

## General information

# Fleeing to Sweden during WWII

## Relation to the course / learning topic

Upper secondary school course IV Contemporary History I – Estonia and the World in the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Topic: WWII

## Key words

effect of war on the courses of people's lives, refugees, exile, Sweden, Germany, displaced persons camps, Red Cross, humanitarian law

## Study results

The pupil

- has an overview of the primary directions in which war refugees escaped from Estonia over the course of WWII;
- provides examples of the fate of different nationalities after WWII;
- understands the importance of the functioning of the Red Cross and humanitarian law in situations of war.

## Background information

As background information, the teacher introduces the evolution of the expatriate Estonian community in Sweden and the work of the Red Cross in Europe after World War II.

In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, people emigrated from Europe to America mostly for economic reasons, for instance in the hope of finding a better job. On the eve of the Second World War, around 25–30 000 Estonians lived in different countries abroad excluding Latvia, Lithuania and the Soviet Union. People emigrated to different countries during the world wars mainly for political reasons, by force, and due to the alteration of national borders. Large communities of expatriates came into being. According to different estimates, 70–75 000 Estonian refugees were added to hitherto existing Estonian immigrant communities during the Second World War. Most of the Estonians who had escaped from Estonia to the West or found themselves in the West, about 35–40 000 people, were in Germany in the zones occupied by the Western Allies. Over 30 000 of them were placed in DP camps (DP – displaced person, or resettled person, exile, deportee) set up by the Allied military authorities or the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, UNRRA. A few camps were located in Austria, where around 2000 Estonians found themselves.



The second country that was a main destination for Estonian refugees after Germany was Sweden. Around 200 000 war refugees in total were registered in Sweden at the end of the war, most of which had arrived from other Nordic countries. Norwegians, Danes and Finns mostly returned to their homelands after the end of the war but Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonian Swedes, Ingrian Finns and Sudeten Germans decided to stay. By 8 June 1945, a total of 28 369 former residents of Estonia (including 6554 Estonian Swedes) had arrived in Sweden. Most exiles in Sweden lived in so called DP camps set up by UNRRA. By August of 1945 already, all DP camps in Sweden had been closed and the exiles had journeyed on to other countries or had found suitable work and lodgings for themselves in Sweden. Since in January of 1946, Sweden extradited to the USSR 2700 soldiers in German uniform (including 146 soldiers from the Baltic countries) who had escaped to Sweden at the end of the war, 6449 Estonians left the country in 1949-51 in fear of communism, moving primarily to Canada. At the same time, a couple of thousand Estonians soon came to Sweden from Germany.

The life of Estonians who departed from Estonia during World War II to countries other than the Soviet Union can be divided into four time periods: the initial period in camps (until August of 1945 in Sweden, until the early 1950's in Germany), a period of searching, unstable organisation of the affairs of everyday life, and adaptation (until the mid-1950's), the following more stable period, and the period following the restoration of Estonia's independence.

A large proportion of refugees started earning their daily bread by physical labour: the men in logging or agricultural labour and the women in housekeeping or agricultural labour. The second generation of Estonians in Sweden is characterised by very motivated effort to acquire higher education, for which reason their level of education is notably high. From the mid-1950's onward, exiles started becoming citizens of their new host countries through naturalisation. After their arrival, refugees started forming various nationalist associations. Local (for instance, the Stockholm Estonian House, the Estonian House in Lund), regional and, so to speak, international level societies can be differentiated. For instance, the Eesti Rahvusfond (Estonian National Fund) was called into being in Stockholm in 1946 to finance foreign policy initiatives. It collected donations that were to be used for political action abroad. Estonians hoped to further support political action abroad with the help of foreign intelligence services. Thus Swedish military intelligence began gathering information on occupied Estonia even during the German occupation already.



The idea of creating the Red Cross occurred on the battlefield of Solferino in 1859, where a young Swiss businessman named Jean Henri Dunant gathered together wounded soldiers and organised a group of local village women to impartially assist sufferers. Back in his home town of Geneva, the young Swiss man wrote a book entitled *Memory of Solferino*. An appeal for creating groups for impartial assistance formed of volunteers in other countries as well is in the final chapter of that book. The book was published in 1862 and the idea for creating the Red Cross was born. In 1863 already, the International Red Cross Committee (IRCC) convened in Geneva and a year later, it adopted the first Geneva Convention – Assistance of the Wounded on the Battlefield. The IRCC had a mandate deriving from international humanitarian law to protect wounded soldiers and prisoners of war, the sick, and civilians. In addition to assisting victims of conflicts, the Red Cross Committee propagated the observance of international humanitarian law and its observance within each country as well.

