

ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE AS REPRESENTED IN SOVIET LATVIA PRESS OF THE 1940s

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Abstract

The paper investigates the phenomenon of Anglophone literature (American and British) in cultural space of Latvia during the first years of Soviet occupation (the 1940s). After annexation, Latvia experienced an imperative influence of Soviet ideology in all spheres of human life. Literature, both original and translated, became one of the most powerful means of Soviet propaganda, and therefore was under the strict and regular control by the Soviet occupation authorities. National authors were given directives on preferable themes and ways of expressions in their creative work. Foreign authors and their works for publication were selected with an extreme caution. As literature was extensively exploited in propagating socialist values and ideals, all stages of reception process were strictly coordinated by the state authorities. The Soviet periodicals served as an efficient and beneficial platform for disseminating 'appropriate' information to the masses. In Latvia, a typical Soviet media system was established, with newspapers and magazines focusing on propaganda of the Communist Party, thus, with all the material published creating a single ideological text. The specific focus of the paper is on coverage of Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia press of the 1940s that reveals certain strategies in employing British and American writers' names and references to or quotes from their works to create an image of hostile to Soviet ideology and dangerous for Soviet people imperialistic world inferior to life in the socialism system.

Keywords: *Anglophone literature, Soviet occupation, Latvia, Soviet Latvia press, Soviet ideology, propaganda*

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1918 after the First World War, the independence of Latvia was proclaimed. It took two more years of severe and difficult struggles of the Latvian War of Independence to defeat the Germans (1919), repel the West Russian Volunteer Army under Pavel Bermond-Avalov (1919) and clear the territory of the Red Army (1920). The Latvian-Soviet Peace Treaty, signed on 11 August 1920 by representatives of the Republic of Latvia and Soviet Russia officially ended the Latvian War of Independence. During the 1920s-1930s, until the Second World War, Latvia gradually was developing a status of a full-fledged subject of international relations and eventually became a part of European political, economic, and cultural space. However, in 1939-1940 along with other two Baltic states - Lithuania and Estonia, Latvia came under the influence of the Soviet Union. "In May 1940 - at the time Hitler launched an attack on France in Western Europe - the leader of the USSR Stalin decided that the time had come to fully resolve the issue of the Baltic States by occupying them" [1]. In June 1940, the Soviet army crossed the border of Latvia, in July of 1940 the government loyal to the Soviet power was pseudo-elected and the decision was made to change the political system and join the Soviet Union. In August 1940, Latvia lost its independence and another republic of the USSR - the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic - was proclaimed. Actually, during the 1940s Latvia experienced several acts of occupation: in the course of the Second World War, Latvia was occupied by Nazi Germany (1941-1945), but in 1944/45 the process of Soviet reoccupation was carried on, and the status of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic was restored. Overall, military presence and control by the occupying forces in Latvia lasted for more than fifty years - up to the year 1991.

The present study focuses on the most violent and severe period in the history of Soviet Latvia - formation years (the 1940s) when on the territory of the newly created Soviet republic the authorities took a range of well-planned though drastic socio-political, economic and cultural actions to strengthen their position and impose the socialist way of life on the inhabitants of Latvia who recently had

