The Soviet Children's Picture Book, 1917-1932

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Abstract

After the 1917 October Revolution, Russian society underwent a series of seismic shifts, driven by the socialist ideology of the Bolshevik government. Innovation and renewal dominated all aspects of culture, including the production of children's picture books, which were published in huge numbers during the 1920s and early 1930s. Pioneering authors and illustrators applied themselves to the task of creating a bold new pre-school literature which would serve the needs of the first Soviet generation. The new Soviet picture book was a multifaceted object which found itself at the confluence of key social, cultural and political developments. This thesis explores how the picture book served many different purposes for different groups, which sometimes lead to brilliant invention but in other instances gave root to great conflict. As a form of art, the picture book acted as a canvas for both modernist artists who wished to promote the socialist cause and illustrators who saw art for children as a specialist genre with no political duty. As a commercial product, the picture book was advanced greatly by private publishing houses during the NEP period, until the state gained full control of the publishing industry at the beginning of the 1930s. Picture books also acted as political education, either by gently demonstrating a socialist way of life or through direct messaging which reflected adult propaganda materials. At the same time, picture books were still given to children to develop literacy, provide moral education and to entertain. Taking a journey into the picture book world gives us new insights into cultural production in the early Soviet Union. We explore not just the nature of continuity and change in post-revolutionary culture but the sometimes difficult process of moulding the 'new Soviet man'. Moreover, picture books show us how a unique Soviet culture for children was created, the legacy of which remains to this day.

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Abbreviations

AKhR Assotsiatsiia khudozhnikov revoliutsii (Association of Artists of the Revolution)

AKhRR Assotsiatsiia khudozhnikov revoliutsionnoi Rossii (Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia)

Detgiz Detskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo (State Children's Publishing House)

GInKhuk Gosudarstvennyi institute khudozhestvennoi kul'tury (State Institute of Artistic Culture)

Glavlit Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatel'stv (Main Directorate of Literature and Publishing Houses)

Glavpolitprosvet Glavnyi politiko-prosvetitel'nyi komitet Narkomprosa (Main Political Education Committee of Narkomrpos)

Gosizdat Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo (State Publishing House)

Gublit Gubernskii otdel literatury i izdatel'stv (Regional Department of Literature and Publishing Houses)

GUS Gosudarstvennyi uchenyi sovet (State Academic Council)

IDCh Institut po detskomu chteniiu (Institute for Children's Reading)

IMVR Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institute metodov vneshkol'noi raboty (Institute for the Methods of Extra-curricular Work)

IZO Narkompros Otdel izobrazitel'nykh iskusstv Narkomprosa (Narkompros Department of Visual Arts)

Komsomol Kommunisticheskii soiuz molodezhi (Communist Youth League)

Narkompros Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniia (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment)

NEP Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika (New Economic Policy)

Oberiu Ob'edinenie real'nogo iskusstva (Association for Real Art)

OGIZ Ob'edinenie gosudarstvennykh knizhno-zhurnal'nykh izdatel'stv (Association of State Book and Magazine Publishers)

OSt Obshchestvo khudozhnikov-stankovistov (Society of Easel Painters)

RAPP Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers)

ROSTA Rossiskoe telegrafnoe agentsvo (Russian Telegraph Agency)

Sovnarkom Sovet narodnykh komissarov (Council of People's Commissars)

Tsentropechat' Central agency for the distribution of printed matter

Unovis Utverditeli novogo iskusstva (Advocates of New Art)

Vkhutein Vysshii khudozhestvenno-tekhnicheskii institute (Higher State Artistic and Technical Institute)

Vkhutemas Vysshie khudozhestvenno-tekhnicheskie massterskie (Higher Artistic and Technical Studios)

VOKS Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi sviazi s zagranitsei (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries)

Introduction: A New Picture Book for the New Soviet Child

After the 1917 October Revolution, Russian society underwent a series of seismic shifts, driven by the socialist ideology of the new Bolshevik government. The Bolsheviks attempted to mould a progressive civilization, which would be inhabited by the 'new Soviet man', meaning that all aspects of culture underwent great change and renewal. As a beleaguered publishing industry began to recover from the bleak Civil War years, many bright new children's picture books appeared on the market and these were published in huge numbers from the mid-1920s to early 1930s. Innovative authors and illustrators energetically remodelled pre-school literature for the first generation of citizens to be raised under Soviet rule. The books produced were essentially pamphlets, soft covered and only ten to fifteen pages long but they embodied vibrant and pioneering design for young children on an unprecedented scale. Picture books acted as a catalogue for the technological progress of the Soviet Union with huge modern factories, busy cities and speeding locomotives filling their pages. They also modelled socialist upbringing. as small children were introduced to the Pioneer movement, May Day parades and Uncle Lenin. At the same time, little ones could still read traditional tales, books about zoo animals and nonsense verse which was filled with imaginative content. Consequently, the production of picture books became a battle ground for writers, artists, literary critics, publishers, pedagogues and politicians, who all had their own views on how the new Soviet culture and the new Soviet citizen should be formed.

The first printed children's book to appear in Russia was Ivan Fedorov's *Vozliublennyi chestnyi khristianskii russkii narod* (*Beloved, Honest, Russian Christian People*). Published in 1574, the book contained an alphabet and grammar lessons, as well as poetry for children and guidance for parents on child rearing.[1] The gradual increase of literacy and growth of the publishing trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, led to the publication of further children's books for the educated classes. During the second half of the eighteenth century, demand for the printed word grew further and the range of reading materials available to

[1] Jacqueline Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia, 1918-1935* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2009), pp.16-17. For a thoroughly detailed account of the history of Russian children's literature dating from 1574 to 2010, see Ben Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories: The History of Russian Literature for Children and Young People (1574 - 2010)* (Leiden: BRILL, 2013).

Russian children was greatly expanded, particularly through the efforts of influential publisher Nikolai Novikov. Novikov published newspapers, textbooks and translations of Western literature, along with children's books, which he intended would both entertain and offer moral instruction. In 1779 he introduced *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* (*Children's Reading for Heart and Mind*), the first Russian children's journal, which was published as a supplement to *Moskovskie vedomosti* (*The Moscow News*). The journal offered a varied selection of informative articles, prose, folktales and fables, eventually capturing a subscription of four thousand readers.[2]

Nineteenth century children had access to both European children's works in translation and texts for young readers by native Russian writers, including five poems by Nikolai Nekrasov, which appeared in a volume during the late 1860s. Works originally written for adults were also gradually adopted by children, not least Ivan Krylov's fables and Aleksandr Pushkin's Russian *skazki* (folk tales or verse tales).[3] The expansion of Russian schools after the Emancipation of the Serfs in 1861, meant that a larger proportion of the population became literate and there was subsequently a much greater demand for reading material at both the adult and juvenile level. Writers and pedagogues applied themselves to the task of creating children's books, including Lev Tolstoi, who compiled bespoke readers for peasant children during the 1860s and 1870s, which he used in a school on his estate at Iasnaia Poliana.[4]

By the turn of the twentieth century, increased literacy and migration to urban areas, meant that the publishing industry was flourishing in Moscow and St Petersburg. Newspapers, magazines and popular literature reflected the tastes of working class and peasant consumers, to the great consternation of middle class intellectuals, who worried about the literary quality of the new publications. Many works for children were produced by new commercial publishers such as I.D. Sytin, M.O. Vol'f and I. Knebel'. These firms catered for affluent families by producing luxurious decorative editions and they also issued large print runs of cheap titles for the mass reader. A great number of children's journals were published too, with popular titles including *Detskoe chteniie* (*Children's Reading*) and *Zadushevnoe slovo* (*The Sincere Word*).[5]

The children's picture book as we recognise it today, emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. German illustrated children's books arrived in Russia as early as the mid-1840s, when Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* appeared in Russian translation as *Stepka-Rastrepka*. Equally popular were the works of Wilhelm Busch, such as *Max and Moritz*, which

[2] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.17-21.

[3] Ibid., pp.21-22.

[4] Ibid., pp.24-25.

[5] Ibid., pp.25-26.

were published in Russia during the 1860s.[6] By the 1880s, English children's book illustration had reached Russia, with the works of Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway proving to be successful.[7] The second half of the 1890s saw a flourishing of Russian book illustration, stemming from the art colonies which had been established at Abramtsevo and Talashkino, with the aim of preserving folk art and promoting peasant crafts as an authentic expression of Russian style.[8] At Abramtsevo, Elena Polenova produced a series of illustrations for traditional folktales and although only one, *Voina gribov* (*War of the Mushrooms*), was published in her lifetime, she gained great posthumous recognition after her death in 1898.[9] At Talashkino, Sergei Maliutin became the first artist to illustrate Pushkin's *Skazka o tsare Saltane* (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*), in a 1898 edition which matched the folk motifs of the poem with simple lines and flat planes of colour. Maliutin also illustrated *Ai-du-du*, which in 1899 became the first Russian children's book to be published in full colour and was notable for its careful integration of text and illustration on every page.[10]

In the early 1900s, the influential Mir iskusstva (World of Art) group made an important contribution to the graphic arts. The members of the group advocated a decorative, modern aesthetic which aimed to break down the traditional barriers between fine and applied art.[11] One of the key Mir iskusstva artists was Ivan Bilibin, who turned to folk culture for inspiration and between 1901 and 1910, illustrated a major series of children's folktale books. Published in large format luxury editions, Bilibin's books displayed a rich illustrative style inspired by folk art and traditional architecture, with jewel-bright colour, elaborate fonts and decorative page borders, which transported the reader to fantastical lands.[12] (Figure 1.1) At the same time,

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[6] Pavel Dul'skii and Iakov Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (Kazan, 1925), pp.9-11; Albert Lemmens and Serge Stommels, Serge, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book, 1890-1992* (Nijmegen: LS, 2009), pp.19-20.

[7] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.16-17; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.21-23.

[8] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p44.

[9] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.31-34; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.48-50.

[10] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.35; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.51-52.

[11] Sergei Golynets (trans. Glenys Ann Kozlov), *Ivan Bilibin* (London: Pan Books, 1981); Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.53-54.

[12] Books in the series included Aleksandr Pushkin, *Skazka o Ivan-tsarevich, Zhar-ptitsa i o serom volke*, ill. Ivan Bilibin (St Petersburg: Expeditsiia Zagolovleniia gosudarstvennykh burnakh, 1901); Aleksandr Pushkin, *Vasilisa Prekrasnaia*, ill. Ivan Bilibin (St Petersburg: Expeditsiia Zagolovleniia gosudarstvennykh

commercial publishers such as Vol'f and Sytin were issuing large volumes of small picture books for the mass market. Publishers kept the cost of these books low by reproducing old, outdated lithograph plates alongside a new text.[13]

Figure 1.1: Ivan Bilibin, illustration for *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* by Aleksandr Pushkin (1905).

Despite the progress that was being made in the production of pre-school books during the early twentieth century, a small group of critics and intellectuals saw the commercial offerings for pre-school readers as inadequate. They suggested that children should be presented with an authentic literary world on their own terms. Aleksandr Fedorov-Davydov led the way as a popular writer of books which employed simple language and content that young readers could relate to, with stories often involving animals or toys that come to life within a fairy-tale structure.[14] He also edited many periodicals for children including *Svetliachok* (*Little Glow-worm*, 1902-18), which embodied a spirit of childhood joy and positive moral values such as truthfulness and love.[15] During the 1910s, the satirist turned poet Sasha Chernyi became equally renowned for his humorous verse which placed imaginative games at the centre of a world in which children could feel at home.[16] The critic and writer Kornei Chukovskii had also begun to

burnakh, 1902); Aleksandr Pushkin, *Skazka o Tsar Saltane*, ill. Ivan Bilibin (St Petersburg: Expeditsiia Zagolovleniia gosudarstvennykh burnakh, 1905).

[13] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories* (2013), pp.168-173; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.61; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.25-26.

[14] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.224-6.

[15] Ibid., p.277.

[16] Ibid., p.241; For an analysis of Chernyi's poetry see Elena Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennesee Press, 1984), pp.53-9.

address the problems of children's literature. In attempting to find reading matter for his own young children, he found even the works of Fedorov-Davydov to be dull and insensitive to the needs of children. He began to develop his own theories about the formation of children's language, asking his readers to send him examples of words and phrases used by their own offspring.[17] Chukovskii's first major attempt at children's literature was in 1911 with the editorship of *Zhar-Ptitsa* (*The Firebird*), an anthology which contained work by Chernyi and other well-known writers, with illustrations by renowned Mir iskusstva artists Mstislav Dobuzhinskii and Sergei Chekonin.[18] Whilst *The Firebird* was not hugely innovative in itself, the pattern of collaboration between top artists and writers was one which would set a precedent for the future trajectory of Russian picture books. Chukovskii himself would come to dominate the world of children's books in later years and the events of 1917 proved to be a temporary obstacle but ultimately a long term reviving breath to the growth of an exciting new children's literature.

After the October Revolution, avant-garde artists embraced the opportunity to apply their radical approaches to picture books, demonstrating an attitude of unprecedented experimentation towards this relatively new graphic medium. Based on the notion that art could lend itself to the cause of social transformation, their picture books embodied the modern rational lifestyle which they believed would lead to the creation of a new type of society. Vladimir Lebedev became an influential children's illustrator, whose stencilled style was derived directly from his work on agitational window posters during the Civil War for ROSTA (Rossiskoe telegrafnoe agentsvo or the Russian Telegraph Agency). His visual language, comprising of simplified flat shapes, was applied to book illustration and made a great impression on the artistic community when it featured in a 1922 edition of Rudyard Kipling's *The Elephant's Child*.[19] (Figure 2.15) The fragmented figures of the animals, seen floating on a white background, invoked accolades from leading avant-gardists including Nikolai Lapshin and Nikolai Punin. Many years later, Russian art historian Evgeny Steiner would describe the book as: "the manifesto of a new approach to children's book graphics."[20]

Equally innovative was the contribution of sisters Galina and Ol'ga Chichagova, who along with author Nikolai Smirnov, worked as the "productional cell for children's books" within the

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[17] Lydia Chukovskaia (trans. Eliza Kellogg Klose), *To the Memory of Childhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), p.96, p.107; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.4-5.

[18] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.289.

[19] Rudyard Kipling (trans. Kornei Chukovskii and Samuil Marshak), *Slonenok,* ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926). The book was originally published by Epokha in Berlin, 1922.

[20] Evgeny Steiner, (trans. Jane Ann Miller), *Stories for Little Comrades: Revolutionary Artists and the Making of Early Soviet Children's Books* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), p.42.

Constructivist group.[21] The Constructivists shared the same Cubo-Futurist roots as other groups of modernist artists but by the mid-1920s, they had begun to explore the idea that art should be integrated into industrial production rather than remain on the artist's easel. Picture books were a part of this scheme, which sought to utilise everyday objects to imbibe a socialist worldview in the consumer. The Constructivist picture book first appeared in 1924 and employed the same geometric shapes, strong typeface and black and red palette as other Constructivist graphics during this period. The subjects depicted were modern to the core with factory production, locomotives and new technology taking centre stage. *Puteshestvie Charli (Charlie's Journey)* featured the American film star Charlie Chaplin undertaking a mission to circumnavigate the globe. Chaplin uses the most up to date transport methods, from steamer and locomotive to aeroplane and cable car. [22] The introduction to the book emphasises that people really use these forms of transport unlike in old-fashioned, fantastical children's books where people travel by giraffe, tortoise and other means that they are not supposed to.[23] Young, ambitious illustrators sought to emulate the urgent, contemporary approach of Lebedev and the Constructivists and a body of work emerged which was distinctly Soviet in form and content.

At the same time, other illustrators and authors were developing their own styles which were less radical and did not pledge direct allegiance to socialism, yet took the opportunity afforded by the radical change in culture to offer a great departure from the saccharin commercial fare that had predominated in the early part of the twentieth century. Chukovskii lead the charge with the unique brand of children's poetry which he had begun to develop before the revolution, most famously in the poem *Vania i krokodil* (*Vanya and the Crocodile*), first published during 1917.[24] Taking into account children's linguistic development and the structures of traditional folk tales and nursery rhymes, Chukovskii advocated humour and imagination in nonsense verse which became immensely popular with young readers. His trademark style centred on a modern version of the traditional Russian *skazka* and by the mid-1920s, children across the Soviet Union could recite by heart such poems as *Moidodyr* (*Wash-*

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[21] Smirnov and the Chichagova sisters gave themselves this title in a 1924 exhibition catalogue. See The First Working Group of Constructivists, 'Statement from the Catalogue of the "First Discussional Exhibition of Associations of Active Revolutionary Art", 1924' in John E. Bowlt (ed.), *Russian Art of the Avant Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902-1934* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), pp.241-24.

[22] Nikolai Smirnov, *Puteshestvie Charli*, ill., Galina and Ol'ga Chichagova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1924).

[23] Ibid., p.3.

[24] *Vanya i Krokodil* was published in twelve instalments during 1917 in *Dlia detei* (*For Children*), a monthly children's supplement for the journal *Niva* (*Virgin Soil*). See Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.74-76; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.7.

until-holes-appear), *Fedorino Gore* (*Fyodora's Grief*) and *Mukha Tsokotukha* (*The Chatterbox Fly*).[25] The verse was full of anthropomorphic characters, from protesting household objects to dancing animals and every phrase was loaded with imagery designed to hold the attention of small children. In his theoretical writings, Chukovskii stated that: "…every stanza, and at times every couplet, must suggest an illustration to the artist, since children think in terms of images."[26]

Chukovskii's literary approach was well matched by a number of illustrators who had also honed their craft before the revolution. One of his most frequent collaborators was Vladimir Konashevich, who had been associated with the Mir iskusstva group, known for their focus on decorative approaches which were a far cry from the reduced aesthetic of the avant-garde. Konashevich's book illustration was figurative, yet modern and humorous. He applied his keen draughtsman's eye to a great many picture books that would delight generations of Russian children. Illustrations such as those created for Chukovskii's *Chudo derevo* (*The Wonder Tree*), a poem about a magical tree that grows shoes instead of fruit, demonstrated that the principles of good composition and attention to detail need not be weighed down by insipid content or dull realism.[27]

While authors and illustrators precariously negotiated their way through the post-revolutionary terrain, the ultimate aim of the Bolsheviks was to create a modern socialist society which would be classless, atheistic and collective. Everything was to be subject to rational planning, including mankind. This scientific utopianism emerged from a cultural trend pre-dating the revolution. Members of the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik party used literature and philosophy as well as direct political discourse to imagine the ideal socialist state. In his 1908 novel *Red Star*, Aleksandr Bogdanov took the popular science fiction genre as a vehicle for modelling his futuristic vision of a collective society. In the Martian colony around which the tale is centred, citizens subordinate every aspect of their social and emotional lives for the good of the

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[25] Kornei Chukovskii, *Moidodyr: Kinomatograf dlia detei*, ill. Iurii Annenkov (Petrograd and Moscow: Raduga, 1923); Kornei Chukovskii, *Fedorino gore,* ill. Vasilii Tvardovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926); Kornei Chukovskii, *Mukha Tsokotukha,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[26] Kornei Chukovsky (trans. Miriam Morton), *From Two to Five* (Berkeley CA, Los Angeles CA and London: University of California Press, 1968), p.145.

[27] Kornei Chukovskii, *Chudo derevo*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Raduga, 1926).

community.[28] After the revolution, Leon Trotskii used his theoretical writings to further idealise the new type of being and all that he could achieve. In the 1924 essay *Literature and Revolution*, Trotskii explained that man would master his own feelings and consciousness to: “extend the wires of his will into hidden recesses, and thereby to raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher social biologic type, or, if you please, a superman.”[29] The cohort of children born straight after the revolution provided ideal modelling material for the formation of this ‘new Soviet man’ and consequently, the idealised view of childhood embodied by the comfortable turn of the century nursery was to be overturned. In the eyes of the new socialist government, children were no longer passive members of society who had plenty of time to play and daydream. Instead, they were to become active members of the social collective from their earliest years, with training in labour, social responsibility and socialist politics forming an inherent part of Soviet upbringing.[30]

If these visions were to have any impact upon Soviet society then they needed to be transformed into practical action. The Bolshevik party leaders were intellectuals who had spent many years in exile, with covertly published newspapers as the main method for disseminating their ideas. When they took power in 1917, it was therefore inevitable that they would turn to the printed word as a key part of their strategy to propagate socialism to all corners of the land. During the early twentieth century illiteracy was still widespread in Russia, particularly amongst the large rural population and so in December 1919, a decree was issued requiring all those between the ages of eight and fifty who could not read and write to learn to do so.[31] Lenin himself declared that literacy was necessary for political education, suggesting that without the

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[28] Aleksandr Bogdanov, (trans. Charles Rougle), *Red Star: The First Bolshevik Utopia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984). Cultural historian Richard Stites traces the rich origins of Russian and early Soviet science fiction. He characterises it as a utopian, futurological mode of thinking with some connections to Marxism but also as a product of the early twentieth century fascination with immortality, space travel and aviation. See Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 167-189.

[29] Leon Trotsky (trans. Rose Strunsky), *Literature and Revolution. Chapter 8 Revolutionary and Socialist Art.* Available from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit_revo/ch08.htm (Accessed 6/5/2015).

[30] Middle class Russian literature, art and domestic culture at the turn of the century sentimentalized childhood as a ‘golden’ stage of life. See Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890 – 1991* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp.43-47.

[31] Sovnarkom Decree on Illiteracy, 26th December 1919. Excerpts from the decree are analysed in Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of mass Mobilization 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.76-77.

alphabet there would be only, “rumours, fairy tales, prejudices but not politics.”[32] Book publishing therefore gained new significance and children’s books became an important part of the drive towards universal literacy, particularly considering that many children of workers and peasants would be the first in their family to become literate. The ideological content of children’s reading matter was considered seriously and this issue came under focus in the Soviet press as early as 1918, when an article appeared in *Pravda* by L. Kormchii, a writer and editor of children’s magazines. Kormchii suggested that: “Books crystallize in children’s souls, creating subsoil that nourishes and gives root to future convictions and beliefs.” On this basis, he proposed that, “we must seize these weapons from enemy hands.”[33]

The publishing industry was initially ill equipped to deal with the demands of the new state, having been left severely depleted by the effects of the First World War and the Civil War. In 1918, 474 children’s books were published but this figure had fallen to just 33 books by 1921. Upon the introduction of the New Economic Policy (Novaia ekonomicheskaia politika or NEP), economic and material conditions steadily began to improve. By 1922 there were 200 new children’s books and this figure had gradually increased to 1533 by 1929.[34] State publisher Gosizdat had been formed in 1919 and included a children’s section, but the reduction of subsidies to state industry after the re-introduction of market conditions meant that the publisher had to relinquish some areas of its output to private businesses, including the majority of children’s literature.[35]

During the 1920s, input from entrepreneurial private publishers proved to be a formative influence on the development of the Soviet picture book. The most successful private publisher of picture books was Raduga (Rainbow), a company formed in 1921 by former journalist Lev Kliachko, who had discovered some children’s poetry written by Chukovskii and decided that it had great commercial appeal.[36] Over the next few years Kliachko would select the liveliest texts

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[32] V. I. Lenin, ‘Report to The Second All-Russia Congress of Political Education Departments’, 17th October 1921. Quoted in Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), p.72.

[33] L. Kormchii, ‘Zabytoe oruzhenoe (O detskoi knige)’ (‘The Forgotten Weapon (On Children’s Books)’), *Pravda*, 17th February 1918. Excerpt reproduced in Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children’s Literature in Russia* (2009), p.40.

[34] Figures taken from Soviet sources and included as ‘Appendix A: Quantity of Children’s Books Published 1918- 1929’ in Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children’s Literature in Russia* (2009), p.238.

[35] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.260, 264; Elena Sokol, ‘Introduction’, *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988) pp.5-26, at p.8.

[36] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories* (2013), p.298; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children’s Literature in Russia* (2009), p.100.

and best illustrators to create picture books which truly appealed to the pre-school market. During the mid-1920s, his successes included Chukovskii tales such as *Moidodyr* but another notable achievement was his employment of young writer Samuil Marshak. Marshak not only acted as literary editor at Raduga but collaborated with Lebedev on what would become the most iconic picture books of the period. Between 1925 and 1927, works such as *Tsirk* (*The Circus*), *Bagazh* (*Luggage*) and *O glupom myshenke* (*About the Stupid Mouse*), revolutionised the picture book world with short rhyming verse and brightly coloured illustrations, which portrayed their message with ingenious simplicity.[37] *Morozhenoe* (*Ice Cream*) showcased this partnership at its best, with a poem that mocked a greedy fat man who ate so much of the frozen treat, that he turned into a snowman and all of the children went skiing on strawberry ice cream.[38] Lebedev's illustrations engaged perfectly with Marshak's gently satirical tone, using carefully reduced shapes and printed textures to draw out the essential traits of each character. (Figures 2.18 and 2.19)

In the middle of the decade private publishers such as Raduga shared the market with Gosizdat, but by the late 1920s, the state publisher came to dominate as private enterprise was once more pushed out of the industry. Private publishing left a great legacy however, as key personnel from private firms were employed by Gosizdat in identical roles. Marshak and Lebedev took the top editorial roles at the Leningrad section for children's literature, which became a centre for the most creative ideas in children's publishing. By this point it was clear that the creation of picture books was a serious enterprise in itself. Books were produced in large print runs, averaging between 10,000 and 20,000 in the late 1920s. By the early 1930s it was common to see editions of 50,000 or more. Well-known poets such as Vladimir Maiakovskii, Osip Mandelstam and Nikolai Aseev penned picture books, indicating that the task of writing for small children was seen as a respectable activity.

Equally, a talented group of specialist picture book authors were exploiting the medium to its full range of possibilities. Poets such as Agniia Barto achieved great popularity, writing sensitively on the distinct world of the pre-school child. Among Barto's best known works was *Bratishki* (*Little Brothers*), which looked at the lives of infants in other countries, while *Devochka-revushka* (*Cry Baby*) told the story of a little girl who would not stop crying.[39] Barto was just as at home with political themes and successfully modelled socialist topics in terms that very young

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[37] Samuil Marshak, *Tsirk,* ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925); Samuil Marshak, *Bagazh*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927); Samuil Marshak, *O glupom myshenke*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

[38] Samuil Marshak, *Morozhenoe*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925).

[39] Agniia Barto, *Bratishki*, ill. Georgii Echeistov (Moscow and Leningrad: Detizdat tsk VLKCM, 1936); Agniia Barto and Pavel Barto, *Devochka-revushka*, ill. L. Feinberg (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

children could relate to. Books such as *Prazdnichnaia kniga* (*The Holiday Book*) and *Pervoe Maia* (*The First of May*) showed May Day parades through the participation of nursery school children and Pioneers.[40] Sof'ia Fedorchenko was another successful author, publishing many books for little children, often using her gentle poetry to educate children about various wild animals and birds. Varvara Mirovich also wrote poetry especially attuned to a pre-school audience, with plots usually focussing on the lives of small children at home or in the kindergarten and embellished with farm animals, pets or the changing of the seasons.

For every talented children's writer there was a gifted illustrator and during the late 1920s, new and colourful approaches emerged. Lidia Popova was influenced by the modern style of Lebedev and the Constructivists, using minimal geometric shapes but also employing playful layouts and bright colours to create books which exuded a sense of fun. The jolly figures and staggered composition of her illustrations for Maiakovskii's *Kon' ogon'* (*The Fire Horse*) perfectly complemented the poet's dynamic text.[41] Elsewhere, her illustration of *matrioshki* (wooden stacking dolls) for A. Olsuf'eva's *Igrushki* (*Toys*), engaged clever use of perspective to play upon the decreasing size of the dolls.[42] (Figure 2.26) Vera Ermolaeva was a central figure at the Leningrad Gosizdat office and she collaborated with different authors, whilst also creating her own highly idiosyncratic books. Ermolaeva had designed simple children's books immediately after the Revolution as organiser and participant of the Segodniia (Today) collective and made a return to the art form in the late 1920s, demonstrating a deep understanding of how the lithographic process could be used to achieve rich painterly colouring, through the layering of shapes and tones. She created wondrous landscapes in books such as *Poezd* (*The Train*) (Figures 2.37 and 2.38) but on other occasions focussed on simple humour and visual games. *Gore Kucher* (T*he Unfortunate Driver)* was a mix and match book, in which flaps could be cut out and then moved around to make different combinations of drivers and cargo.[43] (Figure 2.41)

Despite state dominance of the market, the 1920s and early 1930s saw no ideological consistency in the style and content of the picture books being published. Subject matter ranged from socialist books about the Pioneer movement and books about industrial production, through to stories about the zoo or imaginative poetry in the style of Chukovskii. Visually, the

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[40] Agniia Barto, *Prazdnichnaia knizhka*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927); Agniia Barto, *Pervoe maia*, ill. Aleksandr Deineka (Moscow: Gosizdat, c.1930).

[41] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Kon' ogon'*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

[42] A. Olsuf'eva, A., *Igrushki*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

[43] Vera Ermolaeva, *Poezd* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Vera Ermolaeva, *Gore kucher* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

minimalist modern style advocated by Lebedev was present alongside more traditionally styled drawings and by the late 1920s, a more realistic figurative style was also used in a significant number of books. Nikolai Troshin and Ol'ga Deineko were a husband and wife team who excelled at this approach, writing and illustrating books about large scale industrial production. They employed matter of fact prose and their illustrations bore an almost diagrammatical feel, making sure that children were given an exact view of modern Soviet industrialisation. Books such as *Khlebzavod No. 3* (*Bread Factory No. 3*) *and Kak svekla sakharom stala* (*How the Beets Became Sugar*) showed huge factories, with each stage of production described and drawn in accurate detail.[44] (Figure 4.20) It is no coincidence that Troshin also worked as art editor on showcase propaganda magazine *SSSR na stroike* (*USSR in Construction*), indicating that children were taken seriously enough to be presented with imagery in the same style as adult propaganda literature.[45]

If authors and illustrators could not agree amongst themselves on a uniform style for the new picture book, then neither could critics, pedagogues and politicians. From the revolution onwards, debate raged in newspapers and journals about the sort of literature that small children should be given. High profile figures became involved including head of the People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) Anatolii Lunacharskii and prominent socialist writer Maksim Gor'kii, along with the widow of Lenin and renowned pedagogue Nadezhda Krupskaia. The most turbulent debates centred on the use of fantasy and the fairy tale, which 'proletarian' critics and educators saw as an outdated form which invoked the bourgeois past. On this count Chukovskii came heavily under fire, culminating in a vicious attack on *Krokodil* by Krupskaia, who wrote an article for Pravda in 1928, which condemned the poem as "bourgeois dregs".[46] In the aftermath of this controversy, the influential Gor'kii leapt to the defence of imaginative stories, suggesting that fairy tales could foster a spirit of invention. He also thought that nonsense verse should be permitted as: "It is precisely through playing with words that a child learns the refinements of his native language, absorbing its music and what philologists refer to as 'the spirit of the language'."[47]

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[44] Nikolai Troshin and Ol'ga Deineko, *Kak svekla sakharom stala* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927); Nikolai Troshin and Ol'ga Deneiko, *Khlebozavod No.3* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[45] David King, *Red Star Over Russia* (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), p.222.

[46] Nadezhda Krupskaia, 'On Chukovskii's "The Crocodile" (1928) in Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp. 207-209.

[47] Maksim Gorky, 'The Man Whose Ears are Stopped up with Cotton (On the Discussion about Children's Books)', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.72-75, at p.74. Originally published in *Pravda*, No.19 (January 19th, 1930).

Issues of style and ideological interpretation were finally resolved by the state during the early 1930s. In 1932, the Central Committee dissolved all separate literary organizations and created the Union of Soviet Writers.[48] The publishing industry, now under total state control, was also reorganised and in 1933 all children's books became the responsibility of one single publishing house, Detgiz (Detskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo or Children's State Publishing House).[49] At the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, during which Socialist Realism first emerged as the approved method in the arts, Marshak took to the podium with an address 'On a Great Literature for Little Ones'. He discussed how children's books should be written in the language of the child but also contain "heroic plots", which were to be found in everyday situations such as the school, the fields and the mine.[50] For picture books, the new official attitude meant that much of the innovation that was characteristic of the previous decade had to be toned down and by the late 1930s, illustration and content of books for pre-schoolers became much more conservative. Marshak led by example, no longer writing about circuses and blizzards of strawberry ice cream but focussing on the type of mundane heroism that dominated adult socialist realist novels during this period. *Rasskaz o neizvestnom geroe (Story of The Unknown Hero)*, with realistically rendered drawings by Aleksei Pakhomov, told the story of an anonymous man who leaps from a tram to save a child from a burning building. The man can be identified only by his cap and the logo on his t-shirt, the initials of the organisation Gotov trudu i oborone (Ready for Labour and Defence), a national programme intended to train young people for military preparedness through sport. The underlying message of the book is that anyone can be a hero if they have the correct attitude of service to society.[51] (Figure 2.57)

The glorious blaze of creativity that had characterised picture book production during the earliest Soviet years did not pass unnoticed outside of the Soviet Union and looking at the international reception and context of these books helps us to understand why they provide such a remarkable focus for study. Foreign visitors to the Soviet Union often expressed delight upon discovering the bright modern illustration in children's books. In 1928, Dutch lawyer Benjamin Telder visited Moscow and was so impressed with the fresh colours and direct lines of picture books that he suggested an exhibition in Western Europe should be organised, stating that they, "surpass everything we produce in this field."[52] Telder's advice was heeded and in 1929, to

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[48] Sokol, 'Introduction', p.18.

[49] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.363-364; Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), p.19.

[50] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.366-367.

[51] Samuil Marshak, *Rasskaz o neizvestnom geroe*, ill. Aleksei Pakhomov (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Detizdat, 1940).

[52] Serge-Aljosja Stommels and Albert Lemmens*, The 1929 Amsterdam Exhibition of Early Soviet Children's Picturebooks: A Reconstruction* in Elena Druker and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (eds.), *Children's*

celebrate the tenth anniversary of Gosizdat, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi sviazi s zagranitsei or VOKS), organised a travelling exhibition of graphic art, including children's books, which visited Amsterdam, Paris and Zurich.[53] In Amsterdam, the exhibition was received with enthusiasm, with over 5,000 visitors. As a result, a series of Soviet picture books were translated into Dutch and between 1921 and 1931 over 63,000 copies of these books were sold.[54]

Europe itself had yielded some experimentation in modernist picture book design during the 1920s. Russian émigré artists in France were instrumental in developing the inventive series 'Les Albums de Père Castor'.[55] In a more extreme avant-garde spirit, German artist Kurt Schwitters collaborated with Käte Steinitz and Dutch 'De Stijl' member Theo van Doesberg, to create a number of picture books based on typographical components, including *Die Scheuche Märchen* (*The Scarecrow Fairy Tale*).[56] Meanwhile in the United States, Lucy Sprague Mitchell had become known for stories featuring real world themes such as construction, railways and the kindergarten which in turn were translated into Russian and read by Soviet children.[57] The American books were taken so seriously by Russian educators that they were studied at the Institute for the Methods of Extra-Curricular Work in Moscow (earlier known as the Institute for Children's Reading), where different stories were read to children and their reactions recorded, in order to assess the value of each piece of literature. Researcher Vera Fediaevskaia noted that the children enjoyed hearing Sprague Mitchell's stories about trains, trams and engines. *Boris Takes a Walk* featured a nine year old émigré Russian boy who, recently arrived in New York, went for a walk and was amazed by the trams and subway trains that rush around the city. Fediaveskaia's young Soviet listeners engaged with this tale and the liveliest children: "anticipated the events, interposed remarks, interpreted the sounds, and represented the movements."[58]

Literature and the Avant-Garde (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), pp. 137-170, at p.145.

[53] Ibid., p.144.

[54] Ibid., p.153.

[55] Evgeny Steiner, *Mirror Images: On Soviet-Western Reflections in Children's Books of the 1920s and 1930s* in Druker and Kümmerling-Meibauer, *Children's Literature and the Avant-Garde* (2015), pp. 189-213, at p.193.

[56] Ibid., pp.192-195.

[57] Ibid., pp.201-202.

[58] Vera Fediaevsky, '"Here and Now" Stories in Russia: An Experiment'. *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Dec., 1925), pp.278-289, at p.283.

However, if these publications held common ground with their Soviet counterparts by way of subject matter or style of illustration, the books produced in the Soviet Union retained a unique energy and coherence, which can only be explained by the socio-political conditions in which they were being produced. Steiner suggests that an important factor in the publication of such an enormous quantity of adventurous picture books was the fact that radical art had been legitimized by the state after the revolution and he states that: "only in Russia was artistic and social radicalism ushered so hurriedly into the mainstream."[59] In addition to this, the huge amount of pedagogical, literary and political concern surrounding picture books in the Soviet Union would have been inconceivable in any Western European country at this time. In 1932 a social history of English children's literature, *Children's Books in England,* by F.J. Harvey Darton was published. Many of the definitive texts of English children's literature were produced during the early twentieth century, including Beatrix Potter's animal stories, J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* and A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, yet when Darton's volume came out it was met with only a lukewarm reception. Kathleen Lines, introducing the later second edition, ascribes this to the fact that apart from the most well-known publications, many books for children at this time were of poor literary quality. Lines suggests that critics were unsure what to make of Darton's work as: "The consideration of children's books as a lively part of contemporary *literature* and their history as part of the social pattern was so slight in 1932 as to be practically non-existent."[60] The situation in the Soviet Union was the complete opposite. The cultural importance of children's literature meant that it was not only part of the social pattern but in many instances was defined by the social pattern. This situation was summarised perfectly in the writings of American educationalist Thomas Woody, who visited the Soviet Union in 1928 and again during 1929 to 1930, to research a book on socialist education. Woody reviewed a diverse collection of over 200 picture books which he had collected on his travels and declared that: "The new children's literature is more human, realistic, and is intimately identified with child life and the new-born society."[61]

Consequently, children's picture books provide a fascinating window upon the formative period of Soviet society and this thesis will explore the picture book as an object which acted as a point of convergence for many of the key developments and points of contention within early Soviet culture. The broad purpose of this enquiry is to discover what picture books can reveal about cultural production during the interwar period, investigating both general patterns of

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[59] Steiner, *Mirror Images (*2015), p.190.

[60] Kathleen Lines, 'Introduction to the Second Edition' in F.J. Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[61] Thomas Woody, *New Minds: New Men? The Emergence of the Soviet Citizen* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p.90.

cultural development and aspects of culture which centred specifically on children. The specialized nature of the picture book, a form of graphic media created for the very young, means that it prompts important questions about education and child rearing under the Bolsheviks. The debates which raged around the creation of the new children's literature exposed how conflicting value systems for the upbringing of children competed for a place in the new culture. Where overt socialist values did prevail, picture books modelled ideas for the raising of the 'new Soviet man' and displayed approaches to ideological education for children which require detailed analysis if we are to understand where these pieces fit within the wider Bolshevik strategy to propagate the socialist cause. Outside of child-specific culture, picture books offer fresh insights into the visual arts, leading us to examine how both avant-garde and other artistic groups addressed a highly commercial area of applied design, in a publishing industry which was undergoing a period of great financial and political uncertainty. This new perspective on how contrasting artistic groups co-existed and sometimes collaborated, will contribute to our knowledge of a period in which definitions of revolutionary culture were far from fixed. Overall, looking in detail at picture books and at this specific area of the publishing sector, will contribute to our understanding of the true extent to which the Bolsheviks conceived and controlled the 'cultural revolution'.

The definition of 'cultural revolution' has been much discussed by historians of early Soviet culture and understanding these ideas is important in placing discussion of the picture book in its full historiographical context. The term has a strong association in Western scholarship with Stalin's 'great break' and the class war culture of the First Five Year Plan period. This is due to the work begun by Sheila Fitzpatrick in the mid-1970s, when she described the 'cultural revolution' of 1928–1932 as a "violent and iconoclastic" sequence of events in its own right, instigated by militant communist youth and the mass drive for industrialisation.[62] Fitzpatrick contrasted this use of the term with the original Leninist conception of 'cultural revolution', which was to be a "gradual and non-militant raising of cultural standards" which would be achieved through mass education and internal transformation of individual citizens.[63]

By the 1990s, following the opening of Soviet archives, scholars were questioning whether the two paradigms needed to be kept separate and whether elements of both should be considered together. Michael David-Fox published an influential article in which he analysed definitions of 'cultural revolution' proposed by various historians. His analysis discussed how the

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[62] Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1932', *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jan., 1974), pp.33-52, at p.34.

[63] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Introduction* in Sheila Fitzpatrick *(ed.), Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp.1-7, at p.2.

'Bolshevik cultural project' (the cultural dimension of the revolution) could be seen as a mixture of top-down practices emanating from the party and patterns of self-transformation by individuals.[64] One notable model cited by David-Fox was that proposed by Katerina Clark, who saw Soviet culture not as series of temporal episodes but as a "cultural ecosystem". Clark stressed that events such as the October Revolution did not explain the evolution of culture as: "the more formative moments tended to be not those dramatic times but the intervening years of adaptation and consolidation as the surviving flora and fauna responded to the new conditions."[65] In the case of picture books, this is a logical model to follow as it explains the continued use of artistic, literary and pedagogical ideas from before the Revolution which flourished alongside those ideas that were brand new. Therefore, when discussing the idea of 'cultural revolution' below, unless otherwise specified, the term refers to a multi-layered process of the type described by David-Fox and Clark.

The early Soviet picture book itself is a topic which has only begun to be explored in the literature on early Soviet culture. Recent histories of Soviet childhood by Catriona Kelly and Lisa Kirschenbaum have included examples from pre-school children's literature in their analysis but have not considered authors, illustrators or works in any great depth.[66] Other works have made more significant contributions to our knowledge of Soviet children's literature. Ben Hellman's *Fairy Tales and True Stories* impressively traces the history of Russian children's literature over six centuries, meaning that the chapters detailing the early twentieth century are placed in full chronological context. Hellman discusses books for children of all ages, including information on the political and pedagogical debates around children's literature and considers children's magazines as an integral part of the picture. It is a useful introductory text to the topic, however the broad nature of the work means that coverage of picture books is necessarily restricted to the most well-known writers and publishers, while the work of illustrators is mentioned only in passing.[67]

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[64] Michael David-Fox, "What is Cultural Revolution?", Russian Review, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Apr., 1999), pp. 181-201. In the same issue of the journal, David-Fox entered into an interesting discussion with Fitzpatrick about her earlier work and the implications that their ideas might have for future scholarship. See Michael David-Fox, '*Mentalité* or Cultural System: A Reply to Sheila Fitzpatrick', *The Russian Review,* Vol. 58, No.2 (Apr., 1999), pp.210-211; Sheila Fitzpatrick,'Cultural Revolution Revisited', *The Russian Review* 58 (Apr., 1999), pp.202-9.

[65] Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp.ix-x.

[66] Kelly, *Children's World (*2007); Lisa Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia,* 1917-1932 (New York and London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001).

[67] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories* (2013).

Other works focus specifically on the inter-war period. In *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia*, Jacqueline Olich offers an account of the ideological development of children's literature following the Revolution.[68] Using literary criticism and archival material, she demonstrates the complexity of the debates surrounding the production of the new Soviet children's literature and argues that attempts to create a unified Soviet children's literature failed before 1935. Employing a small number of picture book texts to illustrate her argument, Olich lays the ground for further investigation into how authors and publishers negotiated the difficult political terrain of the immediate post-revolutionary period. Elena Sokol's *Russian Poetry for Children* approaches the work of well-known Soviet children's poets through an analysis of their verse, focussing on influential writers such as Chukovskii and Marshak.[69] These authors formed a key role in developing the Soviet picture book, so an understanding of their ideas is essential for grasping the main literary developments. Sokol carefully explains the evolution of their work, as well as defining the place of the children's poetry of the 1920s within a broader tradition.

In the Russian language literature on the subject, Irina Arzamastseva's *"Vek rebenka" v Russkoi literature* (*The "Age of the Child" in Russian Literature*), offers an interesting history of the early twentieth century Russian children's book. Arzamastseva incorporates complex ideas from world history, philosophy and psychology, in an attempt to define both childhood and children's literature. She looks at how these things influenced the development of the children's book in Russia and goes on to explore the influence of writers, editors and pedagogues in the creation of the new Soviet children's literature. Arzamastseva's book does not focus specifically on pre-school literature and references texts alone rather than illustrated works but its ambitious scope makes for thought provoking reading.[70] In the second volume of a two part series entitled *Detskie zhurnaly Rossii* (*Children's Journals of Russia*), Larisa Kolesova discusses the history of twentieth century Soviet and Russian children's journals. Intended as a reader for undergraduate level courses, the book is nonetheless interesting for the researcher. The first half of the book contains thematic essays on early Soviet journals, Pioneer journals and journals written especially for small children. The second section features a selection of useful texts, including articles dating from the 1930s, reminiscences from authors such as Marshak and pieces of secondary literature from late Soviet publications.[71] As well as recent Russian scholarly works, there are also Soviet era texts which are helpful for obtaining information about children's literature. These should be consulted in the knowledge that the broader analysis is weighed

[68] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009).

[69] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984).

[70] Irina Arzamastseva, *"Vek rebenka" v Russkoi literature 1900-1930-X gg* (Moscow: Prometei, 2003).

[71] Larisa Kolesova, *Detskie zhurnaly Rossii: Uchebno-metodicheskii komplekt (Kn.2) (1917-2000)* (Petrozavodsk: Izdatel'stvo PetrGU, 2015).

down with the ideological bias displayed by their authors, either through personal choice or professional necessity. Lidia Kon was the author of several histories of Soviet children's literature, including *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (*Soviet Children's Literature of the Reconstructive Period*). Kon was considered to be an authority on the subject and despite an uncompromising political attitude, her work was well furnished with details such as statistics on production, biographical details of authors and useful descriptions of popular children's books.[72]

All of these works are invaluable for the historian of the Soviet picture book to gain an understanding of the texts and the creative environment in which the authors were working. However, none of them give any serious attention to illustration, which needs to be considered as equal partner to the text rather than as a mere accompaniment. Work on understanding the illustration of early Soviet picture books has been attempted by a small number of scholars. Steiner's *Stories for Little Comrades* first brought the subject to the attention of English-speaking readers when it was published in translation during 1999, almost ten years after the original Russian edition.[73] This short art historical text discusses the role of avant-garde artists in picture book illustration, focussing particularly on the influence of Constructivism and interpreting many books in respect of their loyalty to socialism and Bolshevik modernity. Steiner's analysis explores the Soviet avant-garde as they were perceived by Russians at the end of the Soviet era, when society was once more being thrown into turmoil. Whilst this bias means that the overall argument is of limited reach, it is nonetheless a useful account in identifying concepts that may be used in analysing Soviet picture books and demonstrates an insightful grasp of avant-garde culture which illuminates aspects of the most inventive books from the 1920s.[74] More recently, Albert Lemmens and Serge Stommels have published a substantial art historical account of Russian children's picture books dating from the late nineteenth to late twentieth century, which includes a chapter on the period between 1917 and 1934, as well as detailed case studies on the work of key artists whose work spans the twentieth century.[75] The text beautifully illuminates the work of the illustrators and paves the way for further development of an account of the social and political factors that informed the content of illustration.

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[72] Lidia Kon, *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (Moscow: Detgiz, 1955).

[73] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999).

[74] One of the terms which Steiner takes credit for introducing into the English language literature on the topic is the 'production book', the genre of book which deals with how machines work and how things are made. He traces the origin of this term to Galina Chichagova, the Constructivist book illustrator, who in her memoirs claimed to have first used the phrase in 1922. See Steiner, *Mirror Images (*2015), p.201.

[75] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009).

In the Russian language, the defining publication of recent years is an enormous anthology entitled *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939* (*Books for Children 1881-1939*), which features late Tsarist era and early Soviet children's picture books from the large private collection of Aleksandr Lur'e. Spanning two large volumes, it displays colour photographs of pages from almost every piece in the collection, making this compendium an essential reference guide for the researcher. The images are supplemented by brief biographies of artists and writers as well as basic information on the history of publishing houses. Well-researched introductory essays by Dmitrii Fomin from the Russian State Library head each thematic section, giving a firm foundation for those wishing to take research on the topic further.[76]

There is therefore huge scope for a study which will continue to develop the work begun by these projects whilst bringing together all of the factors which explain why the picture book of the interwar period became an object of visual and material culture which was so characteristic of its time. This thesis will explore the picture book as a multi-faceted object. As well as its primary function as a text for the development of early literacy, entertainment and conventional moral education, the new Soviet picture book had to serve many other purposes. It was an object of cutting-edge design whilst simultaneously acting as a vehicle for ideological education or even direct propaganda. It was also a commercial product that had to make money, in a publishing industry which was in a precarious financial situation for much of the 1920s. Whilst exploring each of these functions individually, the overarching question of the thesis will to be investigate how and why the picture book meant so many things to so many different people. What made it possible for those publishing picture books to issue fantastical bedtime stories about cannibal pirates alongside propaganda works on the accomplishment of the First Five Year Plan? How could a Constructivist production book be placed upon the same bookshelf as a story with elaborate figurative illustrations of zoo animals? Discussing these issues will lead us to an understanding of the picture book within the developing artistic, social and political culture of the Soviet Union and provide answers to the questions posed about the nature of this culture.

The first chapter will look at the picture book as artwork, concentrating on book design and how various aesthetic approaches were applied to the task in order to create a product which could be identified as the 'Soviet picture book'. It will investigate the pre-revolutionary roots of the 1920s picture book, discussing the extent to which its visual form evolved from turn of the century design models and hand printed Futurist books. The variety of illustrative styles during the mid-1920s will be discussed, analysing differences in both formal approach and social

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[76] Vladimir Semenikhin et al., *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939: detskaia illiustrirovannaia kniga v istorii Rossii 1881-1939: iz kollektsii Aleksandra Lur'e* (Moscow: Ulei, 2009).

attitude. Equally, the similarities of opposing schools of thought will be considered in order to question whether there was some unity of style which made the books of this period so distinctive. The chapter will go on to look at the end of 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, when children's book illustration had become a serious profession in its own right. The work of key illustrators will be examined, focussing on the huge importance of the group at the Leningrad office of Gosizdat, where Lebedev exercised considerable editorial influence. The final part of the chapter will reflect upon the emergence of realistic figurative elements in book illustration, as culture became less experimental and picture books were as affected as any other art form by the drift towards socialist realism.

The second chapter will discuss the picture book as commercial product, investigating the economic and organisational factors which had a bearing upon what was produced. It will consider the effect of the NEP upon the development of picture books, investigating the role played by private publishing houses in pioneering new visual and textual approaches to pre-school literature. The subsequent growth of state publishing will be explored, looking at how ideas and personnel from private business made the transition to state owned companies, which eventually gained a monopoly over Soviet book production. The chapter will also look at the promotion and advertising of picture books, analysing how commercial practices were tied to the wider political culture that was shaping the publishing industry during the 1920s and early 1930s. The young consumer will also be considered, with a view to finding out whether the reading preferences of children were taken into account during the publishing process.

The third chapter will explore how the picture book functioned as political education, focussing on those books which embraced socialist themes and thus acted as a catalogue for the key political and cultural trends of the period. The nature of propaganda will be considered here, with some picture books taking on a direct agitational tone and others adopting a softer approach better described as ideological education. The chapter will look at picture books which depicted modernity and technology, investigating how these texts aligned with a broader socialist culture that advocated the adoption of a rational modern lifestyle. It will go on to explore picture books about the kindergarten, revealing how these texts modelled the ideal socialist upbringing. Picture books about the Young Pioneer movement will be surveyed, considering how they led children through their first steps on the path to political education. Finally, the chapter will review books which presented children with key political topics in very direct terms, looking at how these overlapped with propaganda materials for adults and whether any concessions were made in presenting these subjects to very young readers.

The final chapter will consider the picture book in its most obvious role as an everyday childhood object which encouraged early literacy, taught basic values and served as entertainment. These areas were a field of great conflict between writers, pedagogues and

politicians, who exercised different notions about the role that literature should play in upbringing. The first section will look at Chukovskii, whose imaginative approach to writing for children brought him into conflict with socialist pedagogues, who accused him of propagating an outdated bourgeois ideology. The second section will investigate the Institute for the Methods of Extra-Curricular Work, where a group of librarians and pedagogues undertook serious research into children's literature and established a unique system for objectively analysing children's responses to books. The chapter will go on to look at books which demonstrated right and wrong, both in the conventional sense and from the socialist viewpoint. Books which encouraged children to develop art and craft skills will be examined for their role in teaching children skills which sometimes had a purely practical purpose but in other instances taught the basics of socialist labour. Finally, the chapter will review a selection of picture books which evaded political commitment completely and were filled with trips to the zoo, fairground rides, traditional fairy tales and comic poems.

Sources and Methodology

The picture book raises interesting challenges in its role as a historical source. The historian, used to dealing with facts and evidence, is faced with a wealth of information which requires careful analysis if it is to be of value. As objects of art history, picture books provide a bank of graphic imagery which can be analysed within the visual matrix of a particular period. As a piece of social and cultural history, they need to be treated more carefully. It is difficult to measure the direct social impact of the picture book as its intended audience, pre-school children, leave little evidence of their response to these objects which has not gone through an adult intermediary. Looking at Soviet picture books with a detached adult viewpoint and a century of hindsight, means that the truest part of their spirit will always elude us. As with all man-made artefacts, the books themselves interpret themes and ideas in a manner which gives huge license to the imagination of the artist or author. This means that their historical accuracy cannot be relied upon in a literal sense, however the writer and illustrator act as interpreter of their own times and in so doing, they reveal much about the mentality and cultural outlook of the period they lived through.

Before immersing ourselves fully in a study of children's books, it is also worth taking a moment to ponder the very definition of children's literature. Books for children have a complex relationship with their readers. Children, as the youngest group in society, are not fully able to determine what is published for their consumption, therefore they rely on adults to provide them with reading matter. As a result, literary scholar Helena Goscilo has identified the term 'children's

literature' as meaning a number of different things. It could mean writing by children, literature intended specifically for children, literature adults deem appropriate for children or works selected by children themselves, even if these were originally meant for adult readers.[77] In the case of picture books, the most fitting definition would be literature which is intended specifically for children. Their main audience, pre-school children, are only in the early stages of learning to read and as a result the texts they are given must be very short, simple and highly visual, so in many respects it would be difficult to confuse these with anything intended for adults.

However, in the context of the early Soviet Union, this emphasis on the visual provides a further point of consideration in defining the children's book. In a society with high rates of illiteracy among the adult population, the notion of parents using their children's books to learn to read cannot be dismissed. Many picture book illustrators were using a very simple graphic language which shared much with the political propaganda of the time and this comparison did not go unnoticed by key cultural figures. In a 1930 article, Lunacharskii praised the graphic art in picture books such as those illustrated by Lebedev, stating that: "For both pre-schoolers and illiterates, this sort of narrative through drawn imagery instead of through verbal imagery represents a great achievement."[78] Outside of the specifics of the Soviet case, it can also be said that even literate adult readers will build their own relationship with a children's book, whether this be with a book fondly remembered from childhood, with a story they have read to their own children or with something that they have found and enjoyed along the way. Carole Scott and Maria Nikolajeva suggest that the best children's literature: "speaks to both adults and children, and the two audiences may approach textual and visual gaps differently and fill them in different ways."[79] One further term to clarify before proceeding is the 'picture book' itself. This category can include anything from a short book containing only pictures through to a longer text interspersed with occasional images. Nikolajeva determines that "true picturebooks" are those: "in which the verbal and visual aspects are an inseparable whole".[80] This characterization is an excellent base for an analysis of Soviet picture books from the interwar period, as their strong visual imagery works in equal partnership with the text, not only to tell a story but to convey meaning which almost always has social or political connotations.

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[77] Helena Goscilo, 'The Thorny Thicket of "Children's Literature"', *The Russian Review*, No. 73 (July 2014), pp.341-53, at p.343.

[78] A. V. Lunacharskii, 'Prospects for Children's Books', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.76-100, at p.91.

[79] Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott, 'The Dynamics of Picturebook Communication', *Children's Literature in Education*, Vol. 31, No.4 (2000), p.238.

[80] Maria Nikolajeva, *Children's Literature Comes of Age: Toward a New Aesthetic* (New York and London: Gerald Publishing, Inc., 1996), p.85.

This study embraces an interdisciplinary approach based mainly upon the historiography of early Soviet culture and society but drawing on ideas from the fields of art history and literature. It will not be a full art historical enquiry into the visual elements of the picture book or the work of the artists involved. Neither will it offer an in-depth analysis of the picture book as literary text. Whilst the topic gives ample scope for such investigations, the thesis will provide a cultural and social history of the picture book from a more holistic perspective. Beginning with visual and textual analysis of a wide selection of picture books, it will work outwards to examine related primary sources, using secondary literature from all three disciplines to understand the material in its full context.

The 657 picture books used for this study have been sourced from a number of archive collections which between them, offer an excellent representative sample of what was being produced during the period of investigation.[81] Several of these collections were put together in the 1920s and early 1930s and remain intact. The selection of over 350 books at the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam is composed largely of books which were accumulated during this time by The Netherlands-New Russia Society (Het Genootschap Nederland-Nieuw Rusland). The Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies in London holds a small number of picture books which were bought back from a visit to the Soviet Union by English biology teacher Cicely Osmond in 1931. Likewise, the Kislak Centre at the University of Pennsylvania library holds a collection of over 250 books, all in immaculate condition, which were gathered directly from publishing houses by Thomas Woody on his travels to the Soviet Union. Two large private collections donated to educational libraries provide wonderful resources for the researcher. The LS Collection, which belongs to Albert Lemmens and Serge Stommels, is housed at the Vanabbemuseum in Eindhoven and offers a vast number of Russian and Soviet children's books dating from throughout the twentieth century. Princeton University Library holds the research collection of the Cotsen Children's Library, which includes over a thousand early Soviet children's books and which is constantly being enlarged. As part of a digitisation programme, items from this collection are widely used for research by scholars from Princeton and elsewhere.[82] In addition to these paper archives, the Russian State Children's Library (Rossiiskaya Gosudartsvennaya Detskaya Biblioteka) has developed a huge online library of thousands of Russian children's books, gathered from the holdings of the Russian State Library (Rossiiskaia

[81] A full list of the picture books used for this study is given below in 'Appendix: List of Children's Picture Books'.

[82] Princeton University Digital Library. *Soviet Era Books for Children and Youth (1918-1938*) from the *Cotsen Collection of Illustrated Children's Books*. Available from: http://pudl.princeton.edu/collections/pudl0127.

gosudarstvennaia biblioteka) and other large libraries in Moscow.[83] This is an extensive and well-organised resource which offers almost endless possibilities for research on Russian and Soviet children's literature. In terms of selecting material, small quantities of picture books were published in various languages across the Soviet Union including Ukrainian, Georgian and Yiddish but for practical reasons, this thesis will focus on those printed in the Russian language.

In addition to the picture books themselves, a wide range of other primary sources will be used to paint a fuller picture of the culture surrounding picture book production. Children's magazines including the journals *Chizh* (*Siskin*), *Ezh* (*Hedgehog*) and *Pioner* (*Pioneer*) are an important part of this investigation. Much of their content echoes that of picture books as they were produced from the mid-1920s onwards by the same authors, illustrators and publishing houses who were responsible for many picture books of the period. Most picture book illustrators also worked as graphic artists in other mediums or as easel painters and we will look at their wider portfolio of work, alongside a small number of surviving original sketches for picture book illustration. Commercial documents are essential for any thorough analysis of early Soviet children's literature and we will examine publisher's catalogues, periodicals from the publishing trade and promotional posters. We will also survey literary criticism and pedagogical literature, as these things will be vital in explaining both the rationale behind the creation of children's literature and its reception within a society still forming its cultural identity. Unpublished archive material from the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work will offer an insight into the work of a group of librarians and pedagogues, who quite uniquely, managed to record and preserve children's responses to picture books during the late 1920s and early 1930s. A key group of published sources will be memoirs, diaries and letters, which provide fleeting glimpses of the period from those who lived through it. Although these must be read with great care, they are of huge value as a precious point of contact with a time which is becoming increasingly distant as generations pass.

By embracing such a broad range of materials and looking at the topic through the literature of several academic areas, this study will reveal the huge potential of the early Soviet picture book as a rich historical source which can contribute much to our understanding of how Soviet culture was formed. The picture book is an object of visual and material culture which is not only an incredibly valuable source of information on the early Soviet era, but an object utterly characteristic of its time. Going on an adventure with these books allows us to make the leap of imagination required to develop a richer and more colourful perspective on a fascinating period in the development of twentieth century culture.

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[83] Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia detskaia biblioteka, 2012-2018. N*atsionl'naia Elektronnaia Detskaia Biblioteka: Arkhiv Otsifrovannykh Materialov.* Available from: http://arch.rgdb.ru.

Part 1
The Picture Book as Artwork

The equal balance of text and illustration in a picture book gives it a unique identity and special position amongst other children's books. The pictures serve a primary practical purpose – to illuminate the text for the child who cannot yet read or to aid the child who can read only poorly. They also serve a far richer purpose with deep reaching consequences. The illustrated book is one of the child's first experiences of the world of art and the imagery that he or she encounters forms the building blocks of visual vocabulary and a gateway to understanding the world. In their 1925 history of illustration in the children's book, Pavel Dul'skii and Iakov Meksin described the illustrated book as a bridge which would lead the child further into the world of art and through which he would: "learn to see beauty in his near surroundings and in the nature around him."[84]

As a compendium of carefully composed visual images, the picture book acts as a portable, interactive artwork which can be looked at over and over again. Perhaps the first few times the book is used, the pictures will simply illustrate the story but after that the possibilities are endless. The images may be looked at in a different order to make a whole new story or they might inspire brand new tales that spin off the main plot line. Maybe the illustrations will be used for drawing practise as the child learns to trace and copy for themselves or might even be cut out of the book and used to decorate a bedroom wall or put in a scrapbook.

Whatever the ultimate use of the picture book by pre-schoolers in the first decades of the twentieth century, early Soviet illustrators were all too keenly aware of the impressionable nature of the young child and the importance of providing them with stimulating imagery which would encourage them to develop visual literacy at an early age and blossom into well-educated members of society. This section will explore how the Soviet picture book emerged from a period of artistic activity where illustration for children was already beginning to be taken more seriously than at any previous period in Russian history. We will see how illustration for children navigated the tempestuous years of the revolution and Civil war to emerge in the mid-1920s as an almost fully-formed body of innovative graphic design. The contradictions in culture at this point will be made apparent as some avant-garde artists aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks and pursued their educational goals with ideological accuracy, while other artists continued to follow their pre-

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[84] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.6.

revolutionary trajectory and produce popular images with the spirit of a more traditional childhood remaining central. We will conclude our overview of the artistic role of the picture book by examining the state of children's illustration at the end of the 1920s and into the early 1930s, when the cultural scene entered choppier waters before heading into the vague and uncharted territory of Socialist Realism.

The Picture Book Before the 1920s

To truly understand the extent of the visual innovation made in picture books during the mid-1920s, we must first take a brief look at the children's book illustration of the immediate pre-revolutionary period and the artistic landscape from which the Soviet picture book emerged. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the illustrated children's book began to flourish in both Western Europe and Russia. The work of European illustrators found its way to Russia, while Russian artists began to construct a new visual language which reflected their own national spirit.

The first wave of foreign illustrated children's books to make a major impact on the Russian market came from Germany.[85] Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, translated into Russian as *Stepka-Rastrepka*, was notable for its success. Written for the author's young son and first published in Germany in 1845, the book combined verse with Hoffmann's own drawings to teach good behaviour and correct hygiene in a humorous fashion. Following in the wake of Hoffmann and equally popular was Wilhelm Busch, with books such as *Max and Moritz* published during the 1860s. Telling the story of two mischievous boys and the pranks they played on unsuspecting people, Busch used a mixture of verse and caricature style drawings to entertain young readers.[86]

During the 1880s, English children's book illustration began to appear in Russia, Some of the British artists who created books at this time are considered to have defined the modern picture book and their influence upon Russian book art was later to be evident. The three most well-known illustrators of this period were Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway.[87] Influenced by medieval art and Renaissance decoration, Crane achieved an

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[85] Ibid., pp.7-14.

[86] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.9-11; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.19-20.

[87] Lemmens and Stommels credit Crane with the invention of the picture book, with his complete blend of illustration, decoration and text. Illustrator Maurice Sendak considers that the work of Caldecott signalled the advent of the modern picture book, with words and pictures complementing one another mutually for

illustrative style which balanced clear use of line with rich decorative flair. Caldecott was popular for his comic scenes which featured caricature figures in a classically inspired style. He illustrated nursery rhymes and light verse, using pictures to expand upon the story by adding details not included in the text. Greenaway's work was more sentimental and less technically accomplished but well-loved for its picturesque depiction of English rural life and drawings of young children in eighteenth century dress.[88]

At the same time, home-grown Russian artists were exploring new styles of illustration which considered European ideas whilst also reflecting particularly Russian trends in art and culture. During the late 1870s, Elizeveta Bem gained success with her silhouette style of illustration, derived from the paper cut outs which were popular in the late 1700s and early 1800s. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the dominant current in Russia art was the realist painting of the Peredvizhniki (Wanderers), which reflected the lives of the rural population of Russia and demonstrated an interest in heritage, sparked by the growth of industrialisation. Bem trained in St Petersburg with Ivan Kramskoi, one of the co-founders of the Peredvizhniki and it is argued by Lemmens and Stommels that this influence contributed to the content of her picture books, which often showed children's rural labour. Titles such as *Siluety* (*Silhouettes*) idealised country life but showed children helping to make hay, feeding farm animals or fishing.[89]

The second half of the 1890s was described by Dul'skii and Meksin as the beginning of a renaissance in Russian book illustration.[90] An important new style arose from the art colonies which had sprung up in the late nineteenth century, aiming to preserve folk art and promote peasant crafts as an authentic expression of Russian style. Wealthy patrons such as Savva Mamontov at Abramtsevo and Princess Maria Tenisheva at Talashkino, collaborated with artists who came to their estates to develop traditional skills such as wood carving, embroidery, printing and architecture.[91] Some of these artists were to produce illustrations for folk tales which would give a whole new direction to Russian book art. One of the artists credited with the creation of this Neo-Russian Style was Viktor Vasnetsov. A member of the Peredvizhniki in his early career, Vasnetsov later spent time at Abramtsevo, by which point he had become an accomplished painter, muralist, illustrator and architect. His work across all disciplines was inspired by ancient

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the first time. Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.21; Maurice Sendak, *Caldecott and Co.: Notes on books and Pictures* (London: Reinhardt Books, 1989), p.21.

88 Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.16-17; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.21-23.

89 Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.40-42. Further examples of Bem's work can be found in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.58-63.

90 Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.31.

91 Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.44.

Russian monuments and peasant art motifs and he integrated these folk styles with European Art Nouveau to create a new synthesis of visual ideas.[92] Vasnetsov produced images for several Russian folk tales in the early 1870s, which were largely overlooked but he subsequently made a major impact on illustration with his work on Aleksandr Pushkin's *Pesn o veshchem Olege* (*Song of the Wise Oleg*), published for the centenary of the poet's birth in 1899. Four illustrations featuring the mythological characters of the story, set against a full background of the Russian landscape, were presented amongst ornamental headpieces and decorated initials.[93] Dmitri Fomin highlights the fact that whilst the piece was not intended for children, it's authentic style later inspired many illustrations for the young reader.[94]

At the same time as Vasnetsov, other artists working at the colonies were producing illustration for folk literature which was fully intended for children's consumption. Elena Polenova produced a series of illustrations for folktales between 1886 and 1896. Only one book, *Voina gribov* (*The War of the Mushrooms*), was published during Polenova's lifetime but the artist gained great posthumous recognition after her death in 1898. This began during 1899, when a whole issue of the *Mir isskustva* (*World of Art*) journal was dedicated to her work. Polenova's illustrations pre-dated Vasnetsov's *Pesn o veshchem Olege* but as she was a core member of the artistic group at Abramtsevo, his Neo-Russian style in painting and architecture would undoubtedly have influenced her. At the estate, Polenova specialised in collecting folk tales and nursery rhymes, helping to set up a museum of folk art which included these oral traditions. In addition to her very Russian inspiration, Polenova travelled widely in Europe, becoming acquainted with the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites and the children's books of Walter Crane whilst on a trip to London. Polenova's early folk tale illustrations, including those for *Belaia utochka* (*The White Duck*), were in a realistic painterly style, while later books completed after she had travelled abroad, took on a more stylised aesthetic. Their obvious outlines and blocks of intense colour made them excellent examples of modern graphics which were easy to reproduce.[95] (Figure 2.1)

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[92] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.23; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.45-48.

[93] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.23-24; Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.51.

[94] Dmitrii Fomin, 'Vospitanie krasotoi: stanovlenie detskoi knizhki-kartinki' in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.50-56, at p.51.

[95] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.31-34; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.48-50.

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лы высят кипучие, ножи то=
чат булатные!“
Что же это все один голос?
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потихоньку дверь, видит: оба
брата спят крепким сном,
тотчас обвела их мертвой
рукой — и они померли.
Поутру белая уточка зовет
деток; детки нейдут. Зачуяло
ее сердце, встрепенулась она
и полетела на княжий двор.
На княжьем дворе белы, как
платочки, холодны, как пла=
сточки, лежали братцы ря=
дышком. Кинулась она к ним,

Figure 2.1: Elena Polenova, illustration and page design for *The White Duck* (1923).

Polenova’s counterpart at the Talashkino estate was Sergei Maliutin, who enjoyed a long career as a painter, graphic artist, architect and theatre designer. One of his notable achievements in the field of folk art was the design of the first set of wooden *matrioshka* dolls in the 1890s, which was inspired by a set of Japanese nesting dolls. Maliutin’s work on children’s illustration was limited to the time he spent at Talashkino but he produced a number of original and popular books.[96] A simple style of illustration, intended to imitate the primitive technique of children’s drawings, meant that the artist was: “able to go into the intimate world of the child and find a language attentive to their sensitive hearing.”[97] In 1898, Maliutin became the first artist to illustrate Pushkin’s *Skazka o tsare Saltane* (The *Tale of Tsar Saltan*), matching the folk motifs of the poem with simple lines and flat planes of colour.[98] *Ai-du-du*, a collection of tales and nursery rhymes published in 1899, became the first Russian children’s book in full colour and featured the careful integration of text and illustration on every page, suggesting the influence of Caldecott’s picture books.[99]

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[96] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children’s Book* (2009), p.45, pp.50-51.

[97] Dul’skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.35.

[98] Dul’skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.35; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children’s Book* (2009), pp.51-52.

[99] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children’s Book* (2009), p.52.

At the turn of the century, the Mir iskusstva (World of Art) group took their place as the leading force in the artistic culture of St Petersburg. The Mir iskusstva was an association of artists, writers, musicians and critics who grouped themselves around the eponymous journal edited by the impresario Sergei Diaghilev, which was published in the city from 1899-1904. After this first blossoming of the movement, in accordance with the social change brought by the revolutions in 1905 and 1917, the group became largely an exhibition society but an evolving membership of young artists meant that it kept going into the late 1920s. The members of the group held an individualistic, modern aesthetic approach which valued art for art's sake and which aimed to break down the traditional barriers between fine and applied art. The journal brought together art from all over the world and editions featured visual material as diverse as Art Nouveau illustration from Europe, Russian peasant crafts and Japanese prints.[100] The visual artists aligned with the movement became known for their great innovation in book design and illustration.

One of the key figures during the first phase of the movement was Ivan Bilibin, a young graphic artist whose work has since become emblematic of the period. In 1899, Bilibin visited an exhibition of Vasnetsov's work at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, which greatly captured his imagination and inspired him to turn towards folk tales as a source of inspiration.[101] During the same year, Bilibin began to receive commissions for illustration work, beginning with small pieces for the *Mir iskusstva* journal and culminating in an order from the Department for the Production of State Documents for a major series of children's fairy-tale books. The books were issued as large-format, full-colour paperbacks, with *Skazka ob Ivan Tsareviche, Zhar-ptitse i o serom volke* (*The Tale of the Tsarevich Ivan, the Firebird and the Grey Wolf*) published first in 1901 and Pushkin's *Skazka o zolotom petushke* (*The Tale of the Golden Cockerel*) finishing the series in 1910.[102] In his first books, Bilibin demonstrated his key influences, showing not just obvious allegiance to Russian artists such as Vasnetsov and Polenova but also leanings towards both Western contemporary art and Japanese prints.[103] The latter influence was most evident in an illustration for Pushkin's *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, in which a seascape shows remarkable similarity to Hokusai's renowned wood block *The Wave*. (Figure 2.2) Bilibin's work was distinctive even at this early stage in his career, due to its intricate drawing and decorative colouring. As the artist developed a more individualistic style, his books became known for illustrations with clear

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[100] Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), p.7; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.53-54.

[101] Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), p.5, p.182.

[102] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.44-45; Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), pp.6-7; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.257-265.

[103] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.41-42; Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), p.10.

outlines and monochromatic colour, which showed an acute understanding of what could be reproduced effectively in print. Moreover, the pictures were so well integrated into the layout of the page, that the book became a fully-formed artistic whole.[104] (Figures 2.3 and 2.4)

Bilibin's folk tale work was further enriched by trips to Russia's northern provinces, which he undertook on behalf of the ethnographic department of the Russian Museum between 1902 and 1904. On these excursions, the artist collected many pieces by local craftsmen and photographed traditional wooden architecture, documenting his discoveries in articles for *Mir iskusstva*. These trips fostered the principle that every detail of an illustration should be based on documentary evidence, leading Soviet art historian Sergei Golynets to praise the fact that Bilibin could create, "a magical world from historically precise details".[105] There is some doubt as to whether this fairyland appealed to its target audience. Dul'skii and Meksin believed that Bilibin's weakness as a children's illustrator was the fact that his pictures did not satisfy young readers.[106] Despite this, the overall importance of Bilibin in the history of book design cannot be undermined. Not only was he the one of the first artists in Russia to dedicate himself to book art as a standalone profession but fellow member of the Mir iskusstva, Alexandre Benois, described the work done by Bilibin and his fellow St Petersburg illustrators as, "a rebirth of Russian book art."[107]

Benois took a small piece of this history for himself, as the Russian children's picture book developed into a truly artistic product. A painter, illustrator, theatre designer, art historian and critic, Benois created just one children's book but it was arguably one of the most beautiful books produced in Russia at this time. *Azbuka v kartinakh* (*Alphabet in Pictures*) was published in 1904 and reflected a more European style of illustration, inspired by the refined urban nursery rather than the earthy Russian countryside. The book was printed in full colour lithography with thick paper and a solid binding. Elegant figurative illustrations were presented in an architectural border, showing scenes of upper class life with figures in old-fashioned dress, imaginative tableaux of fairyland or exotic depictions of far off countries. Touches of gold and silver added a final flourish to embellish the finer details. The cover featured a collage of famous folk and fairy tale characters while inside, each letter of the alphabet had its own page with the picture showing one or two items which began with that letter. Benois played clever games with the illustrations. The letter Г (G) showed two boys playing with toy soldiers, which were poised to invade a model town, covering both the words *gorod* (city) and *general'* (general). On a table next

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[104] Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), pp.6-7, pp.10-11.

[105] Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), p.8; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.257.

[106] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.45.

[107] Golynets, *Ivan Bilibin* (1981), pp.6-7, p.185.

to them, two little girls arrange figures to make a *gospital'* (military hospital). In a similar fashion on the У (U) page, an *ulitsa* (street) is besieged by an *uragan'* (hurricane), with people, horses and carriages flying everywhere.[108]

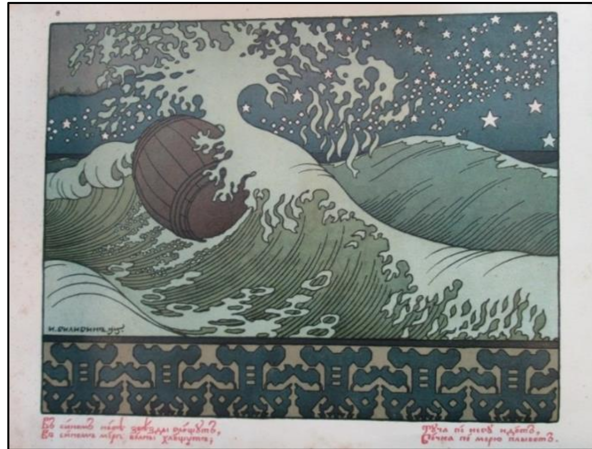
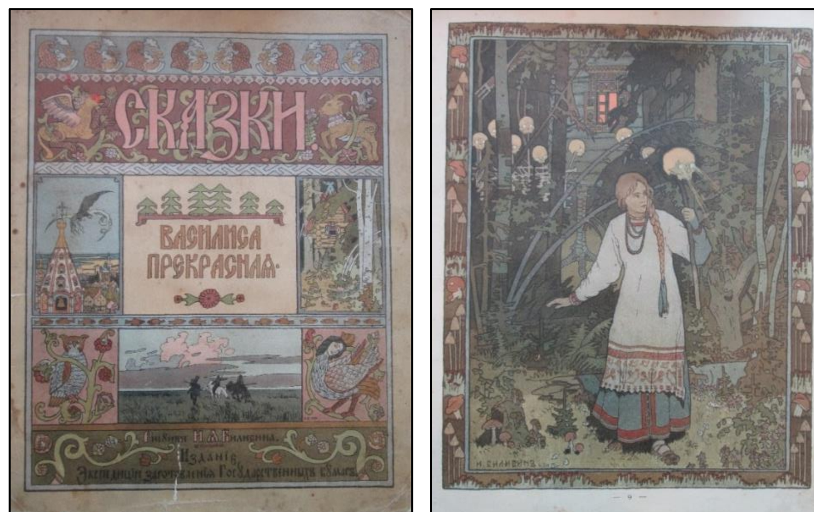


Figure 2.2: Ivan Bilibin, illustration for *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (1905).



