

# Children's Leisure Activities in Russia, 1920s to 1940s



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# Children's Leisure Activities in Russia, 1920s to 1940s

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Material from: National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg; K.D. Ushinsky State Scientific Pedagogical Library, Moscow



This collection of rare publications from the 1920s to 1940s opens a window into the mentality of the 'first Soviet generations' and gives insight into one of the most characteristic aspects of socialising the young in early Soviet Russia. Play was used to inculcate 'politically correct' attitudes and children were taught new variants of familiar games, such as constructing the Lenin Mausoleum with snow bricks dyed red, or playing co-operative shop and collective farm market using wooden models and building blocks. The Pioneer and Komsomol movement devoted huge energy to efforts to 'clean up' children's games in the streets and courtyards: children were, for example, encouraged to play 'communists and fascists' instead of 'cossacks and robbers', and baby or fashion dolls, considered as questionable in gender terms, were ditched in favour of wholesome ethnic representations. Other children's leisure activities featured in this collection are festive holidays: such

as the New Year parties organized by the state for the youth; and a variety of theatre performances and films featuring approved Soviet material. The collection includes books published in the provinces, as well as in Moscow and Leningrad, and covers different age groups, from pre-schoolers to pre-teens. Heavily-ideologized tracts are presented alongside more liberal articles. The actual practices of play are highlighted, rather than schematic recommendations. The selection has been made from materials held at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg and the Ushinsky Pedagogical Library in Moscow. Many of the items included are now extremely rare – the condemnation by state decree of 'pedological perversions' in 1936 led to a purge of pedagogical literature from many libraries, and, as with other kinds of functional literature, the guides were also often used till they wore out.

## RELATED TITLES

- World of Children in the USSR
- Cult of Body
- Everyday Stalinism, Part 1 and 2
- Jewish Theater Under Stalinism: Moscow State Jewish Theater (GOSET)
- Soviet Cinema. Film Periodicals, 1918-1942 - Part 1 and 2
- Soviet Cinema: Archival Documents from RGALI, 1923-35

## SUBJECT AREAS

- Slavic and Eurasian Studies
- Social Sciences
- History
- Gender Studies
- Cultural Studies

## MAIN TOPICS

- Everyday life of children in the USSR
- Holidays
- Leisure activities
- Games, toys
- Theater, cinema, music
- Children and youth policy
- Cultural life in the USSR

## PRODUCT INFORMATION

- Medium: online and on microfiche
- Scope: 273 titles
- Number of microfiches: ca 470
- Language: Russian
- Including Marc21 Records
- Part of the series *Mass Culture and Entertainment in Russia*



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