International humanitarian law is a set of rules for protecting individuals who do not participate or who no longer participate in warfare during a time of armed conflict and for restricting the ways and means of warfare used; also known as the law of war.

The work of the IRCC is based on four Geneva conventions from 1949, two additional protocols from 1977, and an additional protocol from 2005 (prescribing a new, neutral emblem), the statutes of the movement, and resolutions adopted at conferences of the International Red Cross Movement (the most recent was at the end of 2011). The IRCC is an independent (meaning of nations and the UN system) and neutral organisation. The financial means of the IRCC are strictly based on voluntary donations.



## Lesson plan

# Fleeing to Sweden during WWII

### Introduction (about 10 min)

The teacher displays on the wall a painting painted in exile by an Estonian artist who escaped to Sweden. The painting should evoke the feelings associated with fleeing by boat across the sea, for instance *Katastroof* (Catastrophe, 1968), a relief completed by Ernst Jõesaar while he was in exile in Sweden. The pupils try to guess the topic that will be considered in the lesson without reading the title of the picture.

The teacher introduces the method of writing freely. In the space of 2 minutes, the pupil is to write down all thoughts he comes up with associated with the topic "Refugees". This is followed by a discussion in the class based on the thoughts that have been written down and the completion of an idea map: writing down key words and grouping them according to attributes (for instance When? Where? Who? How? Why?) around the idea map's central concept of refugees. The teacher displays a map on the board as background information showing the directions that the refugees primarily moved in and indicating the stages of the exodus (to Sweden and Germany; onward from Germany elsewhere in the world). See the map below.

### Study (about 30 min)

Two different stories of escape to Sweden that took place during World War II are read in groups of three and each pupil shares his story with the other members of his group. The stories of both refugees are mapped out as key words on the basis of the idea map attributes (answers to the questions familiar from the attunement phase of the lesson – When? Where? Who? How? Why?) in a table and the route of the two refugees is marked on the contour map of Europe in different colours. The groups introduce their table in the class discussion. The teacher or a pupil asked to the front of the class also fills in a table on the blackboard on the two refugees to Sweden.

The Delfi Method<sup>1</sup> has to be implemented to generate further discussion and analysis based on the following problem statements:

- Explain what role the work of the Red Cross played in the period after World War II. Give examples based on sources.
- Point out the fate of different nationalities after World War II based on sources.

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<sup>1</sup> This teaching method is an effective method of learning in cases where the status of pupils between themselves in the class would start affecting the solutions proposed by one another or the assessments of the opinions presented when communicating face to face.



- Describe different environments where refugees ended up. How successfully did the refugees manage to adapt?

In the Delfi Method, pupils are presented with a problem for which they have to seek solutions. Each pupil gives his assessment or proposes a solution and justifies it. The teacher passes these assessments / opinions / solutions on to other pupils (anonymously), who then read the assessments / opinions / solutions and add their own to them. Opinion develops / changes as what others have written is read. Ultimately, a joint compromise solution, so to speak, is arrived at.

*Stage I.* The teacher divides the class up into three groups (for instance according to rows of desks, an average of 7–8 pupils tries to find an answer to one problem) and hands out a different problem on a sheet of paper to each of the three groups. Each pupil writes his answer to the problem presented on the sheet of paper individually and anonymously. Thereafter the teacher collects the papers from all three groups and hands them out again anonymously.

*Stage II begins.* (The papers that were previously in the hands of group I go to group II, which reads a problem that is new to them and tries to find an answer based on sources).

*Stage III begins,* where the teacher collects the papers again from the groups (now answers have been received from two different groups to the questions on the papers) and hands them out again. At the end of Stage III, the teacher asks one pupil from each group to read out the answers from the paper in his hand. If necessary, fellow pupils supplement the answers on the basis of the other papers in their hands.

### **Reflection (about 5 min)**

The RATT<sup>2</sup> (Role-addressee-text form-topic) Method is used. Pupils choose one form of text and write / draw a text (an open letter, a letter, minutes, a fairy tale, a drawing, a manifesto, an advertisement, an obituary, a poem, an application, a play, a job description, a job interview, a telephone conversation, a letter of thanks, instructions, a home page, a slogan or other such text) on the topic Escape to Sweden, putting themselves in the position of a participant in the events or a person

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<sup>2</sup> (Role-addressee-text form-topic). Creative writing from the position of someone intended for someone else.



connected to the topic in some other way. For instance, a pupil writes a slogan from the viewpoint of an employee of the Swedish Immigration Bureau appealing to refugees to take jobs in Sweden's northern regions and to undergo retraining.

