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ZAPORIZHIA AS A BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN THE FUTURE AND THE PAST IN UKRAINIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE OF THE 1920S AND 1930S[1]

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ЗАПОРІЖЖЯ ЯК ПОЛЕ БИТВИ МІЖ МАЙБУТНІМ І МИНУЛИМ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ДИТЯЧІЙ ЛІТЕРАТУРІ 1920-30-Х РОКІВ

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Abstract: The article highlights the image of Zaporizhia in Ukrainian children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s, embodied in avant-garde sketches and traditional adventure and historical novels. The aim of the study is to present one example of the 'colonisation' of children, directed at forming a new identity for future citizens of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The results of the study show that Ukrainian children's literature at that time did not appeal to the real experience of children, but replaced it with a constructed reality. In particular, the space of children's literature is urbanised, and factories become an important topos – outposts of industrialisation, among which the most important was Dniprelstan. However, the construction of this plant threatened the national memory of the Cossack past.

In children's literature of that time, the image of Dniprelstan and Zaporizhzhia took on the features of an industrial utopia, with which children were supposed to associate the future. Travelogues and essays about construction drew children into the discourse of power, blurring the line between adult and children's literature. At the same time, writers who were supporters of national tradition sought to fill the image of Zaporizhzhia and the Dnipro banks around it with images of the Cossack past and to affirm its value. Since children's literature of that time was generally aimed at forming a new identity, historical novels, as part of the counter-discourse, were aimed at defending the national component in it, emphasising the historical unity of the nation and preserving the system of democratic values attacked by the Bolsheviks.

Key words: Ukrainian children's literature, essays, travelogues, historical novels, adventure novels, industrial utopia.

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Анотація: Стаття висвітлює образ Запоріжжя в українській дитячій літературі 1920-30х років, втілений у авангардистських нарисах та традиційних пригодницьких та історичних повістях. Метою дослідження є висвітлити один з прикладів «колонізації» дитини, націленої на формування нової ідентичності майбутніх громадян Української соціалістичної радянської республіки. Результати дослідження свідчать, що тогочасна українська дитяча література не апелює до реального досвіду тогочасних дітей, а замінює його конструйованою реальністю. Зокрема, простір дитячої літератури урбанізується, важливим топосом стають заводи – форпости індустріалізації, з-поміж яких найважливішим був Дніпрельстан, будівництво якого поставило під загрозу національну пам'ять про козацьке минуле.

У дитячій літературі того часу образ Дніпрельстану і Запоріжжя набувають рис індустріальної утопії, з якою діти мали асоціювати майбутнє. Тревелоги та нариси про будівництво залучали дітей у владний дискурс, роблячи межу між літературою дорослою і дитячою ледь помітною. Водночас, письменники, прихильники національної традиції, прагли наповнити образ Запоріжжя і дніпровських берегів довкола нього образами козацького минулого і утвердити його цінність. Оскільки в цілому дитяча література тих часів мала мету сформувати нову ідентичність, то історичні повісті як частина контрдискурсу, були націлені на відстоювання національної складової у ній, акцентуванні історичну єдність нації та збереженні системи цінностей демократії, атакованої більшовиками.

Ключові слова: українська дитяча література, нариси, тревелоги, історична повість, пригодницька повість, індустріальна утопія.

The main topoi of narration about Ukrainian literature of the 1920s and 1930s are usually two capitals, which are interpreted as metaphors. Kyiv, the capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic (1917-1921), embodies the national trend in the culture of that time, while Kharkiv, the capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, personifies the Bolshevik trend[2]. The complex interplay of these trends gave rise to the political movement of national communism and the program of Ukrainization, which became the basis for a striking phenomenon – the Ukrainian Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s. In this article, I propose to look at another city, Zaporizhzhia, as a metaphor for the changes that Ukrainian culture underwent during the early Soviet era. The city, founded on the Free Lands of the Zaporozhian Host the Lower after the Russian tsarist regime destroyed the Cossack fortress, the Zaporizhzhia Sich, was named after the Russian tsar, Alexandrovsk, until 1921. First, the Aleksandrovsk Provincial Council renamed the province, and then the local executive committee issued an order to rename the city. The name Zaporizhzhia is literally motivated by its location — behind the Dnipro rapids — a series of rocks that crossed the Dnipro, hindering navigation. However, this geographical motivation also had historical roots, appealing to the Cossack period of national

