

Title: From Sleeping Beauty to Citizen: The Dawn of the “Girl Question” in 19th-Century Russian Journals for Girls

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In this paper I argue that the much discussed *zhenskii vopros*, usually rendered in English as “the woman question,” was initially framed as a “girl question,” the evolution of which may be traced in the shifting editorial policies and marketing strategies of the first Russian journals addressed to young female readers: *Zvezdochka* (*Little Star*, 1842-1863); *Luchi* (*Rays*, 1850-1860); *Rassvet* (*Dawn*, 1859-1862); and *Moi zhurnal* (*My journal*, 1885-1890). Subject to rigorous censorship, these journals articulate an officially sanctioned point of view on what Russian girls should read and think. Analysis of these journals’ contents; readers’ and authors’ memoirs; and editors’ correspondence with censors, patrons, and collaborators allows us to trace the emergence of adolescent girls as visible public subjects and potential citizens in 19th-century Russia. As public and pedagogical assumptions about girls’ education shift in the late 1850s, the roles that these journals envision for their readers shift as well. *Little Star*, *Rays*, and *Dawn* had explicitly didactic programs aimed at girls’ enlightenment and transformation into dutiful daughters and future mothers (in the case of *Little Star* and *Rays*) or freethinking female citizens (in the case of *Dawn*). *My Journal*, however, was an explicitly commercial enterprise aimed at an underserved market of girl readers, and it eschewed its predecessors’ attempts to transform dreamy young readers of dangerous French novels into patriotic mothers or citizens of the world. Although other scholars have published brief articles or book chapters analyzing *Zvezdochka* (Greene, Stykalina) and *Rassvet* (Heldt, Rosenholm), my paper is the first to offer a comparative analysis of these journals. It is based on research in Russian archives, memoir literature, and educational history, as well as a thorough study of the journals themselves.