### Sources used

Klaar, Julia: Eestist lahkumise ja Rootsi pääsemise lugu (The story of leaving Estonia and making it to Sweden) [1941–1947] + information on the author, EKLA-12080-61073-65196

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**Figure 1. The main directions and stages of escape**



Stage I 1944 – beginning of 1950's; Stage II early 1950's

Source: Wikimedia, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BlankMap-World.svg> and additions from the author

## **Additional reference material**

### **Suggestions for works of art to be used in the introductory attunement phases**

Ernst Jõesaar's work painted in exile in Sweden – *Lahkuvate laevade linn* (City of Departing Ships), 1961 [can be used upon registration by way of the digital collection of the Estonian Art Museum – <http://digikogu.ekm.ee/#>]

Ernst Jõesaar's relief completed in exile in Sweden – *Katastroof* (Catastrophe), 1968 [can be used upon registration by way of the digital collection of the Estonian Art Museum – <http://digikogu.ekm.ee/#>]

Ernst Jõesaar's sculpture completed in exile in Sweden – *Inimpurjed* (Human Sails), 1967 [can be used upon registration by way of the digital collection of the Estonian Art Museum – <http://digikogu.ekm.ee/#>]

Olev Mikiver's work painted in Sweden – *Jõulud 1943* (Christmas 1943), 1948 – [http://www.vaal.ee/est/avaleht/otsing/newwin/hor/pic\\_id-2111](http://www.vaal.ee/est/avaleht/otsing/newwin/hor/pic_id-2111) [viewed on 21 June 2014]

Olev Mikiver's work painted in Sweden – *Sündmused merel* (Events at Sea), 1951 – [http://www.vaal.ee/est/avaleht/otsing/newwin/hor/pic\\_id-2413](http://www.vaal.ee/est/avaleht/otsing/newwin/hor/pic_id-2413)

### **Other additional materials**

Klaar, Julia, *Võitlus ellujäämise eest: mälestused* (Struggle for Survival: Memoirs), edited by Anne Velliste, Tallinn: Aade, 2010

Raimo Raag, Estonians in exile, in the collected work *Eesti Ajalugu VI* (Estonian History VI), editor-in-chief Vahtre, Sulev, Ilmamaa [Tartu], 2005, pp. 356-373

*Eestlaste põgenemine Läände Teise maailmasõja ajal: artiklid ja elulood* (The Escape of Estonians to the West during the Second World War: Articles and Life Stories), edited by Terje Hallik, Kristi Kukk, Janet Laidla, life stories editor Riina Reinvelt. Tartu, 2009

*Suur põgenemine 1944: Eestlaste lahkumine läände ning selle mõjud* (The Great Exodus, 1944: the Departure of Estonians to the West and its Effects), edited by Kaja Kumer-Haukanõmm, Tiit Rosenberg, Tiit Tammaru. Tartu, 2006

