

Soviet Literature in Primary Schools in the People's Republic of Poland: Arkady Gaidar's

Timur and His Squad as an Example of Political School Readings

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The ideological policy of a state may influence not only the choice of texts to be translated but also the ways they are translated in order to load them with propagandist meanings. In such a context the translator's voice may be manipulated to carry the messages an authority (e.g. a totalitarian state) requires that the translator convey. An analysis of the Polish translations of Arkady Gaidar's *Timur and His Squad* suggests, however, that political manipulation may occur less through translation strategies than through editorial choices about the material presentation of the works being studied.

Key words: Gaidar, Timur, Russian literature, Polish translations, ideology

Les politiques idéologiques d'un état peuvent influencer non seulement le choix des textes traduits, mais aussi la façon dont ils sont traduits dans le but de consolider leur portée idéologique. Dans ce type de contexte, la voix du traducteur peut être manipulée afin qu'elle exprime des messages qui sont conformes aux exigences des autorités (d'un état totalitaire). Une analyse des traductions polonaises de *Timur et son équipe* d'Arkady Gaidar's suggère, toutefois, que la manipulation peut se faire moins au niveau des stratégies de traduction qu'à celui de la présentation matérielle des textes étudiés.

Mots clés : Gaidar, Timur, littérature russe, traductions polonaises, idéologie

Russian Works in Polish Schools

After the Second World War, when the newly formed People's Republic of Poland became one of the satellites of the Soviet Union, Russian was introduced into Polish schools as an obligatory foreign language. A number of translations of works from Soviet literature were also included in the canon of required readings in Polish and were read and discussed during Polish language lessons.

Some works came to stay on those lists and in Polish primary school libraries for many years. These include Arkady Gaidar's *Тимур и его команда* [Timur and His Squad] (read in the 5th grade of primary school), *Чук и Гек* [Chuk and Gek] (read in the 2nd and 3rd grades), Boris Polevoy's *Повесть о настоящем человеке* [Story of a Real Man] (read in the 7th and 8th grades), and Mikhail Sholokhov's *Судьба человека* [Destiny of a Man] (read in the 8th

grade). The story of the brave Timur undoubtedly belongs to the record holders. A survey of school reading lists from the years 1946-1999, by Anna Franaszek, shows that this book remained on the reading list for fifty years, from 1949 until 1999, although in different years it was either on the obligatory reading list or on the complementary list, and it was not always read as a whole. At times only excerpts were offered to students.

It is worth noting that the lists often recommended only specific excerpts as obligatory reading as the young reader was supposed to be affected in a specific way. Some such recommendations for secondary school readings included the passage describing the fight for bread and the final piece of *Хождение по мукам* [The Road to Calvary] by Alexei Tolstoy (1951-53) and part of Mikhail Sholokhov's *Поднятая целина* [Virgin Soil Upturned] representing a council in a kolkhoz (1953). In primary schools, recommendations more often concerned specific stories and poems, rather than excerpts, probably due to the fact that texts intended for younger readers are as a rule shorter anyway. Whether whole texts or excerpts were indicated as required readings, the 'indoctrination technique' was similar.

Although the number could vary from year to year, together, Franaszek's survey¹ identifies over one hundred items translated from Russian on reading lists in Polish primary schools.

These texts can be divided roughly into three groups:

a) texts belonging to the canon of Russian literature, without obvious ideological characteristics, basically politically neutral, which, however, were often interpreted (over-interpreted) by the authorities in accordance with the established ideology,

b) texts with a clearly marked ideological load with political agitation often being obvious already in the very title;

c) texts with a veiled political message, including texts with patriotic overtones (mainly relating to the events of World War II) and literary works meant to emphasize Polish-

Soviet friendship, which usually convey ideological messages compatible with the guidelines from the authorities of the USSR and the People's Republic of Poland at the time.

Franaszek's list also contains some texts that appeared on the reading lists after the change of political system in Poland in 1989. These texts make it possible to observe different phenomena associated with this change, such as the inclusion of texts by political dissidents. However, they warrant a separate study. Therefore the present paper will focus primarily on texts included in school reading lists from 1945 to 1980 (from the end of World War II until the first Solidarity movement in Poland), while taking into account those items that remained on the reading lists until 1989 (that means until the political changes in Poland).

