

"Today 50 years ago, on October 23, 1956 a demonstration of Budapest students and leading intellectuals set off a chain of events that lasted for almost three weeks and which is now known as the Hungarian Revolution. Our kindred people revolted against the undemocratic regime and ideology forced upon them by a foreign power, but also by the local collaborators.

The uprising that grew into an armed fight enabled to restore the freedom of speech and a multi-party system for a brief period of time. In a few days of its existence the new government succeeded to declare to its own citizens and to the rest of the world that the Hungarian people desire to move out from the Soviet sphere of influence and to determine their own future.

Those aspirations were brutally crushed by Soviet tanks at the beginning of November 1956. The leaders of the Revolution were imprisoned and later executed, tens of thousands were arrested, and hundreds of thousands were forced to flee. Darkness fell over Hungary, the same darkness that ruled over Estonia and all other countries that had been occupied in the last year of World War II.

Though the Revolution was stifled, it was not futile. The 1956 Revolution signalled to the world and first of all to the people of subjugated nations that they would not intend to put up with foreign regime. The flame that had flickered for a moment in Hungary enkindled again: in 1968 in Czechoslovakia, in 1980 in Poland, at the end of 1980-ies everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe. Until the empire of evil collapsed and nations gained their freedom.

The 1956 Hungarian revolution was the moment of truth. It determined the front line of the Cold War for more than 30 years. The support to Hungary by democratic great powers that were engaged in the concurrent Suez crisis remained to be feeble rhetoric. The Soviet leadership who had just condemned in words Stalin's cult of personality and his crimes broke the illusion that they were ready for giving a fair assessment to forcibly imposed systems in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Estonian people remember and commemorate their courageous Hungarian brothers and sisters on the day of awakening hope half a century ago."