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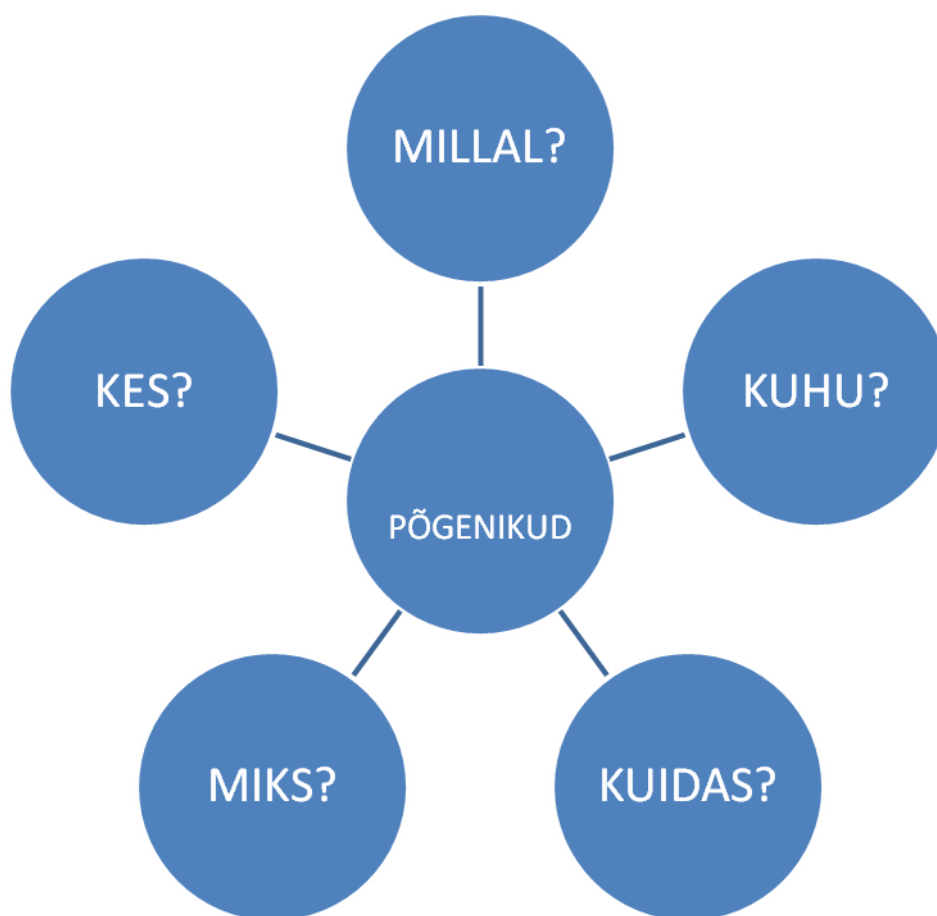
Estonian Red Cross homepage – <http://www.redcross.ee/et/ajalugu.html> [viewed on 21 June 2014]





## Fleeing to Sweden during World War II

**TASK I.** Write down all of your thoughts on the topic Refugees. After the discussion in class, draw up an idea map on the concept of refugees.



Refugees - When? - Where? - How? - Why? - Who?

**TASK II.**

- Read two different stories of escape to Sweden individually in groups of three and tell your story to the other members of your group.
- Map out the stories of both refugees based on the attributes of the idea map as key words (the answers to the questions familiar from the attunement phase – When? Where? Who? How? Why?) in the table below.
- Mark the route of escape of both refugees in the contour map of Europe using different coloured lines.

ATTRIBUTE	REFUGEE I	REFUGEE II
When?		
Where?		
Who?		
How?		
Why?		

## Excerpt I

**Anne-Marie S. (born in 1914) writes about her escape to Sweden and her life thereafter.**<sup>3</sup> *The numbers in front of each excerpt of text indicate the location of the refugee that is marked on the contour map of Europe.*

I wanted to go to Tartu, where I had lived before, in the winter of 1941 but I got no further than Viljandi. Traffic was obstructed and everyone was worried about how to carry on living. It was a strange time when I think back – many things were in short supply. Children were growing up; they didn't have footwear or clothing. There was a shortage of everything. At that time it was very difficult to travel and to obtain a travel permit. The war raged on, yet further away at that time. Everyday life was disturbed and at nights it was restless. When the order came for people (women and children) who had no job or obligations to evacuate out of the city, we did so in the spring of 1944 and evacuated towards Pärnu. In the autumn of 1944, we escaped (myself, my husband and two little children) from Saaremaa in a fishing boat to Sweden.

Our escape succeeded thanks to several fortunate coincidences. A ship picked us up near the coast of Sweden and took us to shore. Yes, back then it was like going from one world to another. While we were used to blackouts, shortages of food and clothing, and all sorts of restrictions in our Estonian homeland, Stockholm was like a sea of lights. People dressed cheerily, colourfully and lightly. I remember when we went by bus from the ship through the city on Sunday morning, several hundred people rode by bicycle towards the seashore. That was strange at that time. The bicycle wasn't the kind of mode of transportation for us as it was in Sweden at that time. Now a new era began in our lives again and it was not at all easy. You had nothing but the clothes on your back and that wartime money wasn't even worth a penny here. I knew a little bit of Swedish that I had learned from a Swedish pastor when I lived on the coast as an evacuee.