With regard to the degree of politicization and the expected impact on children and youth, it should be noted that, in this type of publication, some didactic or educational function must be assumed, no matter what the delivered content or worldview is. The educational role of books aimed at young readers has been underlined by a number of Polish researchers² as well as scholars from the USSR³ or today's Russia.⁴

The first group of texts includes works that were considered to belong to the world canon of literature and were put on the reading list for that reason. In primary school, texts relating to Russian literature are usually poems. Some of these poems were considered by the communist authorities to be 'progressive,' such as the *Письмо в Сибирь* [Letter to Siberia] by Alexander Pushkin, which remained on the list of readings for over forty years (1948-1989). Others dealt with social issues and could be interpreted in accordance with the official ideology, as is the case of Ivan Turgenev's story *Муму* [Mumu], excerpts of which were read by primary school pupils in the years 1948-1951. It is interesting that most of the 'politically neutral' texts in this group were included as supplementary, rather than compulsory readings.

The second group includes texts which openly promoted the world view desired by the authorities. In the case of primary schools, there are no political speeches, which can be found

in reading lists for secondary schools, but there were mass songs. Among these, Vasily Lebedev-Kumach's *Песня трактористов* [The Song of the Tractor-Drivers] was a required reading in the years 1952-1957, Lev Oshanin's *Гимн демократической молодежи мира* [Anthem of the World Federation of Democratic Youth] in the years 1951-1955 and 1961-1965), Alexei Surkov's *Песня о Сталине* [Song about Stalin] (in the years 1951-1955). A similar political function was performed by stories about the leaders of the revolution, especially about Lenin, including Anna Ulyanova-Yelizarova's *Детские и школьные годы Ильича* [Children and School Years of Lenin], on the reading list in 1952-1955 and *Рассказы о Ленине* [Tale about Lenin] by Alexander Kononov, added to the list in 1947 and remaining there until 1963. Among these texts, Yuri German's *Рассказы о Дзержинском* [Stories about Dzerzhinsky], required reading in the years 1950-1957, stands out because it served two functions simultaneously. In addition to world view indoctrination, it was also meant to strengthen Polish-Russian relations by identifying a common hero.

While it is not possible to reference all such readings here, or all their types, the texts mentioned above suggest at least one common feature, namely, frequent recourse to a child hero. Hence the images of Lenin as a child - at the age of readers of the short stories, as well as the age of the heroes of other texts for children. Lenin becomes the model hero, whose attitude should be imitated. Polish children were also given such patterns to emulate in stories about other well-known historical figures. Examples include excerpts from *Дорога в космос* [Way to the Cosmos] by Yuri Gagarin (on the required lists for the years 1966-1977) and stories about Soviet pioneers (scouts), such as *Тридцать один день* [Thirty-one days] by Anatoly Aleksin (required reading in 1953). As an example of a pioneer, Timur, the hero of Arkady Gaidar's book, also fits into this category, although it will be discussed in this article as an example of the third group.

The second group of texts includes works marked by anti-American propaganda, such as Samuil Marshak's *Мистер Твистер* [Mister Twister] (on compulsory lists from 1948 to 1957) and Mikhail Ilyin's *Две страны* [Two Countries] (a required reading in 1950). Such works often stress the inequalities suffered by Afro-Americans, as seen both in Marshak's poem and in the story "Бимсарк и негр" [Bismarck and Negro] by Vladimir Bill-Belotserkovsky (a compulsory reading in the years 1951 to 1964), and in Maria Prilezhaeva's story "С тобой товарищи" [Yours friends are with you] (a required reading in the years 1952 to 1967), which ends with the image of pioneers singing the anthem of the Soviet Union, standing here as an expression of pride in their homeland, where all are equal.

This category of works with clear political agitation features also contains social-realist texts that promote working together to build a communist country, mostly by recounting work on construction sites. The best example of this is Valentin Kataev's novel *Время вперед* [Time, Forward!] describing workers building the industrial city of Magnitogorsk (on the required lists from 1948 to 1950) and excerpts of *Далеко от Москвы* [Far from Moscow] by Vassily Ajaev, presenting a joint effort of oil pipeline builders in the Far East during World War II (on the required lists from 1952 to 1957). What draws attention is the fact that these texts often show a joint effort undertaken by ordinary Soviet people to transform the world and nature, as in Marshak's poem *Война с Днепром* [War against the Dnieper], which refers to the construction of a dam and a power station on the Dnieper (on the required lists from 1952 to 1957).

