310). In the life stories, the value collapses in the social environment are interpreted as personal turning points, after which the previous identity could no longer be retained. The value collapse confuses one's everyday routine, the self-evident repetition of customary events. Patrick Baert has described that chaos as a situation, where “...people are faced with unexpected experiences which disrupt the continuous flow of daily life and threaten its taken-for-granted character” (Baert, 1992:321). Every respondent has lived through such a situation according to his or her own sense of danger and has tried to pass through the distorted times by means he or she can personally comprehend and manage. I have listened to 148 CT life stories connected with Estonia, and I have started to treat them as “windows into the problematic past”. After opening just one or a few of them, the disruption of everyday life is not yet visible, and neither are any of the collective strategies for coping with the objectionable rift. This only becomes possible by comparing the views of the past as seen through many of the “windows”, creating a broader panorama (the “window”-method was explored by Paul Thompson, 1978, and described as theoretical bases to understand any social change 1981a:289). Following the ideas of Pierre Nora, such a panorama of the past could be called the *lieux de mémoire*, “in which a residual sense of continuity remains” (Nora, 1996:1). Such *lieux de mémoire* could be interpreted to be the collective memories of passing from one social frame to another, memories of the mechanisms of managing the value collision. Yet the researcher can only see such a historio-sociological panorama, and only the personal configuration can ever be real for any particular storyteller.

When talking about CT, one must respect every unique experience; yet also try to find a common denominator for those phenomena mentioned in many, or most, of the stories. Such phenomena may be called the leit-motifs (term used in biographical research also by Anna Rotkirch,

2000:34) of talking about survival and continuing. By mentally questioning and searching through the biographies I have collected over the years, I have tried to grasp these actual social practices that have become parts of the collective mechanism for managing the value collapse. The respondents have their personal ways of talking about these practices (*singular*) and generalisations and comparisons can only be made after listening to a sufficient number of interviews (*universal*).

When are there enough narratives for generalisation? Daniel Bertaux has established the generalisation-enabling numerical sufficiency of interviews in terms of saturation: “the point at which new interviews failed to provide additional information but merely reiterated previously noted patterns” (Miller, 2000:77; also Bertaux, 1981:37). In the case of the interviews conducted with the exiled Estonians in Sweden and the Russians in Estonia, such a point of saturation arrived after listening to about thirty interviews. Then the presentation of compensatory social practices started to repeat itself. Determining the saturation point was somewhat more difficult in the case of the Estonian stories of everyday life in Soviet Estonia, since I shared the cultural context with the interviewees, and thus I was more interested in factual variety for achieving a more authentic panorama.

My Estonian respondents have mostly belonged to the Republican Generation (b.1920-1940) or the Generation of Thaw (b.1941-1960), and the Swedish Estonian equivalent would be the Second Generation of the boat refugees (born from after 1944 till the 1960s). For the Russophone migrants to Estonia in Soviet times, I have also paid attention to the generational aspect, with an emphasis on preferring people who arrived after WWII to those who got here in the 1970s and the 1980s. In my analysis of the interviews, I have searched for widespread common social practices, used in different cultural contexts and generations, which has become the inter-generational transmission belts for coping with cultural trauma. I have been less interested in any personal opinions about the sharp changes and have rather tried to reconstruct the fields (*champs*) of social practice where the actual adaptation took place. I make use of the stories of decades-old social practices for adapting to the radically transformed environment in order to find out the main fields where the coping strategies arise.

V.2.1. Double mental standards

I have given detailed descriptions of balancing between two contradictory “frames in society” in several articles (STANDARDS, COMMUNISTS, THEORY), and in my Estonian-language monograph (Aarelaid, 1998).

Especially in the Republican generation there is a lot of talk about troublesome situations when one must clearly understand the context of

the actions. This is the generation that has had to go through several changes in the “frame of society”: the alternating Soviet-German-Soviet occupations in the 1940s and the collapse of the Socialist system in the 1990s. On both shores of the Baltic Sea, I found elderly respondents who talked frankly about their tricks of adapting to the alien circumstances. They mentioned beguiling, lying to the authorities, pretending to be somebody else, morally unpleasant compromises, etc. To be able to utilize double standards, was often a question of survival for the members of that generation.

The main theme for the Second Generation is that of balancing the different mental atmospheres at home and in the society (about Soviet “split subjectivity” see Yurchak, 2003:483). The homeland Estonians emphasise that their parents never told them much about the lost republic, although they stressed the need to support and develop the Estonian cause. A different, imagined era and its mentality were gleaming through the reality of Socialist society, and it was always difficult and sometimes dangerous to find one’s way between these two worlds (the case of Marko). The children of the boat refugees instead told stories of how older people could not adapt to the new circumstances and they as young persons had to do the “translating” between home and the society. As an example of that discourse I shall give an excerpt from the dialogue between myself, AA (b. 1947, SovE), and another person of the same age, NN (b. 1946, SweE). The interview was conducted in Stockholm in 2002, and it is notable that both the interviewee and I are currently university lecturers.

NN: We always talked in school, that all people are equal. But we were like that, Estonians are in their own way and the other people were not so valuable as if or so...

AA: Did you encounter a double- standard phenomenon as a young girl, then?

NN: Yes, absolutely! I understood that my parents could not manage that people with other ideas also existed. I had to explain some things to them.

AA: You had to translate social affairs at home?

NN: Had to translate and so keep them well informed...However, I acted differently in school and at home, but neither of them could see it. I acted in a hidden manner.

AA: So, you gave the impression that you behaved like they wanted at home and in school?

NN: Yes.

AA: But your family did not understand well enough what was going on in the Swedish society, right?

NN: Yes.

V.2.2 Re-ritualisation of the life path

The rites of passage are noteworthy systems for reckoning human time, a system that has an important role in the shaping of the life path in any culture. The rites of passage are some of the most conservative traditions, vividly expressing the continuity of social life. In biographical interviews, the rites (confirmations, weddings and funerals) are described as personally significant events, as something very memorable, yet free of troubles. The fate of Estonians in the chaos of war has offered an interesting opportunity for an almost anthropological comparison. Namely, the Estonians who had followed the same, mostly Lutheran rites of passage up until 1944, were suddenly divided into those who fled abroad and those who stayed behind. And I, as a researcher, could observe how, after half a century had passed by, these traditions had slowly acquired new appearances after their immersion in different social contexts (ADAPTATION).

For the Swedish Estonians, by the 2000s the use of Estonian during the ceremonies had largely disappeared. Even during the funerals of older people, Swedish (or English) was prevalent and there were just a few interludes of singing one or two songs in Estonian and reading a few psalms from the Estonian Bible. The rites of passage had become significantly commercial; every element had its price tag and the rite had become a marketable commodity. Yet, the rites of passage were still strongly connected to the Lutheran church.

The homeland Estonians had, during Sovietisation, experienced several oddities, which the participants themselves can still remember, but which otherwise will soon be forgotten. There were tales of the 1950s campaign against wedding rings as bourgeois relics, of double baptisms and weddings (the official one in the registry and the secret one at the pastor's), etc. Since the new order saw the Lutheran church as a great enemy, the enthusiastic Komsomol leaders tried to invent new Soviet traditions and therefore protect the Soviet youth from Christian Confirmations. As an example I shall give an excerpt from the story of an Estonian-minded top Communist (SovE), describing the invention of the alternative "Forest Confirmation":

We started to organise Summer Days for the young people. How should a young person's maturation be celebrated? There was no Confirmation as such, which means that it was performed underground. There were Summer Days to celebrate turning eighteen, and these were state-level, in the best times there were far more than twelve thousand youths participating each year. This was a youth-oriented activity, perhaps with the least amount of politics. The only thing, which of course was traditional,

was the meeting with old Communists...For the whole winter the young people went to all kinds of courses, where they were taught medicine, home economics, culture, literature, and sports. The culmination was a one-week summer camp, where people lived in tents and learned, or more precisely listened to, lectures, participated in sports activities, had conversations and discussions, so it was really a big event, moreover very enthusiastically supported by the kolkhozes. The special value of the Summer Days was in that really renowned people of the republic came there, writers, artists, masters of culture, dancing masters were especially prized, one had to have a dancing master. People started to call these Summer Days secular Confession or Forest Confession. (A male, b. 1931, Party functionary - cit. by Aareleid, 1998:145)

Calendar traditions are much more sensitive to the political heel-turns than the customs that mark the passage of life. Every regime brings its own list of official holidays and the people are left to give it their public approval and in the private sphere the former holidays can still be continued. So the officially forbidden tradition of Christmas was celebrated behind heavy curtains and developed into a widespread demonstration of homeland Estonian mentality. In the exile Estonian calendar, the Christmas tradition retained its place, but the new main event of the year was the celebration of the anniversary of the lost Republic of Estonia. It is interesting to note that in Sweden every year there was an annual Deportation Day, to commemorate the first deportation of June 14, 1941. It was that Soviet show of force that pushed many to escape to the West in 1944. For the homeland Estonians it was more important to celebrate 26 March, since that was the date of the second and more extensive deportation to Siberia in 1949 (so the community of memories of the boat refugees and the homeland Estonians are not overlapping; see Figure 5).

The calendar change issue was very active in the life stories of the Estonian Russians, with the leitmotif of the disappearance of the Soviet-time holidays and the inability to accept that (EstR):

The whole system of values was turned upside down. The holidays were abolished. But did they think about what a person lives for? Probably most of the holidays should have been retained. Everything should have been thought out and planned ahead. Now, everything is just destroyed in a revolutionary manner. (A male, b. 1941)

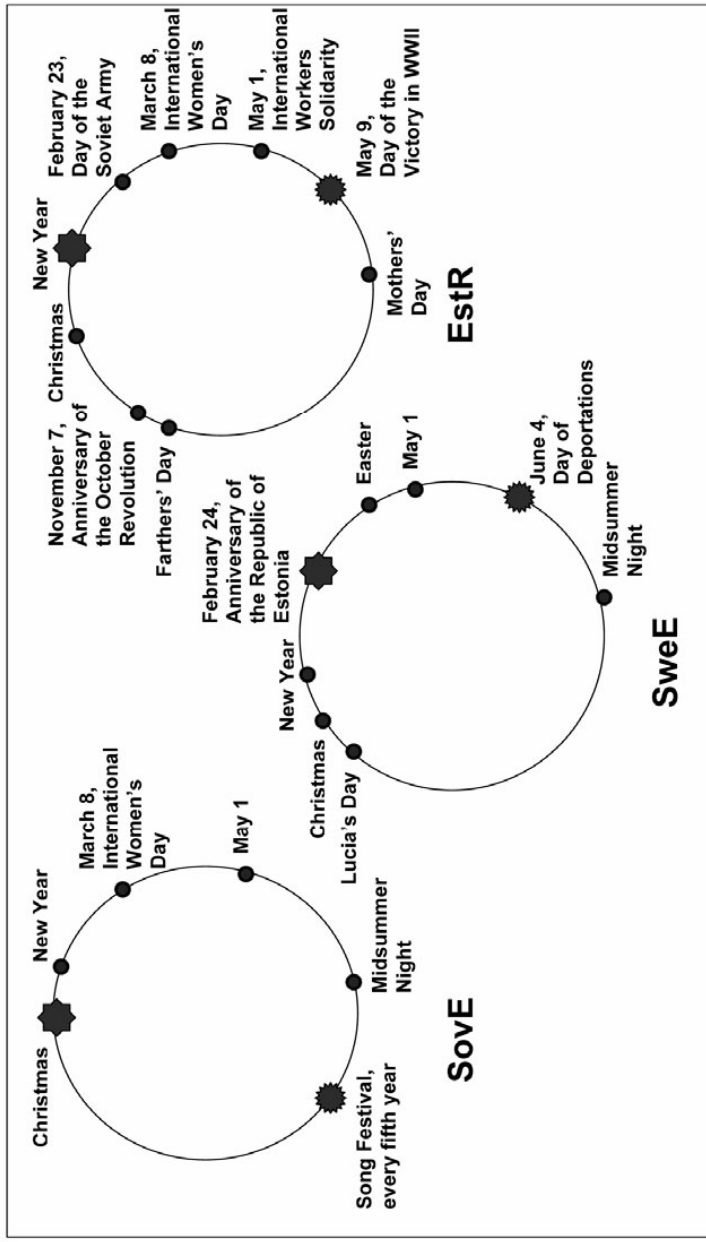


Figure 5. Calendars as presented in the three CT discourses

I found a rather mischievous thought in an interview, one that is proof

of the double mental standards concerning the calendar traditions (EstR):

Talking about the holidays, people like us here in Estonia have precisely twice as many as those in Russia. Of course we celebrate the Estonian holidays like the Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day. I mean in particular the people's holidays. Not the ones some state or another has declared as its birthday. May 9 is also a people's holiday, although people try to pass this by and forget about it, it is a real holiday for us Russians and will remain so. I like this abundance of holidays very much. (A male, b. 1957)

V.2.3. Reordering of the grass-root initiatives

While the literature on the last two strategies for coping with cultural trauma is not extensive (Kirss, et al. 2004; Tulviste&Wertsch, 1994), many people have written on the topic of the Estonian voluntary societies as a significant asset for preserving Estonian-ness in spite of the unfavourable political conditions (Aarelaid&Siisiäinen, 1993; Aarelaid, 1996; Gross, 2002; Hackmann, 2003; Jansen, 1993; Johnston&Snow, 1998; Raun, 1991; Ruutsoo, 2002, etc.). In the current work, I shall give a more in-depth description of the role of civil initiative in the post-collapse situation, both in my joint work with Anu Kannike on the topic of the Singing Nationalism (SINGING), and in the comparison of post-WWII recoveries of civil structures (CIVIL). In the life stories I have gathered, the leitmotif of participating in society activity in order to preserve one's national identity is quite common. Just like in the case of the rites of passage, one can observe how the common institutional and mental structures that had developed by the 1940s underwent a sharp separation into homeland and exile poles.

The Estonians' strong involvement with the voluntary societies was a valuable social and cultural capital, allowing them to seek new social practices that would help them cope with the CT. By using these civic institutions, people started to probe the new regime's limits of approved and forbidden activities. In the previous studies, the voluntary societies have mostly been described in terms of events and numbers of participants, and so the biographical method could bring "new attention to the subjective and discursive dimension of collective action" (Melluci, 1995:57) in suppressive conditions. The respondents have told me how important it was for them to participate in the environmental activities, folk dance and local studies groups (SovE), or in the events of the Estonian House, in Boy Scout camps, student fraternities, the Forest University and the ESTO days (SweE).

It is the researcher's task to analyse how "different regime types and

different forms of repression generate different kind of social movements with differing tactics and internal cultures” (Swidler, 1995:37). I have shown in my analysis (CIVIC) that despite the institutional similarities (Estonian choirs, dancing troupes and youth organisations) on the two sides of the Baltic Sea, the goals of voluntary activity in the longer period of 1944-1991 were considerably divergent. For the homeland Estonians, the voluntary societies were important because these enabled them to create an alternate reality, in which they could oppose the Party bureaucratic public sphere.

My career as a folk dancer began already in high school and lasted throughout university, postgraduate studies and even later, until 1975. Starting in 1965, I was a dancer on the university’s folk art ensemble. This was a form of social experience, cultivating both the body and the spirit. In keeping fit, dancing was a alternative to sports. Dancing made me feel happy, and I think there was more than enough Estonian-ness in that feeling. We went to folk dance festivals in Estonia, to the Baltic “Gaudeamus”; everywhere it was our own Estonian folk dancing, which made us feel like true Estonians, even when we were dancing Russian folk dances. This did not include talking about being an Estonian, it was purely a way of being an Estonian. (A male, b. 1946, researcher - cit. by Aarelaid, 1998:181)

On Swedish soil the societies were needed to legalise the identity of the Estonian boat refugees as a minority group (of ca 28 400 people by 1945 – Raag, 1999:70).

IP: We had our own Boy Scout patrol with perhaps fifteen, at most seventeen youngsters. And we were interested in trips, moving about in the nature, knots of all kinds, first aid, all these kinds of things. And of course national upbringing; this means that it had a national direction. We had triangular neckerchiefs with a blue-black-and-white sign, in which were the three thin heraldic lions behind the back. And in Sweden we had some twenty teams like that in different places.

AA: All over Sweden?

IP: All over Sweden, yes. We went to annual meetings together, we had jamborees. And the Boy Scout leader training... and it was such an intensive national co-operation.

AA: What did the Swedes think of the Estonian organisations?

IP: The Swedish people do not go to societies very much. But we had a special reason, because we wanted to preserve our Estonian-ness,

Estonian contacts through the society, and...to see our people.

(SweE: a male, b. 1931, engineer, chairman of several Estonian societies in Sweden)

On the topic of the third CT discourse (EstR), I can only say that there are practically no civil initiative leitmotifs to be found. It is not as if there is no civil initiative among the present-day Russians in Estonia. Rather, it is not customary to talk about that when telling one's life story.

V.3. Towards social becoming through cultural trauma

Piotr Sztompka writes about the two paradoxes of human experience (Sztompka, 1991:16-17). The first is that we live in a “two-sided world”, a world that our actions construct and a world that powerfully constrain us. That paradox can also be expressed through the evergreen opposition of good “own” and an evil “other”. The second paradox is the opposition of stability and movement, repetition and novelty, continuity and discreteness. This may also be exhibited as a paradox of time or the human desire to control uncertainty and to avoid the finality of one's being. Although these paradoxes are an inevitable part of every human life, an actor has no need to acknowledge them in everyday routines.

Yet these paradoxes become visible during sharp turns on both social and individual levels. In this work, CT has been taken into consideration as a crisis uniting the social and the individual, when the biographical subject is coerced to recognise oneself as a participant in a rapid transformation. The CT life stories picture the teller as an object of a U-turn (a constraining world) and also as a subject (a constructor of a new world).

The CT life stories manifest not only the motive emphasised by the teller, that of forced circumstances, but also the richness of social becoming in its reality. Sztompka understands social becoming foremost as an actor's activity to find the opportunities for positive progress in unfavourable circumstances. Without unduly delving into the theory of social becoming, I just claim that based on the empirical material it is difficult to give positive or negative meaning to post-CT developments. It would be more correct to speak of proliferation of the generation of social novelty.

In my previous analysis I demonstrated that individuals belonging to the same birth cohort (the Republican Generation, 1920-1940) adapted very differently after the tragic social event of 1944, and created a wide array of new social practices. For some it became necessary to quickly

learn Swedish, others needed Russian instead. The former started to collect funds to create a spiritual home for those who had escaped to Sweden: the Estonian House. The latter made a successful attempt to restore the national song festival tradition with Moscow's financial support. The third micro cohort deemed it vital to participate in the building of the "Red" institutions carrying Soviet mentality. Estonian novels appeared in 1950s in Sweden with insights into the newly created exile world. At the same time Soviet Estonia learned to write odes to Socialism and to compose Soviet mass songs. At the same time the Siberian political prisoners developed Estonian-language prison camp poetry.

