

Conquest of the Baltic Countries

In the summer of 1941, when German armed forces swept across and subjugated the Baltic states, which the U.S.S.R. had annexed in 1940, the Nazis at first promoted implicitly anti-Russian cultural and national symbols of sovereignty as a measure to counter Soviet influence.

Above: A Latvian provisional 30-kopeck stamp canceled September 24, 1941, at Madona; the letter was forwarded at Riga. Prewar stamps of independent Latvia remained valid as postage, and LATVIJA 1941.1.VII overprints on U.S.S.R. stamps were intended to imply that Latvia had been liberated from Soviet domination on July 1. Below: A Christmas post card canceled December 18, 1941, at Mustjala, Estonia. Estonian charity stamps, with half of the cost dedicated to rebuilding the war-torn country, picture historic places of national importance.

The domestic letter rate in Latvia was 30 kopecks. Estonian postal rates were unstable: In August 1941, the domestic post card rate had been 20 kopecks. That amount doubled from September 29 through November 30. In December, the 6-pfennig German domestic and occupation rate went into effect, but residents were given until the end of March 1942 to use up stamps of independent Estonia. This example is probably overpaid because the stamps would soon afterward have become worthless as postage.

