

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

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“Practice Basic Hygiene, and You’ll Stay Healthy”: How Primary School Reading Textbooks Transmitted Cultural Education in the Soviet Union

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Abstract

Russia’s Cultural Revolution, beginning after the October Revolution in 1917, produced a broadly defined understanding of culture and cultural education at Russian schools that encompassed even basic hygiene and health. Drawing from postdoctoral research, this paper discusses the Cultural Revolution’s impact and its ideas on cultural education as presented in textbooks for 10-year general education schools in the Soviet Union. Discourse analysis revealed that the schoolbooks acted as an interface between a functional education system and changes in its surrounding environment, especially changes due to the Cultural Revolution. Amid today’s COVID-19 pandemic, the study’s findings raise several questions about what can be learned from the past, including to what extent topics of health and basic hygiene should be part of cultural education and to what extent textbooks and other learning materials should transmit that education.

Keywords: cultural revolution, Soviet Union, cultural education, health, socialism, discourse analysis

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Introduction

About one hundred years ago, the Cultural Revolution, commencing in 1920 or 1921 and continuing until 1939, brought about a lasting shift in society (cf. Fitzpatrick 1978, 1999). After the October Revolution in 1917, or the revolution “from above”), followed by civil war that ended in the destruction of all functional systems of Russian society, the Cultural Revolution, the revolution “from below” (both citations Fitzpatrick 1978, 7) , was needed in order to construct a new world of socialism across what would soon become the Soviet Union. The new society had to be able to compete with the capitalistic society beyond its borders, particularly in the development of advanced technology. To achieve the desired progress, however, Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin identified the lack of culture in the Soviet population, home to millions of illiterates, as a major obstacle (cf. Fitzpatrick 1999).

Thus, to serve the Cultural Revolution, the Soviet education system had to be reconceived and needed long-term investment, not only for its survival but also for its capacity to instill culture in the population. Textbooks, as undisclosed mechanisms of state power, therefore served to construct the reality of the time by disseminating carefully selected content and knowledge for generations of students. To that end, authors of the books processed the pedagogical debates of

their time in light of the Cultural Revolution's ideas and applied those ideas in collecting and selecting information to be legitimated by the state for education in Soviet households, especially non-academic ones. For the purposes of that education, a presentation of reality was preferred that would reproduce the understanding of cultural education, inculcated the new society's values, and instructed generations of young people how to act and behave in their everyday lives.

Against that background, this paper responds to the hypothesis that if education served as a vehicle for the ideas of the Cultural Revolution, then the understanding of culture and cultural education had to have been integrated in the contents of the newly created textbooks for that education. To test that hypothesis, a research question was formulated: To what extent did the Cultural Revolution's understanding of culture impact cultural education in the contents of primary school reading textbooks for Russian, as the native language of Soviet students?

In response to that question, this paper focuses on only one aspect of Soviet cultural education conveyed in the textbooks: basic hygiene and health. According to my postdoctoral research, the topic of basic hygiene and health was extensively treated in reading textbooks designed for teaching Russian the Soviet Union's three-year primary schools. The topic was chosen for this paper both because it captures a basic understanding of culture and cultural education during the Cultural Revolution but also because today's COVID-19 pandemic raises questions that also had to be considered at the time. For one, to what extent should health and hygiene education be problematized in cultural education and transmitted in textbooks? By extension, how did the Soviet population experience health and hygiene education a century ago, and how can today's societies apply that experiential knowledge to the current situation?

To answer those questions and test the hypothesis, qualitative methods of social research, namely discourse analysis based on the sociology of knowledge, were applied in interpreting the textbooks. In what follows, Section 2 of the paper describes the state of the art of research on Soviet schoolbooks and the Cultural Revolution, while Section 3 outlines the research's theoretical background. Next, the methods of systematically analyzing the textbooks are detailed in Section 4, after which Section 5 presents the results regarding education in basic hygiene and health sorted by year of education in three-year Soviet primary schools (Section 5). Last, Section 6 and 7 respectively discuss the results and directions for further research.

State of the Art: Research on Soviet Textbooks and the Cultural Revolution

To date, analyses of German-language textbooks have addressed an array of topics, including gender (cf. Gustke 2019; Ott 2016, 2019; Scherer 2016; UNESCO/Georg-Eckert-Institute 2018), bilingualism and multilingualism (cf. Ehlers 2003), illustrations (Bütow 2003), representation of migrants (Geuenich 2015), and racism (Grawan 2014). Some international comparative studies on cultural understandings in textbooks have also involved the analysis of schoolbooks designed to teach history (Christophe 2014) and foreign languages (Fäcke 2016). West German and East German reading books used in primary schools have also been analyzed for comparison (cf. Humburg 2003), as has the culture transmitted in didactic training for teachers (Kühn/Lindner/Scheunpflug 2021).