[2] For more details, see O. Palko.

history, when the name 'Zaporizhzhia' meant Cossack lands. In 1927-32, a dam was built on the Dnieper, which raised the water level in the river, closing the rapids and turning the river into a convenient and profitable transport route. This dam was part of a powerful hydroelectric power station, Dniprelstan, which became one of the most powerful symbols of Soviet industrialisation, which in literature and art was «called upon to establish a fundamentally new, pro-Soviet literary discourse» **[Omelchuk 2011: 111]**. This image attacked the national memory: growing on Cossack lands and radically transforming them, Dniprelstan erased the past for the sake of a future industrial utopia.

This construction is a common theme that can be traced not only in literature, but also in theatre, painting, and cinema. In adult literature, it develops not only as a production story, but also as a confrontation between 'progressive' Soviet young people and traditionalists, which ends either with the 're-education' or destruction of the latter. The 'adult' discourse has had a significant impact on the development of the theme in children's literature (children's texts even have epigraphs taken from works for adult audiences), demonstrating perhaps the most radical example of the 'colonisation' of children (Perry Nodelman), when works for children become a profound space of adult power **[Nodelman 1992: 29–35]**. Zaporizhzhia in children's literature of the 1920s exists not as a background, but as a source of history for both: the specific text and culture in general.

In this study, I will highlight the history of the ideologically provoked clash between the past and the future as an episode in the struggle for the identity of future citizens and demonstrate how the construction of Dniprelstan influences the genre system of children's literature, contrasting the genre of futurological sketches with classic adventure and historical novels.

Ukrainian children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s: making the national space Soviet

The period of national liberation struggles (1917-1921) led to a significant rise in Ukrainian culture. The revolutionary events were interpreted as liberation from imperial pressure and a return to history. In particular, references to the Cossack past can be traced in state and military symbols, literature, and art. The Bolsheviks perceived the right of nations to self-determination as separatism, which they fought against. In particular, the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR), proclaimed in 1917, was conquered by 1921. However, among the Ukrainian leftists who joined the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine (CP(b)U) after the defeat of the UPR, there were many who defended national distinctiveness. Former members of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Borotbists) believed that the party should lead the Ukrainian people's

aspirations to satisfy their national interests. This contradicted the Bolshevik assimilation policy. As a result, two groups formed within the ranks of the CP(b)U, each advocating different projects of Soviet culture (national and assimilationist).

To soften anti-Bolshevik sentiments, a policy of Ukrainisation was proclaimed in 1923, which was "aimed at “rooting” Soviet power in the border republics by involving ethnic personnel in party work and the state apparatus. This was accompanied by linguistic derussification and the promotion of national languages and cultures" **[Palko 2021: 79]**. This policy strengthened the position of national communism, whose supporters [combined the ideas of communist restructuring of society and national liberation of Ukraine, and contributed to social harmony: "No matter how different Ukrainian intellectuals were. They were deeply influenced by the experience of statehood in 1917-1920: everyone perceived Ukraine's new republican status as the result of not only a social but also a national revolution" **[Shkandrij 2015: 256]**.

For a time, the national communists served as a screen behind which the Bolsheviks strengthened their positions. After curtailing Ukrainisation in 1932, they eliminated the national communists, Ukrainian intellectuals and civil society activists, starved Ukrainian villages, and destroyed those who could resist colonisation.

