

# The Twentieth Anniversary of Soviet Aggression Against the Baltic States

## MANIFESTO

of

Free Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians

TWENTY YEARS AGO, the Soviet Union attacked the Baltic States. Some 300,000 Red Army troops poured into Lithuania on June 15, 1940, and into Latvia and Estonia, on June 17, 1940. With the protection of this occupation army, the emissaries of the Kremlin—Debanov, Vishinsky, Zhdanov—assassinated the legitimate governments of the Baltic nations. The Baltic countries were robbed of their independence and transformed into colonies of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's assault against its Baltic neighbors initiated the Soviet westward march against Europe. Thus, the beginning of today's international tension and threat to peace may be found in the Soviet aggression against the Baltic States in 1940.

By its aggressive acts against Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the U.S.S.R. broke the peace and non-aggression treaties it had signed with those states as well as other international agreements.

Expropriation, exploitation, participation, slave labor, suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Russification, terror, murder, mass deportations—these are the marks of the Soviet occupation in the Baltic States. In committing these acts, the Soviets violated the United Nations Declaration embodying the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Suppression of Crimes of Genocide, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—all these documents bearing the signatures of the U.S.S.R.

The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian peoples, historically and traditionally Western in orientation and outlook, placed their hopes in the Western world. Their trust and reliance in the West was strengthened by the Declaration of the United States Department of State of 23 July, 1940; the Statement of the President of the United States of 15 October, 1941; the Atlantic Charter; the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe; the repeated statements by the United States Government about non-recognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States and continued recognition of their diplomatic representatives; and the proclaimed aims and principles of the United Nations.

The Baltic peoples have given active expression to their determination to regain freedom, and have resisted their oppressors, thus contributing greatly to the still continuing struggle for freedom and justice being waged by all captive peoples enslaved by the Soviet Union. Despite heavy setbacks and trials, our peoples maintain their faith in the restoration of their freedom and independence.

This summer the Soviet occupant will unveil a macabre spectacle—a festive celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the enslavement of the Baltic States during which the captive Baltic peoples will be pressed to appear grateful to their conquerors.

We—free Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians—are conscious of our responsibility toward our nations and toward history. At this twentieth anniversary of Soviet aggression, we feel dutybound to give voice to the aspirations of our captive peoples:

WE ACCUSE the Soviet Union of committing and continuing an international crime against the Baltic States; WE DEMAND that the Soviet Union withdraw its military, police and administrative personnel from the Baltic countries;

WE REQUEST that the governments of the free world, especially those of the Great Powers, undertake all peaceful ways and means to restore the exercise of the right of self-determination in the Baltic countries and in the rest of East-Central Europe;

WE APPEAL to the conscience of all mankind to perceive the magnitude of the injustice perpetrated upon the Baltic countries and to support the efforts toward the restoration of the liberty of these countries;

WE CONVEY to our people at home our pride in their resolute resistance against the endeavors of the oppressor to destroy their national and personal identity;

WE EXPRESS to our peoples behind the Iron Curtain our deep conviction that the Soviet system—as all tyrannies throughout history—carries within it the seeds of its own destruction; that it cannot and shall not prevail;

WE PLEDGE to intensify our joint organized activity in the free world to promote the cause of liberty for the Baltic countries;

WE, FINALLY, DECLARE to the free world and the Communist-dominated world, including the U.S.S.R., that, once free again, the Baltic nations will do all in their power to ensure the best possible relations with their neighbors on the basis of mutual respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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