Yuri Lotman has spoken of cultural explosion and the following flood of code searching. Piotr Sztompka considers social becoming after cultural trauma (Sztompka, 2000). In my work, I have shown how a traumatic event is followed by a period of coping with the results, when a multitude of new social practices are created, which later manifest as biographical tales of what had happened.

The mushrooming of new social practices can certainly be considered as social becoming, during which new behavioral and cognitive patterns are created. Many of the social practices that emerge after a CT are naturally experimental, because after the radical change of the "frame in society" many traditional ways of thinking and acting lose their relevance. At the time of their formation the new practices may be positively evaluated, but after a while, the belief can change and the public opinion changes to scorn or ridicule. Here, I would like to recall the biographical fragments about the zealous founders of the Komsomol Confirmation, who seemed innovative in the 1950s, and antiheroes or eager Communist disciples in the 1990s. The lives of people who tried to create a new world through practices initiated at certain points in time can no longer be changed. But the succeeding political regimes and new generations can form their beliefs. A biographer's only means of self-defence is therefore the construction of a past usable for both oneself and others.

The task of the social researcher is not evaluation of lives that are already lived through. There is rather the opportunity to see through different "life story windows" into the variety of post-CT social becoming.

Methodologically it means to follow the principle of the "humanist coefficient" during social change established by the pioneers of the biographical method William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1958).

VI Conclusion (a parable)

In the end I would like to return to Pierre Bourdieu's subway image as a taken for granted system from the point of view of an individual life, so that learning to find one's way in it equals the acquisition of both habitual dispositions and everyday routines. An adult can not only read the names of the subway stations, look at the schedules and pick a train to go to a place of their choosing at an appropriate time, but also has to know what awaits them on the street levels of the subjectively important stations.

A cultural trauma may be likened to an overnight reorganisation of the subway, at first evident in the changed names of the stations (e.g. "Artillery Square" becoming "Square of the Revolution"). When people enter the subway again, they meet some unpleasant surprises. Suddenly all passengers do not seem to be equal anymore. The trains have been painted in red, yellow and green, the entrance has a checkpoint, where people are issued travelling permits corresponding to certain colours (and only those) according to their identification documents. There are busybodies on the platforms who make sure that nobody boards a train of an inappropriate colour. When someone finally reaches a train of the "proper colour", new obstacles become apparent. Namely, trains of that colour do not stop in the city centre, the passengers have no right to change lines at stops M, N and P, and to exit the subway at stops D, E, S, T and V.

The first reactions are naturally confusion and aggression towards these changes. After that those on the same train try to figure out the reasons behind their being grouped together. It appears that the yellow trains transport teachers, students, clerks, doctors, etc. The people in the train car immediately ask about those in the red and green trains, and whether these people can exit in the city centre. In a while they find out that the red trains are for their "betters": military personnel, members of the N party and government officials. The red trains stop in the city centre, yet do not open their doors at factories Q and W and the city's football stadium. The passengers of the yellow train also learn that the green trains

have no soft seats, have limited passage to train-lines number 1 and 3, and the unfamiliar new station names are announced with a curious accent.

The passengers of the yellow train conclude that clearly they are in a better situation than the “greens”, but not as good as that of the “reds”. In their conversations they try to find some solutions to the fact that the trains do not stop in the city centre, although many of them work there. Some individuals find a new, shorter walking routes to their workplaces, some extremely active persons organise a bus service from station B to the city centre. Others enter the N party, yet others forge their documents or bribe the checkpoint officials and obtain the right to travel on the red trains.

Then there appear rumours that not every train reaches its destination, and worse, some have gone missing altogether, including the passengers. Naturally, everyone wants to know the colour of these trains. Soon there forms a public opinion that these happenings have no connections with the train colours, but they occur most often with line number 4.

Some fifty years afterwards a curious social researcher comes along and wants to find out precisely how this Great Change in the subway took place. The researcher questions the participants and their children, asking the station names before and after the Change, and how people coped with the suddenness of the Change. A total of 148 people are questioned and the researcher concludes that everyone remembers that shocking day in detail and even their children have some preconceptions. Furthermore, there is the amazing discovery that the passengers of the red, yellow and green trains remember their adaptation to the new subway order completely differently. Moreover, most of them identify only with their fellow passengers and can be rather hostile towards those of other “colours”. The researcher decides that people from different trains have seen the events from different perspectives and groups these visions into discourses. Since the participants of the Great Change could take their children only to trains of “their colour”, the children also have their allegiances. They consider themselves, for example, to be the “children of the yellow train”, feeling different from the “children of the red train”, and for them even speaking about the “children of the green train” is absolutely bad form.

The researcher becomes completely perplexed when trying to reconstruct the pre-Change names of the subway stations. It turns out that there are only a few central stations that everyone remembers in the same way. The rest are extremely mixed up. Every respondent remembers quite clearly the names of a couple of stations close to home, but is quick to add that these are generally no longer known and besides that the stations’ surroundings at street level have all changed beyond recognition.

The researcher has also encountered the tales about the lost trains and

tries to shed some light on that. The passengers of all yellow, green and red trains unanimously claim that these incidents happened mostly with trains of “their colour”, but they do not want to speak of such things anymore.

So the researcher comes to the conclusion that there is no way to reconstruct a universally correct representation of the past, and sets a new research goal. Since the different tales about adaptation to the Great Change from passengers of differently coloured trains have been rather easy to map out, some comparisons are called for. It turns out that passengers of every colour remember quite clearly the period when the station names were yet unfamiliar, but the use of the old ones was forbidden. During that period they had to facilitate communication by using old and new names alternately (double standards). Similarly, they remember that some acquaintances decided to refrain from using the subway, and either moved or found a working place closer to home. But the respondents decided to continue using the subway despite the absurd limitations and renaming. To overcome the exit prohibitions and limitations on changing trains they sought out new routes and took longer walking trips (re-routinisation). People also uniformly remember their solidarity with other passengers of “their colour” and joint expressions of disdain in the limited usage stations (social mobilisation). They tried to teach their children how to use the reorganised subway, and to save them from the oppressing memories of the earlier subway system.

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Appendix

Three examples – three different life policies to cope with cultural trauma:

- homeland Estonian (Marko)
- exiled Estonian (Anni)
- Estonian Russian (Vera)

Marko, recorded in March 1997

(Quoted by the permission given by the interviewee in September 2006¹)

I was born on in 1951 in Tallinn where I also spent the first 11 years of my life and my parents are rather old. My father was a goldsmith for all his life and also made it through the war in the Estonian Rifle Corps². He has never been a member of the Communist Party, although he was proposed to join the party numerous times. Father was born in 1907 (he is dead now), mother was born in 1905, she is 91 years old at this time and has been a housewife all through my conscious life. I was the only child in the family.

Father was a goldsmith all his life in one and the same enterprise – the atelier of fine-metal work. Before the war it belonged to a private owner, I do not remember the name, it was an owner with a Russian name. Father worked down at the cellar there, gilded, silvered and burnished and did all sorts of work with precious metals. From that job he joined the army and after demobilization he went back to the same place and there he also completed his career and retired at the age of 55 (as this work was considered unhealthy), but he lived to quite an old age, he was 87 when he died.

¹ The proper names of persons mentioned in the interview are given only in the case their life stories are vocabulary entries in Estonian Encyclopaedia, vol. 14, Tallinn, 2000. Otherwise to protect the privacy of respondents and their colleagues the pseudonyms are used.

² Estonian Rifle Corps – a national formation of the Soviet Army 1942-45

After father's retirement we settled in Valga since we had a house there that he had built himself on a lot inherited from my mother's parents. I went to school in Valga for three years, finished the 8-year school there and, since at that time I had developed great interest in the exact sciences, especially chemistry, I wanted to go and continue my studies in a special chemistry class. This class was in Tartu and I managed to persuade my mother and father, since I was the only child in the family, after all, and so I sort of left home at the age of 15. I passed the entrance exams for the 9th class, was accepted and finished secondary school in Tartu.

This class was an elite class in some sense as it was composed through a certain selection, the children were somewhat more talented, not only from Tartu, but also from the outside. I lived in the school hostel together with some classmates and other younger and elder pupils. And such a wish and will to study was dominant in the class and no wonder that all the pupils of our class continued their studies at universities. However, I was the only one who went to study chemistry. There was quite a number of those in our class who have now become known in political life. Eve Pärnaste³, for example – she was the Komsomol secretary of our school. In general, the Komsomol life was like that: after all, it was the only youth organization and the only opportunity for self-expression for the young who wanted to do something, to do anything at all, whether to participate in cultural life or anything like that. I believe that Eve was also quite such an active young girl and, at least in secondary school the ideological background of Komsomol practically did not reach us.

If we go a little back in time, I joined the Komsomol when I studied in Valga and joining it was for me as natural as joining the Pioneer Organization or the October Children.⁴ This took place in an obvious and natural manner. To be honest, I do not remember how I joined the Pioneers. This happened when I still studied in the Tallinn 20th Secondary School. I vaguely remember the moment when that scarf was tied around my neck in the assembly hall. In my mind one did not resist it, because the children wanted to become Pioneers to get rid of the status of October Children, then you had stepped further, you were already older and a Pioneer. And it seems to me that this ideological context that accompanied this, probably did not matter to me at all neither at Pioneer time nor at Komsomol time. It probably existed, since we all, upon joining the Pioneers, swore to be faithful to the Communist Party, but we did not, in fact, realize what this meant. All the ideological education that came with it, for example, that the Soviet Union is the best country in the world where the children have the best life, it came so naturally. Although I have to say that at home mother and father used to talk about life in the Estonian time, especially mother had good memories of the time of independence. Father remembered it in this way or that way, on the one hand that Estonia was an independent state and we could do anything we wished. On the other hand he remembered unemployment, remembered how his mother

³ Eve Pärnaste - a founder of the Estonian National Independence Party in 1988, MP in early 1990ies

⁴ Youth organizations for children aged 7-10 and 10-14 set up by the Communist Party to inculcate Communist ideology

lost her job at a match factory and how they had rather hard times and his father was a simple builder and did not always have work either. My father came from a quite simple worker's family, maybe his views were a little more left-wing, although he never became a Communist. Although he was made several proposals, since he was a good worker. I do not remember why he did not want to join the party, maybe he said, "Oh, this is all Russian", or something like that. But I also remember that father's views were also shaped by the Estonian Rifle Corps and the Soviet Army from where he returned to Estonia (his fate is quite interesting, in fact, since he was married before the war and had two sons, and when he came back from war, he could not find them any more, but later he married my mother). I remember how father argued with his younger brother (he died long before my father) who said that "Oh, this Russian rule is not going to last for long", that those Russians would go out soon and the Republic of Estonia would be restored (this was around the late 1950ies or so, at least, a time that I already can remember). And then father replied: "Oh, Jants, your eyes will not see it", so that he did not believe it, at least at that time. And in this sense father was quite... well, at least he tried to be a loyal citizen, for example, when I joined the Pioneers or the Komsomol, he sort of did not have any objections – one had to behave like this, it was normal that you did this. He understood it very well that if you did not take such or other steps, the only result would be trouble, so that I did not have any problems at home with joining the Komsomol or, later, the Party.

Anyway, the influence of the University of Tartu on the town's schoolchildren was remarkable, more so because the chemistry classes of our school took place at the university and we were taught by university lecturers and in this sense we were practically in contact with the university from the 9th class. And these university "things" were more available for us. Sometimes we could go to university parties, to the university club when more public events of that kind took place, sometimes we went to concerts at the university aula and such a connection with the spirit of the university probably also influenced this 5th school.

If I am not mistaken it was 1968 when the biggest riot took place, I remember the student days of '68, after the Czech events, well, we did go to see this riot and, of course, it had some influence on us. Those who were older than us, students, had a certain opinion of all those events, that's how it was. And, of course, it was an important matter that we could go to the university library as secondary school pupils. This was also a privilege at that time and, as strange as it was, up there, at the university library at Toome Hill there were the blue atlases of TASS⁵ in a bookcase with the inscription *dlja sluzhebного pol'zovanija* (for official use only)⁶. My Russian was surprisingly good since I already started to read books on chemistry in Russian at that time (far better than the weak Russian of my children now) and so I went there to read them, it was quite an interesting source at

⁵ TASS – Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union

⁶ All sensitive political information was unavailable for ordinary Soviet citizens. Respective publications were usually kept in special departments of libraries access to which was strongly restricted.

that time. Maybe they were deliberately kept there like that, they were not on open shelves, but they were in a bookcase, so that they were not in the special fund...and there were quite interesting things, especially during the Czech events. A letter of the Czech communists was published there and the Soviet repercussions and other interesting information. And such a socio-critical moment sort of arose from there that at that time not everything that the Soviet government did or undertook was praised, but one started to look for information from the outside.

I remember that I was quite a diligent listener of the foreign radio stations at that time, already at secondary school, because I was quite interested in politics and tried to obtain such information from different sources. I even listened to the Russian stations, because the Estonian programs did not come through very well, but the Russian programs came through better. This was also interesting. At the school dormitory we maybe discussed these things, what was written in the papers and what the "Voice of America" said and compared them. At school or in class one did not talk much about this. I remember that in connection with these Czech events a special interest arose, this was in August 1968, I was at home in Valga and clearly remember how I tried to listen to those foreign stations through all the noise and crackling.

After I entered the university I did not feel any depressive wave. I clearly remember the university's spring festival when people went out of the town in a long procession with beer cases. There was much drinking and the student band "Rajakas" sang. The merrymaking was complete and Koop⁷, the rector, also came to this party and the students greeted him with ovations. People shouted "Long live Arno!" and anyway at the university he was greeted quite warmly by students. At first Koop definitely had the reputation of a builder, because as soon as he entered office, new student hostels and lecture halls began to rise, something started to move at the university...In this sense Koop's arrival at the university was really like a fresh breeze. Koop communicated actively with the students and Komsomol leaders, he had very good and close contacts with them. In this sense Koop was quite understanding although in general his schedule was very tight. Toomas, the then secretary of Komsomol told that Koop was often in a hurry and had to go to Tallinn and then took Toomas to his "Volga" and then could talk to him for one and a half hours until Tallinn, and then he went back to Tartu by bus. But he never refused to listen.

When I was a freshman I was elected komsorg (the secretary of Komsomol) of our course. I do not remember how it took place or why, but somehow it turned out like that. Actually this work of komsorg was nothing special, mostly one had to see that the membership fees (2 kopeks, a tiny amount of money) were paid and some kinds of meetings held. In my mind then the Leninist accounts⁸ started,

⁷ Arnold Koop (1922-1988), rector of Tartu University 1970-1988. Despite the fact that his father was executed by Stalin's administration, K. was an ardent communist

⁸ Leninist Account – an all-Union bureaucratic campaign to increase personal responsibility of every member of the Komsomol

this was one of the most stupid things that the Komsomol had to do at the university. As it was compulsory, one tried to give it some rational meaning. Then such a thing as socio-political practice was invented. This meant that each Young Communist, that is, practically every student, had to make through some kind of socio-political practice – to do some social work, organize something or to be elected to some post. Certain booklets of the Leninist account were invented where these social tasks were recorded and then there were some sorts of evaluations. Igor Gräzin⁹, now a politician, was a great theorist of the Leninist account. I am not saying that in a negative sense, but Igor was the man who tried to give some real, rational content to this account, that it would not turn out some kind of stupidity.

The next year I was elected the Komsomol secretary of the faculty and also a member of the university's Komsomol Committee, because each Komsomol secretary of a faculty was also a member of the Committee. Then I already came into closer contact with the Komsomol prominent of the university and, thus, also with the prominent who are active in politics today, who at that time were still leading the university's Komsomol life. The Komsomol paid much attention to students' activities, this was their main focus of work. There were already a number of traditional activities organized by the Komsomol and some even became legendary. Such were, for example, the Student Days in autumn that are organized up to this day. Student Days with the big torchlight procession – at a point such processions stopped, this I remember quite well, it stopped when comrade A., became the Party Secretary of the University and he was rather cowardly. Mart Kadastik¹⁰ was then the editor of the student paper and then we organized these traditional student days as the tradition foresaw torches and all. And then partorg¹¹ A came and told us that one could not organize such a procession any more and this was explained by the allegation that marching with torches was a Fascist custom. In general, he referred to an order from above to finish this thing. But I remember very well that in this context partorg A prohibited the torches and the procession and when I first informed the university's Komsomol Committee about this, we first were in the mood to call off the Student Days altogether. Student days without the procession seemed senseless and I also told partorg A that we had decided to call off the student days. Partorg A was frightened and said that this could not be done as 19 November was the international students' day, but only ideologically acceptable activities could be carried out, such events that would not cause any problems.

Of course, nothing was left us but to organize these Student Days in a reduced manner. And, of course, this was the beginning of the decline of the Student Days. Anyway, already in the first half of the 1970ies they were not like in the late 1960ies.

I was active at the university's Komsomol Committee where the company consisted of those more eager to act, although their motivation was probably

⁹ Igor Gräzin, b. 1952, professor of law, MP 1995-99

¹⁰ Mart Kadastik, b.1955, now a prominent journalist

¹¹ partorg – secretary of a party organisation

quite different. I can certainly say that, for example, biologists and geographers there, they were such enthusiastic people, always willing to do something interesting. For example, Hardo Aasmäe¹², the later mayor of Tallinn, was always present. But there was also another group who was totally oriented to making a career – these were law students. Namely the lawyers knew that their further career would depend on whether they would be able to become party members and whether they had some kind of social background. There were relatively few historians around the university Committee. The economists were more active in the economic field, for example, Siim Kallas¹³ was from this Economics Faculty. There were also such members of the Komsomol Committee who were there purely out of a sense of duty. One could say that the people from the Faculty of Medicine were like that, they fulfilled all the tasks that they were given, but they were not inspired, they were not ideologists. They collected their membership fees correctly, arranged their meetings, delivered their Student Days' tickets and took their students in columns to the processions, in brief, they were decent people.

