

AUDIO. STORIES OF ELFRIDE, MARIA AND OLGA

ELFRIEDE'S STORY

Elfriede was born in 1902 in the family of manor workers in Vaivara Municipality, Viru County. In the 1920s, she came to Tallinn and first found work there as a buffet maid. She was registered as a public woman in 1923. From the beginning of the 1930s at the latest, she lived mainly on prostitution.

In January 1933, the newspaper "Kaja" wrote that a woman had come to Tallinn Central Hospital for bandaging and had nine wounds on her head, made with a blunt object. The victim was Elfriede, who explained that she had been injured in a fight with an acquaintance. In the autumn of the same year, a more serious incident happened to her. The woman was attacked by Harald, a man who had previously been convicted of robbery and violence, and with whom she lived. The man was probably a pimp and the woman his "worker" and mistress. The man stabbed the woman's chest eight times with a fork grabbed from the table during a quarrel. Elfriede delayed seeing a doctor until the wounds started rotting and she had to be hospitalised. The man was sentenced to eight months in prison.

In the 1930s, Elfriede was a street prostitute without a fixed place of residence. In 1935, she was sentenced to six administrative penalties for drunken noisemaking, for swearing at fellow citizens, and for fighting with other prostitutes. She was punished three times for fraud and theft. In 1938, Elfriede was sentenced to 1.5 years in prison.

On October 12, 1939, a decision was adopted prohibiting Elfriede from staying in Tallinn, Tartu and in Harju County. She was considered a threat to public order and security. As Elfriede did not leave Tallinn voluntarily, she was forcibly deported to Tapa.

Like most deported prostitutes, Elfriede tried to return to Tallinn. In the following winter and spring, she was caught three times on Malmi Street from one Johannes's apartment, where she had lived as a subtenant for years. The man had no previous sentences, but he had had trouble with prostitutes. During the interrogations, Elfriede admitted to staying with different men.

In October 1940, when Estonia was already under Soviet rule, the Militia received a complaint that Elfriede had reappeared at Johannes's place. But now their relationship had changed – they were going to get married. Nevertheless, the People's Court punished the woman for her unauthorised appearance in Tallinn sentencing her to correctional work. In 1941, newly married Elfriede began earning money through honest work. She became a simple worker at Tallinn State Sanitary Epidemiological Station, probably under pressure from the Soviet authorities, which had set the goal of eliminating prostitution.

MARIA'S STORY

Maria was registered as a prostitute in 1931, when she was only 17 years old. Her main work area was Dunkri Street and its surroundings. She was looking for men in streets, in taverns and restaurants. When the price was suitable, she took the client to a hotel room or used the private room of a suitable entertainment establishment.

The woman had several incidents with the police. She was repeatedly sentenced for thefts and breaches of public order. She fought with other prostitutes, insulted police officers while being drunk, and committed other acts of hooliganism. On October 12, 1939, Maria was banned from living in Tallinn, Tartu and in Harju County on the basis of the State of Defence Act. Her conduct was considered a threat to public order and security. At that time, Maria was in involuntary treatment at Tallinn Hospital No. 3. The woman was prescribed treatment for syphilis, expected to last for 1.5-2 months. She escaped the hospital before the end of the treatment, but was soon captured. The woman's signature was taken, to confirm her voluntarily leave from Tallinn and settling in Narva.

In February 1940, the Political Police found Maria in Pechory instead, where she was said to have spread rumours that she had been expelled from Tallinn for political activities and to have called herself a communist. Soon Maria was back in the streets of Tallinn. In March and April, the public woman was caught selling herself at least twice, followed by deportation.

Maria was re-arrested in September 1940, when Soviet power had already been established. She was caught by a Militia patrol late in the evening of September 20, in front of the infamous Metropol Restaurant on Dunkri Street. The Militia suspected that she was a prostitute. The woman was asked to provide an identity document, which she did not have. At the ward, she admitted that she was a wanted person and had come to Tallinn to look for a job.

Maria's name reappeared during the German occupation, when the woman, considered to be anti-social, was declared a wanted person again. This indicates the lack of a place to live and, perhaps, her continued prostitution. She was captured in autumn 1942 and placed in Tallinn Labour and Education Camp, which was located in Patarei Prison. The last reports about her date back to March 1944, when she was sent to the Stutthof Concentration Camp in what was then Germany.

OLGA'S STORY

Estonian woman Olga was born in 1918, to a working family in Tallinn. She had four older sisters and a younger brother. In 1925, her mother died and her father gave the three younger children to Riisipere orphanage. In 1934, Olga, an orphan with a 6-grade primary school education, was sent to serve as a maid in the family of a Colonel of Estonian Defence Forces. Two years later, Olga left and became a prostitute. As of the end of the 1930s, three of the girl's older sisters were also making a living from selling themselves. In 1936-1940, Olga was selling herself in a brothel called "Vanemuine" on Viidemann Street in Kadriorg, which was oriented towards wealthier clientele.

With the advent of Soviet power, brothels were closed. Olga's older sisters probably gave up prostituting in autumn 1940, but the youngest sister was undergoing compulsory treatment for sexually transmitted diseases at that time. Shortly after leaving the hospital, she was caught in an apartment on Raekoja Square while providing sexual services. Thus, the Soviet militia became interested in her. She promised to go live with his father who had moved to Haapsalu. There she was immediately registered in an operative file as a prostitute not engaged in any pro-community service. In the spring of 1941, she was re-registered as a construction worker earthwork in a Red Army base.

In June 1941, Olga was deported to the Kirov region of Russia. It is known that she was not sent to a prison camp, as happened to most former prostitutes from Estonia. In 1947, she returned to Estonia without permission and in 1948 found a job as a janitor in Tallinn. Unfortunately, neither the legal service nor the child born in the spring of 1949 saved her from her second deportation to Russia. She was arrested in Tallinn and taken to Kirov oblast again in May 1949, together with a child a few weeks old. There the woman became disabled. After Stalin's death, she asked the Prosecutor General of the USSR for permission to return to Estonia, which she received in 1954.