Figures 2.3 and 2.4: Ivan Bilibin, cover and illustration for *Vasilisa the Beautiful* (1902).

[108] Alexandre Benois*, Azbuka v kartinakh* (St Petersburg: Expeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvenykh bumag, 1904); Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.46-47; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.55.

The books of Bilibin and Benois were luxury products for wealthy nurseries but the publishing trade was also catering for families on a lower budget. Major publishing houses such as M.O. Vol'f, I.D. Sytin and I. Knebel' created both decorative titles for affluent customers and cheap books for the mass market.[109] The Gift series from Knebel' issued between 1906 and 1915, emulated the Bilibin books with large format editions in full colour, illustrated by top quality artists.[110] Frequent contributors to the series were young illustrators Georgii Narbut and Dmitrii Mitrokhin. Narbut's first illustrations were influenced enormously in style by Bilibin but he later evolved to become a much respected artist with his own elegant style.[111] Mitrokhin was not such a prolific children's illustrator but produced several well respected picture books with decorative illustration, displaying a more informal style and fascination with Eastern motifs.[112] Alongside this prominent series, Knebel' published small format children's books, which often placed old lithograph plates alongside a new text. Although they were published in great numbers and sold at a low price, these books seemed outdated when compared with the most recent developments in book art.[113]

The mood in the graphic arts also leant in another direction during the early 1900s, swayed by the political turbulence of the 1905 Revolution. After the revolution, there was a brief interlude during which the Tsar allowed greater freedom of the press, leading to the creation of numerous satirical journals which were richly illustrated with caricatures and political cartoons. Despite their previously apolitical stance, the skilled graphic artists of the Mir iskusstva group found themselves drawn to work on these journals, alongside their more avant-garde colleagues. In the few years after 1905, titles such *Zritel'* (*Spectator,* 1905-6 and 1908) and *Zhupel* (*Bugbear,* 1908) benefitted from striking contributions by Bilibin and fellow Mir isskusstvo members Sergei Chekhonin, Mstislav Dobuzhinskii and Boris Kustodiev. In the years leading up to the First World War, renewed censorship made it difficult for artists to continue targeting political figures but satire remained popular, with the journals *Satirikon* (1908-1913) and *Novyi*

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[109] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.168-173; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.25-26.

[110] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.61.

[111] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.59-66; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.63.

[112] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), pp.66-67; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.63-65. Numerous examples of illustration from this period by Narbut and Mitrokhin are reproduced in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.122-153.

[113] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.61.

satirikon (1914-1918) finding humour in bourgeois society or theatrical and artistic figures.[114] Many of the contributors to these two journals would later go on to create Soviet children's picture books, not least Vladimir Mayakovsky and Vladimir Lebedev, then an artist in his mid-twenties embarking on his first professional commissions. *Satirikon* artist and editor Aleksei Radakov paved the way for this new direction by instigating the publication of a weekly children's satirical journal, *Galchenok* (*The Young Jackdaw*, 1911-1913), in which his team of illustrators could try out new approaches to amusing a young audience.[115]

This serious interest in drawing cartoons for children reached a culmination during 1917, when *Satirikon* artist Nikolai Remizov was commissioned to illustrate a children's poem and inadvertently helped to create a picture book that would become a landmark in the development of Russian children's literature. Due to his rapidly growing interest in children's literature, writer and literary critic Kornei Chukovskii had become editor of *Dlia detei* (*For Children*), a children's supplement for the journal *Niva* (*Virgin Soil*). The author used the new magazine to publish instalments of his poem *Vania i krokodil* (*Vania and the Crocodile*), an epic tale in which a monstrous cigar-smoking crocodile marches down the Nevskii Prospekt, gobbling policeman and pet dogs, until he is defeated by brave little Vania and his wooden sword.[116] Remizov, under the pseudonym Re-Mi, furnished the tale with black and white caricature style drawings, revelling in every detail of the scenario from the luxurious overcoat of the oversized reptile to the grotesquely horrified faces of the well-to-do passers-by as they rush to escape the beast.[117] (Figure 2.5) The collaboration was such a success that after its publication in the journal, the piece had the ambiguous honour of being printed as a standalone picture book by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Red Army Deputies in 1919. This indicated the extent to which the tale was beloved by children but it also showed that despite the author's innocent intentions, some adults read the defeat of the vicious crocodile as an allegory for the October Revolution and the end of the oppressive tsarist regime.[118] (Figure 2.6)

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[114] John E. Bowlt, *The Silver Age: Russian Art of the Early Twentieth Century and the "World of Art" Group* (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1979), pp.110-116.

[115] Bowlt, *The Silver Age (*1979), p.115; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.68-69, pp.343-344.

[116] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.74-76. For more on Chukovskii and *Krokodil*, see below, 'Chukovshchina and the Battle for the Skazka', pp.224-246.

[117] Kornei Chukovskii, 'Vania i krokodil', *Dlia detei* (1917). The poem was serialised in issues 1 to 12 of the journal for that year.

[118] Kornei Chukovskii, *Prikliucheniia Krokodila Krokodilovicha: Poema dliia malenkikh detei,* ill. Re-Mi (Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo Petrogradskogo soveta rabochikh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov, 1919); Olich,

Figure 2.5: Re-Mi, illustrations for *Vanya and the Crocodile* by Kornei Chukovskii (1917).

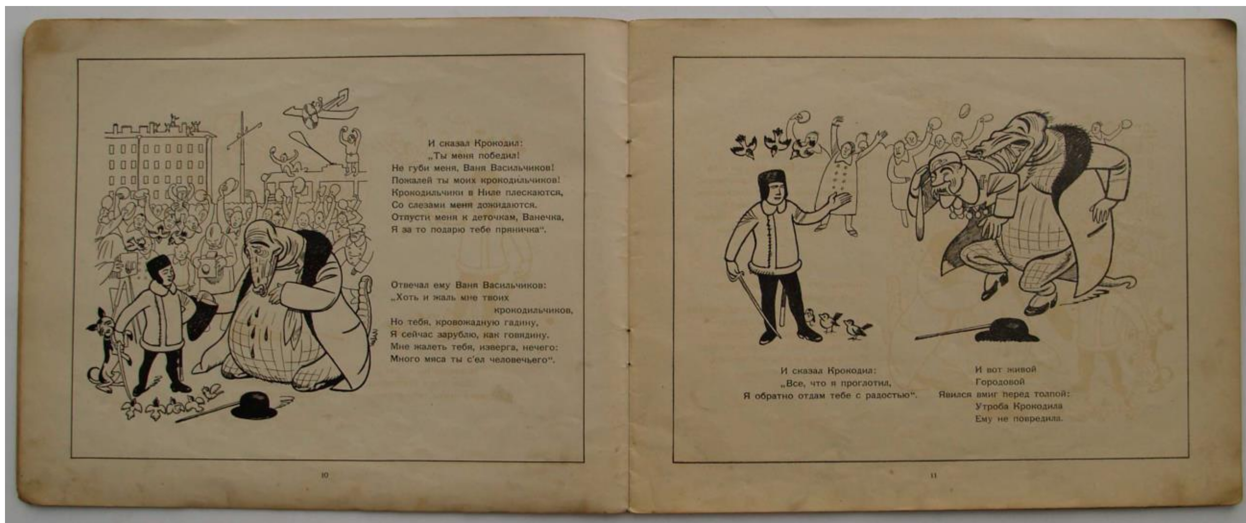

Figure 2.6: Re-Mi, illustrations for *The Crocodile* by Kornei Chukovskii (1919).

Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia (2009), pp.25-26; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.31.

The first children's book to be published after the October Revolution was *Elka* (*The Christmas Tree*), a collection of texts edited by Benois and Chukovskii on the instigation of Maksim Gor'kii, for his Petrograd publishing house Parus (Sail). Issued in January 1918, *Elka* became the first Soviet children's book, not through any allegiance to Bolshevik power but simply by virtue of its publishing date, which had been delayed due to a crisis in the printing industry after the February Revolution.[119] Chukovskii and Benois had made a previous attempt at a progressive children's anthology in 1912 with *Zhar-ptitsa* (*The Firebird*), the first and only instalment of a proposed journal. Although it did not achieve commercial success, the experiment gave the two men a rehearsal at bringing together respected authors with successful graphic artists such as Chekonin, Radakov and Dobuzhinskii.[120] *Elka* followed the same pattern, containing pieces which bore the mark of close collaboration between writers and artists, leading Hellman to argue that the volume, "promised a strong future for Russian picture books."[121] Several of the illustrators produced pages which showed a particular intuition for the picture book form. Chekhonin created an illustration for *Dva zhuka* (*Two Beetles*), a poem by Mariia Moravskaia, which featured delicate line drawings and an elegant border in keeping with the Mir iskusstvo spirit. Lebedev contributed several pieces, including a drawing for Sasha Chernyi's poem *Trubochist* (*The Chimney Sweep*). The sweep was pictured realistically but in solidarity with the poem, which encouraged children not to be afraid of such a man, he was depicted as an approachable character with a cheery smile between his dirt-smudged cheeks. (Figure 2.7) *Satirikon* artist Iurii Annenkov also stood out with his coloured illustrations for Gorky's fable *Samovar* (*The Samovar*), in which he used a caricaturist's skill to give various pieces of crockery humorous, yet convincing human traits. (Figure 2.8) [122]

The almost total breakdown of the publishing industry during the Civil War period meant that the any major plans to reinvent the picture book for the new political era were put on hold. There was however, an exception to this in the form of an innovative collective of Petrograd artists. The Segodniia (Today) workshop was established in early 1918 by painter Vera Ermolaeva, an active member of the Petrograd avant-garde, who was joined by artists Annenkov, Natan Al'tman, Nikolai Lapshin, Nadezhda Liubavina and Ekaterina Turova. The collective

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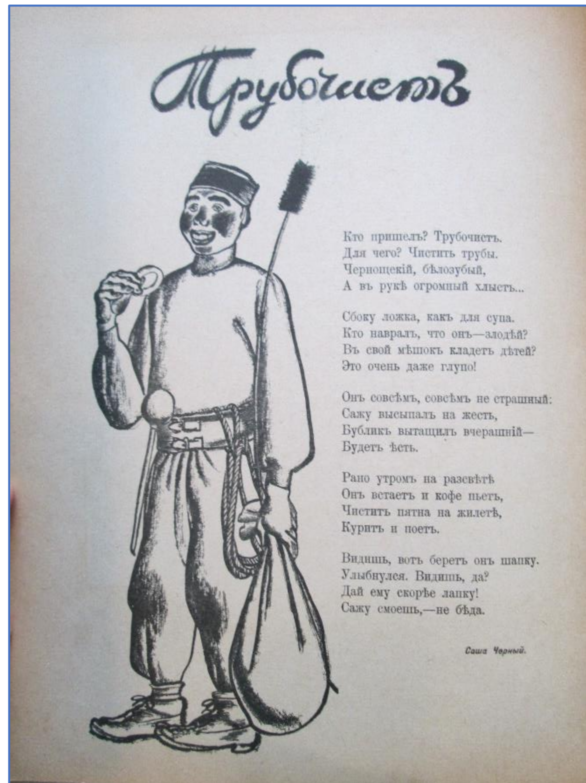
[119] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.293; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.34-37; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.7.

[120] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.289; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.5.

[121] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.292.

[122] Alexandre Benois and Kornei Chukovskii (eds.), *Elka* (Petrograd: Parus, 1918), pp.5-9, p.33, p.34.



Трубочистъ

Кто пришелъ? Трубочистъ.
Для чего? Чистить трубы.
Черноцекій, бѣлозубый,
А въ рукѣ огромный хлыстъ...

Сбоку ложка, какъ для супа.
Кто навралъ, что онъ—злодѣй?
Въ свой мѣшокъ кладетъ дѣтей?
Это очень даже глупо!

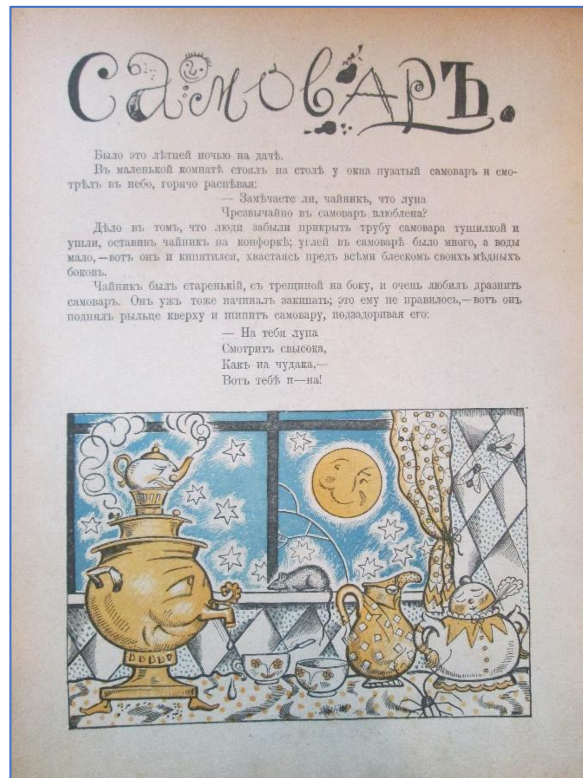
Онъ совсѣмъ, совсѣмъ не страшный:
Сажу высыпалъ на жесть,
Бубликъ вытащилъ вчерашній—
Будетъ ѣсть.

Рано утромъ на разсвѣтѣ
Онъ встаетъ и кофе пьетъ,
Чиститъ пятна на жилетѣ,
Куритъ и поетъ.

Видишь, вотъ беретъ онъ шапку.
Улыбнулся. Видишь, да?
Дай ему скорѣе лапку!
Сажу смоешь,—не бѣда.

Саша Черный.

Figure 2.7: Vladimir Lebedev, illustration for 'The Chimney Sweep' by Sasha Chernyi in *Elka* (1918).



Самоваръ.

Было это лѣтней ночью на дачѣ.

Въ маленькой комнатѣ стоялъ на столѣ у окна пузатый самоваръ и смотрѣлъ въ небо, горячо распѣвая:

— Замѣчаете ли, чайникъ, что луна
Чрезвычайно въ самоваръ влюблена?

Дѣло въ томъ, что люди забыли прикрыть трубу самовара тушилкой и ушли, оставивъ чайникъ на конфоркѣ; углей въ самоварѣ было много, а воды мало,—вотъ онъ и кипятился, хвастаясь предъ всѣми блескомъ своихъ мѣдныхъ боковъ.

Чайникъ былъ старенькій, съ трещиной на боку, и очень любилъ дразнить самоваръ. Онъ ужъ тоже начиналъ закипать; это ему не правилось,—вотъ онъ поднялъ рыльце кверху и шипитъ самовару, подзадоривая его:

— На тебя луна
Смотритъ свысока,
Какъ на чудака,—
Вотъ тебѣ и—на!

Figure 2.8: Iurii Annenkov, illustration for 'The Samovar' by Maksim Gor'kii in *Elka* (1918).

illustrated works for children as well as poetry, collaborating with authors such as Natan' Vengrov, Ivan Sokolov-Mikitov and Sergei Esenin.[123] The books themselves were small pamphlets, mostly only four pages long, with a small circulation of around one hundred and twenty five copies. They featured linocut illustrations which were printed directly from the block and each copy was hand coloured by the artists.[124] This approach to publishing showed economic initiative during a time of great hardship, when artists who were struck with the sudden collapse of the art market needed a new approach to producing and selling their work if they were to make a living. Small, handmade books could be produced on basic equipment at a low cost and could be sold cheaply, so were still a marketable commodity.[125]

Whilst this economic motivation may have stimulated the collective to some degree, art historians including Evgenii Kovtun, have argued that the artisanal approach to production was inspired in greater part by the Segodniia illustrators' avant-garde interests. The 1910s saw the hand-crafted Futurist book flourish with artists such as Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova and Ol'ga Rozanova creating many texts which combined word and image into highly creative, sometimes provocative new forms. The Segodniia books followed principles of design from these books including the use of different fonts, the employment of non-professional typesetting and hand colouring.[126] The original source of these techniques for both the Futurists and the Segodniia artists was the Russian *lubok* print, a broadside on popular themes which originated from peasant culture in the seventeenth century.[127] The collective even planned their own series of childrens *lubki* but published only two examples. *Petukh* (*The Cockerel*) illustrated by

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[123] E. Kovtun, 'Khudozhnitsa knigi Vera Mikhailovna Ermolaeva' in *Iskusstvo knigi 68/69: Vypusk vos'moi* (Moscow: Kniga, 1975), pp.68-80 at p.68; Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.13.

[124] Evgenii Kovtun, 'Artel' khuzodhnikov "Segodniia"', *Detskaia literatura*, Vol. 3, No.4 (April 1968), pp.44-45 at p.44.

[125] Dmitrii Fomin, 'Artel' "Segodniia". Evreiskaia detskaia kniga. "Suprematicheskii skaz…". VKhUTEMAS' in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.160-167 at p.161; Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.14.

[126] Antonina Zainchkovskaia, 'Khudozhnik – ne shutochnoe zvanie…' in *Vera Ermolaeva 1893-1937* (Saint Petersburg: Palace Editions-Grafikart, 2008), pp.5-25 at pp.9-10; Kovtun, 'Artel' khuzodhnikov "Segodniia"' (1968), p.44. There is a substantial body of literature on the Russian Futurist book. The most extensive surveys include Susan P. Compton, *The World Backwards: Russian Futurist Books 1912-16* (London: The British Library, 1978); Gerald Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Evgenii Kovtun, *Russkaia futuristicheskaia kniga* (Moscow: RIP-kholding, 2014).

[127] Kovtun, 'Artel' khuzodhnikov "Segodniia"' (1968), p.44. On the Russian lubok see Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature* (1984), pp.9-10; Stephen White, *The Bolshevik Poster* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.1-3.

Ermolaeva and *Kak propala Baba-Iaga* (*How Baba Yaga Disappeared*) by Lapshin, took on traditional stylistic traits such as flatness of imagery and deliberate crudeness of form.[128] The Segodniia artists were not trying to emulate this folk art in the gentrified, refined way of the Mir iskusstva but to return to the primitive aspects of the *lubok* which so fascinated the avant-garde.[129] They also broke free from the boundaries of academic figurative art through the deconstructed forms of Cubism and the coarseness of Expressionism, which found their way into the Segodniia catalogue through the individual inclinations of the artists involved.[130] In his analysis of the group's work, Steiner thus characterised Segodniia's publications as typifying the: "dual nature of the avant-garde – archaism combined with futurism".[131]

The children's books produced at the workshop demonstrated all of these tendencies. Vengrov's short poem *Myshata* (*The Mice*), which told of a group of mice who have a raucous party in a cupboard at night time, was illustrated by Ermolaeva in a flat *lubok* style but with creatures who had an Expressionist distortion of their natural proportions and features.[132] *Zasuponia*, written by Sokolov-Mikitov and illustrated by Liubavina, was the tale of a strange pine cone-like creature who boorishly chased a crane away from its nest. Both text and illustration showed a Primitivist interest in nature, combined with the surreal atmosphere of a Futurist text.[133] The final children's book by Segodniia, an anthology of Vengrov poetry entitled *Zverushki* (*Beasties*), was published not by the workshop but in a large edition by Gosizdat in 1921. A piece from this volume, *Pro zaiku solnechnogo* (*The Sun Bunny*), had already featured in *Elka* with illustrations by Lebedev but it appeared here with new drawings by Al'tman. The poem's title referred to a Russian phrase denoting shapes made from reflected sunlight and the text talked about a bunny hopping across surfaces in the room, only to land in the jaws of a wolf and vanish. Al'tmans illustration for this piece gained great respect from critics for its inventiveness, using a clever Cubist dynamic which showed overlapping sunbeams throwing the bunny in various directions and ultimately to his grisly fate.[134]

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[128] Fomin, 'Artel' "Segodniia".' (2009), p.161; *Vera Ermolaeva 1893-1937* (2008), p.10.

[129] On the fascination of modernist writers with the primitive and childlike see Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.61-62.

[130] Fomin, 'Artel' "Segodniia".' (2009), p.161.

[131] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.17.

[132] Natan Vengrov, *Myshata*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Petrograd: Segodnia, 1919).

[133] Ivan Sokolov-Mikitov, *Zasuponia*, ill. Nina Liubavina (Petrograd: Segodniia, c.1920).

[134] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925), p.81; Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.17-22; Natan Vengrov, *Zverushki*, ill. Natan Al'tman et al. (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1921), p.12.

The Segodniia collective folded in April 1919, when Ermolaeva departed for Vitebsk to take up a position at the People's School of Art.[135] Despite the short-lived nature of the workshop, its ground-breaking approach to children's illustration made a huge impact. Kovtun highlights the fact that the children's book was seen here for the first time as a holistic artistic organism, while Fomin argues that Segodniia defined a tradition of dialogue with children using grown-up, contemporary art.[136] It is also important to note that some artists from the collective would later use this first experience of picture book work to become leading members of the 'Leningrad School' of children's book illustration. Whilst this will be discussed in depth below, it is enough to state for now that the significance of the influential Leningrad group in the history of Soviet children's illustration cannot be overstated. Meanwhile, our story follows Ermolaeva to Vitebsk, where the beginning of the 1920s saw a whole new chapter in the birth of the Soviet picture book.

The New Soviet Picture Book

Vitebsk was a provincial city in the former Jewish Pale of Settlement, made famous for a short period after the revolution by its rich cultural life and pioneering art school. The People's School of Art opened in early 1919, founded by Marc Chagall, an artist who was raised in Vitebsk but had found professional success in Paris and Berlin. Chagall recruited teachers of various artistic backgrounds, some of local origin and some brought in from Moscow and Petrograd. In the first year of the school, the staff included Ermolaeva, Liubavina and painter Ivan Puni. By the autumn they were joined by Kazimir Malevich, who later succeeded Chagall as the figurehead of the school, when it effectively became a laboratory for his radical Suprematist school of art.[137] Also on the staff was Lazar' Lisitskii, subsequently known as El' Lisitskii, who led the studio for graphic arts and architecture. Lisitskii grew up in Vitebsk, where he received his initial artistic training before studying architecture in Germany. During 1917-1919, following a meeting with a group of Russian artists in Paris who were working on the revival of Jewish culture, Lisitskii illustrated a number of Jewish picture books for children, the most well-known of which was *The Little Goat*. Whilst teaching in Vitebsk, Lisitskii worked closely with Malevich on the development of Suprematism, a movement emanating from Cubism and Futurism, which sought to use the

[135] *Vera Ermolaeva 1893-1937* (2008), p.11.

[136] Fomin, 'Artel' "Segodniia".' (2009), p.161; Kovtun, 'Artel' khuzodhnikov "Segodniia"' (1968), p.44.

[137] For a rich and full account of artistic life in Vitebsk between 1917 and 1922, see Aleksandra Shatskikh, *Vitebsk: The Life of Art* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

picture plane to access a cosmic four dimensional world. Lisitskii's work centred on the Proun, a type of composition based on architectural construction.[138]

In 1920, during his brief period at the school, Lisitskii created a seminal picture book which united his previous experience of children's illustration with the extreme abstract aesthetic of his Prouns and a loyalty to the socialist transformation of culture. *Suprematicheskii skaz pro dva kvadrata v shesti postroikakh (About Two Squares: A Suprematist Tale in Six Constructions)* featured two squares flying through space, one black and one red. The squares crash into the earth, where everything is scattered into pieces and then rebuilt once more, with red planes dominating an otherwise black and white landscape.[139] Not only was the illustrative content pure geometry but the captions were part of the page design, arranged at complementary angles underneath each picture. The text itself employed varied typefaces and capital letters were placed for dramatic emphasis rather than grammatical correctness. The book can easily be understood as a revolutionary tale, employing an appropriately radical aesthetic style, but more revealing is the Suprematist attitude of its creator. The first leaf of the book carries a message imploring the viewer not to read but to take blocks and build, emphasising the fact that he saw the book as an active and transformative object, rather than as passive printed matter.[140] The inside cover addressed the book, "To all children". Given the highly abstract presentation of the subject matter, it is questionable whether the artist meant this literally as an address to the very young or rather as a general rallying call. When compared with Lisitskii's Jewish children's books, which were modernist but brightly coloured with identifiable figurative motifs from traditional stories, *About Two Squares* seems particularly lofty. A later unpublished children's book, *Chetyre arifmeticheskie deistviya* (*Four Arithmetic Operations*) was created by the artist in 1928 and used figures of Red Army soldiers, peasants and workers to visually demonstrate addition and subtraction in patriotic but entertaining fashion. All figures and images in the book were composed purely of letters and other elements of the typographer's case, such as straight lines and punctuation marks.[141] The method was the same as that used by Lisitskii in his well-known design for Maiakovskii's *Dlia golosa* (*For the Voice*) of 1923 but the playful approach of the counting book indicated that if Lisitskii did see children as viable recipients of the new aesthetic

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[138] Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), pp.58-61. For images of Jewish children's book illustration by Lissitsky and other artists, see Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.180-203.

[139] El Lissitsky, *Pro dva kvadrata: Suprematicheskii skaz v 6 postroikakh* (*About Two Squares: A Suprematist Tale in Six Constructions)*. Originally published by Sythian, Berlin in 1922. A facsimile reprint with English translation accompanies Patricia Railing, *More About Two Squares* (Forest Row, East Sussex: Artists Book Works, 1990).

[140] Railing, *More About Two Squares* (1990), pp.4-7; Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), pp.23-33.

[141] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), pp.33-39.

culture, then he understood that they would require a modified version. A fair evaluation of *About Two Squares* might compare it with the Bilibin fairy tale editions of a decade earlier. In the case of both artists, any concerns about the reception of the books amongst young children were outweighed by the huge influence that they had upon subsequent picture book design.

Lisitskii's aesthetic and social approach to the graphic arts certainly made a huge impression on the Constructivist group. Rooted in the same Cubo-Futurist background as the Suprematists, they diverged from Malevich to seek a practical rather than purely visual outlet for their ideas and fully declared their allegiance to a socialist agenda. During the early 1920s, discussions within the group had evolved around the question of how art could be integrated into industrial production, with the traditional artist becoming "artist-engineer".[142] By the middle of the decade the role of the object itself was under scrutiny, with great consideration being given to how everyday things could be utilised to imbibe a socialist worldview in the consumer.[143] Children's books formed a part of this scheme. A statement from the First Working Group of Constructivists published in the catalogue of a 1924 art exhibition was undersigned by writer Nikolai Smirnov and artist sisters Ol'ga and Galina Chichagova as the "productional cell for children's books". In this statement, the group outlined one of their aims as raising the quality of the object and another as: "establishing its social role and organizing its forms in an organic relationship with its utilitarian meaning and objective."[144]

The Chichagova sisters were Moscow artists who trained at innovative art school Vkhutemas (The Higher Artistic and Technical Studios), which was a centre for the development of Constructivism. Their first picture book with Smirnov was published in 1924, leading to a partnership which would last to the end of the decade.[145] The trio specialised in texts on technical subjects, creating a genre which would become known as the 'production book'.[146] In the mid-1920s the Chichagovas also contributed many pieces of the same nature to *Iskorka*

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[142] Christina Kiaer, *Imagine no Possessions* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2005), p.2.

[143] Christina Kiaer has thoroughly explored the development of this 'socialist object' in both theory and practice. See Kiaer, *Imagine no Possessions* (2005).

[144] The First Working Group of Constructivists, 'Statement from the Catalogue of the "First Discussional Exhibition of Associations of Active Revolutionary Art", 1924' in Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant Garde (*1991), pp.241-24.

[145] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.42-43.

[146] The term 'production book' was likely derived from the discourse on propaganda circulating in the early 1920s. In 1920, Lenin outlined plans for 'production propaganda' to be prioritised in newspapers, in order that the population should be educated about electrification and industrial development See V.I. Lenin, 'Theses on Production Propaganda. Rough Draft' in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works: Volume 31 April- December 1920* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp.404-406.

(*Sparkle*), a Moscow based illustrated journal for small children.[147] The sisters' graphic language was dominated by the black and red colour palette and strong typeface typical of Constructivist graphics during this period. Smirnov's directly worded texts were laid out by the artists along definite horizontal lines. In the manner of Lissitsky, a larger font was used where a word needed to stand out and text was integrated with imagery so both demanded equal attention. The pictures themselves were simple in style, reducing people and objects to a collection of stencilled shapes. The utilitarian aspect of the books extended beyond appearance, with children being introduced to the everyday modern world. In *Detiam o gazete* (*To Children About the Newspaper*) we learn about the how articles arrive in the newspaper. The news travels from the journalist, through the telegram system and printing press, to be conveyed by aeroplane or train to its eager readers, members of a children's home.[148] (Figure 2.9) Other books included *Otkuda posuda* (*Where Does Crockery Come from?*), *Kak liudi ezdiat* (*How People Travel*) and *Dlia chego Krasnaia armiia* (*What is the Red Army For?*).[149]

The message of the texts was very clear in stating that the dynamic real world ought to inspire the Soviet pre-schooler, rather than the old world of fairy tale characters and whimsical imagination. This rationale was enforced by a poster designed by the Chichagovas to promote the new Soviet children's literature, which allowed the sisters to set out their manifesto for the socialist picture book. 'Give Us the New Children's Book!!' was a crowded composition radiating an agitational tone. On the left hand side there was a collage of fairy tale characters underlined by the slogan: "Down with the mysticism and fantasy of children's books!!" The right hand side outlined the subject matter needed to raise the new generation – labour, battle, technology, nature and the Young Pioneer organisation. This was not just the visual radicalism of the Segodniia collective but full ideological radicalism. The revered kings of ancient tales, the

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[147] *Iskorka* was a monthly journal founded in 1924 and published by Rabochaia Moskva. The Chichagovas contributed to every issue in 1925, producing not just illustrations for articles and full-page illustrated spreads but supplements featuring paper models to be cut out and assembled. Their models included a group of Pioneers building a reading hut for the July issue and an apartment building under construction for the October issue.

[148] N.G. Smirnov, *Detiam o gazete*, ill. Galina Chicagova and Ol'ga Chichagova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[149] For a full bibliographical list of the Smirnov and Chichagova books, see Ivan Startsev, *Detskaia literature bibliographiia 1918-1932* (Moscow: OGIZ- Molodaia Gvardiia, 1929), p.213.

terrifying witch Baba Yaga and Chukovskii's Krokodil in his large-collared overcoat were all to be banished, making way for a modern book to fit the new Soviet child.[150] (Figure 2.10)

Figure 2.9: Galina and Ol'ga Chichagova, illustrations for *To Children About the Newspaper* by Nikolai Smirnov (1924).

Figure 2.10: Poster designed by Galina and Ol'ga Chichagova, 'Give Us the New Children's Book!!' (c.1925).

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[150] A. Gelina, Galina Chichagova, and Ol'ga Chichagova, 'Obrazy staroi knizhki-skazki. Mistiku i fantasiku iz detskoi knigi doloi!! Daesh' novuiu detskuiu knigu!! Trud, bor'ba, tekhnika, priroda – novyi detskii byt. Novaia kniga nomozhet vospitat' novuiu smenu.' ('The characters of old story books. Down with the mysticism and fantasy of children's books!! Give us the new children's book!! Work, battle, technology, nature – the new everyday life of children. The new book fosters new transformation.') (Rostov: Gosmasterskoi pedagogicheskogo teatr glavsotsvosa, 1925).

Back in Petrograd, the already established picture book tradition was evolving, with visual innovations that that were just as radical as those being propagated by the Moscow artists. The mid-1920s saw Lebedev come to the forefront of developments in children's illustration. Born in 1891, Lebedev was self-taught until 1912, when he enrolled in the studio of Mikhail Bernshtein. There he became acquainted with future avant-gardists Lapshin and Vladimir Tatlin.[151] During his time at the studio, Lebedev experimented with Impressionism, abstraction and most importantly Cubism. In addition to his early professional experience with satirical journal illustration, the First World War period provided the artist with an opportunity to develop his style by working on propaganda window posters for the Petrograd branch of ROSTA.[152]

Following his participation in *Elka*, Lebedev began to illustrate children's books. The first was an Arabian tale, *Lev i byk* (*The Lion and the Bull*) in 1918 and other publications included a series of folk tales for the publishing house Mysl' (Thought) from 1923 to 1924.[153] The most prominent early success for Lebedev came with his 1921 illustrations for *Slonenok*, the Russian translation of Rudyard Kipling's *The Elephant's Child*.[154] The ROSTA posters, designed for display in empty shop windows, were hand printed or stencilled in small batches and featured *lubok* style flat images with satirical captions integrated into the design. Lebedev re-invented this simple graphic language for the animals in the Kipling story, with black and white illustrations showing creatures composed of stencilled body parts floating in an empty white background. (Figure 2.11) These "Cubist constructions" received great praise from Lebedev's avant-garde colleagues including Lapshin and art critic Nikolai Punin, giving Steiner good reason to describe the illustrations as, "the manifesto of a new approach to children's book graphics."[155] Children however, did not find the pictures so appealing. During a group reading session with children aged seven to fourteen, researchers at the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work (previously known as the Institute for Children's Reading) noted some particularly adverse comments. The younger children failed to comprehend the pictures at all, thinking that the images showed either melon peel or the measles. An eleven year old girl understood that the forms were animals but could not see them as whole creatures:

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[151] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.343.

[152] Dmitrii Fomin, '"Novaia estetika detskoi knigi." Leningradskaia shkola nachala 1920-x gg.' in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 2.* (2009), pp.10-19, at p.11; For reproduction images of Lebedev's posters and a contemporaneous appreciation of the work by art critic Nikolai Punin, see Vladimir Lebedev and Nikolai Punin, *Russkii plakat 1917-1922. Vypusk pervyi*. V.V. Lebedev (Petrograd: Uzdatel'stvo "Strelets", 1922).

[153] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.346-347.

[154] Kipling, *Slonenok* (1926). The book was originally published by Epokha in Berlin, 1922.

[155] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), pp.42-43.

> The beak flew off the ostrich. The snake is cut up in bits. Look how the giraffe is all cut up! Its tail flew off. The monkey. Its feet flew off, as though they've been cut off. You see, someone chewed off the elephant's head. Wolves ate the giraffe's muscles.[156]

During the next few years, Lebedev honed his illustrative style further until he made a major breakthrough with a series of picture books written by Samuil Marshak. Marshak was a young children's playwright with an interest in folklore, who found himself drawn to work in children's literature. He headed a group of writers and artists who developed the children's journal *Vorobei/ Novyi Robinzon* (*Sparrow/ The New Robinson*, 1923-1925) and whilst working on his own children's poems, found himself appointed as literary editor of private publishing house Raduga (Rainbow), which opened in Petrograd in 1922.[157] Raduga was best known for its striking picture books, made possible by the ingenious pairing of writers with compatible artists and it was here that Lebedev and Marshak created the most iconic picture book series of the 1920s. The series began with *Tsirk* (*The Circus*), *Morozhenoe* (*Ice Cream*), *O glupom myshenke* (*About the Stupid Little Mouse*) and *Vchera i segodniia* (*Yesterday and Today*) in 1925. These were followed in 1926 by *Bagazh* (*Luggage*), finishing with *Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok* (*How the Plane Made a Plane*) and *Pudel* (*The Poodle*) in 1927. The books offered a totally contemporary vision of the picture book with new subject matter and a bold, brightly coloured aesthetic which worked in complete harmony with the text.[158] *Morozhenoe* tells the tale of an urban ice cream seller and his customers. A fat man eats all of the ice cream on the cart and in punishment for his gluttony, turns into a snowman. A blizzard begins and the children go skiing down a street which is covered in strawberry ice cream. The visual style Lebedev developed on his work for ROSTA had a huge influence on the pictorial language employed in the book. The fat man is a direct transposition of the bourgeois capitalists depicted in one of the ROSTA windows and the children bear the same marching stance as the workers in the poster, with one of them wearing identical dungarees and flat cap. These symbols make it very clear who holds the moral high

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[156] N. Ia. Simanovich-Efimova, 'Eksperimental'nye retsenzii na knizhki-kartinki s illiustratsiiami khudozhnikov' in *Novye detskie knigi: Sbornik IV* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Rabotnik prosveshcheniia", 1926), pp.116-163, at pp.120-123.

[157] The title of *Vorobei* changed to *Novyi Robinzon* in August 1924.

[158] Startsev, *Detskaia literature bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153. For an in depth analysis of illustration in the Marshak and Lebedev books, see the series from publishing house Sovetskii khodozhnik, edited by Iurii Gerchuk. Titles include *V.V. Lebedev: Morozhenoe* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1976); *V.V. Lebedev: Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1978); *V.V. Lebedev: Okhota* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1978); *Khodozhnik V. Lebedev delaet knigu: Bagazh* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1982).

ground in the story and who should be the subject of our scorn and amusement.[159] (Figures 2.12 and 2.13) It is extremely unlikely that pre-schoolers would have been able to comprehend the politics of this imagery but commentators were impressed with the overall style of the illustration. Nina Efimova, herself an illustrator and children's puppeteer, reviewed *Morozhenoe* in 1926 and praised the Marshak–Lebedev books as cheerful and modern. She was also highly impressed with the quality of the lithography, wondering: "What charms does the artist Lebedev have, that the publisher does not spoil his black colour or ruin the quality of his paints?"[160]

The lithographer's careful treatment of Lebedev's illustrations can be attributed to his consummate professionalism as a graphic artist. Scrutiny of the original drawings for *Vchera i segodniia* shows that the images prepared by the artist before the book went to print were meticulously drawn, perfectly finished and produced with full consideration of what was possible with printing technology at this time. The lines where the colour was to begin and end were clearly demarcated, the exact positioning of text over image was made possible by the correct amount of space being left and when the drawing is placed next to the published page, it is obvious that the printer has tried very hard to match Lebedev's original tones.[161] Lebedev also had a great understanding of how different shades could be created by the layering of simple primary colours, meaning that his images could be loaded with ten different hues after just two or three impressions of the lithographer's stone.[162] Efimova's positive comments on *Tsirk* focussed on Lebedev's use of colour and his ability to harmonise this with form and graphic technique. She described the overall tone as being redolent of the boxes of sugar-coated sweets which are given to children for a treat on special occasions.[163] The highest recommendation of all for the Marshak-Lebedev books came from the consumer. In evaluating their success, it is enough to state that they were all re-printed a number of times before the early 1930s, with *Bagazh* reaching a spectacular six editions by 1931.[164]

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[159] Vladimir Lebedev, ROSTA propaganda poster (C. 1920-1921). Image reproduced in Vladimir Lebedev and Nikolai Punin, *Russkii plakat 1917-1922. Vypusk pervyi*. V.V. Lebedev (Petrograd: Uzdatel'stvo "Strelets", 1922), plate XXII; Marshak, *Morozhenoe* (1925).

[160] N. Ia. Simanovich-Efimova, 'Graficheskii iazyk detskikh knizhek-kartinok' in *Novye detskie knigi: Sbornik IV* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Rabotnik prosveshcheniia", 1926), pp.93-115, at p.113.

[161] Vladimir Vasil'evich Lebedev, Original gouache and ink drawings for Samuil Marshak's *Vchera i segodniia* 1925. Manuscripts Q 12281, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library; Samuil Marshak, *Vchera i segodniia*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925).

[162] V. Kreitser, 'Izdatel'stvo-shkola', *Detskaia literatura*, Vol. 3, No.4 (April 1968), pp.58-60, at p.60.

[163] Simanovich-Efimova, 'Graficheskii iazyk detskikh knizhek-kartinok' (1926), p.113.

[164] Startsev, *Detskaia literature bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153.

Figure 2.11: Vladimir Lebedev, illustration for *The Elephant's Child* (1926).

Figures 2.12 and 2.13: Vladimir Lebedev, illustrations for *Ice Cream* by Samuil Marshak (1925).

Marshak and Lebedev had as much organisational talent as creative ability and following their success at Raduga, they were employed as literary and artistic director at the newly created children's department of the Leningrad branch of Gosizdat, which opened at the end of 1924. Referred to ever since as the 'Leningrad School' of children's books, due to the dedication with which the two editors nurtured prospective talent, the group was sub-divided into the 'Marshak school' of writers and the 'Lebedev school' of illustrators. Lebedev was as professional an editor as he was an illustrator and made sure that everything which passed under his jurisdiction was of the highest quality. His artists were known to be in personal attendance at the printing house on a daily basis, seeing to the layout of the page and taking over the drawing from the professional lithographers.[165] If a young artist was struggling with an illustration, Lebedev would even take home the drawing and re-work it himself.[166] In line with his own visual interests, Lebedev fostered a long line of young artists working in an economical modern style. At the same time, either through the influence of Constructivism or in accordance with the general trend in the graphic arts at this time, Moscow illustrators were embracing this new aesthetic too. The pre-school books that emerged took on what would be best described as the 'new Soviet picture book' style. The typical traits of these books included figures and objects formed of simple, flat geometric shapes which were placed against sterile white backgrounds. White space was used as a positive value within coloured shapes, while the composition of each page employed clear modern typography as an integral part of the whole. There was room for some variation between artists but a predominant stylistic commonality linked books of this type to make a cohesive and distinct body of works.

There are numerous 'new Soviet picture book' artists whose work is worthy of attention but outlining a few of the most prolific gives a sense of how brilliant this period was for picture book graphics. After his first experiments in children's illustration with the Segodniia collective, Lapshin became a key member of the Leningrad School who illustrated over fifty children's books and worked on the editorial staff of *Ezh (Hedgehog)*, one of the children's magazines published by Gosizdat. Following his time at Bernshtein's studio alongside Lebedev, Lapshin spent several years studying with Bilibin at the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts before launching into a varied career as a painter, illustrator, theatre artist and porcelain designer.[167] Many of the children's books he illustrated were for school age readers, including several with author M. Ilin, who wrote books explaining technical subjects.[168] Lapshin also proved that he could entertain

[165] Solomon Volkov (trans. Antonina W. Bouis), *St Petersburg: A Cultural History* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996), pp.493-495.

[166] Kreitser, 'Izdatel'stvo-shkola' (1968), p.60.

[167] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.25.

[168] M. Ilin was the pseudonym of Il'ia Marshak, brother of Samuil Marshak.

younger readers, illustrating picture books which covered various topics from everyday life, notably including a collection of poems by Osip Mandel'shtam entitled *Shary* (*Balloons*).[169] One of Lapshin's least characteristic but most striking visual efforts was the design of *Nasha kukhniiia* (*Our Kitchen*), Nikolai Chukovskii's ode to the wonders of the modern kitchen. The illustrations employ an exemplary Constructivist palette of grey, black and red. The front cover and opening page are governed by the perfect straight lines of tiles and shelving, demonstrating the importance of order and neatness. Each page after this features a large drawing of a single kitchen implement – the coffee pot, meat grinder, soup ladle and Primus stove, all reduced to flat stencilled forms but with a cleverly modelled three dimensional quality rarely found in illustrations of this type.[170] (Figures 2.14 and 2.15)

Figures 2.14 and 2.15: Nikolai Lapshin, front cover and illustration for *Our Kitchen* by Nikolai Chukovskii (1925).

Evgeniia Evenbakh was a Leningrad based painter and graphic artist who had studied at the Academy of Arts under Kuz'ma Petrov-Vodkin. She illustrated around thirty children's books, acting as co-author on many titles.[171] Evenbakh was able to illustrate technical subjects in a very economical style but really flourished with her more painterly creations for children's poetry. As a

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[169] Osip Mandel'shtam, *Shary*, ill. Nikolai Lapshin (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[170] Nikolai Chukovskii, *Nasha kukhniia*, ill. Nikolai Lapshin (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925).

[171] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.44; Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.180.

gifted colourist with an eye for vibrant primary shades, she was at her best when creating panoramic double page spreads which turned everyday scenes into festive events. In an illustration for *Rynok* (*The Market*) by Evgenii Shvarts, Evenbakh makes a trip to buy groceries look more like a day out at the circus. We see the inviting coloured awnings of the market stalls, a bunch of shining red balloons drifting off into the sky and the jolly green and yellow striped skirt of a plump lady in the foreground. In the bottom right hand corner there is a witty reference to the work of the Gosizdat editors, as the ice cream man from *Morozhenoe* makes an appearance, cheekily escaping from the pages of his own book to sell his wares in another.[172] In her work for Aleksandr Vvedenskii's lyric poem *Na reke* (*At the River*), Evenbakh uses full page colour to create a dreamlike atmosphere. Water and sky become one in a solid background and shapes made of glimmering white or bright scarlet dazzle against the cool turquoise river. The stencilled figures and little block houses have convincingly real reflections in the water and even the fish, made of nothing but a tiny dash of red ink, look as though they are actually moving. The book was the perfect showcase for an artist skilled enough to create all of these shimmering details whilst remaining within the confines of a flat, minimal, modern style.[173] (Figure 2.16)

Figure 2.16: Evgeniia Evenbakh, illustration for *At the River* by Aleksandr Vvedenskii (1928).

[172] Evgenii Shvarts, *Rynok*, ill. Evgeniia Evenbakh (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926).

[173] Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Na reke*, ill. Evgeniia Evenbakh (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

Boris Pokrovskii was a Moscow graphic artist who created many picture books for pre-schoolers. He was equally accomplished at drawing animals, technological marvels or simple scenes from ordinary life. His style was sometimes very minimal and in other instances more figurative but his illustrations always felt very contemporary and suited to the times. Pokrovskii's masterpiece was the design for Maiakovskii's *Eta knizhechka moia pro moria i pro maiak* (*This Little Book of Mine is About the Sea and About the Lighthouse)*, easily one of the most stylish picture books of the period. The illustrations suitably reflect the tone of Maiakovskii's poem, which is descriptive yet dramatic, explaining how accidents are prevented at sea by the guiding beam of the lighthouse and the hard work of the lighthouse keeper. Rich royal blue and flashes of orange make a predominantly black and white book seem more colourful than it really is. The foam on the waves is created by a strategic absence of printed colour and clever compositional devices include a page built around the grid of a map and buildings shown as cross-sections, with the people inside appearing like toy figures in a dolls house. In one of the most memorable illustrations, we see the lighthouse keeper at work polishing the lamp. His small, muscular human form is framed by the powerful machinery, which is drawn as a silhouette created from a conglomerate of technical parts, more powerful than man alone but totally reliant on his diligence to function.[174] (Figures 2.17 and 2.18)

One of Pokrovskii's colleagues at the Moscow section of Gosizdat was Lidia Popova, an illustrator and poster designer who trained at Vkhutemas under painter Aleksandra Ekster.[175] Popova's numerous picture books bore an instantly recognisable, brightly coloured style which exuded a sense of fun. She composed her illustrations from large, bold shapes, incorporating decorative patterns into the colouring and ingeniously integrating perspective into a totally flat picture plane. On the front cover of A. Olsuf'eva's *Igrushki* (*Toys*), Popova shows a toy seller brandishing his wares, standing against a solid deep pink background. Inside the book, each page features a short poem about a different traditional toy with a corresponding illustration. A set of traditionally painted *matrioshki* pop out across the centre spread, arranged in size order so that they look as though they are receding into the distance.[176] Popova created a delightful design for Nina Sakonskaia's *Knizhka eta pro 4 tsveta* (*Little Book About 4 Colours*), which in defiance of the earnest educational climate during these years was unashamedly pretty and intended to please little girls. The reader is taught to count, name items of clothing and recognise

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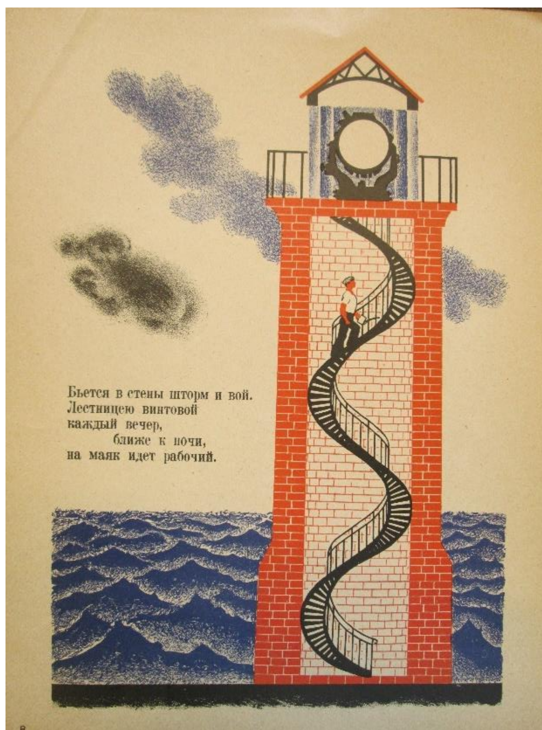
[174] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Eta knizhechka moia pro moria i pro maiak*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1927).

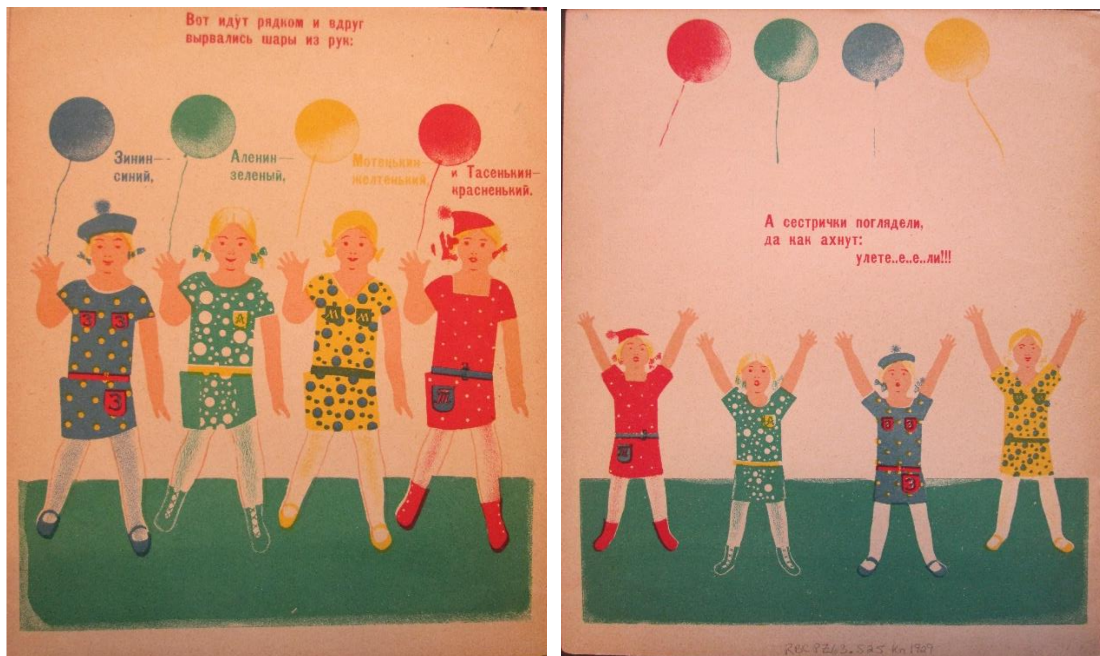
[175] Albert Lemmens and Serge Stommels, *Lidia Popova*. Available from: https://ls.vanabbemuseum.nl/P/popova%20lid/text/popova%20lid.htm Accessed 11/10/2019.

[176] Olsuf'eva., *Igrushki* (1928).



Figures 2.17 and 2.18: Boris Pokrovskii, front cover and illustrations for *This Little Book of Mine is About the Sea and About the Lighthouse* by Vladimir Maiakovskii (1927).

colours through a poem about four sisters who all dress in different colours. After learning about each girl in her red, green, yellow or blue outfit, we see the sisters go for an evening walk, where they each buy a balloon to match their clothing. On the final page, the sisters release the balloons and Popova shifts the perspective so that we are looking at the girls from above, as their balloons float off into the sky.[177] (Figures 2.19 and 2.20)

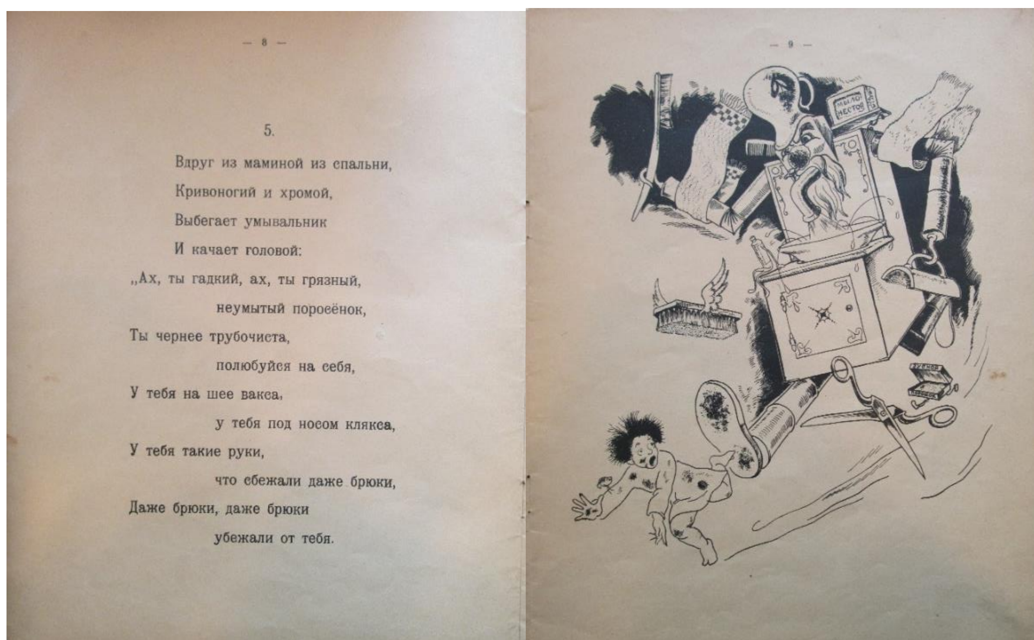


Figures 2.19 and 2.20: Lidia Popova, illustrations for *Little Book About 4 Colours* by Nina Sakonskaia (1929).

By the mid-1920s, the 'new Soviet picture book' artists had taken a large share of the market but they were by no means the only illustrators working on the modern new pre-school book. Some of the Mir iskusstva artists who had contributed to *Elka* continued to work on children's book illustration after the revolution, applying their skills as cartoonists to bring to life some of the most well-loved tales of the period. Chukovskii found a publisher for his growing body of children's poetry at Raduga, where he collaborated with artists from his pre-revolutionary network to visualise his imaginative verse. Annenkov was engaged to complete the illustrations for *Moidodyr* (*Wash-until-holes-appear*), a poem about a boy who refuses to wash until he is chased by a talking washstand with an army of household objects and forced to mend his ways. The elegant black and white drawings show a host of domestic objects gone mad. The smiling

[177] Nina Sakonskaia, *Knizhka eta pro 4 tsveta*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929).

samovar from *Elka* makes an appearance and is joined by flying socks, a dancing mop and Moidodyr himself, the whiskered commander of the washstands, whose hat is a jug and hands are scrubbing brushes.[178] (Figure 2.21) Chekhonin worked with Chukovskii on several books including *Tarakanishche* (*The Cockroach*) and successfully illustrated Marshak's *Knizhka pro knizhki* (*Little Book About Books*).[179] Dobuzhinskii made several picture books of his own including an alphabet book and an illustrated edition of Hans Christian Andersen's *Svinopas* (*The Swineherd*) before helping to create a classic Chukovskii piece.[180] *Barmalei* was an anarchic tale about two children who run away to Africa, where they have adventures with a host of talking wild animals before being kidnapped by Barmalei, a cannibal pirate with a lust for violence. Dobuzhinskii's brightly coloured drawings were full of exactly the sort of gruesome detail that children love to be frightened by and he employed his Mir iskusstva decorative flair in a whole new way. Floral decorations are replaced by snakes, palm trees and crocodiles while on the opening page, the decorative border is formed by a snarling pirate reaching down from the clouds with two enormous, bloodied swords.[181]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5.

Вдруг из маминой из спальни,
Кривоногий и хромой,
Выбегает умывальник
И качает головой:
„Ах, ты гадкий, ах, ты грязный,
неумытый поросёнок,
Ты чернее трубочиста,
полюбуйся на себя,
У тебя на шее вакса,
у тебя под носом клякса,
У тебя такие руки,
что сбежали даже брюки,
Даже брюки, даже брюки
убежали от тебя.

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Figure 2.21: Iurii Annenkov, illustration for *Moidodyr* by Kornei Chukovskii (1923).

[178] Chukovskii, *Moidodyr* (1923).

[179] Kornei Chukovskii, *Tarakanishche*, ill. Sergei Chekhonin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925); Samuil Marshak, *Knizhka pro knizhki*, ill. Sergei Chekonin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925).

[180] Mstislav Dobuzhinskii, *Veselaia azbuka* (Moscow: Brokgauz-Efron, 1925); Hans Christian Andersen, *Svinopas*, ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Berlin: Grzhebin, 1922).

[181] Kornei Chukovskii, *Barmalei*, ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925).

Annenkov, Chekhonin and Dobuzhinskii were among the wave of emigrants who left Russia in the mid to late 1920s but another member of the Mir iskusstva took up the baton of picture book illustration with tremendous success, devoting much of his career to the art form during the 1920s. Vladimir Konashevich was brought up and educated in Moscow, where one of his teachers at the Moscow Art College was picture book pioneer Maliutin. In 1915 the artist moved to Petrograd, where he worked with Chekhonin and Nikolai Tyrsa on the painting of murals at the Ysupov Palace. Konashevich moved to Pavlovsk in 1918, where he worked for eight years as artist-restorer at the palace museum. During this time, he also became a member of the Mir iskusstva and began illustrating literature including the works of Pushkin, Anton Chekhov and Nikolai Gogol. Konashevich's first children's books were for the Grzhebin private publishing house but he found a fertile new avenue for his creativity when he met Marshak in 1923 and began to design books for Raduga and Gosizdat, becoming one of the most prolific picture book illustrators of the period.[182]

Konashevich's work was identifiable by its superb draughtsmanship and a bright, contemporary style which played to the whimsical nature of childhood without being sentimental or clichéd. He used fresh colours, clean white backgrounds and figurative detail to pick out the most important elements of the plot. The artist's Mir iskusstva background and experience with architectural decoration gave him an ability to work with ornamental figures and hand-drawn lettering, which in most instances was put to use on front covers or title pages, leaving the inside illustrations to clearly tell the story. Typical of Konashevich's flair for jacket design was *Van'ka and Vas'ka*, a picture story about two young boys in Leningrad who cause chaos with their mischief. The illustrations on the inside are simple but realistic line drawings with selected blocks of colour, authentically displaying the architectural atmosphere of the city. The front cover and inside title page use an irregular hand-drawn font, to match a drawing of the two boys' giggling faces whilst the headings are surrounded by decorative swirls and motifs, which suggest the elaborate plasterwork of Leningrad's many old buildings. [183] (Figures 2.32 and 2.33)

The depiction of childish behaviour in *Van'ka and Vas'ka* came easily to Konashevich, who understood closely what his young readers required and would be likely to enjoy. In a lyrical account of her childhood, the artist's daughter Ol'ga Chaiko, recalled the many games that her father invented for her. There was a trio of imaginary crocodiles used to teach her to behave

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[182] *Konashevich: Izvestnyi i neizvestnyi* (Saint Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2018), pp.5-7, pp.115-117; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.346-347. The sample of picture books surveyed for this study suggests that Konashevich may have been the most published illustrator of the 1920s and early 1930s, illustrating 39 of the 657 books examined. Lebedev follows with 27 books and Ermolaeva with 21 titles.

[183] Vladimir Konashevich (ill.), *Van'ka and Vas'ka* (Leningrad: Vremiia, 1925).

correctly and a paper figure called Takha-Bul'gakha, who became her playmate and companion. She also recalled Konashevich's great sadness when she grew into a teenager and no longer wanted to join in with his diversions. Chaiko believed that this childlike spirit was what made her father such a successful children's illustrator:

> He was close to and interested in the children's world, like the children themselves. It could be because he loved to illustrate children's books, that the psychology of the child was accessible to him in all of his logical connections. When he made a drawing for a children's book, his fantasy was inexhaustible. He knew exactly what would interest a child of a given age and what seemed boring to them.[184]

This understanding was reflected in Konashevich's own writings, in which he set out his philosophy for children's book illustration. He believed that child was a realist who demanded, "clarity, simplicity and expressiveness." Subjects were to be depicted exactly, perspective was not be distorted and normal colouring was to be used. Above all, composition was to be simple so that the child would understand the picture at first glance.[185]

This way of thinking aligned Konashevich neatly with Chukovskii, who in an essay on children's poetry stated that: "...every stanza, and at times every couplet, must suggest an illustration to the artist, since children think in terms of images."[186] It was therefore almost inevitable that the two men would end up working together and that they would eventually collaborate on over twenty picture books.[187] The first of these works and one of the most successful, was *Mukhina svad'ba* (*The Fly's Wedding*), a dramatic poem about a fly hosting a name day party.[188] The celebration is invaded by a wicked spider who kidnaps the fly and tries to eat her, when she is rescued by a heroic mosquito who asks for her hand in marriage. The elegant drawings are in black with orange details and true to Chukovskii's commandment, each couplet or verse of the

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[184] Ol'ga Chaiko, 'O.V. Chaiko (Konashevich)' in V. M. Konashevich, *O sebe i svoem dele* (Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1968), pp.399-413.

[185] Vladimir Konashevich, 'O risunke dlia detskoi knigi' in V. M. Konashevich, *O sebe i svoem dele* (Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1968), pp.193-197.

[186] Chukovsky, *From Two to Five* (1968), p.145.

[187] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.322.

[188] Kornei Chukovskii, *Mukhina svad'ba*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925). The first edition came out through Raduga in 1924.

poem has its own illustration. Where there is a lot of detail, such as in the tea party scene at the beginning, the page is split into two in order to accommodate enough imagery. During the tense moments with longer pieces of text, such as the fly's kidnapping, Konashevich channels all the dramatic energy into one large illustration which occupies most of the page. This first edition of the book still contained decorative borders and had a slightly old-fashioned appearance but Konashevich re-worked the book for its sixth edition in 1927, when it was renamed as *Mukha Tsokotukha* (*The Chatterbox Fly*). The new drawings used flat planes of colour in gold, red and turquoise with great clarity of detail, creating a bright modern piece which really represented Konashevich's mature picture book style of the late 1920s.[189] (Figure 2.24)

Konashevich also worked with many other picture book authors and had the versatility to adapt his style to each different writer and text. He produced several books with Marshak including *Pozhar* (*The Fire*), a cautionary tale about a little girl who plays with the stove and sets the house alight, so that the fire brigade has to be summoned.[190] The illustrations for *Pozhar* were quite distinct, using a three colour palette of black, red and yellow throughout the book. In the action scenes, the firefighters are composed of small rounded black shapes, making them appear as tiny silhouettes before the flames and smoke, which are created from large swathes of colour. Daniil Kharms gave Konashevich a different task in illustrating his poem *Igra* (*Play*). The text was structured around three little boys playing pretending to be a car, a steamer and an aeroplane and as such, gave the artist free range to visualise these make believe games. Instead of creating a pure fantasy world, Konashevich shows the boys in a very real street with paving, cobbles and an industrial landscape in the background. The artist engages perfectly with the childlike spirit of Kharms' poem and the joy in the images comes from his depiction of the children's movements, which are carefree and show that they are totally absorbed in their play. [191] (Figure 2.25)

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[189] Chukovskii, *Mukha Tsokotukha,* (1929); Startsev, *Detskaia literature bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), p.252.

[190] Samuil Marshak, *Pozhar,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925).

[191] Daniil Kharms, *Igra*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

Figures 2.22 and 2.23: Vladimir Konashevich, front cover and inside cover for *Van'ka and Vas'ka* (1925).

Figure 2.24: Vladimir Konashevich, double-page spread for *The Chatterbox Fly* by Kornei Chukovskii (1930).

Figure 2.25: Vladimir Konashevich, double-page spread for *Play* by Daniil Kharms (1930).

Books by the Mir iskusstva artists were not as visually or socially radical as those produced by their avant-garde colleagues but they still marked a great departure from what was being published at the turn of the century and during the 1910s. Certain stylistic traits were carried in almost all picture books from the early 1920s onwards – bright colours, simple visual styles, pure white backgrounds, minimal use of decorative flourishes and total integration of text and imagery. These books were printed in pamphlet form and not just for economic reasons. Whilst some were small, cheap and flimsy and others were larger and better printed, luxury editions were not to be seen anywhere. The Soviet pre-school child now had a specialist literature of its own, containing a bold visual interpretation of the new society and available to children of all social classes. The artistic takeover of ink and lithographic plates meant that picture book world had undergone its own revolution.

Artists of the Leningrad School

Lebedev was best known for fostering the recognisable 'new Soviet picture book' style of illustration but he also encouraged artists with their own highly idiosyncratic approaches to become involved with book design. The Leningrad Gosizdat office found itself host to many different members of the artistic community, who each found his or her success as a children's illustrator in a unique way. The brilliant creative force and innovation driving this group made it

particularly notable as an example of artists taking the task of drawing pictures for children with utter seriousness and as a craft in its own right. In combination with the pure avant-garde innovations made at the publishing house during this time, it is difficult to imagine the subsequent development of Soviet children's book illustration without this artistic grouping having existed. There were many Leningrad artists whose work directed the future trajectory of the picture book and looking at several who were very central to the life of Gosizdat or who had very distinctive styles, allows us to understand the significance of this moment in Soviet publishing history.

The leading lady at the Leningrad department was Ermolaeva, an artist whose children's book illustration was an integral part of her whole artistic mission. A talented painter with great energy and organisational ability, Ermolaeva had already lived a full creative life before she came to work at Gosizdat in her early thirties. Born in 1893 in Saratov province, her mother was from an old noble family while her father was a local official, who published a Legal Marxist journal in St Petersburg. This lead Ermolaeva's older brother to become a member of the Menshevik party and the artist herself to become well versed in Marxist literature during her youth. Ermolaeva was privileged to receive a rich education, studying in Europe as a young girl before completing the gymnasium in St Petersburg. In 1912, she enrolled in Bernshtein's studio, working alongside Lebedev, Lapshin, Tatlin and other 'left' artists, with teachers including Petrov-Vodkin and Benois. This was followed by a period in Paris, where Ermolaeva was greatly influenced by Cubist and Post-Impressionist painters such as Paul Cézanne, Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso and André Derain. The final part of the artist's formal education was a course at the Archaeological Institute in St Petersburg, which fostered an interest in the culture and art of ancient Russia.[192] Now a fully-fledged young artist, Ermolaeva threw herself into Petersburg artistic life. She was a member of the artistic circle 'Beskrovnoe ubiistvo' (Bloodless Murder), which existed from 1914 to 1917, publishing a Futurist style journal and staging theatrical spectacles. In 1918, the remnants of this group became the Segodniia collective and at the same time, Ermolaeva worked at the City Museum, for which she collected old painted signboards which were gradually being replaced by electric ones. The artist was also engaged by the fine art section of The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (IZO Narkompros), which put her to work on decoration for theatrical productions and then sent her to Vitebsk in the spring of 1919. Alongside her teaching

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[192] Zainchkovskaia, 'Khudozhnik – ne shutochnoe zvanie…' (2008), pp.5-7. Ermolaeva was educated as a child in London, Paris and Lausanne. She found herself abroad as the family sought medical treatment for her crippled legs, an ailment which meant that Ermolaeva walked with a stick or crutches for almost her entire life. One version of the story relates that the injury came from a childhood horse riding accident while a second version states that she was frostbitten while visiting her brother, who had been exiled to Siberia for his political activities. See Shatskikh, *Vitebsk* (2007), p.40.

activities in Vitebsk, Ermolaeva was occupied in setting up the art school museum and acting as secretary for Malevich's Suprematist UNOVIS group. [193]

The year 1923 saw a return to Petrograd, where under Malevich's direction, Ermolaeva was employed as a specialist in Cubism at GInKhuK (The State Institute of Artistic Culture), a centre for theoretical research in art which aimed to analyse the component parts of plastic form.[194] It was also at this time that Ermolaeva first began to work with the Marshak group, as she was regularly commissioned to create illustrations for *Vorobei/Novyi Robinzon*. These were black and white figurative drawings, which often explained technical or historical subjects but this opportunity gave the artist a chance to explore a visual language with which children of the post-revolutionary period could engage. When GInKhuK closed down in 1926, Ermolaeva found herself investigating avenues away from abstract art, founding a small collective known as the 'Group of Painterly-Plastic Realism'. During the next few years, she used her extensive technical knowledge to develop a more individual, painterly style and by the late 1920s she transferred this visual approach to the illustration of children's books and journals, with plenty of work available at the burgeoning Gosizdat children's department.[195]

Ermolaeva's picture books were distinctive for their rich, painterly quality and an exquisite understanding of how the lithographic process could be used to create depth of colour akin to her style of painting. One of her great successes was *Poezd* (*The Train*), an album of eight landscape scenes tied together by a train which journeys through each scene. The book is given a loose plot line in an accompanying short story by Evgenii Shvarts, in which eight schoolboys leave their classmates behind and go on long journeys, writing post cards back home to say where they have been. The train goes over a huge river bridge and then through a night-time city with a velvet blue sky, which sparkles with a thousand electric lights. It crosses an expanse of snow before rounding a red cliff with a raging sea below. The jungle scene is particularly spectacular, with tall green palm trees densely covering a misty mountain which is divided by a tumbling waterfall, where silhouetted figures cross over a rope bridge bearing a mysterious cargo.[196] (Figures 2.26 and 2.27) Ermolaeva's talent for condensing huge landscapes onto small sheets of paper was also seen in her illustrations for Vvedenskii's poem *Rybaki* (*The Fishermen*).

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[193] Zainchkovskaia, 'Khudozhnik – ne shutochnoe zvanie…' (2008), pp.7-12.

[194] Kovtun, 'Khudozhnitsa knigi Vera Mikhailovna Ermolaeva' (1975), p.72; Zainchkovskaia, 'Khudozhnik – ne shutochnoe zvanie…' (2008), p.13.

[195] Fomin,'"Novaia estetika detskoi knigi." Leningradskaia shkola nachala 1920-x gg.' (2009), p.17; Zainchkovskaia, 'Khudozhnik – ne shutochnoe zvanie…' (2008), pp.14-15.

[196] Ermolaeva, *Poezd* (1929).

In the summer of 1928, Ermolaeva made a sketching trip to the Barents Sea and the gouache paintings that she brought back showed the great power of nature in this wilderness. When she shared them with Vvedenskii, the poet was so inspired by the atmosphere of the far north that he wrote the text for *Rybaki*.[197] The story is about a group of fishermen who go out in their boat, only to become caught in a fierce storm so that they have to be rescued. The illustrations reflect the palette of the wild coast with large stretches of sky and sea in varying shades of blue, contrasted with the warm earthy tones of wooden boat, sand and rocky cliffs. The overall effect is highly dramatic but ingeniously scaled down to make a powerful tale.[198] (Figure 2.28)

Vvedenskii belonged to the Oberiu group of poets (Ob'edinenie real'nogo iskusstva or the Association for Real Art) which included Kharms and Nikolai Zabolotskii. Ermolaeva was a close friend and colleague of the group, working with them on many pieces for Gosizdat in-house children's journals *Ezh* and *Chizh* (*Siskin)* as well as full scale picture books. The work she created with Kharms brought out Ermolaeva's mischievous sense of humour, another of her great strengths as a children's illustrator. *Ivan Ivanych Samovar* was a short, playful poem about an overworked samovar, drained to the last drop by a thirsty extended family who are too lazy to replenish its water supply. As with many of Kharm's poems for children, the verse relies on rhythmical word play rather than extensive description and Ermolaeva's drawings provide the perfect complement to this, filling in the gaps left by the text. Portraits of the participants bring the scene to life, from the fragile grandmother with her shawl and walking cane to the puffed up, angry face of the samovar as he gradually steams himself dry.[199] (Figure 2.29) Ermolaeva's visual humour and sense of playfulness also extended itself to some of her most original creations, picture books in which the pages were designed to be cut out and used as toys. Some of these contained small paper shapes to be removed from the book and re-assembled as models and in the case of *Shest' masok* (*Six Masks*), each page featured a face mask for a different ethnic group including an Native American chief, an Eskimo and a white man with a pipe.[200] *Gore Kucher* (*The Unfortunate Driver*) was a mix and match book which allowed the reader to pair carriages and trailers with different combinations of driver. Dotted lines on each page demonstrated where to cut flaps or make folds so that the pages could be changed around. A plump pig could pull either a carriage of boxes or a railway goods wagon, a team of huskies could be made to tug a tram and a big yellow fish found itself towing a sailing dinghy through the sea.[201] (Figure 2.30) As Fomin explains, this format meant that the reader became co-author of

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[197] Kovtun, 'Khudozhnitsa knigi Vera Mikhailovna Ermolaeva' (1975), p.76.

[198] Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Rybaki*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

[199] Daniil Kharms, *Ivan Ivanych Samovar*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[200] Vera Ermolaeva, *Shest' masok* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[201] Ermolaeva, *Gore kucher* (1930).

the book rather than passive contemplator. In changing the order of the constituent parts, the cardinal form of the book loses its sense so that: "The accent is not on looking at the drawings but on the possibilities of manipulating them."[202]

Figures 2.26 and 2.27: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for *The Train* (1929).

Figure 2.28: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for *The Fishermen* by Aleksandr Vvedenskii (1930).

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[202] Fomin,'"Novaia estetika detskoi knigi." Leningradskaia shkola nachala 1920-x gg.' (2009), p.18.

Figure 2.29: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for *Ivan Ivanych Samovar* by Daniil Kharms (1929).

Figure 2.30: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for *The Unfortunate Driver* (1930).

Another artist closely associated with the Oberiuts was Alisa Poret, who produced a number of picture books in her own particular style. Poret was born in 1902 in St Petersburg to a Swedish mother and a father of French origin, who was head doctor at the hospital of the Putilov Works. She trained with Petrov-Vodkin and Pavel Filinov, a painter with philosophical inclinations whose work was characterised by the construction of the picture plane from thousands of tiny coloured fragments. Poret joined Filinov's Masters of Analytical Art (Masterami analitichesko iskusstva) group. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, her apartment became a literary-artistic salon for some of the most prominent members of the Leningrad avant-garde including the Oberiuts and Dmitrii Shostakovich. In this highly creative atmosphere, Poret and Kharms enjoyed a long friendship which blossomed into romance for a brief interlude during the early 1930s. Beginning in the late 1920s, Poret worked for Gosizdat on illustrations for *Ezh* and *Chizh* as well as designing over a dozen picture books, most of which she produced in collaboration with close friend and fellow artist Tatiana Glebova.[203] Lebedev was reputedly not keen on Poret's work, possibly because her naïve Primitivist style was not in keeping with the Lebedev aesthetic but also due to Poret's association with a circle of artists lead by Petr Sokolov, who contradicted Lebedev on questions of book design. As a result, many of the books co-designed by Poret and Glebova were issued under Glebova's name alone and Poret was not paid for every edition of the books that she completed.[204]

The picture books credited to Poret are recognisable by a style which shows a blend of influences including Primitivism of the type favoured in Futurist books, *lubok* illustration, and the distinct painting styles of Poret's mentors, Petrov-Vodkin and Filinov. In each of the books, perspective is flattened or inconsistently applied and the illustrations are coloured in slightly subdued hues, most often playing on the contrast between simple primary shades. Poret depicted various subjects from handmade toys to the railway but also completed a series of books depicting historically important events. *Grazhdanskaia voina* (*The Civil War*) by Ia. Miller, V. Petrov's *Trinadtsat' oktiabrei* (*Thirteen Octobers*) and Poret's own *Kak pobedila revoliutsiia* (*How the Revolution Was Victorious*), all addressed the story of the Bolshevik Revolution in pictorial form, so that it could be understood by children of primary school age.[205] The three books

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[203] Yuri Leving, *Kak Alisa Poret v revoliutsiiu igrala* in *Revoliutsiia zrimogo. Obrazy na setchatke*. (Moscow: New Literary Observer, 2016) [in print], pp.2-3; Alisa Poret, *Zapiski, Risunki, Vospominaniia: Kniga Pervaia* (Moscow: Barbaris, 2014), p.330; Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.32.