At first I became the deputy secretary of the university Komsomol Committee and Toomas who was then the Komsomol Secretary invited me there. We became acquainted with Toomas, somehow quite accidentally. It even came to me as a surprise that Toomas offered me this post, by the way, it was a paid job. I was on the fifth course and graduated from the university at the same time, by the way, in time and *cum laude*. Since I got a higher scholarship for successful studies, the salary of a Komsomol secretary and also worked at a laboratory my income at the time of the fifth course was much higher than a couple of years later when I already worked officially. At that time Igor Gräzin was also active at the university, and one of the deputy secretaries was a nice girl who is now a professor at the Pedagogical University. At the time when I became a secretary, the top period of the university's Komsomol was already over. I hesitated for a long time because I had some quite good proposals to make a professional career. At first I could have started doctoral studies at the university under the supervision of Academic Viktor Palm¹⁴; secondly, I had been invited to the Institute of Chemistry in Tallinn with an official letter. Thirdly, I could have also gone to work at the chemical enterprise where I actually had a part-time job while working as the Komsomol secretary. So that I did not interrupt my connections with my specialty and worked there at the laboratory of enterprise in the evenings. I somehow felt that I could not do anything fundamental in science. I thought that, yes, I could have completed the Candidate's¹⁵ thesis, but could not do something

¹² Hardo Aasmäe, b.1951, geographer, manager, politician, mayor of Tallinn 1990-1992

¹³ Siim Kallas, b.1948, politician, president of Estonian Bank 1991-1994 who introduced the Estonian crown, MP 1995 – 2004, now the vice-president of the European Commission

¹⁴ Viktor Palm, b. 1926, chemist, professor of the University of Tartu, academic of the Estonian Academy of Sciences

¹⁵ Candidate – Soviet academic degree, quite close to PhD

great in the field of Chemistry. I do not know why I came to that conclusion at that time. I liked Toomas as a personality very much and the people around the university Committee, and somehow these activities seemed interesting to me. This simply seemed interesting because of this bustle and management and at that time these Komsomol activists could to some extent even go abroad through the student building camps and all sorts of exchanges and that seemed interesting to me. I probably would not have earned a better salary in the Komsomol than at the laboratory.

In 1970 there was a clear orientation at the university towards a more large-scale organization of cultural events. Toomas himself was very much devoted to culture and therefore he tried to introduce these cultural matters to the students in every way and to do these in very interesting forms. In his time one started to arrange night music concerts at the university aula where young musicians were invited to perform late in the evening in candlelight. This was such interesting and innovative form and the hall was practically always crowded. Toomas Velmet¹⁶ played there. There was an especially funny case with Rein Rannap¹⁷ who was a young rebel at that time. The university had just bought a new white piano and the university's scientific secretary, who kept the keys, refused to give Rannap the key. She claimed that she would not give the white piano to a man who played it with his bottom, and so Rannap had to play on the old black piano. At that time also a contract was made with the "Vanemuine" theatre" and this was such a time devoted to culture.

I became the Komsomol secretary in 1974 when Toomas probably became the director of theater "Vanemuine". Later Toomas was also deputy head of the Executive Committee of Tartu, to my mind this was after the "Vanemuine". Thus, I became Komsomol secretary after Toomas since I had sort of "grown up" under his hand; I tried to continue the traditions that had been created. But, well, as A. became the university's Party secretary, several things were simply forbidden. At that time a quite clear ideologisation of events started.

I remember the university's party conference – I do not remember the year, but I must still have been the Komsomol secretary, because I sat in the presidium. The then ideology secretary of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party Vaino Väljas¹⁸, a very important person, also sat in the presidium¹⁹. And suddenly Vilma Kelder²⁰, Professor of the Faculty of Law, jumped to the rostrum. Took one copy of her printed speech, put it on the table of the presidium with a splash, took the other copy and started to read. I do not remember exactly what she spoke about, but the main point was that she said that she was greatly

¹⁶ Toomas Velmet, b.1942, Estonian cellist

¹⁷ Rein Rannap, b. 1953, pianist and composer

¹⁸ Vaino Väljas, b.1931, appointed first secretary of the Estonian Communist Party by Gorbachev in 1988, a liberal communist, participated in the Estonian independence movement, MP 1990-92

¹⁹ presidium – honorary presidium of communists and Soviet authorities at major meetings

²⁰ Vilma Kelder (1927-2000), professor of law at Tartu University

ashamed of having had such a student once as Vaino Väljas. Comrade Väljas at the presidium blushed and turned pale, but Kelder proudly delivered her speech. The speech was actually connected with some ideological pressure by Väljas to the university, unfortunately I do not remember what it was exactly. Anyway, Kelder's performance was a total sensation and shock, because she in fact spat in the face of the Central Committee. However, she was so prominent that nobody could accuse her of saying anything else than what had been written down. She had two copies of the speech. She gave one to the presidium, and read out the other, nobody expected them not to be identical. Her speech was not casual improvisation, but a printed speech, prepared in detail, and all this in a situation where the ideological pressure by the Party Committee to the university's Komsomol Committee was increasing. The party instructions of the previous partorg B had been more like advice, such a comradely supportive attitude ("Boys, do not do like this, this may bring trouble"). But partorg A's style was quite different ("No, this must not be done, this is ideologically wrong!"), I cannot say whether this was due to his inner conviction or the instructions of the Central Committee. Partorg A was a very stiff man and a very unpleasant man and since Komsomol worked immediately under the leadership and instructions of the party, then it was not a very pleasant experience indeed.

I was the Komsomol secretary of the university for a short time I think that even less than a year. Then a place at the Central Committee of the Komsomol, that of the head of the Department of Students, became vacant and I do not know why I was chosen. Probably one of the reasons was that traditionally the heads of this department came in turns from Tallinn Polytechnic Institute and Tartu State University. This order was still followed, especially as there was all the time rivalry between the university and the TPI. So, I was invited to Tallinn. Joosep was the secretary at the Central Committee who was involved with student matters at that time when Indrek Toome²¹ was the first secretary. Like it was customary at those times, when you were already in this Komsomol system, and one wanted to promote you, this was done automatically, you come here now and that's it.

I was not given a living place at first, but lived in a hostel of the Central Committee of Komsomol, there was a 2-room flat. I was in one room, and another person was in the other room, later there was somebody else in the other room, so that for some time there were three of us in a 2-room flat. Then after some time a flat in an old wooden house became vacant, and I was told to take that flat and was promised that I would get something better in the future. Since I was fed up with living in a hostel, I wanted to get something of my own, and took that flat. That flat was quite special, toilet in the corridor, only a stove and a warming wall. This flat was, well, absolutely dilapidated, every normal person, maybe on my level should not have accepted it, but as I was really fed up with the hostel, I accepted it. Next door there lived a drunkard who now and then came to ask

²¹ Indrek Toome, b. 1943, first secretary of the Estonian Komsomol 1972-78, prime minister 1988-90, MP 1990-92, from 1992 executive director of a real estate company

money for vodka. In winter there was like 6-8 degrees in the morning, although there was an electrical heater, but the walls were so thin, they did not keep the heat. Well, I lived there for quite some years and waited for something better, but did not get anything, before that I became acquainted with my wife who had a 2-room co-operative flat with all conveniences and I moved in with her. Several prominent persons also used my flat, even at the time when it was at my disposal. Later I got a better flat (well, not that much better, still a used flat) from the Central Committee of the Komsomol at Mustamäe and then we exchanged these two flats for one bigger. One could of course get a flat through this Komsomol network, but, well, not like you came and got one right away.

In Komsomol, like in the Party, Moscow appointed the second secretary. And, by bad luck, when I came to the Central Committee, a man called Ivan, was the second secretary. He was conspicuous by his extreme stupidity. The things that he did and the stories that he told were simply anecdotal and he desperately tried to implement the directives and orders of Moscow. More often than not Indrek Toome had to smooth his quite evident nonsense that he had invented there. I was directly subordinated to Joosep, he was a very rational and understanding man (he was just a secretary then). I was the head of a department at that time and those great combinations and struggles at the Central Committee of the party reached me only through certain filters, and this did not directly influence my work or activities. The men on higher positions somehow tried to soften these strict orders and make these directives and tasks somehow more rational.

Väljas, the ideology secretary of the CC of the ECP was for me a completely progressive man of the party. This Kelder's speech at the university was for me a complete surprise too, because at that time Vaino Väljas's image in the eyes of the university's Komsomol was very good. He as former Komsomol secretary of the university used to meet the university's Komsomol active at least once a year. The meetings took place either at the university, or at camps of the Komsomol activists that were such nice social gatherings at Kääriku or Viitna, the latter were usually republican gatherings, the university's camps were at Kääriku. He came to speak there and had good performance skills and at least we had a favorable opinion of him. For me the expression "Estonian-inclined Communist" means that these men somehow tried to bury these stupid ideas that came from above, from the Kremlin, back to the ground, either to lead aside or soften them in a way so that they still did not directly hit the minds and souls of the local people. That one would use the expression "Estonian-inclined Communists", "nationalists" in a negative sense, I cannot comment on, I did not know that then.

I started to go to Moscow myself quite soon, because in Moscow the heads of departments of the republican Central Committees gathered quite often. I remember that one year I even counted that I was in Moscow almost 4 months out of 12. When you went to Moscow, you remained there for a week, another week, the third, and then there was, I remember, Komsomol training at the Higher Komsomol School that lasted for 1, 5 months. Or maybe a month, special programs every day. To be honest, all this was not that boring at all, it was quite interesting, because we were shown quite interesting things that ordinary people could not see. We were taken to the Kremlin where common people could not

get in, then we were taken to the elite military units, I remember an airforce unit with a huge exposition of Soviet military aircraft, this was actually an exhibition or museum, in short, not public. We were taken to the Star City²² for example, with an obligatory meeting with a cosmonaut and shown these training facilities and how the cosmonauts trained. Padajev's beer factory, Armoury and the Diamond Fund where the places we visited and all this was accompanied by lectures and the so-called brain-rinse. Some of it was pretty much babbling, it depended on the man of course, because some men were sensible, but the lecturers were quite high-level, up to the heads of the departments of the CC of the CPSU. Some men spoke quite obvious nonsense, and did not know anything else except this nonsense, because when one tried to ask him something, there was no sensible reply. It seems to me that some of them really were utter fools.

I became acquainted with the Building Brigade²³ already in the second course. After the second course I joined the Building Brigade and became a Commissar at once. Actually I did not want that much to become a Commissar, but the squad Commander still argued me into it, he needed a Commissar, and since I had been komsorg of my course...and then he said, that, come on...Each squad had to have a Commander, Commissar, Master – the “Trinity”. We built some sort of garage, the squad was quite nice, because we had a bunch from the university and also a small group or bunch from the Conservatory.

Among those Conservatory guys there was Jüri Aarma²⁴ and he had a very negative and skeptical attitude towards the Komsomol and all sorts of Commissars, but he took it with humor and in the end we managed very well with Jüri. I was the Commissar, but actually a kultorg²⁵ and Jüri was actually the leader of the life at the squad. He was at the right place with his energy and theatrical activities and other skills of merry-making. Finally our amateur program got 2nd place at the All-Brigade amateur competition, I do not remember though what we did, but it was quite funny. So that this first brigade-year was finished with quite good memories and we had a great squad. Of course, there was no ideological work as such at the brigade, this was complete rubbish. Developing social life was just that something would go on, that there would be some events somewhere, that was the Commissar's task. There was no Komsomol work or ideological babble or nonsense, this was out of the question. It was the Commissar's duty to follow that the performances would not be too outspoken and someone would not get a scolding somewhere, since we had the infamous A. in the squad. We also performed to local people at the village club, that was killing, and maybe it was the Commissar's duty to keep an eye on that, too. In this respect A. was a sensible guy, he said exactly as much as he was allowed so that one did not have to shut

²² Star City – a city erected in 1960 where the Soviet cosmonauts lived and trained for space missions

²³ Building Brigade – EÜE, Estonian Students' Building Brigade, 1964 – late 1990ies, a popular organisation of Estonian students, centre of relatively informal work, social life and opposition to the dominant Soviet culture

²⁴ Jüri Aarma, b. 1951, actor and journalist

²⁵ kultorg – cultural organiser

his mouth, he knew the border quite well.

The next year at the Building Brigade, since I was already a member of the university Komsomol Committee, I was lucky and could go to Hungary. This was either the first or the second Estonian squad in Hungary. A man, who later became a millionaire, was then the Commander of this squad. And Rein Veidemann²⁶, now a journalist and professor of Tartu University, was the Commissar. The present-day ambassador Toivo Tasa²⁷ was a prominent member of this squad who charmed the hearts of young girls, both Hungarian and Estonian. Mati Heidmets²⁸, the present rector of the Tallinn Pedagogical University, was there, I was a common member.

I have the best memories of this time. We were working at a collective farm near Budapest. At first picked cherries, when the cherries came to an end we tied up vine branches, when apricots were ripe, we picked apricots. There was also a local wine industry there that we sometimes visited and every weekend we were taken to Budapest in a tractor box and spent the night in a student hostel. Such exchange of building brigades was arranged by connections between youth organizations, at first probably Moscow gave a permission to exchange the groups (the Hungarian squad came to Estonia and the Estonian squad went to Hungary) and then later there was a long excursion, a whole week. Then we were taken to the Balaton and put down in a kind of camping. A big shallow lake with lukewarm water, one did not feel like staying there for long, then everybody started to drive around and explore Hungary. The girls were luckier, they were taken on more easily and managed to go further. I made a circle around Lake Balaton, spent the night in a haycock. At first we went two or three together, but when only one of us was taken on a car, then we were separated and met again in another town and when we could jump into a lorry, we could go on all together. So we moved on like we could and there was no fear. Only once there was fear when we walked there and on the left there was a sort of peach plantation. There were beautiful peaches, the plantation belonged to a collective farm, and there was a hole in the fence somewhere and then we grabbed these peaches as many as we could and suddenly heard a dog barking, then we ran straight off and then heard severe railing in Hungarian, but they could not catch us. Then we were a bit frightened and thought what would happen if they would catch us.

There was no ideology there during our stay in Hungary. On the contrary, I remember that there was maybe more national ideology, the song "On a plain under the shadow of a bush an Estonian soldier lies on the ground..."²⁹ was very popular. Even the Hungarians learned it in Estonian, although they hardly understood the words, but finally they sang quite well, and all kinds of songs were

²⁶ Rein Veidemann, b. 1946, professor of Estonian literature at Tartu University, literary editor and columnist of the Estonian daily "Postimees"

²⁷ Toivo Tasa, b.1951, translator, literator, ambassador in several Germany-speaking countries

²⁸ Mati Heidmets, b. 1949, psychologist, rector of Tallinn Pedagogical University

²⁹ A song of Estonian soldiers in the German army during WWII and the Estonian forest brothers

sung there. I do not quite remember whether one also sang about the forest brothers³⁰, but there were quite such Estonian-minded songs.

The Building Brigade movement started some time in the 60ies, when one went to the Virgin Land³¹, then the squads were formed. The next stage was here in Estonia and then (the birthday of the EÜE was probably 1964) there were those legendary Muhu squads, then it started. I myself do not remember those old days, I was not active yet.

Now we move on in the chronology, I missed one year at the brigades, I was at the military camp at Klaipeda. But after the end of the fifth course I was already Commander of the South-Estonian Region, then I was ordering about, and already had a lorry GAZ-51 that I used for driving around and then it was pure organizing work. This started already some time in April, at first I had to conclude contracts, drive through all these collective farms, building companies and see what they had on offer, look who proposed better and who had worse conditions, and conclude detailed contracts with them. Then came the bargaining, because actually the students' squads were quite in demand, so that only those who offered the best conditions got one. The local party committees also put pressure on us that MEKs, that is, state-owned mechanized building columns, should be helped and that they should get at least one squad. But the KEKs, joint building offices of collective farms, were more prosperous companies and they got two or three squads easily, because they had many objects and one could always stipulate good conditions. I as neither Commander of the region did nor get any salary from the Central Staff, I had to stipulate my salary myself. You, KEK, will get 3 squads, but will pay for me 200 roubles a month for 4 months, well, all those preparations. From another district, MEK, you will get 1 squad and you will pay me half a salary for 2 months. So, altogether I got quite a nice salary, officially I worked in many places that was not actually allowed, but somehow the papers were drawn up and I got the money.

I was probably simultaneously employed by four companies, or I was paid at four companies, then the enterprises also paid all sorts of meeting expenses and quota salary and some attributics money. How you bargained, so you got. And when the contracts were signed then you started to negotiate to get men to the squads. Well, what do you have to offer, if you had good objects and good contracts, you could get better men, for poorer you had to be content with worse men, so this bargaining was done. The first year this South-Estonian region was quite big (there were five regions altogether), the South-Estonian region comprised of three districts: Põlva, Võru and Valga. On the level of the Central Staff there were not many problems with the formation of squads at the region. But the Central Staff had ideological tasks as well. Of course, staffing the foreign squads to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, was not a problem, the competition

³⁰ Forest brothers – people who hid themselves from Soviet authorities and conducted armed struggle against them in 1941 and 1944-53, altogether about 15.000 men

³¹ Virgin Land – crop-harvesting brigades consisting of young workers and students were sent by the Komsomol to Kazakhstan in late 1950ies

was tough. But there were also such squads that were not very popular, these were the Russian squads. For example, one had to staff the Gagarin squad, a town-building squad and this was a task given by Moscow, to send 30 people there, an elite squad or the republic's representative squad. It was generally known that one did not earn one bit, therefore there was always a big riot to get this squad staffed. Then one had to take turns, one year the university and the next year the Polytechnic Institute had to make the squads, and there was always a mess, because nobody wanted to go. It was then promised to the Commanders and Commissars who agreed to go to Gagarin that in return for that they could go to a foreign squad the next year. And, of course, those squad members who really had gone to Gagarin, they had the privilege to go to a foreign squad as well. So that one coaxed like that. There was practically no exchange with Russia. Actually, to a great extent, the Building Brigade was the students' own initiative. It was much more based on initiative than, let's say any other Komsomol activity, although, formally there was a respective department at the Central Committee of Komsomol, but it was much more autonomous than any other simple department. It was not financially dependent, or very little dependent, on that Central Committee, well, the salaries came from there, but the boys always had possibilities to make extra money. The brigade started to languish because of market economy. The building brigade was characteristic to the system based on collective farms, such a workforce was no longer necessary.

Such a thing was actually quite necessary and welcomed to some extent. I don't think that the brigades in Russia were so much different, students are students, although those who had been to Gagarin told that there was more of this ideological sauce and nonsense. There the curators of the Komsomol Central Committee organized it day after day. The Gagarin squad was important because this was the Komsomol's shock building. Sometimes one had to send some kind of squads to other Komsomol shock buildings as well, but there were relatively few of those. No, our students did not go to BAM³². Quite such fast livers went to BAM, one put together a gang and so they went.