The Soviet transformation of Ukraine (industrialisation, collectivisation, etc.) was a leading theme in children's literature at the time. A general overview of this literature reveals a striking discrepancy between reality and the proportion of depictions of villages and cities. The period from 1920 to 1930 was indeed a time of rapid urbanisation of rustic Ukraine, but even in 1939, only 38.5% of the population lived in cities, while the number of books for children and teenagers on urban themes at that time was twice the number of those about the village. The central theme of urban literature was industrialisation – the pride of the Soviet state. Factories, particularly the largest constructions of that time, became a new topos in children's literature. They were glorified in such artistic publications as *Traktorobud* (by Natalia Zabila, 1933), *Dniprelstan* (by Oles Hromiv, 1932), and non-fiction publications: *Electric dawn* (by V. Sobolev, 1929), *Great Zaporizzia* (by *P. Khaustov*, 1931), *Dniprobud* (by Yaroslav Hrymailo, 1932). Dniprelstan, as the most outstanding building of that time, also became part of the plot of children's travel literature: *How Yurko travelled beyond the Dnipro rapids* (O. Steshenko, 1929), *To Dniprelstan* (V. Reznichenko, 1929), *Young travellers, or a trip to Dniprelstan* (Y. Hrymailo, 1930). All of them depict factories as outposts of the new government and a guarantee of a bright future, while the publication *Black Soil Dniprelstan* (S. Dobrovolsky, 1931) on the state farm records an attempt to use

the name *Dniprelstan* as a metaphor meaning 'outstanding achievement,' symbolically urbanising the rural space.

However, as Olesia Omelchuk notes about poetry for adult readers, "there is one aspect that distinguishes Dniprohes[3] theme from other literary representations of economic projects of the 1920s and 1930s, and that is its close connection with various spheres of national culture (history, archaeology, art, folklore) with the literary memory of ancient Ukraine, with Ukrainian identity itself, which at that time had to be defined not only or not so much as 'Ukrainian' but as 'new.' In other words, when addressing the topic of Dniprohes, writers did not write solely and primarily about Dniprohes. In a specific way, they actualise in their texts the problem of memory about Ukraine's cultural and historical past **[Omelchuk 2011: 93]**.

The significance of the past was reinforced by a small but important group of historical novels about the Cossack. The brief period of statehood revived interest in the Cossack past, which was embodied in state and military symbols, literature and art. This interest persisted in subsequent years, despite the rejection of the Bolsheviks, who associated it with their political opponents. In children's literature, the Cossack theme, whose topos is Zaporizhzhia and the Zaporizhzhia Sich, emerges as a voice in defence of the memory of the national past, which is being destroyed by industrialisation.

Historical themes were generally unpopular in Soviet literature of the 1920s, as the Bolsheviks proclaimed a complete break with the 'unjust' and 'unnecessary' past. Between 1920 and 1931, the school curriculum did not even include history as a separate subject. «Basically, history was only used to illustrate otherwise inexplicable phenomena» **[Gaworek 1977: 58]**. Stalin's centralisation of state power in the late 1920s revived interest in history, which reinforced the image of power by telling the story of an ancient tradition that cemented Russian dominance (in particular through the appropriation of the earlier Ukrainian history of the Kyivan Rus period). «Russia's heritage and Russian nationalism became the new social bond on which Stalin relied to ensure order and legitimacy and to demand further sacrifices» **[Gaworek 1977: 61]**. The Cossack theme of Ukrainian history was reduced to a narrative of 'friendship between peoples.'

Zaporizhia as an industrial utopia

The theme of industrialisation (proclaimed in 1925 as the party line by the 14th Party Congress) was one of the most important for the Ukrainian avant-garde, which justified functionalism as the principle of new art, thanks

[3] Another, modern name of Dniprelstan

to which its creativity «has practical and ideological value for the revolution» **[Ilnytsky 2003: 249]**. Under its influence, the percentage of non-fiction literature in children's literature is growing, which, in terms of industrialisation, is becoming closer to adult literature, particularly in its enthusiasm for the successes of industrialisation and its depiction of industrial giants. The theme of industrialisation is presented not as a natural process of accelerating industrial development, but as a collective achievement of the Soviet proletariat, arising from the initiative of workers and the party. Industrialisation was presented as the pride of the Soviet Union, which children should join in the future. Among children's books, we see texts about the largest constructions of the time, which changed the mental map of future citizens, creating a demand not for historical places, but for the so-called 'outposts of the future' (as V. Sobolev calls Zaporizhzhia), places of power not only for individual republics, but for the entire Union.