By contrast, research on Soviet textbooks written in has been few and far between. An early study examined the representation of Germany's past in textbooks for history lessons in Soviet schools

(cf. Salzmann 1982), whereas a later one investigated Soviet textbooks for middle school classes in literature during the period of social upheaval from 1984 to 1991 (cf. Steier-Jordan 1996). In any case, the Soviet period is usually treated in German scholarship as a rather homogeneous period of socialist pedagogy (cf. Kuhlmann 2013). Some historical studies published in German have even focused on the Cultural Revolution (e.g., Lorenz 1969; Seemann 1961). However, no studies addressing education at schools and pedagogical debates during the Cultural Revolution (cf. Anweiler 1964; Krüger-Potratz 1987) have focused on cultural education as conveyed in schoolbooks.

Nevertheless, culture-oriented research in Russian on understanding and interpreting culture, the transmission of culture and cultural education, cultural policy, and the reception of culture in the Soviet Union has experienced a boom (cf. Chodina 2005; Kostina 2009; Kurennoj/Gluchenko 2013; Narski 2018; Rosin 2007; Schendrik 2005). In that vein, historical analyses of the Cultural Revolution in English (David-Fox 1999; Fitzpatrick 1978, 1999) have been widely accepted in Russian scholarship in culturology, the Russian variation of cultural studies (cf. Eismann/Deutschmann 2001; Mamontov 2005; Scherer 2003). Culturological studies often take Russian-centric perspectives, continue to favor methods of historical materialism, and acknowledge Russian culture as a special "type of culture" (Dobrochotov/Kalinkin 2010, 126). However, research on discourse in Russian addressing the meaning of the Cultural Revolution, as well as its understanding of culture and cultural education as represented in Soviet schoolbooks, has been neglected.

Culture and Education in the Cultural Revolution

The understanding of what culture is, how cultural education should be, and what that understanding means in constructing a new society and system of education ranked among the most-discussed topics during the Cultural Revolution, even to the point of raising "heated arguments among Communist intellectuals" (Fitzpatrick 1999, 79) in the congresses of the ruling Communist Party. According to Fitzpatrick (*ibid.*), two conflicting positions dominated debates about culture in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. On the one hand, some leaders "wanted to destroy 'bourgeois' culture and develop a new 'proletarian' culture"; on the other, some leaders, "including Lenin and Lunacharsky thought that culture had a meaning beyond class, and moreover that Russia had too little of it" (*ibid.*). Serving as a basis for addressing the issue of culture were texts by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that generally considered humans' use of tools as being unique and crucial to defining human culture versus nature – in short, that "culture is what makes us into human beings and that fundamental for culture is tool use" (Veer 2007, 54).

Paradoxically, although the omnipresent Cultural Revolution was committed to bringing culture to the people, the time of the Cultural Revolution was accompanied by political upheavals and challenges, including civil war, conflicts over ruling style between Lenin and Stalin (cf. Lenin 1922; Leonhard 1979), Lenin's death in 1924, various forms of political repression, and the problem of the ideologization of culture. In the early 1920s, the topic of cultural understanding and its interpretation for the new system of socialism in the Soviet Union could be openly discussed in public, and international artists' exchanges were supported by the state. By the end of the 1930s, however, the freedom of discourse and art had changed dramatically in keeping with Stalin's mounting totalitarian regime. In parallel, the living and working conditions for cultural workers deteriorated rapidly, and in the end, "The avant-garde side of aesthetic thought and artistic practice

had repressed, tabooed, or declared inessential” (Städtke 1989, 258). Whereas the Russian avant-garde and formalist art theory were accused of being bourgeois, socialist realism came into favor. Even so, during Stalin’s regime, even professional and established artists were not safe from repression and often could not participate in the Cultural Revolution if they were suspected of propagating bourgeois culture. Some of those artists were arrested and either emigrated or were exiled. The situation eased after Stalin’s death in 1953, when, coincidentally, the Soviet Union established the world’s first-ever Ministry of Culture (cf. Khlestanov 2013).

The goals of the Cultural Revolution included improving cultural knowledge and cultural education, with the specific goals of, among other things, eradicating illiteracy, boosting people’s suppressed self-confidence, raising awareness about basic hygiene and health, emancipating women, and eliminating widespread religiosity. According to Khlestanov (2013, 37), self-confidence and the ability to independently manage one’s everyday life, as well as to co-govern the state, were significant parts of cultural understanding for Lenin. In the same spirit, Kurennyy (2013, 8) has summarized the understanding of culture and the goals of cultural education supported by the Cultural Revolution as “the basic behavioral norms and attitudes of a person up to the level of high culture (art, science, education).”

While analyzing a range of historical documents from the time of the Cultural Revolution, which generally capture the everyday lives of Soviet citizens, including conversations with parents about their children’s daily school routines and conditions in which they do their homework, Fitzpatrick (1978, 1999) elaborated three levels of cultural understanding, cultural education, and cultural education’s goals. Taken together, the three levels distinguish the urban population, rural population, and ruling elite in terms of culture and cultural challenges as well as the requirements for improving their various cultural situations.