Speaking about the Estonian brigade there was practically no such purely ideological clatter there nor was it imposed on us. It is hard to say where has this negative term "the building brigade bosses" come from, it has emerged recently. I believe that in general it is a kind of nihilistic attitude towards the collective farm system and Komsomol and all that was done before. In fact very many of our outstanding production leaders and businessmen and also politicians have emerged from the student's Building Brigade. The "ideological" context of the Brigade was always connected with the Brigade meetings. The Brigade was sent off sometime in mid-June, right after the exams, practically so that the exam session ended and the next day preparatory squads were sent out. They went a week earlier, fixed all the lodgings and then the main squad came after it. The Brigade meeting was usually some time in the middle of summer, sometime in late July, it usually lasted for one weekend. For many years the meeting was held in Vinni,

³² BAM – Baikal-Amur Mainline, a huge Komsomol undertaking, about 4200 km long, where actually forced labour was widely used as well

then a couple of times in Intsikurmu, Põlva counties. The main attraction there was amateurs' competition and sports competition. Not every squad, but only winners of regional meetings could perform at the amateurs' competition. This meant that before that the regional meetings were held a week earlier. Not all the squads were allowed to attend the meeting, well some squads that had sinned a lot, either caught at heavy drinking or who had ideologically sinned, although as a rule there were no supervisors at the regional meetings, or if, then maybe some guy from the local Komsomol or Party Committee. Actually I do not remember anything very sinful would have let off these regional meetings. Maybe there was something when these students performed somewhere, like our squad performed at the local House of Culture, maybe sang something that they should not have sung, and then somebody, a "watchful ear" reported somewhere. Well, that could mean trouble and that could be a reason why that squad was not allowed to go to the meeting. There could also be "watchful ears" among the brigade members themselves as well, although you never actually thought about it. I do not think that it was obligatory like that in every squad, but there were certainly those tale-bearers among students who did that work at the university and probably continued this work at the brigades.

I had no idea how this system of recruiting informants functioned at the university, because, first thing, the Party and Komsomol nomenclature was untouchable for the KGB, that is, it was not allowed to recruit agents from among them. There were some contacts with the KGB, though, but only on the level that we knew that, for example, the Komsomol organization of the university had its curator at the KGB (as for faculty, well, we simply did not know), and I knew who it was. And then this our curator from time to time came and hung around at the Committee and one did not exactly have to report anything, he simply came to talk, like, what you are doing and what activities are coming, well, something like that. Not like, who talks what or... you see, they were no fools either. So that simply such general nonsense, they came a couple of times a month, and everybody knew that. But, talking about the KGB, for example, there was surely an informant at every tourist group visiting a capitalist country. Since I was a group leader several times then the man came to me to the Komsomol Central Committee before the departure, put his documents on the table, said that I am from there, my name is this and this, I am coming with you, if you have any problems, you can turn to me for help. So that I already knew before who was that man in the group and, for example, when I once went to West-Germany, N.N. was in my group. At that time he was just some kind of task agent, but, well he made a career and reached the top of KGB in Estonia. At least on those trips where I participated I knew who were those from the KGB, there was no trouble after the trip, and although probably nothing happened either. The main reason why these KGB men were included in the groups was to prevent people from running away. Running away was not difficult, the group sleeps in a hotel, you sneak out quietly and simply you are not there in the morning, and that's it. And if such things happened, the group leader got a party punishment and probably this informant as well for not being watchful enough, some means had to be taken.

There were instruction meetings before departure, especially when one went to capitalist countries, then everybody was also gathered in Moscow and you were made a “brain rinse” at the “Sputnik”³³ and told like don’t believe everything you see in the capitalist countries. All you will see is only such fabrication, like the Potyomkin village³⁴, but look at the difficult position of the workers and something like that. No, I only had contacts with the KGB at the university and when I went abroad.

I also did research work at the university and after the university and have published articles in the field of chemistry (in scientific journals). There was a special man, the head of a sector of young scientists at the Komsomol Central Committee, the Council of Young Scientists was an all-Union movement. When I came to the Central Committee, it was a sector of the Department of Students, so that I was like the boss and there was a group of active young scholars in my subordination. To be honest, I did not quite understand what they were doing or what their principal activity was.

The main task was to send the papers of young scientists to all sorts of competitions in order to get Komsomol awards and select those papers and review them and later distribute the prizes. And then take these young scholars to Moscow for taking pictures and, well, to do such rubbish.

I worked at the Komsomol Central Committee for quite a long time, if I remember it correctly, I almost grew a beard there, it was there some six or seven years. The Plenum of New Ideology of 1978 that presented Estonia as a negative example of nationalism did not reach me at all. But the confrontation between Väljas and Vaino³⁵, this reached us to the full extent and we were aware of that. That Väljas was the candidate and one also talked about Rüütel³⁶ as the third candidate, I cannot eat my hat though, whether it was Rüütel, and then Moscow chose Vaino. And this was interpreted as a negative sign, the appointment of Vaino, that is. Then also such a thing started, when I came to the Komsomol Central Committee, then, in general, it was bilingual, there were both Estonians and Russians. Russians usually spoke their mother tongue only, one talked to them in Russian and to Estonians in Estonian. At the Bureau of the Central Committee one could speak both Estonian and Russian, that secretary Ivan. sat with headphones, one did synchronous translation for him all the time. There was quite a bunch of translators there who translated to one or the other language. One also wrote the *postanovlenije*’s too, some did this in Estonian, some in Russian, that was not a problem. I would not say that the Estonians especially tried to speak Estonian, it came in a natural way that Estonians spoke Estonian

³³ Sputnik – a Soviet tourist organization for young people

³⁴ Potyomkin village – a reference to a fake village allegedly built by prince G. Potyomkin in the 18th century in Ukraine, to prove to Catherine the Great how well her people were living

³⁵ Karl Vaino, b. 1923, first secretary of the ECP 1978-88, a reactionary communist, initiator of Estonia’s Russification

³⁶ Arnold Rüütel, b. 1928, Head of the Supreme Soviet of the ESSR 1983-90, MP 1992-2001, president of the Republic of Estonia from 2001-2006

and, well, at the Bureau also.

For example the meetings of the apparatus, it was called *aparataja* that the heads of departments and secretaries attended, there one spoke Russian because there were no translators and the secretary did not understand. I spoke about Ivan., this stupid second secretary. Toome managed to get rid of him after some time, he was promoted to party work and since he was so stupid that he was not of much use at party work either, he was sent to study in Moscow and later was promoted to Moscow and altogether away from Estonia. He was replaced by Sergei from Moscow, a very intelligent, sensible, understanding person who was also very calm, practical, since Indrek Toome himself had worked at the All-Union Komsomol Central Committee, he knew that Sergei and simply drew him here, hounded this Sergei for him to become the second secretary. By the way, this Sergei is a diplomat now and works here in Tallinn, meanwhile he was a diplomat in Poland, but now was sent to Estonia, probably because this Komsomol work in Estonia was in his CV and since he knew Estonia. So that I remember Sergei as such very understanding man who somehow tried to, well in some way...this ideological nonsense..., he quite quickly adapted to the Estonian circumstances. He did not force upon us this downright nonsense that sometimes came from Moscow, for example a whole bag full of badges and certificates, "*Luchshemu kukuruzovodu*"³⁷, and we were demanded to draw up lists and reports about the division of these badges. Oh, that was much fun, they were distributed for everybody who wished and everybody happily wore them, I do not know how Sergei solved it or whether the lists were sent to Moscow, but such nonsense came about once or twice a week. Those badges were actually again distributed three years ago, there have been reunions twice, ideological reunions "Do you remember, comrade" for former workers of the Komsomol Central Committee, well, for those who came. The last reunion was two years ago, at the "Katamaraan", restaurant of the Sailing Centre. I. Toome was there, well, lots of people. The first time was when the Estonian *crow* came and then there were some 50 people, not much, probably some were afraid or ashamed or so. But now, the second time, there were already some hundred people and there was quite a party and then, at the registration, the badges were distributed, that's why I remembered all those Komsomol attributics, and who has kept it. After Sergei came Vova, he became quite a local businessman, he was connected with some newly established bank. I do not know if he is still here now or what kind of business he makes. Maybe he has left, because his business was not successful, he was one of the shareholders who built some kind of big luxury house in Kopli, a many-stored house that is standing now.

The youth unrest of 1980 came quite unexpectedly to the Komsomol Central Committee. I do not remember any kind of warning or premonitory signal that we should go out and watch something. There certainly was such attitude, the Central Committee was not that nervous about it that it would have prohibited anything, they were still quite normal people. Well, such mentality in schools was

³⁷ For excellent maize-harvesting – actually maize does not ripen in the Estonian climate

noticed here and there, but one could not take any measures or put on ideological pressure. The Department of Schools was responsible for school-pupils, the head of the department at that time and paid more attention to social life, meetings, amateur activities and the organization of such things. Such ideological pressure that I as Head of the department could or wanted to put on these universities, well, the hard nut to crack was the Leninist account that had to be and that one also inspected from Moscow. They came right here from Moscow, their visits were quite frequent and they were always like, when he came, then he stayed for damned two weeks, went everywhere to the local organizations and right down to simple members of the Komsomol. Well, then you had to prepare what you had to tell and what you could not tell to this Moscow uncle, everything had to be prepared, that *pokazukha*³⁸, it was all set up before, how else. Some were such good fellows who indeed played the game and went to sauna and drank vodka, but some were such damned iron cogs. Sometimes some bad reports were also sent to Moscow, the thing was that the inspectors were also obliged to discover something, when they did not find anything, then it meant that they did not work well enough. You practically had to show them the shortcomings too that they would be satisfied, that they would see that there were such and such shortcomings, that also meant self-critique that was very positive, that, well we see those mistakes and we try to correct them. And so one was quite a lot involved with these men from Moscow, but usually we tried to prevent them from making any improvised escapades. Of course, at universities they sometimes came to a student at the corridor and asked what were his duties of the Leninist Account, there were such cases. Because actually they did not fulfil any of those tasks, but you had to demonstrate that the system somehow functioned, then you had to show them some evidence of the system.

The hue and cry of the 1980 youth unrest broke out like this: a message came that there was some kind of youth unrest and the young carried some slogans and there had been a tumult during a football match. I remember that the people who worked at the Komsomol Central Committee were sent to the town to see that there would not be any gatherings anywhere. I had to stand at the Eternal Flame near Kaarli Church and see that nobody would gather there or profane the soldier's peace. Well, luckily no-one came and the Bronze soldier stood on there in peace. If anybody would have come, I should have called the militia³⁹ or probably there was a militia patrol somewhere nearby. I don't know whether militia was short of forces that the Komsomol people had to stand there. My duty was to speak with the young, to explain them that they didn't behave quite properly. I don't believe I could have made any explanatory work there. This unrest later cleared away so that there was no public turbulence. Well, after the unrest came these *razborki*⁴⁰, sessions of the Bureau of the Komsomol Central Committee where one condemned and discussed what was it caused by and what should be done in the future. If I remember it right, the youth unrest was first of all ex-

³⁸ pokazukha – just for show

³⁹ militia – Soviet police

⁴⁰ razborka – sorting out

plained by weak Communist education. The local Komsomol and party organizations, respective city committees were responsible, the school Komsomol organization, well, this was already too low level to go and bark out.

Then the city and regional committees were the first, they had to make educational work more effective and explain and... It was probably quite clear for ourselves what this all was about, at least among ourselves we talked about the national issue and the pressure. But the flying squads, the Moscow brigades, curators of the Party Central Committee arrived and for them one had to prepare all those papers. When they flew here, that was a real *chepe*⁴¹, the first secretary had to go and report at the Central Committee. And then one had to report on all levels and one had to demonstrate what means had been taken. *Plan meroprijatij po vypolneniju postanovlenija*⁴² – this was the paper shield that one covered oneself with. So one had to cover with it all this Komsomol system, all the city and regional committees, because they also had to draw up their work plans. On the level of the regional committee and also the Central Committee there were probably also people who really thought that the youth was spoiled. I would say that such opinion was more dominant among those Russians, Russians of the Central Committee. Very many of them were actually such, at least it seemed to me, very ardent fighters for the Komsomol cause and they seriously believed that they did it. One saw it like that: one should not go too far with this nationalism, this Estonian cause, it should not show up, if one already noticed it in Moscow that could mean more trouble again.

As I already mentioned those controllers came to us all the time. I cannot say how one looked at the Russification campaign that was carried out from the late 70ies, what was the attitude towards it. Well, Komsomol had its own attitude, one tried not to go along with this, well, I said that the *postanovlenije*'s⁴³ were also written in Estonian, one spoke Estonian as much as possible, well, that Russian language was not pressed upon the people or this was done as little as possible. When Vaino's Russification campaigns started, I already worked in the Party system, then I sensed it more. I sensed it especially when the campaign started in the Party system that all management of business in Estonian was finished. This was some time in 83 or 84, that is, when I went to party work from the Komsomol, then the Estonian-language management sort of existed for a short time, but then quite abruptly all the party business was turned to Russian, absolutely all. And then it was even like that, I was at the Regional Committee and there was no Estonian typist any more, all were only Russian typists and there was maybe one Estonian typewriter at the Committee, when one quickly had to write some letter, then somebody typed it himself. When I already reached the Party Central Committee, then there was one Estonian typist and some five or six Russian typists, well here absolutely all the documentation was already in Russian. On the other hand some opposition emerged to Vaino so that one tried to speak about bilingualism. That is, when Vaino wanted to turn everything into Russian, then,

⁴¹ chepe – extraordinary situation

⁴² plan... - a directive of a plan of measures

⁴³ postanovlenije – resolution, directive

as to counterbalance this, one tried to introduce this *dvujazychije*⁴⁴, Estonian and Russian, that they would be side by side, that both would learn. Vaino was even against this, even this he didn't like at all.

Epilogue (November, 2005)

Before the final collapse of structures of Estonian Communist Party I left the party apparatus in 1991 and worked in the field of sociological research. I studied 3 months in summer courses at the University of Michigan and thereafter organized sociological field studies in Estonia, Moldova, and Ukraine. In 1995 I began to work in private sector mainly for better salary conditions. I work now as a business consultant in a private company.

Anni, interviewed in September 2000

(Quoted by the permission given by the interviewee in September 2006)

A(nni): I was born in Tallinn on Independence Day at the time of the war. That fact gave pleasure to my mother because that day one gave cocoa at the maternity hospital for the new mothers and that was a big deal. There was not much of it during the war. We fled via Saaremaa and arrived in Sweden on 21 September 1944. So that quite at the supreme moment. Father had graduated in agricultural sciences, mother was a chemist. Mother studied at the Technical University until the end, but could not pass the final exams as she was expelled because of her father's background.

I (interviewer): That is, in the red year, 1940?

A: Exactly. My grandfather on the mother's side was the director of police. And so he had been taken away when the Russians first arrived, arrested in his home at night. So they had the feeling that it was really impossible to stay. And my father was not an agricultural scientist, but worked at the Propaganda Office. So one fled with my grandmother, my mother's mother and my mother's younger brother who was under eighteen years old. And got on board at the last minute. We arrived in Gotland and stayed there probably until late January or February.

I: You don't remember anything?

A: No, I don't remember. I was one year old, but I remember from the stories that we had spent the winter there. Otherwise the refugees were sent on to the camps on the mainland. But father got a job as a policeman, since he spoke languages. He was employed as an interpreter to the police, since the refugees had to be cross-examined. Mother distributed clothes, I don't remember whether it was the Red Cross or the Salvation Army that gave some rags to these refugees. So that we were really among the last people to leave Gotland. We came to the outskirts of Stockholm, near Drottningholm where another refugee camp was located. I think that we had a happy refugee time because my mother was almost immediately employed at a laboratory of a veterinary university. So that she got a job in her field at once. However, it was a

⁴⁴ *dvujazychije* – bilingualism

very long drive from one end of the town to the other. She went to work there from the camp already. Then in the autumn we got a flat to a district where many of those who came from the camps got flats. In this sense we were lucky. And father got a job, not exactly in Stockholm, but in Västerås, as an agronomist at first. And he then drove that distance: came to Stockholm in Saturday afternoon and left again at Sunday noon. We got a three-room apartment where we my parents, and me lived together with my grandmother and my mother's brother at first.

I: Did this flat belong to the town?

A: This was a municipal flat. A tenement flat likes most flats at that time in Stockholm. But I did not go to the Estonian school, but to a Swedish school and there were, I think, a couple of special reasons for that. One was that I got so terribly sick when I took the tram or something. I just could not stand the driving. I remember from my childhood how we drove from one tram stop to the next, came off, ate some pickled cucumber to get a salty bite, and another jerk with the next tram. And I should have started at night to arrive school in time. That was quite an enterprise, it always took hours and hours to get to town. Well, I grew out of this. Secondly, my mother thought that many of those teachers who taught at the Estonian School were elderly people already when she went to school herself. She thought that such pedagogic was not very suitable in Swedish circumstances. She also thought that since we had a grandmother at home, learning the Estonian language could not be a great problem. She was optimistic and luckily it was like that indeed. So that I went to that Swedish school in the same district and have studied only in Swedish schools all the time.

I: That was in the 50ies?

A: I went to school in 1949 at the age of six. And I remember that there was a kind of test that I had to take in order to go to school at that age of, because in Sweden the school age is seven. The test lasted for a whole week and I remember what I did there – I drew houses and balloons the whole week. But I was probably considered very mature.

At first, in those first refugee years, it was quite such Estonian community, because many Estonians lived in that district. At home it was Estonian and all our acquaintances and relatives, we had relatives from mother's side here, but also people whom we knew from the Estonian time, all found themselves in the same district. And also those with whom one had been in the camp or with whom one fled. Everyday life except the parents' work, was still all one Estonian society. Nobody had a phone, so that the walks on Sundays to a neighbouring district to drink coffee or just chat were natural and all went on in Estonian.

Children came along and there were very many Estonian children at the street. Some disappeared in the 50ies when many Estonians went on to Canada. Swedish children learned the Estonian language, they learned to understand to some extent, and then they could choose friends. When they were among their own, then there were maybe five to six kids of the same age in the street, but together with the Estonian children there were some twenty.

I: So that the Swedish kids would learn Estonia?

A: Yes, yes. And understood the language as we played, also as they spoke themselves. When I still lectured at the university, some people sometimes came to me and

said that they understood I was Estonian, that they also lived in such a district... That they could still speak Estonian. And when I asked what they knew then usually it was "come in to eat". All grandmothers we had at home put their heads out of the window and called several times like that. We had an Estonian home, but not super-Estonians or chauvinists. There was rather a pragmatic attitude that one had to become melted with the Swedish society, because there was no other solution and why separate oneself from the Swedish society.

I: You simply cannot remember when such attitude developed. It had to develop when you grew up.

A: There was no such attitude at the beginning, of course. As refugees, there was still hope that one could go back and nothing would happen. This attitude was very false.