[204] Leving, *Kak Alisa Poret v revoliutsiiu igrala* (2016), p.4.

[205] Ia. Miller, *Grazhdanskaia voina*, ill. Alisa Poret (Leningrad: Ogiz - Molodaia gvardiia, 1931); V. Petrov, *Trinadtsat' oktiabrei*, ill. Alisa Poret (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930); Alisa Poret, *Kak pobedila revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930). Ia. Miller was a pseudonym used by Zabolotskii for some of his children's books.

included striking illustrations of vast crowds, composed of tiny sketched figures placed in a natural or architectural landscape. Due to the distortion of normal perspective, these scenes gave an impression of vastness of scale and thanks to Filinov's training, Poret was able to put in huge amounts of minute detail, which made the scenes both authentic and endlessly fascinating. *Kak pobedila revoliutsiia* achieved an extra level of visual sophistication due to Poret's interest in the visual language of the cinema. In his meticulous analysis of the book, Yury Leving has traced much of Poret's imagery and many of her compositional devices to the silent movies which were popular at the time, directly linking some of the scenes in the book with propaganda films about the revolution. An image showing Lenin making his speech at the Finland Station shows the façade of the station building and a red banner in the same place as a frame from Sergei Eisenstein's 1928 film *Oktiabr'* (*October*). On page eight of the book, Poret draws a street protest on the Nevskii Prospect which also echoes a scene from *Oktiabr'*, in particular replicating the overhead angle from which the action was shown. Revealing an influence from outside of Soviet cinema, an illustration of three men around a table consulting a map most likely derives its composition from the 1920 film *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr Caligari)* by German director Robert Wiene.[206]

The artistic mixture at Gosizdat included many members of the fashionable Leningrad avant-garde but it also incorporated artists who did not fit in with any particular group. Vladimir Tambi was the department's specialist illustrator of vehicles, producing a line of picture books in an instantly recognisable, colourful style. Tambi was born in 1906 in St Petersburg and from 1922 to 1924 studied under Petrov-Vodkin at the Petrograd Vkhutein (Higher State Artistic and Technical Institute).[207] His books generally took the form of a picture album featuring vehicles of a certain type, with a short explanatory text at the front and back inside the covers. Titles included *Avtomobil'* (*The Automobile*), *Tanki* (*Tanks*) and *Korabli* (*Ships*) and each showed the historical evolution of the subject in question.[208] *Avtomobil'* begins with the early car on its wooden wheels, moving through to high-speed racing cars, emergency vehicles and double-decker buses. The vehicles were always shown sideways on in a flat stencilled style but with all the technical details correct - the tanks had rivets and caterpillar tracks, the car wheels had the correct number of spokes and the ships had perfectly accurate rigging. The illustrations gained their most distinctive quality from the full-colour backgrounds employed by Tambi, which

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[206] Leving, *Kak Alisa Poret v revoliutsiiu igrala* (2016), p.7, pp.19-20, p.38; Poret, *Kak pobedila revoliutsiia* (1930), p.6, p.8, p.9.

[207] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.34.

[208] Vladimir Tambi, *Avtomobil'* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930); Vladimir Tambi, *Korabli* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Vladimir Tambi, *Tanki* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

saturated the pages with intense colour, giving an overall effect which puts the books as close to mid-twentieth century comics or twenty-first century picture books, as to their early 1930s counterparts. (Figure 2.31)

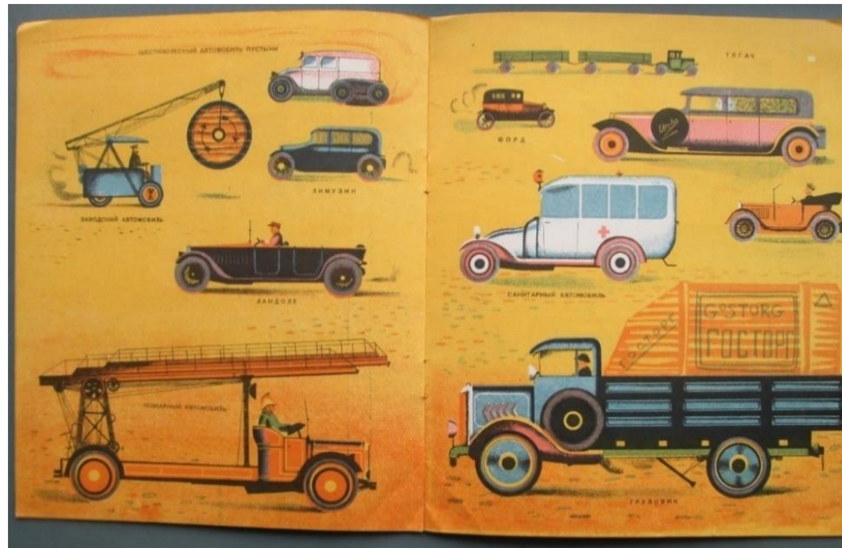

Figure 2.31: Vladimir Tambi, double-page spread for *The Automobile* (1930).

Another of the very unique artists working for the Leningrad department was illustrator and writer Evgenii Charushin, who became very well-loved by Soviet children for his powder-puff animals. Charushin was born in 1902 in Viatka (later Kirov), to an artist-architect father and a market gardener mother who bred animals, often raising baby creatures in the family kitchen. After studying at the Technical Institute in Viatka and then completing his Red Army service, Charushin graduated from Vkhutein in Leningrad in 1926. By the late 1920s, the artist had found his way to Gosizdat, contributing to *Ezh* and *Chizh* as well as illustrating picture books.[209] Initially working under Lebedev's direction, drawing for nature writers such as Vitalii Bianki, Charushin was also encouraged by Marshak to write his own books and so share his knowledge of the animal world that he had been close to since childhood. Lidiia Chukovskaia (daughter of Kornei Chukovskii), who worked as an editor at Gosizdat during the 1930s, recalled an occasion when Charushin came in to the office to consult with Lebedev and Marshak and described how, "in a shaggy fur coat" he passed "for one of his bears".[210] Charushin's creatures were indeed identifiable by fur or feather, shown by richly textured mark-making over a simple Lebedev-style stencilled form. Charushin produced longer texts for older children, which explained the animal's

[209] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.271.

[210] Lidia Chukovskaya, *V laboratorii redaktora* (Saint Petersburg: Azbuka, 2017), p.292.

life and habitat in detail but he engaged his youngest readers with simple albums that centred on the natural beauty of the creature. In *Raznye zveri* (*Different Beasts*) there are animals great and small, from tiny field mice to a large bear, who really captures the imagination with huge paws and thick brown coat.[211] (Figure 2.32) *Vol'nye ptitsy* (*Wild Birds*) concentrates on the wonders of the avian kingdom, featuring common birds like the crow and the duck alongside less familiar ones such as the bustard and a beautifully feathered owl, shown with its head swivelled so that we can see its glowing orange eyes.[212] (Figure 2.33) Charushin proved to be a great commercial success with both his illustrations for other authors and with his own works, which reached over twenty in number by the end of the 1930s.[213]

Figure 2.32: Evgenii Charushin, illustrations for *Different Beasts* (1931).

Figure 233: Evgenii Charushin, illustrations for *Wild Birds* (1931).

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[211] Evgenii Charushin, *Raznye zveri* (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[212] Evgenii Charushin, *Vol'nye ptitsy* (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[213] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.274.

Towards Socialist Realism?

Picture book illustration began to experience a gradual sea change at the end of the 1920s and into the beginning of the 1930s. Many illustrators working in picture books continued to draw in their own characteristic styles but some artists gravitated towards a more figurative, realistic aesthetic. This was in line with the major political developments of the time and the drift towards what would later become known as Socialist Realism in art and literature. Despite the high profile activity of avant-garde artists who openly declared their loyalty to the Bolshevik cultural project, figurative art certainly did not disappear after the revolution. Debate was lively throughout the 1920s amongst both politicians and artists themselves, about the visual style which would give the best official representation of the Soviet state.

The AKhRR (Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia) was formed in 1922 with the aims of supporting the revolution through "heroic realism" and showing the life of contemporary Russia with "documentary truthfulness". Some of the group's members were former Peredvizhniki and it received a huge boost in official support when its first exhibition, dedicated to the Red Army, was sponsored by Trotskii. Artists of the group also painted workers, peasants and revolutionaries, during a period when the cultural pluralism that accompanied NEP meant that there was no officially recognised style of art. It was known that Lenin had conservative taste in the arts but other party members such as Lunacharskii and Nikolai Bukharin put their own personal preferences aside to support artistic variety, including the efforts of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia.[214] Young artists graduating from the progressive post-revolutionary art schools looked for a new way to express their revolutionary consciousness in styles which employed figurative representation but in a more modern form than the traditional academic canvas. The OSt (Society of Easel Painters) was formed in 1925 by a group of Vkhutemas students lead by their teacher David Shterenberg, former head of IZO Narkompros. They rejected the staid realism of the older generation whilst embracing "revolutionary contemporaneity and clarity in the choice of subject", taking industry, sport, technology and the military as their central motifs. At the same time in Leningrad, Krug (The Circle) was formed by a group of students at the

[214] Matthew Bown, '1920-28' in Matthew Bown and Matteo Lafranconi, *Socialist Realisms: Soviet Painting, 1920-1970* (Milan: Skira, 2012), pp.20-33 at p.22; Brandon Taylor, 'On AKhRR' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor (eds.), *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp.51-72 at pp.51-60

Leningrad Academy, who adopted a similar style and use of subject matter to their Moscow counterparts in the OSt.[215]

By 1928, the rapidly changing political climate was having a direct effect upon the art world. Stalin had consolidated power by marginalising his opponents, including defenders of artistic pluralism Trotskii and Bukharin. The prominent Futurist journal *Novyi lef* (*The New Left*) ceased publication and the AKhRR had become the most dominant group of artists in both size and political weight, changing its name to the Association of Artists of the Revolution (AKhR). The First Five-Year Plan was initiated for the rapid development of Soviet industry, NEP was declared to be over and the drive to collectivise agriculture began. These major events led to a new use of the term 'class struggle', with the phrase indicating support for Stalin's policies and on the cultural scene, this movement manifested itself through the emergence of 'proletarian' groups amongst artists and writers. New groups of artists with proletarian credentials formed including Oktiabr (October), which arose in 1928 and included some former members of the OSt. The AKhR saw the gradual dominance of younger members, who expanded the group's activity to include mass art forms such as murals and textile design and in 1931 these young artists spilt from the group completely, forming RAPKh (Russian Association of Proletarian Artists). [216]

A number of successful picture book artists emerged from amongst these turbulent groups of politically focussed artists. These illustrators were not seeking to pursue individual artistic experiments or to produce books for children's entertainment – they were seeking to develop a specially adapted visual language which would explain life in the Soviet Union to its very youngest citizens in an ideologically sound spirit. The idea of the 'new Soviet man' was the chosen subject for some artists, including Aleksandra Deineka. Born in 1899 in Kursk, Deineka was from a genuine proletarian background with a father who worked on the railways and a mother who was a labourer. After art school in Kharkov, the young artist worked as a photographer for the criminal investigation department, decorated propaganda trains and defended Kursk with the Red Army. In 1920, Deineka left for Moscow where he undertook further studies at Vhkhutemas and developed a style which emphasised clear draughtsmanship, dynamic composition and careful restraint in the use of detail. Alongside developing a career in painting, Deineka served his apprenticeship as a graphic artist by working on the illustration and design of journals, becoming an accomplished professional in this area. He drew satirical pieces for *Bezbozhnik* (*The Atheist*) as well as designing poster-like propaganda illustrations for *Prozhektor* (*Projector*) and *Krasnaia niva* (*Red Cornfield*). From 1928 to 1930, Deineka worked on the design of *Iskorka*, where he was able to experiment with different graphic styles and show

[215] Bown, '1920-28' (2012), p.22.
[216] Bown, '1920-28' (2012), p.23; Matthew Bown, '1928-36' in Matthew Bown and Matteo Lafranconi, *Socialist Realisms: Soviet Painting, 1920-1970* (Milan: Skira, 2012), pp.34-53 at p.35.

great versatility in adapting his work for a very young audience. As a painter, Deineka began to achieve major success in 1927 with paintings including *Textile Workers* and *The Defence of Petrograd*. In terms of organisational allegiance, Deineka began as a member of OSt but after some criticism of his choice of subject matter and style, he joined the Oktiabr group instead, through sympathy with their belief that art was a means for mass agitation and that graphic art was equal to easel painting. He eventually joined RAPKh in 1931.[217]

Deineka's political commitment and graphic professionalism made him the perfect candidate for designing picture books and he worked on the medium for a decade from around 1928. The artist's illustration work echoed the interests that he showed in his painting – sports, industrial workers, the Red Army and monumental parades. During the early Soviet years, the cultural construct of the 'new man' became identified with the young and physically fit individual, who was able to take part in labour and defend the nation. Constructive leisure time based around physical culture and sport became part of this image, so that depictions of the sportsman became readily symbolic of this ideal citizen and an exciting subject for artists wishing to show their allegiance to the regime.[218] Deineka's picture books proved to be an easily digestible form of this trope of visual culture and books such as *Pro loshadei* (*About Horses*), an album of illustrated short poems by V. Vladimirov, would have made engaging reading material for small children. Deineka shows horsemen of all types from brave soldiers through to swaggering competitive riders. There are plough horses trotting along the furrow, Kirghiz horsemen on the steppe, athletic cavalry soldiers and at the very end the book, daring chariot racers with their slender thoroughbred animals.[219] (Figures 2.34 and 2.35) Although Deineka's graphic manner did vary at times, many of the picture books he designed were in a style that aligned with his paintings. The human figure is modelled realistically but is not completely lifelike. Always in motion, it is usually composed of a definite solid form and any three-dimensional effect is given by subtle shading, while faces have a bland expression and remain intent on the task in hand. Deineka's picture books never used a saturation of colour but were built around several complementary shades, most often red, earthy yellow and natural sky blue. Black was used not for detailing but blended in as equal with the other colours. Background imagery was more present than in 'new Soviet picture book' style works but was limited to essential details which worked with the composition, rather than whole page being furnished with a full static background. In his illustrations for Boris Ural'skii's *Elektromonter* (*The Electrician*), Deineka showed the electricity pylons that the technicians are harnessed to as they work, drawing the

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[217] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.283-293.

[218] Mike O'Mahony, *Sport in the USSR: Physical Culture – Visual Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p.23.

[219] V. Vladimirov, *Pro loshadei*, ill. Aleksandr Deineka (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

structures accurately but in simplified form, leaving out nearby buildings or clouds in the sky so that the viewer focusses on the workman at the dramatic centre of the scene.[220] (Figure 2.36)

Figures 2.34 and 2.35: Aleksandr Deineka, illustrations for *About Horses* by V. Vladimirov (1928).

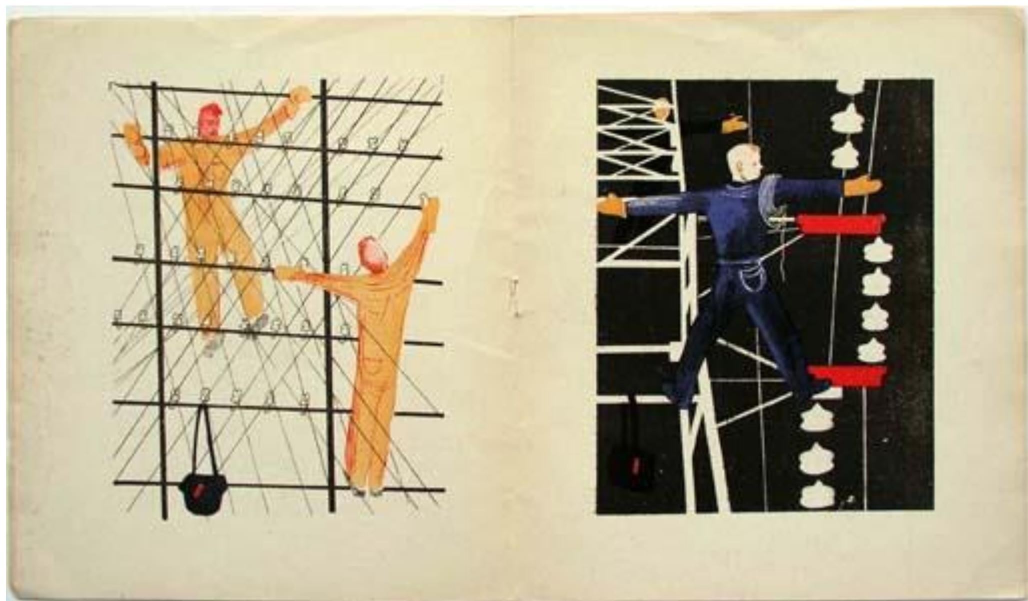

Figure 2.36: Aleksandr Deineka, illustrations for *The Electrician* by Boris Uralskii (1931).

220 Boris Ural'skii, *Elektromonter*, ill. Aleksandr Deineka (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

Aleksei Pakhomov was another painter and picture book artist who was interested in the human form and the forging of the 'new man'. A very different artistic personality to Deineka, Pakhomov specialised in rural scenes and images of people going about their daily work, becoming best known for his idyllic tableaux of Soviet childhood. Pakhomov was born in 1900 to a peasant family in Vologda province, leaving home in 1915 to study at the Steiglitz School of Technical Drawing in Petrograd, which became Vkhutemas in 1917. His teachers in Petrograd included Dobuzhinskii, Chekhonin, Tyrsa and Lebedev. After a spell in the Red Army during 1920, Pakhomov returned to Petrograd to study at Vkhutein, where he became influenced by the works of Cézanne and the Constructivists. In the mid-1920s he decided to move away from 'leftist' art and joined the Krug group of artists. His focus became the human figure and he spent time studying the masters in the Hermitage as well as at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Art in Moscow. In 1925 Pakhomov began to work for the Leningrad branch of Gosizdat, contributing to *Ezh* and *Chizh* whilst also illustrating around fourteen children's books. Pakhomov's illustrations were informed by meticulous studies from life and during the late 1920s and early 1930s, he travelled widely around the Soviet Union, drawing industrial plants, collective farms and Pioneer camps.[221] After briefly experimenting with the 'new Soviet picture book' style in his illustrations for Shvart's Pioneer camp poem *Lager* (*The Camp*), Pakhomov settled on a lyrical, painterly style.[222] The construction of the figures was similar to Deineka's with solid forms modelled by soft shading but Pakhomov's characters, who were often children, bore a much greater sense of fluidity and natural movement. His backgrounds where used, were composed of blocks of subtle colour, which blended in a natural way with the main objects of the image and were carefully textured according to subject matter. *Leto* (*Summer*), a wordless picture book by the artist, shows a series of scenes depicting countryside pastimes. A group of suntanned children in bright red clothes play in the grass, visit farm animals, water the garden and gather mushrooms. The figures are shaded so that they appear to be drenched in bright sunlight and they are set amongst what feels like a never ending sea of soft green meadow, giving a gentle dreamlike feel to the book.[223] (Figures 2.37 and 2.38)

It was not just easel painters who were put to work on figurative picture books. Graphic artists whose main professional experience was with propaganda materials, had particular skill in scaling down large Stalinist topics to fit the picture book format. Ol'ga Deineko and Nikolai Troshin were a husband and wife team who produced a series of picture books showing the

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[221] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.401-408.

[222] Evgenii Shvarts, *Lager*, ill. Aleksei Pakhomov (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925).

[223] Aleksei Pakhomov (ill.), *Leto* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927).

production process in large mechanised factories. Deineko was born in 1897 in Chernigov, Ukraine and studied at the Steiglitz School of Technical Drawing, as well as the Free State Art Workshops (Svomas) and Vkutemas in Moscow. She was a member of the Society of Workers of Revolutionary Posters which existed between 1931 and 1932.[224] Troshin was born in Tula in 1897 and studied at Penza Art College and in Moscow at Vkutemas. He worked on posters, book illustration, journal graphics and photomontage.[225] In the early 1930s he was art director for showcase propaganda magazine *SSSR na stroike* (*USSR in Construction*), which was published in four languages and known for its lavish photomontages and gatefold spreads.[226] Picture books designed by the couple were easily recognisable by their clearly drawn illustrations which had full backgrounds, correct perspective and colouring which was mostly natural but in a few cases used a stylised palette of grey, black and orange. The equipment in the illustrated factories is shown exactly, so that it almost looks like a technical diagram and the workers are seen in the correct positions to service the machinery. Titles included *Kak svekla sakharom stala* (*How the Beets Became Sugar*), Ot *kauchuka do galoshi* (*From Rubber to Galoshes*) and *Kak Khlopok sittsem stal* (*How Cotton Became Chintz*).[227] (Figure 2.39) The images are so accurate that they must have been drawn either from material gathered on sketching trips or more likely from photographs of industry that the pair came across when working on *USSR in Construction* and other propaganda pieces. Another element borrowed from *USSR in Construction* was the use of extended fold-out pages. Troshin and Deineko deployed these in their picture books to show huge factory floors with conveyor belt assembly lines, such as in *Khlebozavod No.3* (*Bread Factory No.3*) where the vast scale of the operation is made very apparent.[228] (Figure 4.14)

Other picture book artists also tackled the great themes of the First Five-Year-Plan era including Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov, who worked together on several texts. Boim was born in the Kursk region in 1899 and studied at Moscow Vkhutemas.[229] Sukhanov was born in Moscow in but began in his artistic training in Tambov, where he also worked as an artist at the first Soviet theatre in the city. He later returned to Moscow and studied in the architecture and polygraphic faculties of Vkhutemas.[230] In their illustrations for P. Lopatina's *Tretii reshaiushchii*

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[224] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.17.

[225] Ibid., p.39.

[226] King, *Red Star Over Russia* (2010), pp.222-225.

[227] Ol'ga Deineko and Nikolai Troshin, *Kak Khlopok sittsem stal* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929); Ol'ga Deineko and Nikolai Troshin, *Ot kauchuka do galoshi* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930); Troshin and Deneiko, *Kak svekla sakharom stala* (1927).

[228] Troshin and Deineko, *Khlebozavod No.3* (1930).

[229] Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), p.14.

[230] Ibid., p.34.

(*The Third Decisive Year*), Boim and Sukhanov use a red and black graphic of the type common in propaganda literature which was intended for a youth or adult audience. They mix infographics, slogans and maps with drawings of large construction sites such as the Dnieper Hydroelectric Station and Magnitogorsk. There is lots of visual information on the quantity of goods being produced in the Soviet Union, including how production far exceeds that of the mid-1920s and what it will achieve during 1931, when the Five-Year-Plan will be close to meeting its target.[231] (Figure 2.40) Boim and Sukhanov also produced books in a less agitational style of illustration, presumably intended for a younger reader than the Lopatina text. *Evreiskii kolkhoz* (*The Jewish Kolkhoz*), a text by G. Ryklin which explains life on the collective farm through the eyes of a young boy called Iasha, is illustrated in a soft watercolour style. Despite its gentle appearance it is still accurate in its depiction of the farm buildings and equipment, the many animals and the members of the collective, who are seen both at work in the fields during the day and gathering for a political meeting in the evening.[232] (Figure 2.41)

Figures 2.37 and 2.38: Aleksei Pakhomov, front cover and illustration for *Summer* (1927).

[231] P. Lopatina, *Tretii reshaiushchii*, ill. Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov (Moscow: Ogiz- Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[232] G. Ryklin, *Evreiskii kolkhoz*, ill. Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov (Moscow: Ogiz-Moldaia gvardiia, 1931).

Figure 2.39: Ol'ga Deineko and Nikolai Troshin, illustrations for *How the Cotton Became Chintz* (1929).

Figure 2.40: Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov, illustrations for *The Third Decisive Year* by P. Lopatina (1931).

Figure 2.41: Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov, illustrations for *The Jewish Kolkhoz* by G. Ryklin (1931).

By the mid-1930s, picture book illustration on all topics was gravitating towards these conservative realistic styles, rather than the bright avant-garde design of the mid-1920s. Although almost all of the material consulted for this study dates from before 1933, it Is interesting to take a very brief glance at the following few years, to see the visual progression of the Soviet picture book into the high Stalinist period, when the art world was no longer as diverse. By 1932, the First Five-Year-Plan had been declared successful, industrialisation had become part of Soviet culture and peasant resistance to collectivisation had been crushed. The notion of a 'proletarian art' was thus no longer a necessary tool in ideological discourse and the disagreements between artistic factions were ended by the joining of all artistic organisations into one single union. The realist painters of the AkhRR dominated the influential Moscow branch of the artists union and the notion of 'socialist realism' began to be floated at high level meetings between senior cultural figures and politicians. In 1934, at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, this new art was proclaimed as the official form of culture.[233] Although 'socialist realism' was never precisely defined in the visual arts or literature, it would become official state doctrine for decades to come.

Picture book artists gradually began to shift their styles to fit in with what they thought state orthodoxy required. Lebedev, an astute man who was closely in touch with the cultural bureaucracy, acted as a barometer for this change early on. By 1931 he was already illustrating picture books which distanced themselves from his radical stencilled style of the mid-1920s. His drawings for Marshak's *Usatyi polosatyi* (*Whiskered Striped*), a poem about a little girl and her kitten, used figurative drawings rendered in soft pastel shading which gave the sense of a cosy, almost sentimental type of childhood.[234] (Figure 2.44) Picture books appearing after 1932, when there was a major reorganisation of the publishing industry, were often very different in tone from what had been seen in the preceding years. *Maika* by Zinaida Aleksandrovna, a tale about a little girl being left at the nursery so that her mother can enjoy the sports facilities in the public park, featured illustrations by Vera Kizevalter which were bright and attractive but drawn in a very safe figurative style. The pictures are coloured in natural shades and the characters are laid out against a fully realistic background with an oddly perfect blue sky, a beaming yellow sun and extremely neat green trees.[235] (Figure 2.42) Another book by Aleksandrovna, *Nashi iasli* (*Our Nursery*), was illustrated by Pokrovskii with Vasilii Bordichenko. In a radical departure from Pokrovskii's dynamic full-page compositions of the 1920s, the illustrations are placed in neat boxes with the text in regular rows underneath. The images are still colourful and interesting but the flat blocks of colour and neat outlines feel much more like a pared down version of Bilibin's

[233] Bown, '1928-36' (2012), p.37.

[234] Samuil Marshak, *Usatyi polosatyi*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[235] Zinaida Aleksandrovna, *Maika,* ill. V. Kizevalter (Moscow: OGIZ-Molodaia gvardiia, 1933).

turn of the century style than something following on from the vivid experiments of the 1920s.[236] (Figure 2.43) One of the most notable shifts in illustrative style was that completed by Pakhomov. After the colourful pieces he produced in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Pakhomov's children's books of the mid-1930s were somewhat muted in comparison. He still drew evocative portraits of children at play or work but they were completed in the type of monochrome sketched style more usually used in adult literature than in books for pre-schoolers.[237] Pakhomov's illustrations for Marshak's *Rasskaz o neizvestnom geroe*, created in 1938, married this sketched style of drawing with pale watercolour tinting. This created a book which was elegant in its own way but which perfectly exemplified the direct approach to visual representation that socialist realism seemed to demand.[238] (Figure 2.45)

Picture book art in Russia saw great change from the late nineteenth century to the early 1930s. Still a fledgling art form in the 1860s, the Russian picture book gradually developed over the next few decades as a blend of European ideas and distinctly Russian cultural motifs, through the landmark publications of artists such as Polenova, Maliutin and Bilibin. By the 1910s, revolution and political change in Russia led to artists seeing the picture book as suitable ground for the use of the graphic style that they had developed for satirical cartoons and by the early 1920s, the Soviet picture book had developed a unique identity of its own. The Russian avant-garde revolutionised the graphic form of the children's book and early Soviet pre-schoolers were given a visual education by some of the most innovative and talented artists of the period. They also benefitted from the gentler approach of illustrators such as Konashevich and the unique artists of the Leningrad School, who created a special visual world which was perfectly tailored for small children. By the end of the 1920s, the picture book world began to see a renaissance of figurative illustration which embraced new trends in art and aligned itself with the emerging cultural identity of the Stalinist state. The early 1930s marked a last burst of freedom for children's books and subsequently, the majority of artists began to tone down their most experimental ideas and make concessions to a cultural climate which was becoming much more homogenous and less open to new ideas.

The visual radicalism of the early Soviet period made an indelible mark upon picture book design but continuity was just as important as change in the blossoming of the art form. Most pre-revolutionary and some post-revolutionary picture book artists were from an intelligentsia

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[236] Zinaida Aleksandrovna, *Nashi iasli*, ill. Vasilii Bordichenko and Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow: Ogiz-Detgiz, 1934).

[237] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.405.

[238] Marshak, *Rasskaz o neizvestnom geroe* (1940).

background. They were well-travelled, often multilingual and fairly European in outlook, being versed in the latest artistic trends from Paris, Berlin and London. The generation of artists born around 1900, who were teenagers at the time of the First World War and October Revolution, did not have the same opportunities to travel abroad as their older colleagues but they did receive their education at the first Soviet art schools, where they were taught by the leading figures of the pre-revolutionary art world. The cultural inheritance passed on between generations was also a vital part of the early post-revolutionary publishing trade, where figures such as Chukovskii and Marshak, who had begun their careers before the revolution, relied on their pre-revolutionary networks to find illustrators to fulfil the vision they had for the new picture book. By the end of the 1920s, young picture book artists from working class or peasant backgrounds were just as common as those descended from the old intelligentsia but they again benefitted from the technical knowledge and wide experience of their older teachers and mentors. The early 1930s was a period of adjustment for all involved in the illustration and production of picture books. Artists were faced with a choice of conforming to the new state-approved art or abandoning their profession but even the blandest manifestation of socialist realist illustration owed something to the rich and diverse period of artistic experimentation that had preceded it.

Beginning at the turn of the century and into the 1920s and 1930s, the Russian and Soviet picture book went from being a little explored graphic medium to a respected artistic product, worthy of attention by serious professional artists. The Mir iskusstva pioneered an approach to book art which meant that the design of a book became a serious craft in its own right where text, illustration and page ornamentation united as a whole entity. This influenced a whole new generation of book artists who became caught up in the wave of revolution and used this opportunity to create a body of work which bore their hopes and ideas for a new political era and the children born into this unprecedented situation. Strong author-illustrator partnerships ensured that text and illustration complemented each other perfectly. Lebedev and Marshak pioneered a sharp contemporary partnership of text and image, Chukovskii and Konashevich displayed an unusually sensitive intuition for the needs of their young readers, while Ermolaeva and the Oberiuts proved that it could be just as enjoyable to create a picture book as to read one. Picture books no longer just featured nursery scenes or traditional tales but became a medium open to the application of any subject matter. Illustrators had a world of possibilities open before them and a plain white sheet of paper could be filled with anything from wild animals, pirates and make believe games through to huge mechanised factories and the history of the revolution. It was this vivid imagination that made the early Soviet picture book such a bright and brilliant phenomenon and one which rightly claims its colourful place in the history of twentieth century art.

Figure 2.42: Vera Kizevalter, illustrations for *Maika* by Zinaida Aleksandrovna (1933).

Figure 2.43: Vasilii Bordichenko and Boris Pokrovskii, illustrations for *Our Nursery* by Zinaida Aleksandrovna (1934).

Figure 2.44: Vladimir Lebedev, illustrations for *Whiskered Striped* by Samuil Marshak (1931).

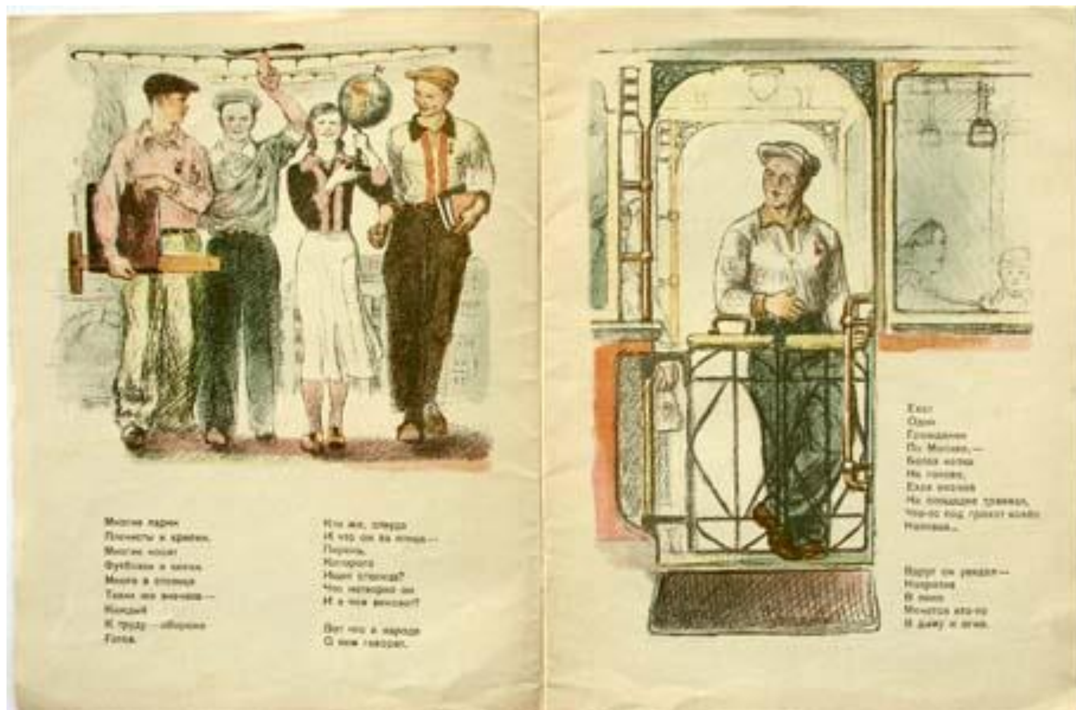

Figure 2.45: Aleksei Pakhomov, illustrations for *Story of the Unknown Hero* by Samuil Marshak (1940).

Part 2

The Picture Book as Commercial Product

The mass-produced picture book may have been an artistic phenomenon but it would not have existed at all without a publishing industry and customers to purchase it. As we have already seen, the picture book was truly finding its feet as a commercial product in the years preceding the First World War. The October Revolution, which totally overturned the existing market system for the supply and sale of goods, left Russian book publishers in an unprecedented predicament. In a very short space of time, structures for doing business across this huge country collapsed and the children's book trade was reduced to almost nothing. In this section we will explore how picture book publishing in the Soviet Union came back from the brink to flourish again, albeit under a new ideological creed.

A chronological account of developments in the picture book field will discuss the importance of the New Economic Policy for the development of the pre-school children's book. It will evaluate the extent to which private publishing houses in the mid-1920s influenced the literary and artistic form of the pre-school book, going on to reveal how state publishers adopted innovations and personnel from private business, as the official publishing sector began to grow and eventually gain a total monopoly over Soviet book production. The second part of the chapter will consider the promotion and advertising of picture books, exploring how commercial practices were tied to the wider culture which was shaping the publishing industry through the 1920s and into the early 1930s. The archives of key picture book publishers from this period are considered to be lost and whilst having access to these materials would reveal many important insights, looking at the promotional materials themselves gives us a lively picture of an industry during a time of great flux.[239] Finally, we will consider a small group of sources which give us some idea of

[239] Research for this study did not locate any archive material from the Gosizdat children's section. It is not known if the files were destroyed, perhaps after Gosizdat was closed in 1930 or if they are just missing and will one day re-emerge. All that remains of the archives from the Raduga private publishing house are documents from the liquidation committee, dating from the period when the publisher was being closed down by the state. These files are mostly accounts, consisting of spreadsheets and invoices detailing information such as what was owed or had been paid to printing workshops, authors and illustrators. There are also some inventories of remaining stock with logistical orders for its distribution across the country. See TsGALI, Fond 237*, Chastnoe izdatel'stvo 'Raduga' (1925-1931).* Papers containing information on the operations of Raduga during its peak years in the mid-1920s are considered by descendants of its founder, Lev Kliachko, to have been lost long ago. See Andrea Immel, 'The Anna Bakhst Benjamin Family

what pre-schoolers were reading and what they enjoyed, leaving us with an outline sketch of the young consumer at the heart of a large industry which had an enormous effect upon the development of a unique Soviet culture for children.

Private Publishing to State Control

The late nineteenth into the early twentieth century saw a significant increase in literacy amongst the Russian population and great improvements in printing technology, factors which naturally led to considerable growth in the publishing trade. In 1897 the literacy rate amongst the population of the Russian empire stood at twenty one percent and by the eve of the First World War the rate had almost doubled to forty percent.[240] This was partly explained by the rapid expansion of the primary school network, which meant that peasant and lower-class city children were learning to read on a wider scale than ever before. In his study of literacy in late Tsarist Russia, Jeffrey Brooks identified this growth in schooling as an, "essential prerequisite for the appearance of a mass audience" for popular commercial literature.[241] Supply responded to demand and during the last few decades before the revolution, highly commercial publishing houses were providing great quantities of books, pamphlets and newspapers to the general population. Coming from peasant or lower class origins, publishers such as I.D. Sytin were entrepreneurial and knew exactly what would please their consumers, despite the misgivings of educated Russians about the quality of this new type of literature. They readily embraced technologies such as lithography, which improved enormously during this period and made the mass production of printed material cheaper and easier, thereby widening the availability of these materials further still.[242] The windows of elegant book shops on the Nevskii Prospekt in prosperous St Petersburg continued to display luxurious titles with brightly coloured jackets, presumably including Benois' *Azbuka v kartinakh* and the Bilibin fairytale books but at the same time, children's books for the 'common reader' circulated to all corners of the country. In 1887, 105 such titles were printed, totalling 346,000 copies. By 1914 this figure had reached 1197

Collection of Raduga Books in the Cotsen Children's Library'. *Princeton Library Publications*, 2002, pp.343-356.

[240] Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p.4.

[241] Ibid., pp.35-36, p.38.

[242] Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (1985), pp.59-60, p.65; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.50.

titles and almost 6.7 million copies, demonstrating that the children's book had become an inherent part of the flourishing publishing industry.[243]

Progress on the spread of the printed word was temporarily halted in its tracks by the October Revolution, which plunged Russian publishing into a period of total upheaval. The drive for literacy was a key part of Lenin's plan to modernise and politicise the country, standing alongside practical developments such as electrification, which would stimulate a 'cultural revolution' in a land seen by the Bolsheviks as backwards and underdeveloped. Russia's new rulers resorted to legislation in an attempt to enforce their agenda, with a decree on illiteracy issued by Sovnarkom (The Council of People's Commissars) in December 1919, which compelled all illiterates aged between eight and fifty to study in order that they might participate in the political life of the country.[244] Despite the Bolsheviks' clear intentions, the publishing trade was in no state to provide the vast quantity of reading material needed for Lenin's grand project. The state publishing house Gosizdat had been established in May 1919 and private publishing was still permitted under the supervision of Gosizdat but the disruption of the First World War and Civil War caused major practical problems in the supply chain. Russian printers relied on foreign-made presses and when these broke down, they could not be replaced or even fixed, as spare parts were simply not available. Paper too became a precious commodity as most of the country's paper making factories were in areas under enemy occupation. Production dropped from 23 million poods in 1914 to just 2.1 million in 1920. Organisational issues also caused chaos as the Bolsheviks set about shifting the fundamental basis of trade from capitalist commerce to a new socialist model of production and distribution. The introduction of War Communism in the second half of 1918 affected book sellers through various measures, not least the municipalization of the book trade by the Moscow Soviet in October 1918. This was followed by a decree in April 1919 which banned the sale of new books, as printed matter was to be distributed free of charge through Tsentropechat, an agency established for this purpose.[245] As a result, book shops became a rare sight during these years and from an estimated two to three thousand stores before the revolution, there were only several hundred left by 1922.[246] Children's literature was affected particularly badly by the crisis and Soviet literary historian Lidia Kon was surely correct when she described the position of children's books at the beginning of

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[243] Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (1985), p.62; Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), p.150.

[244] Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), pp.70-77.

[245]Jeffrey Brooks, *The Breakdown in Production and Distribution of Printed Material, 1917-1927* in Gleason, A., Kenez, P. and Stites, R. (eds), *Bolshevik Culture,* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985) pp.151-174 at pp.153-4; Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment* (1970), pp.133-135; Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), pp.96-101.

[246] Brooks, *The Breakdown in Production and Distribution of Printed Material* (1985), p.155.

the 1920s as "significantly worse than for literature in general".[247] The number of children's titles printed had already dropped to 474 in 1918 before it plummeted to almost nothing, with only 33 texts published in 1921.[248]

In the second half of 1921, the strict regime of War Communism was abandoned in favour of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which permitted private enterprise in certain areas to revive an economy which was in desperate straits. Publishing was one industry which grew swiftly with the new economic approach. In the summer of that year, the Moscow Soviet allowed the free sale of books by independent publishers and by October, payment was re-introduced for all printed works.[249] Private publishing houses had suffered badly during the printing crisis but had never been banned altogether and a decree in December 1921 gave the sector a welcome boost. It set out formal rules permitting publishers to own printing equipment, sell their output at free market prices and import books. Consequently, the number of private publishing houses registered with the state reached over 300 in 1922, almost triple the number recorded during 1918.[250] These new freedoms did not come without conditions, as private publishing was overseen generally by Gosizdat and operationally by censorship organ Glavlit (Main Directorate of Literature and Publishing Houses), which had been formed in 1922. Glavlit not only censored manuscripts before publication but was also responsible for deciding which private publishers were allowed to operate and which areas their output should fulfil. Priority was given to content which the state was struggling to provide for, such as scientific literature and children's books. These types of texts were technically challenging, so both the capital and expertise of private publishers were welcomed in the early 1920s, when the regenerative benefits of NEP were still to be felt. The initiative made a difference as early as 1922, when the number of children's books published rose to 200, almost six-fold the number of the previous year. Even into the middle of the decade, most privately published titles were in fiction, science and technology, the arts and children's books.[251]

Picture books were embraced by private publishers as highly marketable commodities which were relatively cheap to produce due to their small size. During the early to mid-1920s, a

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[247] Kon, *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (1955), p.14.

[248] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.46.

[249] Alan Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921 – 1929* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA and London: University of California Press, 1987), p.147; Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment* (1970), p.265; Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), p.239.

[250] Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists* (1987), p.147.

[251] Brian Kassof, 'Glavlit, Ideological Censorship, and Russian-Language Book Publishing, 1922-38', *The Russian Review* 74 (January 2015), pp.69-96 at pp.71-78; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.47.

proliferation of companies issued brightly coloured pre-school books as part of their catalogues. A small number of picture books were being produced by Gosizdat, which had established a children's section in 1922 but these were insignificant in quantity next to the offering from the private sector. Some of these publishers were co-operatively owned by trade unions or run by social enterprises. Such businesses included Zemliia i fabrika (Land and Factory), Sinaia ptitsa (Blue Bird) and Moskovskii rabochii (Moscow Worker). Later in the decade Kul'tura (Culture), run by a printing trust in Kiev, made a brilliant contribution. Other picture books were published by respected pre-revolutionary publishers who had re-invented themselves for the new era including I.D. Sytin, I. Knebel', Adolf Marks and Brokhaus-Efron, who often relied on old stock which could be re-printed with small adjustments. Entrepreneurial new companies printing pre-school books included fine art publisher Akvilon and G.F. Mirimanov, which specialised in cheap books for the masses. The firms Grezhebin and Epokha (Epoch), who each produced several beautifully designed picture books, operated between Petrograd and Berlin, where many Russian book publishers were taking advantage of high quality printing available at a low cost. This lasted until 1923, when import of these foreign-produced books was forbidden by the Soviet government.[252]

The most successful of all the private publishers was Raduga (Rainbow), a brand name of almost legendary status which became synonymous with the early Soviet picture book. Raduga was founded at the end of 1922 in Petrograd by Lev Kliachko, a colourful and well-connected pre-revolutionary journalist, who was arrested more than once in the late Tsarist years and who had been saved from execution by the revolutionary government through the intervention of Gorky. After the revolution and his narrow escape, Kliachko abandoned reporting and decided to set up a small publishing house specialising in Jewish memoirs. Kliachko had first become acquainted with Chukovskii in 1907 through work on the Kadet newspaper *Rech'* (*Speech*) and he employed the writer as manuscript editor. Chukovskii was given the task of creating a hallmark for the publisher and he chose the biblical image of Noah looking at a rainbow and reaching out for a flying dove. The artist Chekhonin was commissioned to complete the logo design and the business received its now famous name. The fate of Raduga took a decisive turn one evening when Chukovskii visited Kliachko's apartment during a family gathering. The story goes that the writer decided to read his unpublished children's poems *Tarakanishche* and *Moidodyr* to an inebriated Kliachko and was stopped in his tracks by the publisher yelling, "Idiot!

[252] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.295; Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), pp.102-103; Kon, *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (1955), p.15; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.85-86, p.103; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.47-48, p.49; 'Ukazetel' izdatel'stv' in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 2.* (2009), pp.447-452.

What an idiot!" Explaining to an embarrassed Chukovskii that he was calling himself an idiot, Kliachko decided there and then that: "This is exactly what we should be publishing in our Raduga." Despite the unenthusiastic reactions of friends and family, the irrepressible Kliachko went ahead with printing the poems, paying Chukovskii 7,000 rubles for each book, commissioning Chekhonin and Annenkov to illustrate the tales and offering a large 7,000 copies of each title for sale at the expensive price of one ruble each. The gamble paid off and the next few years proved to be highly successful for Raduga.[253]

One major factor in this success was the engagement of Samuil Marshak as both a writer and a literary editor. Marshak was born in 1887 in Voronezh as the son of a factory technician and from childhood he displayed an unusual gift for literature. In 1902, the family moved to St Petersburg where the teenager was introduced to influential critic Vladimir Stasov, through whom he became acquainted with Gor'kii. Gor'kii took an interest in nurturing the young Marshak's talent, even moving the boy to Yalta with his own family to study at the gymnasium away from the cold Petersburg climate, which was affecting his health. Marshak had returned to Petersburg by 1908 and was working as a journalist on publications such as *Satirikon*. Unable to gain admission to the university, he decided to travel and after six months in the Near East, went to Britain in the autumn of 1912. Marshak worked as a correspondent for Russian newspapers while studying at London University and spent some time living at the experimental Simple Life School in Wales. During his time in Britain the writer developed an interest in English poetry and began translating English nursery rhymes into Russian, having been attracted by their whimsical quality. Just before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Marshak returned to Russia and worked in several colonies for orphans and refugee children. During 1920 he was in Ekaterinodar (later Krasnodar), where he helped to establish a centre for homeless children which included a theatre. There was no existing repertory for Russian children's theatre, so along with colleague Elizaveta Vasil'eva, Marshak created a series of plays based on Russian folk tales.[254]

[253] Immel, 'The Anna Bakhst Benjamin Family Collection of Raduga Books in the Cotsen Children's Library', pp.344-345; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.99-100.

[254] Ben Hellman, *Samuil Marshak: Yesterday and Today* in Balina, Marina and Rudova, Larissa (eds.), *Russian Children's Literature and Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), pp.217-239 at pp.218-219; Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.300-320; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.93-96. For an autobiographical account of Marshak's childhood and youth see Samuil Marshak (trans. Katherine Hunter Blair), *At Life's Beginning: Some Pages of Reminiscence (*London: Victor Gollancz, 1964).

In 1922, Marshak settled once more in St Petersburg and due to his literary interests and great organizational talent, found himself at the centre of the cultural scene for children, which was developing rapidly at this time. Assisted by Vasil'eva, Marshak ran the repertory section of the Theatre for Young Spectators. During his quest for new material, he met folklorist Ol'ga Kapitsa who worked at the Institute for Pre-school Education. Kapitsa ran a literary circle called the Children's Literature Studio, where teachers and children's writers gathered for discussion. Marshak became one of the leading participants at the centre of a talented group of writers, who were keen to develop a new type of book for children.[255] It was around this time that Marshak was introduced to Chukovskii, who in turn took him to meet Kliachko. The budding entrepreneur was allegedly delighted with Marshak's verse written for young children, which was heavily influenced by Russian folk poetry as well as the English nursery rhymes that he had already begun translating.[256]

The works of Chukovskii and Marshak formed a solid base for Raduga's picture book catalogue and the two charismatic writers with their many literary and artistic acquaintances gave Kliachko exactly the sort of talent he needed to build a children's publishing business. Raduga first had an office at 18 Zhukovskii Street before moving to the historic Gostinyi dvor shopping arcade but according to anecdotal evidence, much of the editorial work took place at Kliachko's apartment. Kliachko had an unusual approach to approving texts for publication. The author was asked to read the manuscript aloud and if Kliachko could remember the text by heart at the end of the reading, then it got to the next stage, which was to be read aloud by Kliachko himself before he tested it on his own children. Illustrations also had to be easily memorable and Kliachko would turn the picture upside down to gain a child's perspective on the drawing. Raduga put out four hundred books during the course of its operation, with the highest profile titles being the poems of Marshak and Chukovskii. [257] Twenty two titles by Chukovskii published over seventy editions included his long format *skazki* such as *Moidodyr*, *Tarakanishche*, *Barmalei* and *Mukhina svadba*, along with books of smaller poems such as *Murkina kinga* (*Murka's Book*), *Svinki* (*Piggies*) and *Putanitsa* (*The Muddle*). Marshak cemented his status as a children's poet with eighteen books totalling thirty three editions, including the series that he created with Lebedev, alongside a range of other poems which included riddles, educational tales about the

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[255] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.300; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.96-97.

[256] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.320. For a literary analysis of Marshak's poetry for children see Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.320-324; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.100-121.

[257] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.100-101.

contemporary world and translations from English folklore.[258] There were also many other talented authors and illustrators on the Raduga roster, some of whom had come to the work through Marshak and the Children's Literature Studio, which by 1923 had taken on the editorship of the important new children's journal *Vorobei* (*The Sparrow*).[259] There were lots of writers who contributed just one or two texts but prolific picture book authors included poets Nikolai Agnivstev, Mikhail Andreev, Semen Polotskii and Evgenii Shvarts along with naturalist Vitalii Bianki, who was well known as the author of 'Lesnaia gazeta' (The Forest Newspaper), a popular nature column in *Vorobei*. Regular illustrators included Konashevich, Vladislav Tvardovskii, Sergei Rakhmanin, Eduard Krimmer and Efim Khiger.

According to Marshak's description, Kliachko was "a noble, talented person, but he was disorderly."[260] Disorganised though he may have been, Kliachko was astute in his business strategy, publishing four different sizes of book so that there was a price bracket to suit all consumers. The smallest format was 11.5 centimetres long, was printed in editions of 50,000 and sold at 10 or 12 kopecks. The next size up was 18 centimetres long, was issued in print runs of 30,000 and retailed for around 23 kopecks. A slightly bigger size was 22 centimetres long, was released in batches of 20,000 copies and cost 35 kopecks. The largest size, as used for the Chukovskii *skazki* and the Marshak-Lebedev books, was 29 centimetres long, came out in print runs of 5,000 to 10,000 and cost a whole ruble.[261] The number of issues that some of the titles went through stands as obvious evidence that Raduga's business model was enormously effective and that its products appealed to the reading public. Despite their high cost, the large one ruble books reached many editions during the 1920s. Chukovskii's *Moidodyr* was a runaway success, going through twelve editions between 1923 and 1928, totalling 86,000 copies. *Tarakanishche* followed close behind with ten editions from 1923 to 1927, reaching 53,000 copies. A small ten kopeck book by Chukovskii, *Tsplenok* (*The Chick*), was printed in a comparatively small five editions from 1928 to 1930. However, as each edition had 50,000 copies, the title reached the huge sum of 250,000 books.[262] Further evidence of Raduga's artistic and economic success was the fact that it even gained recognition on foreign shores. In 1924 its books were exhibited in New York, in 1925 they were seen in Paris and by 1926, they appeared in the English city of Cambridge.[263] This was highly significant for a privately owned

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[258] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153, pp.251-253.

[259] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.300.

[260] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.94.

[261] Immel, 'The Anna Bakhst Benjamin Family Collection of Raduga Books in the Cotsen Children's Library', p.347.

[262] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.252-253.

[263] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.98.

Soviet business during the middle of the NEP period and even though we do not have the archival material to explain exactly how it was achieved, it is obvious that the firm held great prominence in its field at this time.

By the mid-1920s, the state publishing sector had recovered somewhat and the book trade was showing clear signs of revival. During 1925, the number of children's books published in the Soviet Union reached 933, an almost five-fold increase on the 1922 figure.[264] By 1924, Gosizdat had grown enough to open a children's section at its Leningrad office and Marshak was appointed literary consultant, a position which put him in charge of the department. Over the next few years, he worked hard to build a vibrant centre for children's publishing, however during the middle of the decade, private publishing was still needed to fill those areas which the state could not fully cover. Alongside his main job Marshak continued to work at Raduga, which at this time reached the peak of its productivity and dominated the picture book market. The sample of picture books gathered for this study included 158 published by Raduga. Of these texts, 121 came out between 1925 and 1927, including 65 titles from 1926. Looking at all of the picture books from 1926 which were collected, 66 percent of these were published by Raduga followed by 32 percent from Gosizdat. The continued strength of private publishing in the picture book field at this point was remarked upon by Pavla Rubtsova, an expert on children's libraries at the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work. In a statistical analysis of children's book production for 1926, she noted an overall increase in both the number of titles and the number of copies being published. Picture books made up 20.7 percent of all children's books and a significant contribution to this number was made by large circulations of cheap books, produced for wide distribution in villages. Rubtsova gave particular mention to the brightly coloured 23 kopeck series issued by Raduga and the series Knizhek-Malyshek (Baby Books) from Mirimanov.[265]

Despite the encouraging figures, there were indications that private picture book publishing would not dominate for very much longer. Entries in Chukovskii's diary suggest that private publishing houses were already encountering trouble. An entry in December 1924 talked about his children's book *Piatdesiat porosiat* (*Fifty Piglets*) being set aside at the printing shop, as officials had decided to close down its publisher, Adolf Marx.[266] By 1925, Chukovskii was having difficulty obtaining money owed to him by Kliachko, indicating that the disorganised

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[264] Ibid., p.238.

[265] P. A. Rubtsova, 'Produktsiia detskoi knigi v 1926 g.' in Institut metodov vneshkol'noi raboty otdel detskogo chteniia*, Novye detskie knigi: Sbornik piatyi* (Moscow: Izdanie IMVR, 1928), pp.69-77 at pp.69-70.

[266] Victor Erlich (Ed.) (trans. Michael Henry Heim), *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p.154.

publisher was struggling to balance the books, even during his most successful period. A diary entry from November featured the author complaining that he had not been paid, proclaiming that he was "duped by that scoundrel".[267] In March 1926, the tension between the two men escalated further, when one day Kliachko's assistant refused to answer Chukovskii's telephone calls regarding a payment which was two weeks late. When the writer called into the publisher's apartment later on the same day, Kliachko was to be found calmly playing patience. He ignored Chukovskii's request for money and according to the embittered author, instead told him: "dirty jokes – about Russian prostitutes, whose way of life he has studied in detail."[268] Private picture book publishers were also already under attack in the literary press. In a 1925 article entitled 'Books of the Past and Books of the Future', Anna Grinberg criticised pre-school book publishers as catering for a reader who no longer existed, as post-revolutionary children had new thematic interests that were being neglected. Gosizdat was indicted under these comments but the most virulent remarks were aimed at private presses. Mirimanov was praised for its technical skill and scale of distribution but its content was categorised as being: "based entirely upon the decrepit old hare and the antediluvian adventures of children and animals at home and in the yard." Raduga was hailed for the talent of its writers and artists but this praise was cancelled out by the damning statement that due to its outdated subject matter, its books belonged in the past and therefore it had no readers.[269]

The official end of NEP in 1928 meant that there was no longer any reason to tolerate private business. Private publishers were pushed out of the trade through methods both overt and subtle, as state publishing houses were finally able to dominate the children's book market. Mirimanov managed to stay open until 1929, when it was absorbed into Gosizdat. Raduga lasted for only another year after this, closing permanently in 1930.[270] The financial problems which had begun for the company in the middle of the decade became gradually more severe, partly as a result of competition from state publishing, leading not only Chukovskii but many other authors and illustrators to lose faith in Kliachko. As a result, his best writers and artists moved over to work under Marshak at Gosizdat and Raduga came to rely on re-printed titles, rather than new material. By 1927, Raduga was having major difficulty in gaining approval for its publications. The Commission for Children's Reading, blaming poor artistic quality, forbade 81 percent of

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[267] Ibid., p.174.

[268] Ibid, pp.186-187.

[269] Anna Grinberg, 'Books of the Past and Books of the Future (For Little Children)', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.27-48 at pp.30-32. The article was originally published in *Pechat' i revoliutsiia*, No. 5-6, 1925, pp.243-54.

[270] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.94, p.104.

Raduga's catalogue.[271] In September of that year, Chukovskii wrote in his diary about 4,000 copies of *Barmalei* which had been printed by Raduga for the fourth edition of the book but were "lying in the basement", having been banned by the Social Education Division. By November, Gublit (Regional Department of Literature and Publishing Houses) had "put a hold" on all of the author's Raduga books.[272] Despite his unavoidable commercial failure, Kliachko was adaptable and when Raduga finally closed, he followed his employees and went to work as a consultant for Gosizdat, until his death from tuberculosis aged sixty in 1933.[273]

Raduga left a major legacy in the staff that it passed on to Gosizdat. The Leningrad children's section of the publisher blossomed as a beacon of creativity and artistic quality in the production of picture books. A "bespectacled, chain-smoking Marshak", held court on the top floor of the former Singer Company building on the Nevskii Prospekt, which had become Leningrad's flagship book shop Dom knigi (The House of the Book) and the regional Gosizdat office.[274] He had brought with him Lebedev, his most successful picture book collaborator at Raduga, as art editor. The 'Marshak school' of writers and 'Lebedev school' of illustrators flourished under the Art Nouveau dome of the elegantly constructed store. In an evocative description of the time when she worked at the department in the early 1930s, Chukovskaia invoked the intensity of the work process that took place there. The offices consisted of three rooms – a large one with tables for the editors, a smaller one where Lebedev worked with his assistants and a tiny third room. This last room was just big enough for a divan and table, with an exit onto the balcony and this is where Marshak would go with his writers. The day would begin quietly, with the editors in the main room working at their desks. Later in the day, Marshak would arrive and a stream of visiting authors would gather to wait for him, sitting on the wide windowsills. From here they would disappear one at a time into the tiny room with their mentor, to consult with him on the development of their latest drafts.[275] Their work would be scrutinised, "under a projector so strong and bright" that it became, "easier to see a small success and a small flaw."[276] The editor's consultations would sometimes go on until midnight, when the little room shone like a lamp over the canal below and the trams had, "already rumbled down the

[271] Immel, 'The Anna Bakhst Benjamin Family Collection of Raduga Books in the Cotsen Children's Library', p.347; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.102-103.

[272] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), pp.207-209; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.94.

[273] Immel, 'The Anna Bakhst Benjamin Family Collection of Raduga Books in the Cotsen Children's Library', p.347; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.102-103.

[274] Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), p.493.

[275] Chukovskaya, *V laboratorii redaktora* (2017), pp.291-295.

[276] Ibid. p.292.

Nevskii to their park." Having been in the deepest state of concentration, the writers would lose track of time and be forced to leave by the side door, when the building was already dark and closed for the night.[277]

Marshak held firm views on art for children from the very beginning of his career, believing that it should be both educational and entertaining, whilst upholding high artistic standards. His 1922 article 'Theatre for Children' argued that children need, "not surrogate art but genuine art". It went on to discuss what the content of this art should be, specifying that: "A child wants to see all of life in every tale, in every work of art; he is not looking for amusement but knowledge."[278] This philosophy was first put into serious practice regarding literature when Marshak came to be involved with *Vorobei* in 1923. The magazine was commissioned by the *Petrogradskaia pravda* newspaper and although the editor in chief was Zlata Lilina, the wife of Bolshevik politician Grigorii Zinoviev, Marshak soon found himself instigating major changes to a journal that he thought was of poor literary quality. He changed the name to *Novyi Robinzon* (*The New Robinson*), which he considered to be more serious and exotic, while new writers were brought in. These included specialists on real life subjects such as nature writer Bianki, former sailor Boris Zhitkov and Marshak's brother Il'ia Marshak, who wrote pieces on technical themes under the pseudonym M. Il'in. He also managed to convince reputable poets such as Mandel'shtam and Boris Pasternak to pen works for the journal, proving that writing for children was as series an enterprise as adult literature.[279] Having already applied this strategy at Raduga, Marshak developed it further at Gosizdat, attracting an even wider variety of writers to try their hand at creating children's books. He opened the door to the absurdist Oberiu poets, in an editorial decision which was potentially controversial during a period of fierce ideological debate over the purpose and form of children's literature. Kharms, Vvedenskii and Zabolotskii found themselves not only making a living when their adult poetry was considered to be unpublishable

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[277] Ibid., pp.295-296.

[278] Samuil Marshak, 'Theater for Children', 1922. Cited in Hellman, *Samuil Marshak: Yesterday and Today* (2010), p.219.

[279] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.300-301; Samuil Marshak, 'Dom uvenchannyi globusom. Zametki i vospominaniia' in Kolesova, *Detskie zhurnaly Rossii* (2015), pp. 152-160 at p.152; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.97-98. Boris Zhitkov was a former sailor, scientist, engineer and teacher who had had travelled widely and penned children's books about science, travel and adventure. For general background information on Zhitkov, see Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.348-353, pp.419-120.

but they enjoyed the patronage of a managing editor who thought that they could bring a whimsical playfulness to children's books.[280] The Oberiuts worked not only as picture book writers but regular contributors to *Ezh* and *Chizh* magazines, which were officially organs of the Pioneer organisation but were edited at Leningrad Gosizdat by former Raduga writer Shvarts and poet Nikolai Oleinikov.[281] The mischievous journal editors and the Oberiuts kept the children's section alive with a constant stream of jokes, magic tricks and witty poems, so that visitors were said to have sometimes left the building so drunk with laughter, that they had to hold on to the walls for support.[282]

It is also interesting to note that while the personnel and editorial methods that were brought to Gosizdat from Raduga gave the department its creative impetus, some of Raduga's picture book titles followed too. Nine of the twenty two books that Chukovskii published with Raduga were re-printed by Gosizdat, including *Moidodyr* and *Tarakanishche*. Eleven of the eighteen Marshak Raduga books were re-issued by the state publisher, including *Pozhar* and *Bagazh*.[283] In the absence of archival material from Gosizdat, it is impossible to know if these decisions were made along commercial lines or by editorial preference but we can assume that no publisher at this time, when resources were still fairly limited, would have re-printed a book that was not going to sell.

During the period from 1928 to 1930, there was a general rise in the total number of children's books published, with the figure reaching 1533 titles in 1929.[284] This increase was reflected in the number of picture books produced and based on the sample of books collected for this project, it can be suggested that 1930 was a peak year for picture book production. Of all the titles surveyed, 48 percent dated between 1928 and 1931. There were 55 books from 1928, 55 from 1929, 130 from 1930 and 74 in 1931. The increase was driven by the growth of Gosizdat, who firmly dominated the picture book market between 1928 and 1930, with a plentiful supply of books being issued from both their Leningrad and Moscow departments. The

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[280] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.97; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.125.

[281] *Ezh* (*Ezhemesiachinyi zhurnal* or *Monthly Journal*) was aimed at children aged 7-10 and was published from 1928-1935. Its abbreviated name read as the Russian word for 'hedgehog', Chizh (*Chrezvychaino interesnyi zhurnal* or *Extremely Interesting Journal*) was aimed at children aged 5-7 and was published from 1930-1941. Its abbreviated title read as 'siskin'. *Ezh* succeeded *Novyi Robinzon*, which had closed in 1925, as the foremost children's journal produced in Leningrad.

[282] Chukovskaya, *V laboratorii redaktora* (2017), pp.294-295; Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), pp.493-494.

[283] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153, pp.251-253.

[284] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.238.

state publisher issued 76 percent of the titles collected from 1928, 67 percent of the titles collected from 1929 and 79 percent of the titles collected from 1930. The only other company found to have issued a substantial number of books at this time was Kul'tura, with a notable 17 percent of all titles collected from 1930. The company was run by the Kiev-pechat' (Kiev-print) trust and produced stylish picture books in both the Russian and Ukrainian languages. It is hard to know if this last figure is reflective of the industry as a whole at this time, or if it is representative of what has been preserved in archive picture book collections, which often have an overriding interest in graphic design. It would certainly be interesting to see future research on publishing outside of Moscow and Leningrad, to evaluate the overall impact that publishers like this had on the children's book sector.

As well as the number of titles printed, the size of editions also increased greatly during the last few years of the 1920s. A quick glance at any collection of picture books from the period would show that in 1925, the average picture book was produced in an edition of around 10,000. Between 1926 and 1929, picture books were most often released in batches of between 8,000 and 30,000. By 1930, when picture books were published with the full backing of state resources, titles tended to come in much larger editions of 20,000 to 100,000. It is also interesting to look at the change in retail price of picture books during these years and some idea of this can be gained from looking at the prices inscribed on books gathered for this study. Books dating from 1925, when the publishing industry was still recovering from the printing crisis, cost on average 61.6 kopecks. The sample of books from 1927 had an average price of 34.3 kopecks, while the titles from 1930 averaged at 24.9 kopecks apiece. All of this signifies that by the end of the decade, picture books were not only much more widely available but were a far more affordable commodity for the consumer.

At the end of 1930, as the state tightened its grip on publishing and on culture in general, Gosizdat was closed down. All publishing in the country was centralised under OGIZ (Association of State Publishers), a syndicate of specialised publishing houses. The organization was responsible for large scale planning, financial decisions and production, while individual publishing houses held a purely editorial role.[285] The Leningrad and Moscow departments of Gosizdat effectively stayed in place, retaining their editorial staff. However, most picture books were now officially issued through Molodaia gvardiia, the publishing house of the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), which had been printing books for youth and children since 1922. Research for this study found 74 books from 1931, all of which bore the Molodaia gvardiia label,

[285] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.97; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.125; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.180.

except for two from Gosizdat and one from Kul'tura. The 1931 books also reveal the continuation of the same multi-tiered marketing strategy as Raduga and Gosizdat, with large format picture books in decent quality paper sold alongside large editions of cheap books at a lower price. The most expensive books sold for up to 60 kopecks, measured around 22 centimetres long and were circulated in editions of 10,000. Medium size books sold at around 30 kopecks, measured about 19 centimetres long and had an edition size of 50,000. The smallest size was sold for just 10 or 12 kopecks, measured 16 centimetres long and was sent out in large editions of 150,000 or 200,000. These tiny books were printed on poor quality paper, which felt soft and pulpy to the touch, while printing costs were kept low by the use of a limited colour palette of only red, green and yellow or just orange and blue. Less attention was paid by the lithographer to the individual style of the illustrators, which made the appearance of the books fairly generic across the series. Another interesting point to note about the Molodaia gvardiia books from 1931 was that consumer demand was still being taken into account, as some popular picture books which had first been published by Raduga in the middle of the decade were still being re-issued, including the Marshak-Lebedev titles *Vchera i segodniia* and *Pudel*.[286]

Picture book production dropped sharply after 1931, as the Soviet publishing industry went through a period of change and uncertainty following centralization. Key figures in children's literature worked behind the scenes to develop a new model for producing children's books, in an industry which was now fully under state control. On the 15th September 1933, the Party published a decree establishing Detgiz, a standalone children's publishing house which had been created by merging the offices of Molodaia gvardiia and the children's section of Gosizdat. The proposal for the new publisher had been prepared by Marshak and Gorky (who had by then returned from a period of emigration in Italy), with contributions from Chukovskii, Lunacharskii and Lenin's widow Nadezhda Krupskaia. Gorky and Marshak had hoped that Detgiz might be based in Leningrad but as part of a larger effort to shift cultural activities to the capital, its headquarters were placed in Moscow. Marshak was offered the directorship but declined, preferring to continue his editorial work by heading the Leningrad section of the new publisher.[287] The new arrangement was the culmination of a sixteen year process which had seen children's publishing and the picture book climb back almost from extinction, to become a strong commercial product. The October Revolution and Civil War left the book trade in desperate straits and during the NEP period, the socialist government used private business to serve its needs while the economy was slowly rebuilt. When the state had grown economically and was able to

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[286] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153.

[287] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.363-364; Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.181.

fund the industry by itself, it drew ideas and personnel from the private sector to build a streamlined children's publishing operation which could be fully controlled for its own purposes. To further understand what the intentions of the state were, as it worked to gain a monopoly on the children's publishing industry, we can turn our attention to the promotional materials which were issued by publishers. These were varied, plentiful and changed with the industry as time and politics progressed.

Promoting the Picture Book

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, picture books and other children's books were advertised through conventional methods. Publishers issued catalogues containing lists of their latest titles. In 1925, Raduga published a brightly coloured catalogue with an attractive, full-colour jacket design. The cover illustration showed a bearded peasant in traditional dress holding a bundle of books, who was pictured next to some fairy toadstools and in front of a hut in the countryside, which was framed by an arching rainbow. The catalogue was divided into two sections – one for young and middle aged children and one for older children. Each section featured lists of books in alphabetical order by author. In the section for young children, books priced between 50 kopecks and 1 ruble 20 kopecks were listed first, followed by a separate list of cheap books priced at 18 to 35 kopecks. The catalogue was illustrated with hand-drawn, full-colour collages of the book covers from some of Raduga's most popular titles, including the Chukovskii *skazki* and the Marshak-Lebedev books.[288] In the same year, Gosizdat issued a children's book catalogue which focussed less on the picture book as a competitively priced, desirable consumer object and more on the socialist pedagogical purpose of the book. The cover was printed in plain black and red and was embellished with a simple illustration of some open books, indicating that the state publisher had not only a much smaller promotional budget than Raduga but a more serious purpose.[289] The catalogue opened with a foreword explaining how Gosizdat intended to appeal to the new post-revolutionary child reader. In a similar vein to Grinberg with her books of the past and future, it was explained that the young generation needed a different sort of book to reflect their modern interests and that this new book would help to create a new citizen and therefore build a new life for the country. The structure of the catalogue was also explained. Books in line with contemporary pedagogical, artistic and ideological demands were given short reviews to be used by librarians or school workers. Books

[288] *Katalog detskikh knig* (Moscow and Leningrad: Raduga, 1925).

[289] *Detskie knigi: katalog izdanii* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1925).

considered to be 'classics' and not necessarily up to the latest standards, were listed in title only, as it was thought that people would generally be acquainted with them.[290] In the section for pre-school books, titles listed as 'contemporary' included production books by Smirnov and the Chichagovas as well as stories about the postal service and the kindergarten. There were small black and white pictures placed next to some of the book descriptions, reproducing their cover designs or illustrations. Pre-school books listed as 'classics' included Vengrov's *Zverushki*, as illustrated by the Segodniia collective and Marshak's *Dom, kotoryi postroil Dzhek*, a translation of the English nursery rhyme *The House that Jack Built*.[291]

By 1929, catalogues from Gosizdat listed books under thematic headings as by this time, there were enough children's books being issued by the state publisher to require detailed bibliographic categorisation. Picture book titles were listed under such subjects as social-revolutionary books, the production book and the 'jolly book' ('veselaia kniga'), thus clearly denoting if a book had political or non-political content.[292] This thematic approach was used again in a 1931 bibliography aimed at parents, which inherently promoted the concept of a socialist children's book. Produced during the First Five-Year Plan period, *100 knig tvoemu rebenku* (*100 Books for Your Child*) embodied the culture of this time with an overt emphasis on the educational role of books and the part they were to play in socialist construction. This strategy was of no commercial risk as by 1931, the state had a monopoly on children's publishing, so customers were not going to be drawn away from Gosizdat by the less earnest goods of private publishing houses. A set of short introductory essays address the parent, or more particularly the mother, on how to choose the correct reading material. It is suggested that mothers do not put enough thought into choosing books for their children and that reading matter should be treated in the same way as nourishing food but for the intellect rather than the stomach, as the right books can help to shape the socialist citizen.[293] A set of requirements is then given for the children's book, beginning with the idea that the book should help the child to understand the everyday world. We are also told that the book should teach the child about the character of the collectivist, internationalist socialist person and engage the young reader with the task of socialist construction. It is explained that whilst achieving these great deeds, books should create cheerful citizens, discourage cruel humour and be of high artistic value.[294] The visual language of the book jacket reflects this fully socialist agenda by using the black and white

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[290] Ibid., pp.3-4.

[291] Ibid., pp.5-10.

[292] See for example *Detskie knigi: katalog knig* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); *Katalog knig dlia doshkol'nikov* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929).

[293] *100 knig tvoemu rebenku* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1931), pp.3-4.

[294] Ibid., pp.11-15.

photomontage style which was typically seen in propaganda materials during the First Five-Year Plan years. The children's book covers seen in the montage are all topical, addressing subjects such as the construction of the Dnieper Hydroelectric Station and the icebreaker Krasin, while the foreground is dominated by a healthy, laughing child who embodies the spirit of a proper Soviet upbringing. (Figure 3.1)

As well as catalogues and bibliographies, publishing houses occasionally advertised at the back of a picture book or on the back cover. Sometimes this was simply a brief note offering readers a free catalogue on request. More often it was a list of books which had either already been issued, or which were in print and due to be published soon. In some instances, the list of books was a general selection from the publisher and in others, the advert promoted books by the same author as the title being read. Raduga used this promotional tactic the most and it did so largely during its peak years of 1925 and 1926. In adverts where particular authors were highlighted, the company promoted its most popular and prolific names, usually Chukovskii, Marshak, Bianki and Andreev. Advertising in picture books was rarely seen in the late 1920s and early 1930s and it is hard to imagine why the state publishing firms which were dominant at this time did not employ this device, which was a very cheap and direct way to communicate with customers.

Moscow publishing house Rabochaia gazeta (The Worker's Gazette), which published children's journal *Murzilka*, came up with a highly novel way to promote its range of picture books. In a 1928 issue of *Murzilka*, there was an advertisement for a picture book vending machine. It proclaimed that for five, ten or fifteen kopecks the machine would give out a book and that machines had been installed in two Moscow locations – one on the Tverskoi Boulevard and one at the Moscow Zoo. The advert shows a photograph with some young children trying out the device. It appears to be a freestanding object of around two metres high and has a slot for the money and three large round holes for the books to come through. It is decorated with large signboard style writing, in what we may assume was brightly coloured paint and a cut-out head peeks over the upper edge at the very top. We will most likely never know if the experiment was successful but the idea demonstrates that publishers were aware that children wanted to be entertained and that they were engaging actively with their young consumer base to sell products.[295] (Figure 3.2)

[295] *Murzilka*, No.7 (July 1928), inside back cover.

Figure 3.1: Front cover for *100 Books for Your Child* (1931).

Figure 3.2: Advertisement for children’s book vending machine from Rabochaia gazeta publishing house (1928).

One of the less overt methods of promoting picture books was the practice of publishing a text in a children's journal before printing it as a standalone picture book. Journals offered good value for money, as they sold for around the same price as a mid-range picture book and the reader got not just one story but many, along with puzzles, games and informative articles. Without the availability of publishing house archives, it is not possible to know if this was a device by publishers to test the popularity of a story before investing in an expensive full-colour illustrated edition. The alternative explanation is that it was an intuitive continuation of the pre-revolutionary practise of publishing literary works in popular journals and newspapers. It was likely that both factors contributed, making it both a cultural and commercial phenomenon. This would seem to be a particularly apt explanation in the case of Leningrad, where many of the literary traditions of old St Petersburg were retained at the Gosizdat office. The children's section, funded by a state publisher which was financially strong by the late 1920s, was able to produce its own magazines. *Ezh* catered for children aged seven to ten from 1928 onwards, while *Chizh* was introduced for pre-schoolers in 1930. During 1930 and 1931, at least five texts which would later become picture books appeared in *Chizh*, including *Varezhki i valenki* (*Boots and Mittens*) by Ivan Belyshev and *Skazka o teniakh* (*Tale about a Shadow*) by Viktor Shklovskii.[296] The practise was even more widely employed in *Ezh*, with at least eighteen magazine texts becoming separate picture books between 1928 and 1931. The Oberui poets Vvedenskii and Kharms were responsible for half of these texts between them, as the magazine offered them a playground to experiment with their literary approach to writing for chidren. Vvedenskii's future picture book poems included *Kto?* (*Who?*), *Zheleznaia doroga* (*The Railway*) and *Rybaki*.[297] The poems originally written by Kharms for *Ezh* became some of his most successful picture books, including *Ivan Ivanych Samovar*, *Vo-pervykh i vo-votorykh* (*Firstly and Secondly*) and *Ga-ra-rar!,* which in its later book form became *Igra*.[298] We have a very small piece of evidence that the opinions of

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[296] Ivan Belyshev, 'Varezhki i valenki' in *Chizh*, No.12 (December 1930), pp.1-2; Ivan Belyshev, *Valenki i varezhki*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931); Viktor Shklovskii, 'Skazka o teniakh' in *Chizh*, No.1 (January 1931), pp.4-6; Viktor Shklovskii, *Skazka o teniakh*, ill. Tatiana Lebedeva (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[297] Aleksandr Vvedenskii, 'Zheleznaia doroga' in Ezh, No.3 (March 1928), pp.12-13; Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Zheleznaia doroga*, ill. Alisa Poret (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Aleksandr Vvedenskii. 'Kto?' in Ezh, No.3 (March 1929), pp.30-33; Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Kto?*, ill. L. Iudin (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931); Aleksandr Vvedenskii, 'Rybaki' in Ezh, No.4 (April 1929), pp.10-11; Vvedenskii, *Rybaki* (1930).