experienced a period of independency of their state. To prevent any possible attempt to resist the Soviet regime and speed up the process of Sovietisation Latvia was forced to experience the mass deportations of 1941 and 1949, the processes of imposed nationalizations, collectivization, Russification. The population of Latvia had to be moulded into Soviet people and for disseminating 'proper' ideas and instilling 'right' values the ideologists of the regime put in action the mechanism of propaganda approved and developed already before - in Soviet Russia of the 1920s and 1930s: (a) different spheres of culture (art, literature, theatre, cinematography) as the most powerful and influential propagandistic tool and (b) printed media (newspapers, magazines and journals) as the most accessible and reliable channel to address the society and spread propaganda. The Soviet press not only reported on constant achievements and victories of socialism in all spheres of activity of Soviet people (farming, industry, education, science, sport, culture, etc.) or selectively informed about significant events in the USSR or abroad; everything what was published in Soviet newspapers, magazines, and journals (articles, reviews, comments, domestic and foreign news, feature stories, fragments of fiction or short prose, poetry, interviews, etc.) created a single specific ideological text. To examine the ways the Soviet propaganda addressed, influenced and manipulated the population of Latvia an important constituent of the ideological text of Soviet Latvia press is under present study - coverage of Anglophone literature in the periodicals of Soviet Latvia in the 1940s. In the paper Anglophone literature comprises mostly British and American authors and their oeuvre having been referred to, reviewed, discussed, criticised, despised or rarely praised in Soviet Latvia press during the first period of Soviet occupation (1940-1941) and immediate post-war years (1945-1949).

2. SOVIET PROPAGANDA, PRESS, AND LITERATURE

The Soviet power realized the great and influential role of the printed word in propagating socialist ideology and strengthening their position on the territory. "In 1940, the Soviet occupation authorities nationalized book companies and replaced them with the State Board of Publishing and Printing Companies, which published mainly political literature. The opinion of Soviet ideologues and censorship officials was decisive in the publication of each text. Inappropriate for the Soviet regime printed works were removed from bookstores and public libraries; they were utilized" [2].

As regards the press, from the very beginning of the occupation in Latvia, a typical Soviet media system was established, with newspapers and magazines focusing on propaganda of the Communist Party. Soviet Latvia press followed the same principles of mass persuasion and manipulation which were applied in the printed media in the Soviet Union of the 1920s and 1930s: dissemination of Stalin's statements, publication of the orders from the Central Committee to the party officials and activists, constant praise of socialist way of living in all spheres of human activity, sharp criticism of ideological opponents. Much attention was devoted to different aspects and various issues of literature interweaving them with propagandistic themes and socio-politics of the ruling power. In general, it was the 20th century which openly, extensively, and successfully started to employ culture as a powerful tool of propaganda. Undoubtedly, from early theatre, to public speeches, to magazines, books, songs, and more, propaganda has been pervading human society for ages. But the totalitarian regimes the world experienced throughout the late century (e.g., the case of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the German Reich) have vividly demonstrated that each sphere of culture, every artistic expression can serve ideology of the ruling party. For example, in the USSR these were posters depicting Soviet enemies in a grotesque and repulsive way, rewritten lyrics to humorous folk songs (chastushkas) by Soviet writers to mock White Army generals and other enemies of the Soviet state, or Soviet films promoting the theme of class struggle (in the early 1920s) or discrediting religious organizations and holders of religious beliefs (anti-religious films of the second half of the 20th century) [3]. Undoubtedly, the cinema industry labelled by Lenin 'the most important of all the arts' functioned as an extremely efficient transmitter of Soviet propaganda. "For example, *Battleship Potemkin*, released in 1925, has often been cited as one of the finest propaganda films ever made and is considered among the greatest films of all time" [4].

However, along with cinematography Soviet ideologists eagerly acknowledged the role of literature in propagating socialist values and ideals; especially the importance of printed propaganda increased when the overall literacy rate of the Soviet people had become higher - in the 1930s. Interrelation and

interdependence of socio-politics and literature were clearly defined and formulated by one of the main implementors of Soviet ideology - Maxim Gorky in the 1930s. In his speech *Soviet Literature* delivered in August 1934, the Soviet writer and political activist emphasized the significance of literary works in forming and educating the Soviet people - the people who would be able to oppose and overcome all the threats and dangers of capitalists and would conquer the world: "It is one of the most essential duties of literature to develop the revolutionary self-consciousness of the proletariat, to foster its love for the home it has created, and to defend this home against attack" [5]. The understanding of the mission of literature as a powerful and influential means for disseminating 'proper' ideas, views, information to the Soviet people formulated by M. Gorky was strictly observed and actively followed by Soviet ideologists and censorship officials.