My parents learned to speak Swedish. But at the same time my father was very active in all kinds of Estonian organisations and one could see his name in all kinds of places. He is dead now. But he was active in political and social organisations, as well as my mother. If I say that we were not extreme nationalists, then it indeed was not like we put a wall between and said that the Estonians were inside and the Swedish outside.

I: Did such people exist?

A: To my mind, saying in a rough manner, there were those whose attitude was like that of my parents, that is, they were and remained Estonians who, under such conditions, lived in Sweden and luckily worked in their fields. They did not develop such complexes that they could not do what they had been prepared for, all this went well. And they apparently did not have any problems with their Estonian origin, they were never ashamed of speaking Estonian. I have never spoken Swedish to my parents: not in the tram, not in the bus, never. One spoke Swedish to whom one had to, but between oneself it was still only Estonian.

The other part was somehow afraid of the Swedish society or felt insecure in it. They said that, well, Estonians would not do like that, only the stupid Swedes do like that. And it was emphasised that we were somewhat better, we behaved a little bit differently. I think that it was not very good for quite some children. These children had to go to a Swedish school sooner or later and it might have been difficult if they saw in the end that those Swedes were not that strange and that awful as maybe was suggested at home. And third group maybe decided that, well, we are in Sweden now, we have to become Swedes and then started to speak broken Swedish to their children. The children actually realise very quickly that their parents are no real Swedes. And then maybe at home in the evening one shut the bedroom door and spoke a language that the child did not quite understand any more.

I have thought later that whether it was my mother's conscious attitude or just a natural way of behaviour. For example when mother asked about my schoolwork, when we had some kind of written tests, whether in chemistry or biology, she asked me about it in Estonian. I asked her to check if I knew and she checked in Estonian.

I: In what language was the answer?

A: In Estonian, but I read those books in Swedish. That means I really know the chemistry terms, I know biology... I remember that somebody just said when I spoke about ovary inflammation, that how could I say it in Estonian. But I really can. I

think that, certainly, when I was talking to people of my age, I mixed in some Swedish words, that comes... The brain picks the word that comes quicker. But when I started to work in Estonia I sometimes used words that made me think, oh, how did I know this word. But in Estonia where I could not say a word in Swedish any more, then suddenly I knew. So that in this respect I am very grateful to my parents who gave me such a broad Estonian. We discussed all kinds of things at home, politics and other issues, we used the language for more than just, go and wash your teeth and clean the table and wash the dishes. It was not only a kitchen language.

I: Did you have sisters or brothers?

A: *I have a sister who is six years younger. Like very many refugees, when one could already stand on one's own feet, one got the courage to make children. My mother always said that we would have had two more, but simply the circumstances did not allow. And I think that my sister and I have very different childhood. In mid-1950ies that she remembers we already lived a somewhat different life than that of a refugee ghetto. We moved out of that district and life kind of changed. We have talked after our mother died and we looked at the things there what to keep, then. We simply had an interesting time in the middle of the sadness, because I told about some things that, oh, look, that is what this gave me when I was quite little. These were the things that I had remembered, but that she could not know about. And on the other hand she was with my mother and father when I was already sixteen and went out with my friends. So that she told me the things that I had not done with my parents. When we had sorted everything out, we suddenly had one common childhood that was much longer than our separate childhood, you see. Both of us were children only sometime in the middle.*

I: What kinds of things were there in the homes? The boat refugees did not take a chest of drawers with them, did they?

A: *There, I think, was a rational or very pragmatic way of thought: the parents had taken old photos in one suitcase – you can never replace them – and in the other suitcase they had silverware, because nobody knew what was coming, it could be sold, one could get money for it. They really had a one-year-old child in the hands and two suitcases. I am glad that they did not have to sell the silverware. And the photos are fantastic! We have got my grandfather's wedding photos from some time in the early 20th century where all the men have such big moustache and small wreaths of laurel on the breast.*

I: Very many people have panicked, as they had to flee. One also panicked when going to Siberia.

A: *Well, here too. People took turnips, thinking that there was nothing to eat in Sweden. And later had to throw their turnips overboard at sea. And that happens of course when the world goes upside down completely. But here my parents had of course tried to escape for a long time, to find ways and... they understood the situation and somehow could adapt to it without losing their personality or something. They could keep their heads cool that in my mind was also their way in Sweden. Grandmother who was a fine lady in Tallinn, she did not have to do much in her adult life, became very practical in Sweden. She started to sew all our clothes, started to make lampshades to earn a little extra money. My grandmother stayed at home and died young – she was fifty-six when died. Then I of course thought that she was*

very old. But for me she was like second mother. And with her we went to the town to take the lampshades to the atelier where the orders came from. So the grandmothers often made such kinds of things: glued together small plastic packets that one could play with in the bath, for children, this could be done at home. The rich Swedish society gave them bric-a-brac work to do. It was quite common that a grandmother sat at home and did something at the same time as she took care of her grandchildren in the daytime.

I: Mothers were at work if they could?

A: Well, they were young. My mother was twenty-five when we came here. Of course people like her went to the labour market, they had better opportunities than an elderly person without special education.

I remember all sorts of funny things. I remember, for example, that some time at the beginning there were checks for milk and butter and such things here too. For a short time, however, but still they existed. When an Estonian who lived there in our district had a birthday, then one collected these checks of cream or butter to buy a cake. A real cake. We lived on sugar boxes and bookshelves were made of boards on bricks and there were few chairs. And I remember that the cake was brought in, I was also there as a child. The cake was on a pasteboard and I know that my mother from one table had to give it over to the other and a gentleman had to take it. And then mother believed that the man was holding it and he thought the other way round, and the cake fell on the floor between the boxes. I remember, there was maybe a full minute of silence when everybody looked at this cake or the heap of whipped cream. And after that everybody was on the floor on all four, spoons in their hands, eating what there was on the floor. Well, that it was actually such a big deal and one simply could not leave it there or clear it up.

I do not mean celebrating, but such social communication was very frequent. And when finally somebody got a phone here, then the person would go all through the district, distributing messages and one could make phone-calls there. I remember that at some streets distance my parents had such acquaintances that got a phone at an early time, and then this was a big deal. It was not a bad time at all in some sense. One kind of held together, helped each other enthusiastically and socialised. Well, this socialisation grew smaller some time in the 50ies already. One started to move away, the other got better apartments, whatever. Then there were more children, another generation was born, like very many people indeed had little sisters or brothers born around 1950. And then the situation with jobs had also somehow stabilised. So that then everything fell apart, life became such ordinary Swedish life. And that's why I say that my sister does not remember anything about refugee life.

I: If one started to furnish the apartments, then the furniture was Swedish already?

A: At first the state gave those, as the people called them, king beds and such things. They were rationed. Everyone got a bed and a mattress and knives and forks and dishes and a pot and a saucepan and whatever. And I also know that my mother quite energetically went and looked that those things that the checks were meant for, that one could use for buying the things, were not of very good quality, such more simple things. Mother herself, I know, went and bargained that if she herself would pay extra, whether she could buy better knives and forks and dishes. This probably

caused some confusion that somebody would do like that. But actually we still have some of those first plates and cutlery that were really, well, of better quality. But she was just an enterprising person and saw those opportunities to get something better.

I: Actually, despite everything, one came from a poorer to a richer society. Most refugees did not have that motivation. But I understand that for several young men the primary wish was to come to a better society.

A: *Well, that too, of course. But the general idea was simply to escape the Russians, just to get away from there. I know of how one talked about what happened to those people whom one could not take along. Either relatives or, like my grandfather, who had already been taken to prison anyway. Also my grandparents on the father's side who were elderly, they remained in Valga. What happened to them? Oh, then also my father's brother who fled by another way through the "Czech hell" and through Germany and later found himself in America. It took years before one got into contact with him. So that, there were lots of such worries and one talked a lot about it. It was a thing that prayed upon the mind of the refugees every day.*

I: In native Estonia the deportations started in 1949.

A: *That's true. But since there was a total information blockade, one worried about these things for a long time. My father's mother started to write some time...after Stalin's death, the first letters maybe arrived only in 1954. In her first letter she asked us to send needles, that needles were so blunt that did not go through the cloth any more. I remember that it struck me.*

I: How did the Swedish schoolchildren look at the boat refugees? Was there any other Estonian kid in that school?

A: *Indeed, there was an Estonian boy in my class. Nobody thought that we were somehow different. Although I certainly spoke worse Swedish than my classmates – I had lived in an Estonian home with Estonian children and I had not been in contact with the Swedish language at all in everyday life. However I have the feeling that the teachers knew and maybe they...We had an elderly woman in the first-second grades. Maybe she helped in some discreet manner, but not that I would have noticed it in any way. She was an experienced teacher. I know that sometimes I did not understand exactly what I had to take from the bench, what kind of book exactly, but it is not that difficult after all: you raise the flap of your bench very slowly, look what the other takes and take the same thing quickly. And if you did not understand what chapter or so, you start turning the pages slowly, as the other opens the right page. But this must have been a very, very short time when it was like that...So that by Christmas I was quite good. Later I led all sorts of things, invented plays and made my classmates perform them, so that probably I was not different from the others..*

I: What did the Estonian children do besides school? Whom did they associate with?

A: *Estonian children came home by tram from their school and then sleeping at each other's place and playing with dolls and playing outside started right away. Well, there had remained a lot of forest between the rocks in this district. I had of course, Swedish friends too. Sometimes I visited some of them. If there was something going on at school, then I visited one or another. But usually it was the Estonian children.*

I: The Swedish housewives received you friendly?

A: Yes, they did, very friendly. Often they even wanted to offer something good, they knew that I was a refugee child. But, well, we soon lived almost like that ourselves. Maybe at the very beginning it may have been more modest, but nothing that much different. And I think when I mastered the language, there was no difference any more. Our appearance is not different either, that of course made integration easier. Not that you are such black or dark-haired. But I remember such small cultural differences. When I went, for example, to the birthdays of my Swedish classmates and there was cocoa and a cake and some sandwich. My grandmother said that now, remember, when you have eaten, when you stand up from the table, you have to go to the housewife, reach out your hand and thank for the food. This is a sort of Swedish custom that if you are a well-behaved Swedish child, then you do like that, a little curtsy and hand out like that and thanks. But when I went to the birthdays of my Estonian mates then one would say at home that, now, remember not to poke your hand, because you must wait until an adult gives you the hand first or turns to you, that don't go and poke. The parents had made the things clear for themselves and me.

I: The food must have been different, too. Especially at Christmas, because an Estonian family may have been terrified, since the Swedish menu is totally different.

A: As a child you don't think that much. A child is served such food that she probably likes and probably both had that. The Swedes also eat ham at Christmas, let's say – ham, oven-baked potatoes or something. They have red cabbage that is not quite the same as our pickled cabbage, but the Swedes also make meat paste and jelly. So it was not that different. Of course, one would say that the Swedish food was sweet, that it did not taste. It took time before the older people got used to the sweet herring. Now I find that the sweet herring is much better than the Estonian salty herring. Such things were said, indeed.

I: That a neighbour comes and knocks at the door, what rotten cabbage are you boiling and eating.

A: Such things happened too. Some people salted cabbage in a bathtub, because it was the biggest vessel. Now, when the ventilation carried the smell of pickled cabbage up and down, that certainly may have caused certain conflicts.

I: Were there any problems with school food?

A: Oh, of course there were. Those all sorts of sweet things, the brown beans in a disgusting sweet sauce, I cannot eat those until this day. When I was once forced to sit at the plate during the entire break and when it all came out, then, after that, I was not forced any more.

I: So that adaptation goes through food as well?

A: Yes, so it does. Mother always told when they were still in the camp in Gotland, then she got some salary, too. One gave her a symbolic amount of money for distributing the clothes. Then she went and bought two napoleons from a café and they shared it with mother. She had the feeling that it had to be a top luxury, as a dream world if you could buy a cake. She went and bought the cakes and later said that actually she could have bought something else – something more practical. But simply she had the feeling that these two cakes, that there could not be anything better. That when she could afford it, as if a kind of world had opened.

I: What else can you tell about school-time?

A: *In the 5th, 6th and 7th grades I went to school to the town, it was a district where we moved later and where, by the way, I live today as well, in my childhood home. Here I of course had more Swedish friends at school. For many years I had some Latvian friends there, also refugees.*

But all the time I was a member of the Estonian scouts, of course. At first I was a girl scout and afterwards a leader of junior boy scouts. And then later came the students' organisations and all other Estonian things.

I: Life through the Estonian organisations?

A: *Yes, I am married to an Estonian, too. He is a local Estonian who fled in the same way, the background was very similar starting from Estonia. I knew him from childhood. Although he was already a big boy, but I just knew him. And I married him. And we have four children who have also grown up as Estonians like ourselves. Only they did not have that refugee childhood. The children have done all Estonian things, only not studied at the Estonian school. They are all in contact with Estonia in one way or other – some here, some there.*

I: When were they born? The 1960ies?

A: *The eldest was born in the late sixties. He is now acting director of an Estonian company on the Swedish side. He has been involved in several major projects in Estonia. He is married, has two children, one is quite small. Married to a Swede, but the wife can speak some Estonian. Understands and speaks to the kids, because the elder son will soon be a year and 10 months, to him the mother speaks only Estonian. This is a bright child, knows many words and tries to speak already and he does not care what language are you speaking. The other was born in July, quite an infant. In our case assimilation starts not in the first, but in the second generation.*

I: Were there some students' societies for Estonians, too?

A: *When I entered the university then the Estonian Student Body was formed, no...the Estonian section in Sweden that was established in Stockholm like the Finnish sections. That is, only a student body, but not a society, but like those of all other counties in Sweden. In Stockholm one started to form nations, following the example of Uppsala and Lund, that is, according to counties. Then it was thought that the University of Stockholm ought to have the same system. That Stockholm was so big and people were scattered, that this would keep them together. So that there have indeed been students' societies and my husband had already become a member. But when this idea was launched at the university, then Estonia was one of those who said we will do an Estonian section. This was exactly in 1962 when I and people of my age came to the university. We were one big generation, there were many war-time children.*

I: Did those children come here then, because that age class is quite small in Estonia?

A: *Yes, probably. Here that age class is quite big. That is, the confirmation classes were big, the Stockholm confirmation in 1968 – some 80 children, otherwise always 100 children confirmed in Stockholm, like that. Let's say, there are many war-time children. These are big groups. And there are even several big age classes. That some are born immediately before the war, one during the war and then the third is some 50s. And there were many of us who entered the university in 1962. And then the*

student body had just been founded. Those who were a little bit older took very good care of us. Closer acquaintances here are all married to each other like that. Men were probably five years older. My husband is also 6,5 years older than me. And really we associate a lot with them until now. These are all our close friends. But very many, especially outside Stockholm, married Swedes, of course. That means our bride market was quite a small.

I: The others were also motivated to marry non-Estonians?

A: I think it really was like that, well, the choice among Estonians was smaller and you could not marry somebody just because he was Estonian. You somehow had to like him, too! Many persons were also more motivated to marry a Swede because the domestic super-Estonian-ness got on their nerves. One realise that Estonian-ness did not make much sense any more, that there was no going back to Estonia and practically no contacts with Estonia. Some grandmother maybe wrote letters, but that did not keep up active interest among the young.

I: Didn't the generation born in the 1940ies have any sense of native land?

A: Maybe those who were born in the forties, they still had. They were born during an intensive refugee time when the Estonian community still was one Mini-Estonia in Sweden. But those born around the fifties, they certainly had another sense of native land already. That is, somehow the parents were already proper Swedes as well. They worked in the Swedish society, they had Swedish flats, Swedish furniture. So that they did not have a soul of a refugee any more... Maybe the engine of Estonian-ess was not that strong as in those first years, from 1944 to... well, this refugee community maybe lasted for ten years, not more. Then something got lost and some people of my generation already started to marry outside our own group.

I: Marrying a Swede was a problem?

A: I think many people of course thought that another soul was lost, if one married a Swede. Just like you said, if the parents were such super-Estonians, then they often even disapproved it and did not quite accept the son-in-law. It did not quite seem right to go like that and take a Swede and... Sometimes it seems that those super-Estonians had not adapted to the circumstances because of such attitude. For them the Swedish society was more alien than to the others. And to communicate with some Swedish mother-in-law or father-in-law with whom they did not feel to have anything common that was difficult.

I: That's a nice version that super-Estonian-ness was just a failed adaptation!?

A: Yes, exactly. I think that's what it was. And often simply because the life of the young people who fled at the age of 20-30 was completely disrupted. When they did not succeed that well in Sweden, maybe did not get a job in their field or according to their education, well, then somehow everything went wrong. Then it was definitely some bitterness, some envy of those who made it better, maybe envy of the Swedes.

I: But there were many simple fishermen among those who left. It must have been very difficult for them to adapt to the Swedes?

A: Yes, mostly the coastal people could come. I think that this is an interesting group, because they had to manage some other way.

Let's say we were the children of intellectuals and we got higher education ourselves, we had opportunities. At first we were all scouts, an activity not connected to social class. Then as we got older and already went to university then we had a lot to

choose between. We had those intimate organisations from the old time, those female students' societies and "Filia Patria" and "Ugala" and whatever they were in Estonia, most of them were active here as well, they accepted freshmen. But some women's organisations and some men's organisations stopped accepting the young members. They said that, well, we only have five women left and we cannot offer anything for the young. We could go to the Estonian student body of Stockholm, we had our own section...

But those who had been our friends until then, they remained out now. They did not get into that society because they had not gone to the university. Some of them disappeared right away. They went to the Swedish society where they had more opportunities to socialise, and married Swedes. And some of them also remained very much attached to a certain Estonian circle. Then the scouts' movement still existed and they could be active as leaders there. And if they wanted to do something else, they could collect stamps together, to be involved in some bigger group. And so in my mind several people remained there as some Estonian chauvinists, so that Estonian-ness in a way remained their profession. They had no other way out, especially if they were somewhat older. Let's say those who were of my age went to the Swedish society and disappeared. But those who were a little older, they could not be active anywhere else if they only wanted to be together with Estonians.

People of my age who grew up in this early Estonian community, they often married Swedes, but they still had Estonian parents who were definitely members of whatever Estonian societies. And from there the younger generation got full information about Estonians. Anyway, one kept contact by the phone and certainly visited the parents. So there was some feedback to Estonian-ness, although one did not participate in it with one's own Swedish wife or Swedish family, often with a Swedish career, too. But what happened to many, what I have seen in the case of some friends that when the parents grew so old that could no longer attend these Estonian events or simply died, then suddenly the navel string into Estonian-ness was cut off. And later they often looked for a way back...when the children had grown up, when the career progressed, then they tried to come back, some of course. We have known each other for a long time, had some temporary contacts. Already around forty when you don't have to be occupied with the children all the time, you start moving around a little bit again, then one looked for a way back. And I think this has been very hard. In some cases I know that they came to all sorts of Estonian events. The rest of us who had been together twenty years, all the time, would speak that, oh, do you remember, the Midsummer when Tiit fell into the water from that bridge...and we all laugh. But they don't have anything to laugh at. And then, if you start to explain something twenty years later, then it is not very funny. Understandable, isn't it, nothing in common – you should have been there. They had a feeling as if they were kept off that wasn't right, but simply coming up like that is hard.