7, 12 – Quite a lot was very well organised by the Swedish government. We were sent to a quarantine camp and from there we were quickly put to work. Lots of refugees came from all over the place. The Swedish authorities were not prepared for this kind of eventuality and so there wasn't even any mention of language instruction. Right away I started reading newspapers and magazines. In the quarantine camp we were housed in a boarding house by a bay of Lake Mälaren (a large lake near Stockholm). It was a very beautiful place. Each family was given a

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<sup>3</sup> Kõrgvee, Kersti: Anne-Marie S. mälestused põgenemisest Rootsi ning elust pärast seda (memories of escaping to Sweden and of life thereafter) (excerpts from a letter) [1941-III 1945], EKLA-12116-52783-49176



room. We went to eat together in the dining hall. The biggest problem with the food was that it was very sweet. Swedes love sugar very much and in order to be hospitable to us poor refugees, they added even more sugar than usual. The result was that nobody ate. /.../ I used the whole time that I was in quarantine camp to learn Swedish. I read everything I could get my hands on. Since war refugees continued to arrive, people (men) were quickly put to work. My husband was sent to a woodworking factory that made doors and window frames. We managed to rent a house for six months and moved into it in October of 1944. In the evenings after my husband came home from his primary job, we made wooden alphabet blocks. We lived near Uppsala. He located a printing shop and placed an order with them to print the Swedish alphabet in six colours. He cut the blocks out in the workshop and I glued the letters onto them at home. Skill in woodworking was what helped us a great deal. We also made some wooden plates, burned engraving into the wood and painted it. My husband took samples to a large department store in Stockholm and received a very sizable order from there. /.../ At the same time, a traveller from the north visited that woodworking factory and became very interested in our work. He invited us to move north to work together with him. Since we had our flat for only six months and it was impossible to find flats, we blindly accepted his offer and moved north in March of 1945. We went without knowing what the future would bring. We didn't know the language and we didn't know a single person. We had nothing but our own two hands, the will to live and the tenacity typical of Estonians. We then started up a small business with that Swede making alphabet blocks, wooden plates and other wooden items. We earned so much money in that way that we were able to buy a lot for construction and start building our own house. Yes, it was a big transition back then and I feel its effects even now.



## Excerpt II

**Julia Klaar, story of leaving Estonia and making it to Sweden.**<sup>4</sup> *The numbers in front of each excerpt of text indicate the location of the refugee that is marked on the contour map of Europe.*

1 – It was in the autumn of 1944. Nothing came of our plans to go to Sweden. There were many of us who had waited for the white ship of salvation as we lay on straw in the Kihelkonna schoolhouse. No more ships came. We went to Kuressaare. The city residents themselves had already fled. There were plenty of vacant houses. /.../ The next morning at 6 we were supposed to go to Roomassaare, where boats would then take us to a German ship waiting in the roads. In the evening I went to the evangelical Lutheran church, which on that occasion was open day and night. /.../ The church was full of people. People came and went constantly. They were refugees who were leaving their homeland. They used the chance to pray once more in a church of their own country. I came to the church alone. The children were asleep in someone else's house. I didn't hear what the pastor talked about, I only heard his voice and the anguish of my soul. I sat with my head upright and tears flowed down my cheeks though I was not weeping. I did not pray for anything or complain. It's as if I peeled off of something, from which I seemingly gained courage and was able to decide. I got up. There were no more tears or anguish of the soul. I was ready to leave my homeland. My heart was at peace /.../. A fire broke out in a room below deck when people were boarding the ship in the roads at Roomassaare. There was smoke everywhere and people put on cork life jackets. The ferrying of additional refugees to the ship was discontinued and we who had already boarded the ship didn't know what would become of us. The fire was nevertheless successfully extinguished during the night and in the morning, the loading of people onto the ship commenced once again. It was said that 3000 refugees came to Germany that time in that ship.

2, 3 – We reached Gdynia harbour safely and from there we straightaway boarded a waiting train to Germany. We ended up on a train headed for Halle. /.../ Now I myself was here at the gates of the Halle transit camp at night, dead tired and with my sleepy children, and I uttered sounds together with the others like a hungry sea bird. That was in October of 1944. The Halle camp was one of the newer and better built transit camps. The food there was awful. The soup provided went mostly down the latrines. But there was sufficient bread here. /.../

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<sup>4</sup> Klaar, Julia: Eestist lahkumise ja Rootsi pääsemise lugu (Story of leaving Estonia and making it to Sweden) [1944-1947] + information about the author, EKLA-12080-61073-65196