Soviet newspapers and magazines served as a beneficial platform for establishing a close interrelation between literature and state politics helping the local authorities to implement important tasks set by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: to develop and educate their readers to build a new life based on Soviet principles and values, to instil a positive world view on the socialist system, to eliminate Western influences mostly represented by British and American culture and politics.

3. COVERAGE OF ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE IN SOVIET LATVIA PRESS

3.1. The "Compare and contrast" strategy: 'Them' versus 'Us'

The study of the ideological text constructed in Soviet Latvia press of the 1940s (magazine *The Flag* [Karogs], newspapers *The Struggle* [Cīņa], *The Soviet Youth* [Padomju Jaunatne], *The Soviet Student* [Padomju Students], *The Soviet Latvia* [Padomju Latvija]) allows to conclude that printed media not only played a crucial role in providing the readers with mostly carefully selected and, hence, biased information about all spheres of Soviet people's life and news from abroad but also systematically carried out a state-controlled policy of ideological education of the society basing on and referring to literary works by Soviet or foreign authors (in the context of the Soviet Union, in Latvia 'foreign' did not refer to Russian or any other language of the Soviet republics). The analysis of Anglophone segment comprising British and American writers and their works represented in the press reveals the way one of the fundamental tasks of Soviet ideology was fulfilled: to convince the public of the superiority of the Soviet system over capitalism. In coverage of Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia press, the policy of Soviet propaganda in Russian printed media is followed: to present the Western culture and in general Western way of living as being diametrically opposite and hence inferior to the culture and life of the USSR in terms of ideology, quality, human values and morality. "By the late 1920s, Soviet propagandists were actively using a 'compare and contrast' strategy, contrasting the advantages of the socialist system with the disadvantages of living in capitalist countries. This approach reinforced a bipolar view of the world as being split into two camps: imperialistic aggressors versus righteous communists and socialists" [6]. The division into two ideologically opposite sides becomes especially visible and well pronounced after the Second World War when the former wartime allies (Americans and Brits) have become the main political and ideological opponents of the USSR. By 1946, Stalin "initiated an intense ideologic effort to eliminate Western influences, purify and propagate Stalinist dogma, and deify the dictator himself" [7]. If in some press articles of 1944 or 1945 one can find positive publications related to Americans and Brits because of war-time alliance, then after a year - in 1946 and onwards, the overall tone changes dramatically and yesterday's allies become 'ideological opponents', 'imperialist American and English bourgeoisie', 'haters of mankind', or even 'criminals'.

Thus, in 1944, the newspaper *The Struggle* [Cīņa] writes: "The science, art and literature of the United States have won recognition and respect in the Soviet Union. At school millions of Soviet people have already got acquainted with the most famous American classics - the works by Jack London, Mark Twain, Longfellow and others. Contemporary writers such as Hemingway, Sinclair, Steinbeck, Wright, Dreiser are read with great interest" [8]. In 1945, when reporting on the English writer and social commentator John Boynton Priestley's visit to Moscow, it is emphasized that the Soviet people "have shown a great interest in the life of their ally, the English people, especially since the days of the Second World War" [9]. In their turn, in the publications of the following years emphases are mainly put on

‘decay’ and ‘degeneration’ of bourgeois texts - these are the newspaper cliché terms most commonly used to describe Western culture in general and Anglophone literature in particular: “[..], more and more modern literature of bourgeois decadence in the USA, England and France is characterised in Soviet criticism as total collapse, disintegration, marasmus” [10].