[298] Daniil Kharms, 'Ivan Ivanych Samovar' in *Ezh*, No.1 (January 1928), p.28; Daniil Kharms, *Ivan Ivanych Samovar*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Daniil Kharms, 'Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh' in *Ezh*, No.11 (November 1928), pp.16-19; Daniil Kharms, *Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh*, ill. Vladimir Tatlin (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Daniil Kharms, 'Ga-ra-rar!' in *Ezh*, No.12 (December 1929), pp.5-7; Kharms, *Igra* (1930).

children were taken into account when deciding which poems to put forward into book form. On the letters page of *Ezh* in May 1928, a group of children from a Moscow sanatorium wrote to say how much they liked the jolly story, 'Rasskaz o tom, kak Pankin Kol'ka ezdil v Braziliiu, a Ershov Pet'ka nichemu ne veril' (Story About How Kol'ka Pankin went to Brazil but Pet'ka Ershov Did Not Believe Anything). The piece by Kharms had been published in Ezh during February of that year and soon afterwards, was published as a separate book.[299]

By the late 1920s, Gosizdat was confident enough in its own brand of children's books to issue bold posters advertising the latest publications. The posters used full-colour illustration to make the books seem exciting for young readers. One example from 1930 was headed: "Children of the north and south meet together in the book". A bright yellow panel in the middle shows an African boy standing in front of a large orange giraffe and holding a crocodile on a leash. A white panel to the left of this shows a child from the far north, dressed in furs and flanked by a reindeer. The two children are collaged so that they are facing each other, as if surprised and fascinated by each other's presence. A panel to the right hand side lists a number of Gosizdat picture books which bear no particular thematic unity. A final panel at the far edge gives a collage of images including a large ship, a Native American with bow and arrow and a collection of animals. A slogan at the bottom right hand corner informs us that: "The best children's books are found at the Giz shop."[300] We do not know exactly where such posters were intended to be displayed but we can assume that libraries, classrooms and Pioneer clubs would be likely places. The more pertinent question relates to the overriding purpose of such advertising materials. If Gosizdat was the main picture book publisher at this time, then it had no serious commercial competition and advertising in the conventional sense had very little purpose – it merely advocated the consumption of one set of state goods over all of the others. The answer lies in a series of posters from 1929, promoting the Week of the Children's Book. Just like the essays in *100 knig tvoemu rebenku*, the slogans on these posters advocate literacy and the great benefits of reading, with a view to developing the ideal citizen or the 'new Soviet man'. In correspondence with this theme, each poster used one of two designs which showed children in Pioneer uniform who were either marching with a banner or proudly standing holding books, which they had chosen from a packed bookshelf. One of the posters was emblazoned with Lenin's much quoted slogan: "Without books there is no knowledge, without knowledge there is no communism."

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[299] Daniil Kharms, 'Rasskaz o tom, kak Pankin Kol'ka ezdil v Braziliiu, a Ershov Pet'ka nichemu ne veril' in *Ezh*, No. 2 (February 1928), pp.1-11; Daniil Kharms, *Kak Pankin Kol'ka letal v Braziliiu, a Pet'ka Ershov nichemu ne veril*, ill. Evgeniia Evenbakh (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928); 'V dnevnom sanatorii' in *Ezh*, No.5 (May 1928), inside back cover.

[300] Unknown artist, 'Deti severa i iuga v knige vstretiatsiia drug s drugom.' ('Children of the north and south meet together in the book.') (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

Another was inscribed with a quotation from Gorky which described how books elevated him from animal to man, while a third declared: “Pick up a book, there will be no boredom.” (Figure 3.3) [301]

Figure 3.3: ‘Pick up a book, there will be no boredom’ (1929).

[301] Unknown artist, ‘Bez knigi net znaniia, bez znaniia net kommunizma.’ (‘Without books there is no knowledge, without knowledge there is no communism.’) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929); Unknown artist, ‘Guliai, rabotai, chitai s okhotoi.’ (‘Walk, work, read with pleasure.’) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929); Unknown artist, ‘Kazhdaia kniga byla malen’koi stupen’iu, podnimaias’ na kotoruiu ia voskhodil ot zhivotnogo k cheloveku.’ (‘Each book was a small step, which in climbing, I ascended from animal to man.’) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929); Unknown artist, ‘Vozmi knigu v ruki, ne budet skuki.’ (‘Pick up a book, there will be no boredom.’) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929).

Further information on this fundamental ideological shift can be found by looking at *Na knizhnom fronte* (*On the Book Front*), the trade periodical produced by Gosizdat for its booksellers and regional offices. In 1929, the publisher was not only at its most successful but it was ostentatiously celebrating the ten year anniversary of its foundation. A long string of articles throughout that year discussed the 'book bazaar', a temporary book sale set up in towns and cities, where visitors could buy books from kiosks and stalls. Coverage began during the spring, when planning for the outdoor event could start in earnest. A March edition of the journal featured an article entitled 'What the Book Bazaar Should be Like in 1929', which explained that the book bazaar must play a central part in the celebration of the Soviet book and should be deployed throughout the country. It also argued that while book bazaars had been used in previous years, they had been commercially orientated and encouraged spontaneous purchases. In 1929, bazaars were to "actively propagandise the book".[302] Continuing on this theme, a piece in the same edition explained that the book bazaar was to be deployed in connection with the 'cultural revolution' and that it could be used to bring the book to millions of new consumers. This new reader was to be convinced that "books are a necessity in the process of his everyday life" and that they would "help him with his many questions".[303] The author also acknowledged that book bazaars in the past had been "dull, grey and hopelessly boring" and if they were to succeed in their propaganda task, then they should be made much more attractive with not just sales kiosks but entertainments, attractions and even music by military bands.[304]

There was much advice for regional departments of Gosizdat who were planning their own event. An incredibly thorough explanation of how to organise book bazaar was given in a two-part article during March and April. It covered everything from choosing a location for the bazaar and constructing sideshows, through to advertising and security.[305] Articles also discussed tactics for attracting special interest groups to the bazaar, which meant festive events to promote particular types of book on designated days. A July edition of the journal reported on a bazaar which happened in Leningrad close to the Gosizdat jubilee date in May. At the bazaar there were special days with extra discounts for technical books, medical books, political books and children's books. On children's day, school groups came with their teachers, while workers of

[302] 'Kakim dolzhen byt' knizhnyi bazar v 1929 godu', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.9 (March 1929), p.22.

[303] N.O. Borovich, 'Knizhnye bazary (Iz zametok knigoveda)', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.9 (March 1929), pp.22-25 at p.22.

[304] Ibid., p.23.

[305] I. A. Tsetkin, 'Tekhnika organizatsii knizhnykh bazarov (Sovety organizatora)', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.12 (March 1929), pp.7-13; I. A. Tsetkin, 'Tekhnika organizatsii knizhnykh bazarov', No.13 (April 1929), pp.3-7.

Gosizdat and Molodaia gvardiia lead the pupils in conversation about books. As a gift from the bazaar committee, the children were given a free edition of *Ezh* magazine. There was also a "day of the writer" and an "art day", when well-known authors and artists sat in kiosks to sign books which had been bought by the attending public. Profits more than doubled on these days and literary figures who offered their services included Chukovskii, who we can imagine would have been a great success with young readers of his children's poetry.[306]

There were also separate celebrations for children during 1929, framed either as a 'festival of the book' or officially named Week of the Children's Book, as advertised in the Gosizdat poster series. These were pedagogically organised events designed not only to be enjoyable and sell Gosizdat books but to educate children, parents and teachers in good reading habits. Gosizdat also hoped that they could use these occasions to discover what the juvenile audience needed from the state publisher. *Na knizhnom fronte* published enthusiastic reports on such celebrations from cities across the country including Nizhnii Novgorod, Perm, and Kaluga. In Rostov-on-Don, a celebration of the book was organised by the regional Gosizdat children's section and took on a strong educational focus. The event was built around the grand prize ceremony for a reading competition, which aimed to promote literature about the October Revolution and inculcate children with the habit of independent reading. Thirteen libraries took part and children were given a quiz about what they had read, with prizes given for those who answered all or two thirds of the questions correctly. The celebration consisted of breakfast, followed by a parade of model book covers, then dancing and games. The event was declared a success as it attracted 800 participants and facilitated the sale of 200 Gosizdat children's books. The author of the review also thought that it set a precedent for other events of this nature, which would strengthen ties between publisher and consumer and bring the book shop to the greater attention of children.[307] An exhibition-bazar of children's books held in Penza also aimed to facilitate links between Gosizdat and its young customers. The event was held over two weeks in the Central Club of Pioneers, featured 1500 books and received 3,714 visitors, 2623 of whom were children. As well as a book sale and book lottery, the organisers showed cinema films and held an evening event on the last day of the show. This finale included a play version of Marshak's picture book poem *Knizhka pro knizhki*, a story about a boy who mistreats his books and learns the error of his ways. In return for providing the young guests with fun and games, the organisers asked them for feedback on the content of the exhibition. Amongst other comments, the visitors thought that there were not enough cheap multi-coloured picture books, complained

[306] M. Lerman, '4-yi knizhnyii bazar v Leningrade', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.26-27 (July 1929), pp.13-18 at pp.13-14.

[307] I. Tul'chinskii, 'Knizhkin' den'', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.13 (April 1929), pp.29-31.

that there were no books for girls and that there was not a full selection of children's magazines as at this time, *Ezh* was the only such title published by Gosizdat.[308]

The author reporting on the Week of the Children's Book in Moscow, used the article to demonstrate an exemplary political awareness, explaining how book festivals were to contribute directly to socialist upbringing. Taking place over a week at the end of May, the large celebration included 52 matinees for children in workers clubs across the city, with an audience of 500 to 600 people each. The events put on for small children included a performance by a writer, a puppet theatre play about a book character and an "artistic storytelling". There were also 25 talks for adults on subjects such as the significance of children's reading, the role of the book in children's upbringing and ten years of the Soviet book. Exhibitions and sales of children's literature were accompanied by talks for school workers and there were festive parades of children, who marched en masse with enlarged painted book illustrations and were escorted by an orchestra. The general conclusion was that book week would sit among other important celebrations of the *novyi byt* (new daily life) such as the Day of the Young Naturalist and the Festival of Internationalism.[309]

In connection with this educational attitude, articles in *Na knizhnom fronte* throughout the year discussed the direction and purpose of children's books. In the March issue, an article by Ivan Startsev described the production of pre-school books as a 'battle' between state and private firms. Startsev was an expert on children's books, who forged a long career as the lead bibliographer of the Soviet children's book sector. Here he explained how the pre-school book was the weakest part of Gosizdat's output as in previous years, demand had outweighed supply, with private publishers filling the gap. He named Raduga as initially being the most dominant business, which was then superseded by Mirimanov, followed by Odessa based publishing house Svetoch and finally Kul'tura. Private publishers were criticised for their monotony of theme and this was supposedly reflected in the output of pre-school books for 1927-1928, which included 113 titles on animals and nature and only 36 on other themes. On the other hand, Startsev found praise for private publishers in their use of different visual formats such as colouring books and books for cutting out, stating that Gosizdat had begun to copy this variety of form. The overall conclusion was that pre-school books must no longer be dominated by the tastes of the market but by pedagogical criteria. Consequently, the task of Gosizdat was to develop a standard pre-school book with a range of themes and formats, which employed good quality illustration and

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[308] M. Kovalenko, 'Vystavka-bazar detskoi knigi v Penze', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.22-23 (June 1929), pp.32-3.

[309] A. Vitman, '"Nedelia detskoi knigi" v Moskve', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.35-37 (September 1929), pp.35-37.

was cheap for the masses.[310] In the same issue, another article criticised the standard of illustration in children's books, expressing concern that pictures were not always attuned to the needs of children of different ages, The piece echoed Startsev's battle call for Gosizdat to create a general standard for different types of children's books, hoping that this would replace the "waste paper" of editions from the private publishers.[311]

This militant discourse also circulated outside of Gosizdat trade circles, with writers in regional journals expressing similar sentiments. A December 1929 article in Saratov publication Molodoi Leninets (Young Leninist), offered the opinion that book stalls were full of "trash". The offending literature included not just ideologically harmful books from Mirimanov but out of date classics from Gosizdat and Molodaia gvardiia. It was argued that a new literature was needed in order to arm the October generation with strong political feeling. In order to achieve this, the author suggested that publishers should stop putting harmful books on the market and find a way; "to transmit to children a simple attractive picture of the construction of socialism and future society".[312]

The ideas circulating in the trade press and the general media soon found their way back to the Gosizdat editorial offices and they were clearly seen in the publisher's plan for children's literature in 1930, a copy of which was saved in the archives of the Institute for Extracurricular Work. Preceding the list of books due to be published, the plan began with an essay which explained how progress had been made by publishers in recent years on the creation of a socially meaningful book, which aimed to bring up the reader with a materialist worldview. It went on to argue that the 'production book' should play an increased part in children's literature, as it was especially important in preparing "future builders of socialism". To help with this, the document proposed that young proletarian writers should be recruited, along with specialists in areas of socialist construction.[313] The work of Gosizdat on the pre-school book was declared significant, as it had liquidated the role of private publishers in this area. The central principal to guide further development of the pre-school book was to strengthen the number of "socially meaningful" books, which expressed the social, cultural and economic life of the Soviet Union. Equally important was the idea that pre-school books must consider input from the pedagogical

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[310] Ivan Startsev, 'Na bor'bu s chastnikom (Za polnotu i kachestvo assortmenta detskoi knigi Giza).', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.10-11 (March 1929), pp.8-10.

[311] B. A. Metner, 'Illiustratsii detskikh knig', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.10-11 (March 1929), pp.13-14.

[312] 'Knigu – pokoleniiu oktiabria.' *Molodoi Leninets* (December 21st, 1929). Typed copy of article retained in RAO f.5, op.1, d.113, l. 249.

[313] 'Plan otdelov detskoi literatury Giza k Lenotgiza na 1930 g.' Typed copy of document retained in RAO f.5, op.1, d.173, ll. 1-29 at l.1.

establishment, citing in particular books demonstrating the educational process, sanitary protection and books on nature which bore a materialist worldview.[314]

Another thread of the discussion on children's literature in both *Na knizhnom fronte* and in the literary press, was a fierce questioning of the dominance of the Leningrad School. It is hard to say if these attacks were rooted in genuine ideological belief or perhaps based more on professional jealously and jostling for power but their tone was virulent and unforgiving. In the year's final issue of *Na knizhnom fronte* at the end of December, a writer named Polezhaeva penned an article which in different ways both contradicted and adhered to the prevalent ideological climate. She began with a simple explanation of the qualities which a pre-school book should possess and went on to express concern that Gosizdat had not produced many books for nursery aged readers. She followed this with a lengthy review of various pre-school books in which she declared that production books were boring and not of interest to children, before sharply criticising the works of various Leningrad authors and illustrators.[315] Polezhaeva approved of Ermolaeva's illustrations for Vvedenskii's *Mnogo zverei* (*Many Beasts*) but considered that her illustrations for *Poezd* were incomprehensible to children. Worst of all were the artist's drawings for Kharms' *Ivan Ivanych Samovar*, which were described as "evil caricatures of people".[316] Chukovskii came in for an equally mixed review, as Polezhaeva praised his cheap books of folk poems and the fact that his texts were excellent for reading aloud but found the contents of his *skazki* to be wholly unacceptable. The frightening parts of the stories lacked the joyful emotion that Soviet pre-schoolers should be presented with, most particularly the section of *Mukha Tsokotukha* in which the fly is kidnapped by the murderous spider and the verses in *Barmalei* where the pirate flashes his teeth and builds a bonfire to roast the children. It was declared quite plainly that these books: "should not be placed in the hands of children".[317] Polezhaeva's overall conclusion was that: "There are not many harmful books at Gosizdat, but all of those which there are, are from the Leningrad section." Moscow workers of Gosizdat allegedly payed more attention to the voices of pedagogues and therefore produced books which were of incomparably better quality.[318]

To understand the inconsistencies in the Polezhaeva article and the strength of feeling against the Leningrad School, we can look at a series of articles by critic D. Kal'm, which were published in highly influential Moscow-based journal *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary Gazette)

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[314] Ibid., I.3.

[315] Polezhaeva, 'Detskaia kniga: Chto daet nam Giz i chego my ot nego khotim', *Na knizhnom fronte*, No.47-48 (December 1929), pp.9-13 at pp.9-11.

[316] Ibid., p.11, p.13.

[317] Ibid., pp.11-12.

[318] Ibid., p.13.

earlier in the same month. Setting an ideological tone which Polezhaeva clearly felt compelled to follow, Kal'm proffered the opinion that the Leningrad department of Gosizdat were responsible for many of the problems faced by Soviet children's literature. On the 3rd December, he reported from a meeting of the children's section of the writer's union, at which a speech was made by E.G. Zak, the head of the Central Children's Library. Zak began his report by expressing concern that children's writers were working with a fundamentally different aim to educators. He believed that writers prioritised the emotional aspect of their work and were: "often insulted by the idea that artistic production is a weapon of upbringing". This was considered to be problematic, as the role of the writer was supposedly greater than that of the pedagogue, since education was based on material created by the writer. Zak went on to illustrate this argument by pointing to Gosizdat, which had a "hegemony" over the children's book market. He used the example of the group of writers around *Ezh* magazine, who he considered to be talented and productive but extremely harmful from a pedagogical point of view. The writer A. Irkutov also spoke at the meeting, describing Marshak as an undercover class enemy and the children's department of Gosizdat as a, "nest of petty bourgeois philistines".[319]

Kal'm went on a further ideological rampage on the 16th of December when he published a piece entitled 'Against Incompetence in Children's Literature'. The article was written in response to a speech made by Lunacharskii, in which the politician had defended the fairy tale against radical Marxist critics. The lecture was subsequently published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* and provoked a fierce response from writers such as Kal'm. The critic attacked the books of Chukovsky, Marshak and Kharms as meaningless and empty. As an editor, he considered Marshak to be unprincipled and guilty of favouring petty bourgeois authors over proletarian ones.[320] In a later issue of the journal, leading writers leapt to Marshak's defence, in a response to Kal'm entitled 'Against Lies and Slander'. The signatories included Bianki, Zhitkov, Pasternak, Konstantin Fedin and Mikhail Zoschenko.[321] Nonetheless, this series of events represented a decisive attempt to condemn private publishing in the economic sense and to officially reject its cultural legacy. Marshak, Chukovskii and their creative circle had graduated as children's writers and illustrators whilst working at Raduga, one of the most successful private publishing firms in the Soviet Union during the mid-1920s. Despite the fact that authors had changed allegiance to state publishing after a few short years, strict Marxist ideologues wanted to make it perfectly clear that by 1930, state publishing and the Soviet children's book were to be inextricably tied with the overarching state mission to build the 'new Soviet man'. The picture book was to be

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[319] D. Kal'm, 'O sovremennoi detskoi knige. Na sobranii detskoi sektsii VSSP.' *Literaturnaia gazeta* (December 3rd, 1929). Typed copy of article retained in RAO f.5, op.1, d.113, l. 248.

[320] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.356-357.

[321] Ibid., p.360.

deployed as a tool to mould young readers into politicised young citizens, rather than act as a purely commercial object. Official discourse on the topic expressed this in no uncertain terms and sent the picture book community, with its lively cast of characters, hurtling towards a bold new world, in which it would remain for decades to come.

The Customer is Always Right?

It was young citizens themselves who had the least heard voice in the process of producing picture books, for which they were the only consumer group. There are a few small pieces of evidence which give us some suggestion about children's responses to the books which were published. In 1926, Rubtsova and Anna Pokrovskaia at the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work, published an article with the results of a survey which they had conducted during 1925, detailing 1000 reader requests from 18 Moscow libraries. The children involved were all of school age rather than kindergarten pupils but a few of them were aged seven, so we can consider this research to be of some small value when looking at picture books. The authors explained that the publishing industry was not supplying the type of literature that children wanted to read. The most popular topic was literature on everyday life, which took 26.2 percent of all requests. This stood next to a production rate on this topic of 4.3 percent, leaving a large discrepancy. Children thus had some desire to engage with the contemporary literature that pedagogues were advocating at this time but they also strongly retained their interest in more typical childhood topics. Demand for the *skazka* took 16.1 percent of all requests but there was once more a shortfall, with such books taking only 4.3 percent of production. Moreover, children wanted to read the traditional Russian *skazka* but all the published tales were either by individual contemporary writers or based on revolutionary or production themes. The third most popular category was adventure literature which took 5.5 percent of demand but only 2.8 percent of production.[322] Rubtsova published the results of a similar survey in February 1928, which looked at 5000 requests from urban and rural libraries. The children's favourite author was Marshak with 5,535 requests, closely followed by Chukovskii with 5,266 requests. The next most popular author was Bianki who received 3,584 requests. The following ten authors on the list all had between 1000 and 1500 requests and they included picture book authors Zhitkov, Ol'ga Gur'ian,

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[322] A.K.Pokrovskaia and P.A. Rubtsova, 'Prakticheskoe znachenie metoda sprosa.' *Krasnyi bibliotekar'*, No.8 (August 1926). Typed copy of article retained in RAO f.5, op.1, d.72, ll. 88-99 at l..88, l.95. For more on the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work see below, 'The Institute for Children's Reading', pp.246-257.

Varvara Mirovich and Agniia Barto.[323] The fact that Marshak and Chukovskii dominated this list by a large majority, indicated that the popularity of these two authors with the young readership could not be ironed out by ideology or pedagogical reasoning and that publishing houses continued to print their work through genuine consumer demand.

The popularity of Marshak and Chukovskii can be further emphasised if we allow ourselves to return to the statistics on the number of times that their most popular books were re-issued. Marshak's *Bagazh* reached six editions between 1926 and 1931. His poem *Pozhar* was printed eight times between 1923 and 1932, while *Deti v kletke* (*Kids in a Cage*) achieved nine editions between 1923 and 1931.[324] Chukovskii was even more successful with *Tarakanishche*, which reached eleven editions between 1923 and 1929. Most popular of all was *Moidodyr*, which was issued an impressive seventeen times between 1923 and 1930.[325] These figures indicate that the picture book format which was born of private publishing during the middle of the NEP period, was a far greater commercial success than the socialist pedagogical approach which was being fully advocated by the early 1930s. The picture book continued to flourish but none of the new authors became so beloved by Soviet children as Chukovskii and Marshak. Through the fierce flurry of ideological debate and without archive material on the editorial process, it is impossible to know whether these books were preserved through a sense of literary value or as a valuable commercial asset but very early on, they became an indelible part of culture for Soviet children.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the children's book was a flourishing part of the Russian publishing industry, which had expanded greatly following an increase in literacy rates and the improvement of printing technology. After the October Revolution, a printing crisis caused by the First World War and Civil War reduced children's book production to almost nothing, while the fledgling Soviet publishing industry prioritised essential areas of production such as political literature. Upon the introduction of NEP in 1921, the state used private publishers to fill the gaps in production and the children's picture book blossomed under these companies. The most successful picture book firm was Raduga, which united a group of young, talented authors and illustrators, who pioneered a bright new vision for pre-school children's literature. The state publishing sector began to grow stronger in the second half of the 1920s and take on more responsibility for children's books. This meant that Raduga found itself in financial trouble and eventually closed but it left a great legacy in the writers, artists and editors which it passed on to the Leningrad children's section of state publisher Gosizdat. This department thrived for a short

[323] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.156, p.160.

[324] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.151-153.

[325] Ibid., pp.252-253.

time as the centre of creativity in children's publishing until the 1930s, when the publishing industry was re-structured. Children's book production dropped briefly and in 1933 a new central state children's publishing house was formed, which would take the commercial and cultural lead in picture book production for decades to come.

Advertising and promotional materials from mid-1920s to early 1930s revealed the commercial and cultural path taken by the picture book. Catalogues and advertisements from private companies in the mid-1920s focussed on the commercial appeal of the children's book, as a brightly coloured object which appealed to families with a few spare kopecks to spend. State companies preferred to emphasise the educational role of the book in building the literate, politically aware 'new Soviet man'. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, when the state achieved full control of the publishing sector, these socialist messages were overt and propaganda style posters promoted the book as vehicle for education and enlightenment. The posters were backed up by articles in the trade press and literary journals, which sought to strengthen the role that children's literature was to play in developing socialist society and which fiercely attacked the private publishers and individuals who had dominated production several years before. Children's books became part of the broader movement to harness all cultural and educational matters to a central state apparatus and any major digression from this scheme was strictly ironed out by the mid-1930s.

The legacy of the NEP period in picture book production was nonetheless enormous and the Soviet children's picture book would not have developed so quickly and taken on the sophisticated form that it did, without the contribution of private firms in the 1920s. Just as picture book illustration in the early to mid-1920s was dominated by well-known members of the pre-revolutionary art scene, Raduga was built upon a network of leading figures from the pre-revolutionary literary intelligentsia. The many cultural and social connections between men such as Kliachko, Gor'kii, Chukovskii and Marshak, facilitated a period of great creativity which gave the picture book its literary, artistic and material form. This centre of activity was tolerated long enough for the state to benefit from the talents and resources of individuals before it decided upon the route that official state culture was to take. The literary forms, book characters and brightly coloured graphics of the 1920s nonetheless remained after that time, at least in diluted form and Soviet children's culture was irreversibly touched for decades to come by Moidodyr the marching washstand, Bianki's nature books and many other emblems of the period. The strictly socialist picture book that evolved alongside these things had its own creation story and it is to this that we will turn next, as we look further into the one of the many currents that merged to form the Soviet picture book.

Part 3

The Picture Book as Political Education

Socialist themes formed a significant contribution to the body of picture books produced from the mid-1920s onwards. Of the 657 books surveyed for this study, 82 contained images of or storylines about Pioneers. The Bolshevik push for modernity also featured heavily with modern transport, including locomotives, depicted in 67 books and industrialisation being the direct subject of 27 stories.[326] Other less frequently used socialist topics included the Red Army, the Five-Year Plan, internationalism, communist festivals and Lenin. Many picture books contained subtle cultural inferences which can be traced back to ideological concepts but in this section, we will deal with those texts which took explicitly socialist ideas as their central topic. This will lead us to consider how illustrated books for pre-school children were used as political education.

The immediate thought when addressing this topic would be to determine a definition of 'political education' and consider how this relates to propaganda in the broader sense of the word. A deep discussion of these complex phenomena is far beyond the scope of this project but looking at the way Peter Kenez perceived Bolshevik propaganda in his key study on the topic, offers a useful foundation on which to build our discussion. Kenez gives a core definition of propaganda, describing it as: "nothing more than the attempt to transmit social and political values in the hope of affecting people's thinking, emotions and thereby behaviour."[327] In identifying the specific nature of Bolshevik propaganda, he argues that the Bolsheviks saw propaganda as part of education rather than as a separate task. Not only was the political education department part of the Commissariat of Education but in early Bolshevik terminology, 'political education work' or *politprosvetrabota* was a synonym for propaganda.[328] In the following discussion, we will therefore take the two terms to be fluid, helping us to understand why a variety of methods were used to propagate political ideas.

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[326] Whilst these figures show that considerable attention was given to socialist topics, it should also be noted that non-political topics maintained a solid share of overall production. The most popular topic by far was animals, with 159 out of 657 books featuring creatures of one sort or another – almost double the quantity of Pioneer books. Examples of other groups of non-political books include 61 texts composed of nonsense verse or fantasy stories and 48 books containing nature themes. There were 177 books which had no political connotations whatsoever in either content, text or style of illustration.

[2] Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985), p.4.

[328] Ibid., p.8.

Picture books demonstrated a range of approaches to political education. Firstly, there were books which could not be considered as overt political education, yet which were infused with a worldview aligned to Bolshevik aims. Secondly, there were books which were obvious proponents of ideological education, but which utilised gentle demonstration of the 'novyi byt' and promoted the holistic development of 'new soviet man', rather than employing overt political messaging. The third approach to texts was the direct propagation of the socialist political message using motifs specially tailored to young children, which made the texts seem enjoyable rather than purely didactic. Finally, some picture books presented political topics to children on the exact same terms as they were presented to adults but simply scaled down to fit the picture book format. We will look at these different approaches as we examine how contemporary topics were deployed to create the socialist picture book, which in turn will allow us to evaluate how literature for pre-school children fitted in with the overall Bolshevik strategy for disseminating political messages.

Young Citizens of a Modern New World

During the 1920s and early 1930s, veneration of the machine, technology and modernity in its many manifestations formed a central part of the emerging cultural identity of the Soviet Union. These themes seeped into the picture book world, indicating that a world view which was aligned with the Bolshevik vision for society was deemed suitable for presentation to the youngest Soviet citizens. We will look at why this was the case and how such topics were depicted for the very young, also considering whether these books were supposed to show a portrait of the modern world as it really was or a utopian vision of the future socialist society that would one day belong to them.

The movement to depict modernity in art and literature was part of a broader trend that permeated cultural, social and political discourse to the highest level. From the outset, the Bolshevik cultural project was inextricably identified with the creation of a modern, technologically advanced state, which could compete on the world stage as a beacon of progress thus demonstrating the transformative power of socialism. Richard Stites describes the Bolshevik dream as, "an urban industrial order of modernity and productivity", pointing to the interconnection of politics and technology at the turn of the twentieth century whereby technology would add power to the Bolshevik vision.[329] For Lenin, the plan for the electrification

[329] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (1989), p.3, p.6.

of the entire country was a key part of this strategy, intended to overcome poverty and backwardness.[330]

Writers and social theorists embraced the machine age further still. Science fiction became a popular genre with novels such as Aleksei Tolstoi's *Aelita* (1923) taking inspiration from widespread interest in aviation and the cosmic thought of Nikolai Fedorov.[331] Poet Aleksei Gastev extended his literary fascination with the mechanised factory by attempting to remould mankind itself using the machine-like methods advocated by the American concept of Taylorism. At the Central Institute for Labour in Moscow, Gastev studied human movement, training workers in the most efficient work habits and routines.[332]

In the mid-1920s, critics of children's literature who objected to traditional fairy tales and fantasy endorsed a new type of book which would have this type of scientific thinking at its core. In 1926, N. Potapov penned an article entitled *Is Fantasy Needed in Children's Literature?* Potapov attacked "unhealthy fantasy" as forcibly introducing children to concepts which are counter to their usual understanding of things, citing a work published by Raduga which featured a poem about riding a horse down a rainbow.[333] Instead he suggested that: "Only a knowledge of contemporary life as it really is and participation in collective labour will help to train future warriors and builders of a socialist state."[334] Potapov qualified his remarks with the idea that "healthy scientific fantasy", which addressed the future possibilities of science, was still acceptable, giving his approval to the works of Aleksandr Bogdanov and H. G. Wells. This however, was considered to be more suitable for older children than for pre-schoolers, who could only comprehend literature reflecting their immediate experiences.[335]

From the mid-1920s onwards, many picture books exemplified Potapov's notion by featuring contemporary content including transport, urban landscapes and how things are made. In her 1931 review of Russian pre-school books, Marina Tsvetaeva commended these books as "much needed". Whilst admitting that she found technology "wearisome", the poet acknowledged that: "our children were born in it and with it and are fated to live in and with it:

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[330] Anthony Heywood, *Modernising Lenin's Russia: Economic Reconstruction, Foreign Trade and the Railways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.2-3.

[331] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (1989), pp.168-172.

[332] Ibid., pp.149-155.

[333] N. Potapov, 'Is Fantasy Needed in Children's Literature?', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.49-54, at pp.49-50.

[334] Ibid., p.52.

[335] Ibid., pp.51-53.

and, moreover, to create it."[336] Thomas Woody, impressed by the scale of the Bolshevik's technological aspirations, went a step further by suggesting that: "This dreaming of the miracles of the age of steam, steel and electricity has almost eliminated any need for fairy stories. In fact, the latter seem tame by comparison." According to Woody's categorisation, books depicting trams, blacksmiths and electrification belonged to "super-fairyland".[337]

If Woody's super-fairyland had superseded the world of traditional children's stories, then a new set of real-world heroes would have to step forward. It was inevitable that the machine and the worker should replace the firebird and princess of folklore. The postman takes the lead role in Marshak's *Pochta* (*Post*), in which state-of-the-art transport methods are used to deliver a registered letter to its roaming recipient, Boris Zhitkov.[338] The letter follows Zhitkov by mail train and steamer, going from Leningrad to Berlin, then on to London and Brazil, finally following Zhitkov back home to Leningrad. The illustrations by Mikhail Tsekhanovskii delight in this modern odyssey with a simple stencilled style owing much to the Constructivist lines of the Chicagovas. Cars and buses rush through the cityscapes of London and Berlin while airships and planes fly over the buildings. The postmen are of different nationalities but all are united by their smart uniform, heavy delivery bag and determined, forward marching stance. [339] (Figure 4.1) Marshak aligns them with twentieth-century efficiency in his verse about the Berlin postman, whose jacket buttons are, "burning like electricity" and whose trousers are ironed, "according to the rules of science."[340]

Post was far from being the only picture book to feature a train journey, with the locomotive becoming one of the most dominant characters in picture books during this period. The railways were of enormous political significance during the 1920s as they provided a network for the carriage of goods and between town and country, which was essential for the transformation of the economy.[341] The locomotive also fitted in with the Bolshevik narrative of cultural re-construction, leading Steiner to describe it as a "magic carpet" which would take

[336] Marina Tsvetaeva, 'On the New Russian Children's Book', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.101-106, at p.104.

[337] Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), pp.61-2, p.78.

[338] Lydia Chukovskaia explains that *Pochta* was dedicated to Zhitkov as the former sailor had such a close, enthusiastic working relationship with Marshak, beginning when they worked on *Vorobei/ Novyi Robinzon* together. See Chukovskaia, *V laboratorii redaktora* (2017), p.354.

[339] Samuil Marshak, *Pochta,* ill. Mikhail Tsekhanovskii (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

[340] "Odet takim on frantom: / Furazhka c krasnym kantom, / na kurtke pugovitsy v riad / kak elektrichestvo goriat, / i vyglazheny briuki / po pravilam nauka." Ibid., p.4.

[341] R.W. Pethybridge, 'Railways and Press Communication in Soviet Russia in the Early Nep Period', *Soviet Studies*, Vol.38, No.2 (Apr.,1986), pp.194-206, at p.194, p.196.

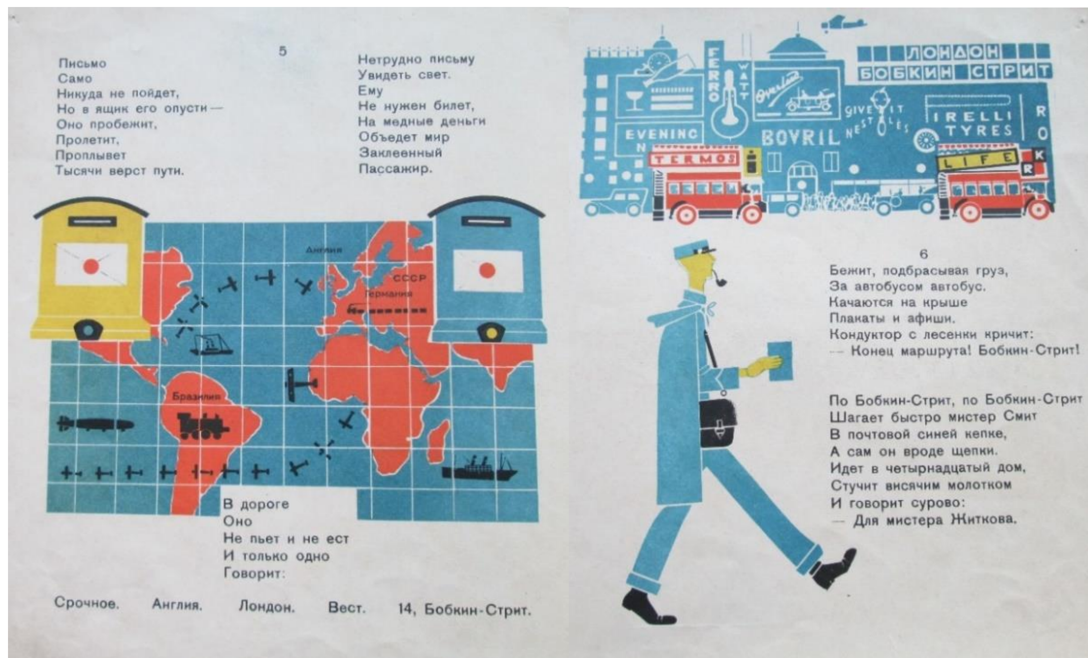

Figure 4.1: Mikhail Tsekhanovskii, illustrations for *Post* by Samuil Marshak (1927).

working folk, "on the journey from dark past to bright future."[342] In many picture books the locomotive was the main protagonist. For the youngest children there were wordless books such as *Chto vezet, gde proezzhaet* (*What it Carries, Where it Travels)* by Georgii Echeistov. This small fold-out concertina format book shows a full-length train with close up views of the people and goods inside the carriages, including cattle, bicycles and even a tractor, thus emphasising the role of railways in bringing modernity to the countryside. [343] (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) Books with both words and pictures could impart even stronger messages about the benefits of the railway system. Vvedenskii's *Zheleznaia doroga* (*The Railway*), portrays a train making its long journey across the countryside and into the city. The narrator of the opening section of the poem gives the locomotive full credit for his travels across the country, saying: "If he were not there, / then I would sit on the spot / and not see anything."[344] The book goes on to portray the locomotive as a strong, capable hero. When a thunderstorm breaks out, the birds and animals hide in the woodlands but the train is not afraid – he goes on through the night to reach his destination safely. (Figures 4.4 and 4.5)

In this new world portrayed by picture books, modern technology is seen as superior to anything that the past could offer. In *Zheleznaia doroga*, as the train passes a peasant crossing

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[342] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.118.

[343] Georgii Echeistov, (ill.), *Chto vezet gde proezzhaet.* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[344] "Esli b ne bylo ego, / to sidet' by mne na meste / i ne videt' nichego." Vvedenskii, *Zheleznaia doroga* (1929), p.2.

the field, it dares him to try and catch up. Poret's illustration for the page gives this moment great poignancy, as the man is drawn in a brightly coloured *lubok* style which could easily have been extracted from a book of folktales and which appears utterly adrift from the shining mechanisms and clouds of smoke seen in the other illustrations. (Figure 4.5) The supremacy of old over new is a theme echoed in other picture books, not least Marshak and Lebedev's *Vchera i segodnia* (*Yesterday and Today*). Outdated household objects mourn their neglect as modern inventions have taken their place. The typewriter has taken over from the fountain pen and since the plumbing has been installed the bucket and yoke are redundant.[345]

Figures 4.2 and 4.3: Georgii Echeistov, *What it Carries, Where it Travels* (1930).

[345] Marshak, *Vchera i segodniia* (1925).

Figures 4.4 and 4.5: Alisa Poret, illustrations for *The Railway* by Aleksandr Vvedenskii (1929).

If picture books embracing modern themes were to be measured against Potapov's criteria of showing contemporary life as it really was, then some can be considered to be obviously successful. The street scene was a popular choice of subject matter, with books showing the bustle of traders, vehicles and people going about their daily business. *Nasha ulitsa* (*Our Street*) by Mirovich shows a busy city street watched from a balcony by a group of kindergarten children. The children can see builders repairing the cobbles, a motorbike racing with a bicycle, the Mosselprom sweet seller and schoolboys rushing along with their books.[346] The illustrations by Konashevich make sure to include the building styles and street furniture familiar to 1920s city dwellers. In this respect, a full-page illustration from *Our Street* bears remarkable resemblance to a photograph taken in central Moscow by Aleksandr Rodchenko in the 1920s. In both images, people in fashionable clothing go about their business against a backdrop of elegant, several-storey buildings which recede into the distance. Konashevich shows a tram gliding along its rails, while Rodchenko captures a bus veering around the corner. Both artists show lampposts, shop signs and advertising boards, while tram lines bisect both scenes in the immediate foreground. (Figure 4.6)

[346] Varvara Mirovich, *Nasha ulitsa,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

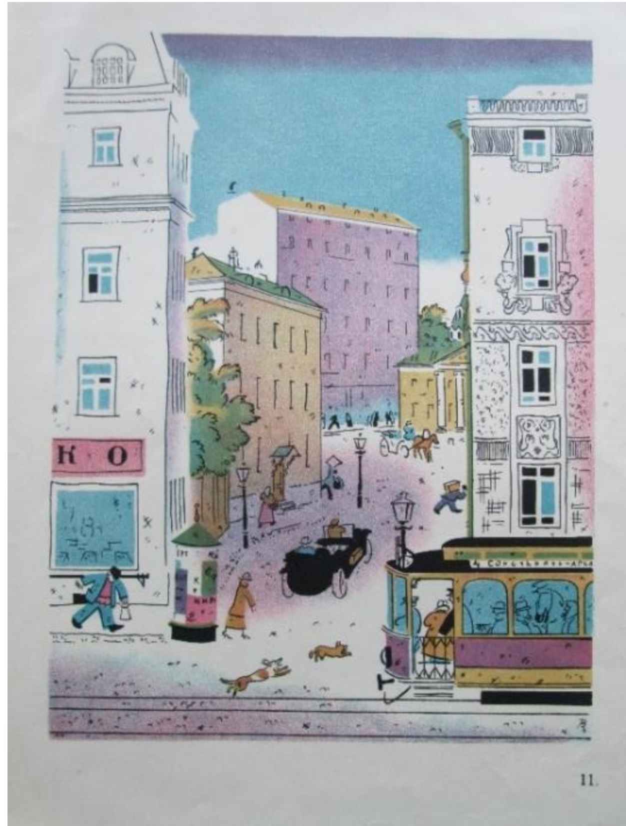

Figure 4.6: Vladimir Konashevich, illustration for *Our Street* by Varvara Mirovich (1926).

Within this urban world, the tram itself provided interesting material for stories. *Pro tramvai* (*About the Tram*) by Agniia Barto tells of an eventful tram journey and the conductor's struggle to control his disorderly passengers.[347] The story corresponds beautifully with anecdotes of tram-riding protocol in mid-1920s Moscow. Alexander Wicksteed, an Englishman working in Moscow during the 1920s, described crowded vehicles with a strict list of rules to be obeyed. Passengers were forbidden to ride on the step, get on or off whilst the vehicle is moving and were obliged to board at the back, with exceptions being made for militiamen, cripples and people carrying babies, who may get on at the front and would most likely be offered a seat there.[348] The population of tram cars was largely good tempered but occasionally a tram would be: "simmering with irritation… and if anyone detonates the whole car goes off like an explosive."[349] In Barto's poem, a seated woman carries a swaddled bundle with a black tail sticking out. She tries to convince the conductor that her bundle is a baby, until a cat jumps out, causing chaos and

[347] Agniia Barto, *Pro tramvai.* ill. Boris Kriukov (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930).

[348] Alexander Wicksteed, *Life Under the Soviets* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1928), pp.83-85.

[349] Ibid., p.85.

earning the woman a fine. (Figure 4.7) We can deduce that the woman went through all of this trouble to gain easy access to a seat at the front, which makes Barto's book an amusing satire on everyday life that would have appealed as much to a parent reading the story as to the child listening.

Figure 4.7: Boris Kriukov, illustrations for *About the Tram* by Agniia Barto (1930).

Other picture books showed a world which would not have been completely recognisable to the Soviet citizen of the 1920s and early 1930s. The many books depicting locomotives failed to describe commonplace aspects of railway travel during the period. As a young girl in the early 1930s, Svetlana Gouzenko was living in a dacha settlement outside of Moscow and she recalled the fear of suburban families in undertaking their daily commute. The trains were not only overcrowded but dangerous, with underpaid railway workers and a culture of makeshift repairs leading to frequent accidents. One morning Gouzenko's Uncle Boris witnessed a huge train crash at the local station which killed an estimated two thousand people. A packed suburban passenger train waiting to depart was hit from behind by a freight train carrying materials for the war industry, causing all of the carriages to be crushed and destroyed. The crash was given only a small article on the back page of *Pravda*, which focussed mostly on the sentence of the guilty engineer, who was shot for his part in the accident.[350] Books for children would obviously not be

[350] Svetlana Gouzenko, *Before Igor: My Memories of a Soviet Youth* (London: Cassell, 1961), pp.91-93.

expected to show these frightening things but at the same time, the contrast with the heroic train drivers and glossy, punctual locomotives in picture books is significant.

The railways were not the only area of Soviet life depicted through a rose-tinted lens. *Univermag* (*The Department Store*) by Elizaveta Tarakhovskaia and Fedor Kondratov shows a trio of Pioneers on a shopping trip. The children arrive at a modern, well-stocked shop with pleasant staff, a working lift and even a cafeteria selling sandwiches and fruit drinks to the hungry shoppers. They marvel at new footballs, musical instruments and no less than twenty-five bicycles.[351] This is a very different reality to the picture of early Soviet retail formed by Marjorie Hilton, who describes Moscow's GUM (State Department Store) in the late 1920s as dusty, short of merchandise and home to rude and inefficient workers.[352]

This discrepancy between life as it really was and the positive stories in picture books can be explained by reminding ourselves of the context in which these works were being produced. As advocates of revolutionary culture, authors, illustrators and critics were working around a definition of reality based not on actual events but on a world as it ought to be if faith in the Revolution was to be upheld. This meant that it was preferable for Soviet citizens in their formative years to be exposed to a promising vision of revolutionary life, rather than be presented with a portrait of a world which hadn't yet caught up with expectations. The nature of this utopianism evolved over time, with picture books depicting contemporary themes produced during the mid-1920s offering a different set of ideals to those which were printed after the First Five-Year Plan was launched at the end of the decade.

Citing *Pochta* and *Vchera i segodniia* as examples, John McCannon characterises the basic message in utopian children's books of the NEP period as one of thinking towards the future. The Soviet Union was working its way towards utopia, but this was a distant reality. Until then: "Soviet citizens could take pride and joy in the advances toward social development and modernization their country was presently making."[353] Steiner extends this analysis in his discussion of the 'production book' by implicitly aligning this type of publication with a Constructivist aesthetic and outlook. He suggests that while the new set of plots and characters had been intended to replace the traditional tale, they were "no less fantastic" than their predecessors.[354] Based on the "new social mythology" of the "Constructivist-Socialist faith", the

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[351] Elizaveta Tarakhovskaia, *Univermag,* ill. Fedor Kondratov (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[352] Marjorie L. Hilton, 'Retailing the Revolution: The State Department Store (GUM) and Soviet Society in the 1920s', *Journal of Social History* (Summer 2004), pp.939-958, at pp.955-957.

[353] John McCannon, 'Technological and Scientific Utopias in Soviet Children's Literature, 1921-1932', *Journal of Popular Culture* 34, No. 4 (Spring 2001), pp.153-169, at p.156.

[354] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), pp.71-2.

books demonstrated a belief in social re-organization which would be achieved through correct theory and employment of technology. The miraculous objects of this new religion would be: "all those wonderworking machines and devices meant to hasten the advent of the materialist paradise."[355]

Extreme veneration of the machine was well represented in some of the more adventurously Constructivist picture books of the mid-1920s. *Topotun i knizhka (Topotun and the Book*) by Il'ia Ionov was illustrated by Tsekhanovskii and went a step beyond the everyday technological marvel seen in *Pochta*. The story features a boy named Tolia who mistreats the books he is reading. A robot named Topotun leaps from the pages of one of the books and carries Tolia to a factory where books are being printed, so he can learn a greater respect for his reading materials. The robot is an extraordinary creation, assembled from cogs and wheels, while the printing press is just as futuristic, being serviced by faceless workers on a sterile white background.[356] (Figure 4.8) Steiner sees these clean, rational, mechanized drawings as assembled rather than drawn by an imprecise, unpredictable artist.[357] This makes *Toputun* seem like the logical continuation of the graphic and typographical experiments of Lisitskii and the Chicagovas and thus an expression of Constructivism in its truest visual form. The imaginative element of the book is also impossible to ignore, particularly considering the fashion for science fiction in adult literature at this time. If Potapov's rule that pre-schoolers should be sheltered from 'healthy scientific fantasy' was ever to be broken, then perhaps the giant working robot in *Toputun* would have made the book into an exception.

Faith in technology could also manifest itself on a more prosaic level. While the bright future seemed distant and vague, the individual manufactured object itself became the concrete representation of the new life, as the production process was central to the new materialist values.[358] The objects featured in the production book could be very simple. *Kozha* (*Leather*) by M. Il'in explains how the hide from a cow becomes a pair of new boots.[359] The clearly written text is accompanied by economically drawn illustrations from Evenbakh, beginning with the live animal, going through the tanning process and stitching by state-of-the-art Singer sewing machine, to show a finished pair of black boots which are, "durable, soft and beautiful".[360]

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[355] Ibid., p.72.

[356] Il'ia Ionov, *Topotun i knizhka*, ill. Mikhail Tsekhanovskii (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926).

[357] Ibid., pp.98-99.

[358] Ibid., pp.152-154.

[359] M. Il'in, *Kozha*, ill. Evgeniia Evenbakh (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[360] "Vot tebe i noven'kie sapozhki - prochnye, miagkie i krasivye." Ibid., p8.

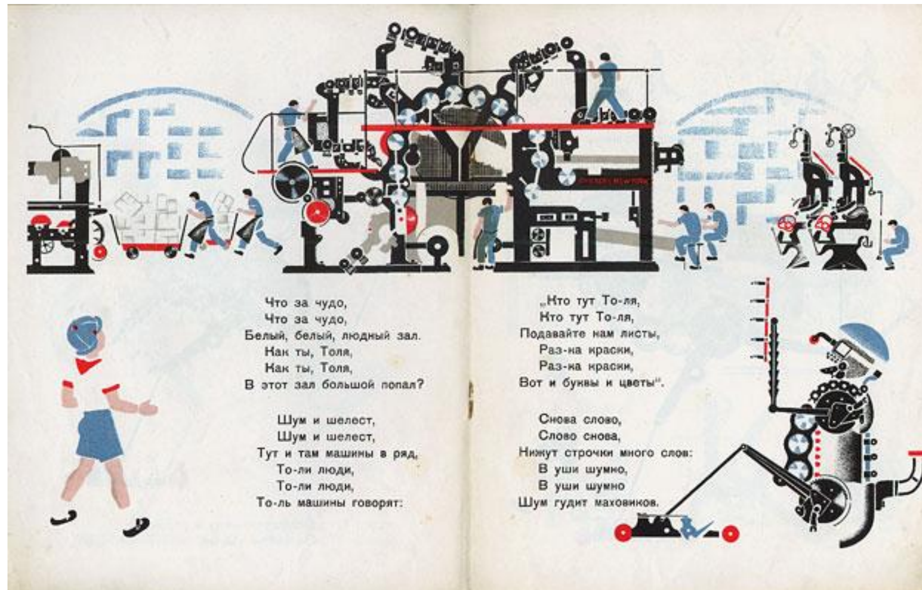

Figure 4.8: Mikhail Tsekhanovskii, illustration for *Topotun and the Book* by Il'ia Ionov (1926).

The ubiquitous locomotive held a much-beloved place in the NEP era picture book, closely followed along by the tram, bus and motor car. Playing a role that was simultaneously commonplace and ultra-modern, these modes of transport were depicted in a style concurrent with advertisements created by modernist artists during this period. On a superficial level, this was due to the fact that picture book artists often worked in commercial design as well, so it is logical that their trademark visual approaches would have been applied to both sets of media. A tram motif appearing on a 1926 poster by Dmitri Bulanov for the Leningrad Advertisements Bureau, is the stylistic companion of a bus appearing on the front cover of a children's book illustrated by the artist in the same year. Vehicles depicted in this simple geometric manner appear frequently in picture books of the period. A tram drawn by Pokrovskii for *Dikovniki* (*Wonderful Things*) by Barto, could almost be the twin of that featured on Bulanov's poster. (Figure 4.9)

The greater significance of this link is that graphic media for adults was employing the same strategies as graphic media for children in imparting a socialist worldview to the masses. The NEP marked a great ideological compromise for the Bolsheviks, as they were forced to retreat from a full socialist economy to a partial return of market conditions. This included the establishment of state-run commercial companies and it was the job of artists to put a socialist gloss on the inherently capitalist task of advertising. Leading the way in this enterprise were Maiakovskii and Rodchenko, who forged a successful partnership designing posters, packaging and signage for state businesses. Mayakovsky had perfected the art of sloganeering during the

Civil War, when like Lebedev, he had designed ROSTA window posters.[361] Combined with Rodchenko's striking, geometric Constructivist graphics, catchy rhymes such as "Nigde krome kak v Mosselprome" (Nowhere else but in Mosselprom), advocated socialist consumption by purchasing from state companies instead of commercial opponents. Gradually this would lead to a full socialist society in which the state would provide for everybody's needs.[362] Commercial design thus held common ground with picture books by envisaging a socialist future which hadn't yet been reached and suggesting that a new, modern lifestyle was the beginning of the road to this dream.

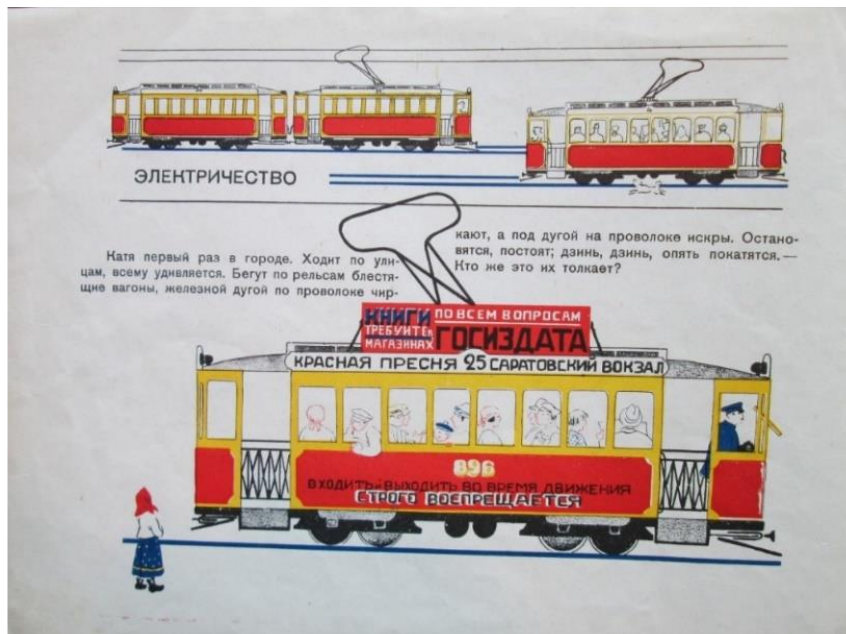

Figure 4.9: Boris Pokrovskii, illustration for *Wonderful Things* by Agniia Barto (1928).

[361] Maiakovskii produced both the text and illustration of posters for the Moscow branch of ROSTA. Examples of this work are reproduced in Aleksei Morozov, *Maiakovskii: Okno POCTA i Glav Polit Prosveta*, 1919-1921 (Moscow: Kontakt- Kul'tura, 2010).

[362] For full discussion of Mayakovsky and Rodchenko's advertising work and images see Randi Cox, '"NEP Without Nepmen!" Soviet Advertising and the Transition to Socialism' in Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman (eds.), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 119-152; Elena Chernevich, *Introduction* in Mikhail Anikst and Elena Chernevich (trans. Catherine Cooke), *Soviet Commercial Design of the Twenties* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp.22-27; Christina Kiaer, 'Chapter 4: Constructivist Advertising and Bolshevik Business' in Kiaer, *Imagine no Possessions* (2005), pp.143-196.

By the end of the decade, dreams of the future had taken on an entirely different tone. The late 1920s saw the collectivisation of agriculture, abolition of private trade and the creation of a command economy, with the launch of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928. Accompanied by a dominant political authoritarianism, these developments meant the abandonment of autonomous revolutionary currents in favour of what Stites characterises as, "the single utopia of Stalinism." Nonetheless, there was huge enthusiasm amongst the populace for construction and transformation, leading Stites to suggest that for those living through this period, euphoric feeling for the Revolution was as great as it had been in 1917.[363] According to McCannon, the effect of this cultural change upon children's books about scientific or technological themes was that, "'Someday' became 'the day after tomorrow'."[364]

Machinery was just as important as during the NEP period, as the huge push for industrialization meant that technology was once again at the forefront of cultural discourse. The central difference for the most politically correct picture books of the First Five-Year Plan period was that the machine was no longer a futuristic object but a real, present thing making a visible impact on the progress of society. The works of Troshin and Deneiko stand out for their unfaltering commitment to describing industrialisation with accuracy and detail. Their books appeared from 1927 onwards and featured the huge factories which were being built across the Soviet Union at this time, showing each stage of production from raw materials to final product. Children could learn how beets became sugar, how cotton became a shirt and how flour was turned into large quantities of bread. The conveyor belt mechanisms of production are emphasised by illustrations which show machinery drawn with the accuracy of a technical draughtsman. The continuity of the production process is often displayed across a double page or fold-out spread such as in *Khlebozavod No.3* (*Bread Factory No.3)*, where an army of efficient workers convey the loaves from one part of the machinery to the next, in a vast factory which seems to fade into the distance.[365] (Figure 4.10)

Troshin and Deineko were not alone in presenting children with a full account of the industrialisation process. The Five-Year Plan itself was presented to children and they were expected to grasp it on the same visionary terms as adults, if simplified slightly for ease of understanding. For older children, M. Ilin' provided the definitive work on the matter with *The*

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[363] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (1989), pp.226-227.

[364] McCannon, 'Technological and Scientific Utopias in Soviet Children's Literature, 1921-1932', *(*2001), p.158.

[365] Troshin and Deineko, *Khlebozavod No.3* (1930).

Figure 4.10: Nikolai Troshin and Ol'ga Deineko, fold out spread from *Bread Factory No. 3* (1930).

Story of the Great Plan.[366] Aleksei Laptev catered for younger readers with an elaborate fold-out picture book on the topic, *Piatiletka* (*The Five-Year Plan*). After a simple introduction, there are three double page maps showing the rate of electrification, number of collective farms and the construction of factories across the USSR. The book then reverses to form a table-length string of nine square illustrations on themes including the production of cast iron, quantity of oil pumped and the state of culture during 1927-8. Each square picture has two flaps which open vertically to show how each sector will have improved during 1932-3. The section on coal mining explains that in 1927, only 35 million tons of coal were mined despite the fact that it was needed for homes, transport and steam engines. By 1932 the figure is projected to have risen to 120 million tons as there will be 60 new mines in the Donbass. These mines are shown in the illustration as deeper and better equipped than their predecessors, with the miners being aided in their work by electric light and powered tools. [367] (Figures 4.11 and 4.12)

Other picture books ventured away from statistics to marvel at how industrialisation would re-mould nature and man himself. The environment was to be subject to the same degree of control and planning as industrial production, an attitude reflected in Marshak's *Voina s Dneperom* (*War with the Dnieper*), a poem about the construction of an enormous hydroelectric dam.[368] The opening verse puts the river firmly in the role of an enemy to be conquered, with man speaking directly to the water, revealing his intentions to lock it in with a wall from which it will leap down and move the machinery. The river objects to this idea answering, "Not for

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[366] *The Story of the Great Plan* was translated into English and published in Great Britain and the United States of America. For one of several editions see M. Ilin, (trans. George S. Counts and Nucia P. Lodge), *Moscow has a Plan: A Soviet Primer* (London Jonathan Cape, 1931).

[367] Aleksei Laptev, *Piatiletka* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[368] Samuil Marshak, *Voina s Dneprom*, ill. G. Bibikov (Leningrad: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

Figures 4.11 and 4.12: Aleksei Laptev, illustrations for *The Five-Year Plan* (1930).

anything and never."[369] Man of course triumphs, with the final pages of the book glorifying the electrification of factories and cities as a result of the dam's construction.[370]

The human side of large construction sites was revealed in *Kuznetskstroi: sotsialisticheskii gigant (Kuznetskstroi: The Socialist Giant),* which shows the building of a huge metallurgical plant, describing the role played by shock brigades not only in constructing the factory but in leading the struggle against religion. A double-page illustration shows these atheist agitators marching with banners, persuading workers not to miss their shifts on church holidays.[371] The central message of the book is that whilst labouring on socialist construction projects, man could be re-made and this neatly parallels adult literature of the period. Clark pinpoints the importance of texts which illustrated human transformation through labour, citing

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[369] "Ni za chto i nikogda." Ibid., p.1.

[370] For greater discussion of Marshak's verse placed in its full cultural and political context, see William B. Husband, ''Correcting Nature's Mistakes': Transforming the Environment and Soviet Children's Literature, 1928-1941', *Environmental History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Apr., 2006), pp.300-318, at p.312; McCannon, 'Technological and Scientific Utopias in Soviet Children's Literature, 1921-1932', *(*2001), pp.159-160.

[371] Mikhail Gurevich*, Kuznetskstroi: sotsialisticheskii gigant*, ill. Mikhail Gurevich and A. Ignumov (Moscow: Ogiz – Gosudarstvennoe antireligioznoe izdatel'stvo, 1932), pp.8-9; Husband, ''Correcting Nature's Mistakes': Transforming the Environment and Soviet Children's Literature, 1928-1941', (2006), pp.305-306.

the well-known 1934 anthology celebrating the White Sea-Baltic Canal project as a prime example. Readers were encouraged to engage with the stories of workers on the project, acknowledged even at the time to be forced labourers, who had succeeded in renouncing their former lives to become new model citizens.[372]

As well as being exposed to such didactic texts, children were also allowed to dream of the wonderful new cities that socialist construction would bring. *Kak postroili gorod* (*How they Built the City*), by Ester Papernaya told the tale of a city being built on the steppe, where only gophers and moles had lived before. First came a glass-walled factory, followed by six thousand workers and their families. The barracks the people lived in were cold and uncomfortable, so new apartment blocks were built serviced by electricity, heating and running water. The factory kitchen fed everyone three times a day and the workers co-operative sold all imaginable goods in a large department store. There was a school, hospital, Palace of Culture with theatre and cinema as well as green space for leisure in the summer time.[373] The book perfectly visualises the ideals of the great town planning schemes of the late 1920s and early 1930s, such as those intended for Green City near Moscow or at Magnitogorsk.[374] The illustrations by Poret and L. Kapustin take on the style of an architect's plan view, bearing an uncanny resemblance in both colour scheme and content to a poster by Daniel Cherkes printed in the same year as the book, which promotes the building of socialist cities for industrial workers. Dominated by tones of green and orange, both book and poster show multi-storey modern buildings with many windows, surrounded by green space and interspersed with impressive leisure facilities. (Figures 4.13) [375]

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[372] Leopol'd Averbakh and Amabel Williams-Ellis, *The White Sea Canal: Being an Account of the Construction of the New Canal Between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea* (London: Workers' Bookshop Ltd., 1935); Katerina Clark, 'Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five Year Plan' in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp.189-206, at pp.192-193.

[373] Ester Papernaya, *Kak postroili gorod*, ill. Alisa Poret and L. Kapustin (Leningrad: Ogiz - Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

[374] Utopian town planning has been much discussed by scholars and the depiction of these architectural projects in children's picture books would be worth further investigation. For information on the rationale behind these schemes and evaluation of their success see S.O. Khan-Magomedov and Catherine Cooke (trans. Alexander Lieven), *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp.481-520; Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1997), pp.106-144; S. Frederick Starr, 'Visionary Town Planning during the Cultural Revolution' in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp.189-206.

[375] Daniel Cherkes. *For the builders of a socialist industry - culturally socialist cities.* (1932) Image reproduced in King, *Red Star Over Russia* (2010), pp.232-233.

We can only speculate on the impression such a bright new vision would have had upon a child living in crowded Moscow or in a packed communal apartment in St Petersburg.

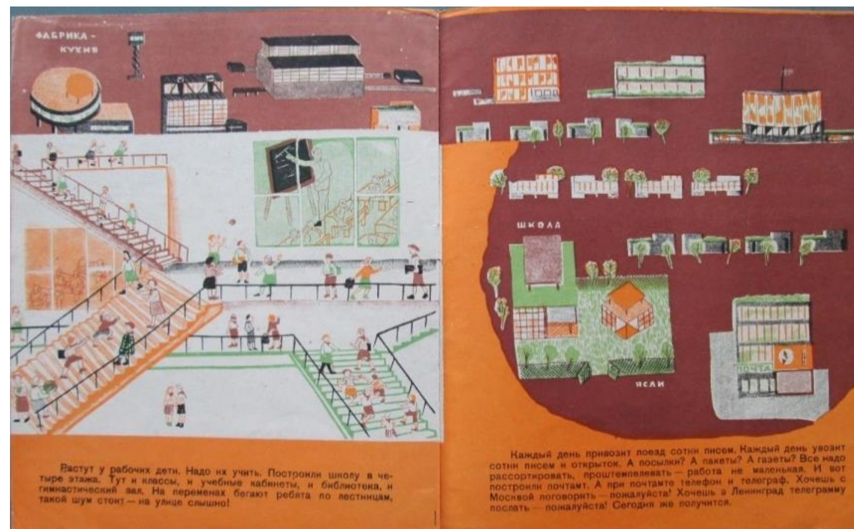

Figure 4.13: Alisa Poret and L. Kapustin, illustration for *How They Built the City* by Ester Papernaya (1932).

The vocabulary shared between visual media for adults and picture books during the First Five-Year Plan period, demonstrates a change in the way that artists were employed and emphasises the role that they played in depicting the Stalinist utopia. The end of the NEP period and commercial trade meant that advertising was no longer a major source of work for graphic artists and many directed their efforts, through financial necessity or otherwise, into producing state propaganda. As discussed above, Troshin designed picture books whilst also working as art director of high profile propaganda magazine *USSR in Construction*, which celebrated the great industrial achievements of the Soviet state.[376] A 1931 poster promoting an edition of the magazine, uses the same orange and black palette, towering factories and silhouetted human figures as a page from Troshin and Deineko's picture book *Kak svekla sakharom stala* (*How the Beets Became Sugar*).[377] Despite their obvious allegiance to the Stalinist agenda, Steiner classifies the Deneiko and Troshin works as Constructivist production books due to their "ruler-perfect straight lines and compass-drawn curves", with nonlinear human figures bustling about in service of the machine.[378] The illustrations do bear some allegiance to the Constructivist idyll but comparison with the early works of Lebedev or one of the other 'new Soviet picture book' artists, would show that there is much more figurative detail and a more fixed background than the

[376] King, *Red Star Over Russia* (2010), p.222.

[377] Troshin and Deineko, *Kak svekla sakharom stala* (1927).

[378] Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades* (1999), p.150.

floating white space of books from the mid-1920s. This re-introduction of figurative elements signals acceptance of the notion that an abstract future was no longer required, as the ideal socialist society was being created now and should be depicted as it is really happening. It also acts as evidence that picture books, as an active part of Soviet literary and visual culture, were showing signs of conforming to the cultural movement that would later be officially adopted by the state and known as 'socialist realism'.

This transition between approaches in just a few short years was evidence that authors and illustrators were able to exercise great flexibility in their creative approach and adapt readily to the ideological environment. Picture books featuring modernity and technology were considered important so that children would be introduced to contemporary life and instead of being distracted by unnecessary fantasy, their imagination would be sparked by the role they would play in building the socialist state. The task of depicting an adult world and its ideological values in terms that small children could understand, led to the use of several different approaches to text and illustration. Some stories were not overtly political but were based upon modern themes such as railways and the postal system, thus indicating sympathy with the Bolshevik drive to modernise the country. Some of these were accurate depictions of daily life but others engaged subtly in a more political agenda, showing the world as it ought to be if the Bolshevik vision were to succeed. During the NEP period, picture books influenced by Constructivist design placed faith in the transformative power of machinery and modern transport and the proposed ability of these things to create a new modern lifestyle or *novyi byt* and transform ordinary citizens into the 'new Soviet man'. During the period of the Fist Five-Year Plan, picture books featuring technological progress took on a more transparently political air. Technology was no longer associated with futuristic possibilities but with the rapid progress that was being made as the first Soviet generation grew. Children were presented with picture books on industrial themes which exactly mirrored the content and visual style of propaganda materials published for adults but scaled down to fit the picture book format.

The contemporary topic to which we will turn our attention next was equally aligned with the creation of the *novyi byt* and the path of the Soviet state towards modernity but was centred on the very specific world of the pre-school child. This meant that authors and illustrators had a specialized task on their hands, with a topic which not only had little opportunity to be ideologically ambiguous, but which had to appeal directly to small children if it was to fulfil its purpose.

Modelling the Socialist Kindergarten

In the July 1928 issue of *Murzilka*, a magazine for young children, a letter was published by four-year-old Vova Tiurin from Nizhnii Tagil, in which he described everything he liked about attending his kindergarten. Vova told the readers about the new coat pegs, cots and chairs that were being delivered but most of all he was excited about the delicious lunch served, consisting of soup, kasha and kissel.[379] Little Vova would not have been aware that his enjoyable days at the kindergarten were part of a great scheme to raise a generation of socialist children. For the Bolsheviks, the protection of children was vital to assure the communist future.[380] The rights of young citizens were secured in family law and labour legislation. In both domestic and international propaganda, the fair treatment of children by the state became part of the legitimising myth of Soviet socialism, with the assertion that children experienced better conditions there than in any other country.[381] A well designed, ideologically correct education system was part of the state's plan to provide for its youngest members and this was to begin at pre-school level.

The Soviet kindergarten had its roots in the mid-nineteenth century, when progressive educators imported the concept from Europe with the aim of making childhood and family life more rational and modern.[382] In a move away from the traditional upbringing by nannies and governesses, wealthy parents began to consider the benefits of a collective education.[383] At the other end of the social spectrum, a small number of charitable societies and employers were beginning to provide help for working mothers, notably including the Tregorkha textile works in Moscow which had its own child care centre.[384] In terms of educational methodology, the influence of Western European theorists was keenly felt, with the ideas of Friedrich Froebel gaining great popularity from the 1860s and the work of Maria Montessori proving popular during the 1910s.[385] In the immediate pre-revolutionary period, child-centred 'free upbringing' was the pedagogical current dominating the Russian kindergarten. Children were to develop practical and

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379 *Murzilka*, No.7 (July 1928), p.31.

380 Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), pp.43-44.

381 Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.61-64.

382 For a history of the kindergarten in pre-Soviet Russia and the various pedagogical currents which were popular during this period see Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades (*2001), pp.8-32; Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.36-37, pp.367-371.

383 Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.367-368.

384 Ibid., pp.369.

385 Ibid., pp.36-37.

intellectual skills willingly, through games and creative work but they were also to become socialised to life amongst other children, leading to the creation of a harmonious community.[386]

However, the kindergarten did not become a mass movement and even by the 1910s, only a very small proportion of the pre-school aged population was served. In Moscow, the area with the highest level of provision, the figure stood at just two percent during 1917.[387] As Kirschenbaum explains, the lack of a tsarist network of public kindergartens left very little foundation for early Soviet educators to build on.[388] Whilst this created a huge organisational challenge, it also meant that there was a blank slate for the construction of a Soviet kindergarten with unique ideological and practical significance. Immediately after the October Revolution, the most radical pedagogues advocated the idea that the bourgeois nuclear family would be disintegrated, with children handed over to the state and raised in a fully communal environment. This would allow full political socialisation from an early age and would emancipate women, who were seen as equals of men in Marxist ideology and enable them to participate fully in labour and political society.[389] Such ideas never fully gained hold, but childcare institutions embraced elements of this theory in an effort to mould the 'new man'.

The kindergarten was intended to free women for work, but it also put children at the centre of a complex set of pedagogical and social goals, tied up with the realities and evolving political philosophy of the Bolshevik state. As early as October 1917, Narkompros established a Pre-School Education Section.[390] In the immediate post-revolutionary period, the great hardship that many families suffered as a result of the First World War and the Civil War, led to the kindergarten being seen as an institution which could improve the health and welfare of children. The 1919 handbook of preschool education published by Narkompros, emphasised that kindergartens should make sure to provide hot meals for children, who might otherwise go hungry. They were also advised to provide a full, rather than half day service, so that children with two working parents would be properly supervised instead of left to run through the streets or factory corridors.[391] Nonetheless, reports from delegates at the 1920 pre-school conference suggested that teachers hoped that once children began to attend the kindergarten, parents

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[386] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.36-37, pp.370-371; Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), pp.19-24.

[387] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.37.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Robert W. Clawson, 'Political Socialization of Children in the USSR', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 88, No.4 (Dec.,1973), pp.684-712, at pp.686-7; Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.51.

[390] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.397.

[391] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), pp.35-36.

would look beyond its practical role and embrace the wider educational mission which was envisaged.[392]

By the mid-1920s, with the initial crisis caused by the revolution over, educators and the state began to elaborate upon how the kindergarten could be used to help construct the new society. Pre-school education was to form part of the move towards the 'novyi byt' or new daily life, a way to create a modern, socialist society by transforming daily life rather than relying on direct politics. Children would be liberated from the pernicious influence of the family, which inhibited the correct social development of children. On the one hand this could mean relief from poverty and neglect or on the other, being removed from the irrational love of parents prone to spoiling their children.[393] The kindergarten would be a centre for rational upbringing by providing a clean environment with simple furnishings where children were taught good hygiene and 'cultured behaviour', which incorporated a love for reading, appreciation of nature and the development of good manners.[394] It was hoped that these patterns of behaviour would spread to the home and convince parents that modern ways were worthwhile, leading Kelly to describe children during this period as "instruments of indoctrination".[395]

Despite this soft approach, the Soviet establishment was still acutely aware of the direct link between politics and education. Vera Fediaevskaia, who was a researcher at the Institute for the Methods of Extra-Curricular Work and a nursery school expert, expected children to be: "active workers in the socialistic reconstruction of society". Consequently, the communist party would provide them with an education which aimed to bring up, "a generation capable of definitely establishing communism."[396] During visits to the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, Thomas Woody observed this policy in action, visiting model nursery schools and kindergartens, including those at Stanislav Shatskii's Colony of the Cheerful Life.[397] Woody wrote that: "Children

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[392] Ibid., pp.36-37.

[393] Ibid., pp.44-9.

[394] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.397-398.

[395] Catriona Kelly, 'Shaping the "Future Race": Regulating the Daily Life of Children in Early Soviet Russia', in Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman (eds.), *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp.256-281, at p.257.

[396] Vera Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and co., Ltd., 1936), p.82.

[397] Shatskii was a leading progressive pedagogue before the revolution, who later aligned his aims with those of the Bolsheviks. His network of progressive schools in Kaluga province, including the Colony of the Cheerful Life, is analysed by William Partlett in 'Breaching Cultural Worlds with the Village School: Educational Visions, Local Initiative, and Rural Experience at S.T. Shatskii's Kaluga School System, 1919-

in these institutions, like those in communes, children's houses and children's villages, have the best possible chance of becoming whole-hearted supporters of the new ideology."[398]

On a practical level, pre-school aged children might have attended several types of institution. All designated for children aged three to seven, they included the *detskii sad*, which translates literally as 'children's garden', from the imported German term. Alternatively, they might be sent to an *ochag* or hearth. In her study of the early Soviet kindergarten, Lisa Kirshchenbaum identifies this as a full-day institution for pre-school children, which may have included an educational component.[399] Having visited an *ochag*, Woody stated that it varied "but little from the kindergarten in appearance."[400] There were also less formal arrangements such as the *detskii ploshchad* (childen's playground), which has been defined by Kelly as a "temporary creche".[401] Furthermore, Fediaevskaia identified organisations set up by groups of parents on their own initiative, perhaps through a house commune or workers' barracks. These included groups started for 'walks' or excursions, which evolved into rudimentary creches with basic equipment.[402]

Despite the assumed ideological importance of pre-school education, limited state funds meant that only a tiny proportion of children were able to attend a kindergarten. In her analysis of early Soviet sources, Kirschenbaum reveals that during 1926-27, only 0.6 per cent of pre-school aged children held a place at a *detskii sad* or *ochag*, with the figure rising to 1.61 per cent during 1930-31.[403] The very low level of provision during the mid-1920s was due to budget cuts imposed after the introduction of the New Economic Policy. With state funds severely restricted,

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1932', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 82, No.4 (Oct. 2004), pp.847-885. Partlett highlights how extra-curricular and outreach work, such as hygiene campaigns, were used in an attempt to transform and modernise communities along Bolshevik approved lines.