At the first level, the cultural requirements for peasants working on collective farms (*kolchosy*) were among the lowest. For that subset of the population, culture was primarily summarized in terms of basic hygiene: “washing hands with soap, tooth-cleaning, not spitting on the floor” and “elementary literacy, which was still lacking among a substantial part of the Soviet population” (Fitzpatrick 1999, 80). By contrast, more was expected from urban dwellers, who formed the second level of culture and thus needed to demonstrate table manners, behave well in public places, treat women politely, and draw from basic knowledge of Communist ideology (*ibid.*). The first two levels of cultural understanding also promoted “wearing underwear, eating with knife and fork, washing hands before meals, reading the newspaper, not beating your wife and children, and not getting so drunk you missed work” (*ibid.*, 81).

The third level of cultural understanding and cultural education, embracing “good manners, correct speech, neat and appropriate dress, and some appreciation of the high culture of literature, music, and ballet” (*ibid.*, 80), referred to the new governing elite. The self-directed acquisition of cultural knowledge and cultural education by citizens at the third and highest level was motivated, for example, by quizzes in popular magazines – one was titled “Are you a person of culture?” – with questions addressing classics of world literature (e.g., Shakespeare and Heine), the Soviet Union’s technical achievements (e.g., types of warplanes), and the names of Soviet icebreakers (Fitzpatrick 1999, 87). On cultural expeditions, professionals at the third level, including physicians, teachers, and journalists, would travel throughout the country to convert people of different ethnicities to

culture. Their successes and failures were meticulously documented, including their difficulties in converting Nordic peoples such as the Chukchi to Soviet culture (cf. Slezkine 1992).

To succeed, the Cultural Revolution also required a new kind of education and rapid training of the masses as resources to develop the envisioned society. State pedagogical institutions such as the Krupskaya Academy of the Communist Education and the People's Education Commissariat, both of which advocated the theoretical foundations of Marxist pedagogy and its practical implementation, were also engaged in the "intensification of the ideological struggle in the Cultural Revolution" (Krüger-Potratz 1987, 53). From the outset, the significance of ideological education was emphasized both in and outside the institution of schools. In either situation, the educational processes and even personal experiences had to be implemented following "a unified plan" (ibid., 60) and controlled by means of organized experiences at school and at extracurricular educational events.

During the Cultural Revolution, a period characterized by experiments in all parts of society (Kurennoy 2013), education at institutions needed a new type of pedagogy (cf. Anweiler 1964) that could reveal "the truth that the bourgeoisie has kept hidden" from the students (Volpicelli 1958, 104). To that end, Soviet schools, typically labeled "polytechnic schools," were expected to be oriented toward practice. They all followed the ideas of the Dalton Plan, a concept developed and applied by U.S. education reformer Helen Parkhurst at a school in Dalton, Massachusetts. According to the Dalton Plan, students need to learn independently, frontal instruction is discouraged, and teachers should instruct and help students during their educational processes (cf. Parkhurst 1922). In that way, the Plan is a proven pedagogical practice that may be suitable for pandemic-induced homeschooling today.

For their part, teachers in Soviet schools were expected to help students to connect newly gained knowledge to its practical application. After all, to quote Veer (2007), "The application of newly acquired knowledge in the context of work is one way to guarantee its deep-level processing" (46). In that pedagogy, learning processes should be interdisciplinary, intuitive, and individual. Among the many teachers who engaged in reconceiving and reshaping Soviet schools, Lev Vygotsky (1933/1935) developed a range of pedagogical ideas still recognized today, including children's zone of proximal development, according to which a teacher and a student make an individualized learning plan with specific learning goals to achieve. Metaphorically speaking, those steps cooperate to form a "scaffold" (Vygotsky 1978) that can be dismantled once the learning goals are achieved.

Finally, the idea of 10-year general education at schools has gained acceptance, with Years 1 to 3 constituting primary school, Years 4 to 8 constituting middle school, and Years 9 and 10 constituting upper school. During the Cultural Revolution, because the young, mostly rural state urgently needed a labor force to participate in the Soviet Union's lagging industrialization, schooling did not need to last long, and the knowledge acquired needed to be practical and favor technological and agricultural understanding (cf. Volpicelli 1958, 109). According to Salzman (1982), who has argued that experimentation in developing Soviet schools ended in the 1930s, the most fundamental ideas of school-based pedagogy and education were developed during the Cultural Revolution and have retained their validity even "decades afterwards" (cf. ibid., 5).

Last, and more to the point of the research presented here, the Cultural Revolution involved the development of new types of textbooks to meet the new society's needs. Serving as "the most important teaching tool" (Vagin/Speranskaya 1959, 131), the books have since provided an "authentic representation of the content of socialist general education" (cf. Baumann 1984, 10). Discussing the multifunctionality of the books, Hacker (1980, 28 and 97) has underscored their connection with students' realities and role as a motivational means of learning, exploring, and acquiring knowledge during self-study by means of research-based learning (cf. Kozdon 1974, 100). The reading textbooks for three-year Soviet primary schools were chosen for this paper's analysis, because they not only offered students their first encounter with their native language in a written text but also transmitted culture and ideology, knowledge about the self and the world, and cultural identity, all by means of narratives describing the student's world.

