

The original documents are located in Box D25, folder “Celebration of Latvia's 50th Independence Day Anniversary, St. Cecelia Society Auditorium, Grand Rapids, MI, October 19, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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GRAND RAPIDS CELEBRATION OF LATVIA'S 50TH INDEPENDENCE
DAY ANNIVERSARY, 7 P.M. SATURDAY, OCT. 19, AT
ST. CECILIA SOCIETY AUDITORIUM, 24 RANSOM AVE. N.E.
(AFTER FORMAL PROGRAM, REFRESHMENTS AT 504 GRAND AVE. N.E.)

IN A LITTLE LESS THAN A MONTH, LATVIANS EVERYWHERE WILL
MARK A PROUD DAY IN THEIR HISTORY -- THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF LATVIA'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1918. I KNOW THAT
THIS DAY OF NOV. 18 ~~IS FOR LATVIANS~~ IS FOR LATVIANS LIKE THE FOURTH OF JULY
IS FOR AMERICANS ... A DAY THAT STANDS FOR FREEDOM AND
LIBERTY AND THE CASTING OFF OF THE YÖKE OF OPPRESSION.

2/ Latvian

MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN THE WORLD SINCE THAT GLORIOUS DAY
IN 1918 WHEN THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK WAS SIGNED, AND THE
RUSSIANS WITHDREW FROM LATVIA AND THE OTHER BALTIC TERRITORIES.

YES, THE WORLD HAS SEEN MUCH OF GLORY AND MUCH OF SHAME
SINCE THAT DATE. AND CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MOST SHAMEFUL
HAPPENINGS OCCURRED WHEN THE SOVIET UNION ~~WAS~~ BRUTALLY
SEIZED LATVIA, ESTHONIA AND LITHUANIA IN JULY OF 1940.

AND SO ONCE AGAIN THE DARK CURTAIN OF OPPRESSION SETTLED

OVER LATVIA AND THE PEOPLE LIVED ~~UNDER~~ UNDER THE ~~HEEL~~ HEEL

The Russians again but this time an even more ruthless
OF THE OPPRESSOR. BUT I CAN SEE IN YOUR FACES AS I TALK *debates.*

1

TO YOU TONIGHT THAT NO NATIVE OF LATVIA HAS EVER GIVEN UP

HOPE THAT THE YOKE OF THE OPPRESSOR WILL BE LIFTED AND THAT

FREEDOM ONCE MORE WILL BE RESTORED TO THE PROUD PEOPLE OF

LATVIA.

#2 3/ LATVIANS

LET ~~ME~~ ME TELL YOU THAT I ADMIRE YOU. I ADMIRE YOU FOR

YOUR SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE, YOUR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE

You & others come from Captive Nations
SOVIET OCCUPATION AS INEVITABLE AND ~~NEVER-ENDING~~ NEVER-ENDING.

1

AND I ADMIRE YOU, TOO, FOR THE CONTRIBUTION ~~THE~~ LATVIANS

CHARACTER

WHO HAVE COME TO AMERICA ARE MAKING TO THIS COUNTRY. I KNOW

1

WHAT YOU HAVE DONE IN GRAND RAPIDS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN

WHICH LATVIANS HAVE LOCATED. YOU ARE MUCH LIKE THE EARLY
 AMERICANS WHO SETTLED AND BUILT THIS COUNTRY.

5/ LATVIANS

YOU WORK HARD, AND ~~YOU~~ YOU ASK ONLY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY
TO WORK HARD AND TO MAKE YOUR OWN WAY. THOSE ARE THE KIND
OF PEOPLE WHO CARVED ~~THE~~ A NATION OUT OF A WILDERNESS WHEN
AMERICA WAS YOUNG...THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO MADE AMERICA THE
GREAT ~~NATION~~ NATION IT IS.

I KNOW THAT AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY HERE IN AMERICA YOUR
HEARTS GRIEVE FOR ~~THESE~~ FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN YOUR
NATIVE LATVIA WHERE THE OPPRESSOR RULES.

6/ LATVIANS

I HOPE, AS YOU DO, THAT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN FREEDOM'S
LIGHT AGAIN WILL BURN BRIGHTLY IN YOUR NATIVE LAND. I HAVE
NOT ~~BEEN~~ GIVEN UP ON THAT DREAM, AND I KNOW YOU HAVE
NOT EITHER.

IT IS NOT FOOLISH TO DREAM THAT DREAM, EVEN IN THIS MOMENT
WHEN WE SEE THE SPARKS OF A NEWFOUND FREEDOM EXTINGUISHED
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE ROUGH PAW OF THE RUSSIAN BEAR.

6A/ INSERT LATVIANS?