4 – We were very surprised when we returned to the city of Frankfurt am Oder. There was a transit camp there as well but it was much shabbier than the one in Halle. /.../ Here the first lice appeared on our clothes and the bedbugs gave us no peace. But some sort of organisations operated here that sent single mothers to Czechoslovakia with their children, mostly the wives of soldiers at the front or whose husbands had otherwise gone missing. There was no warfare in Czechoslovakia, there was food and it was otherwise a good place to be. /.../

5–6 – Our group was given a large dance hall on the second storey of a guesthouse as our place of residence. In total we were about 100 mothers and children. Our husbands were at the front and many had no word whatsoever concerning their most recent location. /.../ We lived in Leschtine for 7 months from October of 1944 until May of 1945 when the war ended. We thought that after the division of Germany we would remain in the western zone. The British were already quite near and already in the city of Aussig. But one morning it turned out that Soviet soldiers were in the village. /.../ We no longer slept in the camp on the following nights, instead we climbed up into the mountains to hide at nightfall. We brought blankets and drinking water along for the children. We slept on soft moss under the blankets that we brought along. /.../ The camp must be emptied at once! All foreigners out of Czech borders in 24 hours! That was the order. We packed our suitcases and made other arrangements through the night, and at 6 in the morning we were at the station waiting for the train. All the women and children from 2 camps. /../

8 –At nightfall we started heading for Aussig on foot but how far can you get on foot with children and baggage. /.../ The station building had been reduced to rubble. There were crowds of people everywhere among the rubble and on the platform waiting to board trains going westward. /.../ Soldiers are coming! And they were already there in their white fur-lined jackets and fur hats. Now that was panic. It was dark and the crowd was looking for an escape route. No other escape route could be found than through the ruins of collapsed walls! Take your baggage and your sleepy children and go. Where! Good heavens, where can we go. Nobody knew what to suggest. The crowd moved in one direction and I went along with it. I left my baggage behind. I held on to the children at all cost. /.../

9 – The filthiest station of all time. We arrived there with our transport on a hot July day. /.../ It was like some kind of international migration of peoples. When a train loaded with potatoes passed through, it was harvest time for us. We snatched



potatoes for ourselves and put them in bags, and we boiled them between the railcars. There were so unbelievably many people that there was no place to relieve yourself. There was no place to step where there was no heap of sh... /.../ Somewhere under the side of a railcar, a mother was breastfeeding a child covered with scabs. I stopped and looked. Good heavens – how far can that woman get with a child like that? Then scabs appeared on my children as well. Russian scabies, I was told. Large abscesses at first filled with pus, and then a scab covers it that wouldn't heal anymore. /.../ And there we were for 10 days with our train. Altogether, we travelled by train for 5 weeks straight before we made it over the Czech border into Poland. /.../

...to be continued



### Excerpt III

**Julia Klaar, story of leaving Estonia and making it to Sweden.**<sup>5</sup> *The numbers in front of each excerpt of text indicate the location of the refugee that is marked on the contour map of Europe.*

...continuation

10 – Here /.../ my two little children – Peeter and Matti – got sick. The Red Cross and also the Russians made arrangements to take the children to the hospital right away. /.../ The Poles were very accommodating here, especially the communist mayor, and the ladies of the Red Cross as well, who had been part of the wealthy class before the war. I was temporarily allowed live at the Red Cross along with my older third child /.../ so as not to split up our family. The next day we went to receive our flat. /.../ The room wasn't so bad. The floor was damaged, the walls were soiled, and glass was missing from a couple of window panes. One of them was covered with a piece of cardboard and the other was plugged with a rag. The cooking stove was once quite elegant but now the iron was cracked, smoke from it leaked into the room and it was as black as a spook in the corner. But we still had a separate room to ourselves! We moved there from the Red Cross with our stuff. /.../ We brought soup home from the Red Cross in a small milk can. Pea soup cooked with water only. Sometimes we also get bread along with the soup. /.../ We arrived in that little town in June of 1945 a couple of days before St. John's Day and we were allowed to live there for a whole year. /.../ The issuing of work permits and apartment permits, the fair distribution of heating fuel, the organisation of food ration cards, etc., etc. were the job of the mayor, and it was all done according to the communist view of the world, of course. People were to be given support in proportion to their labour contribution. My subsistence cards were 3rd class. I had no job, and children and adults were all categorised as third class, contrary to propaganda. We were only allowed bread for our cards, other items were not distributed to us. /.../