Methods

According to Keller (2006, 2011), discourse analysis based on the sociology of knowledge has formed the basis for analyses of textbooks since the days of the Soviet Union. In that type of discourse analysis, Keller (2004) has observed the ideas of Foucault (1974), the themes of power and discourse, and the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann (2013). The approach asks a wide range of questions. For one, how is social knowledge constructed in a discourse, and what role do power relations and institutions play therein? For another, what is allowed to be expressed, and what is not? Because qualitative social analysis examines the social construction of knowledge and power at both the micro-level of individual actors and the macro-level of institutions, its goal, summarized by Keller (2011), is "to empirically investigate the forms, extent, and consequences of social defined relations and knowledge policies" (17).

As a form of discourse, textbooks, on the one hand, are also media that manifest knowledge about a particular society that the state considers valuable to disseminate among its members. On the other, they are collections of selected texts and learning materials that form a corpus of data and contain discourses of knowledge concerning the school subjects addressed. As discourses, textbooks are not rigid entities but have their own dynamics within the functional system of education. The discourse of knowledge in textbooks is constructed by their contents, in the process of institutionalization in the education system, materialized in book form, and reproduced in the classroom.

Textbooks depend on the social power relations of their time, with decisions about their content made to offer society certain bodies of knowledge for internalization but not others. In the words of Foucault (1978), "Discourse is constituted by the differences between what could be said correctly in an epoch (according to the rules of grammar and the rules of logic) and what is actually said. The discursive field is, at a given moment, the law of this difference" (316). According to that logic, in the decision-making processes of including and excluding content, knowledge in school textbooks has to appear to the era's power elites to be meaningful, valuable, and in conformity with the state's ideology. Discourse internally regulates the questions of what is to be included and what is not, what is to be concealed and what may be uttered, and appears externally in the form of a textbook that is readymade, unquestionable, and obligatory for students.

Those power-knowledge complexes are also phenomena of certain epochs (Foucault 1974b). Textbooks manifest social orders of knowledge by reproducing the knowledge of their epoch, the

values of their society, the society's image of itself, and people's desires, as well as represent both subjective and objective realities. On the one hand, they reflect the subjective interpretations of knowledge and reality by their authors. On the other, they also represent an objective reality, for they correspond to the institutionalized reality, represent the construction of reality legitimated by the state, and offer knowledge accepted by the society of their epoch. That system of rules for constructing reality in light of value concepts and self-images, among other factors, are permanently maintained in a cycle, because students interpret the contents of their textbooks, integrate their subjective–objective realities into their own personal realities during socialization in school, and generalize those realities to other social situations.

To return to the method applied, Keller (2011) understands discourse analysis based on the sociology of knowledge as “not a specific method” but a “theoretically grounded research perspective on particular research objects that are precisely conceived as discourses” (Keller 2011, 18). For that reason, various methods of reconstructive social research can be applied in such an analysis. In the research reported here, the selected textbooks were the discourses analyzed, according to a qualitative research paradigm based on content analysis (Mayring 2016), one that involves oscillating between steps of analysis and the verification of the initial hypotheses. The reconstruction process, performed in a methodologically controlled manner and guided by research-eminent questions (Keller 2004, 98), involved analyzing fragments of discourse in order to glean their formation and examining patterns of their interpretation and phenomenal structures.

Next, guided by methods of qualitative social research (Kelle/Kluge 2010), coding was performed on a licensed version of a QDA software. Following the theoretical condensation of cultural approaches of the Cultural Revolution and the inductive–deductive analysis of the textbooks, three categories concerning the understanding of cultural education in the Soviet schoolbooks were crystalized: culture as basic hygiene and health education, culture as ideology, and culture as art education. As explained at the beginning of the paper, however, only the first category is presented and discussed herein.

Selection of Data

Textbooks from the Soviet era are well-received in Russian society today. Although all of the books were gradually replaced after the Soviet Union collapsed, several generations of the population were socialized by schoolbooks developed in the Soviet Union and educated by teachers trained in the Soviet Union as well. The current popularity of Soviet textbooks is largely indebted to the widespread opinion, one propagated on YouTube by local pedagogical experts, that the contents and methods of Soviet books in different subjects were more thoughtfully conceived than modern ones.

In the study reported here, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planned research in a Russian archive had to be postponed, and sources available online were used instead. Extensive research surprisingly revealed online publishers as well as private providers offering access to a wide selection of Soviet textbooks on the internet, sorted by subject and year. Whereas the online publishers have purchased licenses to reprint and sell selected, unaltered Soviet textbooks and maintain “Soviet Textbooks” as a section in their catalogs, the websites of private collectors have digitized either donated or self-purchased Soviet textbooks and archived them for access, depending on the property rights, either for download or for perusal online. In either case, the

website owners, sometimes bloggers, present their collections of the Soviet textbooks as their personal projects. Although the textbooks are free to view, local advertising is procured to finance the websites, and donations for the project are accepted.