[398] Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), p.367. As a visiting foreign specialist, Woody would have been shown only the best institutions. His book is however, thoroughly methodical and his conclusions are based on what he sees rather than his own ideological judgements. Within the vast literature on foreigners visiting the Soviet Union, Shelia Fitzpatrick offers an insightful analysis of the cultural and political dynamics of such visits. See Shelia Fitzpatrick, 'Foreigners Observed: Moscow Visitors in the 1930s Under the Gaze of their Soviet Guides', *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 35, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2008), pp.215-234.

[399] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.27.

[400] Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), p.366.

[401] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.401.

[402] Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), pp.66-67.

[403] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.91.

private kindergartens were permitted to operate and even state institutions began to charge for tuition from 1924 onwards, an extra cost that would have proved very difficult for most families.[404] The small increase in attendance during the early 1930s was due to policies implemented during the First Five-Year Plan. During this period there was a drive to increase the number of pre-school institutions, including those organised by communities themselves, so that the female labour force could be harnessed.[405] Urban children benefited from this growth much more than rural children. The attendance figure for 1931 showed that while 7.83 per cent of urban pre-schoolers attended a *detskii sad* or *ochag*, this proportion was just 0.32 per cent in rural areas.[406]

In addition to the overall lack of provision, existing facilities were of inconsistent quality. Elena Bonner, born in 1923 to communist parents, attended several kindergartens in Moscow and Leningrad during the late 1920s. She recalled her experiences of two particular kindergartens, one of which was clean, airy and well equipped with neatly dressed children. The other was dark, cramped, had sticky table cloths and a lavatory which was so filthy that Bonner was left with a "lifelong dislike of public bathrooms and the habit of 'holding.'"[407] It is therefore of great significance that when the kindergarten appeared in picture books, it was always depicted as a model institution full of happy, well cared for children. For children and parents who did not have access to a kindergarten or whose experiences were less than exemplary, the picture book could demonstrate the rationale and methods of the best institutions.

Rational methods of upbringing were fundamental to the kindergarten if it was to succeed in its mission to promote the *novyi byt*. Key aspects of this campaign were modelled in picture books, which always showed a clean classroom environment with suitable furniture and neat equipment, regular meals served sitting at the table and facilities for washing which were properly used by the children, while everything happened according a strict daily routine as part of the collective. One of the most exemplary kindergarten texts is *Detskii sad* (*The Kindergarten*) by M. Prigara which was published in 1930.[408] The front cover illustration shows a child in a fur coat ringing the doorbell. He or she crosses the threshold and we are taken into the world of the kindergarten, with a cheerful poem which explains each part of the day. The children remove their outdoor clothes and hang them on hooks before they say good morning to the teacher,

[404] Ibid., pp.95-97.

[405] Ibid., pp.134-140.

[406] Ibid., p.91.

[407] Elena Bonner (trans. Antonina W. Bouis), *Mothers and Daughters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), pp.60-61.

[408] M. Prigara, *Detskii sad*, ill. Mariia Pleskovskaia (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930).

Aunty Nadya. Once indoors, they wash their hands and brush their teeth at special small sinks. Next, they make animals with clay and construct wooden models in the workshop until it is time to sit down together for breakfast in a spotless dining room, with dustpan and brush hanging on the wall, ready to clean up with afterwards. The meal is followed by songs round the piano, feeding the animals in the living corner and games outdoors.

Prigara tells a story about everyday life to which young children would have related but the book is also full of clues about the ideological environment in which it was created, demonstrating a direct link between children's literature and the agendas of pedagogues and propagandists. In her study of early Soviet hygiene propaganda, Tricia Starks explains how the Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Infancy was established in 1918 with the aim of providing a full range of services for mother and baby, including nurseries, maternity homes, and consultations for nursing children and pregnant women. As it became apparent during the 1920s that the state budget could not allow for all of these things, the consultation centre and propaganda took the lead in training mothers until the state could live up to its promises.[409]

Information literature about the kindergarten followed the same principle. The 1919 Narkompros pre-school handbook contained guidance for equipping the kindergarten, based upon the scientific importance of a clean and safe environment. This included a specified number of wash basins and towel hooks, hygienically designed furniture and toys, plus the commitment to involving health care workers to make sure standards were being met.[410] By the late 1920s and early 1930s, when demand still far outstripped actual pre-school provision and standards of care frequently failed to meet expectations, literature issued by government agencies demonstrated how things ought to be. A poster published by Narkompros during this period featured the headline: 'The kindergarten strengthens children's health and accustoms them to collective life and work.'[411] Six boxes with captions show children going about their daily activities in a neat, orderly setting. In some of the images, they work in the garden or play with building blocks and toy trucks. Two images are dedicated to the communal meal, with the one of the captions explaining the importance of clean, orderly and correct feeding. The image given dominant place at the top right corner shows a doctor and a nurse in clean white overalls, tending to a queue of curious children. (Figure 4.14)

The vision of the kindergarten that we see in Prigara's story is directly related to such materials. As well as featuring activities that clearly enforce the rational, healthy agenda – tooth

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[409] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene and the Revolutionary State* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), pp.139-140.

[410] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.67.

[411] 'Detskii sad ukrepliaet zdorov'e detei i priuchaet ikh k sovmestnoi zhizni i trudu.' (Moscow, c.1930).

brushing, disciplined mealtimes and constructive play – the visual motifs in the book inherently demonstrate its allegiance to modern upbringing. In common with the poster, the illustrations show rosy-cheeked children in brightly coloured clothes, posters and charts on the wall and perfectly child-sized furniture. From observing photographs of model kindergartens in early Soviet periodicals, Kelly has described the propaganda kindergarten as: "a purpose-built structure with clean lines in the high modernist style associated with Russian Constructivism."[412] The minimal, Constructivist style of Mariia Pleskovskaia's illustration serves to emphasize the point, with the use of a sterile white background and domestic objects constructed from simple shapes. (Figure 4.15) In both the Narkompros poster and the *Detskii sad* illustrations, the little white wooden chair, neatly made with concise right angles, becomes an instantly recognisable symbol of modern, progressive childcare.

Although forming only one aspect of the health-promoting regime, the attention paid to personal cleanliness must be given further consideration. Encouraging young children to wash is a staple theme in pre-school literature even today and this was no different in the early Soviet Union. In 1923 Chukovskii's popular *Moidodyr* was published, warning small readers to keep themselves clean unless they wished to be taught a lesson by the eponymous marching washstand.[413] Whilst ultra-modernist kindergarten picture books addressed this same theme, their tone was entirely different. They took on an air of serious instruction, as for young builders of communism, learning about hygiene from an anthropomorphic washstand was not appropriate.

As well as the core ideological belief that healthy children would become healthy members of the future communist society, pure practical circumstances dictated the need for this basic education. In late Tsarist Russia, infant mortality had been of great concern to social reformers, who identified traditional child rearing practices as the most immediate hazard to the survival of infants. In one village in Perm province between 1902 and 1913, 55 percent of babies under the age of one died.[414] After the revolution, disturbances caused by the First World War and Civil War, meant that the living conditions of most families were highly inadequate. Many children were being raised in cramped, unhygienic conditions and infectious diseases such

[412] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.405.

[413] Chukovskii, *Moidodyr* (1923).

[414] David L. Ransel, *Village Mothers: Three Generations of Change in Russia and Tataria* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), p.41 Ransel's study offers fascinating insight into how rural women in Soviet Russia managed their reproductive choices and child rearing practices through a complex relationship between tradition, modernity and the state.

as typhoid were rife.[415] In the light of these circumstances, it therefore made sense that kindergarten teachers would do their best to prevent their charges from becoming unwell. In Woody's accounts of his visits to model institutions, he repeatedly comments on the presence of soap, basins, toothbrushes and towels. In one kindergarten, he notices a slogan on the wall which reads, "Cleanliness is the way to health."[416] Quoting from a document on pre-school training from 1930, Woody explains that three to four-year olds were expected to be able to use the toilet properly without help, wash before bed and on rising, as well as clean their teeth with a brush. Crucially, they were to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after activities such as playing with animals. Woody considered that given the crowded living conditions of Russian working families, standards of personal hygiene in pre-schools were generally, "far higher than could have been obtained in their individual homes". [417]

This seriousness of this mission did not mean that humour was disallowed in texts on the subject. *Vse kuvyrkom* (*Everything Topsy-turvy*) by Nina Sakonskaia, features a boy who is late getting ready for kindergarten and gets in a terrible muddle trying to find his grooming equipment.[418] He dries himself with a scarf instead of a towel, brushes his hair with a dirty black boot brush instead of a hair brush and tries to clean his teeth with salt instead of tooth powder. The humour relies on the boy's silly behaviour and he is affectionately called a 'chudak', best translated here as 'oddball' or 'eccentric'. Even though the poem is fun, the ultimate purpose of the book is to inform. When the boy mistakenly smears his cheeks with cheese from the cupboard, we are given a very definite description and illustration of what he should have used instead – a round, pink cake of soap, recognisable by the letters "TEZhE" imprinted on its surface. (Figure 4.16) Significantly, the book was published by the State Medical Publisher and a note on the back cover states that the book is approved by the Commission for Pre-school Books of the Narkompros Pedagogical Studio.

Washing was given further importance by the fact that it was embedded in a fixed daily routine, an important guiding principle of the socialist kindergarten. The daily routine of a well-run kindergarten would have been similar to the schedule demonstrated in books such as Prigara's *Detskii sad*. They day would have begun with washing and breakfast, followed by work in the

[415] On the prevalence of lice, cholera and typhoid during the early post-revolutionary period and the efforts of the state to combat them, see Starks, *The Body Soviet* (2008), pp.48-49.

[416] Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), p.51.

[417] Ibid., pp.414-416.

[418] Nina Sakonskaia, *Vse kuvyrkom*, ill. Margarita Genke (Moscow: Gosmedizdat, 1929).

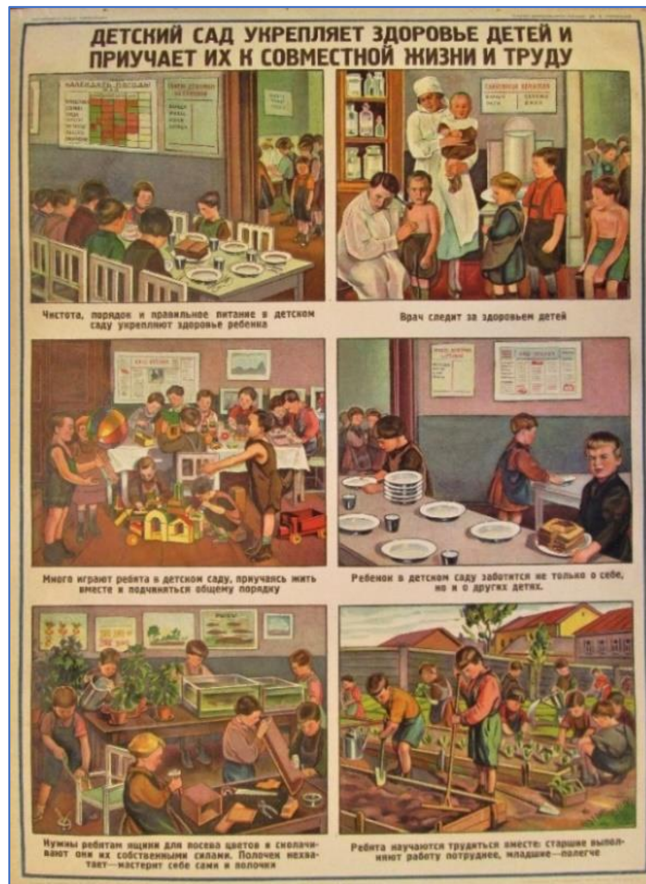

Figure 4.14: "The kindergarten strengthens children's health and accustoms them to collective life and work." (C.1930)

Figure 4.15: Mariia Pleskovskaia, illustrations for *The Kindergarten* by M. Prigara (1930).

Все у Кости из-под рук
исчезает как-то вдруг:

шапка,
книга,
мяч,
рубаха.
Невозможный растеряха!

Девять,
девять
на часах!
Не успею
в детский сад.

Руки, шею
сполоснуть
и скорее
улизнуть!

Открывает Костя шкаф,
Мыло ищет второпях;
Хвать, не глядя, с блюдца что-то,
крепко, крепко руки трет он,
по щекам размазал жир:
„Что за шутка? Это сыр!...“

Заглянул бы чудак,
полкой выше, вот сюда:
Там спокойно, в мыльнице
розовеет мыльце,
круглое, как луковка,
а на мыльце буковки:
ТЭЖЭ.

Figure 4.16: Margarita Genke, illustrations for *Everything Topsy-Turvy* by Nina Sakonskaia (1929).

garden and organised activities. Late morning would be taken up with games devised by the children, a walk or sun-bathing. Then the children would have washed before lunch, eaten and then taken a nap. The afternoon might be taken up with walks, excursions, games or creative work before an afternoon snack of tea and bread.[419] Fediaevskaia saw daily routine as the best way to shape correct habits in young children and meet their physical needs stating that: "The rigid adherence to their daily routine of desirable habits means the healthy body with the physical strength to play one's part in a communistic society."[420]

As well as the regulating children's physical life, Kelly suggests that a further purpose of the fixed routine was to develop a rational sense of time in the young. Schedules to regulate workers time, such as the ideas developed by Gastev, were advocated during this period both for their modernising effect and the hope that they would create a disciplined, more efficient workforce.[421] Whilst pre-school children were not expected to be meeting production quotas quite yet, this awareness of time still found its way into kindergarten picture books. In Ol'ga Gur'ian's *Progulka* (*The Walk*), a group of small children go out for a walk in the snow, building snowmen, throwing snowballs and sledging.[422] The joyful tone of the poem emphasises the fact that the children are having fun and the text is not overtly didactic, except for the clock which features prominently on the first page of the book, letting us know that this activity fits firmly into the

[419] This example schedule was compiled by Kirschenbaum based on kindergarten plans from the mid-1920s. See Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.109-110.

[420] Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), p.85.

[421] Kelly, 'Shaping the "Future Race"' *(*2006), pp.261-262.

[422] Ol'ga Gur'ian, *Progulka.* ill. Vladimir Golitsyn (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926).

routine. The opening lines of the poem read: “Twelve! / Twelve! / Time to get dressed to go for a walk!”[423] (Figure 4.17)

The fact that Gur’ian’s walk group all set out together and Prigara’s diligent pupils work in harmony is no coincidence and demonstrates the final fundamental part of the drive for rational upbringing. Activities at the kindergarten were to have no individual differentiation, as even the smallest socialists were to strive towards collectivism. Induction into the collective spirit is gently demonstrated by M. Dubianskaia in her short story *Mnogo rebiat* (*Many Children*).[424] Little Maia is left at the *ochag* for the day and bursts into tears when her mother leaves. She doesn’t want to draw until another little girl shares a drawing of some Red Army men. Then Maia won’t join the other children to wash her hands because she doesn’t want to stop drawing. When it is naptime, she sits on the floor stubbornly and says she wants to play, until all the other children fall asleep and the room becomes very quiet. (Figure 4.18) She can’t help but join in when Aunty Ania plays the piano and all the children pretend to be bears and finally Maia’s mother arrives to collect her. Maia decides that she doesn’t want to go home and so hides one of her galoshes and ends up being the last to leave. Immersion into the collective is seen in Dubianskai’s tale as a pre-school rite of passage but educators planned that this stage in a child’s life would lead onto much greater things. Fediaevskaia outlined how important it was that children be introduced to collective living and learn to do simple tasks for the good of the group. This was for no lesser reason than that: “By accustoming children to play and work co-operatively we lay the foundation for the first habits of collective work.”[425]

Figure 4.17: Vladimir Golitsyn, illustration for *The Walk* by Ol’ga Gur’ian (1926).

423 ‘Dvenadtsat’! / Dvenadtsat! / Pora odevat’sia, itti guliat’!’ Ibid., p.3.

424 M. Dubianskaia, *Mnogo rebiat,* ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

425 Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), p.101.

Figure 4.18: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for *Many Children* by M. Dubianskaia (1930).

In 1924, the State Academic Council (Gosudarstvennyi Uchenyi Sovet or GUS), introduced a pre-school curriculum designed to, "train children to construct and participate in the socialist future."[426] Traditional pre-school activities such as drawing and building with blocks would still be allowed but interpreted within a new socialist framework, as pre-school work was to connect with contemporary life and develop a materialist world view with collective habits.[427] In unison with the 'complex method' which was introduced into the primary school curriculum at the same time, activities were to be divided into the three categories of nature, labour and society.[428] Nature activities might have included work in the garden or organising a nature corner. Labour projects could have been helping to prepare vegetables or making decorations for the kindergarten. Society tasks might have encompassed visiting a local factory or meeting with a Pioneer troop.[429] At the third preschool congress in 1924, delegates discussed the new curriculum and concluded that even though the term 'play' was no longer in use, play was still an important part of the kindergarten. Teachers adjusted to the new use of terminology by declaring that it was not possible to distinguish between play and labour.[430]

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[426] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.105.

[427] Ibid., pp.107-108.

[428] On the introduction of the complex method in primary schools and the subsequent failure of teachers to follow it, see Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education on Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp.32-26, pp.39-40; Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.107-108.

[429] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.107-108.

[430] Ibid., pp.122-123.

Kindergarten picture books displayed activities which to the uninitiated reader, would have looked like children taking part in ordinary games but which would have been labelled as children's 'work' under the new curriculum. *Detskii sad* (*The Kindergarten*) by Margarita Mikhaelis, shows images from pre-school life in small, concertina format with no text.[431] In the brightly coloured figurative illustrations, the kindergarten pupils are seen taking part in the usual activities including eating together, watering the plants in the living corner and working in the garden. In one of the images, a group of children in smocks bustles around a table which is covered with a model village. One little girl is cutting out shapes from coloured paper and the other three children seem to be adding the finishing touches to the models. (Figure 4.19) In another image, a group of children build a structure from large blocks while two of their class-mates gaze at a spinning top and another loads a wooden trolley with toys. (Figure 4.20) Without captions to disambiguate the meaning of these activities, they would appear to be the sort of things that might happen in a normal play session.

Figures 4.19 and 4.20: Margarita Mikhaelis, illustrations from *The Kindergarten* (1930).

431 Margarita Mikhaelis (ill.), *Detskii sad* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

Meksin offers a similarly ambiguous picture in his book *V Detskom sadu* (*At the Kindergarten*), a collection of short sketches edited by the author but composed by a group of pre-schoolers from Tver.[432] In one of the episodes, 'Na mashine' (By Engine), a group of children build a train from large building blocks and stools, so they can go on an excursion to the countryside. To initiate this activity, Kolia calls to the other children "Vasia, Lenia, let's play!"[433] The use of the word 'play' might be justified here by the fact the story is being told from the children's perspective, but the accompanying illustration lends itself to the idea that the game is fun rather than work, as two of the little girls filling the role of passengers are holding dolls.

In the classroom, the blurring of the line between work and play might have been accepted due to the strong pre-revolutionary influence of Montessori, whose work was infused with the notion that play is the work of the child. Elizaveta Shabad echoed this sentiment in a pamphlet for parents on how to choose suitable toys, stating that: "Any healthy child loves to play. Moreover, play is the main occupation for a preschool child and his first work."[434] However, for heavily politicised Soviet pedagogues who were theorising on how to build a new society, the concept bore much deeper ideological implications. In a 1928 article, Krupskaia commented upon the loose boundary between work and play, explaining how children's games were a path to collective life and therefore socialism. Echoing Montessori, she argued that what seems like play to us, is work for children but also noted that sometimes children like to make or do things together. As a ten or eleven-year-old, she and two friends built a model zoo for some younger children. She recounted how the grown-ups saw their task as play, but the work drew the girls into a close friendship. Krupskaia argued that supporting such acts of children's initiative would produce the habit of collective work and the "organisation of all life on a collective basis". Organisations for children's labour such as kindergartens and children's clubs were to be a "broad step on the route to socialist construction" and a "good medicine against hooliganism."[435]

Demonstrating the power of the kindergarten to implement such direct social organisation, some kindergarten books showed activities which were to channel children into work for the collective and which could not readily be categorised as play. The concept of 'self-government' was embedded in the curriculum and Kirschenbaum argues that while kindergarten teachers were aware that their pupils were too young to run their own institutions, self-government was a way to teach children discipline and order. Children would take turns at helping in the dining room and there were commissions for sanitation, housekeeping or caring for

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[432] Iakov Meksin (Ed.), *V detskom sadu*, ill. Natalia Ushakova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[433] Ibid., p.6.

[434] Elizaveta Shabad, *Igrushka v doshkol'nom vozraste* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930), p.3.

[435] Nadezhda Krupskaia, 'O kollektivnom trude detei', *O nashikh Detiakh*, No.2-3 (May-June 1928), p.2.

the plants and animals in the living corner.[436] Woody encountered this agenda on a visit to a village kindergarten, where he observed that the system of self-government in education began at pre-school level. He watched the "domestic economy committee" set the table and "gladly accepted their invitation to have a bowl of soup."[437]

Picture books often showed children laying the table or helping to serve a meal. *Nash zavtrak* (*Our Breakfast*) by Mirovich gives us an idyllic view of such an activity in a poem about a group of children having breakfast together.[438] The children carry the chairs to the table and we find out that that it is Mania and Zina's turn to be on duty, as their names and identifying pictures are on the wall – a sledge and pussycat respectively. Mania and Zina take care of the bread basket while Aunty Masha sprinkles sugar on the kissel and kasha. (Figure 4.21) The clean, modern illustrations reinforce the idea of a cultured environment by showing delicate china and children neatly dressed in patterned smocks. After the meal has finished, Marat takes his turn at clearing up duty and puts the crumbs out of the window for the sparrows, who he tells off for not sharing, saying: "Look at the children, / we eat and drink together, / not fighting, not screaming, / we live together cheerfully."[439]

Figure 4.21: Unknown artist, illustration for *Our Breakfast* by Varvara Mirovich (1926).

[436] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.129.

[437] Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), p.51.

[438] Varvara Mirovich, *Nash zavtrak*, ill. Unknown (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[439] 'Posmotrite na rebiat, / vmeste my edim i p'em, / ne deremsia, ne orem, / druzhno veselo zhivem.' Ibid., p.8.

Captive living creatures provided further focus for children's sense of duty in picture books about the living corner. The major benefit of children caring for animals was that they would, according to Fediaevskaia, "gain a sense of responsibility for other lives than their own."[440] In another book by Mirovich, *Zhivoi ugolok* (*The Living Corner*), a group of kindergarten children learn about the wild things they find, helped by patient explanations from teacher Aunty Olia.[441] Each short episode is written in the first person, from a child's viewpoint and reveals mysteries about a different creature. The children learn that a pupa was not glued to a branch by someone but stuck itself there and so they leave it alone until it unfolds into a blue butterfly. The group must teach one of their friends that taking the goldfish out of the water will make it unwell and they watch some tadpoles grow into frogs. Other residents include a lizard, a family of hedgehogs and a finch escaping the winter frost. Matter of fact illustrations by Echeistov make sure that the explanations in the text are supplemented visually for any reader who might not be familiar with the creatures described. (Figure 4.22)

During the First Five-Year-Plan period, kindergarten books showed collective work with a specific political character. These activities far exceeded the loose definition of 'work' in the GUS curriculum by closely modelling adult work practices and the political dialogue current at this time. In Lina Neiman's *Udarnaia brigada* (*The Shock Brigade)*, the children have nothing left in their living corner but a lizard, a hedgehog and a crow who has become boring.[442] The children had agreed at the start of the year that they would get ten creatures and they quarrel about why nobody has brought any, until Katya jumps up on a stool and declares that they are "udarniki" (shock-workers) and will accomplish the task. The next day, Taras brings a cockroach in a matchbox. Then a yellow canary in a cage arrives, followed by a puppy and a tank of goldfish. With two days to go until the deadline, Iuzik brings a real rabbit but the day after that one of the goldfish dies (a failure). (Figure 4.23) On the final day, the lead shock-workers save the day by going to zoo and obtaining a pair of ginger guinea pigs from a Pioneer who works there. The book ends with the triumphant statement that, "The plan is fulfilled."[443] In contrast to Mirovich's benevolent living corner, Neiman's animals become a focus for militant political agitation, undertaken as part of a fundamentally pre-school task.

Pre-schoolers were also encouraged to expand their horizons beyond the kindergarten and learn directly about the world of adult work and socialist construction. This was to give them

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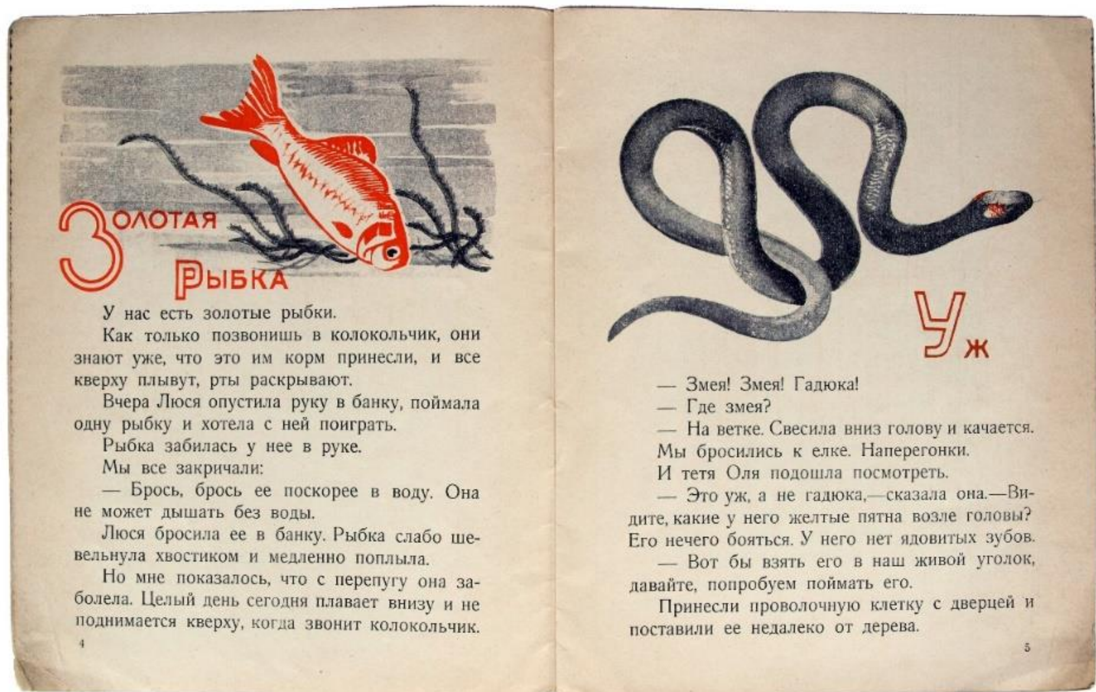
[440] Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), p.92.

[441] Varvara Mirovich, *Zhivoi ugolok*, ill. Georgii Echeistov (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

[442] Lina Neiman, *Udarnaia brigade*, ill. M. Granavtseva (Moscow: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[443] Ibid., p.15.



ЗОЛОТАЯ РЫБКА

У нас есть золотые рыбки.

Как только позвонишь в колокольчик, они знают уже, что это им корм принесли, и все кверху плывут, рты раскрывают.

Вчера Люся опустила руку в банку, поймала одну рыбку и хотела с ней поиграть.

Рыбка забилась у нее в руке.

Мы все закричали:

— Брось, брось ее поскорее в воду. Она не может дышать без воды.

Люся бросила ее в банку. Рыбка слабо шевельнула хвостиком и медленно поплыла.

Но мне показалось, что с перепугу она заболела. Целый день сегодня плавает внизу и не поднимается кверху, когда звонит колокольчик.

4

УЖ

— Змея! Змея! Гадюка!

— Где змея?

— На ветке. Свесила вниз голову и качается.

Мы бросились к елке. Наперегонки.

И тетя Оля подошла посмотреть.

— Это уж, а не гадюка,—сказала она.—Видите, какие у него желтые пятна возле головы? Его нечего бояться. У него нет ядовитых зубов.

— Вот бы взять его в наш живой уголок, давайте, попробуем поймать его.

Принесли проволочную клетку с дверцей и поставили ее недалеко от дерева.

5

Figure 4.22: Georgii Echeistov, illustration for *The Living Corner* by Varvara Mirovich (1928).

Больше всех радуется Боб:

— Всех восемь, теперь только двух достать. Только двух.

И Боб каждый день торопит:

— Помните! Помните! Дней до первого декабря остается мало.

Вдруг радость—Юзик достал кролика. Едва его тащит, запыхался, весь красный.

— Настоящий кролик. У папы выпросил. Насилу отдал.

8

Но на другой день Валя на всю комнату рев подняла:

— Глядите! глядите! — и сама тычет пальцем в стеклянную банку.

Один из карасей плашмя лежит на животе и не двигается.

— Перекормила!—кричат на Валю с одной стороны.

— Не докормила!—кричат на нее с другой.

Но карасик все равно не двигается.

Боб только рукой махнул:

— Вот так неудача! Опять двух нехватает.

— Хотите еще тараканов?—несмело спрашивает Тарас,—я могу, у нас их в кухне много.

Но никто с ним и разговаривать не стал.

9

Figure 4.23: M. Granavsteva, illustrations for *The Shock Brigade* by Lina Neiman (1931).

a respect for and desire to participate in labour, whether this be through watching the cook prepare vegetables or observing the postman and the carpenter.[444] In *Detskii sad v berezovoi roshche* (*The Kindergarten in the Birch Grove*), Elena Ul'rikh portrays a rural kindergarten attended by children from a sovkhoz (state farm) and a kolkhoz (collective farm).[445] As well as taking part in the usual kindergarten tasks of feeding the bunnies and watering the garden, the children learn about agriculture by watching adults working on the farm. With the story told from the pupils' perspective, we see how they visit the farm and watch the harvest being threshed, look at the silo where the cattle feed is kept and then ride home on a cart loaded with sacks of grain.[446] They emulate the work of the adults in their play and so develop work habits and knowledge that they will one day use as productive members of the community. A group of little boys pretend that the ladders on their climbing frame are the silo tower and they haul baskets of grass up to the top, in imitation of filling the feed store.[447] In another game that prioritises team work, the children construct a chute from a plank of wood. Some of the children send objects rolling down to a little house at the bottom, where other members of the gang pick them up.[448] (Figure 4.24) The text is intended to be read as a factual report, employing black and white photomontage illustration concurrent with the style used in propaganda albums during this period. The children in the illustrations are well-kept, wholesome and seem to be enjoying themselves but the earnest overall tone of the piece brings home its message - even these very young children are taken seriously as members of society and so are expected to fully engage with grown-up themes.

The grown-up concerns placed upon young shoulders were not limited to developing good work habits or adapting to a collective way of living. Kindergarten picture books also addressed direct political themes, with specially adapted motifs designed to make these subjects easy to digest and enjoyable. In outlining the purposes of social education, Fediaevskaia explained that it should involve "preparation for understanding and participating in political education."[449] To achieve this, pre-schoolers were to celebrate revolutionary festivals and to be "acquainted with the achievements of their great leaders of the working class." They were also to have contact

[444] Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), pp.97-99.

[445] Elena Ul'rikh, *Detskii sad v berezovoi roshche*, ill. Vera Lantsetti (Moscow and Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[446] Ibid., pp.6-7.

[447] Ibid., p.8.

[448] Ibid., p.11.

[449] Fediaevsky, *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia* (1936), p.101.

with Young Pioneers, so that they would learn to work diligently and develop a “desire for good organization”.[450] These themes were all to be found in stories about the kindergarten.

Figure 4.24: Vera Lantsetti, illustrations for *The Kindergarten in the Birch Grove* by Elena Ulr’rikh (1931).

Revolutionary holidays on the first of May and on the seventh of November to celebrate the anniversary of the October Revolution, were intended to replace the key religious festivals of Easter and Christmas and were supposed to make a deep impression on children.[451] The GUS curriculum suggested that May Day should take precedence over the October festival and be something that pupils eagerly awaited.[452] Guidelines from one author advised that the holiday would, “raise in the children consciousness of the international solidarity of the working class.” It was recommended that in the months before May Day, children learn about different jobs and using art projects and dressing up clothes, would envisage themselves as future workers.[453]

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[450] Ibid.

[451] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.125. The October Revolution took place on 25th October 1917. The Julian calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in February 1918 thus aligning Soviet Russia with rest of Europe. This meant that the anniversary of the October revolution would subsequently be celebrated on the seventh of November. On the origins of May Day and the November holiday, see below, ‘Communist Politics in Pictures’.

[452] Ibid., p.127.

[453] These ideas were from a 1924 article by Mariia Markovich, cited in Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), pp.127-8.

Revolutionary festivals were depicted in sections of picture books or in whole books devoted to their celebration. They often pictured the spectacle of a May Day parade as viewed by small children and sometimes showed how May Day activities were approached in the kindergarten. *Prazdnik* (*The Holiday*) by Gur'ian does both these things.[454] In the first part of the poem, the kindergarten children bundle into the back of a truck with red paper flags and they are taken to see the big parade on the square. (Figure 4.25) The children cheer as the workers file past them holding red banners, followed by the Komsomol (Communist Youth League) and then the Pioneers in their red scarves. Most excitingly of all, "steel birds" or aeroplanes, "rustle and dance" over the squares of the red capital.[455] In the second part of the poem, the children spend the week busily decorating the classroom for their own festival and they use their games to emulate adult workers. With large building blocks, they play at being a construction brigade, just like those they see putting up new buildings around town. Aunty Anna plays the piano while they pretend to be aeroplanes in the Red Air Fleet. To finish the celebration, the group take a homemade megaphone and give a radio broadcast, announcing all that they have achieved.

The October holiday was also acknowledged by kindergarten picture book authors. One of the episodes in Meksin's *V detskom sadu* is entitled *Krasnyi Oktiabr'* (*Red October*).[456] As with other stories in the book, the subject is treated very gently and with deference to the young age of the expected reader. The children bake star shaped biscuits decorated with nuts and raisins in the shape of a hammer and sickle. (Figure 4.26) They sing songs about the October Revolution and the older children go to see the Pioneers to invite them to visit the kindergarten. Most importantly, Aunty Vera explains that while planning the celebration they must think, "how best to remember comrade Lenin".[457] After Lenin's death in January 1924, all schools were ordered to make sure that children had some knowledge of the life and work of Lenin, which for kindergarten teachers could mean building a 'Lenin corner' or putting on a 'Lenin morning'.[458] In her manual for running a kindergarten, Elizaveta Tikheeva explained that all subjects were to be grouped around the personality of Lenin and that this was to be the basis of political education for pre-schoolers. Although only the six and seven year olds would understand it properly, the kindergarten was to have a Lenin corner with a portrait of the leader and an album of children's collage. Political celebrations such as October and Lenin Memorial Day were to be centred

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[454] Ol'ga Gur'ian, *Prazdnik*, ill. Anna Borovskaia (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927).

[455] "Nad ploshchadiami / krasnoi stolitsy / shumiat i pliashut / stal'nye ptitsy - / aeroplany!" Ibid., p.8.

[456] Meksin, *V detskom sadu* (1926), pp.24-27.

[457] Ibid., p.24.

[458] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), p.124. On the history of the Lenin corner see Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp.126-127, pp.222-224.

around the corner, decorating it with fresh flowers or adding new pages to the album.[459] In Meksin's story, the children make a collage with a picture of Lenin in the centre and surround him with images of children holding red stars in their hands. One of the kindergarten children exclaims: "Look, the children have come to congratulate Lenin on the holiday." Following this, they cut out pictures of workers and peasants and hang these underneath Lenin's portrait in the Lenin corner. We are informed that Lenin, "greatly loved workers and peasants and taught them to free themselves from the factory owners and landlords."[460]

Figure 4.25: Anna Borovskaia, illustrations for *The Holiday* by Ol'ga Gur'ian (1927).

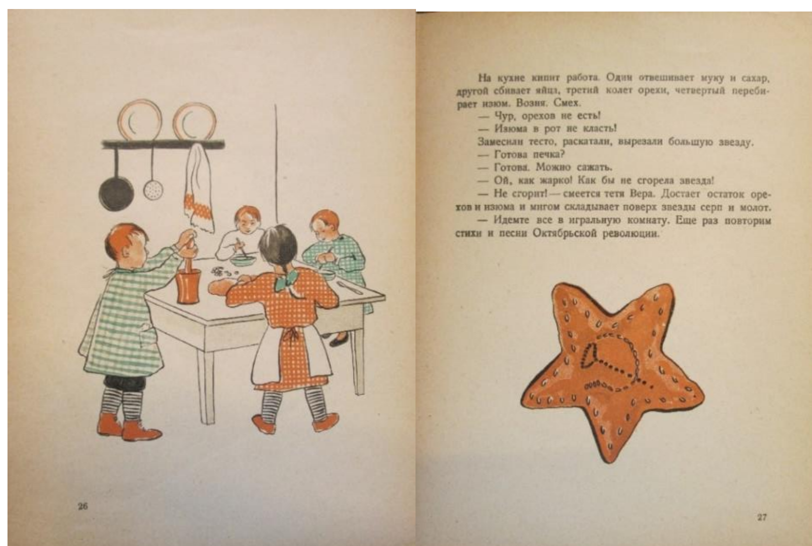

Figure 4.36: Natalia Ushakova, illustration for *At the Kindergarten* by Iakov Meksin (1926).

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[459] Elizaveta Tikheeva (ed.), *Detskii sad po metodu E.I. Tikheeva* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

[460] Meksin, *V detskom sadu* (1926), p.24.

Spending time with the Pioneers was not just for October. The Pioneer was an aspirational figure for the kindergarten pupil, who was far too young to join the organisation but could look forward to the day when they would. Established in 1922 as the junior branch of the Komsomol, the Pioneer organisation involved around one fifth of children aged ten to fourteen by 1925. Incorporating elements of the Scout movement, its primary purpose was to educate young people in the values of socialist society and encourage active participation in politics. On joining, children took an oath to be true to the precepts of Lenin and the Communist Party. On leaving, they were eligible to apply for admission to the Komsomol, which would eventually lead the selected few into full Party membership.[461] In 1924, the movement was extended to even younger children, with the creation of the Octobrist organisation for those aged seven to ten, which was to be run under the supervision of the Pioneers.[462]

For the young characters in Gur'ian's poem *Pionery prishli!* (*The Pioneers Came!*), a visit from the Pioneers is a matter of great excitement.[463] A 1929 Gosizdat catalogue for pre-school books described the tale as: "A depiction of one of the most festive moments in the life of the kindergarten."[464] The first section of the text declares that nobody can sleep, as they are dreaming of a drum and a trumpet. The Pioneers are coming to the kindergarten and the children rush to get their breakfast and catch the tram on time. Upon arrival, in true collective spirit, the kindergarten children hold a meeting and agree that they will welcome the Pioneers with a bright red banner bearing the slogan, "We will always be friends."[465] Finally the Pioneers arrive, marching in a straight line with the drum beating rhythmically and their leader wearing a shaggy fur coat. (Figure 4.27) Imitating the organised brigade, the little children march in their own line, trying to be serious and avoid yawning. Speeches are exchanged and the kindergarten children declare that: "Now we are seven years old, / but when we are eight, / we will ask you to take us as Octobrists!"[466] The serious formalities over, both sets of children play games together. The Pioneers teach the little ones how to play at being teacups and they lead them in a ball game about the weather. When it is time for the Pioneers to go home, the kindergarten children bid

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[461] Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp.25-26; Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.62; Jim Riordan, 'The Role of Youth Organisations in Communist Upbringing in the Soviet School', in George Avis (Ed.), *The Making of the Soviet Citizen* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp.136-160, at pp. 136-139.

[462] Riordan, 'The Role of Youth Organisations in Communist Upbringing in the Soviet School' (1987), p.138.

[463] Ol'ga Gur'ian, *Pionery prishli!*, ill. Mariia Shervinskaia (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929).

[464] *Katalog knig dlia doshkol'nikov* (1929).

[465] "Budem vsegda druz'iami!" Ibid., p.4.

[466] "Seichas nam sem' let, a stanet vosem', my b oktiabriata vsiat' nas poprosim!" Ibid., p.8.

them goodbye. One of the little boys in the final illustration waves a symbolic red scarf as the troop disappears around the corner.

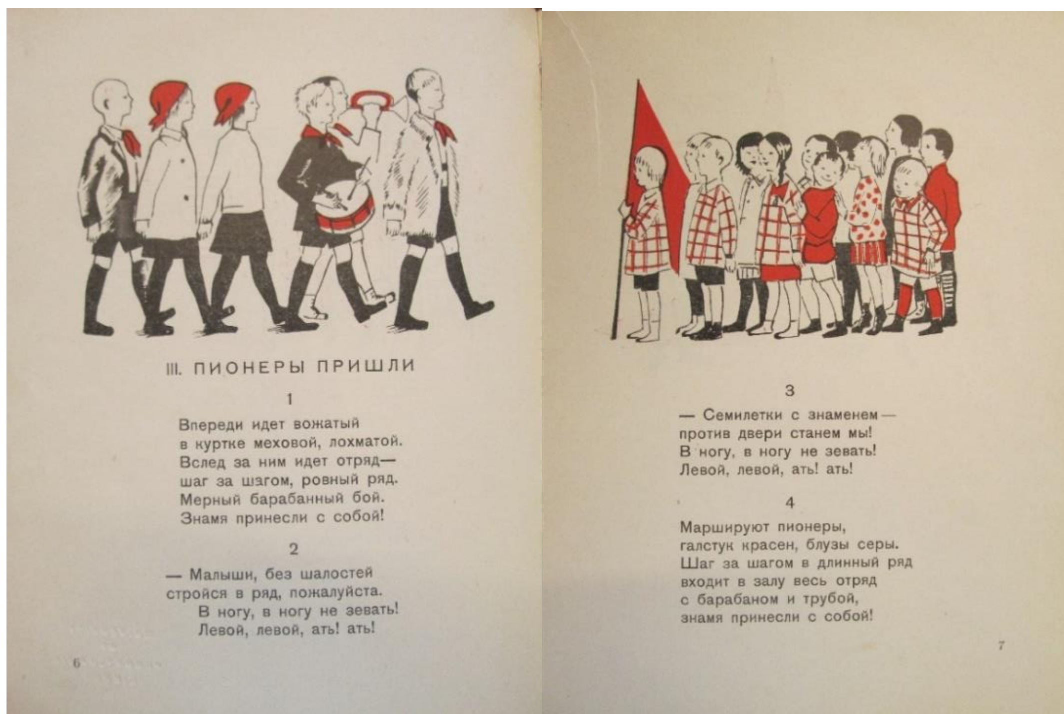

Figure 4.27: Mariia Shervinskaia, illustrations for *The Pioneers Came!* by Ol'ga Gur'ian (1929).

Kindergarten picture books were obvious proponents of ideological education but instead of direct sloganeering, they promoted the Bolshevik outlook through the development of modern child-rearing practices. By encouraging young families to live according to the *novyi byt*, the new Soviet man would be cultivated from the youngest citizens, who were seen as raw modelling material for the development of socialist culture and the inheritors of the communist future. When it became apparent that the state could not provide good quality pre-school education for all eligible children, picture books acted as a guidebook for the upbringing that was envisaged by socialist educators. Children were shown how to practise good hygiene in a clean, well-equipped environment as part of a rational daily routine. They were taught the value of living collectively and that working for the good of the group was part of the training they needed to take their part in adult socialist society.

Where kindergarten books addressed more openly political topics, the ideological messages were overt but clothed in terms that young children would easily understand, so that the books could be enjoyed as stories rather than as dry didactic texts. If the Pioneers came to visit, then there would be games and fun. Communist festivals meant baking biscuits, creating a collage or playing at being aeroplanes. Even when children were shown imitating adult work on

the Five-Year Plan or in collective agriculture, this was enjoyable too, with imaginative games in the nursery playground or the opportunity to adopt bunnies and guinea pigs.

Kindergarten picture books demonstrated neatly how political education was to be integrated into pre-school life but political topics were also the subject of standalone texts. One major area of production was the Pioneer book, which was seen as essential reading for the smallest socialists, who should be eager to learn what the Pioneers got up to when they were not visiting the kindergarten.

We Want to be Pioneers!

Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement had already gained popularity in Russia before the October Revolution, with the first patrol of seven boys being formed in Tsarskoe Selo in 1909. The public-spirited organisation won the approval of Tsar Nicholas when Baden-Powell was invited to visit Russia for a royal audience in 1910 and by 1917, there were 50,000 scouts in over 143 towns across the Russian Empire.[467] The Civil War period saw the movement tested by the political climate as many Scout leaders were tsarist officers who went to fight with the white army, while scouting itself was seen by the Bolsheviks as a symbol of the British bourgeois government and a rival to the Komsomol, which had been established in 1918. Yet scouting retained its appeal for young people to the extent that Lunacharskii and People's Commissar of Public Health, Nikolai Semashko, suggested that the Scouts unite with the Komsomol to create a joint organisation. The Young Pioneer movement was formed several years later in May 1922, as a communist organisation for 10-14 year-olds based on the structure of scouting and retaining many of its key features but operating under a different ideological banner.[468] Unlike the Scouts, boys and girls were invited to join a single organisation rather than one with a separate female section.

The Pioneers were divided into patrols, which belonged to troops with a leader, which in turn were a part of a large linked organisation. Just like the Scouts, the Pioneers were to engage in summer camp, gatherings round the camp fire, playing the bugle and the drum, tying knots and taking part in proficiency tests to display various skills. There was a Pioneer salute, Pioneer laws and an oath to be sworn upon joining the organisation.[469] In the 1922 version of the oath, the new recruit promised to be true to the working class, help his comrades and obey the laws of

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[467] Jim Riordan, 'The Russian Boy Scouts', *History Today* (October 1988), pp.48-52 at pp.48-49.

[468] Ibid, pp.50-51.

[469] Ibid., p.51.

the Young Pioneer.[470] The motto of the Pioneers, displayed on the membership badge was *Bud gotov – vsegda gotov* (*Be prepared – Always Prepared*), which happened to be identical to the Russian Scout motto.[471] In a 1924 article, Krupskaia offered a communist justification for use of this motto, tracing it back to Lenin's 1902 text *What is to be Done?*. She proposed that Lenin had coined the phrase when he appealed to the party to be united in the battle for the working class. Party members needed to be prepared to print secret leaflets, organise the workers and go to prison for the cause. Lenin declared that: "We need to be ready, so that when a suitable moment comes, we are standing with a weapon in hand."[472]

The Pioneer was most recognisable by his or her uniform, once more similar to the Scouts, based on military style shorts and shirt with a neckerchief.[473] The Pioneer scarf differed from that of the Scout in its bright red colour, which was later explained by Lazar' Kaganovich in a speech to the First All-Soviet Pioneer Rally in 1929, during which he stated that: "The red necktie is impregnated with the blood of hundreds and thousands of strugglers … When a Revolutionist was brought to the gallows, the hangman would say: 'Here is a necktie for you.'" He went on to describe how the three corners of the scarf represented the continuous relationship between the old communist generation, the generation of Lenin and the Bolsheviks and the current proletarian Communist Party.[474]

The key features of Pioneer life proved to be easy to depict in picture books, thus turning the Young Pioneer into an exciting character which pre-school aged children could look up to and learn from. Illustrators arrived upon an image of the Pioneer which was not identical in all books but retained enough common features to make it an instantly recognisable motif across many texts. The first noticeable trait of the Pioneer was the uniform with shorts for the boys, a knee-length skirt for the girls and always a smart shirt and the red neckerchief. In real life, this uniform was very important to children. Vera Miusova, a Pioneer in the late 1920s, remembered ironing her uniform and scarf every day and wearing it to school, recalling that: "These were the only smart and neat clothes that I had. I was proud and felt grown-up when I wore them."[475] The picture book Pioneers echoed this pride and any one of the many dozens of Pioneers that were

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[470] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.550.

[471] Riordan, 'The Russian Boy Scouts' (1988), pp.51-52.

[472] 'Bud' gotov' in N.K. Krupskaia, *Izbrannye pedagogicheskie proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1968), pp. 526-527.

[473] For photographs of early British Boy Scout uniform, see The Scout Association, *An Official History of Scouting* (London: Hamlyn, 2006), especially p.82.

[474] Lazar' Kaganovich, *O Pioneerakh Sbornik* (1929), pp.17-20. Translated and reproduced in Woody, *New Minds: New Men?* (1932), p.108.

[475] Figes, *The Whisperers* (2007), p.26.

illustrated during the 1920s and early 1930s could be praised for their neat turn out. An example from the mid-1920s is the Pioneer troop shown in Aleksandr Samokhvalov's *V lager'!* (*To Camp!*), an illustrated poem in which the Pioneers march through the centre of Leningrad to catch a boat which is going to take them to camp.[476] The children are marching with heads held high, all in gleaming white shirts with red neckerchiefs blowing in the breeze. (Figure 4.28) Later books retained the same rousing image of the Pioneer, with this demonstrated brilliantly in an illustration by Vera Ivanova for E. Emden's *Vesenii marsh* (*The Spring March*).[477] In the poem, the Pioneers are moved by the coming of spring to parade once more and head off to camp. As the poem tells us that the ice is melting on the river, the corresponding image shows a Pioneer summoning his troop to action, wearing a smart khaki uniform with matching knee-high socks and holding a red flag identical to the colour of his neckerchief. (Figure 4.29)

The Pioneers drawn by Samokhvalov and Ivanova were not the only ones on the move - the picture book Pioneer lived in a world of perpetual motion. The most common visual image of the troop was that of a line of children marching sideways on, with best foot forward. As with the Samokhvalov image, the parade often featured a drum, trumpet or red flag and in many cases a combination of these things. When the Pioneers enter the kindergarten in Gur'ian's *Pionery prishli!*, illustrator Mariia Shervinskaia shows the patrol, complete with drummer and bugle player, marching across the page in profile.[478] (Figure 4.27) It might be suggested that this manner of depicting a parade was so widely used as it was easier for the artist than drawing a line of people marching toward the viewer, however it proved to be consistently striking, especially with large group scenes. In an illustration for Marshak's cheerful Pioneer poem *Otriad* (*The Brigade*), Tyrsa shows us an impressive troop of five patrols accompanied by musicians, marching perfectly in step across a green field, white uniforms against suntanned legs and red scarves gleaming en masse in the sunshine.[479] (Figure 4.30)

If the Pioneers were not marching then they were still depicted in motion, engaged with a useful task. These tasks varied widely depending on what duty called for. Elena Il'ina's story *Dva Det-Doma* (*Two Children's Homes*), about the Pioneer brigade of a children's home, utilises cartoon style sketches by Ermolaeva in imitation of a children's wall newspaper. The children are

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[476] Aleksandr Samokhvalov (ill.), *V lager'!* (Leningrad: Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1978). The original book was published by Gosizdat in 1927.

[477] E. Emden, *Vesennii marsh*, ill. V. Ivanova (Moscow and Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[478] Gur'ian, *Pionery prishli!* (1929), p.6.

[479] Samuil Marshak, *Otriad*, ill. Nikolai Tyrsa (Moscow: Ogiz- Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

Figure 4.28: Aleksandr Samokhvalov, illustration for To Camp! (1927).

Figure 4.29: Vera Ivanova, illustration for *The Spring March* by E. Emden (1931).

engaged in all sorts of activities, from writing letters and sweeping the floor to lifting weights and going on an excursion to a military detachment.[480] In this tale about a friendly rivalry between two different troops, keeping busy is seen as the paragon of virtue for any Pioneer worthy of their neckerchief. (Figure 4.31)

The Pioneers shown in picture books were of both genders but there was a bias on the part of illustrators towards boys over girls. This is evident in the illustrations that we have already looked at, which are typical within the Pioneer book genre. Samokhvalov showed a patrol of five children which included two girls, who were placed on the back row. (Figure 4.28) Shervinskaia's group featured two girls to four boys, with the boys taking the important roles of leader and musicians. (Figure 4.27) Tyrsa's glimmering troop consisted of four patrols made up of boys and only one consisting of girls. (Figure 4.30) Most biased of all was Ermolaeva's work in *Dva Det-Doma*. In a book which featured illustrations of sixty-four individual Pioneers, only seven of these were obviously female in dress and hairstyle. When representing an organisation which was fully communist in outlook, therefore ideologically equal in terms of prescribed gender roles, there is a puzzling absence of equality in the illustrations to these books. Kelly offers an explanation to this, situating the issue of female representation within a broader phenomenon seen in early Soviet propaganda. Femininity was associated with a 'backward' attitude to the cultural past, associated with the home and private relationships, leading girls to be: "represented as boys in all but primary sexual characteristics." Referring to the well-known sequence of Pioneer photographs taken by Rodchenko in 1930, she describes the portrayal of Young Pioneer girls as: "almost indistinguishable, with their cropped hair, plain shirts, and black knickers or short baggy skirts from their male counterparts."[481] The fact that the Pioneer movement had inherited a pre-existing masculine culture from the Scouts meant that femininity, even of a modified socialist persuasion, had an extra struggle to find its voice in these early depictions of the children's movement.

In purely aesthetic terms, there was no consistent artistic approach to the depiction of the Pioneer. Just as picture books about modernity employed illustrative styles varying from 'new Soviet picture book' style to figurative drawing, with many other approaches in-between, so too did Pioneer books. The most abstract figure seen during the mid-1920s was the figure of Tolia in Tsekhanovsky's illustrations for Ionov's *Toptun i knizhka*.[482] The boy is composed of a series of flat shapes with blue for the uniform shorts, red for the neckerchief, peachy pink for the limbs

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[480] Elena Il'ina, *Dva Det-Doma*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

[481] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.550.

[482] Ionov, *Topotun i knizhka* (1926).

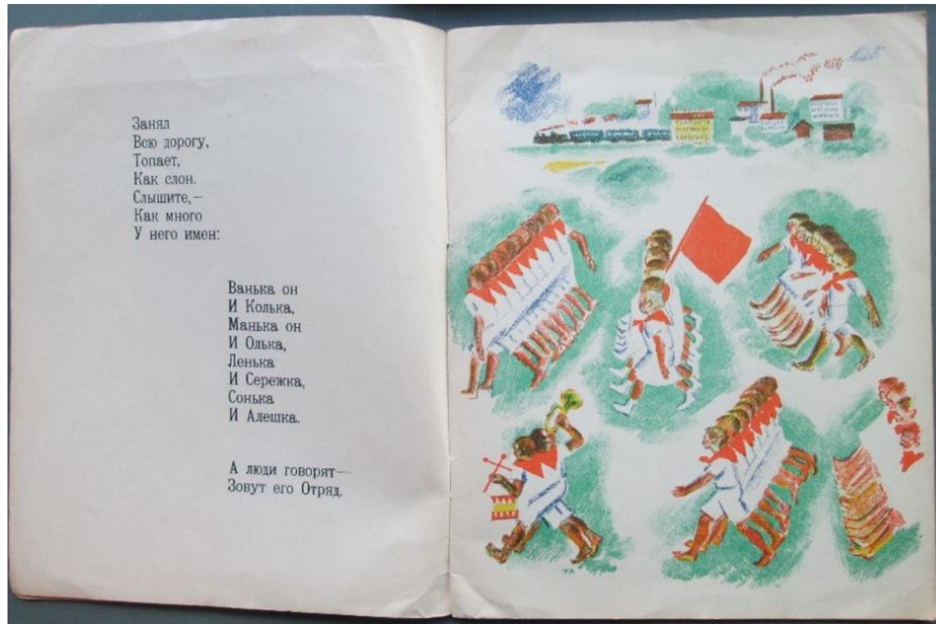

Figure 4.30: Nikolai Tyrsa, illustration for *The Brigade* by Samuil Marshak (1931).

Figure 4.31: Vera Ermolaeva, illustrations for Two Children’s Homes by Elena Il’ina (1928).

and vacant white space to indicate where his shirt might be. He stands in a rigid pose so that he looks almost as mechanical as the robot in the story and the machinery of the book printing factory. (Figure 4.8) While minimalist design remained influential, by the late 1920s and early 1930s it was just as common for Pioneers to be shown in a more traditional figurative style. Exemplifying this were the children drawn by Boim and Sukhanov for Mikhail Ruderman's *Na kreisere* (*Aboard the Cruiser*), in which a Pioneer troop spends the day visiting a battleship.[483] The Pioneers are still in the same uniform and still constantly in motion, however the figures are no longer two dimensional and flat. Instead of appearing as though they have been stencilled onto the page, they are carefully drawn and filled out with varying skin tone, hair and shaped facial features. The images have full background instead of a white space, which is defined by light and shade with lots of three dimensional detail, including accurate drawing of the technical parts of the ship and its equipment. (Figure 4.32) If Troshin and Deineko fleshed out the industrial landscape in factory-themed picture books, then Boim and Sukhanov filled in the details when it came to Pioneer excursions.

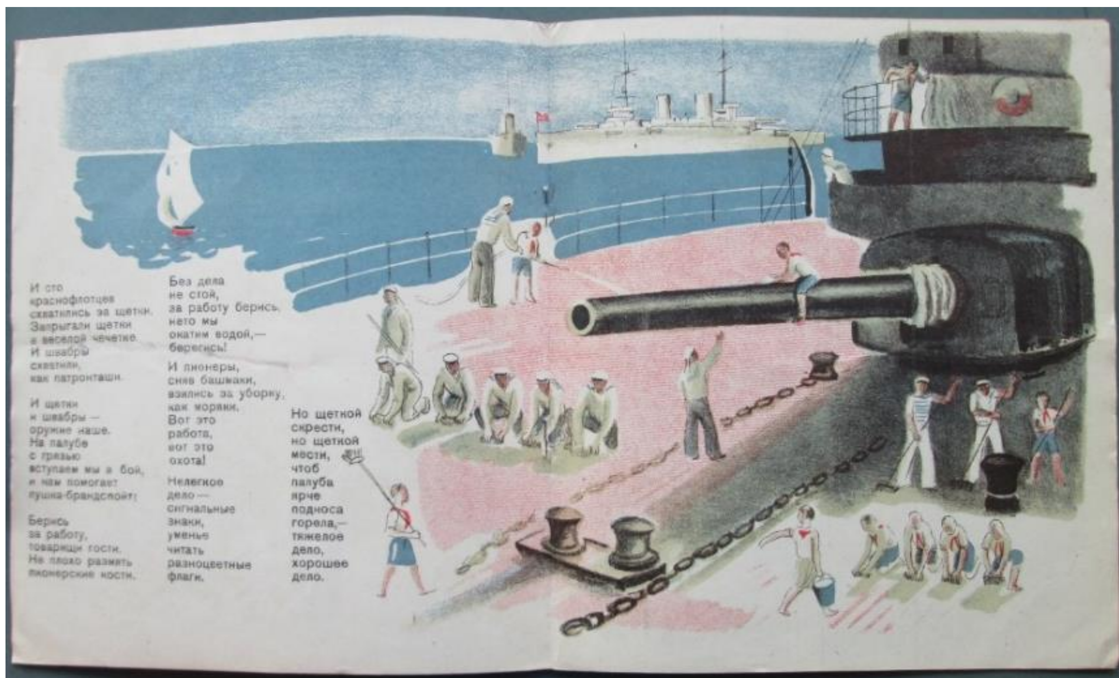

Figure 4.32: Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov, illustration for *Onboard the Cruiser* by Mikhail Ruderman (1932).

[483] Mikhail Ruderman, *Na kreisere*, ill. Solomon Boim and Boris Sukhanov (Moscow: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

Once the Pioneer had become a visually identifiable picture book character, the content of the stories had to reflect the political and social agenda of the organisation. One of the dominant topics was summer camp, which was a definitive aspect of the Scout movement and so too became a central part of the Pioneer organisation. Three key Pioneer camp texts, each of which varied slightly in literary approach, mapped out the prescribed common features of the outdoor excursion. For the very young reader, there was Barto's *Pionery* (*Pioneers*). The poem was written in the author's characteristic gentle rhyme and defined the basic traits of the Pioneers' activities in a clearly defined plot, as it told about a boy who joined the troop and went off to camp for all sorts of adventures.[484] Marshak's *Otriad*, with verse arranged neatly by activity but no chronological narrative, would have been understood by small children on a basic level but also contained some sophisticated political references that slightly older children would have related to.[485] The dual audience for this poem was confirmed by the fact that before it became a standalone picture book, the piece was printed previously in *Ezh* magazine, a publication aimed at seven to eleven year olds.[486] A more complex text, showing a day in the life of the camp, was penned by Shvarts in *Lager'* (*The Camp*}.[487] Much longer and in verse containing many military references, the simple picture book layout of the tale was at odds with the poem, which was possibly intended for an audience of older Octobrists or younger Pioneers, who would have understood the agitational tone of the piece better than pre-school children.

There was much advice available to real life Pioneers making their own camp and this could be accessed through information manuals or posters. *Lagernaia zhizn'* (*Camp Life*), published in 1926, provided a comprehensive sixty page reference guide which began with a long kit list for camp, including two changes of underwear, soap, a sewing kit and five meters of rope. After this, detailed instructions and diagrams were given for everything from making a rucksack, constructing a tent or bivouac, building an outdoor kitchen and fording a stream.[488] The military-inspired methods given in the text bore more than a passing resemblance to the directions and illustrations given in Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*. A pair of posters published by Molodaia gvardiia in 1929 presented similar content in a more visual form, using a Constructivist style blocked layout with huge photographs of eager Pioneers and detailed drawings of everything needed for camp. The first poster, *Pokhodnoe snariazhenie pioneera* (*The Pioneer's Marching Equipment*), showed each piece of personal equipment required, from an axe

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[484] Agniia Barto, *Pionery*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

[485] Marshak, *Otriad* (1931).

[486] Samuil Marshak, 'Otriad', *Ezh*, No. 1 (January 1928), pp.14-16.

[487] Shvarts, *Lager* (1925).

[488] N. Evtiukhov, *Lagernaia zhizn': Letniaia spravochnaia knizhka razvedchika, eskursanta i pionera* (Leningrad: Nauchnoe knigoizdatel'stvo, 1926).

down to the obligatory toothbrush and a packet of tea.[489] The second poster *Praktika pokhodnoi zhizni* (*Camp Life in Practise*), showed how to build shelter, erect a flagpole, read a compass and even create a dining table in the field by digging out a seating area from the earth.[490]

Picture books did not go into such technical detail but retained the main features of this outdoor life. In both Barto's *Pionery* and Marshak's *Otriad*, illustrations show triangular tents, just like the ones displayed in the information literature. (Figure 4.33) In Shvarts' *Lager*, the campers are illustrated sleeping in a row with no obvious shelter, but the poem specifies that they are under canvas.[491] Once camp was set up, Pioneers could use their vast stash of equipment to get on with a busy schedule of open-air activities which might include hiking, scouting for animal tracks in the woods and swimming in the river. Bathing is seen in the picture books as a joyful experience. After their morning chores, Barto's pioneers rush to the nearby river and enjoy fooling about in the water.[492] Marshak's troop also bathe in the river, waving their bare arms and laughing.[493] The whole business is more adventurous for Shvarts' boys as they plunge into the water after Mitya, who is nicknamed "the diver".[494] They swim so vigorously that spray is sent flying and forms a "rainbow bridge", while the water becomes a "bubbling cauldron".[495]

The proper way to end the day was with the all-important campfire, which was used for stories, songs, political education and preparing late night snacks. In Barto's story, the bonfire scene forms the dramatic crux of the plot, when a storm breaks out and the Pioneers hear a voice in the woods. They bravely go off into the dark to investigate and end up rescuing a boy who has got lost on his way home to a neighbouring village, bringing him back to the camp for dry clothes and a bed for the night.[496] Marshak's brigade use their bonfire for political talk while potatoes bake in the ashes of the fire. The loud voice of the leader drifts through the woods and addresses topics grand and small, as he talks:

About the brigade and the school,

About tomorrow's work in the field,

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[489] 'Pokhodnoe snariazhenie pioneera.' (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1929).

[490] 'Praktika pokhodnoi zhizni.' (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1929).

[491] Shvarts, *Lager* (1925), p.1.

[492] Barto, *Pionery* (1926), p.9.

[493] Marshak, *Otriad* (1931).

[494] "Mit'ka prozvan vodolozam,/ Snial shtany – i v vodu razom." Shvarts, *Lager* (1925). P.8.

[495] "Rezhet rechku poperek./ A za nim I ves' otriad,/ Bryzgi iskrami letiat./ V bryzgakh raduga mostom,/ Rechka vspenilas' kotlom." Ibid.

[496] Barto, *Pionery* (1926), pp.11-14.

About the German Komsomol,

About the Soviet icebreaker.[497]

After the speech, the children eat and then lay down to sleep in preparation for another busy day.

Figure 4.33: Nikolai Tyrsa, illustration for *The Brigade* by Samuil Marshak (1931).

Adherence to a prescribed schedule, with an emphasis on collective living and practices promoting good health, played the same role at Pioneer camp as in the kindergarten. The importance of encouraging good citizenship in the young generation was emphasised in a 1925 pamphlet, *How Does One Live to be Healthy?*, in which Pioneers were encouraged to be strong and ready for battle. The text stated that in the event of a future attack: "Pioneers must come to the relief of the Komsomol and the party, and those reinforcements must be healthy."[498] In order to raise such worthy young comrades, time at camp was to be rigidly structured. Included in the

497 "Ob otriade i o shkole,/ O rabote zavtra v pole,/ O nemetskom komsomole,/ O sovetskom ledokole." Marshak, *Otriad* (1931).

498 A. Zheleznyi, *Kak zhit' chtoby zdorovym byt'?* (Moscow: Novaia Moskva, 1925), p.3, Cited in Starks, *The Body Soviet* (2008), p.169.

instructions for running a camp in *Lagernaia zhizn'* was a template for how each day should be spent:

7 to 7.30	Get up and clean tents
7.30 to 8.30	Clean the camp, bathing and gymnastics
8.30 to 9	Morning tea
9 to 9.30	Cleaning up after tea and preparation for the day's activities
9.30 to 1	Activities according to timetable
1 to 2.30	Lunch and cleaning up afterwards
2.30 to 4.30	Rest, of which 1 hour is "dead hour", when it is not permitted to play or work
4.30 to 5	Evening tea and cleaning up afterwards
5 to 7	Evening activities according to schedule
7 to 8	Free time
8 to 9	Dinner and cleaning up afterwards
9 to 10	Free time
10 O'clock	Lay down to sleep, cease conversations.[499]

Commenting on a similar schedule from 1924, Kelly argues that the Pioneer camp was a place for improving health and whilst political education and socially useful work were central activities, there was also plenty of time for leisure which included sport and individual games.[500]

Such schedules were demonstrated perfectly in Shvarts' *Lager'*. If Prigara's *Detskii sad* offered an exemplary depiction of the kindergarten routine, then *Lager'* filled the same role within the Pioneer camp genre. The troop is woken by the drum at five o'clock in the morning and they immediately set the fire and boil water for morning tea. After gymnastics, there is a Civil war themed game in the woods during which they imitate Semen Buddyony's army driving Denikin away from Moscow. Then the Pioneers head to the local farm to mend some broken fencing before taking a swim, cooking supper over the fire and writing the camp newspaper. The day ends around the campfire, listening to a report on the day's activities.[501] As well as correct content, illustrative style was important in putting across the correct ideological message. In the same way that Pleskovskaia pledged allegiance to modern upbringing by illustrating Prigara's kindergarten book with a Constructivist graphic, so too did Pakhomov in his interpretation of Shvarts' camp text. In the centre spread, where the Pioneers are shown working on the farm, they form an efficient army of identically-dressed moving figures, shown sideways on in the accustomed fashion and each

[499] Evtiukhov, *Lagernaia zhizn'* (1926), p.40.

[500] Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.549.

[501] Shvarts, *Lager* (1925).

playing his or her part in the work process. The boys swing their hammers in unison as they bang in the fence posts, while the girls maintain a steady supply of timbers for the job, remaining utterly unfazed by the enormous overstretched cow in the background. The reader is left in no doubt that the job will be done properly.

Picture books tailored for smaller children also contained the rudiments of camp routine, such as communal recreation and meetings around the bonfire, but they did not place such emphasis on the rigid structure of the day. The tone of the texts was more closely related to articles from journals for pre-school children, in which juvenile characters long to go to Pioneer camp but are not yet old enough. *Paromoshkin lager'* (*Paramoshka's Camp*), a story published in *Chizh* during 1930, tells about a little boy called Paramoshka and his group of four Octobrists who want to go to camp, but the Pioneers will not take them. After much agitation, the Pioneer camp committee is persuaded to let them go and they head off to camp by steamer. The story ends with their arrival at the camp, where Kostia the Pioneer leader greets them.[502] A group of young children featured in an article for *Iskorka,* are equally persuasive of their Pioneer mentors. Entitled *Kak my gotovolis' byt' Pionerami* (*How We Prepared to Become Pioneers*), the tale is based at a summer colony. The younger residents are desperate to sleep in a tent and so ask the Pioneers to help them construct one, which they begin to live in, sometimes going back to the colony at night. Talking with the Pioneers around the campfire, they learn how a dining table is dug from the earth, how homemade dish racks are constructed, how the Pioneers study nature in the woods and how they cook over the fire.[503] The younger children are included in camp routine in a way that would have evoked wistful envy in an ambitious Octobrist reading the journal.

This type of wishful thinking was captured beautifully in Barto's *Pionery*, as the story begins with young Fedia, who is taken to town by his father and sees a Pioneer parade and longs to join.[504] He subsequently does so and his adventures at camp provide an interesting narrative for the rest of the story. In *Otriad*, Marshak responds to the emotional demand of the younger reader by giving his text a lyrical atmosphere, which captures the utopian feeling of a long summer day in the countryside. The tents in the field are described as a linen town and: "As the wind comes - / The town trembles."[505] Tyrsa's illustrations for the book match this dreamy mood with colouring that shows soft summer sunlight and emphasises the green tones of the meadow and blue of the sky and river. (Figures 4.30 and 4.33)

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[502] L. Musina and D. Neusikhin, 'Paramoshkin lager'', *Chizh*, No. 6 (June 1930), p.7, pp.10-11.

[503] *,* 'Kak my gotovolis' byt' Pionerami', *Iskorka*, No.1 (January 1925), pp.18-22.

[504] Barto, *Pionery* (1926), pp.3-7.

[505] "Vidish' – za polianoi/ gorod polothianyi?/ Veter nabezhit - / gorod zadrozhit." Marshak, *Otriad* (1931).

The utopian tone is carried over into materials which dealt with Artek, the flagship camp which all Pioneers aspired to visit. Established in 1925, Artek was a sanatorium in the Crimea founded to improve the health of Pioneers, who were sent to stay there from all over the Soviet Union. Whilst this distinguished it slightly from local Pioneer camps which were set up under canvas for just the summer, it was run along the same lines with routine and collective living forming the basis for daily life. By the mid-1930s a ticket to Artek was a well-established reward within the system of Stalinist privileges but during its formative period in the late 1920s, information literature emphasised the message that in theory, all Pioneers were eligible to go.[506] *Na beregu moria* (*By the Sea*), a 1929 propaganda novel for children by D. Lavrov, told the tale of four Pioneers from a factory settlement who received a trip to Artek to improve their health. The book is laid out as a story and while it is obviously purposed as an information piece on the aims and activities of the camp, descriptions throughout the text emphasise the beauty of the scenery and the joy of the children to have been selected for the trip. Before the decision has been made about who will be sent, every Pioneer at the factory club longs for it to be them: "'I wish I could go,' thought everyone to themselves, 'to the Crimea, to the Black Sea… if only!'"[507]

A wordless picture book by Natalia Iznar conveys the Artek routine for children too young to tackle Lavrov's wordy prose.[508] The bugle call wakes the campers, before washing and the morning ceremony to raise the flag. Then there is sport, swimming, lessons in military first aid and reading at the club. Excursions take place to the vineyard to help pick grapes and to the Tatar village, while the final illustration shows the waves lapping against sandy cliffs. It is in the picturesque tone of the illustrations that the idyllic nature of camp life is conveyed. The scenery is suggested in soft water colour tones of warm yellow, terracotta red and bright blue, showing off the contrast between sea, sand and mountains. In an illustration of the children playing volleyball, the background landscape looks like a holiday brochure and indeed bears a similarity to a postcard of Artek produced at around the same time. In the postcard, children are pictured doing gymnastics on a beam. They have the same starched white outfits and suntanned legs as

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[506] Elena Bonner and Svetlana Gouzenko both attended Artek in the summer of 1936. As a child of privileged party members, Bonner was bought a ticket by her father, a Comintern official. See Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters* (1993), pp.244-246. Gouzenko, whose father was an engineering expert working for the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, won her place as a prize for a painting entitled 'Happy Childhood', which was entered in an art exhibition of work from Moscow schools. She found herself staying at the camp alongside Svetlana Stalin, which proved to be rather eventful. See Gouzenko, *Before Igor* (1961), pp.153-157.

[507] D. Lavrov, *Na beregu moria: Nash Artek* (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1929), p.11.

[508] Natalia Iznar, (ill), *Artek* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

Iznar's picture book volleyball players and the same long shadows stretch across the ground, formed by the bright Crimean sunshine.[509] (Figure 4.34)

Figure 4.34: Natalia Iznar, illustration for *Artek* (1931).

After summer camp, socially useful work was one of the most dominant themes in Pioneer picture books. Sometimes this work took place at camp and it could involve anything from bringing political education to rural children, putting out forest fires or helping on a local farm. A photospread and essay published in *Ezh* during 1931, showed Pioneers from the Tolmachevo camp near Leningrad and their busy schedule of work in the community. Some work in a tomato field, while others dig the winter vegetable store at the local commune. The older children help with the haymaking in the meadow and run a nursery for the village children, so that the women can go to work in the fields.[510] Such tasks were echoed in the Pioneer camp picture books. Not only did the Artek campers help with the grape harvest, but the Pioneers in Marshak's *Otriad* join in with the haymaking and the children in Barto's *Pionery* invite the local village children to come and see their red banner, on which they have inscribed Lenin's name.[511]

[509] 'Fizkul'tura. Balansirovanie na naklonom brevne.' (Moscow: Izogiz, c.1930).

[510] 'Fotoapparat', *Ezh*, No. 17 (September 1931), pp.12-15.

[511] Marshak, *Otriad* (1931); Barto, *Pionery* (1926), p.10.

Outside of camp, the hard work of the Pioneers went on throughout the year. Highly publicised annual campaigns engaged children across the country in large-scale activism for a nominated good cause.[512] One of the more colourful occasions was Den' ptits (Day of the Bird), for which children were encouraged to build bird houses, so that summer avian visitors would eat pestilential mosquitoes and feed on insects which would otherwise destroy valuable crops. As with the social work completed at camp, prototypes for carrying out the work were given in children's magazines, before taking on literary form in the picture book. In March 1928, *Ezh* contained a six page spread on how to conduct events for the Day of the Bird. As well as constructing nest boxes, children were to propagandise their efforts with poster displays, a bird whistle orchestra and a parade with children dressed up in three dimensional bird masks. The sheet music for a song was given, along with full instructions for how to build the bird house itself.[513] For the pre-school aged reader, *Iskorka* printed an illustration of a carnival parade for the Day of the Bird, featuring small children in various bird masks and one child dressed as a ginger cat, wearing a placard stating that he is the enemy of the bird.[514]

In picture book form, there was Maiakovskii's poem *My vas zhdem, tovarishch ptitsa, otchego vam ne letitsia? (We Are Waiting for You, Comrade Bird, Why Are You Not Flying?)*, illustrated with joyful black and white line drawings by Tatiana Mavrina. In the poet's typically oratorial style, the starlings are welcomed for the spring by a triumphant Pioneer parade with a trumpet and a drum.[515] There was also *Den' ptits* (*Day of the Bird*) by Dubianskaia, a book which opens with a Pioneer rally, during which it is declared that two million feeders and nest boxes are required. Painterly panoramic illustrations by Pavel Basmanov show the Pioneers making the boxes and then parading out into the chilly woods to put them up in the trees, before the birds arrive with the warm spring weather. This task is no small feat as it involves taking a boat down the icy river and crossing the rushing water by a bridge made from a fallen log, all whilst carrying ladders and ropes to scale the trees.[516] (Figure 4.35)

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[512] On the high importance of socially useful work and political activism in the early years of the Pioneer movement see Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), p.547.

[513] 'Nash sbor', *Ezh*, No. 3 (March 1928), pp.26-30.

[514] 'Den' ptits', *Iskorka*, No.4 (April 1929), p.23.