As in literature for adult readers, Dniprelstan appears as a grand construction project of the future, whose symbolic significance is so great that the authors attribute to it «an idea of beauty, grandeur, and sublimity» **[Omelchuk 2011: 111]**. The image of Dniprelstan first appears in reports and travelogues — descriptions of trips organised by teachers for schoolchildren. The description of the excursion, during which children are shown new specialised equipment and the scale of the work, becomes a metaphor for indoctrination (which is particularly noticeable in Yaroslav Hrymailo's travelogue, where children learn new words heard on the construction site). A recurring episode is the explosions that destroy the natural landscape, which also become a metaphor for the destruction of the past for the sake of the future, which Dniprelstan is supposed to create, since "it will generate enormous profits. It will lift up our industry, and with it the entire Soviet country" **[Hrymailo 1930: 57]**.

The future of Zaporizhzhia is depicted as an industrial utopia. In Reznichenko's travelogue, a garden-city (a popular metaphor at the time) called Electropolis will grow on Khortytsia Island (the former site of the Zaporizhzhia Sich), which is predicted to surpass New York. In V. Sobolev's report *Electric Dawn*, the author writes about the inevitable changes that Zaporizhia will undergo just one year after the launch of the power plant: "The proximity of a large source of energy has affected the entire way of life and behaviour of this still small but strong and capable city. Its advantageous location has wiped away the faded colours of provincial provincialism from Zaporizhzhia and given it dignity and businesslike efficiency, a character of maturity and perfection" **[Sobolev 1929: 52]**.

Khaustov's reportage *Great Zaporizhia* is almost entirely devoted to the future industrial utopia. Noting the construction of the Dnipro Hydroelectric

Power Plant in the first chapter, the author develops his dream of Zaporizhia as the city of the future, 'the world's first green working-class city,' in the eight subsequent chapters.

The author describes a plan according to which industry will be located in two groups 2.5 km away from the city, surrounded by green spaces, «the entire expanse of the great Zaporizhzhia will be criss-crossed by boulevards. Beaches will run along the entire bank of the Dnieper. One edge of the city will face the river — towards the basin of air, water and light» [**Khaustov 1931: 12**]. Residential development envisages fully glazed 3-4 storey buildings, with public canteens in each residential complex, served by a single factory kitchen for the whole city. Raw materials are supplied by an agro-industrial complex, which grows «radishes the size of footballs, or cucumbers that look more like airships» in its hangars [**Khaustov 1931: 22**]. However, education and culture are developing much more slowly. Each housing complex has its own nurseries, kindergartens, labour schools and children's technical stations; vocational schools and factory schools are located around the respective factories. «A separate "scientific and educational district" contains higher education institutions and institutes: polytechnic, chemical, and agricultural» [**Khaustov 1931: 22**]. And just as the cultural institutions in this city are concentrated in one place – the Park of Culture and Recreation – so the history of Zaporizhzhia in this story is reduced to one word: the name of the new freight station – 'Sich'.

Khaustov's utopian descriptions are based on real plans, as he 'fills in' the details of the experimental project of Ukrainian constructivist architects, *Sotsmisto*, which is now a district of Zaporizhzhia. It was built for the employees of Dniprelstal and Dniprokombinat (heavy industry enterprises). Sotsmisto was the first place in Ukraine to use the quarterly principle of development: each quarter had an original structure that combined residential buildings with public buildings. In this way, according to the architects, a new social order was created. This project was shut down during implementation, so the actual area is far from what Khaustov described.

