

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 Pushkin'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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