[515] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *My vas zhdem, tovarishch ptitsa, otchego vam ne letitsia?*, ill. Tatiana Mavrina (Moscow and Leningrad: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[516] M. Dubianskaia, *Den' ptits*, ill. P. Basmanov (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1930).

Figure 4.35: Pavel Basmanov, illustration for *Day of the Bird* by M. Dubianskaia (1930).

As well as making themselves useful through good deeds, young activists were also supposed to engage directly with political subjects. One of the most dominant topics in Pioneer literature of the period was internationalism and whilst it was represented in only a very small number of Pioneer picture books, those books were tightly connected with children's magazines and serious propaganda texts for Pioneers. Between 1928 and 1931, *Ezh* featured a significant amount of content on internationalist topics, with twenty two articles overall, compared with just three on Pioneer camp. During 1930 and 1931, *Chizh* printed only seven articles on the kindergarten but twenty one about internationalism, making this the most predominant theme after industrialisation, on which twenty seven pieces were included. Of these internationalist pieces, many expressed solidarity with German Pioneers and their struggle to live as communists. The first edition of *Chizh* for 1931, included a column about a workers' march in Berlin, where the children joined their parents to strike against low pay by factory owners and beatings from the police and the fascists.[517] In March of the same year, we learned about a group of schoolchildren in a gymnastics lesson. Their teacher told them to chant, "Hurrah. Germany!", but they decided instead to give the cry, "Red-sport!", the slogan of the German worker physical-culturists.[518] *Ezh* was equally enthusiastic about supporting German communists, with a photograph of a police raid on Karl Liebknecht House in Berlin, printed in April 1930.[519] In the

[517] 'Rebiata za rubezhom', *Chizh*, No.1 (January 1931), p.7.

[518] 'Rebiata za rubezhom', *Chizh*, No.3 (March 1931), p.14.

[519] *Ezh*, No.8, (April 1930), p.23.

February edition of 1931, a letter from a German Pioneer was printed, describing the opening of the first workers' club in Germany. This was followed by a reply sent from the Russian Pioneers, wishing them well.[520]

The drama of police violence against German communists and the resilience of German Pioneers against their oppressors, was played out in picture books. *Dva pervomaia* (*Two May Days*), had a short text by Shvarts to explain two sets of illustrations by Usto-Mumin.[521] On one side of each double page, the pictures showed May Day in the Soviet Union, a celebration to be enjoyed by all children with music and processions, bright green grass and sunshine, tractor rides and red banners everywhere. On the opposite side was the story of Hans, the German Pioneer. He lives in a country where May Day celebrations are banned and is punished by his teacher for bringing in a celebratory banner. Sneaking out of school through the window when the teacher is not looking, Hans joins the workers of a local factory in an illegal demonstration, which is targeted by heavily armed police. His May Day culminates in arrest after he hoists a red banner atop the church spire. The illustrations for this half of the book are dark, grainy and full of drama, which makes the Soviet May Day look even brighter and more cheerful. (Figure 4.36)

Figure 4.36: Usto-Mumin, illustrations for *Two May Days* (1930).

[520] *Ezh*, No.3, (February 1931), pp.13-15.

[521] Evgenii Shvarts, *Dva pervomaia*, ill. Usto-Mimin (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930); Two of the illustrations were first printed in *Chizh*, No.4 (April 1930), pp.12-13.

The link with Germany was cemented further during 1930, when the International Rally of Proletarian Children and Second Congress of World Pioneers was staged in Halle. The event received thorough coverage in Ezh and Chizh and lead to the emergence of a complex picture book, which was evidently designed to appeal to more than just the pre-school age group. In *Skazka o tolstom Shutzmane i ob uchenom doktore* (*Fairytale About the Fat Man Shutzman and the Learned Doctor*), Emden tells of a policeman who goes to the doctor to get help for Halle, the ailing German town which is planning a socialist Pioneer rally.[522] When the doctor asks him what the symptoms are, he pulls a red neckerchief from his pocket and the doctor turns white as a sheet – it's a frightful fever that cannot be cured. If this is the case then the rally must be forbidden but it is too late to solve the problem, as the disease has already spread to towns the world over. The poem is written in the long *skazka* format which would have been familiar to very young children through the works of Chukovskii, but the subject is complex and assumes some prior knowledge of the idea of world revolution. It is not surprising to learn that the poem was not specially written for small children but extracted from a long propaganda book by the author. *Immer bereit!* (*Always Ready!)* was aimed at Pioneers and went into exact detail about what happened at the rally. Designed by Solomon Telingater, it was presented in black and red Constructivist typography in an agitational style. There were lots of statistics and slogans highlighted in a larger font then the body text, areas of text in blocks divided by lines, section headings on the long edges of the pages and photographs taken with Rodchenko style dramatic angles. In short, the book employed all the graphic devices used in propaganda books and albums for a teenage Komsomol or adult audience.[523] Choosing to publish the *skazka* separately meant that younger children could get a taste of the ideological feeling behind the rally, without having to understand the dry statistics and agitational sloganeering. Selecting Lidia Popova to create the illustrations gave it the appearance of a regular, cheerful picture book. Her policeman is round and jolly, the doctor is a silly caricature and she uses the same solid blocks of bright colour as in all her other picture books.

The fact that books like this addressed a dual audience of both pre-schoolers and Pioneers was significant, as it recognised that political education could be achieved in gradual stages that lead to the growth of more complex ideological knowledge as the child got older. In turn, this could have a huge influence on the politics of the growing generation as they reached maturity. During the 1920s, the Bolshevik drive for world revolution officially shifted to the policy of 'socialism in one country' but despite this, picture books and children's journals continued to propagate the idea that communism could spread across the globe. Matthias Neumann has

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[522] E. Emden, *Skazka o tolstom Shutzmane i ob uchenom doktore*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[523] E. Emden, *Immer bereit!,* ill. Solomon Telingater (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

argued that Komsomol members joining the organisation during the late 1920s and early 1930s still expressed a firm enthusiasm for world revolution and that the consistent internationalist discourse in children's books, magazines and newspapers was a key influence upon these beliefs.[524]

Yet despite the huge ideological power that a well-crafted Pioneer text could possess, there were numerous examples where the Pioneer figure appeared in picture books with no particular purpose. The red-scarved character had such high currency as an aspirational figure and motif of communist upbringing, that illustrators simply used it to demonstrate the loose allegiance of a book to socialist culture. There might be no mention at all in the text that the protagonist is a Pioneer but when he or she appears in the illustrations, we see the red scarf, uniform shorts and eager sideways-on stride. In some cases, the irrelevantly illustrated Pioneer does great harm to the reputation of the organisation. As we have seen, the figure of Tolia in *Topotun and the Book* exemplifies the perfectly turned-out Pioneer, yet the poem does not indicate anywhere that he is Pioneer. Moreover, in the story, Tolia is taken to task for mistreating his books, behaviour which would be seen as reprehensible within any decent Pioneer troop. In many other cases, the aimless Pioneer is harmless, as the storyline contains nothing to either enhance or damage the Pioneer reputation. *Kisevna i kotiata* (*Kitty and the Kittens*) by P. Petrovskii is a simple playful poem about a cat taking care of her kittens, yet when the children of the household appear, the boy is in Pioneer dress uniform, striding forward in profile, encouraging the kittens to pounce at the ball of wool.[525] (Figure 4.37) It is also interesting to note that, as with many other examples of the picture book Pioneer, the boy seems far too young to be enrolled in any troop. Allowing the under-aged child to be dressed up in the neckerchief gave the very young reader a decent chance to envisage him or herself as a Pioneer, rather than asking them to make the huge leap of imagination required to see themselves as a tall, grown-up thirteen-year-old. This proved to be an excellent device for encouraging small children to engage with socialist culture and begin to envisage their place within it.

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[524] Matthias Neumann, 'Youthful Internationalism in the Age of 'Socialism in One Country': Komsomol'tsy, Pioneers and 'World Revolution' in the Interwar Period', Revolutionary Russia, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2018), pp.279-303 at pp.289-290.

[525] P.N. Petrovskii, *Kisevna i kotiata*, ill. Natalia Ushakova (2nd ed.) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

Figure 4.37: Natalia Ushakova, illustration for *Kitty and the Kittens* by P.Petrovskii (1928).

The Pioneer picture book followed the kindergarten picture book in its mission to encourage a rational, modern upbringing with allegiance to socialism. However, the Pioneer organisation represented the next stage in this process and so books about Pioneers encouraged small readers to take their first major steps on the path to a serious political education, engaging consciously with key ideological concepts which they might carry with them to adulthood. They were taught the fundamental socialist values of collectivism, loyalty, discipline, social service and keeping fit for duty. These ideas came in an attractive package of outdoor excursions, friendship and belonging, all of which are things that appeal greatly to young children.

The vocabulary for Pioneer books partly came from the institutional structure of the organisation, which in turn was heavily influenced by the Boy Scout movement which had preceded it. It also drew heavily on the socialist theoretical base of Pioneering, which was developed by specialist authors who created a body of information literature and propaganda texts dedicated to Pioneer themes. Writers and illustrators who worked for magazines intended for young children, took the messages and literary styles from media intended for older children and teenagers and simplified it for the younger reader. These magazines in turn had a huge influence upon the themes and literary tone deployed in Pioneer picture books.

This does not mean that Pioneer books were not enjoyable and very often they provided extremely engaging reading material that was well tailored for a young audience. Stories offered

adventure, excitement and a great outlet for the wishful thinking of a small child who was ready to grow up and emulate the older children he or she looked up to. Illustrators helped immeasurably with this task, turning the Pioneer into an instantly recognisable motif which could give dynamism and colour to any text, even if it was not originally intended as a Pioneer book. Through this striking emblem, children could envisage their near future in Soviet society without needing a deep grasp of abstract political concepts and when they were ready to learn more, picture books pointed them in the right direction. Next, we will see how the Pioneer book fitted neatly into a broader textual and visual lexicon that helped to define the key symbols of early Soviet political culture.

Communist Politics in Pictures

From the earliest days of the regime, Bolshevik culture constructed its own mythology and symbolism. Key rituals and symbols replaced pre-revolutionary traditions and gave the new Soviet state a vivid political identity of its own. The most colourful aspects of this new culture included celebrations for May Day and for the anniversary of the October Revolution, while from the mid-1920s, the regime found strong expression in the leader cult surrounding Lenin. We have seen how socialist upbringing was heavily promoted in picture books through the propagation of the *novyi byt*, as well as through participation in the kindergarten collective and the Pioneer movement. It might be logical to assume that key political topics would receive an equally thorough treatment, yet the sample of picture books surveyed for this study show this not to be the case. Of the 657 books recorded, only twelve included references to May Day parades or celebrations, while the November festival appeared in just five. Perhaps more surprisingly, Lenin is represented in even fewer publications. He is briefly referenced in six books and forms the direct subject of only two texts. By examining the text and illustration of some of these books, we can come to some tentative conclusions as to why prominent political topics were not as widely used as a softer approach to ideological education.

In the immediate years after the revolution, parades in honour of May Day and the October Revolution became highlights of the Bolshevik calendar and political symbols in their own right. The new regime called for a new form of celebration and this evolved from a mixture of practices rooted in both the opulent traditions of the tsarist era and modern ideas instigated by cultural figures with an allegiance to socialism. In his analysis of the revolutionary festival, Stites traces its roots to several sources, including the processions and holy days of the Orthodox Church and the displays of state power seen in the military review from the eighteenth century onwards. Combined with demonstrations by workers and radicals at the turn of the twentieth

century, not least the May Day socialist international holiday brought in from Europe, the precedent was set for elaborate public spectacle.[526] Celebrations in Petrograd during the immediate post-revolutionary years were characterised by overflowing public processions, brightly coloured murals by avant-garde artists, light shows and huge scale theatrical spectacles in public squares, all dominated by an overall feel of carnival and jubilation.[527] Meanwhile in Moscow, events for the 7th November celebration of 1918 already bore traits of the "Lenin style of ritual", with an abundance of red flags and garlands which were equalled in numbers by discs displaying the new Soviet crest, the hammer and sickle. Culminating in a mass march past the Kremlin with groups of workers, elaborate floats and dramatic tableaux, it was made apparent that Moscow had become, "the sacred center of the Russian Revolution", with Lenin as its "central charismatic figure."[528] During the 1920s, a "process of stiffening" saw festivals become less spontaneous and more centrally planned. Avant-garde decorations were no longer employed, with the focus shifting instead to red banners inscribed with slogans and the ubiquitous red star emblem, while parades began to be led by the military.[529] By the mid to late 1930s, the annual demonstration had become heavily militarised, particularly in Moscow, with large displays of aircraft and a parade of tanks leading the throng of marching civilians. Celebrations had become so standardized in form and so removed from the more spontaneous events of the early post-revolutionary years, that Stites describes the November holiday in Moscow during this period as, "a cultic service to a semidivine leader, Stalin."[530]

It has already been shown above how kindergarten texts such as Gur'ian's *Prazdnik* featured a parade but focussed on demonstrating how celebrations were to be integrated with ideological education in the classroom. It has also been demonstrated that May Day was used as a motif to explore internationalism, exposing the desperate plight of German communists in Shvarts and Usto-Mumin's *Dva pervomaia*. A distinct body of texts however, made a parade the single focus of the plot, so that while these books would have been ideal material for political story time in the kindergarten, the festival also became a tale worth telling in its own right. The parade themed picture books to which we turn our attention were published between the mid-1920s and the very beginning of the 1930s, meaning that they come from the period when celebrations were becoming more formal but were not yet fixed in their high Stalinist form. The content corresponds with this and the books can be divided into two categories – single texts

[526] Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (1989), pp.80-81.

[527] Ibid., pp.84-85, 93-97.

[528] Ibid., pp.91-92.

[529] Ibid, pp.98-99.

[530] Ibid., pp.228-229.

about a May Day or November parade and anthologies which include parade texts amongst a selection of pieces on broader political topics.

Prazdnik (The Holiday), written by Vengrov and illustrated by Georgii Tuganov, is the simplest of the single texts. The poem describes an October parade heading through the city, with each short verse dedicated to a separate group of workers. There are metal workers, textile workers, printers and bakers. On one side of the double page we see them marching, holding red banners inscribed with the slogans of their trade, while on the opposite side we see them occupied at their respective workplaces.[531] (Figure 4.38) Other authors created stories based upon the experiences of little children on parade day thus ensuring that the subject would be immediately accessible to the very smallest readers. In *Kak Pasha provel 1-oe Maia* (*How Pasha Spent the 1st May*), Sofia Zak gives us a rousing poem about Pasha, who is heading off to see the parade with his kindergarten friends. Employing 'new Soviet picture book' style illustrations, the story contains all the key elements that would be expected of a mid-1920s parade book. Pasha rushes out of the door into a warm, bright morning with red flags and banners all around and an aeroplane in the sky. The children climb into the back of a truck and watch a procession with Octobrists, a troop of Pioneers with a drum and a group of female workers singing the *The Internationale*. The truck stops near the Lenin mausoleum and Pasha looks at it with a deep sigh, declaring that he can't wait to turn seven and become an Octobrist. At the end of the poem, the little boy goes home and sleepily asks his mother if it will be long before it is the First of May again.[532] Barto's *Prazdnichnaia kniga* follows a similar premise, telling the story of little Misha, who is left behind in the children's home when the older children are taken off to the parade in a truck. He watches from the window, waving his handkerchief at the glorious display taking place below him. There is a throng of singing workers with a brass band, who are followed by a brigade of Pioneers and then a smart troop of Red Army men.[533] The colourful centre spread illustration by Pokrovskii makes the parade look truly bright and festive as it veers around the corner and heads off into the distance. (Figure 4.39)

In *Pervoe maia* (*The First of May*), Barto addresses the needs of the older picture book reader, with a much longer and more complex story. In a text designed to appeal to the aspiring Pioneer, we hear about a group of very adventurous village children who set off to Moscow to join the celebrations. Spring has come and Fedka boasts that he has a ticket to go to the May Day holiday in Moscow. Vaska, Zinka, Makar and Aleshka are jealous and decide that they will go too and they stay up all night to create a homemade banner. The children set off first thing next morning, catching a lift to the train station on a passing cart. They have no money for the fare to

[531] Natan Vengrov¸ *Prazdnik*, ill. Georgii Tuganov (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[532] Sof'ia Zak, *Kak Pasha provel 1-oe Maia*, ill. T. Kachkacheva (Moscow: Novaia Moskva, 1926).

[533] Barto, *Prazdnichnaia knizhka* (1927).

town and so they sneak into the luggage wagon, where they are found by the conductor, who lets them ride for free when they tell him where they are going. The group arrive at the Kursk Station in Moscow and then join the parade, which is described as a noisy mass of people waving red banners, while planes soar up above. After they pass the mausoleum, the parade ends but the children meet some local Pioneers and they are invited to tea at a children's home, before being driven back to the station in a truck and put on the train home. The illustrations by Deineka are bold and striking, employing the same style as the artist's easel paintings of athletes and soldiers. Whilst this means that the images make little concession to the young picture book consumer, it enhances the purpose of the text as a serious grown-up story which makes the parade into a rite of passage for the young characters, who are ready to become proper citizens rather than passive observers of the festival.[534] (Figure 4.40)

The short parade texts in anthologies have similar form and content to the single stories, however their placement in a collection reinforces that fact that the communist festival was seen as the ideal opportunity to introduce young children to a broad range of political topics. The 1932 book *Mai* (May), features several festive articles. The first piece is a poem entitled *Pervomaiskii marsh* (*First of May March*), which hails the Octobrists as training to become the next generation of the Communist Party. The cheerful illustration shows a troop of Octobrists marching with red stars and banners in the foreground, while in the distance a huge parade of workers winds through a city. Later in the volume is a lavish double page illustration of Pioneers and kindergarten children at a parade, while the final piece in the book is a story about some children in a Bulgarian village who are banned from flying the red flag on the rooftop for May Day, so they paint a live stork red to make a "living flag". In between these festive pieces, there is a poem about spring on the kolkhoz, an essay offering support to oppressed workers in other countries and a Dmitri Moor cartoon mocking the clergy and the bourgeoisie.[535] *Oktiabr'skie pesenki* (*October Songs*), a collection of poems by Vengrov, is similarly varied. The seasonal content consists of verse on the military and workers parading in Red Square, as well as a double page spread entitled *Derevnia na prazdnike* (*The Village on Holiday*). Other poems in the book depict building new homes with electric light, a freight train, agricultural work in the fields, a troop of Pioneers engaged in social work at camp and an ode to the hammer and sickle.[536] It seems that there were no concrete rules about what should be included in volumes such as these, as long as

[534] Barto, *Pervoe maia* (c.1930).

[535] Agniia Barto et al., *Mai*, ill. Aleksei Laptev et al. (Moscow: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

[536] Natan Vengrov, *Oktiabr'skie pesenki*, ill. Lidia Popova, A. Petrova and G. Tuganov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927).

it fitted broadly into themes about the development of the Soviet state or communist politics. Ample illustration in familiar motifs meant that even children who could not read yet would comprehend the key ideological messages.

Parade picture books mirrored real celebrations and whilst their educational function is crystal clear, it is hard to explain why they were not more numerous given that they represented such an important socialist topic. Perhaps the fact that parade ritual was not solidified until the mid-1930s made it difficult for authors and illustrators to show a celebration which was perfectly ideologically correct, meaning that it was safer not to produce too many books on the theme. However, if this was the case then books about industrialisation or the Pioneer movement would also have been produced more hesitantly, as these things too were inherently tied with the growth of the Soviet state and were undergoing constant change throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. The only further idea upon which we might speculate is that books about May Day and October had limited commercial viability. In the same way that children would only read a book about Easter in the spring and a story about Christmas in December, parade books would have maximised their sales potential for a only short while in the spring and autumn. It is possible that during a time when paper was often in short supply and publishers had to make the most of available resources, that they chose to print only a few texts on these very seasonal episodes.

If the small number of picture books on communist celebrations poses a question, then the fact that there was an even smaller quantity about Lenin presents a definite puzzle. By the time of Lenin's death, his image was already common currency on political posters and other objects, including porcelain plates decorated with his portrait.[537] During the weeks after his death, as Nina Tumarkin explains, the Lenin cult blossomed and became "a pervasive feature of Soviet political practise". Its most intense phase lasted for two years, providing a "unifying symbol" to inspire loyalty to the state during the period of potential instability following the leader's death.[538] The cult manifested itself in many ways, beginning with official portraits, Lenin corners and a profusion of books - during 1924 there were seventeen million copies of books by or about Lenin and Leninism published, representing sixteen percent of all book publications that year. There were also more creative ideas, including postage stamps, cigarette packets and May Day parade floats, but overriding all else was the construction of the mausoleum in Red Square, where Lenin's preserved body was to be displayed, promoting the notion of his immortality.[539]

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[537] Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1999), p.147.

[538] Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.207.

[539] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power* (1999), pp.148-149; Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.232.

Figure 4.38: Georgii Tuganov, illustrations for *The Holiday* by Natan Vengrov (1930).

Figure 4.39: Boris Pokrovskii, illustration for *The Holiday Book* by Agniia Barto (1927).

Figure 4.40: Aleksandr Deineka, illustration for *The First of May* by Agniia Barto (c.1930).

After an initial burst of exuberance, by 1926 the Lenin cult had begun to wane and images of Lenin had become more standardized. Publications about Lenin peaked in 1925 and then rapidly declined in number with *Leniniana*, the annual bibliography of works on Lenin, ceasing publication after the 1928 listings.[540] This was in no small part due to the increasing control which Stalin exercised over the party throughout the second half of the decade, with Tumarkin arguing that that by 1929, with the launch of the First Five-Year Plan, the Lenin cult was fully harnessed to the needs of the state.[541] The image of Lenin gradually became amalgamated with that of Stalin, so that both men appeared together in poster images and by the mid-1930s, Stalin was the visually dominant figure, with Lenin seen in a secondary role offering him legitimacy in his mission.[542]

The Lenin cult for children followed a similar pattern to the general manifestation of the cult but with specially tailored methods of indoctrination for children of various age groups. After Lenin's death, his image and life story were put to prolific and sophisticated use in schools and youth organisations. Where Lenin was portrayed as a child, he was pictured as the model of a studious boy who was already concerned for the people. The depiction of Lenin as an adult was that of a kind father figure, whose life and political career were to be emulated by children.[543] It was intended that children's "saturation with Leniniana", would develop in them a love for Lenin which would mature into a loyalty to Soviet power.[544] The image of the young Lenin was easy for children to identify with and so the Octobrist organisation chose an image of Lenin as a curly-haired young boy as the emblem on its badge, while classrooms across the land decorated their walls with portraits of the young Volodia.[545] School projects were recorded in which children wrote about Lenin or designed grand monuments in his honour.[546] Pre-school aged children were also encouraged to engage with remembrance of the leader in their art lessons. Whilst in the Soviet Union, Thomas Woody visited a Ukrainian kindergarten where he was given a set of children's drawing books. Each of the books contained an interpretation of the Lenin

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[540] Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.244-245.

[541] Ibid., p.246.

[542] Bonnell, *Iconography of Power* (1999), pp.155-161; Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.248-250.

[543] Catriona Kelly, 'Grandpa Lenin and Uncle Stalin: Soviet Leader Cult for Little Children' in Balázs, Apor et al. (eds.) *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.102-12, at p.103; Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.227.

[544] Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.227.

[545] Kelly, 'Grandpa Lenin and Uncle Stalin' (2004), p.103; Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.227.

[546] Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!* (1997), p.228-231.

mausoleum, with one by six-year-old Nelia rendering it in joyous rainbow coloured walls with pink and yellow aeroplanes flying overhead.[547] (Figure 4.41)

From the mid-1920s until the early 1930s, children's magazines such as *Iskorka*, *Ezh, Chizh* and *Pioner* featured frequent articles and pictures about Lenin, most often for January issues in memoriam of his death or as political pieces marking the anniversary of the October Revolution in the autumn. There were also books published about Lenin for the school-aged child which contained both pieces written by adults with children in mind and carefully selected work by children themselves. *Deti o Lenine* (*Children on Lenin*) was a collection by children from an experimental school, with a high profile editor in the form of children's theatre director Natalia Sats. One child gives an account of hearing about the death of Lenin through a newspaper boy on the street, while another talks about how they went to see the body in the mausoleum and cried with sadness. In a more hopeful tone, another pupil writes about how she dreamt that Lenin came back to life and a poem explains that the Pioneers will take over from Lenin now that he is gone. The texts are accompanied by appropriately themed drawings and a section at the back shows designs for some very ambitious Lenin monuments and a song with sheet music.[548] Il'ia Lin's *Lenin i deti* (*Lenin and the Children*) offered a more substantial volume, coming in at over 120 pages, with an even wider range of content. It also proffered a different approach to design, consisting of uncompromising Constructivist montage by Gustav Klutsis and Sergei Senkin, alternating with reproductions of simple children's drawings.[549] The first section is a biographical account of Lenin's childhood, complete with family photographs, aimed at children wanting to emulate their hero. This is followed by lots of short texts about Lenin's love of children and his acts of kindness towards them – how the party leader sent toys to the son of a comrade with whom he had stayed in Finland or how he granted a football to some school children who did not have one. A section entitled 'Skorb' velikaia' ('The Great Sorrow') contains almost thirty pages about children's reactions to Lenin's death, including the obligatory trips to see the body. The tone then lightens once more with children's reminiscences about how they met Lenin, with one child encountering him at the Kremlin clinic and another witnessing him make a speech in Red Square. Finally, we hear about how children are trying to understand Lenin's death in their day to day lives. A short piece tells of two little girls in a kindergarten playing at making Lenin's funeral.

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[547] The Lenin mausoleum by Nelia aged 6, kindergarten pupil in Kamenets-Podolsk, Ukraine (C. 1930). Folder of uncatalogued materials, Soviet Russian Children's Picture Book Collection, Kislak Centre for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania.

[548] Natalia Sats, *Deti o Lenine* (Moscow: Novaia Moskva, 1925).

[549] Il'ia Lin, *Lenin i deti,* ill. L. Iskrova, Gustav Klutsis, Sergei Senkin (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1925).

One says that they have forgotten the cross, only to be reminded by the second that it is not needed.[550]

In the light of this profusion of Lenin material which was being pressed upon and children of all ages, it is peculiar that there are only a small number of picture books to consider on the subject. Lenin makes brief appearances in some of the texts we have already examined on other themes. In Meksin's *V detskom sadu*, there was the veneration of Lenin in a collage for the October celebrations.[551] In Zak's *Kak Pasha provel 1-oe Maia*, the small protagonist travelled past the mausoleum, where he pledged to become an Octobrist and always remember to honour Lenin.[552] The leader himself appears in a poem and illustration for Vengrov's *Oktiabr'skie pesenki* anthology, standing on a podium and making a speech to unite a crowd of workers and peasants who are holding red flags.[553] (Figure 4.42) After these short guest appearances, there are only two single-subject texts on Lenin to consider. *Detiam o Lenine* (*For Children About Lenin*), was credited to journal editor and Narkompros official Aleksandra Kravchenko, but actually authored by Anna Pokrovskaia of the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work. Lenin's life story is told in full page illustrations with an explanatory paragraph for each, however at 71 pages long it is not an ideal picture book for pre-schoolers. Moreover, the illustrations by well-known artist Boris Kustodiev are detailed and interesting but not very well tailored to a young audience used to bright colours and immediate detail. Russian literary historian Irina Arzamastseva has explained that the book was acknowledged at the time to be a failure, perhaps because the old-fashioned *skazka* tone of the text came across as inept with the subject matter.[554]

Kol'ka i Lenin (*Kol'ka and Lenin*) by I. Molchanov, published in 1927, was most likely more successful, as it presented a story that children would relate to on their own terms. The book tells the story of a young boy who lives far from the city and whose father is an engine driver. Kol'ka's father brings him a book about Lenin and the boy decides that he would like to go to Moscow to visit Lenin. On a frosty January morning, he gets into the locomotive with his father and they speed off to Moscow, where Kol'ka goes to meet Lenin in the Kremlin. Then the plot takes a twist and we learn that this was only a dream, as Kol'ka wakes to find his father weeping and a newspaper boy passing by the window, yelling that Lenin has died.[555] The poem is long and

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[550] Ibid., p.115.

[551] Meksin, *V detskom sadu* (1926), p.24.

[552] Zak, *Kak Pasha provel 1-oe Maia* (1926), p.15.

[553] Vengrov, *Oktiabr'skie pesenki* (1927), p.18.

[554] Aleksandra Kravchenko (ed.), *Detiam o Lenine*, il. Boris Kustodiev (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926); Irina Arzamastseva, 'Podvizhniki detskogo chteniia', *Detskie chteniia*, Tom 1, No.1 (2012), pp.12-42, at p.19.

[555] I. Molchanov, *Kol'ka i Lenin*, ill. S. Kostin (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927).

slightly surreal, so would be beyond the grasp of the youngest pre-schoolers but with its dynamic Constructivist stencilled illustration and adventurous story, it might have appealed to six and seven year olds. It contains the typical features of other Lenin books for children, to which children may well have been accustomed by this point. Lenin is portrayed as a benevolent figure who went to battle for the oppressed and just like the children in the Sats anthology, Kol'ka hears about Lenin through a newspaper seller and dreams about him being alive after he has already died.

Figure 4.41: The Lenin mausoleum by Nelia aged 6, kindergarten pupil in Kamenets-Podolsk, Ukraine (C. 1930).

Figure 4.42: Illustration for *October Songs* by Natan Vengrov (1927).

When it comes understanding why there were not more picture books published on Lenin, there are several lines of enquiry that would be worth pursuing further. Perhaps it was the case that authors found it very difficult to explain the complexities of Lenin's politics and the history of the revolution in short form for pre-school aged children. The case of the Kravchenko and Kustodiev book certainly provides evidence that this may have been so. Books for older children circumvented the problem by showing the Lenin cult on children's terms and based on their own experiences, even allowing them to be the co-authors of publications. While picture books began to do this, for example by illustrating the kindergarten Lenin corner, the practise was not carried out to a significant extent. It is also worth considering that picture book authors did not wish to portray an incorrect version of the Lenin cult, a key political movement which was intended to heavily influence even the youngest members of the growing generation. However, if this was the case then Lenin would not have featured in monthly magazines for pre-school aged children either and his appearances in these were numerous. The fact that a picture book takes longer to come to print than a journal may have been a factor, as during the time that elapsed between writing and publication, the approved method of venerating Lenin could have altered, as it did gradually from the mid to late 1920s. To properly examine this theory would mean scrutinizing the contents of Lenin articles in the journals, to see how closely they complied with adult propaganda at various points in time. A final possibility could be that the dates at which picture books were published was significant. Picture book production was steady between 1925 and 1931 but peaked in 1930, when Gosizdat was strong enough to take an almost complete share of the market.[556] The fact that the Lenin cult reached its climax in 1925, could mean that by the time picture book production was at its highest level five years later, publishing houses had other priorities. Maybe future studies which consider a greater overall number of picture book texts will either discover more Lenin picture books for pre-schoolers, thus providing a more in depth analysis, or will find evidence from other sources to solve the puzzle. In the meantime, we can only speculate upon the reason why one of the most iconic propaganda topics of the period left such a small mark on the pre-school library.

Picture books about direct political topics such as communist celebrations and Lenin, represented the endpoint of a complex and multi-layered process which employed children's literature for pre-schoolers as a major tool for political education. There were a number of propaganda strategies that were employed in producing picture books on socialist themes, from the gentle infusion of everyday stories with a Bolshevik compatible world view, through to directly agitational texts designed to unambiguously inform the reader about correct political practice.

[556] Of the 657 books looked at for this project, 508 dated between 1925 and 1931. By year, this broke down as follows; 1925 – 56, 1926 – 71, 1927 – 57, 1928 – 58, 1929 – 60, 1930 – 133, 1931 – 73. Out of the 133 books published in 1930, 103 of these were issued by Gosizdat.

Modernity and technology were an inherent part of the cultural identity which was being forged by writers, artists and politicians during the early post-revolutionary years. Through picture books, young children were to be inspired by the transformative powers of contemporary life so that they would grow up as active participants in a modern state guided by technological development. Story book modernity could be as simple as a true to life tale about a tram or the daily happenings of the urban environment. Equally, the depiction of modern themes in picture books sometimes employed a sophisticated visual and textual system openly displaying Bolshevik aspirations on the same terms as propaganda materials for adults. Ultra-modernist picture books during the mid-1920s harboured dazzling dreams of the future, while later on in the decade, picture books idealized the very real achievements of the Five Year Plan.

Other picture books addressed political themes which were specially aimed at small children and which developed their own language and style for promoting the *novyi byt* to a young audience. Kindergarten picture books modelled the progressive socialist upbringing which the Bolsheviks intended to provide for all Soviet children. Through entertaining stories about life in the pre-school, young children and their families could learn about good hygiene, correct daily routine, the benefits of collective life and the rudiments of political education. When children were ready to develop their political awareness further, they were to do so through the Pioneer picture book. The Pioneer was an aspirational figure for pre-schoolers looking forward to becoming fully fledged young communists and they could be inspired by adventurous stories about camp, socially useful work and the distant plight of international communists. Illustrators turned the Pioneer into an instantly recognisable motif, which represented correct political views without the need for complex theoretical explanations.

The final stage in the political induction for pre-schoolers was represented by books on direct political themes such as communist festivals and Lenin. These were fewer in number than books promoting socialism through the *novyi byt*, suggesting that publishers and pedagogues either found it difficult to portray direct politics for pre-schoolers or that they saw such books as a less viable commercial prospect. The texts that were published offered the same political themes and motifs as those offered to adults, such as the Lenin mausoleum or a procession with red flags. They made concession to young readers by cleverly using a child's perspective on events and employed talented illustrators who could scale down key symbols into simple, brightly coloured forms which decorated pages in profusion.

The picture book provided an ideal vehicle for early political education due to its sheer adaptability. Political topics could be presented either directly to children in a simplified form or made easier to digest by integrating them into gentle stories about the socialist transformation of daily life. As well as employing obvious motifs such as the red flag or the hydroelectric dam, picture book authors and illustrators created some key symbols of their own. The generation of

children raised from the mid-1920s to early 1930s became the first to have their upbringing and aspirations guided by the locomotive, the benevolent kindergarten teacher and the cheery Pioneer. This does not mean that the picture book horizon remained cloudless. There were other areas of production where ambiguity reigned and the well-ordered Pioneer parade was thrown into chaos by a carnival of talking animals or a cannibal pirate. It is to these books that we will dedicate our final section, as we investigate the complex battle which took place between educators, politicians and imaginative authors.

Part 4
The Picture Book as Everyday Object

The complex purposes that the picture book served in the early Soviet setting have already been explored. We have seen how it acted as artwork for a mass audience, how it became a lively commercial product which negotiated its way through a turbulent economic period and how it played a major role in the political education of young children. We now turn our attention to the picture book in its most obvious and immediate sense. Across all time periods and cultures, the pre-school book has been used to develop early literacy, introduce children to the literature of their native tongue, educate them in everyday matters and to entertain. In post-revolutionary Russia however, these things were not at all straightforward and the picture book became a point of convergence for fierce conflict about how the Soviet child was to be raised. Authors, pedagogues, literary critics and politicians engaged in heated debate around the form and purpose of the book during this formative period of Soviet culture.

We will first look at Chukovskii, whose individualistic literary approach embraced both the folk tale and the traditions of the pre-revolutionary liberal intelligentsia. The author and his children's books were heavily targeted by the pedagogical establishment in the late 1920s and the roots and results of this conflict will be examined. The second section will explore the Institute for Children's Reading, a library and research centre which aimed to discover children's reading preferences and requirements from an objective pedagogical viewpoint. Further sections will give an overview of books which taught moral values and practical art and craft skills, revealing how they served an everyday purpose but also sometimes contributed to political education. Finally, we will explore books which somehow evaded the all-pervasive political atmosphere of the time and simply provided young children with enjoyable stories and brightly coloured pictures.

Chukovshchina and the Battle for the Skazka

Nikolai Vasilevich Korneichukov was born in St Petersburg in 1882, the illegitimate son of a peasant girl from the Poltava region and a young man from a wealthy Jewish family, whose parents forbade the pair to marry. Consequently, the boy and his sister were raised in Odessa by

their mother alone, who worked as a washerwoman to make ends meet.[557] The future author was forced to leave the gymnasium before completing his diploma, due to a law which excluded those of lowly social origins from gaining a full education. Determined not to let this class prejudice define him, he continued his studies alone through extensive reading and gained much of his knowledge, "by the force of his intellect and will alone."[558] In his late teens, he earned a living putting up posters and painting houses and also at this time discovered the English language, teaching himself ten words a day from a second-hand textbook.[559] In 1901, Korneichukov's developing literary talent was put to good use when he began contributing articles to the Odesskie Novosti (Odessa News).[560] The pen-name he used for these early pieces, Kornei Ivanovich Chukovskii, was adopted permanently and symbolised a liberation from the difficulties of his childhood, with an open road ahead to forge an independent life.

In 1903, this road took Chukovskii to London as a correspondent for the Odessa News and this proved to be a formative period in his development as a writer. In between dispatching articles to the paper, the penniless young journalist spent much of his time in the reading room at the British Museum, becoming well acquainted with English literature. One of his great discoveries was the cannon of English nursery rhymes and children's folklore, which captured his imagination due to their whimsical nature and deep historical roots.[561] On returning to Russia after eighteen months in Britain, Chukovskii found great success as a literary critic and became an intrinsic part of the rich cultural scene in St Petersburg. He gained a large number of literary and artistic acquaintances who would play a major part of his life for many years to come including the painter Il'ia Repin, along with writers such as Aleksei Tolstoi and Vladimir Mayakovsky.[562] Chukovskii entered the world of children's literature almost unintentionally, when a combination of professional and personal circumstances led him down this new path. The writer was raising three young children – Nikolai (Kolya) who was born in 1904, Lidiia (Lida) who

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[557] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.17; Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.74.

[558] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.17. Chukovskii later wrote an autobiographical novel about his expulsion from the gymnasium. See Kornei Chukovsky, (trans. Beatrice Stilllman), *The Silver Crest: A Russian Boyhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[559] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.18, p.22; Anna Vaninskaya, 'Korney Chukovsky in Britain', *Translation and Literature*, No. 20 (2011), pp.373–92 at p.375.

[560] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.3.

[561] Ibid., p.4. Anna Vaninskaya has written a detailed account of Chukovskii's work during the London period, in which she explores the huge influence which Edwardian British culture had upon his identity as a writer and ponders his later status as an intermediary between Russian and British culture. See Vaninskaya, 'Korney Chukovsky in Britain' (2011).

[562] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.4.

was born in 1907 and Boris (Boba) who arrived in 1910. At this time, the family lived in a dacha by the seashore at Kuokkala (later Repino), which was then a part of Finland. In her memoirs of this idyllic childhood, Lidia wrote about how her father was driven by a deep love for both his own and other children, as well as a great concern for the quality of their education, particularly in the area of literature. She believed that Chukovskii loved children not in a sentimental way but with a consummate curiosity for the way they developed, as well as treasuring their ability to bring him out of the most melancholy mood.[563] He thought it was vital that teachers should be talented enough to inspire their pupils into being delighted by learning and he detested those adults who abused children. Lidia and Kolya were withdrawn from the Kuokkala gymnasium in favour of home schooling when their father discovered that one of the teachers beat the pupils.[564] Chukovskii had his own methods for bringing literature into the curriculum and he taught his children to "fall in love with poetry", not through dry lessons but by passionately reciting the verse of the great poets during rowing excursions on the Gulf of Finland.[565]

At the same time, Chukovskii began writing critical articles on children's literature, the first of which appeared in 1907. He attacked the prevailing currents in children's literature, promoting the idea that it bore little resemblance to genuine art and that children required a literature which was specially tailored to their own needs.[566] Chukovskaia recalled that her father "tolerated" the family reading the books which were popular with other children. He also subscribed to a number of children's magazines, some of which he considered to be of better quality than others, however this was mainly to gather material for his articles. The children were allowed to read whatever they wanted but it was probably because their father considered them: "securely defended against banality and mediocrity by Baratynsky, Tyutchev, Pushkin, and Fet."[567]

The first piece of writing for children created by Chukovskii himself was a poem entitled 'Veter' ('Wind'), which appeared in the children's journal *Tropinka* (*The Path*) in 1907. *Tropinka* was created by the Symbolist group of writers and whilst Chukovskii considered it to be too religious in orientation, he admired some of the content and considered it to be better attuned to a child's perspective than many other children's magazines of the period.[568] His next attempt at children's literature came in 1912, when he published several pieces in the *Zhar-ptitsa*

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[563] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.127-131.

[564] Ibid., pp.50-51.

[565] Ibid., pp.29-34.

[566] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.4; Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.91.

[567] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.96.

[568] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.5, pp.51-53.

anthology, which he edited alongside Benois.[569] The major breakthrough for Chukovskii as a children's author came in 1916, when he met Gor'kii and the two men found that they shared a common interest in children's literature and a concern for the quality of what was being produced. On a train journey from Petrograd to Kuokkala to visit Repin at his studio, Gorky scolded Chukovskii for criticising children's authors without trying to write something himself. They discussed plans for an anthology, which would attract the best authors and illustrators, thus raising children's books to the high artistic level of literature for adults. Having commandeered Chukovskii and Benois to edit the volume, Gor'kii published it at the beginning of 1918 under the title *Elka*, through his publishing house Parus, a business he set up to provide the Russian reading public with good literature at an affordable price. Chukovskii was invited to head the children's section of Parus, which Gorky envisaged would sell poetry, popular science books and translations of European literature. *Elka* was intended to be the first of a series of almanacs. and although subsequent issues never materialised, Gorky had sown the creative seed for Chukovskii to embark further into the world of children's books.[570]

Chukovskii's first masterpiece of children's poetry emerged at around the time of the encounter with Gorky, on another fateful train journey across Finland. One of Chukovskii's young sons had fallen ill while the family were in Helsinki and was taken home on the night train. To stop the child crying and fussing, the writer began composing a poem to accompany the rhythm of the moving wagon. The next day, the boy asked his father to tell him the story again and together they remembered the poem and wrote It down. Sometime later, Chukovskii made the rounds of publishing houses in Petrograd to see if he might publish the tale and was made an offer by Adolf Marx to edit a children's supplement, *Dlia detei* (*For Children*), to be issued with popular journal *Niva* (*Virgin Soil*). *Vania i Krokodil* (*Vania and the Crocodile*) was published in instalments in *Dlia detei* during the course of 1917 and made waves with its rebellious and unconventional plotline.[571] A well-dressed crocodile named Krokodil Krokodilovich wanders down the Nevskii Prospekt on his hind legs, smoking cigars and speaking Turkish. The passers-by make fun of him and so he becomes angry, swallows a policeman and the people scatter in all directions. The beast is defeated by Vania Vasiltchikov, a young hero with a wooden sword who is daringly out without his nanny. The swallowed policeman is regurgitated and Vania is rewarded

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[569] Ibid., pp.5-6.

[570] Kornei Chukovskii, *Sobiratel' detskoi literatury. Literaturnyi sovremennik. No.8/ 1936 g. Pamiati A.M. Gor'kogo.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/prosa/articles/sobiratel-detskoj-literatury (Accessed 2/4/2018); Kornei Chukovskii, *Gor'kii i detskaia literature. Literaturnaia Gazeta/ 20.7.1936. Otryvki iz vospominanii.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/prosa/articles/gorkij-i-detskaya-literatura (Accessed 2/4/2018); Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp.78-79; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.6-7.

[571] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.6-7.

with marmalade, chocolate and ice cream. In the second part of the poem, Krokodil returns to his family in Africa, bringing a Christmas tree as a gift for his children. He tells his animal friends that in Russia, creatures like them are kept in the zoo and deprived of all freedom. In the third and final part of the poem, the African beasts head to Petrograd to free the zoo animals and are assisted by little Vania. The animals are invited to live alongside the people of Petrograd and do so peacefully. The poem ends with Krokodil calling in for tea with Chukovskii. Chukovskaia attributed the success of the poem to several factors. It inherited the best qualities of both Russian and English folklore, had a strong relationship with Russian classical poetry and featured a triumphant storyline of good over evil.[572] However most striking of all was the novelty of the story itself, which was unprecedented amongst the predominantly saccharine and unimaginative poetry being published for small children at that time. The author admitted that the poem was; "aimed belligerently against the dominant cannon of the children's literature of that day."[573] Chukovskaia wrote that a cigar-smoking crocodile on snobbish Nevskii Prospekt was, "Unheard of! It made your head spin!"[574]

Alongside his critical work on children's literature and the composition of verse for his own children, Chukovskii spent a great deal of time investigating children's linguistic development from a pedagogical and theoretical viewpoint. He was not the only writer of his generation to be preoccupied with this theme and influences from the tight-knit pre-revolutionary literary scene would have been readily absorbed by Chukovskii. The Futurist poets in particular found inspiration in children's creativity. In 1914, Aleksei Kruchenykh published an anthology of drawings and stories written by children, while Velimir Khlebnikov was interested in the trans-sense utterances of children as a source of ideas for his innovative 'zaum' poetry.[575] Chukovskii first wrote about children's language in December 1909, when he penned an article for newspaper *Rech'*, in which he asked parents to send him examples of interesting words and expressions used by their own children. He was greeted with an enthusiastic response, receiving a steady stream of letters on the topic, which continued for many years. In 1911, he put together his articles on children's literature and language and released a small book, *Materiam o detskikh zhurnalakh* (*To Mothers on Children's Magazines*).[576]

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[572] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.108.

[573] Andreas Bode,'Humor in the Lyrical Stories for Children of Samuel Marshak and Korney Chukovsky', *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Volume 13, Number 2 (December 1989), pp.34-55 at p.41.

[574] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.107.

[575] Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), p.7.

[576] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.5.

By 1928, this body of work had blossomed into a longer text named *Malenkie deti* (*Little Children*). The book was incredibly successful and from its third edition in 1933, it became known as *Ot dvukh do piati* (*From Two to Five*), eventually reaching four hundred pages and twenty one editions before Chukovskii died in 1969. The core section of the book was based on the author's observations of how young children acquire and use language. He included a chapter about how they compose their own verse and how teachers and parents can encourage them in this early poetic education. There was also an insightful chapter about how children use fantasy and nonsense verse as a linguistic tool to test the boundaries of their own experience. Later editions included sections on 'The Battle for the Fairy Tale' and 'Commandments for Children's Poets'. This last chapter encouraged writers to tailor their work to the child's level of development by incorporating plenty of rhyme, movement, musical language and strong imagery, along with games for the young reader to join in with.[577] Included in *From Two to Five* were plenty of examples gleaned from Chukovskii's own family life. He used an example of a game his children invented during the Kuokkala days, when they went to fetch drinking water from the well at the house of neighbour Repin. Carrying the heavy bucket was hard for the children and so they composed a poem which turned the task into a game. To begin with, they had to creep into the artist's garden without making a sound, so as not to disturb him at work. Once they were back on the road with the pail of water, they had to balance it on a carrying stick without spilling a drop. They recited a special balancing poem and at the end of each verse they had to suddenly drop down, when they could take a rest before setting off once more and beginning the poem again. This game made such an impression on all involved that Chukovskii made a note about it in his diary and Chukovskaia later remembered this favourite excursion with her father as "magical amusement".[578]

Such magical amusement was available to all Russian children from the mid-1920s, when Chukovskii made a major name for himself as a children's poet. After the October Revolution, the family went to live in Petrograd and Chukovskii took literary work wherever he was able to find it. This included heading the Anglo-American section at Vsemirnaia literature (World Literature), a publishing house established by Gorky to provide Russian readers with translations of international literary classics. In 1920, Chukovskii's wife gave birth to their fourth child, Mariia (Mura), a little girl with promising literary talent of whom the author became extremely fond.[579] The period of Mura's childhood proved to be a very creative for Chukovskii and

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[577] Chukovsky, *From Two to Five* (1968); Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.12-13.

[578] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), pp.9-10; Chukovsky, *From Two to Five* (1968), p.67; Diary entry by Chukovskii for April 30th, 1917. See Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), p.29.

[579] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.114.

from 1923 to 1929, he published almost forty children's books. More than half of these were issued by Raduga and most of them went through several print runs.[580] The main literary forms which inspired this verse for children were classical poetry, Russian folk poetry and English folklore, including nursery rhymes.[581] There was also the influence of the material that he had gathered from studying the language of small children and the general sense of fun that he embodied as a grown man who could never overlook childish pleasures.

The books can be categorised into two main groups. In one group, there were books of small poems which were inspired by or closely derived from folk tales and nursery rhymes. Sometimes these were tiny pamphlets, which just included two or three poems and in other instances, a larger number of poems were compiled to make a longer collection. Poems often appeared in more than one of these publications, which meant that they were illustrated by different artists on each occasion. Most of the short poems appeared in two main series, the first issued through Raduga during 1927 and the second issued by Gosizdat in 1929. The other main group of books was the longer *skazki* (verse tales), which constituted Chukovskii's major success and cemented his status as a children's author. Most of these works were published by Raduga between 1923 and 1927, with several more following afterwards during the mid-1930s. The texts issued by Raduga were *Moidodyr* and *Tarakanishche* in 1923, *Mukhina svadba* in 1924 and *Barmalei* in 1925. *Telefon* (*The Telephone*), *Fedorino gore* (*Fedora's Grief*), *Putanitsa* (*The Muddle*) and *Chudo derevo* followed in 1926, while *Mukhina svadba* was re-issued under the name *Mukha Tsokotukha* in 1927.[582] Literary historians have characterised Chukovskii's *skazki* through their distinct poetic characteristics and recurring cast of characters, which includes the monstrous Krokodil, Chukovskii himself and daughter Mura. Elena Sokol describes the poems as "an immense fantastic cycle", while for Jacqueline Olich they demonstrate the creation of an "alternate reality".[583] Alongside his poetry, Chukovskii also produced some translations of English children's literature. During the 1920s there were several editions of chapters from the *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling and an adaptation of Hugh Lofting's *Doctor Dolittle*, which appeared in Russian as *Doktor Aibolit* (*Doctor Ouch-it-Hurts*).[584]

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[580] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.251-253.

[581] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.60, p.91.

[582] Startsev, *Detskaia literatura bibliographiia 1918-1932* (1929), pp.251-253.

[583] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.86; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.90. For a comprehensive analysis of Chukovskii's poetics see Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.12-24, pp.60-92.

[584] Kornei Chukovskii, *Doktor Aibolit*, ill. Evgenii Belukha (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925); Kipling, *Slonenok* (1926); Rudyard Kipling (trans. Kornei Chukovskii), *Otkuda u nosoroga shkura*, ill. Evgeniia Evenbakh (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

In the best traditions of the folk and fairy tale, Chukovskii's imaginary world was populated by talking animals and magical objects, which were able to interact with human characters in a seamless and unquestioned fashion. In the long *skazki*, the victory of good over evil often dominated the plotline, along with the moral triumph of weak characters over malevolent stronger ones. Equally, anarchic disobedience and rebellion against the established order are considered by the poet to be right and proper, in tales which were specifically designed to entertain small children. In all of Chukovskii's poems, a childlike spirit of play predominates and is represented linguistically by gleeful sections of nonsense verse and absurdities that defy adult common sense.[585] Looking at some of the individual books shows us how Chukovskii wove these themes and motifs into his work.

Two small ten kopeck books from the 1929 Gosizdat series, demonstrated the typical form and content of Chukovskii's short poems. *Cherepakha* (*The Tortoise*) and *Koshki v lukoshke* (*Cats in a Basket*) were both illustrated by Konashevich and placed simple but humorous imagery next to each phrase, as in a cartoon strip. *Koshki v lukoshke* contained two silly counting puzzles based on comical characters. In the first, old Kondrat is walking to Leningrad when he meets twelve children along the way. Each child has a basket with a cat sitting in it, each cat has twelve kittens and each kitten has four mice between his teeth. Kondrat is unable to work out how many cats and mice are going to Leningrad. The children then head in the opposite direction towards Kostroma rather than to Leningrad, so his efforts are wasted anyway. The second poem in the book is a similar puzzle, about four little girls who are given a coin each to buy gingerbread. The four girls turn out to be just one girl, who visits the stall four times.[586] *Cherepakha* contains a nursery rhyme style poem about two frogs who are on a long walk to the swamp, when they stop to sit on a boulder to rest their legs. The boulder moves and it turns out to be a tortoise who is angry at the frogs for sitting on his head. The frogs bow down and ask the tortoise for forgiveness, pleading that they didn't notice his head and that they thought he was headless. (Figure 5.1) The second piece in the book is a brief sketch about a group of brave tailors who are not afraid of any beast, until they go outside, where they see a snail and run away in fright.[587]

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[585] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.113; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.87-92.

[586] Kornei Chukovskii, *Koshki v lukoshke,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[587] Kornei Chukovskii, *Cherepakha,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

Figure 5.1: Vladimir Konashevich, illustration for *The Tortoise* by Kornei Chukovskii (1929).

Murkina kniga (*Murka's Book*) was a compilation of short nonsense poems and two longer *skazki*. It contained three poems which were based on the adventures of anthropomorphic animals as well as several pieces inspired by the imaginary games of Chukovskii's little daughter. The centrepiece of the book was 'Chudo derevo', a *skazka* about a magical tree by the garden gate, which grows boots and shoes instead of leaves and flowers. Mura gets tiny blue slippers with pompoms and all of the children who are running around barefoot can come to the tree and pick a new pair of shoes or boots. A short poem, 'Tufel'ka' ('The Slipper') follows, in which we learn that when Chukovskii read 'Chudo derevo' to Mura, she rushed out into the garden to bury one of her shoes to see if it would grow. There is also a poem called 'Buterbrod' ('The Sandwich'), about a ham sandwich that lives at the end of the garden. It decides to go for a walk, only to be met by Mura, who gobbles it down. The final piece in *Murkina kniga* was 'Putanitsa', a *skazka* about how all of the animals are making the wrong noises and behaving incorrectly. The goats are sitting in the trees and cheeping like birds, while the sparrows are mooing and a pair of fish are walking across the field. Mura asks the grey hare why this is happening and we learn that it is because she has misbehaved, so when she promises to be good, everything goes back to normal.[588] *Murkina kniga* was a very personal project for Chukovskii and acted as a tribute to the closeness of his family life and the affection that he held for his daughter. Entries in his diary for the autumn of 1923 betrayed great excitement amongst the family for the forthcoming book. On the seventh of November, Chukovskii took Mura to Kliachko's apartment to meet with artist Konashevich, who wanted to make a sketch of Mura with her mouth open, so that he could illustrate 'Buterbrod'. On the tenth of December, Chukovskii was woken early by Mura, who had

[588] Kornei Chukovskii, *Murkina kniga*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1924). 'Chudo derevo' and 'Putanitsa' were later published separately as standalone books. See Chukovskii, *Chudo derevo* (1926); Kornei Chukovskii, *Putanitsa*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926).

been promised that the book would be ready soon and had come to ask about it. The finished book finally arrived on the twelfth of December and Chukovskii described it as: "one of the most important days in my life."[589]

Everyday events in the Chukovskii family household also provided perfect inspiration for other poems. In her remembrances, Chukovskaia described her father's lifelong hatred of the telephone, recalling how he would often suddenly hang up the receiver midway through a conversation. On one occasion she found her father working at his desk, with a gurgling noise coming from the drawer. Intermittently, the author would get out the telephone receiver and say a few words, before putting it back in the drawer to talk to itself. On one extreme occasion, Chukovskii even sought to avoid a telephone call by ordering the family to tell the caller that he was dead and had already been buried in the Volkovskoe Cemetery.[590] This dread of the device gave Chukovskii the inspiration to write *Telefon*, a piece of brilliant, tumbling nonsense verse in which a succession of animals telephone him with bizarre and bothersome requests for help. The poem begins with a call from the elephant, who is asking for chocolate for his son but only five or six poods, as the child is still small. The next caller is Krokodil, who asks Chukovskii for some galoshes. The poet replies that he sent two excellent pairs last week, however the crocodile says that he has already eaten them. A pair of hares want some mittens, the monkeys want some books and a couple of herons have eaten some frogs and given themselves indigestion. The nonsense carries on all day and even a kangaroo calls with a wrong number, asking if this is the apartment of Moidodyr. The poet gets no sleep for three nights and just as he is about to doze off, the telephone rings again. This time it is the rhinoceros, who needs help to retrieve the hippo, who is stuck in a swamp. The poem concludes with the simple statement that pulling a hippo from a swamp is not an easy job.[591]

Another *skazka* featuring Krokodil and a string of talking wild animals was *Barmalei*, an epic adventure tale in which two young children defy their parents and run away to have an adventure in dangerous Africa. They pick fruit from the trees, ride a rhinoceros and play leapfrog with the elephants. The children find themselves in trouble when they offend a large hippopotamus by tickling his belly and Barmalei the bloodthirsty cannibal pirate is summoned from inside a pyramid. Barmalei lights a fire to roast the children and things are looking rather dismal, until Dr Aibolit arrives in an aeroplane. Unfortunately, Aibolit is thrown straight on the bonfire and in a gruesome pun on his name screams, "Ouch, it hurts!" After a terrifying climax, the crying children are saved in the nick of time by Krokodil, who swallows the pirate whole.

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[589] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), p.130, pp.135-136.

[590] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), p.117. Many Russian and Soviet writers were buried in the Volkovskoe Cemetry.

[591] Kornei Chukovskii, *Telefon*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926).

Trapped inside the crocodile's stomach, the pirate apologises and promises to be good, so he is regurgitated by the beast and comes out reformed. The children bring Barmalei back to Leningrad, where he finds work as a baker and gives free gingerbread to Vania and Tania, due to his new found affection for little children.[592] The fast-paced poem is full of easily repeatable rhyme, tongue twisters and entertainingly silly detail and with Dobuzhinskii's bright illustrations, it offers a complete fantasy world. It might be assumed that this imaginary landscape was initially inspired by mythology or adventure stories but the reality was more mundane. Moreover, the Barmalei creation story reveals how closely Chukovskii worked with his illustrators. Dobuzhinskii and Chukovskii were taking a walk one day in Petrograd, on the Petrograd Side, when they found a street called Barmaleeva. Struck by the strange name, the two men began to wonder how the street had been christened and decided that without doubt, Barmalei was a robber who lived in Africa. Dobuzhinskii took out his notebook and drew a pirate with large whiskers, a red kerchief and a huge knife in his belt. The artist suggested that Chukovskii should write a poem about Barmalei and thus the idea for the book was born.[593]

This type of spontaneous inspiration was absolutely central to the creation of Chukovskii's children's poetry. *Tarakanishche* and *Moidodyr* came to him suddenly over the course of two days in 1921, while he was supposed to be working on an article about poet Nikolai Nekrasov.[594] *Mukha Tsokotukha* arrived on a hot August day in 1923, when Chukovskii had come to Petrograd on business while the family were still at the dacha. He later remembered how he was overtaken by a sudden joyful mood whilst walking along the Nevskii Prospect and rushed back to his empty apartment, in the knowledge that he was about to "create something wonderful". Sometime earlier, he had tried to write a poem about a fly's wedding but could only manage two verses of, "exhausted, anaemic, measured verse". On this day of great inspiration, Chukovskii found himself without writing paper. Tearing off a strip of wallpaper, he wrote "recklessly line after line" whilst scampering, "round the flat in a wild shamanic dance". He compared this flash of unconscious happiness with a return to childhood and considered that without such moments of inspiration, it would be impossible for anyone to write sensitively for children.[595] The inspiration to write children's verse became rare for Chukovskii after the late

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592 Chukovskii, *Barmalei* (1925).

593 V. Serebrianaia, 'O khudozhnike etoi knigi' in Kornei Chukovskii, *Barmalei,* ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Khudozhnik RSFSR", 1983), inside front cover.

594 Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.8.

595 Kornei Chukovskii, *Kak byla napisana "Mukha-Tsokotukha". Literaturnaia Rossiia. S. 12-14/ 23 ianvaria 1970 g.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/prosa/articles/kak-byla-napisana-muxa-cokotuxa-2 (Accessed 2/4/2018).

1920s. His own children had reached adulthood apart from Mura, who sadly died at the age of just eleven in 1931, having suffered from tuberculosis which spread to her bones. In addition to this, as we will see below, his children's verse came under harsh ideological attack from proletarian critics and pedagogues. Exhausted by these struggles, Chukovskii decided to focus his efforts on other areas of literary work and although for many years he continued to expand *From Two to Five* and penned the occasional children's book, his golden period as a children's writer was over.

It nonetheless goes without doubt that children in the 1920s adored Chukovskii's poems. His books and in particular the *skazki*, were reprinted many times, as we have already discussed above. Pre-school children do not habitually leave lengthy notes about their reading preferences and so we do not have extensive personal testimony about how they were scared by *Barmalei* or how they giggled at *Telefon*, However, a brief glimpse of such affection for Chukovskii can be found in the memoirs of Elena Bonner. She remembered that Chukovskii was the first author that she mastered during the summer that she learned how to read and that his books were her first step towards a love for the great Russian poets. Bonner remembered reading *Fedorino gore* and feeling so sorry for the unfortunate Fedora, that she would read the book hiding behind an armchair so that nobody could see her cry. Later on, when Bonner had become fully absorbed by Pushkin and Gogol, her little brother Egorka irritated her by asking to be read, "kiddie stuff, like *Moidodyr*".[596]

It would have been very easy for Bonner and her contemporaries to get lost in the world of talking washstands, magical trees and articulate elephants with a taste for chocolate but despite its seemingly endless joy and merriment, this world could not remain untouched forever. It was a sunny desert island floating in an uncertain sea of revolutionary culture and Chukovskii's poetry looked rather rebellious when placed next to the picture books being created by artists and authors of an earnest socialist persuasion. This cultural clash can be seen in high contrast if we look at *Puteshestvie Charli*, a Constructivist picture book by Smirnov and the Chichagova sisters. In the book, American film star Charlie Chaplin circumnavigates the globe in record time by using all available means of modern transport. He leaves for New York on a motorcycle before crossing the Atlantic to Hamburg by steamer and then flying by aeroplane to Moscow. The express locomotive takes him across Siberia, where a submarine is waiting in Vladivostok to carry him to Japan. He crosses Japan on a rickshaw then goes by hydroplane to San Francisco before finishing his journey home by motorboat, motor car, cable car and tram. The book ends with a telegram from Charlie thanking the pilots, sailors and chauffeurs who took him around the world

[596] Bonner, *Mothers and Daughters* (1993), p.46, p.55, p.73.

safely.[597] Smirnov's introduction to the book is written in verse but reads more like the manifesto of a modernist art group than a children's book. It condemns adventure books that attempt to thrill children with tales of disaster at sea. Travel books in which people make their journeys by riding on ostrich, giraffe, hippopotamus and tortoise are also seen as inappropriate, as people are not supposed to use these creatures for transport. Smirnov instead outlines that his book will show a journey without adventure, one taken by air and by road, employing means of transport which people really use.[598] Charlie's wonderful journey is an imaginative modernist fantasy in itself but *Barmalei*, published only a year later, clashed with the Constructivist book by propagating exactly the opposite sort of fantasy. Some of its content could even be taken for a deliberate provocation, defying the strict educational goals suggested in *Puteshestvie Charli*. Not only do disobedient Vania and Tania embark on a perilous adventure which almost ends in disaster but they are seen gleefully riding on a rhinoceros, leapfrogging over elephants and fraternising with an anthropomorphic crocodile who has a penchant for swallowing people whole. These things were precisely what the Constructivists considered to be very unhealthy subject matter for young socialist minds.

Chukovskii did indeed meet with fierce ideological opposition to his children's books from the mid-1920s onwards, which often came from people in positions of power and influence. Children's books had been highlighted for official scrutiny after a resolution on the press which was passed at the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1924. This document declared that the production of children's literature should be placed under the control of the party, so that elements of class and labour education could be strengthened. In addition to this, the deep ideological divisions seen on the adult literary scene were echoed among specialists in children's literature and the liberal fellow travellers found themselves in stark disagreement with radical advocates of the 'proletarian' approach. Fairy tales, fantasy and the *skazka* were the subject of great controversy and although this debate had been seen many times before the world over, it became especially bitter in the Soviet context. Proletarian educators believed that fairy tales were a relic of the bourgeois past which should either be reinvented around contemporary content or cast aside completely. The harshest critics of all were the pedologists, a group of determinist pedagogues who believed that the influence of the environment was crucial in child development. They advocated the use of psychological techniques in early years education, believing that these could correctly mould the socialist child. They notably opposed fantasy and imaginative play and thought that direct realism was the only suitable choice for children's literature. Books containing anthropomorphic animals particularly grieved them.[599] Such extreme

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[597] Smirnov, *Puteshestvie Charli* (1924).

[598] Ibid., p.3.

[599] Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), pp.10-12.

views had a heavy influence on official educational policy. At the third preschool congress in 1924, a new curriculum was introduced, which advocated early training for labour and the development of a materialist world view. During discussion on the curriculum, teachers turned to the *skazka*. They acknowledged that while children enjoyed fairy tales, these stories ought to be substituted for more realistic narratives with subject matter such as modern life or the wonders of new technology.[600]

Chukovskii found himself at the opposite end of the court to these powerful adherents of radical pedagogy but instead of complying with their requests and making artistic compromises, he actively engaged with the fairy tale debate from the offset. As well as continuing to write *skazki* full of anthropomorphic creatures, he wrote a string of critical articles defending the fairy tale, fantasy and nonsense verse. The first of these was 'Sensical Nonsense', which was published in 1924 and later incorporated in *From Two to Five*.[601] In using his voice as a prominent literary critic, Chukovskii amplified any existing opposition to his children's books. Entries from his diary and pieces of correspondence show the problems he was already experiencing in the mid-1920s with getting his poems published, due to the pressure being imposed upon the publishing industry by proletarian ideologues. In the summer of 1925, the Regional Department of Literature and Publishing Houses (Gubernskii otdel literatury i izdatel'stv or Gublit), decided to ban *Mukha tsokotukha*. Chukovskii and Kliachko appealed to one of the censors, Comrade Bystrova, who informed them: "in dulcet tones that the Mosquito Is a prince and the Fly a princess." Moreover, the drawings were considered to be indecent as the fly and the mosquito were supposedly too close together and flirting with each other. Chukovskii wrote an indignant letter to a higher official by the name of Ostretsov, complaining that the book been passed by the same office six months previously and arguing that: "No child has salacious associations with weddings." Chukovskii suggested that pedagogues who lacked an understanding of poetry were to blame for the debacle and offered a much simpler reading of the story as: "a book that promotes hatred for the evildoers and despots and sympathy for the underdog." The author met with Ostretsov the following week and was treated sympathetically but told there was not much that could be done as: "Moscow has simply decided to cut Chukovskii down to size and have him write books with a social purpose."[602] A similar episode followed in March of the following year, when *Krokodil* was first passed by censors and then pulled from the printing press at the last minute.[603] Chukovskii wrote a long letter to the head of Gublit in which he argued that the poem had laid the foundation for a new children's literature

[600] Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades* (2001), pp.117-118.

[601] Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), pp.10-12.

[602] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), pp.171-173.

[603] Ibid., pp. 186-188.

and reminded them of its popularity, pointing out that phrases from the book had become part of children's popular culture. He pointedly expressed confusion that the poem had been published by Petrosovet in a huge edition during the initial revolutionary crisis, yet it was only considered to be dangerous and harmful in the ninth year after the revolution.[604]

This attack on the revered *Krokodil* was a sign of worse to come for Chukovskii and the aggression against his children's books peaked at the end of the 1920s, when tensions between the different cultural factions reached a climax. The literary scene at this time was dominated by the Russian Association or Proletarian Writers (RAPP), whose aggressive ideological stance fully permeated debates on children's literature. It must be stated that Chukovskii was not a political man. His personal papers reveal no obvious political persuasion and no concern with political affairs, beyond their direct impact on his daily life. In the immediate post-revolutionary period, he met regularly with numerous politicians and figures of influence, yet his comments on these encounters were generally concerned with the preamble to the conversation or peculiar character traits that he found interesting. A diary entry from February 1918 revealed that Chukovskii was meeting Lunacharskii almost every day, in a "squalid little flat" where the commissar conducted much of his business in a chaotic fashion. A note on the door written on a sheet of high-quality English paper asked people to call on him at his office instead but was completely ignored by a stream of eccentric visitors. Chukovskii gave a vivid description of Lunacharskii's relentless love of signing documents, his habit of seeing two people at the same time just to show off and the regular interruptions from his wife or young son, who would suddenly enter the room shouting something in French.[605] Chukovskii may have continued to conduct himself as though politics were a hinderance or frustration but being apolitical or even maintaining an old-fashioned outlook, was provocative in itself during such turbulent times. Literary historians have argued that Chukovskii's individualistic personal ideology made him a valid target for ideological criticism. Olich argues that Chukovskii and other writers of the modern-day *skazka* embraced humour and a humanist spirit, going on to say that this was only possible due to the fact they were working for NEP era private publishing houses.[606] She suggests that the *skazka* tradition was used by these authors to pass down their own cultural inheritances, either consciously or unconsciously. Instead of the moulding the 'new Soviet man', they were shaping a cosmopolitan young citizen with a knowledge of Russian literary classics, folktales and Western children's

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[604] Kornei Chukovskii, *Zaveduiushchemu Gublitom. SS K.I. Chukovskogo v 15 tomakh, t.2. M.: Terra – Knizhnyi klub / 2001/ 25 Oktiabria 1926 goda. Ot K.I. Chukovskogo*. Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/ki-chukovskij-zaveduyushhemu-gublitom (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[605] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), pp.36-37.

[606] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.64.

literature.[607] Olich also suggests that the leftist critics were correct to be afraid, as Chukovskii and Marshak undermined efforts to form a 'Soviet' children's literature by creating "the classics of twentieth-century Russian children's literature".[608] Hellman stops short of describing Chukovskii's work in such confrontational terms but concurs that in a climate dominated by the radical left critics: "Chukovskii could hardly have been published at all in the 1920s without Kliachko's Raduga."[609]

Chukovskii fought his personal battle with the radical left on two main fronts. His highest profile clash was with the indomitable Krupskaia, who was an inherent part of the Soviet pedagogical establishment. Throughout her career, she maintained strong interests in educational policy and children's issues. Amongst other activities, she edited pedagogical journals, oversaw the library system, organised aid for homeless children and wrote many articles about family matters. Inevitably, this led to firm views on children's literature, which Krupskaia believed should be interesting whilst providing a firm political and moral education.[610] On the basis that children were impressionable and inclined to imitate what they see and hear, she argued that book characters should act in a positive, socially constructive fashion. Krupskaia was greatly concerned about the *skazka*, as it contained elements of superstition, religious and mythical overtones, nonsensical fantasy and anthropomorphism.[611] During 1926 and 1927, when the struggle between the Party leadership and opposition was exerting pressure on key political figures, Krupskaia's writings became more aggressive in tone. In one piece criticising Chukovskii's *Chudo derevo*, she decried the character of Mura as being bourgeois and too absorbed with material things. She took opposition to the fact that children were being told that shoes came from a miracle tree and not from a hardworking shoemaker.[612] At a meeting of the Narkompros board in February 1928, children's literature was discussed and in particular, the place of the *skazka*. Those present included Krupskaia, Lilina and Lunacharskii but the commissar defended the role of fantasy stories, as he felt that unadulterated realism would lead to an artificial and uninspiring literature.[613] The debate around fantasy and anthropomorphism spilled over into the pages of *Kniga detiam* (*Books for Children*), an ideologically orientated periodical sponsored by Krupskaia. Throughout 1928, a series of articles addressed the issue and came to the general consensus that until the age of seven or eight, children were too

[607] Ibid., p.65.

[608] Ibid., p.69.

[609] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.359.

[610] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), pp.163-165.

[611] Ibid., p.167.

[612] Ibid., p.169.

[613] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.356; Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), p.14.

underdeveloped to be given anthropomorphic content, as they were too young to distinguish fantasy from reality.[614]

As a high profile author of fantastical *skazki*, Chukovskii was bound to meet with this powerful current of criticism and the inevitable happened in the winter of 1927 to 1928. At the end of November in 1927, the author was in Moscow on business, where he took the opportunity to find out why the latest of edition of *Krokodil* had been banned from publication. He went to see Natan Vengrov, who was by then head of the Moscow children's section of Gosizdat and was in turn directed to Krupskaia. Krupskaia greeted Chukovskii warmly by telling him that Lenin had enjoyed reading *Moidodyr* to their nephews. Chukovskii then spoke his mind on the *Krokodil* issue, telling Krupskaia that "pedagogues are no judges of literature", which resulted in a note back to Vengrov in which she described the author's behaviour as "insolent".[615] On the first of February 1928, an article by Krupskaia entitled 'On Chukovskii's *The Crocodile*', appeared simultaneously in *Kniga detiam* and *Pravda*. She found much to object to in the book. Her first objection was that children love to learn about wild animals but that they would gain nothing except nonsense from Chukovskii's poem. Krupskaia did admit that children should be amused and that a crocodile riding in an aeroplane is funny. However, any positive effect was cancelled out by the derogatory depiction of peasants with pudding bowl haircuts, who could be found in the illustrations of the crowd of people. She also objected to the idea that Vania should have been given a shallow reward of chocolate for his good deeds. Finally, Krupskaia argued at great length that Chukovskii had composed a parody on the work of Nekrasov, rather than a poem intended for children and that this showed his hatred for the respected poet. Her conclusion was that Krokodil should be kept from children, "not because it is a fairytale, but because it is bourgeois dregs."[616]

The article caused a great furore which instigated a flurry of correspondence from Chukovskii and his circle. Two days after it was published, Chukovskii found out about the piece and went into a panic. An entry from his diary for this day read: "I'm writing a response to Krupskaia. My hands are trembling. I can't sit on my chair. I have to lie down." He follows this up with the comment: "If only my *Small Children* would come out now. It contains an indirect response to all the attacks."[617] Chukovskii's written response to Krupskaia went through her

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[614] Sokol, 'Introduction' (1987-1988), p.14.

[615] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), pp.214-215.

[616] Krupskaia, 'On Chukovskii's "The Crocodile"' in Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.207-209; N.K. Krupskaia, *O "Krokodile" Chukovskogo. "Pravda"/ 01.02.1928.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/nk-krupskaya-o-krokodile-chukovskogo (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[617] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), p.222.

objections one by one. Firstly, he pointed out the obvious fact that the poem was written before the Soviet republic even existed. He also argued that he did not forget that he was writing for children, as Krupskaia had suggested and that his new book, *From Two to Five*, was ample illustration for this fact. Chukovskii cited the joyful reaction of millions of children to the poem when it was first published in 1917, declaring that these children knew that: "Krokodil is simply a crocodile, that Vania is simply Vania, that I am a storyteller, a children's poet, and not a distributor of political pamphlets."[618] On the fourteenth of February, Chukovskii's daughter Lidia wrote to Gor'kii asking for his help, explaining that for the first time in his twenty six year career, Chukovskii had found himself so miserable that he was unable to work. She argued that his children's books had been such a success that it could hardly be the case that *Krokodil* gave children nothing, as Krupskaia had suggested.[619] A month later, *Pravda* published a letter from Gor'kii to the editor, defending Chukovskii against Krupskaia's attack. Gor'kii not only argued that Chukovskii's work on Nekrasov was excellent and that Lenin had approved of it but that Krupskaia's review was strange and unjust.[620] Chukovskii received news of this intervention with great joy, declaring in his diary that he had felt unbearably happy, before rushing out to buy a copy of the paper to see the letter for himself.[621]

Contemporary literary scholars have rightly analysed this episode as being political rather than literary in character. Sokol argues that Krupskaia's article was obviously motivated by politics as it had: "no obvious pretensions to scientific or educational theory." Arzamastseva agrees, explaining that Krupskaia was in a battle with the Kremlin at the end of the 1920s, so her opinions on children's books were not independent from politics. Moreover, the article was published in both *Kniga detiam* and *Pravda*, which implies that politics were given precedence over professional ethics. Arzamastseva speculates that Krupskaia would have been disappointed by her failure to find an ally in Gorky, as children's books, pedagogy and library work, "were her last strongholds of power."[622]

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[618] Kornei Chukovskii, *V zashchitu "Krokodila". K.I. Chukovskogo v 15 tomakh. SS v 15 tomakh, t.2. M.: Terra – Knizhnyi klub / 2001*. Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/k-chukovskij-v-zashhitu-krokodila (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[619] Lidia Chukovskaia, *A.M. Gor'komu. SSochinenii K.I. Chukovskogo v 15 tomakh, t.2. M.: Terra – knizhnyi klub / 2001.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/lk-chukovskaya-am-gorkomu (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[620] M. Gor'kii, *Pis'mo v redaktsiiu. Pravda / 14 Marta 1928.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/m-gorkij-pismo-v-redakciyu (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[621] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), p.224.

[622] Arzamastseva, 'Podvizhniki detskogo chteniia' (2012), pp.28-29.