After the Second World War, Anglophone literature as an unquestionable mouthpiece of imperialistic worldview provides favourable material for representing all the ills of the capitalist system, if presented in a skilful and ideologically ‘appropriate’ way. In Soviet Latvia press, with conspicuous regularity articles are published which emphasize the existence of two competitive worlds by interweaving literature into politics: comparing and contrasting Anglophone fiction with Soviet literary texts demonstrate the benefits of the socialist system and remind the public of the insignificance and decay of Anglophone bourgeoisie art. Hence, the way Anglophone literature is represented in print reflects one of the press clichés of that time - when reporting on any manifestation of the Soviet reality a strategy of opposing two phenomena is often applied; mostly, these two phenomena represent two ideologically opposite worlds - socialist and capitalist. The comparison and, as a result, the opposition of two systems is very often clearly pronounced already in the headlines: *Them and us* [Viņi un mēs] [11], *Soviet Literature and Contemporary Western Literature* [Padomju literatūra un mūsdienu Rietumu literatūra] [12], *Opposition of the Two Worlds* [Divu pasaļu pretstats] [13], *Superiority of Soviet Socialist Culture over Bourgeois Culture: Literature and Art in the USSR and Capitalistic Countries* [Padomju socialistiskās kultūras pārākums pār buržuāzisko kultūru: Literatūra un māksla PSRS un kapitalistiskajās valstīs] [14], etc.

In the articles, their authors constantly ‘juggle’ with words, phrases, and constructions of comparisons, contrasts, and oppositions. For example, to prove superiority of Soviet Socialist culture over imperialistic, bourgeois culture, the techniques of repetition and parallelism are intrusively exploited: “So, in our time, **two** opposing social worlds are existing on the planet: the world of socialism, which opens a new era in human history, calls humanity forward, towards a great goal, to communism, infused with the deepest, most progressive ideas, by Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin's great, developing teaching, and capitalism world, which is going through the last stage of its development: the stage of decay, putrefaction and disintegration. **Two** cultures correspond to these **two** worlds: the world of capitalism - a reactionary, rotting culture of bourgeois society, and the world of socialism - a new, socialist culture. And comparing these **two** worlds, these **two** cultures, we see the enormous superiority of socialist culture, which brings joy of life and freedom to humanity, over the bourgeois culture of civilized barbarism, which expresses the decline and disintegration of the bourgeois world” [15] (emphasis mine).

In this type of articles, the Anglophone literature is invoked to demonstrate the crucial differences between the two systems: mentioning of the British and American writers’ names or referring to their works serve as an opposing and contrasting site in propagating all goods of the Soviet world: “At the end of 1946, O'Neill's new play “The Iceman Cometh” premiered in New York. Many critics in the American press likened the play to Gorky's work “The Lower Depths,” as it also depicts the dregs of the city: drunkards, streetwalkers, thieves and loafers. But instead of Gorky's peculiar humanism, O'Neill puts in questionable mystically philosophical considerations and motives. [...] He has become a hater of mankind; any attempt for a free human society is called by him nonsense” [16]. The authors of such articles do not hesitate to use the language saturated with highly negative emotional words, striking metaphors and comparisons to cause a feeling of disgust and repugnancy in their readers towards the imperialistic literature. They write about “a deep spiritual crisis” of Western European decadence and “the fused personifications of literary degeneration: zoological naturalism on the one hand, and the symbolism of insanity, which sometimes resembles the same glorification of human inferiority, on the other hand” [17]; the artistic world of decadent fiction is compared to “a rotten swamp” full of “murderers, gangsters, psychopaths, uncontrolled sadism, misanthropy”, and the writers are called “sceptics, apocalyptic, pessimists, absurdists, ‘pure art’ aesthetes” who are “entangled like poisonous snakes” “in one tangled ball” [18]. The bourgeois literature is likened to “the agony of death, which sometimes, as we know, can last for long” and “with its deathly bacilli considerably poison the surrounding air” [19] but “literature analysis turns to a section of a rotten corpse” [20].

