

June 14, 1941: Latvia's Day of Infamy



Russian tanks entering Rīga 1940.

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Every country recognizes its day of infamy. The United States recalls President Franklin Roosevelt's words that December 7, 1941 was a day of infamy for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor killing thousands. Latvia, whose democracy was ended by the Soviet invasion a year earlier, had its first day of infamy when the Stalin's Soviet troops rounded up and deported 15,000 Latvian citizens to concentration camps in Siberia. On June 14th their names will be aired over Latvian media and thus remembered.



Latvians in Minnesota and around the world will mark the 80th anniversary of the Russian communist deportation of 15,00 people to their deaths in Siberia. This was the first of many and we remember it with a moment of silence. It is frustrating to hearing some people say that wearing a face mask is akin to living in a communist stat. In any event Biden meets with Putin on the 16th and he is of the old guard that would like to have Latvia back. Thank goodness for NATO.

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The Soviets considered Latvia, a country 40% the size of Iowa with 1% of the population of Russia, a threat. And anyone who was in opposition, who spoke the native language, for example, was a subversive. My father was a journalist who would have been shot and the rest of us sent to the Gulag to die in Siberia. My immediate family was fortunate to flee to the West and eventually find a new home and freedom in Minnesota.

When the Soviets deported the 15,000 Latvians to certain deaths in Siberian concentration camps there was no warning. No indictments, no charges, no bail, no trials; people just disappeared. What happened to Latvia should be a warning to what can happen in an autocratic society. Some people in the United States liken government regulations mandating the wearing of face masks to an act of communism. These comments come from uneducated people who have not studied history.

The lessons of what happened to Latvia, now a staunch member of NATO and sharing a 140-mile border with Putin's Russia, should not be forgotten.

Back to the narrative. Under communism the state owns your house, your business, forbids religion and a free press and all the media. It only allows its version of history and affects anything/everything to be taught. There is not an independent judiciary so there is no recourse and whatever the government says goes. There are no independent unions and no real political parties. And in communism of course some people are more equal than others, namely those who are communist party members.

Latvians today remember every June 14th with a moment of silence much like Israeli citizens devote two minutes of silence on each April 27 to remember the horrors of the holocaust. So, you guys out there give me a break that you are subject to the horrors of face mask wearing to stop the spread of disease and complain it is a harbinger of communism.

Sources- https://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/e/P/3_okupacijas.pdf