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Dos and Don't s: Fantastic Fiction in Soviet Latvia

The paper “Dos and Don’ts: the Fantastic Fiction in Soviet Latvia” will discuss an exciting and under-researched theme - the specific kind of (in)official censorship that such literary phenomenon as genre fiction faced for several decades in Soviet Latvia. This censorship lasted from the Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940-ies until the relative freedom of thought that began flourishing in USSR during the late 1980-ies. The paper will describe and discuss the fact that several genres of fantastic fiction that had until 1940-ies been developing according to the prevalent literary tendencies of the world were suddenly tabooed due to their unrealistic contents and the fact that the upper hand in all fiction was given to the artificially constructed manner of writing convenient for the political regime – the Social Realism. However, among all the genres of fantastic fiction there was a single exception that was „legalized” – namely, science fiction – which was published both in translations and (very few) originals, whereas such genres as fantasy and horror fiction were ignored and almost completely forgotten for several decades. The paper will discuss the reasons for these different attitudes as well as their consequences in the literary area of Latvia today.