One of the main Soviet ideologists' pretensions to 'the decadence of modern bourgeois literature' is the absence of a positive hero, the lack of positive perspective on life, on human future. In the press, the readers are regularly reminded that "the method of Soviet art and literature and the aesthetic system of expression forms is socialist realism [...] the last stage of realism and thus its highest degree and fulfilment" [21]; hence what has to be represented in Soviet literature was defined already earlier - in M. Gorky's speech of 1934: "Life, as asserted by socialist realism, is deeds, creativeness, the aim of which is the uninterrupted development of the priceless individual faculties of man, with a view to his victory over the forces of nature, for the sake of his health and longevity, for the supreme joy of living on an earth which, in conformity with the steady growth of his requirements, he wishes to mould throughout into a beautiful dwelling place for mankind, united into a single family" [22]. Socialist realism which was an official style of idealized realistic art developed in the Soviet Union and the aim of which was to create what Lenin called 'an entirely new type of human being': The New Soviet Man, is regularly contrasted to what is offered by the capitalist culture. It is constantly demonstrated and 'proved' to the Soviet public that the so-called bourgeois literature is unable and unwilling to provide its readers with a depiction of clear, positive, and favourable reality and future life. The question is posed, and the answer is given: "What kind of a human, what ideas does the capitalist world oppose to our man, the Soviet human, and to his ideas? An old expression says: - Search in writings! Indeed, bourgeois literature comprehensively answers the question" [23]. And at once specific examples from modern Anglophone fiction are invoked: Robert Payne's novel "David and Anna" which "openly proclaims racism and destructive war", John Steinbeck's "Cannery Row" in which the author expresses his unhealthy thoughts about the future belonging to hoboes and rascals, or O'Neill's claim that all humans are "a mixture of mud and manure" (his play "The Iceman Cometh" is quoted) [24].

3.2. The "Compare and contrast" strategy: 'Them' versus 'Them'

However, one cannot claim that in the 1940s the Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia was only represented in a negative way. Novels, short stories and poetry by English-speaking writers though in small numbers if compared to translations from the Russian language but were published into Latvian by State Administration of Printing and Publishing Enterprises (in Latvian: VAPP). Undoubtedly, in translated literature the Russian language as the main source language dominated and Soviet Latvia publishing market experienced huge prints of propagandistic texts and belles-lettres translated from Russian. But foreign authors (British, American, French) also entered the cultural space of Soviet Latvia: with extreme cautionary measures, under strict and overall control of censorship on pre-publishing, while-publishing and post-publishing stages to eliminate an appearance of any inappropriate text, to exclude influences harmful to Soviet ideology and to ensure a 'proper' reading and understanding of a literary work that originates from a capitalistic country. Undoubtedly, the Soviet newspapers and magazines were extremely helpful in providing a necessary platform for informing the society not only on 'decay' and 'degeneration' of the Western literature but also on some progressive authors who, though come from the capitalistic countries, admit the evils of living there, sympathize and support the socialist course and in their creative work try and reveal all the ugliness of existence in the imperialistic world. Noteworthy, that to demonstrate the presence of ideas and moods in a capitalistic country favourable to the Soviet ideology the same 'compare and contrast' strategy is applied, this time emphasizing the existence of two separate worlds in the country under imperialistic rule: the world of capitalists supported by 'apolitical', 'exquisite aesthetic', 'cynical', 'reactional' writers and the world of the workers, social thinkers and activists supported by 'progressive', 'brave', 'sound', 'realistic' writers, for example, 'Two Books - Two Americas' [25] or 'Two Englands, Two Frances' [26]. In the press it is postulated: "There is no one America, one England, one France, but there are two Americas, two Englands, two Frances. There is reactionary, anti-democratic, imperialist America, England and France, and there is progressive, democratic, anti-imperialist America, England and France, organized, united and strengthened by the class of workers of these countries under the leadership of the communist parties. And this second America, England and France do not allow the corpse poison of decadence literature to seep into the consciousness of the masses" [27].