11, 13 – Like everywhere else, the Red Cross had large complexes of buildings at its disposal in Zopota, where poor refugees were provided with a place to live. A cup of black coffee was given for free along with a double sandwich. /.../ I started scouting around to see if I could get a job somewhere and I succeeded with the help of the Gdynia Red Cross. We were sent to a Red Cross sanatorium for children<sup>6</sup> that was being set up by the Swedes. /.../ There were others besides us, each of whom was in

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<sup>5</sup> Klaar, Julia: Eestist lahkumise ja Rootsi pääsemise lugu (Story of leaving Estonia and making it to Sweden) [1944-1947] + information about the author, EKLA-12080-61073-65196

<sup>6</sup> Commentary of the compiler: Red Cross sanatorium.





transit and had a checkered past, and were staying at the Red Cross. I was waiting for work and at some point in the future, passage to Sweden. /.../ A Finnish lotta<sup>7</sup> who had been through the war joked: I had never had the chance to travel before, now I've travelled through half of Europe in jackboots with a Red Cross backpack on my back. A Jewish woman who had come from Siberia wanted to go to England to be with her relatives. Reportedly she had voluntarily chosen the Russian side when Poland was partitioned. The consequence – deportation to Siberia separately from her husband and daughter. They were both most likely dead, and she was alone, completely broken, seeking a chance to get to England. The last person I came in contact with there at the Gdynia Red Cross was a Lithuanian woman. She unconditionally wanted to go back home. She didn't think there was any point for her in going anywhere else.

14–16 – We had been in Dziezasno<sup>8</sup> for over a year, worked under the cover of the Swedes, and my person and my children seemed to be beyond the sphere of interest of the authorities. But the children needed to go to school. /.../ After the Swedes had given the holiday home to the Poles as a gift and transferred it to them, and the Swedish staff had been replaced by Poles, the new functionaries started taking an interest in the presence of me and my family there. My aim was still to get to Sweden and the Swedes helped me. /.../ My oldest child Aino went to Sweden openly and that went quite smoothly. A Red Cross major let Aino stay at his place in Stora Essingen and enrolled her in night school in Stockholm. /.../ It was no longer possible to send my other children to Sweden openly. One month after Aino's departure, I sent 7 year old Matti to Sweden into the care of a young couple. Matti was sent across the sea secretly. /.../ The ride out took place with several cars in the morning. /.../ His older brother Enno took Matti with him for a walk along the road. The road passed through rye fields. The rye was tall and the children weren't visible in the rye. Matti was brave and diligent and he walked for some distance alone. The first cars drove past but the last car in the line stopped and pulled the child into the car so that the others didn't notice anything. When boarding the ship in Gdynia, two tall Swedes

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<sup>7</sup> Commentary of the compiler: the lottas (Lotta Svärd) were a national defence organisation uniting Finnish women during the interwar period and in the Second World War. In many respects, it was the model for the *Naiskodukaitse* organisation established in Estonia in 1927. In the late autumn of 1944, the Soviet Union presented a demand for prohibiting the activity of the lottas as well as the Finnish Defence League (Suojeluskunta). The leadership of the lottas succeeded in salvaging part of the organisation's property and thus the predecessor of today's Lotta Svärd Foundation was founded in 1944. Its main activity became supporting lottas returning from the front and other lottas returning to civilian life: finding jobs and places to live for them, covering education and training costs, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Commentary of the compiler: reference is probably being made to the sanatorium belonging to the Red Cross in Sopot.