Ultimately, no website was identified that offers a complete, well-preserved selection of textbooks that would accommodate systematic textbook analysis. Furthermore, in the online archives, many scanned textbooks, due to their age, were in poor condition, as reflected in the charming antique quality of the pages, often with notes in the margins, underlining, and library stamps. Nevertheless, the websites proved useful in gaining an overview of the contents in the range of Soviet schoolbooks on different subjects still in existence, in whatever form.

For the research, reading textbooks for Russian were gathered from <https://stalins-bukvar.ru>, an official website that owns the property rights to retail a selection of Soviet textbooks used in primary school. The website derived from the private initiative of young father who found enough sponsors for his project to collect and sell the selected Soviet books for primary school by means of a crowdfunding platform. As he explains on the website, his aim was to find better schoolbooks in math, reading, and writing for his children, for in his opinion, today's schoolbooks are not good enough for teaching basic skills in primary school. More recently, the project became an official online archive licensed to sell a selection of textbooks for primary schools allegedly produced in Stalin's era, hence the website's name "stalins-bukvar," or 'Stalin's ABC fiddle.' In the archive, textbooks published in 1954 and 1955, thus after Stalin's death, nevertheless contain portraits of Stalin, and their usually high edition numbers (e.g., 11th edition) indicate their initial publication in the Stalin era, which partly overlapped the period of the Cultural Revolution. Because the research focused on the impact of the Cultural Revolution's ideas of culture and cultural education as presented in Soviet schoolbooks, the website was used to obtain the original documents, which are printed unaltered and can be used as learning supplements.

Results: Treating Basic Hygiene and Health in Russian Reading Textbook

All of the analyzed textbooks for Russian reading classes in primary school were published by Prosvetchenie ('Enlightenment'), which regularly printed Soviet schoolbooks on behalf of the Ministry of Enlightenment or the ministry that dealt with topics of education. The name of the publishing house and the Ministry indicates the purpose of education – that is, enlightenment – and even the name of the ministry remains the same today.

As usual in Russian, each book's table of contents appears at the end of the book, such that students do not have to immediately confront the contents instead of the structure. The analyzed schoolbooks are all structured according to the same scheme, with the four seasons of the school year – "Autumn," "Winter," "Spring," and "Summer" – determining the organization of the contents. The schoolbooks begin with either the chapter "Autumn," because the Soviet school year in all republics began on September 11, or with the chapter "Summer" or, in some cases, "Remembering the Summer." Between the seasonal chapters, the other chapters, varying from book to book, focus on topics such as homeland, family, and comrades.

In the books analyzed for the first three years of primary school, basic hygiene and health education are covered in all three years. According to my investigation and preliminary research for the

selection of data material, the discourse on health and hygiene no longer treats the topics separately after the third year of primary school.

The First School Year

The table of contents in the reading book for the first school year contains 10 chapters, in the following order: "School," "Family," "Winter," "Lenin Days," "The Soviet Army," "The City" (Moscow), "Practice Basic Hygiene, and You'll Stay Healthy", "Domestic and Wild Animals," "Spring," and "Summer." As the table of contents shows, an entire chapter is devoted to the topic of basic hygiene and health, even though it is only three pages long, from page 74 to page 76. The top of page 74 presents a framed slogan, "Bud tschistim – budesch sdorovim," that can be translated as "Practice Basic Hygiene, and You'll Stay Healthy". To the right and left of the motto appear illustrations of the same boy, drawn in black and white. On the left, the boy is performing his morning exercises; on the right, he is bending over a sink to wash himself. Taken together, the images can be interpreted as depicting a coherent action.

Various other images and genres are used to introduce the discourse of basic hygiene and health and to make the lessons easy for children to memorize. Whereas images visualize washing and exercising, slogans are easy to remember. A particular image in the discourse's formation depicts a scene from a girls' physical education class, in which the teacher, a woman, stands in front of her students who are wearing athletic gear and ready to exercise. Under the picture, appearing in the third-person plural, are four statements presented as if a mantra to be repeated in unison: "We play sports", "We like to play sports", "Playing sports helps us to be healthy", and "Playing sports makes us strong".

Structurally, the discourse on health and basic hygiene in the first school year assumes an introductory character with the aim to teach healthy habits. Along with different methods of expression – black-and-white drawing, children's poems, and technical instructions—the discourse presents an understanding of culture as civilization and explains norms of basic hygiene in children's everyday routines. It also connects the idea of hygiene with the idea of health and, in turn, the idea of health with playing sports and exercising. Receiving special focus in the discourse, water is highlighted for its significance in basic hygiene and health as well as its association with cleanliness. On the one hand, one must wash with water in order to be healthy and clean; on the other, one's clothes, bed, and bedding have to be washed, also with water, in order to maintain good health.