I: Now again the question what happened to those simple fishermen people?

A: I don't know that. Many of them disappeared among the Swedes. If they did not live in Stockholm or Göteborg or around other towns, where they could socialise with Estonians.

Maybe these fishermen went on from the forest work to some town where there were factories. Maybe they became workers somewhere else. Maybe they escaped

those places where they were distributed at first and this Swedish life somehow disappeared for some time. This forest work was a war-time job, after all. But then they maybe looked for a job in, say, Boreås or some major industrial enterprise where Estonians had been sent and where a small Estonian community already existed.

I: Then there are usually communities of simple people in more distant towns?

A: Yes, as a rule there are. Although at first one also sent lawyers and such people to the forests as lumbermen, but they left after some time – they still looked for opportunities to come out of the forests. It was the same thing with those who found themselves in factories. Well, all kinds of people, with different education. The more educated left quite quickly, well, looked for other places. One quickly tried to restore the social position. My father-in-law was a lawyer and he of course could not find a job here as a lawyer, because it was difficult to re-train for the Swedish legislation. But he worked at the Forest Board, a big public institution. And he was actually a good Swedish bureaucrat. Like my own father who later on was no longer an agronomist, but sat in the office and had a fat job.

But from where the parents had lower education, the young people started to leave in their turn. The young rose, because there was some kind of, - maybe it is still characteristic of all Estonians everywhere, - a desperate compulsion or aspiration for education. The simple parents also said that one had to get education, especially when you had fled and it was evident that those who were educated had relatively better opportunities to make a career in Sweden. Once I saw a study that was made about Boreås, a city just East of Göteborg. It used to be a city where many Estonians lived in the old days and a study was made there about the children of factory workers. I don't remember the year, but it must have concerned about my generation. Among the children of factory workers with little education like the refugee Estonians, less than 20% had finished secondary school or gone to the university. Among Estonian children 74 % had continued their studies.

That was a great difference. I would say that maybe in many cases great pressure was put on the young people. That even exhausted many of them, I think. Especially the generation that comes here and is about 20 years old while their parents are around 40-50 and when those parents start to put pressure on them to succeed in this society with the utmost effort. That's the group and there was another group, too, people of my age, pre-school children when they came.

I: ...that one could take education and silverware with oneself.

A: Yes, exactly. Well, manor houses that everybody had to leave in Estonia – you could not take these. Estonia should be covered several times with those manors and other big thing that fell into the hands of Russians as one fled. Those myths became bigger as years passed, the boats smaller, the storm bigger and the treasures that remained behind, grander. One man even showed the picture of the president's palace for his own house...

But it was really so that people had to go to the university. It is a bit anecdotal but there is a grain of truth in it that one had to study medicine, dentistry, engineering and that was about the circle that was allowed. Architect, well, engineers – anything at the Technical University. Well, the girls became pharmacists, doctors and dentists and boys then went to study whatever at the Technical University. And my husband, for example, who studied history, political science and geography, his parents were

once seriously consoled that it was not so bad although the boy didn't go to the Technical University or didn't become a doctor, but at least he went to the university. And I think this has been difficult for many, because not everybody wants to become a doctor or an engineer after all.

And the school thing... that the Estonian children had to be the best in their class in Swedish schools! That was terrible pressure in my opinion! Especially if you came from the Estonian school where one really crammed, were very good and the children had very good grades. Well, one could go over to a Swedish school with the mark of the 6th grade, and then one had to have good marks to get into a good school or to specialise in different natural sciences. And then the pressure was really terrible, because...

I: What happened to those kids?

A: Well, many things happened. I think that many failed and that was embarrassing for the parent. If the child was not accepted, it was the failure of the whole family. That is the easiest possibility. The other is of course that they were forced to learn things where they maybe all survived, but they had to work in an unpleasant field until the end of their life. In the old days one did not change one's speciality like now, well, the society is so much more dynamic. But earlier it used to be that you went to work and retired and meanwhile worked at the same place. And many people just work in fields that they simply could graduate in but have no interest at all. And then still those who just went out of their mind because of such studying. And now I see that where I lived we had a boy, some years older than me – extremely good in mathematics and chess and so on. He had, like many others, only mother and grandmother, two women who came with him from the native land. The father had disappeared. And the boy was the apple of their eye of course. At first he was crammed with food so that he grew fat, then kept an eye on him that he wouldn't run, walk or climb, nothing, and he only studied. And now I sometimes see him at the square in front of the subway station, near the big House of Culture and there are all sorts of types hanging around in front of it. There he goes, he has become a real tramp: insane, goes and mutters to himself. Down at heel, in some old winter-coat and like that. I think there is definitely some grey zone that the Estonian society doesn't want to know about.

Some time in the late 60ies a Swedish psychiatrist conducted a study in a mental clinic, he was a youth psychiatrist and noticed that Latvian and Estonian children were over-represented among the patients. They were young people of about my generation that means, the second refugee generation. And he took interest in why there were so many Estonians. He tried all sorts of things here and went to talk to the Estonian school, where the pressure on the pupils was very strong. One had to be very good at school and of course one denied any problems at all. He probably made a presentation at our student body where he really spoke how he ran his head against the wall trying to ask whether, for example, the Estonian children had any problems at home.

I: What subject did you choose at the university?

A: At first I went to study pharmacy, I was really interested. Actually I could choose between two things: I had a great need to humanitarian education – I was interested in literature, I was interested in anthropology, but somehow I was able to

get in to the Pharmacy Department, so I remained there. For some time I also worked at a pharmacy. And I stayed at home when I had children, because then I felt like many others that the children had to learn Estonian, since our domestic language was Estonian and all our relatives, brothers and sisters and their children all spoke Estonian. That meant staying at home because there was no Estonian kindergarten yet. Like always when you make a choice and choose something for Estonian-ness, you have to give up something else.

So I was at home with them until the youngest was about 1,5. Then bilingualism had become fashionable; the first linguistics professors had been appointed in Sweden. It had a lot to do with children's bilingualism and psychology and sociolinguistics and...all that had always interested me. I had followed these processes among my parents, then among myself and my acquaintances and also our friends' children who are the third generation. And then I thought that I could go to the lectures in the evening. It is possible in Sweden to go in the evening too. I started to go besides the children and thought that I would just listen for my own pleasure and read the literature and listen what they talk about. But it started to interest me and then I stayed there and studied linguistics for another term. I studied Estonian for one term, then I studied anthropology since it had interested me. And finally I got a job at the linguistics institution, I was a lecturer there. And then I started to write my PhD dissertation.

I: So now you have two diplomas? One qualification is pharmacy?

A: And the other is humanitarian. And then I started to write the dissertation and namely looked how the language changed. I did not look at it from the viewpoint of the Estonian language, what happened to the Estonian language, but simply whether the changes that occurred were of the same kind as they occur in other creole languages and in the development of children's language. I took the Estonian families where all those involved are married with Estonians, of equal education, children of the same age, active to the same extent in the Swedish Estonian community, living in major towns. In our generation these differences are not very clear yet, if the parents are real Estonians, but the differences become evident in the next generation. For example, of my children: they have one type of language, but the children of my friends who have exactly the same situation may speak worse despite the Estonian school. That is, their language is much weaker.

I: Are there different types of deformations?

A: Yes, exactly. And I think that there are many factors, for example, those friends of mine and their husbands, if they have Swedish children at home, then they only speak Swedish, to their own children too, while I would speak Estonian. I speak two languages. I can say, when they come home from school that takes off your shoes, that I have cleaned the rooms or something like that. Then I repeat it in Swedish when I see their Swedish friends. Or if I want to give them some sandwiches or buns, there is a meal, I say that come now – I have it ready – and then say it in Swedish. What also counts, many of my children's friends know a little Estonian because they have heard it in our home all the time.

I: Let's speak some more about the university, the previous story was quite short

A: Anyway, I went to study pharmacy. And studied for four years. That was a very intensive time in many senses. The subject as such interested me, it interests me until today, but I definitely had a slightly schizophrenic feeling that I also wanted culture, more culture-oriented subjects. So that this was such an intensive time that on the one hand one studied and crammed and spent whole days in the laboratory and in the evening there were lots of cultural activities that satisfied my other side. Student life was very intensive too at that time. That is, on the Swedish side where its own pharmacy students' body existed that organised many parties and other events. But at the same time the Stockholm Estonian section was founded following the pattern of the Swedish student bodies. I cannot say much more about the student years, it was interesting and unforgettable. Many parties too, I know that at that time I went to very many parties of other student bodies or universities. I had a boyfriend at that time who was chairman of the pharmacy students' organisation and with him I could see all kinds of interesting things that I could not have seen otherwise.

I: A Swedish boyfriend?

A: Yes, that was a Swedish boyfriend. I also had an Estonian boyfriend at the same time since I had two societies in which I had to socialise and got a boyfriend in both of them. It was easier this way.

I: There was the Swedish bunch too?

A: Yes, the Swedish bunch too, but this remained like a separate bunch, and I still have contacts with those whom I met there. Some of course disappear gradually, but there are still some. Like I have Swedish friends from my school years as well as those whom I met here in my Estonian life. Estonian life is logical, these people have largely remained in the same place. As I said, we married them and have been in contact with them all through our lives.

I: What kind of ritual marks graduation from the university in Sweden and can it be compared with something Estonian? Or was there no Estonian ritual?

A: In Sweden there is no ritual when you graduate. You pass your final exam, submit a paper to the dean's office or whatever it was, to the rector's office. And two weeks later you go and take your document from there and that's it. No graduation parties. Well, you could do it among yourselves, but there is no such big event connected with it, some public ceremony of distributing diplomas or... Maybe there was before, but not at my time. If you complete a PhD thesis, then there is, but not when you get such basic education.

I: But there is a party at the end of secondary school?

A: The end of secondary school is marked with big festivities. Although in the meantime the socialist governments in Sweden tried to nullify it and it was no longer called studenten that meant becoming a student. Student exam as it was called at the beginning, that was celebrated with big parties, until 1976 was probably the last year when it was really called this way.

I: I heard that at some time you have had the graduation ceremony in the church as well?

A: That was not always like that, maybe at some schools where it had been a tradition already earlier. But in general, graduation from secondary school means a big party, graduation from the university goes silently. Just making the paper, so to say.

I: What are the weddings like? Are some Estonian traditions followed as well?

A: The wedding is like everybody wishes, but in general the weddings are big. At least we had a big event. We wanted to invite many guests and did so, we had quite a big wedding. We are wedded by an Estonian minister and so-to-say Estonian church, - Jakob's Church, which is the church of the Estonian congregation in Stockholm. Wedded by the Estonian minister and with Estonian text. I remember that the minister who wedded us asked whether we wanted the sentence that was included in the old text where the wife has to obey the husband and listen to him in all matters. We abandoned the sentence. So that our Estonian text was a bit modernised too.

I: What does one do with the children, are they baptised?

A: Yes, we have all baptised our children. They were then about six months old, I don't even know exactly. We have also had the Estonian minister who has baptised them. And we have done like it was done in the past. Like my sister and me were baptised at home in Sweden. The Swedes always baptise at a church. I don't know any Swedish child among my acquaintances, which would have been baptised at home.

I: What do they wear – those traditional long baptismal robes?

A: My children did not have white long robes, because I thought that a six-months-old who already sits would somehow look funny in such a long robe. And since we did not have one too...In Swedish families the wedding robe is often inherited in the family for ever and ever and the names of all children are embroidered into the train of the robe. We did not have it. So that we had some white clothes...The boys had a little training suit and the girl had a short little dress. Socks and like that. Little shoes. And the children have been baptised at home, the minister has conducted the act in front of gods and afterwards there is usually a coffee table and we have chosen godparents

I: How many godparents are there?

A: Well, we have done like it used to be in Estonia in the old days. At least the custom that a boy has two godfathers and one godmother and the girls two godmothers and one godfather. We have followed this custom. And we did not choose from among our relatives whom we have plenty on both sides, but we chose from among our close acquaintances. Those whom I told about before, with whom we are very close from the student times. Just to enlarge, to connect them with our family. We are all criss-cross godparents for our children. The threads run in all directions. And it is even so that my elder son has two children and our friends' children are their godparents, so now there are connections through many generations.

I: You were at home with the children for quite a long time?

A: In 1968-1977 I was completely at home. Now, at first, if you already have many children then you probably must have wanted them and then you want to spend time with them. But teaching the Estonian language was certainly another reason. Knowing how tired you actually are as you come home from work, having taken the children home from the kindergarten and fed up with everything. Then there is laundry and everything else. And then you cannot enjoy the children and they cannot enjoy you either. Let alone that they have listened to the Swedish language for 10 hours and spoken Estonian to some angry mother in the evening just for one hour. Then the children's vocabulary would remain quite limited as well. So that staying at home was a conscious choice. We have been very lucky that we both had

parent who were vital and fond of children and who wanted to occupy themselves with them. Of course I have been especially glad that the grandparents talked so much to the children. They all had their professions, their special hobbies, their memories.

I: And the children got all that in Estonian?

A: Yes, all in Estonian and therefore they have heard a lot about Estonia, about pre-war Estonia too. My father was very interested in geography, especially other cultures and he of course studied maps with the children, studied all sorts of books about Indians or other cultures and told the children. So that they got a lot of what you maybe would not have managed to do yourself as there are always other duties as well.

I: When the grandparents told the children about Indians, then in what language?

A: In Estonian.

I: But the book itself was in some other language?

A: We have translated all the time. The children had very few Estonian books. Gradually we got children's books from Estonia too, but they were not always suitable for children who had grown up in Sweden. There is some cultural difference. The Swedish children's books are more connected to reality, pedagogical in some sense. Even "Pippi Longstocking" is pedagogical, isn't it? It teaches independence to the child or like that, they are somewhat easier. But there are almost no children's poems in Sweden that was unfamiliar to me too. I could not read these poems. I could not have read them so that they would have attracted the children because I had not grown up with them myself.

I: What school did the children go to?

A: They went to a Swedish school, from the very beginning. And started so that when they were small they only spoke their mother tongue at home. At the age of four it was possible to take the children to the kindergarten for three hours a day. I thought that we could do that because it would be a little bit problematic if they went to school without knowing any Swedish. The Estonian friends had children of the same age, we socialised with each other. So that the children really played only in Estonian. All our children gradually went to the Swedish playgroup three hours a day. At first they spoke with a strong Estonian accent and that was such a funny time in some sense. The Swedish children did not react at all. Because 4-year-old children speak differently themselves: some lisp and some can not say s, some r. So that for the children that was no problem at all...

I: Is one so tolerant in the Swedish society?

A: Yes. We did not live in some immigrant district either where maybe there would have been all sorts of people. No, Estonians have never had any bad reputation or some immigrant reputation in the negative sense. So that the children's language really hasn't been a problem.

I: From the kindergarten the children went to Swedish school?

A: Yes, then they went to school. I haven't gone to Estonian school either, only to a Swedish school. I thought that since my mother could teach me and my sister Estonian so that we speak it with each other until today, then maybe I could also teach my children Estonian at home, that you don't have to go to an Estonian school for

that. The Estonian school was far too. It would have been difficult to drive to the Estonian school: one was in a pram, the other could hardly walk and then to take the first to school and back... I also had the feeling that the Estonian school already started to become a kind of bilingual school. In the sense that ...there were children whose one parent was Swede and the other Estonian. Then I thought that it would be easier to distinguish between the languages at home, that one talked one language at school and kindergarten and the other at home. But if you speak some mixed language all day at school then...the children soon realise that the parents speak Swedish too and why should the children make the effort. I just intuitively thought that it would be the best option.

I: The children grew bigger, what happened then?

A: *When my smallest child was about one and a half years old I once again went to the university. To satisfy the cultural needs. In mid-1970ies a lot had been written about bilingualism and linguistics, new professorships were established in linguistics in Sweden. The 30-year-olds that had completed their dissertations at a very young age then got these professorships. One also started to write more about bilingualism in the papers, one studied it. This had always interested me, how my parents spoke both Estonian and Swedish, how I and my generation spoke it, but also, as I have followed my children as they started to speak Swedish with Estonian accent. Languages have always interested me. So then I started to study linguistics at the University of Stockholm. I went there in the evenings so that I put the children in front of the TV to watch some children's programme for half an hour and hoped that my husband would come home and just left. I went in the evenings from six to nine.*

I: The house did not burn down?

A: *No, fortunately not. Usually the father did come, only once he had not come home. When I arrived home at half past ten in the evening then the two bigger who were then nine and seven sat in the hall on the floor in front of the small boys' room and played cards.*

I: That is, You went to study like an ordinary student, not as a post-graduate?

A: *No-no, to get the basic education from the university again. And I thought that I would not even pass the exams, that I would not have the time besides children. That was just my own curiosity, satisfaction of my interest. In the first term we studied phonetics, those new grammars, generative and others. There was a course called socio-linguistics, about language in society and like that. It was put together of moduls and I chose the development of children's language and psycholinguistics. Further on I thought that since I go to the seminars I could try to pass the exams as well. When you have done all this group-work then you practically ought to know what is required at the exam.*

My husband took the children from Friday evening. Sometimes went to his parents or my parents. Anyway he always took care of them the Saturday and Sunday before I had the exams. I really sat those two days and read through the materials once again and hoped that I would remember everything until Friday – for some reason we had usually exams on Fridays. So I made through this first term. Not very brilliantly but not narrowly either. And as it had gone like that and I still had not reached the subjects that really interested me – bilingualism and the development of the language of bilingual children – I continued at the next term. Now there were

some more essential subjects. When I had passed the second term too one of my lecturers called me and asked if I wanted to join their research project that was called "Swedish as target language"

I: Swedish as target language, does that mean what you learn besides your mother tongue?

A: Yes, not like the foreign language you learn at school, but Swedish if you have to learn it as the second mother tongue in Swedish-language society. And there were some twelve such domestic languages. People with different domestic languages had written little essays and they had to be analysed from the viewpoint of the Swedish language, like what kinds of mistakes there were and those mistakes had to be categorised by all sorts of different criteria. So they called me late in the evening and I said yes, of course! As soon as I put down the phone I thought how it would work out, at home with four children and going to work enthusiastically – that was a little optimistic! Then I called my father who had just retired and asked what he thought about it. He only laughed and said that his attitude to children was friendly. So that was solved like this. The heads of the project actually did not have very much money, so that the scholarship lasted until 1 July or so.