THERE ARE SOME WHO EXCUSE THE SOVIET-LED INVASION OF
CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY COMPARING IT WITH THE U.S. PRESENCE IN
VIETNAM AND THE DISPATCH OF U.S. TROOPS TO THE DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC. THIS IS RIDICULOUS. OUR TROOPS ENTERED BOTH
VIETNAM AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BY INVITATION OF THE RULING
GOVERNMENT. AND OUR MILITARY ACTIONS WERE TAKEN TO DEFEND
LIBERTY -- NOT TO STAMP IT OUT. *The Russians moved into*
CZ to enslave people. America seeks to free people & save a nation

7/ LATVIANS

I READ IN THE PAPER TODAY WHERE THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VOTED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY TO RATIFY A TREATY
PROVIDING FOR THE INDEFINITE STAY OF 70,000 SOVIET TROOPS IN
Obviously this was forced -
CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THIS
1
IS THAT WHILE THE VOTE WAS BEING TAKEN, GROUPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKS
STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE STREETS CRYING, "SHAME." THIS TELLS US
THAT THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM MAY BE DEAD ON PAPER ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS A RESULT OF THE SOVIET-LED INVASION *WLB*

8/ LATVIANS

OF THAT COUNTRY, BUT IT IS VERY MUCH ALIVE IN THE HEARTS OF

THE PEOPLE. THAT ~~REMEMBER~~ FLAME BURNS BRIGHTLY, TOO,

IN THE HEARTS OF THE LATVIANS AND OTHER CAPTIVE PEOPLES...AND

THE RUSSIANS KNOW THIS. THE KREMLIN LEADERS KNOW, TOO, THAT

MANY OF THEIR OWN PEOPLE FEEL THE SHAME THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAKS
HAVE CALLED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD.

9/ LATVIANS

THERE ARE ~~OTHER~~ REPEATED CALLS IN OUR TIMES FOR A DETENTE
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION.

I WANT PEACE AS MUCH AS ANYONE. BUT I DO NOT THINK WE WILL
EVER ACHIEVE PEACE BY IGNORING REALITY AND PRETENDING THAT
THE COMMUNIST LEADERS IN THE KREMLIN ALSO ARE MEN OF PEACE.

Chamberlain
Walter
ONLY IF
~~WE~~ WE WILL ACHIEVE PEACE IN THE WORLD ~~IF~~ WE INSIST
THAT ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD LIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH
INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND ALL UNITED NATIONS MEMBERS LIVE UP

TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER.

THAT IS WHY I SAY THAT THE SOVIET UNION MUST BE CONDEMNED
BEFORE THE WORLD FOR VIOLATING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CZECHO-
SLOVAKIA, JUST AS SHE WAS CONDEMNED IN 1956 FOR ~~THE~~ HER
SAVAGE AND BLOODY SUPPRESSION OF THE HUNGARIAN REVOLT.

YOU EMBRACE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN CHARTER, THE
PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE. ~~AND YOU~~

11/Latvian

AND YOU BELIEVE IN THE ULTIMATE RESTORATION OF FREEDOM TO
THE ~~THE~~ LATVIAN REPUBLIC WHOSE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
CELEBRATE
WE ~~THE~~ TONIGHT.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ONE PROVISION IN THE NEW
RUSSIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK TREATY ~~FORBIDS~~ ANY KIND OF PUBLIC
CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK
REPUBLIC ON OCT. 28.

12/ Latvian

HOW STUPID IT IS OF THE RUSSIANS TO ~~BELIEVE~~ THAT BECAUSE
THEY PROHIBIT A PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF AN INDEPENDENCE DAY
THAT THIS WILL ~~NEVER~~ ERASE IT FROM THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF
THE PEOPLE !

YOU KNOW AND I KNOW THAT NOTHING IS GREATER THAN THE PROUD
SPIRIT OF AN INDEPENDENT HUMAN BEING. THIS THE COMMUNIST
OPPRESSORS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WILL NEVER DEFEAT. ~~THEY WILL~~

13/ Latvian

CANNOT
THEY ~~WILL NEVER~~ DEFEAT THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

AND THAT IS WHY I BELIEVE WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL THAT
SOME DAY THERE WILL AGAIN BE AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF
LATVIA -- - You & I -
AND WE WILL CELEBRATE THAT DAY, TOO,
TOGETHER.

THANK YOU.

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NOTE CARDS

GRAND RAPIDS

OCT. 19, 1968

Congress of the United States

Office of the Minority Leader

House of Representatives

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Herb R. Ford
M.C.

SATURDAY
7:00 P.M.

LATVIA'S 50TH INDEPENDENCE
DAY ANNIVERSARY

ST. CECELIA SOCIETY AUDITORIUM