The authors of the analysed works readily sacrifice the history of the region for the sake of utopia. Most mention the Cossack era only briefly and in passing. But V. Sobolev's report *Electric Dawn* also seeks to convince readers that everyone will benefit from the construction, because «scientists, those archaeological moles, will not give up a single inch of land for construction without a fight» [**Sobolev 1929: 38**] and they are 'doing well': «...the Dnieper, the vigilant guardian of ancient history buried thousands of years ago. Dig a little, and it will tell you about Cossack freedom and fierce attacks, reveal the history of the fortress of Baida Vyshnevetsky; dig some more, and the old Dnipro will tell you about the days when nomads made a cup out of the skull of the Grand Prince of Kyiv, Sviatoslav, and drank wine from it; dig some more,

and you will see a wild man in animal skins who does not yet know how to make a stone axe» [**Sobolev 1929: 40**].

The author cheerfully recounts numerous discoveries made during construction dating back to ancient times (the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Greek culture, Khazars, Sarmatians, and Scythians), though he sometimes forgets that artefacts require careful excavation rather than dynamite to uncover. However, despite the references to history in this chapter, the next one compares the work of archaeologists to that of geologists, with the latter coming out on top because they discover resources that are useful for the future.

In the middle of 1930s, the theme of Dniprelstan disappears from the pages of children's works. The image of the industrial utopia of Zaporizhzhia, cherished by the avant-garde, gives way to socialist realist stories about the invention of weapons to fight global capitalism. The attempt to form a new Ukrainian identity based on leftist ideology fails, and socialist realism literature shapes a Soviet identity in which only external attributes can be national. Dniprelstan, once a dream of a happy future, has become the cause of an ecological disaster, exacerbated by the Dnipro Combine factories surrounding it.

A city named after the Zaporizhian Sich

The ideas of industrial utopia are opposed by the vision of Zaporizhzhia as a national historical symbol. The theme of the Cossacks was very popular in culture until 1921 as a symbol of national liberation struggles, but in the 1920s and 1930s it was extremely sensitive. Therefore, the reference to the Zaporizhian Sich by children's authors at that time was extraordinary and implied the defence of national and patriotic values. At the level of literal form, this was embodied in traditional genres of fiction: adventure and historical stories.

The adventure story *How Yurko Travelled on the Dnipro Rapids* by Oksana Steshenko is a certain counterpart to avant-garde travelogues. According to the plot, a teenager named Yurko and his uncle Petro travel along the Dnipro from Polissya (the northern region) to Kherson (a city in southern Ukraine). During their journey, the travellers encounter various adventures: they meet a homeless boy and take him to a children's shelter, they are attacked, their boat is stolen, and finally they catch their attackers.

The format of the journey allows the author to enrich the text with a variety of informative facts about geography, ethnography, etc., but the historical component focuses on Cossack history: during their journey, the heroes visit Mezhygiria, where was a Cossack monastery, they visit the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky and listen to the opera *Taras Bulba* in Kyiv, then information is provided about Cossack towns Trakhtemyriv, Pereyaslav, Chyhyryn,

and later the Kodak Fortress, Khortytsia, and the flooded Mykytynska Sich. Thus, geography is filled with history.

The main event of the journey is not a tour to Dniprelstan, but passing the Dnipro rapids in a Cossack style. The depiction of this episode is based on the poetic descriptions of the rapids by historian Dmytro Yavornytsky, supporting the discourse of 'Cossack romanticism.' After overcoming nine rapids under the guidance of an experienced pilot, Yurko arrives at the Dniprelstan construction site, where an engineer tells him about the future benefits of the power plant. The value of the experience of overcoming the rapids becomes a metaphor for the value of the historical past as such, without which modern innovations would not be possible.