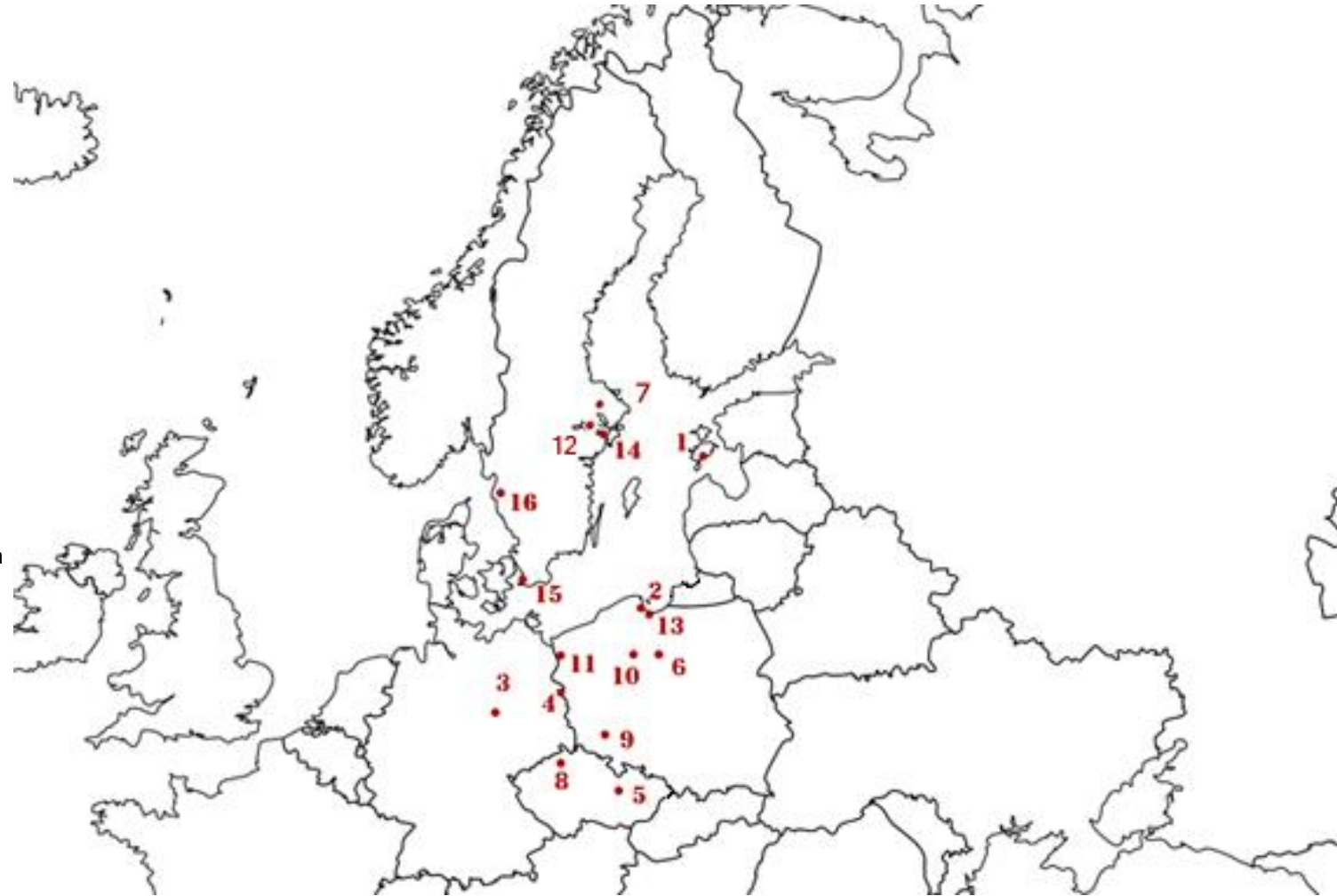
took the child between then and in the rush to board, nobody noticed that the boy boarded the ship. On board, Matti was immediately hidden in a toilet on the ship until the ship had embarked and the danger of personnel checking for tickets had passed. /.../ Then it was my youngest son Peeter's turn with the last Swedes. He was only 5 years old. /.../ The agreement in sending Peeter away was analogous to how Matti was sent. It took a long time for me to get to Sweden with my remaining two children and to be able to start thinking about gathering the family back together again. /.../ We were on Swedish soil at the end of June and we got there almost one month after the last Swedes had left Dziezasno, and that was in June of 1947.



## Contour Map of Europe

Draw the route of both refugees on the map using two different colours. Some of the places that the refugees passed through have already been given on the map.

1. Roomassaare Harbour
2. Gdynia port town
3. City of Halle
4. City of Frankfurt am Oder
5. City of Leschtine / Leština
6. Strasburg in Westpreußen/Brodnica
7. City of Uppsala
8. City of Aussig/ Ústí nad Labem
9. City of Liegnitz / Legnica
10. City of Kulmsee/ Chełmża
11. Stettin/ Szczecin port city
12. Lake Mälaren
13. Zopott/Sopot port town
14. Stora Essingen Island in Stockholm
15. City of Malmö
16. Åboland



**Problem Statement I**

**Explain the role of the Red Cross in the period after World War II. Give examples based on sources.**



**Problem Statement II**

**Relying on sources, point out the fate of different peoples after World War II.**



**Problem Statement III**

**Describe different environments that refugees found themselves in. How did they manage to adapt?**