The tendency to present the existence of two worlds within one, hostile to the socialist course, country is related to the idea expressed by Lenin and promoted by Soviet propaganda that 'the final victory of socialism on a world scale can be achieved only by the joint efforts of the workers of all countries.'

Therefore, it was important to demonstrate that there were sympathizers and supporters of the Soviet course in the 'enemy's' camp.

3.3. Anglophone literature and Soviet people's everyday life as represented in Latvian periodicals

Additionally, Soviet Latvia press quite skilfully exploited Anglophone literature, i.e., foreign literature, in promoting Soviet ideals, instilling socialist values and praising life in the socialism system. In general, Soviet propagandists were encouraged to exploit literary texts to address their audience, especially younger generation. "By using fiction, the propagandists must ensure that listeners get interested and are fond of books, that young people become regular visitors of libraries and reading rooms" [28]. They are even provided with lists of appropriate titles to be used in their work, including some foreign books too as the authors coming from the countries ideologically opposite to the socialist course serve as guarantors of everything critical written by them about the capitalist system: "Speaking and telling about our life in the socialist era, we must also talk about the times of bourgeois power, about the years of German occupation. Fiction also helps the propagandist here: V. Lācis' novel *The Storm* [Latvian], U. Sinclair's *The Flivver King* [American], L. Feuchtwanger's *Simona* [German], M. Twain's *Running for Governor* [American] and other works which reveal the so-called real face of bourgeois 'democracy'" [29].

Moreover, Soviet Latvia press actively refers to Anglophone literature when providing ideological education of the society by (a) giving ideologically direct instructions what (not) to read and how to understand what you are reading, (b) demonstrating the importance and educational role of 'proper' literature for the Soviet people, (c) warning the society about the dangers of 'wrong' literature, the so-called imperialistic, bourgeois texts. Basing on the study of the Latvian newspapers and magazines it was concluded that fiction, including Anglophone titles, accepted by the state authorities was actively involved, incorporated, and exploited when telling about a Soviet person's everyday life, thus, accustoming the society to the constant presence of a book in their lives. Some of the most pronounced cases found in Soviet Latvia press of the 1940s are given below:

1) Reports on organization of book discussion events on both professional and amateur level, for example, in 1947 the newspaper *The Struggle* [Cīņa] informs that "The All-Russian Theatre Association has organized a reading and discussion of the play *The Forty-Ninth State* by the English writer James Aldridge. [...] Theatre experts, Western literary specialists, the theatre directors and critics of the capital took part in the discussion of the play. Soviet, English and American journalists were present at the reading of the play" [30], but in 1948, two newspapers - *The Soviet Student* [Padomju Students] and *The Soviet Youth* [Padomju Jaunatne] - report on the open discussion and conference for the readers of Theodore Dreiser's novel *The Financier* organised among the 2nd-year students of Economics at the Latvian State University 'to better understand various issues in political economy and other problems related to capitalism' [31].

2) Informing the public about publishing news and ensuring the 'right' reception process. In Soviet Latvia, newspapers and literary magazines regularly print news and reviews on books planned to be published or already released. Reading as one of the most honourable, necessary, and useful activities for the Soviet people is constantly promoted and the importance of reading is emphasized: for example, in one of the issues of the newspaper *The Struggle* [Cīņa] of 1940 when providing *Discussion of the Plan of State Administration of Printing and Publishing Enterprises Fiction Publishing House for Year 1941*, it is stated: "This plan has been designed to develop and educate our readers to build our life" [32]. In 1948, in the literary magazine *The Flag* [Karogs] the author of the article *The Art of Translation* [Tulkošanas Māksla], Valdis Grēviņš, ends it with an exalted passage: "The great Stalin post-war five-year plan imposes great responsibilities on all of us - on writers, translators, editors. Much is being expected from us by all the nation, that enormous number of readers who eagerly grab each new book today. We have been given unprecedented opportunities to make these books good, with artistic passion written, carefully published. Then let us be masters of our work, worthy of our great age" [33]! As regards Anglophone titles if the work was accepted by the censorship for translation and publication, then the press serves as one of the most efficient mediation ways of reception in after-publication stage providing the public with an 'appropriate' context for promoting, perceiving, reading and understanding the text in a 'right' way. When in 1941 John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is introduced to a Latvian

