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What did it mean to be a Ukrainian children's writer in the 1930's?

(Based on the works by Natalia Zabyla and Oksana Ivanenko)

The focus of the proposed study is on women's writing experience in a totalitarian society. The discussion of this topic lies in the unresolved question: was the women's experience a special one, or did the authors feel the same pressure and embody ideological principles in the same way? This topic also concerns a wide public discussion about the fate of children's literature of the Soviet times. The problem of ideology and children's literature in Western literary criticism is associated with such researchers as Bob Dixon, Peter Hollindale, John Stephens, who interpret it as essentialist, arguing that "there cannot be a narrative without an ideology" (McCallum, Stephens 2011). But in Soviet children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s, ideology began to define didacticism. The main source of information about the political influence on children's literature in the first decades of the Soviet times is A. Fateyev's study *Stalinism and Children's Literature in the Politics of the Soviet Nomenclature of the USSR*, which demonstrates how children's literature turns into an industry of propaganda and "social engineering" (Фатеев 2007). N. Zabyla and O. Ivanenko, whose experience and works are chosen for the analysis, turned to children's literature because of ideological persecution, and because of the need to write for their children. And another ideal of the Soviet child, family, and childhood was formed in their works. The images of boys (for example *The Story of the Truant* by N. Zabyla), joined the collectives, subordinated to the requirements, and girls (for example, *Sandals, Full Speed* by O. Ivanenko), self-sufficient and making their own decisions, are of particular interest.

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