

Conquest of the Baltic Countries

In the summer of 1941 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.

Regular issues of the Soviet Union were overprinted for Lithuania and for the Vilnius district of Lithuania in June and July 1941; the latter shown here. 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 occupation on July 1. Both types are shown on the August 19, 1941 domestic cover. Estonia issued new stamps, not provisionals, in August and September 1941. Estonian charity stamps, with half the cost dedicated to rebuilding the war-torn country, picture historic places of national importance. The postmark on the October 4, 1941, cover gives the town name as Tallinn, Estonia, but the address block uses its German name Reval.

All three frankings — 15-kopek Vilnius district provisional of Lithuania; mixed franking of one pre-war 5-kopex and one provisional 10-kopek occupation stamp of Latvia; and 30+30-kopek semi-postal stamp of Estonia — paid printed matter rates in those respective countries.

