

Depiction of the oil shale industry in *Looming* magazine between 1940 and 1956

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The focus of the article is on the depiction of oil shale mining, which had intensified after the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union in 1940, in *Looming* magazine during the first decades of the occupation. It also provides a brief overview of the coverage of the extraction of this natural resource during the Republic of Estonia: from the second half of the 1930, in particular, literature, art, film and photography began to be urged to cover topics deemed to be of national importance, while the exports of shale oil increased as a result of the armament of Nazi Germany.

To the modern reader, the post-war Soviet Estonian propagandist literature on oil shale mining reads like a form of colonial violence or a consequence thereof, distorting both the object depicted and those who depicted it. The so-called oil shale literature of the time is meant to convey a message (Stalin's socialist-realist writer as an engineer of human souls), while making concessions to form. The description of conditions emerges as a new genre. The authors published in *Looming* during that era often had a similar background: they had served in the Red Army or spent time in the Soviet home front or came from Russia, hence they had had time to acquire the main principles of socialist realism. Novice writers also began to produce texts. Both writers and artists were sent to cover the oil shale basin, and *Looming* makes up only a portion of the whole coverage (which includes film and news media). Texts in various genres that are dedicated to the extraction of natural resources come in waves after guidance and calls to depict the industry in connection with national economic planning and five-year periods. On the other hand, there are periods where whole issues go by without a word on Estonia's most important industry. The oil shale narrative centres on a grand industry and the wondrous Stalinist mining town(s) built for it, reframing the local history of the extraction of this resource from the perspective of the occupying power.

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