The significance of water for basic hygiene is especially highlighted by two poems, written in plain language, that explain water's value to children. In telling a story, each poem is easy for children to remember, which was often the goal of the lesson. The first poem, "One Must Wash," written by famous children's poet, journalist, and translator Korney Chukovsky (1882-1969), addresses the importance of washing oneself in a child-friendly narrative emphasizing the use of water, toothpaste, soap, and a towel. In the poem's first stanza, the reader is introduced to the everyday morning routines of animals such as mice and kittens that involve washing themselves. The reader, however, assumed to be dirty, is directly reproached in the second-person singular, "You," for not washing. Indeed, as the poem continues, being unclean is why "your" clothes and shoes have run away.

The second poem, “What Is Good and What Is Bad,” by revolutionary artist Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930) also moralizes the issue of basic hygiene and provides moral instructions on how to behave by distinguishing good from bad behavior. In the poem’s plot, a boy asks his father to explain what kind of behavior is good and what kind is bad. The father answers that good behavior, for instance, is when the boy washes himself, brushes his teeth, and keeps his clothes and shoes clean, whereas not doing those tasks is bad behavior. Thus, cleanliness is again associated with being good, while the lack thereof is again associated with being bad. In both poems, the antinomy of cleanliness versus being dirty therefore rises to the surface. Because religious education was abolished in the Soviet Union, moral justifications other than ones based on religion or ethics were given to children to encourage them to perform their daily routines every day and master their lives in accepted ways. In that sense, as part of cultural education, deeper meaning was infused in the schoolbooks’ lessons about basic hygiene and health.

Other methods of discourse formation in the textbooks are technical rules and instructions. For example, on page 75, to explain the importance of washing oneself and brushing one’s teeth properly, six rules advise washing one’s face in both the morning and evening (Rule 1) but washing one’s hands first (Rule 2), as well as washing one’s face, neck, and ears (Rule 3), drying off with a towel (Rule 4), keeping one’s towel clean (Rule 5), and brushing one’s teeth with tooth powder, also in both the morning and evening (Rule 6). After those rules, the text explains that people can do even more to stay healthy – for example, “breathe clean air,” “air out the room,” and keep the bed made.

In sum, the discourse formation in the textbook for the first year of primary school presents basic hygiene and health not only as a fundamental, significant aspect of people’s daily routines but also as an essential element of a healthy life, one that gives life structure and a deeper sense.

The Second School Year

The reading book for the second school year contains 14 chapters, presented in the following order: “Remembering the Summer”, “Gardens”, “Autumn”, “School, Family, and Comrades,” “The Great October Socialist Revolution”, “The City”, “Winter,” “Getting to Know the Sensory Organs,” “The Soviet Army,” “Domestic and Wild Animals,” “Spring,” “Forest,” “Gardens”, and “May Day Festival.” Therein, basic hygiene and health are discussed in the chapter “Getting to Know the Sensory Organs,” from pages 141 to 148. However, the chapter first presents two short stories – one about a boy who meets a blind person for the first time, the other about the friendship of a beaver that can hear better than see and a swan that can see better than hear – along with activities for understanding sense organs (pp. 141–146). Only the chapter’s penultimate page (p. 147) addresses personal hygiene and health before the chapter returns to the topic of sensory organs.

The second year’s schoolbook presents the discourse of hygiene and health primarily with black-and-white drawings in two parts. The first part, “Taking Care of Your Body,” focuses on caring for one’s body by illustrating animals in the process of cleaning themselves: a dog licking itself clean, birds splashing in a puddle, two mice washing themselves with their front paws, and a cat pawing itself behind the ear. In view of those images, the students are tasked with explaining how the animals clean themselves. By contrast, the second part, “Our Sanitarians at School,” discusses hygiene and health with a series of three pictures framed together that show three spaces at school

that need to be kept clean by students. The image on the left depicts an open medicine cabinet and an older boy, wearing a white coat and handing liquid medicine to a younger boy. In the center image, the boy in the white coat doctors another boy's hand. Last, in the image to the right, a student actively cleans a blackboard. Underneath those images, an activity asks students to describe the duties and responsibilities of the school's orderlies and sanitarians, two roles in the school community typically held by older students. After that, however, the chapter "Getting to Know the Sensory Organs" ends with a tale about a clever blind boy who understands what happens better than people with full vision.

Thus, the discourse of basic hygiene and health in the second year's textbook centers on two subtopics – self-care and health at school – and is formed almost entirely by visual means, with a page full of images connecting the ideas of basic hygiene and health on two levels. At a basic level, even animals instinctively take care of their bodies; at a scientific level, sanitation and keeping clean promote human well-being and health. Taken together, living and working, in that order, both require clean spaces to ensure hygiene and health.