Krupskaia nonetheless maintained great influence over whether Chukovskii's works for children would be published, as she served as head of the GUS Commission on Children's Books. A long period of disagreement with GUS was the second battle front in Chukovskii's war with the leftist pedagogues, as he found his children's books subject to an outright ban.[623] Starting on the first of November 1927, all children's books had to be censored by GUS rather than Gublit and so at the end of October, all of Chukovskii's Raduga books and *Krokodil* were put on hold.[624] On the seventeenth of January 1928, Chukovskii launched a tirade against GUS in his diary, calling them, "benighted blockheads, philistines usurping the name of scholar." He believed that their reviews were completely arbitrary and unconvincing and that the only criteria they had for passing or banning a book, was whether it included anthropomorphism. He fumed that: "If things were so simple and all that needed to be done was to banish anthropomorphism, it could be taken care of by the guard who sits at the entry to the Narkompros."[625] Chukovskii was not alone in his dislike of the organisation and later on in the year, there was another string of letters from the writer and his associates, this time objecting to the narrow view of children's literature being promoted by GUS. In September 1928, Chukovskii and Marshak wrote to Narkompros to complain about the Commission on Children's Books. The letter was extremely polite in tone and explained that writers had hoped that the new commission would promote an authentic children's literature, whilst bringing together writers and pedagogues. At its first meeting, the commission had banned *Krokodil* and all writers were amazed by this sudden severity of approach. Chukovskii and Marshak described how they felt that pedagogues were not exercising objective criteria for the evaluation of artistic children's literature. They finished by respectfully suggesting that the future work of the commission could be more fruitful if pedagogues, writers and artists were to engage in wide discussion and collaborate on the work that was being done.[626] Similar arguments were presented by Chukovskii in a letter sent directly to Lunacharskii at around the same time. Chukovskii complained about how Krokodil had been banned and called this a "blatant scandal", as the poem was an authentic work of art.[627] Finally, a group of writers including Marshak, Zhitkov, Aleksei Tolstoi and Evgenii Zamiatin wrote to Lunacharskii.

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[623] Erlich, *Kornei Chukovsky: Diary, 1901-1969* (2005), p.222.

[624] Ibid, p.209.

[625] Ibid., p.217.

[626] Samuil Marshak and Kornei Chukovskii, 'V Kollegiiu Narkomprosa' in Kornei Chukovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii tom piatnadtsatyi: Pis'ma, 1926-1929* (Moscow: T8RUGRAM/ Agenstvo FTM, 2017), pp.147-149.

[627] Kornei Chukovskii, *A. V. Lunacharskomu. SS K.I. Chukovskogo v 15 tomakh, t.2. M.: Terra – Knizhnyi klub / 2001.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/ki-chukovskij-a-v-lunacharskomu (Accessed 2/4/2018).

They expressed hope that the decision to ban Chukovskii's works might be overturned and described him as: "without doubt one of the best contemporary children's writers".[628]

Despite strong support from his colleagues, the damage rendered upon Chukovskii's reputation by these episodes was significant and deep criticism of his books became residual in the press and the pedagogical establishment. The notion of 'Chukovshchina' (Chukovskii-ism), was used as a byword for the campaign against fantasy and the *skazka*. A 1929 article by K. Sverdlova, entitled 'O Chukovshchine' ('On Chukovskii-ism) highlighted excerpts from the latest edition of Chukovskii's *Malenkie deti*, using them as evidence to criticise the attitude of Chukovskii and the group that surrounded him. Sverdlova did not object to Chukovskii's use of folk poetry or his desire to make children laugh and indeed praised him as a talented author. Her objection was that his books represented: "the ideology of degenerate philistinism, the cult of the dying family and petit-bourgeois childhood." Echoing Krupskaia, she complained about the pampered, petit-bourgeois character of Murka in *Chudo derevo*. Sverdlova suggested that instead of showing this outdated family life, children's books should demonstrate mechanized toys, physical education and production games, which would fit in better with the new way of life enjoyed by Soviet children.[629] Elizaveta Shabad, a pre-school specialist associated with the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work, chose to sleight Chukovskii by omission rather than by open attack. Her 1930 pamphlet *Kakaia knizhka nuzhna doshkol'nomu rebenku* (*What Sort of Book Does the Pre-school Child Need?*), advised parents on the correct reading material for their young children. There was a short essay, followed by lists of recommended reading under different themes. In the section on the 'jolly book', where the poems of Chukovskii and Marshak should have found a comfortable home, there was no mention of any text by either author.[630]

The leftist pedagogues may have had the loudest and most aggressive voices but there were also articles which took Chukovskii's side in the debate. Authors of these pieces argued in favour of fantasy and the *skazka* whilst being very careful not to compromise their own positions. In a 1929 article for *Kniga detiam*, folklorist Ol'ga Kapitsa argued that whilst the *skazka* form was ideologically complex, there was a valid place for some folklore in contemporary books for

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[628] Federatsiia pisatelei, *Protest. K.I. Chukovskogo. SS v 15 tomakh, t.2. M.: Terra – Knizhnyi klub / 2001.* Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/protest-federacii-pisatelej-av-lunacharskomu (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[629] K. Sverdlova*, O "Chukovshchine". Krasnaia pechat'.* No.9-10 / 1929. Available from: http://www.chukfamily.ru/kornei/pro-et-contra/borba-za-skazku/k-sverdlova-o-chukovshhine (Accessed 2/4/2018).

[630] Elizaveta Shabad, *Kakaia knizhka nuzhna doshkol'nomu rebenku* (Moscow: Narkompros RSFSR Gosizdat, 1930), p.15.

children. She pointed out that there was already a lot of folklore in modern children's books by authors such as Chukovskii, Marshak, Bianki and Mirovich. Kapitsa believed that this folklore offered a promising source of humour, citing the argument in Chukovskii's 'Sensical Nonsense', which suggested that linguistic nonsense helped to strengthen a child's sense of reality. In response to the view of radical pedagogues that folklore should not be used with pre-schoolers, Kapitsa argued that the form of folklore was unproblematic as long as content was carefully managed, so that children were not given false information.[631] In the introduction to a 1929 edition of *Arabian Nights*, Gor'kii defended the *skazka* directly, arguing that the key educational notion propagated by folktales was that of invention. He described how writers of folktales: "had conceived of magic carpets many centuries before the invention of aeroplanes and of extraordinary speed long before the steam engine or motors run by gas and electricity." Gorky suggested that imagination and intuition were excellent qualities for children to develop, as they were also vital abilities for the natural scientist, meaning that apparently whimsical stories served a utilitarian purpose after all.[632]

Gor'kii wrote a further article in January 1930, this time in direct response to the attack of Kal'm on the Leningrad group and the ensuing debate in *Literaturnaia gazeta*. The attack on Marshak and his editorial office had been driven by the desire to eliminate the cultural legacy of NEP era private publishers, which played into the hands of the radical left as they sort to purge the literary world of 'bourgeois' elements. Gor'kii joined many other writers in defending Marshak, arguing that in a rapidly changing world, new verbal forms were required. He stated that the children's literature being created by Marshak was doing an excellent job at inventing these and Gor'kii asserted that, "we cannot permit the illiterate Kal'ms of this world to badger such talented individuals as Marshak." In a further qualification to this statement, which could clearly have been applied to Chukovskii as well, Gor'kii defended the idea that children should be allowed amusement in literature. He stated that: "It is precisely through playing with words that a child learns the refinements of his native language, absorbing its music and what philologists refer to as 'the spirit of the language'."[633]

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[631] Ol'ga Kapitsa, 'Folklore in Contemporary Books for Children', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.55-68 at pp.57-65. Originally published in *Kniga detiam*, No.2-3 (1929), pp.21-28.

[632] Maksim Gorky, 'On Folktales', *Soviet Studies in Literature: A Journal of Translations* (Winter 1987-1988), pp.69-71 at p.69.

[633] Gorky, 'The Man Whose Ears are Stopped up with Cotton (On the Discussion about Children's Books)', (1987-1988), p.74. Originally published in *Pravda*, No.19 (January 19th, 1930).

Gorky's intervention signalled that the period of dominance by the radical left on issues of children's literature would not last forever. In 1932, RAPP and all other writer's groups were dissolved in favour of one large organisation, the Union of Soviet Writers. Although this was to end factionalism on the literary scene, it was part of the move towards greater Party control over culture in the Soviet Union. The peak of Chukovskii's success took place during the more pluralistic period of the mid-1920s and although difficulties with the fierce leftist pedagogues and the loss of his personal inspiration meant that he no longer wrote for children on a regular basis, his name had become inextricably linked with the new Soviet children's literature. Moreover, his poems and *skazki* were cherished by children across the land and this ensured an enduring legacy of imagination and laughter, with a gateway to the world of literature that was open to all who wished to enter it.

The Institute for Children's Reading

As we have already seen, children's literature in the early Soviet Union was not driven solely by authors and illustrators but also by pedagogues and intellectuals, who were motivated by a deep concern for children's education and the role that this should play in shaping society. The Museum of the Children's Book in Moscow collected seventy thousand volumes and conducted educational work with its young patrons. The museum was directed by Iakov Meksin, a writer and pedagogue who penned both children's picture books and art historical works on children's literature, including the self-published 1925 work *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (*Illustration in the Children's Book*), which he co-authored with Pavel Dul'skii. There is very little surviving information on the museum, due to Meksin's arrest in 1937 and the subsequent suppression of his professional legacy but surviving fragments of evidence paint a picture of a creative and vibrant establishment.[634] Meksin was assisted by Konstantin Kuznetsov, a graphic artist who illustrated picture books, including some written by Meksin. Biographical information on Kuznestov tells us that he designed a layout for the museum in 1931 and created backdrops for plays which were performed there by children. The museum also organised travelling exhibitions of children's books, some of which were sent to Europe during the late 1920s, as part of an effort to promote Soviet graphic arts to the Western European public.[635]

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[634] Dul'skii and Meksin, *Illiustratsiia v detskoi knige* (1925); Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.300.

[635] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), p.109, p.336.

During 1931, Australian-British journalist Ella Winter spent six months in the Soviet Union to collect material for a book on human relations in the new Russia.[636] She met with Meksin at the Narkompros museum in Moscow, where he showed her a 'Wandering Exhibit' which was designed to be taken to schools, farms, factories and playgrounds. Winter described in detail a set of interactive displays which engaged visitors with both the history and production process of children's literature. A series of dioramas demonstrated children's reading across different time periods, where a model of a family was shown, alongside a gadget with a handle to turn which revealed images of the books read by children of the period. One showed the family of a nineteenth century merchant, with books that were expensive and only accessible to wealthy children. Another model showed a worker's family in a dingy basement, reading fairy tales by the dim light of a lamp, in order to escape their miserable lives. A final scene showed a "large, light, airy, children's reading room", populated by children of workers and peasants who had been "freed" by the new regime. In Winter's words, the books read by these modern children were: "some of the delightful children's books of Russia today, cheap books that are within every child's reach and that cover all the possible range of interest of a child."[637] In addition to the historical panoramas, there was a printing press for the children to operate themselves, a section on good manners and hygiene while reading and a dressing up game based on well-known book characters. A further part of the exhibition taught children artistic appreciation for book illustration, with a mix and match game to identify pictures by different artists. Meksin explained that his exhibit was used to study children's reading preferences and in noting the books that a child selected, adults were able to gauge where his or her interests lie and so guide him towards a future vocation. Moreover, children enjoyed the exhibit, leaving positive comments in the visitors' book about the sections that they enjoyed the most.[638]

Pre-dating The Museum of the Children's Book and offering a truly systematic and progressive approach to studying children's literature was The Institute for Children's Reading (Institut po detskomu chteniiu or IDCh). The institute opened in 1920 under the directorship of Anna Pokrovskaia. Pokrovskaia, born in 1878, had been arrested and exiled before the revolution and mixed in illegal Marxist circles before later following the Social Democrats. She had links to the circle of Alexandra Kalmykova, a wealthy patron of the movement with interests in publishing and children's literature, although Pokrovskaia held a more liberal approach than

[636] Ella Winter, *And Not to Yield: An Autobiography* (London: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1963), pp.154-156, pp.158-159.

[637] Ella Winter, *Red Virtue: Human Relationships in the New Russia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933), pp.237-238.

[638] Ibid., pp.239-240.

the extreme left members of the group.[639] During the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s, Pokrovskaia worked in free libraries for workers in both Nizhnii Novgorod and Saint Petersburg.[640]

In 1911, Pokrovskaia created a special children's department at the Griboedov library in St Petersburg, with the intention that even street children should have access to good quality books. At the library she formed a storytelling circle, which employed narrators to read to children and then record their reactions using a detailed printed questionnaire. The aim of this exercise was to objectively research children's literature from the perspective of the young reader and by 1913, Pokrovskaia's department was working with Moscow University, which ran courses on children's reading and the children's library.[641] At around this time Pokrovskaia and her then husband, Aleksandr Pokrovskii, who was also a librarian, travelled to Germany to study the organisation of children's libraries. In 1919 the couple re-organised the storytelling circle into the Commission for Children's Reading, so that the work could be adapted for children growing up under the new Soviet conditions.[642]

The Institute for Children's Reading emerged a year later and Pokrovskaia moved with her new venture to Moscow. The Institute inhabited an old building on Malyi Uspenskii Lane (now Sverchkov Lane), where Pokrovskaia lived on site, in a mezzanine room with a leaky roof. Her co-founders in the Narkompros approved enterprise were Nikolai Chekhov, a respected turn of the century expert on children's literature and Aleksandr Zelenko, a pedagogue and architect of school and library buildings. She was also joined by staff from the Griboedov library and assistants from the university, with notable personnel including Ol'ga Kapitsa, along with mathematician turned professional librarian Pavla Rubtsova.[643] Continuing the work begun at Griboedov, the institute was built around the experimental study of child readers and their interaction with children's books. There was a children's reading room where the observation sessions took place, a reading room for adults to study children's literature, a well-stocked library and an enquiries office. Materials gathered by the staff included records of children's reactions to books, notes on how children listened to books at the time of storytelling and children's own reviews of books. There were detailed protocols for the collection of material and typewritten copies were saved and bound in volumes by year, so that material was ready for use in future academic work.[644] By 1923, Pokrovskaia and her colleagues had built up enough material to

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[639] Arzamastseva, 'Podvizhniki detskogo chteniia' (2012), pp.13-14.

[640] Ibid., p.36.

[641] Ibid., p.14.

[642] Ibid., p.16.

[643] Ibid., pp.16-18.

[644] Ibid., p.18, p.21.

release an annual bulletin containing articles about their research. *Novye detskie knigi* (*New Children's Books*) featured book reviews, topical discussion and reports based upon the results of the experiments in the reading room. There were two editions in 1923, single editions in 1924, 1926 and 1928, while a sixth edition was put together but never published.[645] Along with the bulletin, members of the institute regularly contributed pieces to pedagogical journals and published standalone pamphlets on various aspects of children's books and reading.

In 1923, Narkompros merged the institute with two other pedagogical establishments to form the Institute for the Methods of Extra-curricular Work (Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institute metodov vneshkol'noi raboty or IMVR). Pokrovskaia's section became known as the Department for Children's Reading (Otdel detskogo chteniia or ODCh IMVR) and the greatest part of the department's work centred on the Commission for Children's Literature. The commission was headed by Rubtsova and wrote lists of recommended books, replenished the stock of children's libraries and continued to assess children's literature in an objective fashion. To evaluate the illustration of children's books, the commission engaged Ivan Efimov and his wife Nina, who were artists and professional puppeteers.[646]

By the mid-1920s, the independent ethos of the institute was threatened by the dominance of the leftist pedagogues. The drive towards developing materialist thought in pre-school children, as well as the attacks on the *skazka* and anthropomorphism, were just symptoms of a wider political situation which made the Department for Children's Reading especially vulnerable. The GUS Commission on Children's Books and the appearance of *Kniga detiam*, overshadowed the bibliographic and publishing activities of the institute with their powerful presence, as they advocated a strict ideological viewpoint which contrasted to the careful analytical work of Pokrovskaia and her staff.[647] By the end of the decade, the institute's researchers had been forced to marginalise their work on reader observation and move towards simple recommendatory work, in line with the centralisation of the publishing trade and the drive to create an officially sanctioned Soviet children's literature. At the end of 1930, the Institute for the Methods of Extra-curricular Work was closed after criticism from Narkompros and GUS, who objected to its apolitical stance and the narrow scientific view of its work.[648] This ideologically tinged judgement of the institute's work lingered for many years, as Lidia Kon demonstrated in her history of early Soviet children's literature, which was written during the 1950s. Kon argued that the institute was admirable for being the first scientific-pedagogical base for Soviet children's literature and praised its workers for being well qualified and dedicated to children.

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645 Ibid., p.24.

646 Ibid. pp.24-25.

647 Ibid., pp.25-26.

648 Ibid., p.31, p.33.

The problem lay in the fact that they knew the world of the "former child reader" better than the new Soviet upbringing and this: "prevented them from giving a correct theoretical summary of the rich material that they had collected."[649]

The contemporary historian can now enjoy a more detached view of the institute's work and this allows us to see that whilst it only existed for a short period of time, its mission was genuinely pioneering. Documents that have survived from the 1920s give us a vivid picture of the work undertaken by these unique specialists in children's literature. Perhaps even more importantly, they give us rare insights into the way that children of the period responded to some of the books that were being published and these impressions are fascinating, even if we consider that they were recorded through adult intermediaries. Much of the institute's work was related to older children but considerable effort was also dedicated to pre-school books and their readers.

The work with pre-school literature began on a simple level, with members of staff writing short reviews of the latest picture books, which were then kept on file for reference. In a collection of reviews dating from 1926 to 1929, the institute's reviewers showed a characteristically objective approach and as would be expected, held a higher opinion of some picture books over others. Petrovskii's *Kisevna i kotiata* was praised for its realistic content, simple language and the fact that it discussed animals and their lives, subject matter which was considered appealing to children. Nikolai Chukovskii's *Nasha kukhniia* was counted as a good book for its jolly poem, bright colours and pleasant appearance. A text which fell foul of the reviewers was *Len* (*Flax*) by Mikhail Andreev, a short poem about how flax is grown and turned into linen. The book was deemed to be cheap and insignificant, with its only achievement being the use of bright colours. Other picture books were given a mixed verdict, including Barto's *Pionery*. The reviewer of found the story to be simple, prosaic and written in bad poetry with thoughtless rhythm, however the book was thought to be redeemed by good, lively illustrations. Ionov and Tsekhanovskii's *Topotun i knizhka* seemed to illicit sheer confusion, with the reviewer explaining that the pictures gave the mood of typographical reproduction but pointing out that none of the human characters had faces, with even the main character Tolia lacking eyes, mouth and nose.[650]

The most interesting responses to picture books of the period came from the children themselves and these interactions were recorded by institute workers in the children's reading

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[649] Lidia Kon, *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (Moscow: Detgiz, 1955), pp.16-17.
[650] Mikhail Andreev, *Len*, ill. N. Goft (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926); Barto, *Pionery* (1926); Chukovskii, *Nasha kukhniia* (1925); Ionov, *Topotun i knizhka*, (1926); Petrovskii, *Kisevna i kotiata* (1928); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, ll.3-4.

room, where sessions were held regularly for children of different ages. In 1928, pre-school children came three times a week at three o'clock in the afternoon, with an average attendance of twenty to twenty five children for each session. School age children were hosted five times a week at 5 o'clock, with fifty to sixty children attending each time and around 150 books issued on the average day. There were also twenty storytelling hours each month, with two every week for preschool children and three for school children in different age groups.[651] A report dating from the late 1920s gives us more detail about what happened during reading room sessions for pre-school children and the type of children who attended. The author began by explaining the reading material which was chosen for the work, with picture books and the study of illustration considered to be essential. In terms of group storytelling, the author acknowledged that stories made up by the adult leading the session were generally the best thing for small children but to achieve a more objective analysis, it was necessary to use published material which included poems, *skazki*, riddles and fables. The report outlined several methods used to record children's responses to a book, beginning with notetaking according to set protocols on the way children listened to a story or reacted to a book. Observations were also made on the influence of books upon children's activities, looking at how stories appeared in conversations, games, roleplays or drawings. In addition to this, staff engaged the children in conversations about illustrations and kept statistical information on how many times a book was taken or how many times the children asked for a story to be repeated. The report looked at information gathered from eighty children, thirty eight of whom were of a young age. Both genders were represented almost equally, with forty four boys taking part and thirty six girls. Demonstrating the thorough academic approach of the institute, the psychological development of the children was assessed according to set levels and the social backgrounds of the children were recorded. In this particular group, most were from working class homes and considered to be living in satisfactory material conditions, with the majority sleeping in a separate bed. The author believed that the parents did not give the children enough attention and explained that most of the children did not have any of their own books or toys.[652]

On the basis of this methodology, the report went on to look at the reactions of the children to a selection of *skazki*. The children brought from home a familiarity with well-known nursery rhymes and could also recite couplets from popular poems including Hoffmann's *Stepka-Rastrepka*, Chukovskii's *Chudo derevo* and Marshak's *Knizhka pro knizhki*. The author of the report commented on how they liked to play with words and cited Chukovskii's compilation of poems *Piatdesiat porosiat* as being satisfying for younger children, who liked to recount the

[651] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 130, l.32.

[652] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 128, l.1.

animal characters and repeat their noises.[653] The children's reactions to Marshak and Lebedev's *skazka*, *O glupom myshenke*, were described in some detail. In the story, a little mouse cannot fall asleep to his mother's singing and so asks for a nanny. A duck is too loud, a frog is not satisfactory, a pig sings too stupidly, a horse makes a frightful noise and a pike is too quiet. The final babysitter is a cat, who sings very sweetly but when the mother mouse returns, her baby is gone from his bed and nowhere to be found.[654] The report describes how the children loved to listen and look at the book, finding particular fascination in the fact that the cat is wearing a pink dress. (Figure 5.2) One little girl asked why the cat had clothes on, explaining that her own cat at home did not wear a dress. The children were also very confused by the ending of the book and its intended meaning eluded them completely. They did not understand why the baby mouse could not be seen on the final page, with one child suggesting that it was sleeping, another believing that it had not been drawn and a third thinking that it had simply gone away. It is stated that none of the children guessed that the mouse had been eaten and only realised this after some consideration.[655]

Figure 5.2: Vladimir Lebedev, illustration for *About the Stupid Mouse* by Samuil Marshak (1928).

[653] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 128, ll.8-9.

[654] Marshak, *O glupom myshenke* (1928).

[655] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 128, l.13.

The files kept by the institute also included direct transcripts from the reading room, which were presumably used in compiling reports and articles. One revealing dialogue recorded in March 1925, featured a group of seven year olds looking at Chukovskii's *Barmalei*. One little boy was inspired by the opening lines of the poem, which dramatically warn children not to go to Africa as it is incredibly dangerous. He was heard repeating to himself: "I'm not going to go. I do not know where Africa is." Two other boys started a conversation about the pirate in the story, with the first asking the other, "Do you feel sorry for Barmalei?" His friend replied by passing strict moral judgement on the character saying, "No, I don't like evil people." The boys were then joined by a little girl, who pointed at the picture of Barmalei in his red neckerchief and revealed her experience of Soviet upbringing by stating that, "He has a Pioneer's tie." Most of all, the children enjoyed the humour in the poem and laughed at the silliest and most grotesque parts. They were amused by Doctor Aibolit arriving in the aeroplane and laughed even more at the part where the doctor is thrown on the bonfire and cries: "Ouch it hurts, ouch it hurts." The verse in which Barmalei is swallowed whole by Krokodil evoked further laughter. When the children went back to the beginning and read the book again, they laughed at exactly the same places in the text.[656]

A series of dialogues from 1927 about individual books, revealed children's reactions to various picture books on everyday themes and demonstrated that young readers used these books to affirm their own experiences of the world. A pair of books by Lev Zilov entitled *Gorodskaia ulitsa* (*City Street*) and *Derevenskaia ulitsa* (*Village Street*), which had lively figurative illustrations by Aleksandra Soborova, proved to be interesting and accessible for the children.[657] In *Gorodskaia ulitsa*, the children were captivated by a page which featured a busy city crossroads, where a policeman has stopped the trams to let the pedestrians cross the street. They observed that the policeman was like the ones that they had seen around Moscow and they deduced from the illustration that the pedestrians could not work out how to cross the road and so asked the policeman for help.[658] A different group of children looking at the same page in the book were inspired to create a role play game, in which they rearranged the furniture in the reading room to make their own tram. Benches became the tram rails, chairs became the tram seats and the children played at handing out tickets and getting on and off the vehicle.[659] In *Derevenskaia ulitsa*, the children enjoyed looking at an illustration of a cat grooming her kittens. This brought up a discussion about their own pets, with one little girl explaining how her family

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[656] Chukovskii, *Barmalei* (1925); RAO f.5, op.1, d.48, l.37.

[657] Lev Zilov, *Derevenskaia ulitsa*, ill. Aleksandra Soborova (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1927); Lev Zilov, *Gorodskaia ulitsa*, ill. Aleksandra Soborova (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1927).

[658] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 142, l.14.

[659] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 142, l.15.

kept a cat to catch mice.[660] Mirovich's *Nash zavtrak* was read by a group of children from a kindergarten who were visiting the reading room. On looking at the page where the story book kindergarten children feed the sparrows on the windowsill with leftover crumbs, one of the real life kindergarten pupils reflected that: "We don't feed the sparrows. We don't have any crumbs left."[661] Another dialogue featured two boys named Shurik and Boria, who were looking at Marshak and Lebedev's *Tsirk*. The minimalist style of the pictures with their white background gave Shurik the impression that, "Nobody is at the circus." The two boys then argued about who should get to have the book and Shurik hit Boria on the arm.[662]

Sometimes the material from the reading room was used in book reviews which summarised the success of a particular text when used with children. One set of these reviews looked particularly at children's responses to production picture books, which largely failed to inspire children with the desired enthusiasm for the modern world. *Vintik-Shpuntik* (*Rabbet-Screw*) by Nikolai Agnivstev was considered to be one of the children's favourite production books. The poem featured an anthropomorphic screw who works in a factory but goes on strike because he is not treated properly, so production grinds to a halt. Children visiting the reading room found the rhythm of the poem satisfying and enjoyed repeating the sounds, which demonstrated the repetitive movements of a factory. They also loved the little screw as the hero of the story but the production theme was apparently not clear to children, as all they understood about the pictures was that they showed a lot of machinery.[663] Production books written by Marshak and Lebedev found varying degrees of success with young readers. *Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok* (*How the Plane Made a Plane*) described in verse how an old plane had to retire from duty and its toolbox colleagues made a brand new one from a trunk of wood to replace it.[664] The children visiting the institute liked looking at the book, listened willingly to the text, repeated lines from the poem and understood the premise of the plot.[665] *Vchera i segodniia* did not fare so well. Overall interest in the book was weak and the pictures did not satisfy children, apart from the illustration of the bath and shower, which generated a lot of conversations. (Figure 2.16) The reviewer's conclusion was that: "Not even the oldest preschool children understand this book."[666]

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[660] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 142, l.20.

[661] Mirovich, *Nash zavtrak* (1926); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 142, l.26.

[662] Marshak, *Tsirk* (1925); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 142, l.26.

[663] Nikolai Agnivstev, *Vintik-Shpuntik*, ill. Vasilii Tvardovskii (Leningrad: Raduga, 1926); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.40.

[664] Samuil Marshak, *Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927).

[665] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.46.

[666] Marshak, Vchera i segodniia (1925); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.41.

Port was a poem by Semen Polotskii, with polished 'new Soviet picture book' style illustrations by Eduard Krimmer. It described how goods arrived by ship from foreign countries and showed the various pieces of equipment used to unload them onto the docks.[667] The slick design did not impress the reading room children at all, as the only illustrations that interested them were those of zoo animals from Africa being unloaded and a mouse stealing some spilt grain. The institute staff thought that the text was hard to understand and considered the book to be quite inaccessible for pre-schoolers.[668] The most scathing reports of all were saved for the Constructivist production books created by Smirnov and the Chicagova sisters. *Puteshestvie Charli* was mostly read by boys of an older age and usually put back by girls and young children. The reviewer found the text to be difficult, with some words that were not understandable and the contents were judged to be uninteresting.[669] *Detiam o gazete* was bluntly described as "undesirable", due to its incomprehensible pictures and inaccessible contents, which meant that it was hardly ever picked by pre-school children.[670]

The institute extended their work into the wider community by offering educational visits for adults on themes related to children's books, libraries and reading. This demonstrated the ambition of Pokrovskaia and her staff and the sincerity of their belief that the methodology which they had developed for studying children's reading, could be useful in a broad range of educational institutions. During 1928, the excursions were held at three o'clock in the afternoon and lasted for four hours. Visitors could choose between a general excursion which outlined the activities of the department or one which focussed on a specific area of work. Specialised excursion themes included storytelling, the research work of the department, work with pre-school children, the illustration of the children's book and methods of pedagogical work on the book. The agenda for the excursion on work with pre-schoolers included information on the particularities of the age group, methods for studying the reading interests of very young children and a demonstration of current pre-school literature. Those attending the institute for a session on illustration would be introduced to the main themes of the picture book which were listed as the city, the village, production, nature and animals, along with local history and folklore. The itinerary also included an introduction to the history of children's book illustration, going back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Russia and the West. Finally, attendees would learn about techniques of reproducing drawings, from engraving on wood and metal, through to lithography and photo-mechanical methods. The institute also held excursions for older children and teenagers who were involved with library work at schools and clubs. They could learn how to

[667] Semen Polotskii, *Port*, ill. Eduard Krimmer (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926).

[668] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.55.

[669] Smirnov, *Puteshestvie Charli* (1924); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.55.

[670] Smirnov, *Detiam o gazete* (1926); RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.42.

build a library through a visit which advised them on how to purchase and catalogue books. Other excursion topics for this audience included statistical work with the book, the analysis of readers' interests and the issue of attracting readers to a library through exhibitions, posters and storytelling sessions.[671]

We can only speculate on how much further the work of the institute might have developed if it had not been formed during such ideologically turbulent times. We can however, be certain that its dedication to children and their books demonstrated a genuine concern for the education and upbringing of a generation who were experiencing a childhood unlike any that had been lived through before. Pokrovskaia and her staff saw objectivity and consistency as vital in their attempts to guide children's literature through a difficult period and whilst this met with great disapproval from the Soviet establishment, the traces of their work which have survived offer a rare and authentic glimpse of how picture books were received by their young readers. The natural, spontaneous and uninhibited responses of the reading room pre-schoolers are not only entertaining but confirm that the Soviet educational establishment reacted harshly to the institute for a reason. Unless they could have persuaded five year olds that the technicalities of factory production really were interesting and that a cannibal pirate throwing people on a fire was not amusing, then perhaps modelling the 'new Soviet man' was never as straightforward as they had envisaged.

What is Good and What is Bad?

The complexity of the picture book in the early Soviet setting reveals itself most clearly when we look at books which aimed to give children a moral and social education. Across time periods and places, early childhood literature and storytelling have been used to teach young children how to behave. The basic social code needed to flourish in any given society will be found in its folk tales or picture books, through the description of what constitutes good manners or the exemplification of personal qualities which are valued in a population. Stories also carry messages about how to keep safe and often carry harsh warnings about what will happen if these rules are broken. All of these things were found in Soviet picture books during the 1920s and early 1930s but they were present alongside another set of social conditions, which were highly specific to the socialist culture that was being formed at the time. We will now look at picture books which addressed both of these educational tasks, in order to discover both the universal and uniquely Soviet behavioural codes which young children were being encouraged to follow.

[671] RAO f.5, op.1, d. 130, ll.1-4.

By the 1920s, learning how to wash and keep clean had long been a key part of pre-school upbringing in developed societies. We have already seen how hygiene was embedded in the Soviet kindergarten routine as part of a drive to create a modern, rational childhood and mould healthy young citizens. However, picture books on the theme of hygiene were not all purely didactic. Some authors placed the message in an informal domestic setting with young characters that children could easily relate to, so that the stories became humorous and entertaining. The most well-known was Chukovskii's *Moidodyr*, an epic *skazka* about a dirty boy who refused to wash but learned the error of his ways when he was terrorised by a talking washstand.[672] Other writers did not achieve Chukovskii's great level of commercial success with their hygiene tales but nonetheless produced some successful books on the topic. Fedorchenko wrote two separate poems about dirty little boys who could not or would not be cleaned. *Samyi griaznyi* (*The Dirtiest*) is a poem about Vania, who is so dirty that the house committee meet to decide how to clean him up. They put him in the bathtub and he clogs up the drain and so they take him to the *bania* (bath house), where his dirt goes all over the walls. Then they decide to bathe him in the river but he is so filthy that he muddies the water and makes the riverbank dirty too. A trip to the sea fails and the poem concludes that there are not even enough waves in a great ocean to clean this dirty boy.[673] The lead character in *Pro Dzhana* (*About Jana*) offers greater hope for the redemption of dirty children, in a poem which combines its definite moral with some interesting facts about exotic wild animals. Dzhana is a little boy who lives with his mother an unspecified jungle location, presumably intended to be somewhere in Africa. She washes him in a tub with sand and clay instead of soap and Dzhana finds the process so painful that he runs away and decides never to return home. Instead he will live with the animals who are good and kind as they do not wash their babies. He stops for a rest and sees a mouse washing her young by licking them with her tongue. Dzhana thinks this is just a strange episode until he sees an elephant hosing down her baby and some wild pigs taking their piglets to the river to wash. The little boy becomes distressed that the animals are neat and tidy, while he is very messy and so he returns home to his mother, who is pleased to see him and feeds him three bananas for supper.[674]

Children who refused to wash were entertaining, as this behaviour was considered audaciously unacceptable in modern society. However, equally in need of correction were children who would not stop crying. Agniia and Pavel Barto addressed this issue in their poem *Devochka-revushka* (*Cry Baby*). Little Gania cries all the time and can be heard from a long way

[672] Chukovskii, *Moidodyr* (1923).

[673] Sof'ia Fedorchenko, *Samyi griaznyi*, ill. Tat'iana Shevchenko and A. Petrova (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Pravda", 1930).

[674] Sof'ia Fedorchenko, *Pro Dzhana,* ill. M. Granavtseva (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

away. She cries when she is put out to play in the garden and then wails again when she has to come back inside. She howls when she is given a cup of milk to drink because she would rather have tea. She cries when she is put to bed for the night because she would prefer to get dressed again. The locals gather to find out who is crying all the time and they find Gania in the back yard, wailing and with her nose as red as a beetroot. The last line of the poem offers the cautionary advice that if Gania continues to cry, then she will become damp enough for mould to grow on her.[675] Gania displays behaviour typical of a toddler and small readers would have found this easy to identify with. The character is gently mocked for her silly behaviour in both the exaggerated language of the poem and the dramatic facial expressions shown in the figurative illustrations. (Figure 5.3) These things make it perfectly clear that although this behaviour is part of growing up, it is ultimately undesirable if one wishes to fit smoothly into human society.

Figure 5.3: Leonid Feinberg, illustrations for *Cry Baby* by Agniia and Pavel Barto (1930).

Another tough childhood lesson to learn was the importance of sharing and Rashel' Engel' tackled this topic in her clever story *Iabloko* (*The Apple*). Two little boys, Sergun'ka and Funtik, go into the garden one morning and see a ripe pink apple hanging from a tree. They argue about who saw the apple first and therefore who gets to have it, which ends in a fist fight. They can't decide who won the fight and so have a running race, which also ends indecisively. They fetch Til'ka the dog from a neighbour's yard, so that she can decide who gets the fruit but this fails too when Til'ka is called in for her dinner. The boys return to the garden and the apple is

[675] Barto and Barto, *Devochka-revushka* (1930).

gone, as it has been eaten by a little girl named Marusen'ka. The implicit moral of the story is that fighting is not a useful way to resolve a conflict and that neither of the opposing parties will get what they want.[676]

Badly behaved picture book children sometimes caused events which were much more serious than losing a rosy apple. In Marshak's *Pozhar*, little Lena ends up in grave danger when she plays with the stove while her mother is out shopping, despite very strict instructions to leave it alone. She opens the door and sparks fly out and land on the floor, setting the room on fire. The flames go higher, the cat escapes onto the roof and people in the neighbouring apartments begin throwing their belongings out of the windows. The frightening tale has a happy ending when the fire brigade dash across town to put the fire out. Their heroism is personified in the brave senior fireman Kuz'ma, who has been in the brigade for twenty years, saved forty lives and fallen from the roof ten times. Kuz'ma saves Lena's cat from the roof and generously placates the weeping girl by promising that they will build her a new home.[677] Marshak's story seriously castigates disobedient children but provides reassurance there are adults who will get them out of trouble if necessary.

Sof'ia Zak also covered the theme of grown-ups who take care of children when they have done something inadvisable. Her poem *Boria v ambulatorii* (*Boria at the Polyclinic*) tells us about a little boy who has eaten bad ice cream from a street vendor, given himself a tummy ache and ends up having to visit the doctor. His mother takes him to the clinic and he is very scared, so the poem carefully explains what happens when he gets there. A lady in a white coat takes his details and Boria and his mother join the other people in the waiting room. He is called in to see the doctor, who begins to examine him but Boria escapes into the waiting room without his shirt on, only to be caught and returned by a friendly nurse. The kindly doctor laughs and sends Boria home with some medicine. The little boy falls into a dreamless sleep, feels better the next day and he is no longer afraid of going to the clinic.[678] The book addresses a very typical childhood fear and gently educates children, firstly to avoid badly stored ice cream but mainly not to shy away from those adults who are there to help them.

Picture books that taught children every day common sense and good behaviour were obviously useful to parents and contained messages that would still resonate with small children today. However, they were also joined on the bookshelf by titles which contained moral imperatives that had unique significance for children living in the Soviet Union. The leading writer of such texts was Maiakovskii, who amongst his poems for children, penned several picture

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[676] Rashel' Engel', *Iabloko*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[677] Samuil Marshak, *Pozhar,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925).

[678] Sof'ia Zak, *Boria v ambulatorii*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928).

books offering direct social instruction.[679] In her Soviet era analysis of Maiakovskii's books for children, Kon described him as: "the authentic forefather of the new poetry for children." She explained how Maiakovskii was the first to speak in an authentic Party voice with little children and how he made it his role to acquaint them with Soviet reality.[680] Furthermore, Kon outlined how the poet set out the desired traits of the Soviet child, who would in future become a good communist.[681] Writing without ideological obligation, American scholar Sokol explained this more succinctly. She argued that in the post-revolutionary period, Maiakovskii as a children's poet was: "above all an ideological propagandist for the new Soviet state." Sokol also suggested that Maiakovskii held a negative attitude to childhood and therefore emphasised growing up, with his work advocating the idea that: "Things in childhood are good only if they are useful for an adult's future life. [682]

The characteristics identified by these scholars are found in abundance in Maiakovskii's picture books, no matter which ideological interpretation one chooses to see them through. One of his earliest was *Skazka o Pete tolstom rebenke i o Sime kotoryi tonkii* (*Skazka About Petia the Fat Boy and Sima Who Was Thin*). The piece is written in the traditional long *skazka* format and contrasts the worthy Sima, son a proletarian blacksmith, with the glutinous Petia, son of a bourgeois Nepman. In a plot which bears similarities to Marshak's *Morozhenoe*, Petia eats so much that he eventually explodes and the workers' children feast on all of the delicacies that have been expelled from his bloated stomach.[683] There were also shorter poems which would have been more accessible for younger pre-school children and these were clearly related in form to the agitational slogans written by Maiakovskii for the ROSTA windows and the Mosselprom advertisements. The verse was formed in short sections and closely linked to the illustrations, which were compatible in style with the laconic character of the text. *Chto takoe khorosho i chto takoe plokho?* (*What is Good and What is Bad?*) features drawings by Maiakovskii himself and tells us about a little boy who asks his father the question posed in the title of the book. The father explains some important rules of conduct and bad behaviour is shown in a black font on the left hand side of each double spread, while good behaviour is written about in red on the right hand side. We learn that it is bad for skin to be dirty and that the boy who loves soap and tooth powder is sweet and good. We also learn that virtuous boys study hard and do not treat their

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[679] For analysis of the wider body of Mayakovsky's poetry for children see Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.307-310; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.152-166.

[680] Kon, *Sovetskaia detskaia literature vosstanovitel'nogo perioda* (1955), p.69.

[681] Ibid., pp.71-72.

[682] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.152-153.

[683] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Skazka o Pete tolstom rebenke i o sime kotoryi tonkii*, ill. N. Kupreianov (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1925).

books badly. Bravery is demonstrated by an image of a giant crow, which the cowardly child runs away from but the brave boy stays to fight all by himself.[684]

Guliaem (*Strolling*) employs similar stark contrasts of good and bad behaviour, showing us the people to be seen on a daily walk through an urban area. The Red Army soldier is brave as he defends everybody and the uncle working in the Moscow Soviet is good, as he is making sure that children have a happy life. The old ladies who gather outside the church in the morning are stupid as they think that a picture of God will help them, however the members of the Komsomol club are clever as they do not need to pray to build a future for themselves. A bourgeois who is fat like a ball cannot do anything, as even a sparrow is more intelligent than him and the woman shown powdering her nose is a bad mother, as she does nothing all day and has a windmill instead of a tongue from gossiping too much. Even animals are judged in socialist human terms as a cat wearing a red bow is respected for keeping himself clean but a dog in its kennel is not good as he is dirty.[685] It is impossible to know whether children would have understood these very political messages or just laughed at the silly caricatures shown in the drawings but the fact that they were published at all, indicates a genuine attempt to introduce very young children to serious Soviet values.

One of the most important qualities for a Soviet citizen was to embrace hard work in order to build communism and many picture books tackled the social scourge of laziness. *Pro lentiaia Ivanycha* (*About the Lazybones Ivanych*) by Agniia Barto and P. Arbatov shows a boy living in a children's home who refuses to get up. While the other boys go out to play and dig in the garden, Ivanych just turns over to the other side and begins to snore. The power of the collective convinces him to mend his ways when the boys begin a game of Red Army soldiers and the lazybones realises that he wants to join the team. The message is reinforced by illustrator G. Din, who uses different illustrative styles for the two sets of boys. Ivanych is drawn on a brown background in an old fashioned hand-drawn style, while the other children are pictured in a clean, modern style on a cheerful bright yellow background.[686] In Vera Il'ina's *Gudok* (*The Whistle*), children are taught a respect for the adult world of work and they learn how a strict daily routine for all workers keeps society functioning. Lazy young Stepa loves to sleep and hates the noisy factory whistle that wakes him up in the morning. He vows to block it up and sets off with his pillow under his arm. Arriving at the factory, he bravely climbs the stairs of the tall chimney and stuffs his pillow inside it, so that the whistle is silenced. Things take a turn for the worse

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[684] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Chto takoe khorosho i chto takoe plokho?* (Leningrad: Rabochee izdatelstvo "Priboi", 1925).

[685] Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Guliaem*, ill. Irina Sunderland (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2018).

[686] Agniia Barto and P. Arbatov, *Pro lentiaia Ivanycha*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930).

when his father fails to come home for dinner because the whistle never blew. Stepa dashes back to the factory to pull the pillow out and tumbles down from the chimney before he awakes to the voice of his mother and realises that it was all a dream. The little boy has learned new respect for the whistle which calls people to work in the morning and lets them get home on time for supper.[687] (Figure 5.4)

As with the Maiakovskii books, we will never know how successful this form of ideological education was and whether children found the stories appealing regardless of their content. Whilst we do not know very much about the reception of the texts, they tell us a great deal about the ambitions of the society in which they were created. In common with most cultures, early Soviet picture books taught children how to behave nicely and avoid getting into trouble. More specifically, moral education in Soviet picture books also included a knowledge of class war, atheism, being unusually brave and working hard as part of a rapidly industrialising workforce. These great educational expectations were being placed on very small shoulders, which in turn reveals the high hopes that were being held for the future of Soviet Russia.

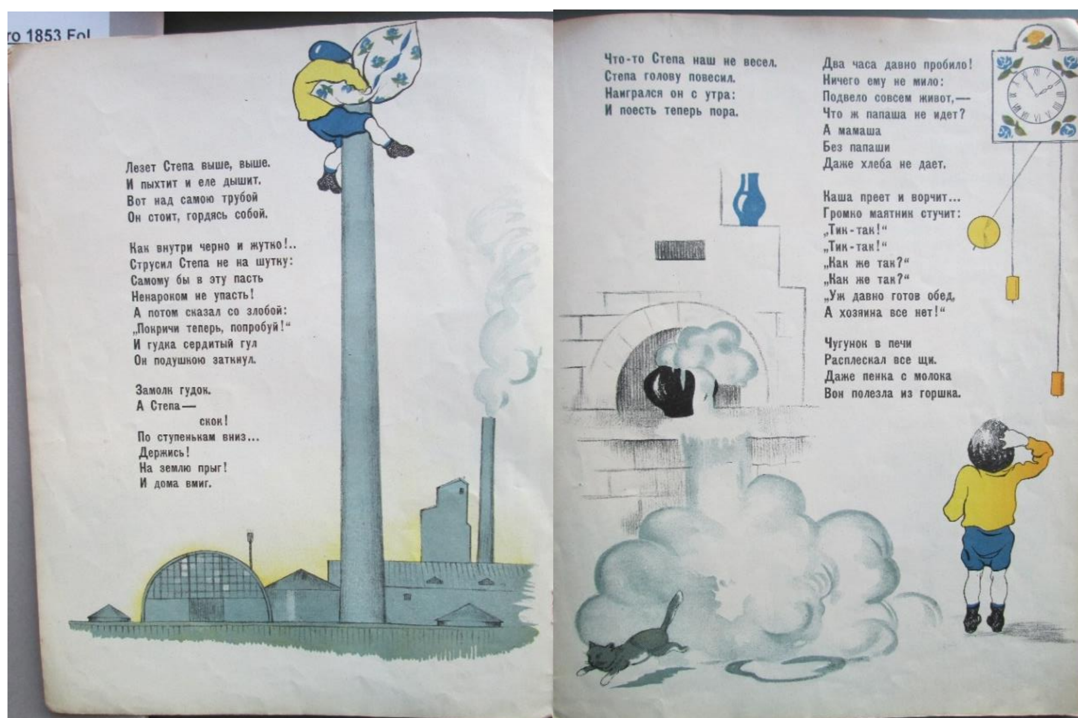

Figure 5.4: Vysheslavtsev, illustrations for *The Whistle* by Vera Il'ina (1930).

[687] Vera Il'ina, *Gudok*, ill. Vysheslavtsev (Moscow: Zemliia i fabrika, c.1930).

Make and Do Books

Little builders of communism needed practical as well as moral knowledge to bring forth the planned future and for pre-school children, simple art and craft was an excellent starting point. There were many picture books which contained projects for children to make or do at home. The teaching of elementary art techniques began with straightforward colouring books. Mariia Rakhmanina's *Tri kraski* (*Three Colours*) had a coloured image on the left hand side of each spread, with an identical black and white outline image for the child to colour on the opposite side. The first three spreads focused on single colours, with images including a lemon to be tinted yellow, cherries to turn red and a cucumber to render in green. Once the child had mastered the basic shades there were two spreads with multi-coloured images to create, including a fruit bowl and a bouquet of flowers.[688] Lebedev incorporated both colouring and drawing skills in his book *Kras'i risui* (*Paint and Draw*), which was intended for five to seven year olds. On the left hand page of each spread was an image of a different breed of horse, printed in full colour but against a blank white background. On each right hand page was a plain coloured background, with an empty white silhouette of the same horse. The child was instructed to draw a background for the ready-coloured horses and to colour in the plain white horse in any colour they chose.[689]

Picture books also introduced more complicated art skills and some of these books, as with the books on moral education, incorporated elements of socialist culture into the development of generic skills. *Ia pechatnik* (*I Am a Printer*) by Konstantin Kuznetsov and Ekaterina Zonnenshtral', introduced children to basic printing techniques so that they could produce their own posters, wall newspapers and illustrations for self-made books. The book was aimed at four and five year olds who with the help of an adult, would learn to make potato prints, which were considered by the authors to be a good introduction to woodcut and linocut. Slices of potato one centimetre thick were to be cut and then formed into shapes or lettering, using homemade chisels made from a sliced up food can. The printing blocks were then covered in inks or watercolour paints and used to imprint patterns and images on either plain paper or newsprint. Suggested images included repeating patterns, human figures, ships, locomotives and tractors.[690] Practical research conducted for this thesis, which re-created the process given in the book, indicated that whilst the finished results were fairly good, the activity may have been more

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[688] Mariia Rakhmanina, *Tri kraski* (Moscow and Leningrad: Raduga, 1929).

[689] Vladimir Ledédev, *Kras' i risui* (Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

[690] Konstantin Kuznetsov and Ekaterina Zonnenshtral', *Ia pechatnik* (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

suitable for an older age group than that indicated by the authors. (Figures 5.5 - 5.8) Creating and using food can chisels with sharp metal edges would have been incredibly dangerous for small fingers. The printing process was also rather fiddly and manipulating thin slices of potato coated in slippery paint, would have been quite frustrating for little children. There was also the question of equipment and resources. Given the scarcity of even basic drawing materials in most kindergartens, it is unlikely that a supply of paint would have been available for the project. Moreover, there would not have been many homes or kindergartens able to spare potatoes for art lessons, during a time when this basic food was often a precious commodity.

Figures 5:6 and 5:7: Konstantin Kuznetsov and Ekaterina Zonnenshtral', illustrations for *I Am a Printer* (1932).

Figures 5.7 and 5.8: Printed images created from Kuznetsov and Zonnenshtral''s *I Am a Printer*.

Despite the limited availability of conventional art materials and the potential squandering of food supplies, picture books that promoted art and craft skills could nonetheless help to plug a gap in family resources. During the 1920s and early 1930s, few commercially produced toys were available due to a lack of state production in this area. During the NEP

period, toys could be purchased from private vendors but were often expensive, meaning that children generally possessed few playthings.[691] Books that showed children how to make their own toys offered a solution to the scarcity and were the most common type of craft book on offer at this time. The simplest books contained paper toys, which were cut out from the pages of the book itself and therefore required no further materials. The projects offered were varied and began with simple ideas like the mix and match book. Samokhvalov's *Foma peremenchivyi* (*Fickle Foma*) had ten pages featuring the faces of different characters. Across the centre of each page was a dotted line to cut along and then the faces could be mixed up to make funny new people. A woman in a headscarf could be given a fireman's hat or a well-dressed man in a suit could be given a bushy beard. There were many different combinations, making the book into an enjoyable game that could be played with many times.[692] *Iz bumagi bez kleia* (*From Paper Without Glue*) by Ermolaeva and Lev Iudin, provided templates for stand-up three-dimensional figures, which could be assembled and used as toys. The flat shapes were to be cut and folded in certain places and resulted in little people pushing barrows, a horse pulling a cart and two children riding a pony.[693] Aleksandr Gromov designed a simple puzzle that would have occupied a child for a decent length of time. *Golovolomka petukh* (*Puzzle Rooster*) featured a black square on the inside cover, which was to be cut into eight pieces along set lines. The rest of the book simply showed twenty six silhouetted shapes that could be created with the pieces and the challenge was to work out how to re-arrange them to form the images.[694]

Homemade toys could also be created cheaply from discarded household objects. *Igrushki kartoshki* (*Potato Toys*) by A. Fedulov showed children how to make toy figures from potatoes, supplemented by used matchsticks, scraps of paper, ends of thread and pieces of cork. Ideas shown included a man driving a racing car, a man walking a dog, somebody riding a horse, a figure holding a fishing rod and a weightlifter with his dumbbells.[695] (Figure 5.9) The toys would have been easy to make and fun to play with but as with *Ia pechatnik*, there may have been an issue with using precious food supplies to make playthings. In this case however, it would at least have been possible to dismantle the toys after a few hours and put the potatoes in the soup pan.

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[691] Kelly, 'Shaping the "Future Race"' (2006), pp.268-269; Kelly, *Children's World* (2007), pp.443-444.

[692] Aleksandr Samokhvalov (ill.), *Foma peremenchivyi* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[693] Vera Ermolaeva and Lev Iudin, *Iz bumagi bez kleia* (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[694] Aleksandr Gromov, *Golovolomka petukh* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

[695] A. Fedulov, *Igrushki kartoshki* (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

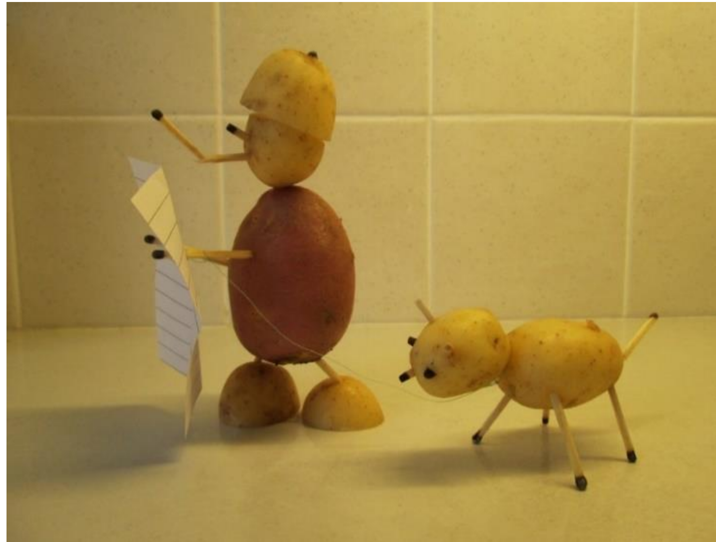

Figure 5.9: Potato figure created from Fedulov's *Potato Toys*.

Other homemade toy books offered similar ideas but had a broader educational purpose which went beyond pure entertainment. Author A. Abramov published several art and craft books which were themed around scientific or technological concepts. *Tsentr tiazhesti* (*The Centre of Gravity*) began with simple balancing tricks using a pencil and a penknife, to show how gravity holds objects in place or makes them fall over. It went on to explain how children could make cardboard cut-out vehicles, which were weighed down with a weighted plumb line formed from string and a series of cardboard circles glued together. The vehicles could then be sent down a wire to show how objects descend with gravity.[696] *Konveier* (*The Conveyor Belt*) outlined a group project using an origami balloon to teach children about how a production line worked, with the introduction to the book linking this to the large factories which were contributing to the industrialisation of the Soviet Union. Ten children were required to make the 'factory' and each would complete one stage in the folding process, before passing the balloon on to the next worker in the chain. It was stated that the finished balloons could be hung up to look like strings of lanterns to decorate the nursery for special occasions.[697]

Special mention should be given to those picture books which went beyond paper craft or junk modelling and encouraged children to take on a more complicated project. Ivan Efimov's *Ten: tenevoi teatr* (*The Shadow: Shadow Theatre*), taught children how to make shadow puppets and create a puppet show at home.[698] Efimov and his wife Nina were professional puppeteers, who worked a travelling puppet booth during the Civil War years and in 1918, opened the Theatre

[696] A. Abramov, *Tsentr tiazhesti*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931).

[697] A. Abramov, *Konveier*, ill. Aleksei Laptev (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1932).

[698] Ivan Efimov, *Ten: tenevoi teatr.* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

of Marionettes, Petrushkas and Shadows in Moscow.[699] The book gave a set of instructions at the beginning and then the shadow puppets were shown as illustrations to a story, which was to be used as the basis for the play. The puppets were to be traced from the illustrations and then cut out of cardboard. If the aspiring puppeteer was feeling very ambitious, then they could give the figures jointed limbs, which would be moved by strings. In the story, a peasant saves a merchant from drowning and is rewarded with a piece of gold. On his way home, he swaps the gold for a horse, the horse for an ox and so on, until all he has left is a sewing needle, which he loses in the yard when arrives. (Figures 5.10 and 5.11) Efimov's book was very beautiful, fully immersed in his art form and displayed a well thought out creative project but it showed no concern for socialist education. Published in 1929, when attacks on the *skazka* and the fairy tale were at their peak, the story for the puppet play bore a great similarity to a folktale named 'Barter', which could be found in the collection of renowned Russian folklorist Aleksandr Afanas'ev.[700] Moreover, in this tale the peasant is made to look very stupid, something which would have been out of tune with the drive towards modern, collective agriculture which was being pursued during this period. Furthermore, Efimov suggested that the screen for the theatre was made by nailing planks of wood across a doorway and hanging a sheet and blankets upon them. This would have caused chaos in the crowded communal apartments inhabited by most children at this time.

*Shimpanze i marty*shka (*Chimpanzee and Marmoset*), a small pamphlet by an unknown artist, offered a smaller scale but still ambitious project for the child who had some sewing skills and plenty of patience. The book gave pattern pieces and instructions to stitch small poseable toy monkeys using scraps of fabric. The animals were constructed from a wire frame, which was wrapped in strips of newspaper secured by lengths of thread. The frame was then covered by pieces of brown fabric, cut according to the pattern, which were stitched on to secure them in place. Hands and feet were made from small pieces of leather which were stitched onto the open ends of the wire frame. The mouth and nose were embroidered in red silk, the eyes were glass beads and the marmoset's hair was made from a clump of stuffing. The instructions were illustrated with diagrams of the process and these images were embellished with tiny monkeys,

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[699] John Milner, *A Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Artists*, 1420-1970 (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1993), p.130, p.399. For a detailed account of the Efimovs' puppetry work at this time see Nina Efimova (trans. Elena Mitcoff), *Adventures of a Russian Puppet Theatre* (Birmingham, MI: Puppetry Imprints, 1935).

[700] 'Barter' in Alexander Afanas'ev, (trans. Norbert Guterman), *Russian Fairy Tales* (London: Sheldon Press, 1976), pp.338-340.

who demonstrated the actions required at each stage.[701] (Figure 12) The book was not perfect, as the directions were not particularly thorough and the list of materials and equipment was incomplete - one major omission was any instruction about making the marmoset's ears. The construction process was also rather intricate and would have been very difficult for young children without the help of an adult or older child. However, the major strength of this project was that it created a pleasing toy from household odds and ends, which could be obtained for little or no cost. It probably did not matter that the end product was not especially robust, as the project was time consuming enough to keep a child busy for the whole of a rainy day, which was probably just as useful to busy parents as adding the finished item to the toybox.

A Day at the Zoo

Picture books that taught children art techniques or how to create their own toys, were sometimes focussed on developing basic skills but in other instances contained material which gave the projects an ideological focus. There were however, many picture books which contained no ideological meaning whatsoever in either the content of the text or the style of illustration. Of the 657 books studied for this project, 177 were completely devoid of politics. On her trip to the Soviet Union, Winter noted that whilst there were many picture books on contemporary political themes, there were also: "very charming picture books of animals, flowers, boats, circuses, which seem to have no visible connection with socialist construction."[702] Pre-school books were also filled with outlandish anthropomorphic creatures, forbidden fairy tale characters and outrageous nonsense verse which meandered far from strict pedagogical guidelines. A brief survey of some of the most striking titles will show us how imagination and joy prevailed, despite the fierce political climate of the period.

A trip to the zoo is one of the most beloved childhood excursions and early Soviet picture books covered this topic with great flair. The supreme illustrator of zoo books was Vasilii Vatagin, who earned a doctorate in zoology from Moscow University and subsequently forged a long career as a specialist animal artist. Vatagin worked in painting, sculpture and the graphic arts and he was well known for the many murals and standalone pieces which he created for the State Darwin Museum in Moscow. Before the revolution he was able to travel, visiting zoos in Europe to paint animals in 1907 and heading to India in 1913, for a sketching trip that would

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[701] Unkown author, *Shimpanze i marty*shka (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

[702] Winter, *Red Virtue* (1933), p.246.

Figure 5.10: Ivan Efimov, illustrations for *The Shadow* (1929).

Figure 5.11: Shadow puppet scene created from templates in Efimov's *The Shadow*.

Figure 5.12: Monkey figure created from *Chimpanzee and Marmoset*.

leave a lasting influence on his work.[703] Vatagin illustrated picture books for a number of children's authors and his softly rendered figurative illustrations were highly attuned to the individual characteristics of the animals he depicted. *Slon Bambo* (*Bambo the Elephant*) by N. Zhbankova, told of Bambo the elephant and how he came to live in the zoo. Bambo was born in the Indian jungle, captured by people to work carrying timbers and then taken as a transport elephant for a prince in a grand palace. Eventually Bambo was bought by a rich American who needed an elephant for his circus, before he eventually ended up in the zoo, where the children adored him. Vatagin's illustrations, clearly inspired by his time in India, were beautiful scenic pieces with rich backgrounds, which captured the elephant's movements in lifelike detail.[704] Fedorchenko's *Zoologicheskii sad: zveri dikovinnye* (*The Zoological Gardens: Wild Beasts*), presented the reader with poems about animals including the antelope, kangaroo, giraffe and porcupine. The poems describe the physical traits and behaviour of the creatures and Vatagin's lithographs for the text complement it perfectly, showing each animal with scientific accuracy and just a minimum of background detail. The poem about the marmosets tells us that they bump their eyebrows together, have funny grimaces, clever eyes and hands like a person. The

[703] Nadezhda Tregub, 'Vasily Vatagin – Master of the Animal World', The Tretiakov Gallery Magazine, No.4 (2008). Available from: https://www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/4-2008-21/vasily-vatagin-master-animal-world (Accessed 8/8/2019).

[704] N. Zhbankova, *Slon Bambo*, ill. Vasilii Vatagin (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, n.d.).

illustration for this page is striking, with two brown eyed monkeys staring directly at the reader, complete with velvety fur and long thin tails.[705] (Figure 5.13)

Vvedenskii and Ermolaeva collaborated on a zoo book which described a visit to the zoo in more atmospheric language. The lyrical poem in *Mnogo zverei* (*Many Beasts*) describes a walk round the zoo and names the creatures that are met along the way.[706] The excursion starts off cheerfully enough with foxes, seals and bears that greet the visitor but the experience soon becomes rather melancholy. Vvedenskii imagines that the camel is unhappy to be separated from the desert and whilst the parrots can talk, they only screech nonsense that nobody can understand. An eagle sits on a stone feeling bored and sad because he would like to fly and not just do nothing all day. The big cats pace around behind the bars while: "Only the flies have freedom / They mock, buzzzz!.."[707] Ermolaeva's illustrations match the tone of the poem with flat, slightly abstracted animal figures in earthy shades. She would almost certainly have taken a trip to the Leningrad Zoological Gardens to research her drawings and the beasts are full of movement and natural character but they exude a different sort of realism to Vatagin's animals. The bored looking lion and the snarling puma almost bristle on the page, while the frustrated eagle stands tall with stubborn pride. (Figure 5.14) This creative approach to a normally conservative topic, was typical for members of the Leningrad School but we can only wonder why they chose to present to children a picture of such discontented and bad tempered animals. The yearning for freedom which is so apparent in the poem could even have been seen as subtly subversive, had it been read by somebody looking for political inferences in the text.

Picture books also told stories about domestic animals, who were allowed to be part of the family and were not trapped behind bars. Ermolaeva illustrated a playful counting book entitled *Sobachki* (*Doggies*), which was based on a short story about a dog show. A man took his uncle's dog to the show but when he got to the registration desk, he had forgotten its name, as it was only purchased the day before. He instructed the desk clerk to name the animal and then went to look around the show, where he began to sketch the other dogs. However, there were so many that he had to draw multiple animals on each page of his notebook to fit them all in. The illustrations for the book correspond with this, so there is one large dog on the first page, two smaller ones on the second and four on the third. The number of animals doubles each time, until the second last page, which has one hundred and twenty eight dogs. The final page has so

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[705] Sof'ia Fedorchenko, *Zoologicheskii sad: zveri dikovinnye*, ill. Vasilii Vatagin (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927).

[706] Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Mnogo zverei*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

[707] "Tol'ko mukhi na svobode / Nasmekhaiutsia, zhuzhzhat!..." Ibid., p.8.

Figure 5.13: Vasilii Vatagin, illustration for *The Zoological Garden* by Sof'ia Fedorchenko (1927).

Figure 5.14: Vera Ermolaeva, illustration for *Many Beasts* by Aleksandr Vvedenskii (1928).

many dogs that they just look like tiny dashes on the page and the caption simple reads, “How many dogs?” The reader is asked to count all of the dogs in the book and to give each one a name, as long as they can remember not to call a little lapdog Polkan or a name a large wolfhound Zizi.[708] Although the story is not credited to a separate author, it bears all the hallmarks of a Kharms piece, with a humorous monologue bordering on the absurd and a strange cast of characters. It even echoes a short story which Kharms published during the 1930s, in which a man gets a job as a warden at a cat show and then muddles up all of the animals and forgets their names.[709]

Nikolai Aduev also took a playful approach in his book about a family of mice, who live in the basement of a house as uninvited guests. The little mouse declares to his mama and papa that he wants to travel and see the world, so he heads up the drainpipe to the first floor. His appearance in the apartment causes the lady who lives there to take fright and tip hot water from the samovar over her husband and as the mouse makes his way up through the building, he disturbs some schoolchildren at work. The intrepid creature then reaches the roof, where he meets a cat and hurries back down through the house. He lands in a tub of soapsuds where some women are doing the laundry, frightens a pair of musicians who are practising and gets chased back to the basement by a dog, declaring that it is nice to be at home after all. The book is designed on a long length of cardboard which folds into a concertina shape. In a clever use of this unusual format, the mouse’s journey up to the roof covers the whole length of one side, while the journey back down is shown on the other.[710] (Figure 5.15)

This was not the only story about anthropomorphic animals. We have already seen how Marshak and Chukovskii used anthropomorphism in their work, which was descended from folk and fairy tale traditions. Many other authors also adopted this tried and tested technique for communicating with young readers and they came up with some highly imaginative books. In Lev Dligach’s poem *Pozhar koshkinogo doma* (*Fire at Cat’s House*), we hear about a cat whose house has gone up in flames. The animals in the village ring the fire bell and rush to put out the blaze. The chickens bring buckets of water in their beaks, the grey tom cat beats the flames with a broom and the dog brings a watering can. When the fire has been put out, the animals have a picnic in the garden, except for the grey tom cat, who has burned the end of his tail on the flames.[711] Elizaveta Polonskaia’s poem *Zaichata* (*The Baby Hares*), was a humorous fable about

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[708] Vera Ermolaeva, *Sobachki* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929).

[709] ‘Sem’ koshek’ in Daniil Kharms, *12 povarov*, ill. Fedor Lemkul’ (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Malysh”, 1972), pp.12-13.

[710] Nikolai Aduev, *Up and Down*, ill. V. Kozlovskii (Kiev: Kul’tura, 1930?).

[711] Lev Dligach, *Pozhar koshkinogo doma*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul’tura, 1927).

Figure 5.15: V. Kozlovskii, sections of illustration for *Up and Down* by Nikolai Aduev (1930).

a family of hares who live in a house and wear clothes. There are eight naughty babies and the parents are working too hard to look after their brood. Daddy hare says that he has had enough and is going to think for three days about what to do. He sits on a tree stump and gets the children to bring him sacks of vegetables, which he sits and eats while they all watch him, waiting for his decision. On the third day he declares that the children can go without trousers, so that mother hare does not have to do any more mending. The final verse states that this is why hares do not wear clothes and that mother hare wrote this story so that everybody will know.[712]

Wild animals were not always subject to such outlandish humour, as there were many picture books which featured the natural world and educated children about its inhabitants in a straightforward manner. These books were meticulously illustrated with naturalistic detail and

[712] Elizaveta Polonskaia, *Zaichata*, ill. Aleksei Radakov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1923).

artists enjoyed being able to demonstrate their talent for accurate scientific drawing, albeit simplified so as to be accessible and appealing to young children. Sergei Rakhmanin and Mariia Rakhmanina illustrated many nature books for Raduga, written either by themselves or other authors. They worked together on one of Bianki's books, *Odnodnevki* (*One-day-lings*), which gave a full explanation of the lifecycle of the dragonfly. The illustrations were composed of black and white line drawings in fine detail, which showed the insects and their habitat, while the background was divided into water and sky by solid blacks of pale green and turquoise. [713] (Figure 5.16) Rakhmanin created his own counting book *Nogi* (*Legs*), which featured brightly coloured figurative drawings of various creatures. A snake had no legs, a snail had one and a cockerel had two. In the absence of a three legged animal, the artist jumped straight to a four legged rabbit, followed by a five legged starfish. There was a six legged beetle, an eight legged spider, a ten legged lobster and finally a centipede with many legs.[714] *Domiki* (*Houses*) was written by Rakhmanin but illustrated by Rakhmanina and explained how a range of different creatures make their own homes. It showed snails who carry their homes on their backs, bees who build a hive, nesting birds and beavers that construct a dam. The illustrations clearly showed each creature in its respective abode and a limited palette of red, green, brown and black was not completely realistic but gave the book a smart, almost diagrammatical appearance.[715]

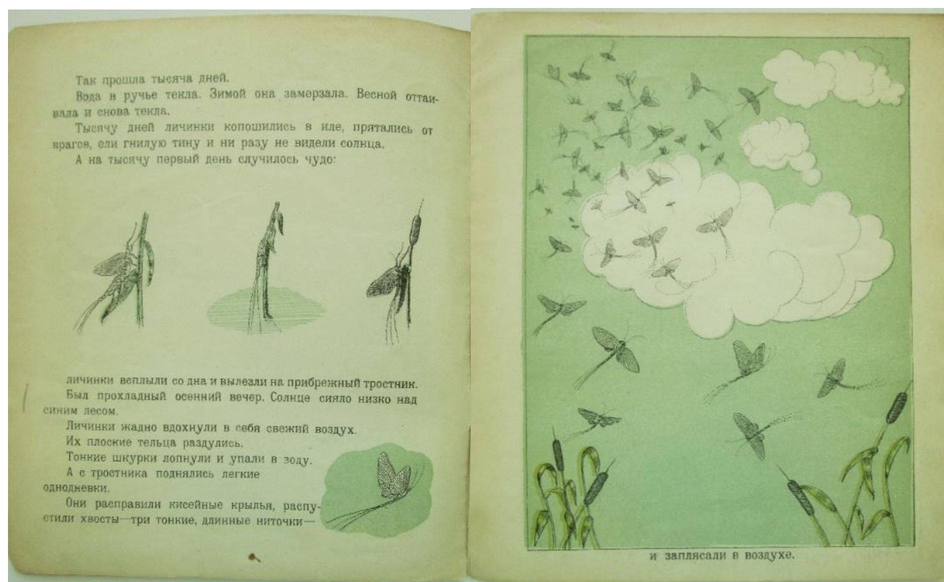

Figure 5.16: Mariia and Sergei Rakhmanin, illustrations for *One-day-lings* by Vitalii Bianki (1925).

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[713] Vitalii Bianki, *Odnodnevki*, ill. Sergei Rakmanin and Mariia Rakhmanina (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925).

[714] Sergei Rakhmanin, *Nogi* (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926).

[715] Sergei Rakhmanin, *Domiki,* ill. Mariia Rakhmanina (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929).

Many other authors and illustrators turned to depicting nature, each with their own distinctive approach. Birds were a popular subject and the books in which they appeared were particularly colourful and decorative. Dmitrii Bulanov, who had designed posters and a guidebook for the Leningrad Zoological Gardens during 1927 and 1928, produced an album entitled *Dikovinnye ptitsy* (*Wild Birds*). Each page featured a large drawing of a single bird on a white background, which served to emphasise the curved shapes of the birds, with their long flexible necks or fanned out tails. His collection showed exotic species that would have been unfamiliar to most Soviet children and included the aninga, lyrebird, rhinocerous hornbill, kiwi and pelican.[716] Fedorchenko's book *Ptitsy mokrye i sukhie khoroshie i plokhie* (*Birds Wet and Dry, Good and Bad*) also looked at exotic birds, with a set of poems that described their characteristics. The marabou stork habitually balances on one leg, the crane stands in one place and beats his wings, while the soaring eagle has sharp eyesight and a strong beak to hunt young lambs. Efimov's illustrations for the text were painterly ink drawings in shades of red, blue, yellow and orange and they perfectly captured the birds swimming, flying or preening their feathers.[717] (Figure 5.17)

Gur'ian chose to write about tiny invertebrates in her book *Nasekomye* (*Insects*), which talked about how insects lived but also commented on their interactions with the human world. Wasps from an egg-shaped nest on the balcony play tag with Vanya, while Mitya places a sign on a tree trunk to indicate where an ant colony has built its hill underneath. Worms invade a bowl of raspberries, midges are attracted by an oil lamp in the kitchen and a sleepy winter fly gets stuck on the putty that has been used to seal the frost-covered windows. Delicate illustrations by Konashevich in yellow, green and blue show the insects in their chosen habitats and the reactions of the people who encounter them. The front cover is one of the artist's masterpieces, with a bright yellow border framing butterflies, bees and beetles which look like perfectly preserved entomological specimens. [718] (Figures 5.18 and 5.19) Nina Kogan and Lesnik turned their attention to the underwater world in *Akvarium* (*The Aquarium*). Vivid watercolour illustrations of different fish were annotated with details about where they live, what they eat and

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[716] Dmitrii Bulanov (ill.), *Dikovinnye ptitsy* (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, n.d.); M.M. Solov'ev, *Putevoditel' po Leningradskomu Zoologicheskomu Sadu*, ill. D. A. Bulanov (Leningrad: Izdanie Zoologicheskogo Sadu, 1928). For examples of Bulanov's zoo posters see Mikhail Anikst and Elena Chernevich (trans. Catherine Cooke), *Soviet Commercial Design of the Twenties* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp.134-137.
[717] Sof'ia Fedorchenko, *Ptitsy mokrye i sukhie khoroshie i plokhie*, ill. Ivan Efimov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).
[718] Ol'ga Gur'ian, *Nasekomye*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927).

how they reproduce. We learn about the scalar fish who inhabits the rivers of the Amazon and carries its eggs in its mouth until they hatch. We also meet a Chinese goldfish with telescopic eyes and a fish with a long tail that can stretch out like a sword. The detail in the images corresponds precisely with the text and the book contains enough serious information to satisfy the budding young naturalist.[719] (Figure 5.20)

Figure 5.17: Ivan Efimov, illustrations for *Birds Wet and Dry, Good and Bad* by Sof'ia Fedorchenko (1928).

Figures 5.18 and 5.19: Vladimir Konashevich, front cover and illustration for *Insects* by Ol'ga Gur'ian (1927).

[719] Nina Kogan and Lesnik, *Akvarium* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930).

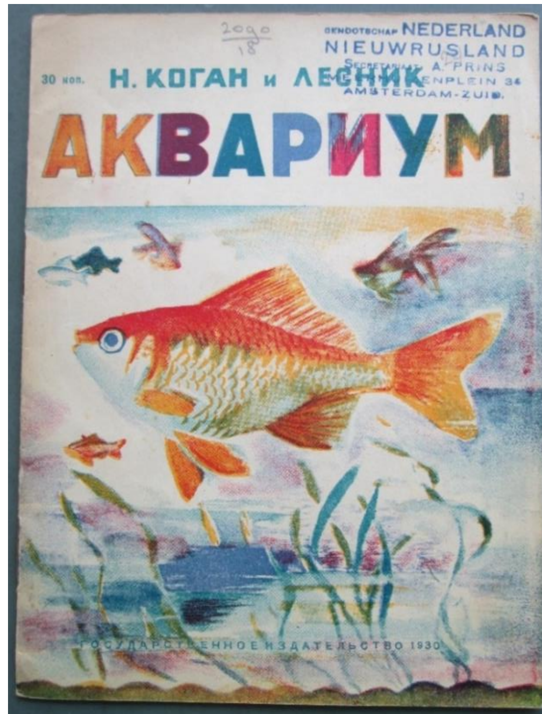

Figure 5.20: Nina Kogan and Lesnik, front cover for *The Aquarium* (1930).

