



Student worksheet

Forest brothers*Kitchen in forest***Source A: The impact of the March Deportation and collectivisation**

As a result of the deportation in 1949 and collectivisation, a new wave of refugees takes cover in the forests. But the system of supplying the Forest Brothers has not been developed yet. The fact that the Forest Brothers have bad relationships with the peasantry, their greatest allies, is even sadder still. Since the peasants don't wish to give anything away voluntarily, Forest Brothers steal collectivised cattle and crops, which they see as a property of the Soviet regime. However, the peasants' life depends inevitably on the collectivised property. People need to keep themselves alive and pay the state duties. Thus, the Forest Brothers, who fight for the freedom of their people, become more and more like bandits in the eyes of the peasantry, just as they have been depicted by the occupying authorities' propaganda.

Exercises:

1. What were the reasons that made people go to the forest (forest brothers)?
2. How did the Forest Brothers resist the Soviet regime? Please give examples.
3. What were the aims of the armed resistance? How to assess the real impact of this activity? Please give arguments.
4. How to estimate the activity of the forest brothers' movement in 1944–1953 based on the table?
5. Why did the forest brothers' movement subside?
6. Describe the living conditions of the Forest Brothers.
7. What can be learnt from Sander Tuul's story?
8. Discuss, who the forest brothers were: heroes or bandits or something else. Is it correct to put the question like this? Please give arguments.



Source B: Waiting for help from the west

The gullible hoped for the help of the western allies. According to the Atlantic Charter, all nations that were free prior to the war were to regain their independence. Hopes were put on USA, Great-Britain, UN, the 'white ship', the Russians going back home, the possible war between two controversial world systems, in case of its outbreak our Forest Brothers were to assist in liberating Estonia. [---] But all of these hopes were unfounded and led to the death of thousands of Forest Brothers during subsequent years in Estonia, as well as in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

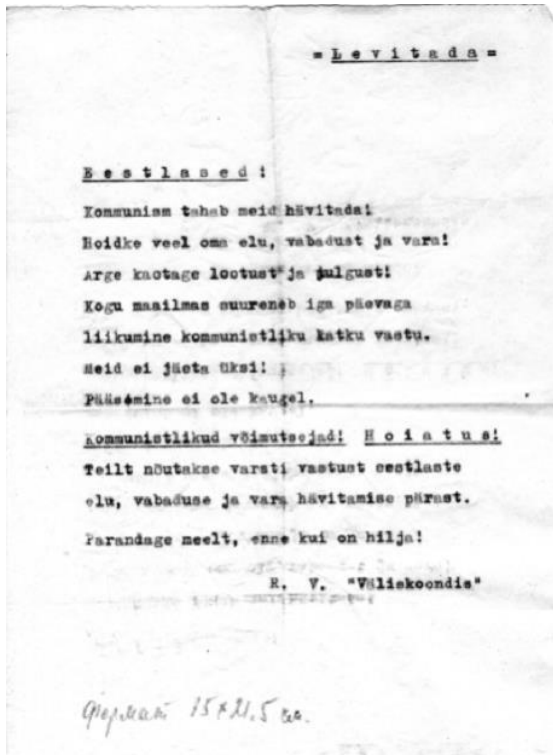
So what was the force that compelled us, the last of the Forest Brothers, to resist? I say: it was the knowledge that as long as you are alive, carrying a weapon and on Estonian grounds, you're all right! The knowledge that those, who were taken by the communists, are doing even worse. The knowledge that the death road to Siberia is always open, but there is no way back. The knowledge that when you are captured by the deathly enemy, you can be saved from suffering by the bullet in your weapon.

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Source C: Leaflet spread by the Forest Brothers of the Viljandi County (1949)



To be spread

Estonians:

Communism seeks to destroy us! Keep your life, freedom and property still! Don't lose hope and courage! Movement against the communist plague is growing all over the world. We will not be left alone! Salvation is not far.

Communist dominators:

You will soon be held responsible for destroying the lives, freedom and property of Estonians. Repent before it is too late!

By R. V. „Väliskoondis“

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YEAR						TOTAL
1944	13	0	0	0	206	219
1945	126	7	16	39	152	340
1946	77	1	5	57	197	337
1947	36	0	0	18	75	129
1948	77	4	0	89	19	189
1949	82	1	0	180	47	310
1950	28	0	0	143	31	202
1951	13	1	0	53	21	88
1952	8	0	0	30	12	50
1953	0	0	0	6	0	6
TOTAL	460	14	21	615	760	1870

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