The Third School Year

In contrast to the textbooks for the first and second years, the reading book for the third school year is divided into three chapters – "Literature," "Geography and Natural History" and "History" – each with a series of subchapters. First, "Literature" includes "Remembering the Summer," "Autumn," "School, Comrades, and Family," "Winter," "Fairy Tales and Fables," "Spring," and "Cities and Streets." The next chapter, "Geography and Natural History," includes "Orientation to Place," "Fields," "Domestic Animals," "Gardens," "Forests," "Forms of Earth Surface," "Water in Nature," "Water-Dwellers," "Amphibians," "Climate," "The Human Body and Its Care," and "Great Russian Inventors and Explorers." Last, the chapter "History" includes "The Past of Our Homeland," "The History of Our Socialist Homeland," "Five-Year Plans," "The Great Patriotic War," and "Reconstruction after the War."

In the third year's book, basic hygiene and health are treated in the subchapter "The Human Body and Its Care" (pages 256-271), which, as part of the chapter "Geography and Natural History," approaches the topics from the perspective of natural science. The subchapter is the only part of the schoolbook written by a named author, Isaenko, presumably a natural scientist but someone who otherwise remains entirely unidentifiable. Not only is the surname Isaenko common, but Ukrainian surnames typically end in "o" as well and do not indicate gender.

In a departure from the schoolbooks for the two previous years, the discourse on health and basic hygiene in the subchapter takes a scientific approach and offers specialized information without using the tools of narrative or verse. In fact, the subchapter "The Human Body and Its Care" contains rather professional information for children, albeit written in plain language, that seems to have been adapted from an anatomy textbook for the students of medicine. As such, the discourse is structured according to a clear-cut logic that repeats throughout the subchapter: an aspect of the human body and its care is introduced and explained in a technical but reader-friendly way, and that information is illustrated in a black-and-white image, followed by reading comprehension activities for students about health and their bodies.

For instance, the first aspect of the subchapter, “The Skeleton,” is introduced in a technical text with information about the human skeleton and its parts. For comparison, the section provides an illustration of a horse skeleton and a human skeleton, followed by an explanation of their components. Then, in an activity, students are asked to describe the two skeletons in a comparative way (p. 257). The next section, “The Spine”, with the subsection “Spinal Curvature”, discusses the titular topics with illustrations of correct and incorrect posture while sitting at a desk. Another illustration on the same page shows a person with a crooked spine standing with their back to the reader and carrying a bucket in their right hand. The text explains that people should carry heavy objects alternately with their left and right arms in order to avoid spinal curvature. The next section, “Chest and Muscles,” follows a similar structure; it begins with a brief introduction, followed by illustrations of the chest and muscles of the human body. Although the drawings could be from an anatomy textbook for medical professionals, the source is not cited.

In the subchapter, a large section, “Nutrition,” is devoted entirely to the titular theme. Following an explanation of human digestion, the body’s digestive organs are illustrated and labeled. After that, the differences between foods for animals and plants are elaborated. The act of digestion is next detailed as the path of food from ingestion to elimination, with the take-home message that one should chew food well before swallowing it. Thereafter, subsections include “Teeth,” “Dental Care,” and “Vitamins,” followed by a list of seven rules for healthy eating: chewing food well, eating at regular times, not eating too much at once, not eating right before going to bed, eating raw plant foods because they contain more vitamins than cooked food, not overcooking food in order to retain vitamins, and not touching food with dirty hands (p. 264).

The subsequent section is dedicated to the topic of infectious diseases, with definitions and examples of six illnesses. Therein, the subsection “Microbes” discusses six types of microbes (e.g., typhoid, tuberculous, and cholera), with black-and-white illustrations of how they appear under a microscope. Next, the section explains how bacteria and viruses can be transmitted and what people can do to prevent their spread. The final subsections – “Breath,” “Respiratory Organs,” “The Skin,” “Circulation,” and “The Heart” – include an explanation of what to do upon cutting a finger, followed by a final section discussing sensory organs in detail with illustrations. As all of the book’s sections, the final one provides questions for thought and tasks for students to complete.

Based on the textbook analyzed, reading books for the third year of primary school in the Soviet Union situated discourse on basic hygiene and health in the context of the natural sciences. Unlike books used in the other years, the third year’s book does not downplay the complexity of the topics but uses technical terms and perspectives to discuss them. By contrast, the first school year’s book structures the discourse around images, poems, and rules, while the second year’s book gives hygiene and health added meaning by contextualizing the topics in terms of animal instinctiveness and how humans have progressed beyond the state by virtue of technology. The third year’s schoolbook thus presents the topics of basic hygiene and health from a distinctly scientific perspective.

Conclusion: Cultural Education as Enlightenment

The research question set the study’s sights on traces of cultural education propagated in the Cultural Revolution in Soviet reading schoolbooks for the Russian language. To that aim, reading books used in three-year primary schools were analyzed to understand the extent to which themes

of cultural education were represented in the cultural knowledge conveyed by those textbooks. Accordingly, the hypothesis – that ideas of culture debated during the Cultural Revolution must have found their way into schoolbooks – was confirmed. As discussed in this paper, the first level of the understanding of culture – the instruction of the population in health and basic hygiene – was included in the contents of the reading textbooks in order to reach a large-scale population of youth year after year and thereby consciously convey values of the Cultural Revolution to new generations, socialize them with those values, and ensure the system's future and long-term survival.