Historical novels depict the Zaporizhian Sich as a place where the most important values of Ukrainians were embodied. In V. Tal's novel *The Unusual Adventures of Bursaks (A Tale from the 18th Century),* the Zaporizhzhian Sich is a territory of freedom and equality, while Hetmanate (the rest of Ukraine) is a space of dependence and deprivation of rights. According to the plot, two teenagers, Samko and Marko, decide to leave their studies and join the Cossacks. During their travels, they encounter many adventures that demonstrate the social injustice of the system at that time. During one of these adventures, they learn about the destruction of the Sich, after which they take part in a peasant uprising and then set off for the Kuban, where they join Anton Golovaty's Black Sea Cossacks. The motive that drives the boys is not a classic one: they are not looking for adventure, nor do they seek to apply their strength or prowess; they are guided by the idea of the Sich as a place of freedom and happiness. Samko's idea is influenced by his father, who was a deacon in the Sich church, and when he returned to family life in Pereyaslav, «he was overcome with longing for the Sich Cossacks, and he died of boredom... Before he died, he often went to the Dnieper, sat on the cliff and, sighing sadly, looked south, to the other side, where the Sich was» **[Tal 2015: 9]**.

Idealising the Sich, Samko attributes to it qualities that he lacks in his own environment. First and foremost, the young man does not accept social oppression, arbitrariness and lawlessness. Valuing freedom, he actively sets out to defend it, repeatedly engaging in struggle with his oppressors. The behaviour of the character, with whom the reader identifies, prompts him to value freedom as a chosen value and to defend it in the future.

The idealised image of the Sich throughout the text is undermined by the remarks of other characters, who point out to the boys the social stratification of Sich society: «They complained a little about the older community, that is, the elders, for the fact that they ruled and cared for their own good, without caring about the poor» **[Tal 2015: 10]**. And even about the Sich's loss of its key characteristic – a centre of freedom: «They decided to seek freedom where it

had long since disappeared. What kind of freedom is it when you have to listen to what the queen and the lords say! They are deceiving the poor. The Sich that once was will never be again, and this one is already spinning itself into thin air, living out its last days. And it is impossible for there to be a corner of freedom in bondage. The Sich's freedom has long been in the lords' hands, and all that remains is to tie the knot. And they will tie it...» **[Tal 2015: 42]**. However, despite the harsh warnings, the boys retain their faith in Sich as their ideal. Considering the conditions in which this work was read, namely the Bolsheviks' belittling of national history, it can be assumed that the text encourages readers not to accept foreign assessments of national history.

Hryhorii Babenko's novel *The Stormy Path* depicts the Sich as a specific historical topos and system of values. The author's interest in history (he corresponded with Dmytro Yavornytsky) led to a detailed description of the Sich and its customs and traditions. The space is formed by wicker walls and a tower, huts, the Sich square in front of the church with a pillory, a school, and the suburbs of the Sich, where shopkeepers, innkeepers, beggars, kobzars, cripples, and monks gathered. The narrator describes the order in the Sich during preparations for a campaign, return, fasting, wintering, etc. He describes the daily routine, food, activities such as training, fishing, games, diplomatic etiquette, campaign order, combat and tactical decisions.

However, the reader's first impression of the Sich is formed by the behaviour of its representatives, in particular the Zaporozhian Cossack Pavlo Hlek, who arrives in Slobozhanshchyna (region of Ukraine). In the first chapter, the main character, the teenager Dorosh, witnesses how the Cossack defends an old beekeeper from an attack by the Russian 'boyar children'. During his stay in Slobozhanshchyna he embodies dignity, courage and justice. But his main difference from the Slobozhans is his ability to act in defence of his convictions, while the Slobozhans depend on the mercy of the Russian boyars. They perceive this feature of Pavlo not as a personal trait, but as a consequence of his belonging to the Zaporizhian Sich.

However, when Hlek leaves Slobozhanshchyna, he manifests himself in actions that are criticised by the focalised character Dorosh: he reproaches the Cossack for his cruel treatment of a Tatar prisoner: «If I had known you were such a brute, I would never have freed you from prison» **[Babenko 2019: 131]**. Even though the young man takes part in battles and kills attackers, he protests against violence against people who cannot defend themselves. Thus, the story teaches readers to evaluate actions rather than status, to think critically rather than dogmatically.