reader, it is stated that the novel “has a great revolutionary and artistic value. It is next to the best and most advanced works of American writing. Steinbeck is a harsh realist who, without mercy, exposes the social contradictions of the United States” [34]. In 1947, *The Soviet Youth* [Patomju Jaunatne] informs about the publishing of Upton Sinclair’s *The Flivver King* and writes that the novel “opens a bright and true page of the American working people’s life to our reader, and anyone who will read the book will remember with deep satisfaction and pleasure the words of Lenin, the great organizer and leader of the proletariat, who in June 1918 wrote - “We have all the rights to be proud and to be happy that we managed to be the first to overthrow in one corner of the world the savage beast of capitalism, which covered the earth with blood and reduced mankind to hunger and despair”” [35]. In its turn, in 1948 Theodore Dreiser’s *The Financier* is highly praised and recommended for reading: “Latvianization of the novel *The Financier* has appeared at the right time. [...] Dreiser’s *The Financier* serves us in Latvia as a warrior against the theories promoted by the bourgeoisie, about the ‘land of great opportunities’ for every hard-working person, the land where everyone gains happiness without socialism. *The Financier* destroys these views” [36].

3) Printing lists of recommended books addressed to a wide readership. Moreover, the lists are prepared not only to aim at specific age or social groups, but also the reading recommendations are equated with important events in the country to ensure an ideological education of the society (e.g., *What to read when preparing for International Women's Day* [37], *Stalin's Constitution and the Soviet Election in the Representation of Our Literature* [38], etc.). Especially children and young people are targeted. In the press, to provide a ‘proper’ ideological impact on young readers, the guidelines are given what is advisable to read and even the age or school year when certain books might be read. As a rule, Anglophone titles are rarely included in the lists; mostly these are books written by Latvian writers or ideological texts translated from Russian about Lenin’s childhood, pioneers or Soviet heroes: “*Youth books recommended*. Deputy People's Commissar of Education c.[omrade] Jansons has recommended the following editions of the VAPP Youth Publishing House for use in schools: Lev Kassil’s - *Clock in the Tower*; A. Kononov’s - *Stories about Lenin*; A. Lyapidevsky’s - *The Chelyuskins*; A.I. Ulyanova’s - *Childhood and school years Ilyich* and Soviet children's letters - *How we live*. (All these books can be used already in the 1st school year)” [39]. It is regularly controlled what schools and libraries offer to their young readers to avoid the presence of ‘improper’ literature because of either young readers’ age (the texts offered are too difficult and complicated, for example, ‘serious political and other Marxist classic works’ for 10-14-year olds) or, and it is much more serious and dangerous - ideologically ‘wrong’ books: “It is unforgivable at all that there are books harmful to young people in the pioneer room of this school. It is incomprehensible that so far, the instructors of the Kirov district education department, as well as the Komsomol Member District Committee, have not noticed this. But the school principal still doubts whether these books “would really be removable from the pioneer room book stock.” It is not yet clear to her that the books published during the German occupation express an ideology hostile to the Soviet state, which is harmful to the educational process at school” [40].