The formation of the discourse on basic hygiene and health continues throughout the parts of the analyzed schoolbooks that address the topics. In the first two years of primary school, the topics are connected to students' everyday lives, with the purpose of integrating healthy habits, basic hygiene, and exercise into their daily routines. Vivid images, short stories, fables, tales, poems, clear rules, and even instructions for daily practice are used to relate the topic to children and instill the idea that part of being good is being clean. Often, communicating those messages relies upon students' age-appropriate knowledge of and interest in animals to encourage them to practice basic hygiene by showing how animals instinctively clean themselves. In short, because instinct helps animals to survive and because basic hygiene is an instinct, humans need it for survival, too. At the same time, basic hygiene and health involve more than merely caring for one's body and playing sports, for medicine and clean spaces in everyday life are also needed to maintain human health.

The formation of the discourse, however, changes dramatically in the third year of primary school, when the topics of basic hygiene and health begin to be treated in the context of the natural sciences. Indeed, the construction of their presentation for the third year's textbook demonstrates the complexity of hygiene and health and their significance for human survival. The treatment of the topics in the schoolbook offers practical tips for applying such knowledge in life, largely by means of rules for healthy eating, caring for one's body, sitting correctly, and avoiding contagious diseases. Altogether, the discourse on hygiene and health in the first three years of primary school formed in a multidisciplinary way, and the reading books for lessons in the students' native language of Russian seem to have played a central role in that process.

Along those lines, cultural education, as constructed in the schoolbooks analyzed, served the purposes of enlightenment. In that light, enlightenment can be understood not only as the historical era of "the Enlightenment" but also as a unifying element of pedagogical practice across time, space, and cultures that makes the notion of education per se a "practical enlightenment" (Maier/Conrad 2020, 19). Thus, enlightenment is a process of transformation and emancipation: not an accumulation of knowledge but "a work of ourselves on ourselves as free beings" (Foucault 1990, 50). The critical examination of oneself thus "must be imagined as an attitude . . . in which the critique of what we are is at the same time the historical analysis of the limits given to us and an experiment in the possibility of their transgression" (ibid., 53). In that same sense, the Soviet ministry charged with administering education was called the "Ministry of Enlightenment," not the "Ministry of Culture." After all, the root *cultus* implies religiosity as the target of institutional education, as in the name "Kultusministerium" that remains used by most federal states in Germany.

Back to the Future: Re-Thinking Cultural Education After COVID-19

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related discussion about health and basic hygiene, including in schools, the analysis of Soviet textbooks on the topics seems highly justified. Indeed, education during the pandemic has raised the question of whether textbooks are suitable media to address those topics and, if so, then to what extent. From that perspective, it is pivotal to scrutinize experiences from the past, which can illuminate how knowledge in cultural education can be constructed in reading textbooks. Beyond that, the textbooks showcase how the Russian and Soviet education system responded to environmental changes such as the Cultural Revolution, how new textbooks were created as a result, and how the education system invested in its survival. Such evidence implies the strong connection between macro-level changes in society and micro-level social actions in response, including their practical realization in schoolbooks.

The research has also raised several questions for further discussions and investigations into pedagogical praxis. For one, to what extent will the COVID-19 pandemic influence our everyday lives, learning, and teaching practices at schools? By extension, do we need to address health education and basic hygiene in schoolbooks in general, in textbooks for primary school, and/or in reading books for the native language in particular? In which subjects and at what age can students discuss issues of health and hygiene appropriately, and which methods should be used? Analyzing Soviet schoolbooks revealed that the discourse on basic hygiene and health can be addressed to students at a young age and successfully discussed in reading books in native language classes. Moreover, the schoolbooks showed how to communicate issues of basic hygiene and health to young students in a multidisciplinary manner by using images, poems, rules, and even science in reading books.

More broadly, however, the question is how cultural education has been practiced in societies beyond Europe. Throughout time and space, research is needed to systematically compare the notion of cultural education between nations and between disciplines. Every crisis forces society to rethink its values and determine how to overcome the crisis, and the greatest, newest problems can indeed generate new, creative ideas for solving them in order to keep the functional systems of society alive. Indeed, drawing from Kokemohr (2007), Koller (2018), while describing educational processes as transformational processes above all, writes that “in dealing with new problems people develop new dispositions of perception, interpretation and processing of problems, which allow them to cope with those problems better than before” (16).

The society in the Soviet Union in the time of the Cultural Revolution did find possibilities to build a new world according its “totalitarian” (Reckwitz 2000, 72) understanding of culture and to cope with the societal problems of their time, including the problem of the lack of basic hygiene and health, by integrating those topics into the basic understanding of culture and by making hygiene and health two of the goals of cultural education. Because global society has discovered and will continue to discover ways of coping with new problems in education in general and in cultural education in particular, the question thus becomes what cultural education will look like after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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