Title: Thank You for a Happy Childhood! Transforming The Bronze Horseman into a Soviet Children’s Classic 1928–1953.

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Between the 1920s and 1930s a fundamental shift took place, as The Bronze Horseman was remade into a children’s classic and a cornerstone of the public school curriculum. This presentation looks the impact of illustrated editions of Alexander Pushkin’s poem Mednyi vsadnik (The Bronze Horseman, 1833) published during the Stalinist era, 1928–1953. Six illustrated editions of Pushin’s poem by five different artists were published during this period. Illustrations became a strategic method of articulating the new cultural priorities of the state, from the rehabilitation of key figures from the past, to the creation of a Red canon and the exaltation of Russia’s national bard in Pushkin jubilees of 1937 and 1949. Illustrated editions of The Bronze Horseman offered a new way of envisioning such figures from the national pantheon as Peter the Great and Pushkin himself. They created a new way of conceiving the former Russian capital St. Petersburg/Leningrad - and this became crucial in post-Siege of Leningrad illustrations, which turned the poem into a reader on how to weather catastrophe and begin the project of rebuilding a damaged city. This presentation examines how illustrated editions transformed The Bronze Horseman, creating a new ways of reading and a new adolescent reading audience.

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