4) Frequent use of quotes from or references to the literary texts (Anglophone literature including) when reporting on different life realia of Soviet or capitalist bloc - farming, industry, education, political situation, etc. Such approach allows demonstrating that literature is a mandatory, inseparable part of public life. Moreover, in the press, the references to the British or American fiction serve as indisputable proof of the evil and corrupted nature of the capitalist world, contrasting to the highly positive and beneficial Soviet world. “Before the war, the American writer John Steinbeck wrote the book *The Grapes of Wrath*. In this book, the writer described the extremely difficult life of American farmers. A few years have passed since Steinbeck published his book, during which the life conditions of farmers became heavier” [41] - this is the way the author chooses to start his article reporting on harsh economic situation in capitalistic states. Another example is related to the situation of Soviet miners described in a positive, optimistic manner highlighting all the benefits of this profession in the USSR: “Indeed, find at least one capitalist country where the job of a miner is an honorary profession, where there are honorary miners. Such a capitalist state does not and cannot exist. In the writer Cronin's novel, *The Stars Look Down*, which depicts the life of miners in England, even a simple saleswoman did not want to talk to a miner - he was just a labourer. But in our country, miners are respected” [42]. In terms of invoking and incorporating Anglophone literature in the press articles devoted to different spheres of human

activity a certain tendency was observed: the specific authors were referred to or quoted when reporting on the specific issues. Thus, A.J. Cronin's, T. Dreiser's, J.B. Priestley's or J. Steinbeck's works helped to demonstrate the injustices of the socioeconomic situation in capitalism; U. Sinclair's or M. Twain's oeuvre revealed the corrupted nature of politics, but references to John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* showed to the Soviet readers the ill-natured relationships in a bourgeois family.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study of coverage of Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia press of the 1940s has revealed some uniform strategies exploited by the Soviet power to carry out the process of Sovietisation on the territories annexed within the USSR, to instil in the society ideas and values of socialism and to discriminate the way of life in capitalism. Soviet ideologists actively and with a well-planned range of measures employed literature - one of the most potent tools of propaganda, and the press - one of the most available and trustful channels, to address the readers of all generations. They knowingly involved foreign fiction in following the direction set by the Communist party: to praise the achievements and victories of the socialism in different spheres of human activity and to criticize capitalism in all its expressions including literature and culture as well. To ensure 'proper' ideological content guidelines from the metropolis -Moscow - were followed and the strategies of Soviet Russia press of the 1920s and 1930s for presenting information were borrowed. The most frequent strategy exploited by Soviet Latvia press was a 'compare and contrast' strategy used to demonstrate all benefits of living in the Soviet Union if compared to the countries under capitalism. Coverage of Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia press was completely subordinated to the Soviet socio-political course and dependent on the state ideology. Anglophone writers and their works served as favourable material to operate with when demonstrating superiority of Soviet literature and culture and eventually Soviet lifestyle over Western, imperialistic, bourgeoisie literature, culture and life in general. In Latvian press of the 1940s, Soviet literature (the body of texts written by the authors of different Soviet republics, national authors including) is actively promoted and discussed. Readers are regularly reminded of the honourable and significant role of Soviet literature, often contrasting it with the insignificance and misery of the Western/American literature: "The war against fascism demonstrated to the American people that at a time when the literature of bourgeois decline proved to be ideologically completely powerless in the face of fascist threats, Soviet literature was fully armed as a powerful means of the spiritual mobilization of the masses to fight the enemy" [43]. The periodicals of Soviet Latvia created an image of Anglophone fiction as harmful and dangerous for Soviet people postulating pessimism, decay and disintegration of humanity. Since Anglophone writers mostly represented the capitalist world perspective, which was considered hostile to the Soviets, frequent references to the artistic world of Anglophone literature to contrast two opposing systems - socialism vs. capitalism - can be found in the press publications reporting not only on different aspects and issues of literature, but also when informing the society on socio-economic and political conditions in the USSR or abroad. Examples from British and American fiction when telling or writing about different realities of life demonstrate the Soviet ideological position that literature cannot be detached from public life. Fiction books were of great importance in Soviet people's life, they were actively used in ideological education of the society and the press provided a beneficial platform for creating the necessary context for 'appropriate' reception process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The article has been published thanks to the financial support from ERAF (project "Literary and Political Discourse of Translations in Totalitarianism: Anglophone Literature in Soviet Latvia"; application No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/3/19/452).



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