Children who were not interested in animals and the natural world were also well provided for, as picture books covered a range of entertainment based topics. *Karusel'* (*The Carousel*) was one of the very few children's picture books that Boris Pasternak wrote and it described a trip to the fair on a fragrant summer's day. A carousel with wooden horses takes centre stage and the lilting, musical verse carries readers round and round with the ride. The horses rise up and down, the roof swirls as it turns, while the river and the trees pass by over and over again with each rotation. The poem was no different in style to Pasternak's verse for adults and while it would have been wonderful to recite aloud, the sophisticated vocabulary and use of language would have made it challenging for pre-schoolers to read on their own. Illustrations by Dmitrii Mitrokhin highlighted elements of the poem, with simple line drawings enhanced by blocks of colour in black, red and orange. This technique flattened natural perspective, which was a modernist device but also reflected folk art traditions and made the book feel suitably festive.[720] David Shterenberg took on the classic theme of toys for his wordless picture album *Moi igruskhi* (*My Toys*). The postcard sized book was part of a series along with *Fizkul'tura* (*Physical Culture*), *Posuda* (*Crockery*), *Tsvety* (*Flowers*) and *Uzory* (*Patterns*). In a collage of illustrative styles, which made it as much a miniature artist's book as a title for children, *Igrushki* featured a different toy on each page. A doll attached to a spinning top sits on the table next to some lacey doilies, a matrioshka inhabits a floating space bordered by impressions of fern

[720] Boris Pasternak, *Karusel'*, ill. Dmitrii Mitrokhin (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926).

leaves, a toy cavalry soldier and his horse trot across a streaky painted background and a life-like toy monkey swings on his jungle perch.[721] (Figure 5.21)

Whimsical books about toys and days out were published alongside lavishly illustrated versions of classic European fairy tales, despite the fierce debate surrounding such literature. The Mir isskusstva artists were particularly attracted to these stories and their work had the depth and decorative flair to create the rich imaginary lands described in the tales. Dobuzhinskii illustrated Hans Christian Andersen's *Svinopas* (*The Swineherd*) in pastel coloured illustrations, which were lavishly ornamental and would not have looked out of place on a box of chocolates. The princess wore silken embroidered ball gowns with her hair perfectly curled, the royal palace had rows of elegant pillars and the king appeared in a golden crown and a red velvet cloak. [722] (Figure 5.22) Konashevich chose Charles Perrault's *Mal'chik s pal'chik* (*Tom Thumb*) and filled the pages of the book with all of the dark drama that the grisly tale required. The wood in which the children are abandoned is densely packed, with gnarly trees that look almost alive, edged by creeping dark shadows. The scene in which a giant ogre threatens to eat the children is given a terrifying full page illustration, with the monster taking up the whole image and even spilling over the border supposed to contain the picture. We see his sharp teeth gnashing and his bulging, muscular arms bearing an enormous cutlass, while the small boys pleading for their lives do not even come to the top of the ogre's huge boots.[723] (Figure 5.23) These artists were clearly not deterred by the attempts of earnest socialist pedagogues to commit such books to history and their vibrant artwork ensured that these stories reached a new generation.

This new generation also had original imaginative stories written for them and some of these were gloriously comic, absurd or surreal. *Propala koshka* (*The Cat Disappeared*) by Viugov, was a silly tale about three old ladies who lose their cat. They put a notice on their cottage door, offering a reward for the cat's return and so the children of the town set out to find the animal. The old ladies end up with a long queue of children at their door, bringing cats of all colours and sizes that they have found, although none of them are the missing animal. The old ladies become worn out with this and they put up a new notice on the door saying that the cat has been found. Meanwhile, all the other old ladies of the town have lost their cats and are wondering about looking for them. The flock of old ladies sees the notice on the door stating that a cat has been

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[721] David Shterenberg (ill.), *Fizkul'tura* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930); David Shterenberg (ill.), *Moi igrushki* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930); David Shterenberg (ill.), *Posuda* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930); David Shterenberg (ill.); *Tsvety* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930); David Shterenberg (ill.), *Uzory* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930).

[722] Andersen, *Svinopas* (1922).

[723] Charles Perrault (trans. unknown), *Mal'chik s pal'chik: Skazka*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (St Petersburg and Berlin: Grzhebin, 1923).

Figure 5.21: David Shterenberg, illustrations for *Toys* (1930).

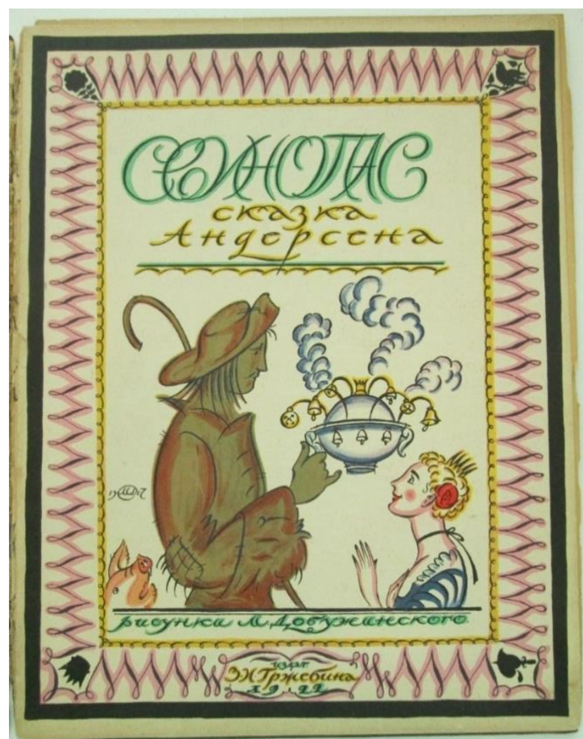

Figure 5.22: Mstislav Dobuzhinskii, front cover for *The Swineherd* by Hans Christian Andersen (1922).

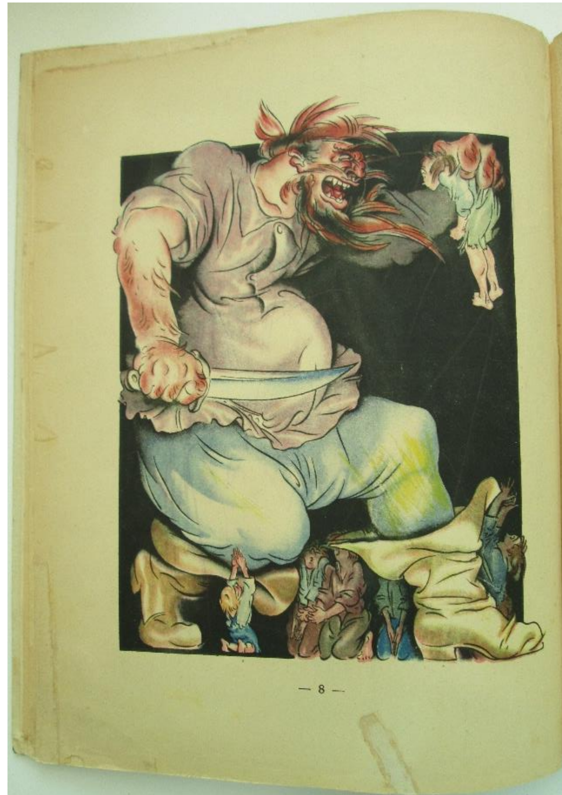

Figure 5.23: Vladimir Konashevich, illustration for *Tom Thumb* by Charles Perrault (1923).

found and the original three old ladies have to assure them that they do not have a cat there after all. The multiple missing cats are rounded up from rooftops and yards and then the original missing cat turns up suddenly and nobody knows where she has been.[724]

Story book dogs and their owners could cause even more mischief than story book cats. Polotskii's *Kakvas* (*Likeyou*) was a poem about an old man who takes his dog for a walk through the city. They meet a little girl who asks what the dog is called. The old man replies, "Likeyou!", so the girl calls the dog Aniutka and beckons it to come but the animal ignores her. The old man walks on and another passer-by asks the dog's name. He receives the same reply as the little girl and tries to call the dog by the name Tom. Eventually the old man and his dog are being followed by a trail of people all calling the dog different names. The dog finally loses his temper and lunges at the crowd, so the old man calls him to heel, shouting "Back Likeyou!" The people finally realise that Likeyou was the dog's name all along and that the joke is on them. [725] (Figure 5.24) *Taksa kliaksa* (*Blot the Dachshund*) by A. Mariengof, featured a really naughty canine who conspired to cause major trouble. A lady goes out to buy groceries, leaving at home her nephew,

[724] V'iugov*, Propala koshka*, ill. Aleksei Komarov (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1927).

[725] Semen Polotskii, *Kakvas*, ill. Tatiana Glebova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928).

green parrot and pet dachshund. The dog gets bored of playing in the garden and thinks of a new entertainment. On the wall hangs a portrait of the aunt, so the dog takes black boot polish and a shoe brush in his paw, climbs a ladder and decorates the lady's face with a bushy black beard. He then paints the green parrot as black as a crow and covers the little boy too. When the aunt returns home, she manages to clean the boy and the parrot but the portrait does not fare so well. After three attempts, some of the boot polish beard remains and it has to stay like this forever.[726]

Figure 5.24: Tatiana Glebova, illustrations for *Likeyou* by Semen Polotskii (1928).

These stories were outrageous but one writer eclipsed all other picture book authors in his pursuit of the strange and unusual. Kharms was the master of surreal make-believe games that courted the limits of acceptability. Born Daniil Iuvachev in 1905, to parents who were established members of the St Petersburg intelligentsia, the future writer received a bilingual education at the prestigious German Peterschule. The pseudonym Kharms, possibly derived from the English word "charms", first appeared in his personal notes during 1924, while the young man was still a student but already engaged in writing poetry. Kharm's debut public poetry reading took place in 1925 and his first poem was published in 1926, one of only two works for

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[726] A. Mariengof, *Taksa kliaksa,* ill. F. Suvorov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927).

an adult audience that would appear in his lifetime.[727] In 1927, Kharms became one of the founder members of Oberiu, a small group of writers who revelled in the absurd, holding literary evenings, plays and lectures to showcase their outlandish work.[728] The surreal world of the Oberiuts became a complete lifestyle for Kharms, who was known for his eccentric behaviour which defied the conventions of revolutionary society. He could be seen walking along the Nevskii Prospekt wearing mismatched clothing and bedroom slippers, carrying a butterfly net. Visitors to his apartment reported the presence of a 'machine' in the corner, which was made from wooden boards, bicycle wheels and other spare parts but which served no purpose.[729]

The political climate in the late 1920s meant that there were few opportunities for modernist writers to publish their works, so when Kharms and his Oberiu colleagues were invited by Marshak to work for the Gosizdat children's section, they were able to earn a living from their writing. They were also able to use juvenile literature as a playground for some of their most whimsical ideas and Marshak knew that this literary style would be well received by children.[730] Kharms became a popular and prolific contributor to *Ezh* and *Chizh* magazines, writing fifteen poems, stories and advertisements for *Ezh* during 1928 and 1929 alone.[731] The joyful atmosphere in the *Ezh* editorial office was relished by Kharms and whilst he took the task of writing for children with a serious professionalism, he also enjoyed the games, jokes and silly stories that were constantly shared amongst the staff of the journal.[732] However, the contradictory nature of the man was such that he actually possessed a profound dislike for children, although his young readers did not notice this. He performed in schools and kindergartens with great success, appearing in strange outfits and delighting his audience with magic tricks using ping pong balls. Chukovskii's granddaughter Marina remembered these tricks as the same ones that Kharms used to entertain his grown-up acquaintances.[733]

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[727] Anthony Anenome and Peter Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary": The Notebooks, Diaries and Letters or Daniil Kharms* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), pp.10-14; Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), p.325; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.127.

[728] George Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat: Russia's Literature of the Absurd* (Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1987), pp.10-11.

[729] Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.21; Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat* (1987), pp.6-7.

[730] Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.25; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), p.125.

[731] Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.25; Valerii Shubinskii, *Daniil Kharms: Zhizn' cheloveka na vetru* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo ACT, 2015), p.260, p.275.

[732] Shubinskii, *Daniil Kharms* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo ACT, 2015), pp.266-267, p.270, p.273.

[733] Ibid., p.244, pp.273-274.

Many of Kharms' works for *Ezh* and *Chizh* became standalone illustrated children's books. There were playful short poems suitable for very young children, such as *Igra* and *Ivan Ivanych Samovar* but also longer prose works, aimed at slightly older children. These stories were surreal pieces that blurred the line between dream and reality, prefiguring the dark stories that Kharms wrote for adults during the 1930s, which were never published in his lifetime. *O tom kak starushka chernila pokupala (About How an Old Lady Bought Ink)* was about a confused old woman who went on a shopping trip to purchase a bottle of ink and tried every shop including a fishmonger and a butcher before ending up in the editorial offices of a publishing house, where the editor promised to publish a story about her adventure. There was also the tale of *Kak Pankin Kol'ka letal v Braziliiu, a Pet'ka Ershov nichemu ne veril* (*How Kol'ka Pankin Flew to Brazil but Pet'ka Ershov Did Not Believe Anything*), in which two small boys leave Leningrad to take a plane to Brazil. They argue all the way to the aerodrome and all the way through the flight. They argue about the native people they see when the plane lands, they debate whether the cow they have seen is a bison and they disagree about whether the palm trees are really pines, until eventually a passing car gives them a ride back into Leningrad.[734] The most distinctive work produced by Kharms during this period was *Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh* (*Firstly and Secondly*), which also had the honour of being the only picture book to be illustrated by Vladimir Tatlin, in atmospheric greyscale drawings. Firstly, a boy is walking along the road, singing a song. Secondly, he is joined by another boy called Petka, who goes along with him. The pair next come across a tiny man, who they take with them and then the three travellers stumble across a very tall man, who is lying across the road and he is invited to come along too. The group gather up a donkey, take a ride across a lake in a rowing boat and then all crowd into a car that they find sitting wating for them. After staying the night in a hotel, they find a passing elephant for the tall man to ride upon and the book ends in suspense as they leave the town, stating that the next part of the story will be saved for another time.[735]

The spirit of contrariness and the suspended sense of reality in the work of Kharms, was a far cry from both the innocent joy of Chukovskii's verse and the earnest ideas of pedagogues who spoke out on the issues surrounding the creation of pre-school literature. Yet it is typical of the period that such a plurality of ideas on the topic managed to both co-exist and contradict each other at the same time. The picture book carried the weight of great expectations as a textual and visual medium that was to foster the development of early literacy, educate small

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[734] Kharms, *Kak Pankin Kol'ka letal v Braziliiu, a Pet'ka Ershov nichemu ne veril* (1928); Kharms, *Ivan Ivanych Samovar* (1929); Daniil Kharms, *O tom kak starushka chernila pokupala*, ill. Eduard Krimmer (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929); Kharms, *Igra* (1930).

[735] Kharms, *Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh* (1929).

children in the moral values of society, teach practical skills and also to entertain. Chukovskii addressed these needs with his unique approach to children's verse which was rooted in pre-revolutionary intelligentsia traditions, the homelife of his own family and pure artistic inspiration. However, as a figurehead for the defence of fantasy and the fairy tale, he became a scapegoat for everything that strict socialist pedagogues saw as problematic within children's literature. Professional pedagogues such as Meksin and the staff at the Institute for the Methods of Extra-curricular Work, aimed to make an objective contribution to the development of children's books and reading but like Chukovskii, they were not powerful enough to hold their ground during a period when every aspect of education and child rearing became highly politicised. This politicisation of childhood was reflected in the contents of picture books which taught basic moral values or simple art and craft skills. Sometimes these educated children in the conventional sense, by teaching them to behave nicely or colour in pictures of animals. In other cases, they promoted early socialist activism by encouraging children to admire the brave Red Army soldier or work hard for the collective.

Despite the fierce debate and contradiction surrounding children's literature, many picture books were published which bore no political commitment whatsoever. In the late 1920s, the last few years of relative freedom before children's publishing was brought under tighter control, authors and illustrators were able to exercise their imagination to a surprising degree. Books about the zoo were allowed to educate in a direct fashion with no socialist bias, stories about animals contained rampant anthropomorphism and poets could invent heavily surreal worlds with unlimited possibilities for adventure. The fact that such books passed under the radar, demonstrated that the state did not have full control over what was being published at this time but also indicated the sincere care that Soviet society had for its youngest citizens. Some authors and illustrators expressed this care through an idealized commitment to raising socialist citizens, who would build communism and bring the Soviet vision to completion. Others firmly maintained their belief that children had universal educational, social and emotional needs which ought to be nurtured before they were made to participate in any grand political scheme. The fact that a fairy tale or a book of children's verse could ignite controversy at the highest political level, showed the great depth of concern that existed on all sides for guiding children safely through this unique and turbulent period.

Conclusion: A Picture Book for All Occasions?

The early Soviet picture book emerged during one of the most turbulent periods of twentieth century history. The appearance of a large number of bright, modern books for pre-school children was a colourful phenomenon, bearing a unique energy and a set of ideas intended to contribute to the promising future which many hoped would emerge from the total upheaval that had been caused by the October Revolution. The great expectations placed upon the shoulders of the very young and the highly imaginative books produced for their consumption, meant that this became a particularly remarkable episode in the history of children's literature. During the 1920s and early 1930s, the picture book was not just a simple product to be purchased for a small sum at a book shop or magazine kiosk but a multifaceted object, which held huge importance for a number of different groups within society.

Artists embraced the picture book as a dynamic graphic medium which was a blank canvas for playful visual innovation and sometimes a banner for the display of ideologically inspired messages. The children's picture book was an art form which had only fully emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century but had truly reached maturity by the 1920s, giving artists in the new Soviet state the opportunity to turn this relatively new medium into something spectacular. Avant-garde artists miniaturised their radical visual approaches to create the 'new Soviet picture book' style of illustration and present children with a vision of the modern new world which they believed would be delivered by the socialist state. Other artists, including Konashevich and the members of the Leningrad School, created unique visual landscapes which were perfectly tailored for small children, exercising great imagination and a desire to help children understand the world around them through a rich visual education. By the late 1920s, picture books began to align strongly with general currents in literature and art, which promoted concrete figurative illustration as the preferred method of visualising the Soviet progress under Stalin. It was not just the style of illustration that made early Soviet picture books so innovative but the content. Illustrators no longer stuck to a repertoire of motifs from traditional tales, fantasy stories or the cosy world of the nursery. They embraced a broad range of topics ranging from wild animals and the natural world, through to ultra-modern themes such as train journeys, production in huge mechanised factories and socialist politics, which meant that the picture book became an integral part of children's upbringing at the beginning of a complex and fast-moving new century.

As a commercial product, the fate of the picture book sharply reflected the radical cultural and economic changes that were happening during the first fifteen years of Soviet rule.

The publishing industry had been decimated by the First World War and Civil War and so during the NEP period, the Soviet state allowed private publishers to fill the gaps in state publishing output, which remained very limited until economic recovery took hold in the mid-1920s. The Soviet picture book was pioneered largely at private publishing houses during the mid-1920s, particularly Raduga in Leningrad, which brought together perfectly compatible authors and illustrators and also offered a successful commercial model for marketing the books. By the time state publishing was strong enough to take control over the industry in the second half of the 1920s, private publishing had already exerted an irretractable influence upon the form and content of the picture books that were being produced. Popular picture book titles from Raduga, such as those by Chukovskii, were regularly re-printed by Gosizdat and key authors, illustrators and editorial staff eventually left the dwindling private firm to work for the influential children's section at the Leningrad branch of the state publisher. As the balance of the market shifted at the end of the decade, the picture book was no longer seen as a purely commercial product but as a direct tool for encouraging young readers to become take an active part in socialist society. This shift was reflected in the content of advertising materials and also the tone of articles in publishing trade and literary journals, which sought to undermine the creative legacy and non-conformist ideological influence of some successful authors and editors from the mid-1920s. The publishing industry was fundamentally re-organised in the early 1930s and although this was a powerful assertion of control by the state over cultural life, the picture book still bore some of the vibrancy which it had retained from its former life as a more openly commercial entity.

Artists, authors and publishers of all political persuasions saw the picture book as a rich creative opportunity but for some this was directly linked with the drive to commence political education with children at a very young age. This process was complex and multi-layered, with some picture books displaying a subtle allegiance to the Bolshevik cultural project and others offering a direct but scaled down replica of adult propaganda materials. Many books depicted modernity and technology, themes which were a key part of the vision that the Bolsheviks had for the country in the post-revolutionary years. Illustrators and authors used a sophisticated system of visual and textual motifs which echoed the progressive modern life being depicted in literature and visual media for grown-ups. Other books aimed to educate children in the transformative powers of the *novyi byt*, demonstrating how modern methods of child rearing could form socialist citizens. This very specialist library for small children introduced readers to life in the contemporary kindergarten and then to the Young Pioneer movement, with the Pioneer becoming an aspirational symbol for future communists. The most ideologically overt picture books directly featured political themes that were commonly found in adult propaganda pieces and they did so on almost the same terms as these, if slightly scaled down for small readers. Stories about the life and death of Lenin or communist festivals made concessions to a young audience, telling the tale from the child's perspective or simplifying key symbols to fill brightly coloured pages. It is

extremely hard to analyse the success of this drive to politicise very small children but we can state that the sheer versatility of the picture book, a medium in which the visual and the textual were so tightly interdependent, made it the perfect vehicle for attempting to explain such significant messages to the youngest minds.

The earnest intentions of authors and illustrators with a socialist orientation did not mean that the education of young children went unquestioned. The picture book may have been commandeered as a portable artwork, valuable commercial product and a mass propaganda tool but it also still served its primary function as a childhood companion which taught basic literacy, moral values and entertained little readers. The way these basic functions were approached led to great conflict between strict socialist pedagogues and other educators, authors and illustrators who took a less political view of childhood. Chukovskii's unique children's verse was rooted in the traditions of Russian and European literature, his own family life and pure artistic inspiration but in standing up for his artform, he came under attack from extreme leftist pedagogues who found his approach to be far too liberal. Professional librarians and pedagogues such as those at the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work, dedicated their work to objectively analysing children's books and reading preferences. This forward-thinking mission was not always appreciated by stated sponsored education specialists, who adopted a highly politicised approach to child rearing with their own definite pedagogical criteria. The politicisation of childhood meant that simple picture books such as those which taught moral values or art and craft skills, sometimes became embedded with a socialist slant which slightly altered their everyday purpose. Despite this precarious climate, the state did not have full control over what was being published during the 1920s and early 1930s, so many picture books appeared which were totally devoid of politics and they featured trips to the zoo, the natural world, fairy tales and surreal nonsense verse which pushed the boundaries of acceptability.

The fact that the picture book could exist as a multi-functional object and mean so many things to so many different people, can be explained by returning to some of the broader concepts which have been applied to the development of culture in the early Soviet Union. Cultural revolution is a pertinent notion to the discussion and taking the term in the sense proposed by Katerina Clark, as a "cultural ecosystem", allows us to see that the early Soviet picture book was very representative of the period that it inhabited. Clark put forward a model in which culture evolved not during dramatic moments such as the October Revolution but during the intervening periods, when the "surviving flora and fauna responded to the new conditions."[736] In a separate essay analysing Russian intellectual life through the NEP period, Clark argued that a "quiet revolution" at this time defined who was to dominate in Soviet culture. She suggested that a broad changeover of the artistic movements and figures who led the cultural scene, meant

[736] Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (1996), pp.ix-x.

that patterns of Soviet intellectual life were established which would endure for many decades to come. This shift was caused by a series of political and cultural events, including the change of economic policy, which meant that patronage of the arts and the dominant forms of expression changed. In the case of the visual arts, the withdrawal of state subsidies meant that the radical avant-garde no longer dominated, as they had in the Civil War period when they enjoyed prominence through state sponsored activities. In the field of publishing, the public once more had to pay for books and journals, which had been provided free of charge under War Communism. As a result, cultural life came to be more pluralistic but ultimately, organisational structures arose which would form the prevailing template for future Soviet culture.[737]

This analysis certainly applies to the establishment of the Soviet children's picture book, which inherited its lasting identity from the artistic and economic climate of the mid-1920s. During NEP, private publishers were responsible for the vast majority of children's picture books, providing for this sector of the market when the state was not able to do so. This situation began to change in the late 1920s as the economic and political reach of the state grew but by this time, private business had already moulded a strong literary and artistic product based on a successful commercial model, with a large and enthusiastic consumer base. The business structures for children's publishing developed by these companies were taken on directly by the state during the late 1920s, after NEP had officially ended. Gosizdat also adopted the practise of employing strong professional artists who collaborated with talented writers, to ensure that the Soviet picture book continued to be a high quality product which would contribute to educating the Soviet population. In accordance with Clark's analysis, new cultural leaders emerged from this process and in the case of picture books, the most notable example was Marshak. His first major career success was as a young writer and editor at Raduga and his talent led him to become leader of the innovative Leningrad children's section at Gosizdat. Despite a difficult spell at the very end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, when powerful proletarian critics found cause to attack his work, Marshak's professionalism prevailed and he became one of the architects of Detgiz, an institution which embodied the model for centralized state children's publishing that would prevail until the final years of the Soviet Union.

Closely linked to the process of cultural revolution, was the tension between the continuity of pre-revolutionary culture and change which brought new ideas. No country can go through a revolution and shed the skin of its existing culture overnight. This was true of the Soviet

[737] Katerina Clark, 'The "Quiet Revolution" in Soviet Intellectual Life' in Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites (eds.), *Russia in the Era of NEP* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp.210-230, at pp.210-215.

Union and was most certainly true of the picture book, which was remarkably innovative but at the same time was guided heavily by pre-revolutionary cultural figures and artistic forms that flowed naturally into the revolutionary years from the late Tsarist period. Visual art and illustration could not be totally reinvented when the red flags were raised over Russia, as they had to get their fundamental vocabulary from somewhere. Even the radical Constructivists, who designed ambitiously minimalist picture books for small children, were only a few steps further along from the European abstract modernisms of the 1910s, in which they had been fully immersed until the revolution led them to adopt a socialist worldview. The newly reorganised Soviet art schools also facilitated the transmission of skills and ideas between pre-revolutionary artists and those of the new Soviet generation. Some experienced book illustrators elected to emigrate but others stayed and became absorbed into the new system, teaching young artists, who in turn became picture book illustrators during the late 1920s. A small number of other picture book artists managed to glide through the political turmoil by remaining completely neutral and avoiding any major disputes. A fine example of this was Vatagin, who continued to paint realistic animals and educate the Soviet population about the natural riches that the world had to offer.

On an organisational level, the picture book world of the 1920s was a microcosm of the broader cultural dynamic at this time, with key figures from the immediate pre-revolutionary period becoming major players in forming the new culture. Gor'kii, Chukovskii and Kliachko were established members of the tightly interwoven Russian cultural scene long before the October Revolution, and all three men influenced the development of the picture book in a fundamental way. It was Gor'kii who seriously encouraged Chukovskii to write for children and who published *Elka*, the first Soviet children's book and one which set the prototype for fruitful collaboration between an unlikely variety of authors and illustrators. Gor'kii also fostered the early literary talents of the young Marshak, paving the way for him to become a hugely successful children's poet and an organisational cornerstone of Soviet children's literature. Kliachko was a well-known pre-revolutionary journalist who escaped execution by the revolutionary government on the intervention of Gor'kii. It was Kliachko who took Chukovskii's unpublished children's poems and printed them to great acclaim, leading Chukovskii to become one of the most beloved Soviet children's writers. In turn, Chukovskii introduced Kliachko to Marshak, who as an author and in his editorial capacity, helped Raduga to became not only the home of the Soviet picture book but one of the most successful Soviet publishing houses of the mid-1920s. The picture book and Soviet culture in general, would not have developed in the same way without the influence of these powerful and well-connected intellectual networks.

The final major point of discussion is how the early Soviet picture book attempted to construct the 'new Soviet man' and whether this effort succeeded. The new type of person was to

be a progressive and rational being, who would fully subordinate his or her life to the socialist collective. Picture books were produced with the aim of moulding the ideal citizen from the first Soviet generation, who were considered to be perfect modelling material for this grand project. The Constructivists designed radically modernist picture books which were intended to educate children about the contemporary world and encourage the young reader to adopt a socialist worldview. Artists including Deineka and Pakhomov offered an idealised vision of the 'new man', as an athletic individual who was enthusiastic about collective life and prepared to keep himself in perfect physical and mental shape, so that he could honour his obligations to society. Picture books that directly featured political topics taught children about the merits of a modern lifestyle, the benefits of an organised socialist upbringing and presented them with the direct objects of the new communist faith. Maiakovskii preached to children about the moral virtues that they would need to be good communists, while some art and craft books introduced children to the rudiments of collective labour.

There is no simple and direct way of working out whether introducing political education at such a young age was successful and if picture books led the children of the 1920s to become loyal Soviet communists. The only indication left to us about the reception of political picture books is to look at their popularity in relation to books by Chukovskii and Marshak, whose works for children were rooted in a much more cosmopolitan and liberal approach than some of the overtly socialist texts. Books by these two authors were frequently re-issued in large print runs from the mid-1920s onwards and they can rightly be considered to be the star bestsellers of their day. Furthermore, library surveys conducted by the Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work, indicated that by volume of requests, Chukovskii, Marshak and nature writer Bianki were children's favourite authors by far. Observation work conducted at the same institution suggested that young children were clearly baffled by modernist production books but that Chukovskii's *Barmalei*, an imaginative adventure poem about a ruthless cannibal pirate, consistently made them laugh.[738]

The 1930s ushered in a new phase for the Soviet picture book but the fates of those authors and illustrators who had invented it during the preceding decade were mixed. The creative and non-conformist spirit of the Leningrad School turned out to be desperately at odds with the serious tone of the cultural world under Stalin's rule. By the end of the 1920s, the Oberiuts were no longer able to perform in Leningrad, after their happenings elicited ever more

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[738] Olich, *Competing Ideologies and Children's Literature in Russia* (2009), p.156, p.160; RAO f.5, op.1, d. 109, l.41, l.42, l.55; RAO f.5, op.1, d.48, l.37.

hostile reactions. The end of 1931 brought a series of attacks in the press against both the Oberiuts and the Leningrad School of children's writers and illustrators. The Moscow press attacked the literary practise of the Marshak-Lebedev group as harmful, while a speech by poet Nikolai Aseev published in the literary journal *Krasnaia Nov'* (*Red Virgin Soil*) in mid-December, criticised the Oberiu poets as being, "remote from the questions of socialist construction". Shortly after this, Kharms, Vvedenskii and several other writers were arrested and charged with anti-Soviet activities in the field of children's literature.[739] Kharms confessed to leading a group of anti-Soviet writers, who were attempting to corrupt the younger generation by consciously introducing subversive themes into their works and ignoring "Soviet reality".[740] Kharms and Vvedenskii were released after six months in prison and exiled to Kursk, where they shared a house, until they were allowed to return to Leningrad at the end of 1932.[741]

The rest of the 1930s was a bleak and hungry time for Kharms, who struggled to earn a living even as a children's writer. The absurd, dark stories he wrote during this period, which were to receive great literary acclaim many years later, were shared only with his wife and a few close friends. In 1939 he spent a brief spell in a psychiatric hospital, possibly as part of a plan to avoid being drafted into the military.[742] After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in summer 1941, the climate of suspicion surrounding those with previous political convictions intensified. Kharms was arrested at home in August and fearing forced labour as much as military service, may have deliberately convinced his interrogators that he was suffering from mental illness. His eccentric habits and ideas led to a medical examination by prison doctors, who diagnosed Kharms with schizophrenia and committed him to the psychiatric ward of the prison for treatment. The Siege of Leningrad began in early September and in February 1942, Kharms died, probably of hunger.[743] In 1936, Vvedenskii got married and settled in Kharkhov. He was arrested in

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739 Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat* (1987), pp.22-23; Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), p.495; Matvei Yankelevich (Ed. and trans.), *Today I Wrote Nothing: The Selected Writings of Daniil Kharms* (New York, Woodstock and London: The Overlook Press, 2007), pp.24-25.

740 Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.26.

741 Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.27; Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat* (1987), p.23.

742 Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), pp.27-28; Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat* (1987), p.23; Yankelevich, *Today I Wrote Nothing* (2007), p.25.

743 Anenome and Scotto, *"I Am a Phenomenon Quite Out of the Ordinary"* (2013), p.29; Yankelevich, *Today I Wrote Nothing* (2007), p.26.

September 1941, as German troops approached the town and most citizens had already been evacuated. He died in captivity two months later.[744]

In December 1934, Ermolaeva was arrested along with a number of other Leningrad artists, most of whom had been associated with the Group of Painterly-Plastic Realism. They were accused of anti-Soviet activity and in March 1935, Ermolaeva was sentenced to three years in a camp as a socially dangerous element. She was sent to Karaganda and worked designing posters at the settlement but in September 1937, she was found guilty of associating with a counter-revolutionary group and shot.[745] In 1937, *Ezh* editor Oleinikov was arrested at a meeting of the Writer's Union. All those present, including his friend and former co-editor Shvarts, voted to expel him from the organisation. Oleinikov was accused of "acts of sabotage on the literary front", counter-revolutionary activity and espionage for Japan, leading to his execution in November of that year.[746] Lebedev, terrified by the arrests of his colleagues at Gosizdat, lived through the difficult years of the late 1930s in constant fear. He found solace and distraction by taking long walks around Leningrad and attending sports matches with close friend Shostakovich. Lebedev survived both professionally and personally by sacrificing his modernist style for a more conservative approach and he continued to paint pictures and illustrate children's books until he died in 1967, aged seventy six.[747]

During the 1930s, Chukovskii produced only a few children's books, focussing instead on other areas of literary work. In 1938, he settled in the writers' village at Peredelkino on the outskirts of Moscow and lived here until his death in 1969, at the very respectable age of eighty eight. His legacy was fiercely preserved by his family, who turned his house into a museum which thanks to the valiant efforts of daughter Lidia, fended off closure during the late Soviet years but is now a much-loved part of the Moscow State Literary Museum.[748] Everything remains as Chukovskii left it, including toys collected on his travels which remain in the drawers and his many books which still sit on their shelves. Family photographs from when the Chukovskii children were small and an original sketch of Barmalei by Dobuzhinskii hang beside the

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[744] Gibian, *The Man with the Black Coat* (1987), p.30.

[745] *Vera Ermolaeva 1893-1937* (2008), p.20, p.141. The official cause of death was execution by shooting but Russian cultural historian Solomon Volkov cites testament from the artist Vladimir Sterligov, who was in the camp at the same time as Ermolaeva. Sterligov remembered that the guards made fun of Ermolaeva on account of her crippled legs, which he said were amputated during her time in the camp. Sterligov believed that Ermolaeva died with a group of prisoners who were put on a barge and abandoned on an island in the Aral Sea. See Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), pp.495-496.

[746] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.372-373.

[747] Volkov, *St Petersburg* (1996), pp.496-497.

[748] Chukovskaya, *To the Memory of Childhood* (1988), pp.155-156.

staircase. During the author's later years, he was regularly visited by groups of children for whom he built a library and held an annual bonfire party to celebrate the end of summer. Some of these traditions are upheld today and scores of school children are brought to the house to learn about the man and his stories. On a visit to the museum made during research for this project, a school group was having a barbecue in a clearing in the woods and the smoke drifted through yellow autumn leaves into the blue sky. Another group of children had just arrived by coach and were queuing outside the house, the accompanying adults apparently even more excited about the visit than their young pupils. Children still hang their worn out shoes on a dedicated 'wonder tree' in the garden, perhaps in the hope that they will grow into a handsome new pair. (Figure 6.1)

Figure 6.1: The 'wonder tree' at the Chukovskii House Museum, Peredelkino, October 2018.

Other picture book writers and artists managed to continue their careers more or less uninterrupted. Some chose to comply with the evolving ideological demands of Soviet literature, others managed to remain detached from artistic controversy or political commitment and some were simply lucky. Marshak's speech at the 1934 writer's congress, 'On a Great Literature for Little Ones', strongly indicated that he intended to try and work with the Soviet regime rather than swim against the current. However, by the mid-1930s, he was directing his truly creative ideas towards literary translation rather than children's verse. The arrests of many staff members from the Gosizdat children's section left Marshak in fear for his own life, until he was unexpectedly given the Order of Lenin in 1939. During the Great Patriotic War, Marshak focussed on journalism, returning to translation and lyric poetry when peace came. He wrote some children's poetry in his last two decades but stood down from editorial work, instead becoming one of the

elder statesmen of children's literature, offering guidance to the young new generation of children's writers. Marshak died in 1964, aged seventy six.[749]

Konashevich continued to work as a picture book illustrator into the 1930s, toning down his modern 1920s style to re-introduce full backgrounds and a more realistic figurative style. The artist lived through the Siege of Leningrad, painting pictures of the devastated, hungry city through his window. Better times came after the war and he continued to illustrate children's books and adult literature, always adapting his style to suite the prevailing cultural mood. Having enjoyed an illustrious career that prevailed through many turbulent years, Konashevich died in 1963 at the age of seventy five.[750] Charushin continued illustrating nature stories with his powder-puff animals but after the mid-1930s, his creatures were pictured with full background detail in a more conventionally realist style. After the artist's death in 1965, Charushin's son Nikita continued his father's work, illustrating animal stories in the trademark family style.[751] Pakhomov continued to illustrate children's books until his death in 1972. His illustrations from the mid-1930s onwards employed a safe, figurative style which complied with socialist realism but still sensitively depicted children's lives as they played and learned.[752] The destinies of many other picture book authors and illustrators are unknown to us, as we knew very little about them to begin with. In some cases, all that remains is the name on a book jacket and perhaps a date of birth found in a reference guide.

The children's publishing world launched some of its employees into successful careers in related fields. Shvarts, who had spent his early career in the theatre, launched a successful career as a playwright, creating many works for stage and screen before he died in 1958. Tsekhanovskii moved on from illustration to become a pioneer of animation. In 1929, he created a dynamic cartoon version of Marshak's *Pochta* which received acclaim both in the Soviet Union and abroad.[753] During the 1930s and 1940s, he was forced to tone down his Constructivist style but did manage to produce films featuring the stories from various picture books. These included Marshak's *O glupom myshenke* in 1940, complete with soundtrack by Shostakovich and

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[749] Hellman, *Fairy Tales and True Stories (*2013), pp.366-367; Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.99-100.

[750] For many examples of Konashevich's work, dating from the 1920s to the 1960s, see *Konashevich: Izvestnyi i neizvestnyi* (2018).

[751] Lemmens and Stommels, *Russian Artists and the Children's Book* (2009), pp. 270-281.

[752] Ibid., pp.400-409.

[753] Pochta, 1929. Directed by Mikhail Tsekhanovskii and N. Timofeev, USSR. Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkLgTt3G6m4 (Accessed 5/11/2014). For information on Tsekhanovskii and his successes see Jay Leyda. *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1960), p.281.

Chukovskii's *Telefon* in 1944.[754] In 1964 Tsekhanovskii re-animated *Pochta* in full colour, adding extra details to bring it in line with contemporary culture. The postage stamps featured Sputnik and stylised images of Lenin, while the aeroplane in the story became a modern jumbo jet flying through a night sky filled with zooming meteors.[755]

The re-animation of *Pochta* came after Khrushchev's Thaw, a period when Soviet culture enjoyed some breathing space, which allowed a new generation of scholars to re-discover the innovative picture books of the 1920s and early 1930s. Poets such as Kharms and Vvedenskii who had been repressed under Stalin, were posthumously rehabilitated in the 1960s, meaning that their children's books could be read once more. Key illustrators who did not survive the 1930s also got the recognition they deserved. During the 1970s and 1980s, Leningrad art historian Evgenii Kovtun was heavily involved in excavating the great body of Futurist and avant-garde books from the early twentieth century and in so doing, he discovered the picture books created by Vera Ermolaeva. Kovtun championed her cause as a pioneer of the Soviet picture book and an influential figure in the field of early Soviet book illustration. In a 1971 article for periodical *Detskaia literatura* (*Children's Literature*), Kovtun argued that if we did not recognise Ermolaeva's contribution to the field in the 1920s and 1930s, then our impression of book design during this period would be incomplete and untrue.[756] Accompanying the renewed scholarly interest in the early Soviet picture book was a series of re-prints from an art publisher in Leningrad, which made titles illustrated by well-known artists available to readers. Each edition offered a faithful reproduction of the original picture book inside a cardboard sleeve, which sometimes contained an essay about the illustrator and how the book was created. Titles issued during the 1970s and 1980s included Chukovskii's *Barmalei*, Marshak's *Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok*, Samokhvalov,'s *V lager'* and Bianki's *Snezhnaia kniga* (*The Snow Book*) with illustrations by Nikolai Tyrsa.[757]

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[754] Animator.ru. *Tsekhanovskii Michael M.* Available from: http://animator.ru/db/?ver=eng&p=show_person&pid=1015 (Accessed 30/08/2014).

[755] Pochta (Post), 1964. Directed by Mikhail Tsekhanovskii and Vera Tsekhanovskaia, USSR: Soyuzmultfilm. Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khF47qdAHvU (Accessed 5/11/2014).

[756] E. Kovtun, 'Khudozhnik detskoi knigi Vera Ermolaeva', *Detskaia literatura*, Vol.5, No.2 (February 1971), pp.33-37, at p.35.

[757] Vitalii Bianki, *Snezhnaia kniga*, ill. Nikolai Tyrsa (Leningrad: Izdatel'tstvo "Khudozhnik RSFSR", 1981); Kornei Chukovskii, *Barmalei,* ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Khudozhnik RSFSR", 1983); Samuil Marshak, *Kak rubanok sdelal rubanok*, ill. Vladimir Lebedev (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo "Khudozhnik RSFSR", 1974); Samokhvalov, *V lager'!* (1978). The series was issued under the banner 'Khudozhniki detiam iz istorii Sovetskoi detskoi knigi' ('Artists for Children from the History of the Soviet Children's Book').

The late Soviet period also saw picture book texts from the 1920s and early 1930s given new illustrations by a fresh generation of picture book artists. During the 1970s, the Moscow publishing house Malysh (Little One), was notable for commissioning stylish artwork which re-interpreted fifty-year-old texts for Brezhnev era children. In an edition of Bianki's *Chei nos luchshe?* (*Whose Nose is Better?*), illustrator Valentin Fedotov rendered the bird characters in the story with bright, painterly strokes of colour.[758] (Figure 6.2) An anthology of poems and short stories by Kharms was illustrated by Fedor Lemkul' in a cheerful cartoon style, with lots of comic detail to complement the text. Lemkul's characters wore 1960s fashions and the illustrations were dominated by the bright tones of orange, purple and yellow that were popular in design during this period.[759] (Figures 6.3 and 6.4) At the same time, a new generation of children's writers emerged, who were inspired by the recently rediscovered work of early Soviet children's poets such as Kharms and Chukovskii and who managed to throw off the constraints of socialist realism. Playful works by creative poets such as Boris Zakhoder and Irina Tokmakova, won the praise of Chukovskii, who was by then comfortably revered as one of the founding fathers of Soviet children's poetry.[760]

The Soviet Union ceased to exist almost thirty years ago but the picture books that it left behind retain a vibrant influence over Russian children's literature and culture. The Gosizdat offices on the fifth floor of the Singer Building, where Marshak and Lebedev worked their magic and where the Oberiuts made everybody roll with laughter, have long since closed and Leningrad has once more become Saint Petersburg. However, the first two floors of the building still house Dom knigi, the most prominent book shop in the city. Serious readers crowd in with the tourists, who come to drink coffee in a café overlooking the Kazan Cathedral, browse for souvenirs and buy calendars featuring large photographs of Vladimir Putin. In the children's section on the upper floor, books by Chukovskii and Marshak take a prominent place, while titles by Kharms, Charushin, Bianki and Maiakovskii are easy to find on the well-stocked shelves. The popularity of these authors amongst Russian families prevails, in a children's book industry that has great reverence for its vivid past.

Twenty-first century illustrators are re-interpreting 1920s picture book texts for a young generation who are living in a very different world to the one which was shaken by the throes of revolution a century ago. The young Moscow based artist Nina Totibadze has imagined a new visual landscape for Pasternak's poems *Karusel'* and *Zverinets* (*The Menagerie*). The animals on

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[758] Vitalii Bianki, *Chei nos luchshe?*, ill. V. Fedotov (Moscow: Izdatel'tstvo "Malysh", 1978).

[759] Kharms, *12 povarov* (1972).

[760] Sokol, *Russian Poetry for Children* (1984), pp.175-178.

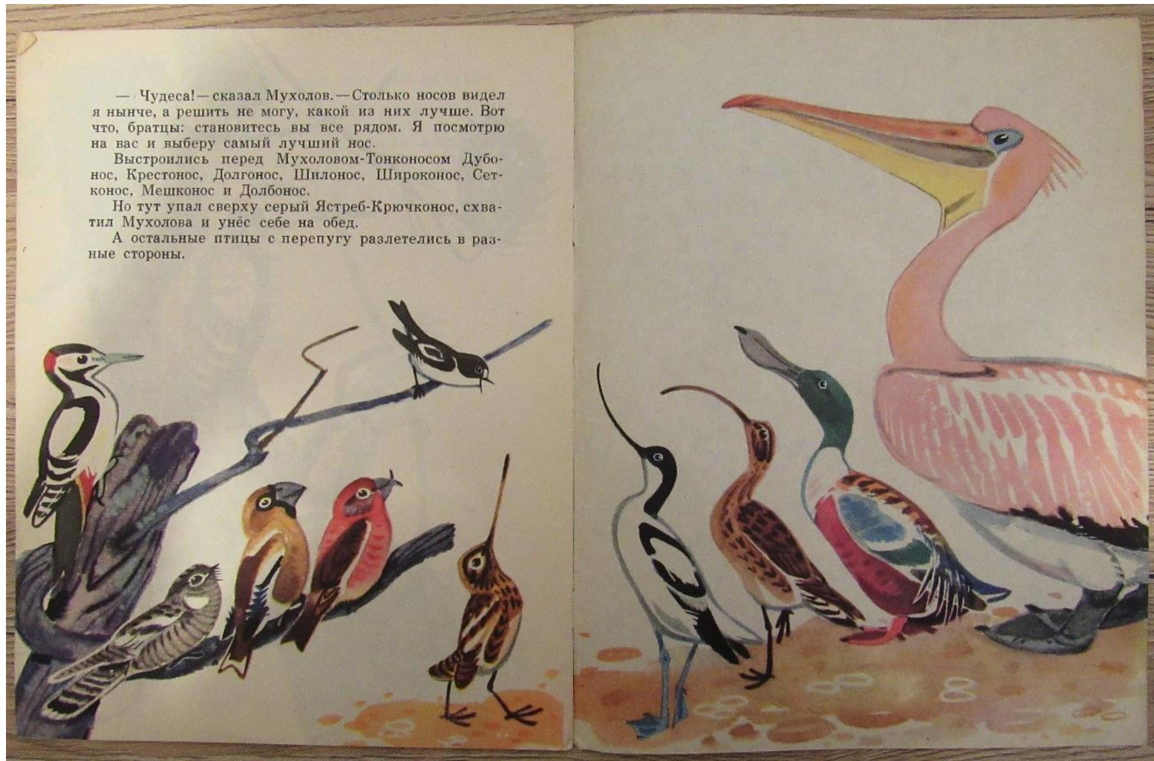
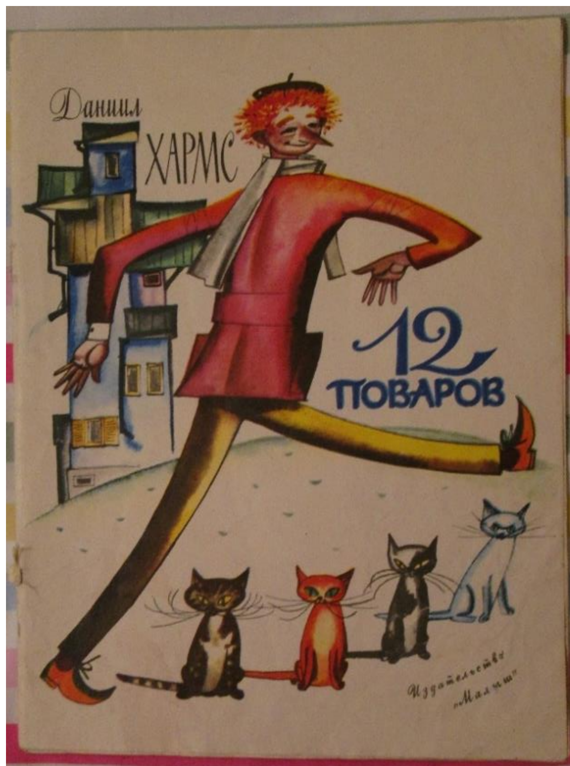
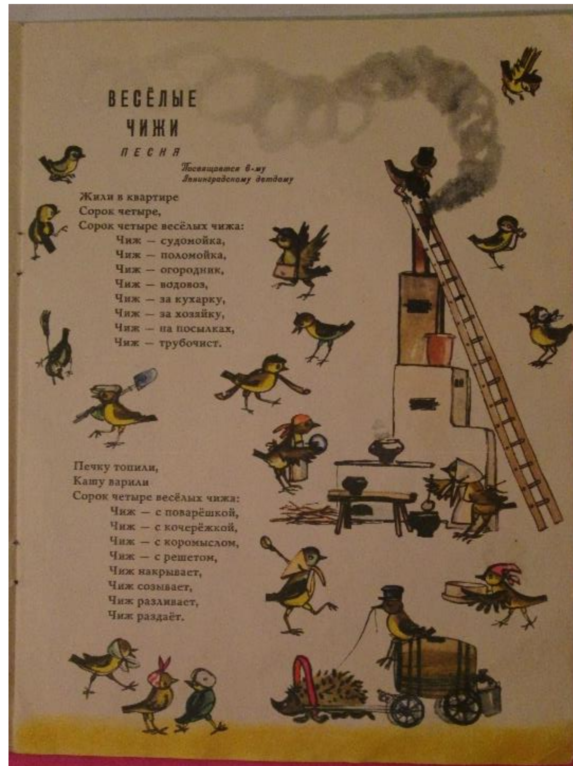


Figure 6.2: Valentin Fedotov, illustration for *Whose Nose is Better?* by Vitalii Bianki (1978).





Figures 6.3 and 6.4: Fedor Lemkul', front cover and illustrations for *Twelve Cooks* by Daniil Kharms (1972).

the carousel come to life with realistic fur and are ridden by children in velvet party dresses and old-fashioned cloth caps. The animals in the zoo are equally life-like, floating on a pure white background with textured fur and feathers, in illustrations that owe more than a small debt to Charushin's fluffy creatures. The leathery skinned elephant covers a double- page spread, while the puma creeps towards us with vivid blue eyes, reminiscent of the snarling big cats in Ermolaeva's drawings for Vvedenskii's *Mnogo zverei*.[761] German artist Willi Glausauer illustrated Kharms' absurd tale *Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh* for a German edition of the book and his pictures were subsequently re-used for a Russian edition. In keeping with the text, the pastel coloured figurative drawings are slightly surreal and they place the characters in a European story-book landscape, which is hard to attach to any particular time period. Characters wear both wellington boots and old-fashioned hats, while a picture of Mickey Mouse on a motor-cycle hangs next to an antique metal bedstead. This approach seems a fitting tribute to Tatlin's original dreamlike landscape and a suitable way to help modern children find their place in the strange world of the story.[762]

Early Soviet picture book tales have also been made into animated films numerous times over the decades, with the *skazki* of Marshak and Chukovskii proving to be perennially popular. Marshak's *Pudel* and *O glupom myshenke* have been reimagined several times whilst Chukovskii's *Barmalei*, *Mukha Tsokotukha* and *Moidodyr* are constantly updated for new generations of Russian children. Some of these stories are also well loved in the theatre world with classic Soviet works providing perfect inspiration for stage productions, including at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, where the ballet company keeps a version of *Moidodyr* in its repertoire. The rapid advancement of technology in the early twenty-first century has seen children, families and schools create their own versions of popular Chukovskii tales and post them on popular video sharing websites. *Moidodyr* and Mukha *Tsokotukha* are the most common choices and many recordings can be viewed of small children carefully reciting the poems or taking part in kindergarten plays and dance recitals that tell the stories. One class of ten-year-olds from Zelenograd in the Moscow region, created a particularly imaginative animated version of *Mukha Tsokotukha* using plastic figures, Lego bricks, modelling clay and paper scenery. The soundtrack featured the children narrating the poem, interspersed with an appropriately atmospheric selection of tunes by 1930s Soviet jazz legend Leonid Utesov.[763]

Early Soviet picture books may still influence contemporary Russian childhood but they have certainly not been forgotten in their original form. Books that were printed in the 1920s and

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[761] Boris Pasternak, *Karusel'*, ill. Nana Totibadze (Moscow: Machaon, 2016).

[762] Daniil Kharms, *Vo pervykh i vo vtorykh*, ill. Willi Glasauer (Moscow: Car'era Press, 2015).

[763] Anna Yakushkina. 2010. *Mukha-Tsokotukha* [Online]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7BzhTOUj_8 (Accessed 3/11/2020).

early 1930s have taken on a glamorous new life of their own, becoming valuable commodities on the international art market. Surviving copies from the period are sold for large sums at prestigious auction houses. A sale of printed books and manuscripts at Christie's in London during November 2010, saw a 1925 Raduga edition of Marshak's *Morozhenoe* sell for 1875 pounds and a rare first edition of Chukovskii's *Barmalei* sell for 3250 pounds.[764] In December 2013 at Bonhams in New York, a copy of David Shterenberg's *Tsvety*, a tiny wordless picture book the size of a postcard which originally cost twenty five kopecks, sold for 2250 dollars.[765] Children's magazines from the period are just as desirable to wealthy collectors, as demonstrated by a sale at Bonhams in December 2012. A lot containing eighty four issues of *Ezh* and six issues of *Chizh* sold for an enormous 12,500 dollars.[766] This phenomenon is a homage to the astute commercial intuition of early Soviet publishing houses and an ironic compliment to those earnest artists who though that their book designs could build a socialist new world.

Graphic design enthusiasts on a much lower budget are able to collect their own copies of selected early Soviet masterpieces. In recent years, a number of publishing houses have produced replicas of some of the most stylish picture books of the period and these provide a thought provoking glimpse into how today's Russians are building a relationship with their Soviet past. A series of reproductions from Moscow publisher Art Volkhonka offers beautifully produced books which replicate the exact size, printed colour and paper tone of the originals. In common with the late Soviet reproductions, each is presented in a cardboard sleeve, which has short articles on the author and illustrator inside the covers. The titles available are not well-known pieces by Chukovskii and Marshak but lesser known books, illustrated by some of the most innovative book artists of the 1920s. There are two box sets of Maiakovskii poems with pictures by various illustrators and there is a box set of Tambi's vehicle books. A collection of production books includes works by Smirnov and the Chichagova sisters, while a group on the theme of travel features Ermolaeva's *Poezd*, along with Vvedenskii and Evenbakh's *Na reke*.[767] In

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[764] Christie's, 2010. *Lot 297.* Available from: https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/dobuzhinskii-mstislav-valerianovich-1875-1957-illustrator-and-chukovskii-5387321-details.aspx?lid=1&sc_lang=en (Accessed 2/11/2020); Christie's, 2010. *Lot 324.* Available from: https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/lebedev-vladimir-and-marshak-5387348-details.aspx?pos=4&intObjectID=5387348&sid=&page=25&lid=1 (Accessed 2/11/2020).

[765] Bonhams, 2013. *Lot 1097*. Available from: https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/21029/lot/1097/ (Accessed 2/11/2020).

[766] Bonhams, 2012. *Lot 3043.* Available from: https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20377/lot/3043/ (Accessed 2/11/2020).

[767] Titles from Art Volkhonka's 'Detiam budushchego' series include Nikolai Aseev, *Top-top-top,* ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2017); Evgenii Shvarts, *Poezd,* ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2017); Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Mnogo zverei*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow: Art Volkhonka,

pondering the title of the series, 'Detiam budushchego' ('To Children of the Future'), we are led to question how the books are intended to be used and for what audience they have been produced. If they really are to be read by today's small children, rather than simply being admired by art lovers, then we might wonder if parents and teachers will use them to explain life in the 1920s and 1930s. As well as superficially showcasing the past through period clothing or technology which has long since become outdated, the books bring to life the world view of a generation who were being raised towards a communist future. We might question if twenty-first century pre-schoolers can really be expected to understand the nuances of Maiakovskii's Soviet moral code or of they will just enjoy the silly humour of his poems. Perhaps this was just the same for small children in the 1920s and they too simply enjoyed the verse given to them by talented poets and the pictures painted for them by gifted artists. Either way, these reproductions offer Russians of all ages the chance to rediscover a forgotten part of their rich literary and artistic heritage.

There are of course, many aspects of the early Soviet picture book that are worthy of discussion but which could never have been sufficiently covered by this thesis alone. The literary and art historical aspects of the topic have already been explored in greater depth by other scholars, however considering the vast number of picture books which were published during the period and the huge number of artists and authors involved, there will no doubt be future publications which discuss these things further. In terms of the social and cultural history of the picture book, there are very many topics that merit further research in their own right. Should archives from Raduga or the Leningrad children's section of Gosizdat in the late 1920s and early 1930s ever emerge, then our understanding of how the Soviet picture book was created will be greatly enriched. There is also a need to further understand how the picture book made the transition to socialist realism, looking at the visual and literary changes that were made and the complicated cultural background to this process. The picture books themselves cover an enormous range of themes and they could be used to help further our understanding of the cultural reception of topics as diverse as the Red Army, agriculture and farming, sport and leisure, early Soviet attitudes to foreign countries and representations of the diverse geography of the Soviet land. This thesis has also only addressed books in the Russian language and scholars who specialise in the languages and cultures of smaller ethnic groups that inhabited the Soviet Union, will surely be able to contribute to our knowledge of the Soviet picture book when they analyse texts from these areas.[768] It is hoped that this thesis has shown how worthy the

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2017); Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Na reke,* ill. Evganiia Evenbakh (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2017); Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Rybaki*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow: Art Volkhonka, 2017).

[768] A very small number of publications have already included or analysed material in non-Russian languages. Christopher Murphy has examined five Central Asian illustrated children's books including two

picture book is, as a historical source which reflects the many complexities of the early Soviet period. Perhaps in the future, the gaps in these pages will be filled and our understanding of the topic will be richer in detail and even more colourful.

The Soviet picture book emerged from a country that had been devastated by war and revolution. At the beginning of the 1920s, production of children's literature was almost non-existent and this makes it all the more remarkable that by the middle of the decade, the Soviet picture book was thriving not only commercially but artistically. A huge number of authors and illustrators applied their skill and imagination to create a large and dazzlingly colourful body of works which represented every aspect of a country which was being rebuilt physically, politically and socially. These authors and illustrators did not always agree on the kind of books that small children should be presented with and they certainly did not always meet with the approval of the pedagogues and politicians who wielded power over educational and cultural matters at this time. They nonetheless succeeded in establishing a rich literary and visual tradition, which ingeniously adapted the rich vocabulary that they had inherited from previous generations of artists and writers, to create a bold and striking new product. The new Soviet picture book tradition exemplified a distinct culture for small children, which was unique to the society into which it had been born. Elements of this picture book culture were so successful that they have prevailed to this day and retained a vivid life of their own, in times which are so very different to the period in which they were first invented. This longevity is testament to the quality and sincerity of a body of work which definitively represents its era. Our modern curiosity may be sparked by a magical wonder tree, speeding locomotive or troop of marching Pioneers but whichever of these we choose, the early Soviet picture book gives us a rainbow coloured portal through which we can travel to an extraordinary period of time and therein lies its true and enduring value.

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in Turkmen, two in Uzbek and an edition of Troshin and Deineko's *Khlebozavod No.3* in Crimean Tartar. See Christopher M. Murphy, 'New Books for New People: Soviet Central Asian Children's Books (1926-32)', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2012), pp.310-322. Some examples of Georgian illustrated children's books and magazines are featured in Pavel Chepyzhov, *New Georgian Book Design, 1920s-30s* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2018), pp.252-273. Images from a selection of early Soviet children's books written in Yiddish are reproduced in Semenikhin, *Kniga dlia detei 1881-1939. Tom 1.* (2009), pp.58-63.

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Wolf, Erica, ‘When Photographs Speak, To Whom Do They Talk? The Origins and Audience of SSSR na stroike (USSR in Construction)’, *Left History*, Vol. 6, No.2, (1999), pp.53-82

Appendix: List of Children's Picture Books

Abramov, A., *Tsentr tiazhesti*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

——, *Konveier*, ill. Aleksei Laptev (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

——, *Vyrezai pechatai*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow: Ogiz-Detgiz, 1934)

Aduev, Nikolai, *Poklep*, ill. Sof'ia Vishnevetskaia and Elena Fradkina (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1927)

——, *Vverkh i vnizu*, ill. Valerii Kozlovskii (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930?)

Agnivstev, Nikolai, *Chaska Chaia*, ill. Vladislav Tvardovskii (Moscow and Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Kitaiskaia boltushka*, ill. Iurii Ganf (Riazan: Druz'ia detei, 1925)

——, *Tvoi Narkomy v tebia doma*, ill. Konstantin Eliseev and Konstantin Rotov (Moscow: Oktiabrenok, 1925)

——, *Vintik-Shpuntik*, ill. Vasilii Tvardovskii (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Sharmanochka,* ill. Viktor Zarubin (Leningrad: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Solntse i svechka*, ill. V. Apostoli (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Vintik-Shpuntik*, ill. Vasilii Tvardovskii (Leningrad: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Znakomye neznakomtsy*, ill. P. Pastukhov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Rebiachii gorod*, ill. Vladimir Dobrovol'skii (Moscow and Leningrad: Raduga, 1929)

——, *Kak primus zakhotel fordom sdelat'eia*, ill. Konstantin Eliseev (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, n.d.)

——, *Oktiabrenok postrelenok*, ill. Ivan Maliutin (Moscow: Oktiabrenok, n.d.)

Aldin, Cecil (trans. Iakov Meksin), *Dzhim* (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

Aleksandrovna, Zinaida, *Kolkhoznaia vesna*, ill. Aleksei Laptev (Moscow: OGIZ-Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

——, *Maika,* ill. Vera Kizevalter (Moscow: OGIZ-Molodaia gvardiia, 1933)

——, *Nashi iasli*, ill. Vasilii Bordichenko and Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow: Ogiz-Detgiz, 1934)

Alekseev, A., *Shest'-desiat*, ill. Natalia Iznar (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Alfeevskii, Valerii and Lebedeva, Tatiana (ills.), *Park kul'tury i otdykha*, (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Na lakore* (Moscow: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Andersen, Hans Christian (trans. unknown), *Svinopas*, ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Berlin: Grzhebin, 1922)

Andreev, Mikhail, *Khrabryi lapot'*, ill. Mariia Pashchenko (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1924)

——, *Anika-voin*, ill. Vasilii Svarog (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Dva brata*, ill. Vladislav Tvardovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

——, *O Ermile i docheri Liudmile*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Khorovod*, ill. Aleksei Radakov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Samsusam*, ill. Vladidlav Tvardovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

——, *Khrabryi lapot*, ill. Mariia Pashchenko (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Len*, ill. N. Goft (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Maliar Sidorka*, ill. M. Pashkevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Maslianitsa*, ill. V. Apostoli (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Medved'*, ill. Petr Buchkin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Obnovki*, ill. Aleksei Efimov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

——, *Samsusam,* ill. Vladislav Tvardovskii (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

——, *Khvastuny*, ill. D. D. Raule (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, n.d.)

Andrievskaia, M., *Basni*, ill. F. Fogt (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Basni*, ill. O-Bonch-O (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Liubopytnye*, ill. E. Zhukovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Matematik khvatik*, ill. M. Purgold (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Annenkov, Iurii (ill.), *¼ deviatogo* (Petrograd: Segodnia,1919)

Artamanova, O., *Upravdom*, ill. Nikolai Lapshin (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927)

Aseev, Nikolai, *Top-top-top*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925)

——, *Krasnosheika*, ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927)

——, *Pro zaiach'iu sluzhbu i lis'iu druzhbu*, ill. Mariia Siniakova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927)

——, *Krasnosheika*, ill. Natan Alt'man (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

——, *Tsirk*, ill. Mariia Siniakova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Kuter'ma (zimniaia skazka)*, ill. Aleksandr Deineka (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Assanov, Nikolai, *Ledokoly radio-stantsii*, ill. Mariia Siniakova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Barto, Agniia, *Pesenki*, ill. L. Mileeva (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Pionery*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926)

——*, Prazdnichnaia knizhka*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927)

——*, Dikovniki*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928)

——, *Gorki,* ill. Mariia Shervinskaia (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Pervoe maia*, ill. Aleksandr Deineka (Moscow: Gosizdat, c.1930)

——, *Pro voinu.* ill. Aleksei Laptev (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Pro tramvai.* ill. Boris Kriukov (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

———, *Pesn o stroike*, ill. Tatiana Mavrina (Moscow: Ogiz - Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

———, *Bratishki*, ill. Georgii Echeistov (Moscow and Leningrad: Detizdat tsk VLKCM, 1936)

——— (trans. Oksana Ivanenko), *Bratiki*, ill. Kesha (Odessa: Ditvidav, n.d.)

Barto, Agniia and Arbatov, P., *Pro lentiaia Ivanycha*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

Barto, Agniia and Barto, Pavel, *Devochka-revushka*, ill. Leonid Feinberg (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Devochka chumazaia*, ill. E. Redlikh (Moscow: Ogiz–Detgiz, 1934)

Barto, Agniia et al., *Mai*, ill. Aleksei Laptev et al. (Moscow: Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

Barto, Pavel, *Elka,* ill. Lev Bruni (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Bednyi, Dem'ian, *Starye kukly*, ill. Kukryniksy (Mikhail Kupreianov, Porfirii Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov) (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Belyshev, Ivan, *Valenki i varezhki*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

———, *Novyi chainik*, ill. Georgii Bibikov (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Benois, Alexandre*, Azbuka v kartinakh* (St Petersburg: Expeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvenykh bumag, 1904)

Benois, Alexandre and Chukovskii, Kornei (eds.), *Elka* (Petrograd: Parus, 1918)

Bianki, Vitalii, *Odnodnevki*, ill. Sergei Rakmanin and Mariia Rakhmanina (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

———, *Liagushenok*, ill. Sergei Rakhmanin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Pastukh i kukushki*, ill. M. Shatalova-Rakhmanina (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Letchiki*, ill. Sergei Rakhmanin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

———, *Pastukh i kukushki*, ill. Vera Ivanova (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Teremok*, ill. Evgenii Charushin (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1930)

Bich, Ol'ga. *Mal-malyshok*, ill. V. Apostoli ((Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Borisov, A. (ill.), *Devochki SSSR* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

Borisovskii, V., *V lavke na prilavke*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

B. Borovskii, *Miach*, ill. Anna Borovskaia (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928)

Braderzon, Moshe, *Babushkina skazka "Tamarochka"*, ill. I. Chaikova (Moscow: Haver, 1923)

Budiak, Iurii (trans. Ant. Popova), *Aist i liagushki*, ill. Iantsyn (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1929)

Bulanov, Dmitrii, *Dikovinnye ptitsy* (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Bush, V. (trans. Samuil Marshak), *Voron'e gnezdo* (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1928)

Butorovna, Mariia (ill.), *Igry* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Charushin, Evgenii, *Okhota na medveda* (Leningrad: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1933)

———, *Raznye zveri* (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

———, *Vol'nye ptitsy* (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Cherkesov, Iurii, *Prazdnik igrushek skazka i risunki* (St Petersburg: Akvilon, 1922)

Chernyi, Boris, *Avtobus Moskva*, ill. Mikhail Gurevich (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Chernyi, Sasha, *Detskii ostrov*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928)

Chukovskii, Kornei, *Prikliucheniia Krokodila Krokodilovicha: Poema dliia malenkikh detei,* ill. Re-Mi (Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo Petrogradskogo soveta rabochikh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov, 1919)

———, *Moidodyr: Kinomatograf dlia detei*, ill. Iurii Annenkov (Petrograd and Moscow: Raduga, 1923)

———, *Moidodyr: Kinomatograf dlia detei*, ill. Iurii Annenkov (2nd ed.) (Petrograd and Moscow: Raduga, 1923)

———, *Murkina kniga*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1924)

———, *Barmalei*, ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

———, *Doktor Aibolit*, ill. Evgenii Belukha (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925)

———, *Mukhina svadba*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

———, *Piatdesiat porosiat*, ill. Sergei Chekonin (Leningrad: A.F. Marks, 1925)

———, *Tarakanishche*, ill. Sergei Chekonin (6th ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

———, *Chudo derevo*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Fedorino gore,* ill. Vasili Tvardovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Mukhina svad'ba*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (4th ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Putanitsa*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Svinki*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929)

———, *Telefon*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (2nd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

———, *Barmalei*, ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (4th ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

———, *Domok: Narodnye stishki*, ill Sergei Chekonin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

———, *Veselye rabotniki,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927)

———, *Zakaliaka*, ill. Sergei Chekonin (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1927)

———, *Tak i ne tak*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1928)

———, *Barabek,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Cherepakha,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Barmalei,* ill. Mstislav Dobuzhinskii (5th ed.) (Moscow and Leningrad: Raduga, 1929)

———, *Ezhiki smeiutsiia*, ill. Vladislav Tvardovskii (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929)

———, *Fedia-bredia: Narodnye stishki,* ill. Dmitri Mitrokhin (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Koshki v lukoshke,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Svinki*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (3rd ed.) (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929)

———, *Fedorino gore*, ill. Vladislav Tvardovskii (5th ed.) (Leningrad: Gosizdat, c. 1930)

———, *Mukha Tsokotukha,* ill. Vladimir Konashevich (2nd ed.) (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Novye zagadki*, ill. Unknown (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Telefon*, ill. Konstantin Rudakov (7th ed.) (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Zagadki*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1933)

——— (trans. unkown), *Fligele-Migele*, ill. unknown (Moscow: Emes, 1935)

———, *Tarakanishche*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Detgiz, 1935)

———, *Telefon*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Leningrad: Detizdat TsK VLKSM, 1936)

Chukovskii, Nikolai, *Nasha kukhniia*, ill. Nikolai Lapshin (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925)

———, *Begletsy,* ill. Arnold Lakhovskii (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

Dan'ko, Elena, *Vasa bogdykhana*, ill. Efim Khiger (Leningrad: Raduga, 1925)

———, *Shakmaty*, ill. M. Ezuchevskii and Vasilii Vatagin (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1929)

Deineka, Aleksandr (ill.), *Krasnaia armiia* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Parad Krasnoi Armii* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Deineko, Ol'ga and Troshin, Nikolai, *Kak Khlopok sittsem stal* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Ot kauchuka do galoshi* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Destom', K., *Domik s zolotymi oknami*, ill. N. Fogt (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Diadia Yasha, *Bum i zveri*, ill. Unkown (Odessa and Moscow: Svetoch, 1927)

———, *Veslyi schet: Pervyi desiatok dlia malykh rebiatok*, ill. Samuil Goldman (Odessa and Moscow: Svetoch, 1927)

Dirsh, Natalia, *Sakhar*, ill. Konstantin Kozlovskii (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

Dirsh, V., *O pauke i mukhe*, ill. Evgenii Rachev (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

Dligach, Lev, *Pozhar koshkinogo doma*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1927)

———, *Osen'*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1929)

———, *Zhilishche*, ill. Mariia Pleskovskaia (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

———, *Zagadki*, ill. Gavriil Pustovoit (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1929)

Dobuzhinskii, Mstislav (ill.), *Veselaia azbuka* (Moscow: Brokgauz-Efron, 1925)

Dub, B., *Tramvai*, ill. A. Petrova (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1927)

Dubianskaia, M., *Den' ptits*, ill. Pavel Basmanov (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1930)

———, *Mnogo rebiat,* ill. Vera Ermolaeva (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Dubnova, Sofiia, *Mat'*, ill. Nadezhda Liubavina (Petrograd: Segodnia, 1918)

Echeistov, Georgii (ill.), *Chto vezet, gde proezzhaet.* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Pozharnye* (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Efimov, Ivan, *Ten: tenevoi teatr.* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

Efimov, Ivan and Efimova, Nina, *Petrushka* (Moscow: L.D. Frenkel, 1924)

Emden, E., *Pesniia o mame*, ill. David Shterenberg (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——— *Skazka o tolstom Shutzmane i ob uchenom doktore*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Vesennii marsh*, ill. V. Ivanova (Moscow and Leningrad: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

———, *Den'*, ill. Vladimir Akhmetev (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

———, *Izvestno li sery?,* ill. Kukryniksy (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

Engel', Rashel', *Pochemu golubei pozdno nakakormili*, ill. Vladimire Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928)

———, *Rabotnichek*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Iabloko*, ill. Lidia Popova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Pro durochka i khvostik*, ill. Mariia Siniakova (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

———, *Zolotye list'ia*, ill. Nina Pamiatnikh (Kashina) (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

———, *Veter: Knizhka zagadok*, ill. D. Mel'nikov (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

Erlikh, V., *Professor zadacha*, ill. Aleksandr Fedulov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929)

Ermolaeva, Vera (ill.), *Shest' masok* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Sobachki* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1929)

———, *Gore kucher* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Ermolaeva, Vera and Iudin, Lev, *Iz bumagi bez kleia* (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Ermolaeva, Vera, Lesnik and Iudin, Lev, *Zoosad na stole* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Esenin, Sergei, *Isus mladenets*, ill. Ekaterina Turova (Petrograd: Segodnia, 1918)

Ezhov, V., *Magnit*, ill. 2nd workshop of Izogoz (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Ezuchevskii, M., *Deti narodov*, ill. Vasilii Vatagin (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1928)

Fede, A., *Veselyi zavtrak*, ill. E. Ivanenko (Moscow: Rabochaia gazeta, 1929)

Fedorchenko, Sof'ia, *Na krylyshkakh*, ill. Afanasii Kulikov (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927)

———, *Zoologicheskii sad: zveri dikovinnye*, ill. Vasilii Vatagin (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1927)

———, *Ezdovye*, ill. Lev Bruni (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, c.1928)

———, *Noch'iu*, ill. G. Din (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1928)

——, *Ptitsy mokrye i sukhie khoroshie i plokhie*, ill. Ivan Efimov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1928)

——, *Ugadai,* ill. Natalia Ushakova (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

——, *Vesenniaia pesnia*, ill. Boris Kriukov (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1929)

——, *Vot tak zveri*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

——, *Bespokoinye sosedi: predstavlenie v 3 x kartinakh*, ill. Fyodor Kondratov (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Pro Dzhana,* ill. M. Granavtseva (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Kak mashina zverei vspoloshila*, ill. Ivan Efimov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, c.1930)

——, *Samyi griaznyi*, ill. Tat'iana Shevchenko and A. Petrova (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Pravda", 1930)

Fedotov, F., *Mongoliia*, ill. Tat'iana Zvonareva (Moscow: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

Fedulov, A., *Igrushki kartoshki* (Ogiz-Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Fish, Gennadii, *Po Neve*, ill. Aleksei Efimov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Sobaki,* ill. M. Pashkevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1929)

Fridman. *Pochemu tramvai ne edut*, ill. A. Sherbakov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Fridkin, B. (ill.), *Tsirk* (Kharkov: Molodoi Bolshevik, n.d.)

Froman, M., *Topor i pila*, ill. M. Pashkevich (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

——, *Zhelezo*, ill. M. Goft (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Fyodorov-Davydov, Aleksandr, *Polnoe lukoshko – vsego ponemnozhka: Narodnye pesni-shutki*, ill. Aleksandra Soborova (Moscow: Rabochaia gazeta, 1927)

——, *Prokazy puza-karapuza*, ill. Aleksandra Soborova (Moscow: Rabochaia gazeta, 1927)

Gamburger, Leonid, *Zateinaia knizhka* (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1930)

Gamburger, Leonid and Vilenski, David, *Chetveronogie sportsmen* (Kiev: Kul'tura, 1929)

Garshin, V., *Liagushka puteshestvennitsa*, ill. Aleksei Komarov (Moscow: G.F. Mirimanov, 1928)

Gek Fin, *Barbos*, ill. S. Malts (Leningrad: Raduga, 1927)

Gelina, A., *Gassan arabskii malchik*, ill. Aleksandr Mogilevskii (Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1932)

Genke, Margarita (ill.), *Kisyn'ka murysen'ka* (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

Gershenzon, Mikhail, *Plokhoi master*, ill. Fedor Kondratov (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Bodun i Niushka*, ill. Konstantin Kuznetsov (Mosow and Leningrad: Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Gladun, Aleksandra, *Oleni i lopari* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

Glebova, Tatiana, *Den' lesa* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Godin, Iakov, *Olen'ka*, ill. Libakov (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1926)

Golom', S., *Khitryi karas'*, ill. Purgold (Leningrad and Moscow: Raduga, 1925)

Goriunov, I.*, Za snopami*, ill. Nina Pamiatnykh (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

Gorlov, Dmitrii (ill.), *Sledy* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Zoopark M.O.K.Kh* (Moscow: Ogiz–Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Gralitsa, Iurii, *Detskii internatsional*, ill. Georgii Echeistov (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1926)

Gromov, Aleksandr, *Golovolomka petukh* (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Korabli* (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1930)

——, *Trafarety* (Ogiz – Molodaia gvardiia, 1931)

Gurevich, Mikhail*, Kuznetskstroi: sotsialisticheskii gigant*, ill. Mikhail Gurevich and A. Ignumov (Moscow: Ogiz - Gosudarstvennoe antireligioznoe izdatel'stvo, 1932)

Gur'ian, Ol'ga, *Progulka.* ill. Vladimir Golitsyn (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926)

——, *Veselaia groza*, ill. Boris Pokrovskii (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926)

——, *Vstrecha na rechke*, ill. Unknown (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1926)

——, *Akhmet i ogorod*, ill. B. Grosevskii, I. Shpinel, V. Veretennikov, Lidia Zholtkevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927)

——, *Nasekomye*, ill. Vladimir Konashevich (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927)

——, *Prazdnik*, ill. Anna Borovskaia (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927)

——, *Pionery prishli!*, ill. M. Shervinskaia (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1929)

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