The subsequent description of the Sich, where Dorosh arrives, is also ambiguous. The first words of the section 'Sich' are indicative: «The first thing that caught Dorosh's eye when the Zaporizhzhia army approached the Sich was

three gallows sticking out of a grave hill near the Sich» [Babenko 2019: 160]. Later, the reader learns that the Sich community strictly adheres to established rules: "You cannot break the customs of the Sich, because they are the only thing that holds the Sich together. Even I cannot overturn a verdict. For if I, the koshovyi[4], do not adhere to the ancient customs of the Sich, the community will be the first to drown me in the Dnieper" **[Babenko 2019: 175]**. This equality before punishment contrasts with the arbitrariness of the elders in the Hetmanate and the boyars in Slobozhanshchyna.

What Dorosh cannot reconcile himself to, and what ultimately causes him to leave the Sich, is the inhumanity of war and the cruel treatment of prisoners. Dorosh critically sums up Sirko's campaigns: «We curse the Tatars for separating husbands from wives, brothers from sisters. You saw for yourself how the old Cossacks cry when the bandura players sing about Turkish slavery. How are we any better than these infidels? Have we not separated women from their husbands, have we not killed innocent people in the Black Valley? ... And now we, the Cossacks, defenders of freedom, are driving people like cattle as a gift to the hetman... They will become his slaves, and the Tatar elders will sing about our slavery, just as our bandura players sing about Turkish slavery» **[Babenko 2019: 226]**. And although his reproach does not change Hlek's actions, it does prompt him to re-evaluate himself. The anti-war motif is reinforced by the depiction of the psychological consequences of participating in combat: Dorosh suffers when he has to kill, and after being wounded, he «became very nervous, angry at every little thing» **[Babenko 2019: 224]**.

Works about the Zaporizhian Sich in children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s contributed to the formation of a counter-discourse to Soviet culture. M. Shkandrij believes that «the most important components of the national counter-discourse... emphasise the sense of continuity between generations, the cultural uniqueness of the country and the unity of its history» **[Shkandrij 2004: 50]**. The authors of these stories defend the unity of national history and oppose Sovietisation. After the rollback of Ukrainisation, these works were removed from libraries and forgotten, as were their authors. However, it was precisely these texts, out of all the children's literature of the time, that were republished during the period of independence.

Conclusions

Children's literature of the Soviet era is an example of radical adult intervention in the world of children for the sake of ideologically shaping them into citizens of a new society. Ukrainian children's literature of that time demonstrates

[4] Koshovyi is the head of the Cossack army. It is Ivan Sirko in the novel.

how real experience is replaced by a constructed reality: the space of children's literature becomes sharply urbanised, and factories – the outposts of industrialisation – become the core of urban space. The main one was Dniprelstan, a hydroelectric power station that supplied energy to a group of factories and also made the Dnipro navigable, destroying the natural landscape that had historical significance. Thus, Dniprelstan became a metaphor for the idea of the first decade of Soviet power to destroy the past for the sake of the future.

In children's literature of that time, the images of Dniprelstan and Zaporizhzhia took on the characteristics of an industrial utopia, with which children were supposed to associate the future. Travelogues and essays about construction drew children into the discourse of power, blurring the line between adult and children's literature. At the same time, writers who were supporters of national tradition sought to fill the image of Zaporizhzhia and the Dnipro banks around it with images of the Cossack past and to affirm its value. Since children's literature of that time was generally aimed at forming a new identity, historical novels, as part of the counter-discourse, were aimed at defending the national component in it, emphasising the historical unity of the nation and preserving the system of democratic values attacked by the Bolsheviks. From the mid-1930s, with the curtailment of Ukrainisation, children's literature of socialist realism formed a Soviet denationalised identity, and historical themes became a tool for imposing Russian supremacy.

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