I: So it became possible to get away from the pots and pans at home?

A: Yes-yes, I could get away. My father looked for the children one day and the other grandfather was there the other day. They were both retired, the grandmothers were both still working. And that was of course, as I said, a glorious time for the children because they could live a much more exiting life than at home with me.

With the university it remained like that: when I had finished the second term and passed the exams, I thought that I could continue, it was not that bad at all. On the third term I already lectured myself too a little since I had been involved in the project. I remember that at some point I asked that how come they chose me although I was not so brilliant at the exams. And then they said that I was mature than some others were. But I was myself also sincerely interested in the subject. So I got the job of an assistant. I had already gathered 60 credit points or the basic programme of a subject, then I thought that I could study something else too. Further on I studied social anthropology and Estonian...I had not gone to Estonian school and I thought that then it would be good to have some academic degree or at least the basic course done in the Estonian language.

So it went like that...I got more and more opportunities to lecture the subject that I especially liked. I did those other subjects not in linguistics, but in Nordic languages, where Swedish is taught to those teachers who themselves will teach Swedish to grown-up immigrants, well, foreigners. And also to those who are teachers at the primary schools for immigrants, who are not exactly teachers of the Swedish language, but maybe who ought to know what happens to the children of immigrants, why they make certain mistakes. I liked to teach teachers although nobody else wanted to do it, because all those teachers had lots of experience themselves – they knew too much, they would make remarks all the time.

I: It means the teachers themselves had a better basis?

A: Yes, exactly! The teachers were of course a little arrogant, those who always know everything better. They could only sit still for 45 minutes. But if you broke through this certain initial negative attitude, then you could say that you tell me

about practice and I will then give you the theory why your pupils do like this or that. I taught like at the teachers' university where at that time one also taught domestic languages. Yes, it was at the pedagogical university where one prepared the teachers of domestic languages. At some point everybody had the right to get instruction in one's mother tongue. My children have also received instruction in the Estonian language some hours a week. That was in the seventies, probably not any more. And 16 different language groups were taught, from Kurds, Turkish, Greek, and Persian. There were no taught major European languages like Italian or French, they had other opportunities. There was a group from Eritrea, Somalia', and Finnish of course.

I: Where there immigrants from Central European countries too?

A: *Yes, there were Hungarians of course. And from Czechoslovakia and lots of Yugoslavians, as they were called at that time, there were many of them in Sweden. Spanish-speakers too, from South-America. The teaching was of course a very interesting experience in many respects. I remember, when I started to teach those Arab-speaking men, there were almost only men at that course. Many had obtained higher education in their homeland, but did not have a teacher's qualification. Those Arab men sat with their backs towards me, because a female teacher was not good enough for them. When I started to walk round and faced them then they turned their chairs around, sat again their backs towards me. And then we had a long discussion if one ought to behave according to Swedish customs in Sweden. Then finally we got so far that they sat, facing forwards, but held newspapers in front of their faces so I still could not see them. Then they had to write, but how can you write if you hold the paper in front of your face with two hands! Finally, step by step, it disappeared. But they did not get on very well with the Swedish teachers, the native Swedes. When I told them myself that I had also such immigrant background and that I was bilingual too and remembered it well when I didn't know all the words and some things in the Swedish society seemed so funny, then they opened up. The Arabs of course discussed and asked a lot. But I learned a lot myself too, taking a fresh look at the Swedish society. Before I looked at it with my Estonian eyes that are quite similar to the Swedish eyes, because the cultural difference is not that big. But it is hard for the Arabs to understand Swedish customs. Such customs, for example, that if you go to dinner at somebody's place and the housewife has cooked a meal, then, practically before you start eating, you start to praise the food: oh, how good! And oh, how good! You hardly have tasted it! The husband, he praises the most, often even starts praising. As you start eating or the dish goes around in the table, somebody already starts: oh, extremely good! And the other says, incredibly well, and the third says, uniquely well! One has to add some adjectives all the time! Then we discussed with the Arabian men why one would do like that. They said and I also thought, it was also a bit funny for Estonians to praise the housewife's food like that. As if she succeeded in doing something like that for the first time in her life, something really tasty, that is. There were of course purely linguistic matters with the immigrants too. In the Swedish language it is often like if you translate word by word into the other language, then it means something else. Like we can say in Estonian: oh, what do you say. But if you say like that in Swedish, then to somebody, who has just learned to speak Swedish, it sounds like...*

I: Insulting?

A: *Exactly. In Estonian one also says in reply, what are you speaking, although one understands very well what the talk is about. It is exactly the same in the Swedish language where one would carelessly say that I didn't hear what you said. There are such funny things and strange linguistic experiences. The immigrant constructs a sentence in Swedish, that is, he is able to put together a sentence contrary to the rules of his mother tongue and the pronunciation is absolutely impossible. And when he finally articulates this sentence in Swedish, then a Swede would respond in two ways: one is, oh, what do you say; and another, oh, what are you talking about. But the immigrant understands that the Swede did not hear him. And then the poor immigrant repeats the same sentence again in a very loud voice and the Swede looks at him with the face that now that is a fool, why is he crying this into my face!*

I: Did there come an end to this teaching?

A: *Simultaneously I started to write my PhD dissertation, because I was accepted for doctoral studies after the basic exams. I chose the same topic. The dissertation remained unfinished, because when it was nearly completed, we moved to Africa.*

I: Radicals turn in Your life!

A: *Yes, it really came suddenly. Some days before Christmas my husband was asked if he would be interested in going to Africa for half a year, to a small southern kingdom called Lesotho. The husband had been travelling to Africa before as well, but at the beginning of 1989 we went there.*

I: Why were the Swedish specialists hired there?

A: *Because Sweden knows to do this thing well and it was an international exchange.*

I: But there are other countries too. Sweden is actually quite far north from Africa?

A: *In Sweden planning was on a very high level. There were people from other countries also. When such projects came that there is a need somewhere, then first come, first served. One had to send applications, these were often international projects, funded either by the UN or by Swedish international funds.*

I: The husband suddenly got the idea to take his wife and children and go to Africa?

A: *We would have liked to go with him already earlier, but he always went for shorter periods, well, you don't take children from school for three months. But half a year, that already made sense. A whole term from Christmas or New Year till summer. We went in early January 1989. The elder son already served in the army. The daughter had to finish in spring, so she remained alone in Sweden. We took the two younger boys with us and left for half a year. At first we planned to come home for the summer, but as we were there, it appeared that our stay was prolonged. We discovered that Southern Africa was extremely interesting in many ways, it was the time when Apartheid started to break up. Lesotho is the small country within the Republic of South Africa, completely surrounded by the other country, a mountainous country. About the size of Estonia, the same population, the same area.*

I: Did Apartheid and all that influence it too?

A: No, not directly. Lesotho was never colonised, it was an English protectorate and it was not such a rich country as Zimbabwe and others,... Well, at least everything was very, very interesting. We were happy to prolong that time.

I: What can a wife and children do there?

A: The children went to the international school at once.

I: An English-language school?

A: Yes, such an International School, they are similar all over the world. At first it was probably founded for the children of diplomats, because they travel around and have to continue according to the same system, wherever they happen to live. There was such a school even in small Lesotho, although most of the children were local whose parents understood that education was necessary. But there were also foreigners like us, who had a family member working in Lesotho. I managed to get a job at the same school as a teacher of Swedish, because there were also some Swedish children. There is a system in Sweden that if you take your mother tongue and pass the examination, then you already have the Swedish language. You can go to a Swedish university without passing the language test. Many of those children had lived their whole life abroad, travelling in many places. And the parents wanted them to study Swedish on some level too. At home they spoke Swedish, but they also needed the standard language. The Swedish state paid for that. So I got a job at once.

I: But that was a part-time job?

A: Yes, I worked part-time. The children were in different ages, so that they could not all attend classes together. There were little children who went to primary school. But it was very, very interesting at that school, because everybody, the teachers, were a little Bohemian and travellers. They probably have contracts for four years or like that. Some stay for eight years, others go to somewhere else after four years. That was a very colourful community. Mostly Anglo-Americans, from some old British family, or Americans, well, Australians too. Yes, they very interesting people because of that – with very wide outlook. So that was an extremely interesting time. We could travel around a lot and see all kinds of exiting things. We as Swedes had the problem that Sweden was strictly against Apartheid that meant that we could not get a proper visa to the Republic of South Africa. But since Lesotho was completely surrounded by South Africa, we still had to travel through it when we wanted to go to Botswana or Swaziland or Namibia, it was possible to travel with special transit visas. So that we saw something in South Africa too.

I: You have to make stops on the road?

A: Yes, you have to, because the distances are enormous – you cannot imagine. That's another continent, you cannot drive anywhere in some hours, the drive lasted several days at least. So we had already spent a year and a half there and thought that it was over. We packed our things that had to go by ship. We had bought all sorts of exotic things that had to go to Sweden. Two nights before our departure we got a call from Sweden and were told to stay for another year. We were very happy for that, although we had already sent away our things. In summer we went to Sweden and meanwhile even in Estonia. We were away for three years.

I: But at the same time Estonia gradually becomes free?

A: Yes. In February 1989 we were already in Lesotho and there was midsummer at that time. One morning I went to the kitchen to make coffee. We had a living

room and TV next to the kitchen. I always switched on the TV in the morning because we could watch the news of South Africa. This was the news programme and suddenly, in the middle of African summer. I saw the Tall Hermann and the people under the tower. I of course shouted to the others: come quickly, come quickly! Tall Hermann, Tall Hermann! And then the others came rumbling down the stairs. And there we stood, in African February, and watched how they change the flag on top of Tall Hermann. That was really fantastic.

And what was interesting of course – all the time when everything happened here in Estonia and we were there,...well, all educated people generally listened to the BBC a lot about Estonia all through this time of becoming independent. There were probably only two times some news about Sweden.

I: But the broadcasts were actually about all the Baltic countries?

A: Yes, but it broadcasts a lot about Estonia because there were more people who could speak some English in Estonia than in Latvia or Lithuania. So that Estonia was absolutely more represented. And that meant that if we happened not to listen to something then some Italian and Greek or some other person would meet us on the street and ask whether we had heard what had been told about Estonia the night before. So that we could follow the Estonian events extremely well by the BBC. And of course the South-African TV broadcasts well too.

I: Well, what did you do when the tanks started to come in?

A: Then we were exactly in Stockholm. My husband had gone to Africa and I had to come to Estonia for a week with the little boys. They had not been there before and I said that now we make the trip, that we have a week left. We had to go in the evening of 19 August. All the people, Marju Lauristin and Savisaar and Fjuk⁴⁵ and who else were in Stockholm already at the end of the week and I had met them on Saturday night and on Sunday night. There was an Estonian at the Russian embassy that issued the visas. And he told me to come the next day, that he would quickly make the visas for the trip in the evening. But in the morning my mother called and said that nothing probably came out of your trip, if I had listened to the news. That was early in the morning, since it was an hour earlier in Estonia...no, it was two hours earlier then, wasn't it?

I: Two hours. It was the Moscow time, not the local time in Estonia.

A: Was it? So it was very early in Stockholm. Of course we followed the course of events. I had to meet Peeter Vihalemm⁴⁶ once more in the morning. He said that it would make no sense to come to the Soviet embassy because nobody knew anything there; all the gates were locked and nobody could get close. We cancelled the trip. Although we were told that ferry "Estonia" would leave in the evening, but god knows if it could ever get back from there. One really could not know. So we went to the place where the Monday meetings⁴⁷ were held instead. I had been there a couple of times before as well when we were in Sweden, but at that time it was something quite fantastic. Probably all the embassies were empty at that time, no matter what

⁴⁵ Here mentioned as leading persons of Popular Front

⁴⁶ Here as activist of Popular Front

⁴⁷ place of the regular meetings of the Baltic émigré activists of the central part of Stockholm

country, all the representatives were there. A great number of Swedes, not to mention Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians participated. Those transverses that led to the square, all were full of people! And everybody of course followed the events with excitement. And then it went as it went. I couldn't go to Estonia that week, but exactly a week later we went there with a cruise. It was Monday, 26 August, then we went there. We had no time to make a longer trip any more and the visa matters were also so that nobody knew how and from where one could get it. There was no visa necessary for the cruise.

I: That is, to Estonia in the morning and back in the evening?

A: Yes, exactly. But the weather was nice and... I had been there before but in my mind everything was somehow different, the atmosphere and all seemed changed. Whether it actually was or not, but still, it really was different.

I: We in Estonia were more frightened of what would happen, now that we were independent. Whether the Russian tanks would suppress our freedom...

A: No, of course, I can understand that. Probably everybody had the feeling that it was the time when everybody walked on tiptoe a little bit. I noticed that you did not hear the Russian language in a bus or in the street like before. Now it has returned with those years. It was of course interesting when somebody asked you something that day. I cannot speak Russian. Before independence if anybody asked the time or something else in Russian and if you said, sorry, I cannot understand, one would revile you in Russian. I could not understand that either, but I understood that I was reviled. But then after that it was very interesting, if somebody came to ask you something in Russian and I said that unfortunately I didn't understand, they would show their watches, knock at it and ask: how much, how much, or something else in Estonian. So that was really a change!

And then we came back from Africa, we were away for exactly three years. In January 1992 we came back to Sweden. Then we left one child in Africa who had to go to school there for one more term. Before we had left one alone in Sweden as we went away, now left one to Africa as we came back. My husband then came to work in Estonia at once.

I: Was he invited?

A: Yes, exactly. At first he became a councillor to Savisaar's government⁴⁸ at Toompea. But at the time of Vähi⁴⁹ those who had been invited from abroad were already asked what their specialities were. Then the formation of local governments started and all that had not existed before. Since my husband had been involved in such matters, he continued in this field.

I: What was it then? A sense of mission?

A: No... I don't know. I don't think it was some kind of sense of mission. It seemed natural, when it was possible to come and stay.

I: Was life in Estonia very different compared to Africa?

A: Yes, it was indeed! Even living there in Africa my husband was restive that he couldn't be closer, it was quite on the other side of the Earth. We had been interested in those processes all the time and learned to know people whose way of thought

⁴⁸ Edgar Savisaar was a prime minister in years 1990-1992

⁴⁹ Tiit Vähi was a prime minister in years 1992 and 1995-1997

would have contributed to it. But nobody knew if one would ever get that far. So that coming back...No, I think that maybe it is right to answer like Rein Taagepera⁵⁰ once did, that why are we asked why we came back, why aren't we asked why we didn't come back. In a way we had grown up with the idea that Estonia would be free one day. That sounds very grandly, but the aim...from the beginning it was the wish to preserve some kind of culture and some command of language, hoping that the wonder would happen some day. Maybe nobody actually believed in this wonder, but in a way that was the engine in exile Estonians. Not quite conscious towards the end, but at the beginning it was a clear aim. But somehow it had rooted in us. Our return – that is many things actually. One is that Estonia still became free. Another, that it is interesting to be in a society where you have to build up something again, even not from zero, but from minus, because the Soviet time had destroyed many good old structures. And a part of this process was maybe not based on a sense of mission, but maybe simply tradition. Our parents had been active when the first republic came. Our return was like a part of it. I cannot say exactly why. It was just a natural thought.

I: To come here to Soviet Estonia for the first time, when was that?

A: I cannot tell the exact year. It was before 1980, but I don't remember the year.

I: The children had to be small.

A: No, the children were not with us. My husband and me came alone for the first time.

I: What was the first time like?

A: Strange. I don't have relatives of my age here. Now I know some, but then I didn't. But my husband had cousins or children of two uncles and they had been to Siberia and we met them of course. Several comments or questions that came from them made me think. I think all this made an enormous impression on me, because when I came home, I solved Estonia's problems in my dreams at night: economic problems, political problems. I only saw dreams about Estonia. Probably there were so much impressions in the brain that as I fell asleep at home, I got ideas. I know how I have solved the problems of trolley-buses at night and obtained wedding dresses for the young, founded new factories at once that would make more wedding gowns for the brides.

I: What disturbed you here?

A: No, nothing really disturbed. I cannot say that. We lived in a hotel then and that was rubbish of course. I don't know, we had travelled elsewhere before. Maybe life in Estonia was not that much different, as I had imagined. Then we had had many contacts already and my husband had been to Estonia and our acquaintances had been to Sweden...I think that there was nothing directly like, oh, is it like that here!

It was funny in my opinion that I could have crossed some yard and say that coming from here were arrive at Liisu's house. I had grown up with those stories about the life of Tallinn, I could find the way after what my parents had told me. Of course I did such funny things. We went to Toompea with my husband's cousins and then I

⁵⁰ Rein Taagepera - politologist who came back from USA to take the professorship at Tartu University

looked at the castle and said how ugly that they have painted it pink. Everybody started to laugh and I didn't understand all what they were laughing at. And then they asked, well, what colour was it before? I answered that yellow, of course. I had seen only black-and-white photos of the castle all my life. But houses of that type in Sweden are very often light yellows with white corners. So that I had added colour to my black-and-white pictures myself and made Toompea castle yellow. They are laughing at that until today.

I: But were you not disturbed by everyday problems?

A: No, I don't think so.

I: Because the eighties were the most difficult time actually.

A: Yes, that's true. I knew that.

I: Then there were queues in shops.

A: Yes, we saw all that. We had heard about that and, of course, when you see with your own eyes that there are only some pickled cucumbers and chicken legs in the shop, then it's depressing of course. But that was not surprising. I rather remembered such small things. My husband had another cousin, a young boy who had to go to the army soon. He was free and came with us a lot. He was a very sweet boy. We also went to work with some acquaintances or relatives like that. It was Easter time, I remember that it rained a lot. The boy always stood – the others sat, he stood. Finally we asked him to sit down too as we planned to stay there for quite some time. But he had just one suit that he was wearing every day in our honour. The boy said that if he sat the suit would crease so that it couldn't be smoothed even with iron. So he said thanks, he would rather stand. That was of course a little bit funny.

I: And now you are back in Estonia for good?

A: Now we actually are here: the husband is permanently, the daughter is permanently, the elder son worked some time for "Estline" that now has ceased, so that he was here three times a week. He has also worked at the Department of Foreign Relations of the Interior Ministry for some time, but he already had a Swedish girlfriend so that attracted him back a little.

I: Now he still has a Swedish family there?

A: Well, not quite Swedish family. He has two children, he speaks Estonian to them, we speak Estonian to them. The children understand both.

I: In your family the assimilation has taken quite a long time – will you become Swedes in the fourth generation?

A: We probably haven't become Swedes yet. Even the son hasn't said that they wouldn't move here if the work developed further.

I: What do the two younger sons do?

