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A New Normal: Death and Dying in a Soviet Children’s Magazine, 1941-1945

The proposed project considers how the Soviet state presented death and dying to its children during World War II, using the most widely-circulated and consistently-published children’s magazine during the war, Murzilka. The nature of the war and its privations meant that Soviet children – even children beyond the reach of the enemy – had to confront physical death in the loss of parents, siblings, relatives, and neighbors. In marked contrast to prewar conventions, Murzilka integrated violent death and dying into its images and texts, identifying both as part of “normal” Soviet life and history. Special consideration will be given to the differences in presentation of Russian/Soviet death and German/enemy death. This grant will fund the purchase of photocopies of primary source materials available only in Russia, fifteen issues of Murzilka, to supplement those previously acquired.