A: One studies geography for his PhD in Uppsala and has chosen cultural geography. He studies old maps, looks at how the landscape has changed under different political systems. What happened before the war, when Estonia became independent, or actually even before that – he looks at very old maps, starting from somewhere in the 17th century.

I: Does he study Estonian maps too?

A: Namely the Estonian maps –from island of Muhu and from Rapla County. Their structures are different. And then he looks what happened with the land reforms as independence came; what happened in the Soviet time, what happened

when collective farms were formed, how was this structure broken down, what is there in those areas and what has happened as the lands were returned and so on. Those maps can be put on top of each other using chip systems and looked so that all the old structures show. So he is involved with Estonia and is here very often. Well, his material actually comes from Estonia, he goes to archives here and co-operates with people from Tartu.

I: And you don't know what will happen in the future

A: No I don't. When he finishes he will certainly continue to work in this field. And the other boy writes his MA thesis at the University of Stockholm about Estonian wet areas and respective legislation and looks at what they were like in the Soviet time, in parallel what happened in Sweden when all those environmental movements came and what to keep and what not. So that he also comes here and really hopes that when he finishes in spring, he would get a job here. So that they are all anxious to come here.

I: That's not very common.

A: No, no, but they are really anxious to come and they have chosen their subjects like that. So I tend to believe that somehow the centre of gravity gradually remains on this side, but of course I think that we cannot cut off those connections with Sweden either. Nobody can tell about ourselves too when we get old, where do we stay or where we are.

I: Do you have double citizenship?

A: Yes. Because maybe Estonia is not so developed by that time when our legs no longer carry us and eyes don't see, maybe it is easier there. Otherwise it might happen that the children must only occupy themselves with us. Well, I don't want that. So that question is still open. But now we are here and we have bought a plot in Saaremaa and build a summer cottage there. So that's our fate.

I: Very beautiful fate You have.

A: Beautiful, I also think so. Super-fate, I should say. Everything has gone like you wish and even better.

Biography of Vera, recorded autumn 2003

(Quoted by the permission given to the interviewer in September 2006)

It was my mother's destiny that from the oblast of Novgorod she arrived in Leningrad, but later settled in Tallinn. She had pedagogical education and was assigned to work in Tallinn. In 1947 she becomes acquainted with a man. Being already pregnant, she does not marry him, but keeps the child since abortions were prohibited. Thus I was born in late forties. I had great health problems: I could not walk until the age of three and heard very badly. Mother had to carry me everywhere on her hands. Doctors advised to take me away to the countryside, where nature and the way of life would be favourable for recovering.

Mother got a spacious room only after I was born, but until then she did not have a place to live. Almost immediately after I was born grandmother arrived

from the oblast of Novgorod to help mother. At that time there were still traces of war in the towns: disorganization, hunger, armed people on the streets. Naturally one could not dream about baby food or swaddling clothes. At that time mother got only a half-liter of milk for me.

My health was really bad: I was on the brink of life and death. It was decided that grandmother would take me to the countryside and mother would stay and work in Tallinn.

So, at the age of one year and three months grandmother took me with her to her place in the oblast of Novgorod. Here she had a small house, peaceful, the war did not reach those places. When we arrived, grandmother got a job as a nanny in a nursery school in order to manage life with me. In the kindergarten and nursery school I spent days and nights with grandmother.

At that time mother did not help us in any way, very seldom wrote letters (with excuses). Now I understand that for her this was actually very hard.

I was four years old when mother married and the next year my half-sister was born. A new family was formed where I was not needed. But maybe it was even better this way. I lived a good life with grandmother, there was no hunger. We lived on grandmother's salary, plus our own garden and forest that also fed us. A lot of food was distributed by norms (we stood in long queues to get the products). We had just the basic things we needed.

Once a year, some time around my birthday, grandmother made me some everyday dresses and a school uniform.

Later I went to the first class, the school was in our village. From the first to the fifth class I studied excellently, but later, when I started to get "goods", I learned that grandmother did not recognize "goods" and I carried a "good" home like a brick. I got diplomas for good grades. I liked to go to school: we were very friendly, always stood firm for each other. Everybody wore the same uniform, nobody was different. I remember the New Year presents: 2-3 mandarins and a small chocolate. Now, when I feel the smell of mandarins, I always remember those times. Electricity came to our village when I finished second class, but until then there were wick light lamps with kerosene. Later, in 1968 the family of my classmate bought the first TV-set.

I remember that only a few times mother sent us to the village packets of felt boots and sweets. At the age of five grandmother takes me to Tallinn for the first time, to my mother. I only remember mother's big dog and our street with barracks-like houses. When we were in Tallinn, grandmother took me to my own father. I remember that he dressed me up from feet to head and took to the Upper Town. And I also remember mother's first visit on 12 April 1961 to our village. Then she came with the stepfather. Grandmother gave me a photo and asked me to go and meet them at the station, but I didn't recognize them and was very frightened that mother did not come after all. I returned to grandmother in tears, but after some minutes we saw them at the gate. This was the only visit of my mother during all the time that I lived with grandmother. During school holidays I did not go to my mother, but to our (grandmother's) relatives.

I remember how grandmother gave me 10 copecks for the cinema on Sundays. I remember, when the first torches arrived, how I read under the blanket. This

activity almost acquired a ritual character at New Year's Eve: when the clock stroke twelve, I started to read immediately.

When I finished ninth class, the time arrived to get a passport, but since I was registered at my mother's place in Tallinn, I was told in the village council to go to Tallinn to get the passport. I went to Tallinn at the age of 16. I wanted to stay. We had a conversation with my mother and we decided that I would stay on the condition that I start working. So I stayed in Tallinn. I started to work as a post-man and lived with my mother in Kopli⁵¹. I also continued my studies in secondary evening school no. 4 (11 classes). I did not study very well, because I got very tired at work, I had to make three rounds a day in the district. All my salary I gave to mother. All that time I studied, I wore just one dress, at school and at work.

When I finished school, I took my documents to Tallinn Polytechnic Institute, Faculty of Automatics, Telemechanics and Communication. I got in easily, got only one four of the five exams. I was the second or the third on the list. When I came to my mother and said that I entered the day-section, she said that she would not support me. In tears I went to the faculty to take out my documents, but there I was advised to transfer to the evening section that I then did. But then I already enrolled to the Faculty of Precise Mechanics Instruments, since the faculty that I chose at first did not have an evening section. By that time my length of service was already two years that in principal guaranteed enrollment to the institute and a scholarship.

At the time when I entered the institute I also finished calculation machine operator's courses. I thought that it would be useful, but finally I did not start to work in that field. At the same time we moved with mother to Mustamäe (at that time it was called "second micro-district"). There were construction works everywhere: all over Mustamäe from Polytechnic Institute to Kadaka Road. At the Polytechnic Institute I studied one and a half years, but later I was dismissed for poor progress. I did not have enough time to study, and by that time I realized that it was not "for me".

In 1967 I became acquainted with my future husband on a party in the Sailors' club in Kopli. And already in 1968 we decided to register. At that time we did not think how we would start our life together. We had no thoughts about wealth, about connections, about the help of parents. We registered our marriage on 5 October and on 17 October I sent him to the army for two years. Before we married I worked at the machine-building factory, at the personnel department, later on the railway. At that time my relations with mother started to deteriorate and I had to leave and rent a flat on my own. At the railway I was just then offered a room in a hostel, the neighbours were good.

On the railway I worked as a typist at first, then as inspector of military record bureau, later as senior inspector. And so I worked there for eight years. Gradually my salary rose to 80 roubles and this was quite enough. Often we went to the theatre, to the cinema, or to dance at the Club of Railway Workers. Actually I also

⁵¹ Kopli, - a district in Tallinn where the first Russian migrants from Leningrad, Pskov and Novgorod oblasts located in temporary bad-quality buildings.

worked one year at the Ministry of Finance where I was offered a 1-room flat and a permanent job, but, since I already planned to enter the institute, I refused and went to work at the Ministry of Commerce (as a typist). I also earned extra salary to go on holidays, to send packets to my husband. Here I got almost as much as for my main job. I remember that there was no tendency to bossing, everybody sort of respected each other, but now... As if people on lower positions were some kind of small insects without rights.

In November my husband went to the army, in March I went to visit him for the first time. When my second year at work arrived, colleagues emotionally sent me to study at the Railway Institute, at that time it was called Leningrad Institute of Engineers of Railway Transport, and it was situated in Leningrad. I started to study when I was 21 years old. Three and a half years I studied on Pikk Street where a consultation office of the institute was situated. I studied in the Faculty of Economics and Organization of Railway Transport. When I finished the first course, my husband returned from the army. We started to live in my hostel in a room with five girls. Later my husband also started to work on the railway since we were promised a separate flat after some time. In May we got a warrant for a one-room flat without conveniences close to the main railway station. On the first floor there was a kitchen of 13 square meters, on the second a room of 13 square meters. We also had an official phone. We were madly happy, since at that time one usually had to wait in a queue for a flat for many years. In the first place veterans of war, work heroes or the authorities nominated by the party were given flats.

During that time two children were born into our family, the first child, a daughter, in 1972. We did not manage very well on our own, so grandmother helped us. At the time when my husband finished his studies in the evening school, I finished my third from the five years of studies at the institute and went to the exam session in Leningrad. My second child was born on the fourth course and, already pregnant, I went to the last session. The railway compensated for our travel expenses during the sessions.

Later my husband also started to study mechanics of carriage economics at the Institute of Railway Transport. But I got my diploma and I was awarded the qualification of engineer-economist of communication. I defended my graduation paper on "excellent". The professor proposed me to continue my studies, but I could not because of the family. But later the relations with my husband started to deteriorate. I started to think about a divorce almost immediately after I defended my diploma and returned to Tallinn. One year after my graduation we were divorced, since my husband started to drink, neglected his studies at the institute... In general, I did not tell anybody that I was divorced. A change of job from the management of roads to the means of communication of stations' organization (technical department) helped me to overcome that stress. The children were not separated from the father. He paid the allowance correctly. At that time I received 33% of his salary for the allowance of two children. Later I started to work as an economist in the same enterprise does until 1981. By that time we had got a next flat from the factory (a two-room apartment). So we moved there with two small children, grandmother and husband (still not divorced). When we

were divorced, we were demanded to move out from the flat, but I was determined not to move anywhere with small children (a family with under-age children was protected by the law). So this flat remained ours. For the flat we paid in turns with the former husband, ate separately.

I would have liked to escape from such life. Just at that time I corresponded with a friend who lived in Ufa⁵² and decided to take a leave from work and try to establish myself with the children in Ufa. It did not work out. But from this trip I have a vivid memory how the feeling of the grandeur of our Homeland Russia arose in me. We traveled through all the European part of the Soviet Union. This was enormously impressive. I stayed in Ufa for more than a month and did not say anything about the trip to my husband. By that time he started to search for me and already thought that I had left forever. He was very frightened. But I returned, and when he saw me with the children, he cried. Probably then he realized for the first time that he ought to change. He promised that he would continue his studies and stop drinking and he did not lie. Gradually our relations started to improve, he finished the institute, found a job in his field in the rubber-technology factory, where, after some time, I also went to work. At first I worked as an economist, later as senior economist, and afterwards as head of the department of work and salary. I was included in the auditing commission of the Ministry of Oil and Chemical Industry. The ministry itself was located in Moscow and I started to travel to Moscow or Voronezh often for the auditing. Every year we could allow holidays outside Estonia.

In 1983 our son was killed. This tragedy bound us together like never before. Although we did not remarry after the divorce, we lived already for a long time like husband and wife. About three years later my grandmother died. So, suddenly like that, two persons very dear to me passed away.

In 1983 our son was killed, but in 1984 a daughter was born, and then we again had two children, but could have had three... By that time our salaries were not bad at all. We went to restaurants, bought domestic appliances, saved up for a new flat. At that time it was not possible to buy a flat, but people exchanged and, so to say, bought additional rooms for personal (illegal) payment. We also wanted to put ourselves on the list for buying a car. Thus, that period appeared to be the most unclouded, since it seemed that it was possible to achieve success in everything, but it did not go like that.

Some time around 1986 disturbances started, soon the Popular Front⁵³ was formed. At that time the question of Estonia's separation from the Soviet Union was raised. Mass staff reductions were carried out in enterprises. For the first time we heard about the Language Law, that also had an influence on the formation of the Interfront⁵⁴. I remember when from all enterprises crowds of people came on the streets. People went silently, in ranks, carried slogans, flags, and therefore

⁵² Ufa – an industrial town in the Ural Mountains.

⁵³ Popular Front – established in summer 1988 the Estonian-centred mass movement for democracy

⁵⁴ Interfront or Intermovement – established the imperial-minded mass movement of the Russian inhabitants in autumn 1988

transport could not circulate. People wanted to defend their right to study in their native language, their right to work. Then one started to organize courses of the Estonian language that were absolutely useless, because they were carried out in the working time where everybody had to do his work. At that time we did not believe that such a thing could happen.

To my mind, already in 1979 Estonian language had to be introduced, later all this moved on and on, and from 1986 one already definitely had to know the Estonian language. During this period of 10 years clouds began to gather in sort of waves. It seemed to me that people stopped smiling. In trams one started to insult Russians. We even did not talk any more, sat in the tram and were silent.

And then, when the Russian Easter came, many Russians went to the cemetery where very many people gathered and then we sort of understood that actually there are a lot of Russians, that we would not disappear.

In 1988 many co-operatives were established. In 1989 my husband left the rubber-technology factory and we established our own division of rubber technology. We had clients in Murmansk, Pskov, and Kiev. At that time everybody was still afraid to keep dollars.

So, until the monetary upheaval in 1992 we were a rubber technology co-operative and, since our elder daughter was interested in horses from early childhood, we bought her a white horse after 1989. Another branch of activity of the co-operative - horse transport – was started.

I myself was discharged in 1987 because of the state of the market at that time. I was politely asked to send in my resignation. At that time the local party committees that were going to pieces, tried to fix up their own people there. Then I even did not think about what would I do, where would I go to work. I was confident in my strength, knowledge, and experience and knew that I would find a job in any case.

At that time a leading engineer for the standardization of work was needed in the huge building trust. When I went there the chief engineer did not trouble him to introduce me with the matters, but I learned everything on my own, and later even achieved success at that work. I worked there from November 1987 until January 1989, the reason for my leaving was just the wave of staff reductions. This was the so-called first wave, when I was discharged too. At that time lists of people who were to be discharged were displayed and we had to sign that we had acquainted ourselves with the lists. We got the allowance for two months (average salary). The reductions were planned and, as we guessed already then, apparently worked out above not just for one year. But everybody was confident that he was a professional and could not lose the job, but, alas.

When those mass reductions took place, I remember how I watched demonstrations out of the window of my workplace. Then there was the Interfront – the Russian-speaking population (about 600.000 people) and the Popular Front – those who spoke Estonian (about 900. 000 people). People from the Interfront went in peaceful silence, with gloomy faces. In 1988-1989 workers' squads were formed. Then we guarded on the streets, maintained order.

Now I started to think about what to do after the reductions. And then I became engaged in our co-operative that gave some income. In 1990 co-operatives

were established on a mass scale and, since I had great experience in this field, I worked in a number of such co-operatives and, to some extent, put them on the feet. In the beginning of nineties our personal co-operative still flourished. Joint-stock companies started to appear, but it was more profitable to establish co-operatives, because they had to pay smaller taxes. Accounting system was so primitive that one could easily write off something, hide the losses at that time there were few people who received their salaries in time and every kind of book-keeping tricks were done. From the same period I remember how the checks were introduced on scarce commodities. Even those who were getting married got extra checks for a better food and champagne. At that time a sort of uncomfortable feeling, strange feeling started to arise.

Suddenly a sharp jump in prices came in 1992, everybody started to exchange 3000 Soviet roubles for 300 Estonian crowns. From such a turn (change of currency) I came to my senses about three days, I could not look at these “wild” Estonian banknotes.

But, never mind, we survived this backtrack also. I remember how at those time removals still continued and I was even happy that I had already gone through this. Whereas the first wave of reductions removed the young without children and the second wave the elderly, then the third – those who did not speak Estonian. So there were 5-6 waves of reductions. With the sixth wave one started to shut down the huge enterprises, and later, who could, started to privatize these enterprises. One could say that the leadership usurped the shares of the workers. In the beginning of nineties appeared a wave of “educated” caretakers and saleswomen at the market.

Now I think that I was able to cope with this thanks to my great experience in different spheres of activity. I remember that then many military men left and many military units were devastated, everything valuable was stolen. Ghastly past... At that time our co-operative (family business) was also plundered, since we could not pay for guards, as we did not see any money for the orders ourselves. In 1992 connections were broken off with Russia where we delivered goods and for already sent goods we did not get paid. This resulted in financial failure. After the (gradual) downfall our family business my husband started to suffer from heart problems and depression. For a whole year he could not come to his senses, could not do anything. Later he started to work as chief constructor later was promoted and became chief technologist, and he established a small company that specialized in making dosators. Like that he step by step came to his senses. The profit of the business was small, but, at least, he had a job. But I still continued to work as an accountant for 2-3 small co-operatives.

In 1993 it was somehow already possible to buy candies and bananas for the child. So we survived the years 1992-1993 and things went well in my husband's business. We could buy a 17-year-old Opel for 9600 crowns. And drove it for almost ten years. I also remember how in 1992-1994 car-owners stood in queues for twenty liters of petrol. I also remember that there were no clothes available for children at that time. One got clothes from friends whose children had already grown up. As for psychological state this period reminded me the post-war years of disruption.

In 1995-1996 the Russian people in Estonia already came to their senses from this mess. Then one started to realize that “you are nothing without papers”. Everybody started to put all kinds of papers in order, and this was often done with bribes. Who had money, became Estonian citizens already then. Of course, as time went by, many were exposed.

From 1995 we live in a three-room apartment, from 1992 I have a permanent job as an accountant at a hairdresser’s salon, my husband works in the field of repair works for private apartments already for some years. And, it seems that the period from 1996 to 2004 has been more or less peaceful for us. I think that if there was not the issue of age, we would have no troubles any more. Now I am already in mid-fifties and I cannot earn a normal salary any more. Now I get 2480, out of which 2000 goes just to pay for the rent. Naturally, if I would look for a new job, in many cases my “grey” passport would also appear as a problem. Looking back, I think that at that time when we lost our jobs we could still have contributed a lot for our real homeland – Estonia, but, alas, we turned out to be, I do not know who, “grey people”, look down aliens.

But anyway, I still take to heart all the bright changes in Estonia. What concerns studying the Estonian language, personally for me bad hearing created the biggest obstacle, but I can say that I understand something on the elementary level, I know special words in accounting and a couple of sentences. In general our life is stable, no better or worse than that of the others’.

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