Timur and His Squad - A Novel for Young Adolescents

Arkady Gaidar's novel fits into the last of these three groups, which includes texts whose propaganda function with patriotic overtones (mainly relating to the events of World War II) and an emphasis on Polish-Soviet friendship was partially veiled. On the surface, *Timur and His Squad* is an adventure novel for young people. It tells the story of pioneers who helped

local people during the war. From this perspective, the novel fits naturally within the canon of literature for the young, because its characters are children and the story highlights the victory of good over evil. The adventures of the characters leading to this victory arouse the young reader's interest and can facilitate the formation of certain beliefs and behaviors.

Timur and His Squad serves indeed several educational functions. On the one hand, it tells about Soviet pioneers, shaping the communist model of education; on the other hand, it shows the reality of war behind the front lines, contributing to the development of young people's patriotic feelings. Both these functions are often present in Soviet literature, emphasizing the role of the child and young adult literary hero as a model of right (anticipated and award-winning) behaviors.⁵

Attention was paid to joint work for one's school, collective farm, factory or homeland (an example is Alexei Musatov's *Стожары* [Stozhary], a compulsory reading in the years 1952 to 1957), and/or to heroic feats undertaken for patriotic reasons, often leading to the martyrdom of a young hero during the war. Characters could be actually existing people such as the partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the heroine of Margarita Alger's poem *Зоя* [Zoya], current in Polish schools in 1948 or the heroes of Alexander Fadeyev's *Молодая гвардия* [The Young Guard] (on reading lists in the years 1948 to 1966), or fictional characters, such as Vania, a character from Valentin Kataev's novel *Сын полка* [Son of the Regiment] (required reading in 1953).

Introducing a model character (hero) is not specific to the communist regime and the need for a literary character who is a role model for children and young adult readers is pointed out by both Soviet and contemporary Russian educators.⁶ Depending on the model of society promoted and the civic attitudes desired, the type of model character varies and, depending on the type of the reader and the age group for which the text is designed, different socializing or indoctrinating methods are used by the writers. This is clearly visible in the following

statement by the author of *Timur and His Squad*, quoted by Boris Yemelyanov in his *Рассказы о Гайдаре* [Tales about Gaidar]:

In January 1941, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, A. Gaidar gave a speech on the education of children. The shorthand report reads: 'To a reader of this age, with whom I have not the honor to work, a reader at the age of three-four years, I explain it this way: 'The reds have walloped the whites, and the hare comes out, he looks around and he likes it'⁷.

Incidentally, Yemelyanov's *Tales about Gaidar* were included on the reading list for Polish primary schools twice, in 1953 and 1956. Thus young Polish readers were supposed to follow the models not only of the heroes of Gaidar's works,⁸ such as Timur Garayev, but also of Gaidar himself, who joined the Red Army in 1918 when he was almost 15, became the commander of a regiment when he was 17, and was killed in 1941, when fighting as a gunner in a partisan unit. Besides *Timur and His Squad*, two other novels by Gaidar for young people were included on Polish school reading lists: *Школа* [School], *Дым в лесу* [Smoke in the Forest]. In both cases, the characters were teenage boys, and in one case the text has a certain autobiographical dimension, since Boris Gorikov, like Gaidar (whose real name was Golikov), became a Red Army soldier at the age of 15. However, it is the novel about Timur Garayev that remained on the compulsory reading list for Polish primary schools the longest, which is why its translations into Polish are the ones we will look at in more detail.

By way of introduction to the analysis of *Timur and His Squad* it is important to note that both when the novel was written and at the time when the text was included in the reading list in Polish schools, the model of a brave boy, a pioneer (or scout) was very topical, as was the theme of war, and in particular the image of a child in wartime. In the Soviet Union heroic pioneers and Komsomolets had already become a literary ideal for the child reader, deserving of emulation. This corresponded to the assumptions of communist ideologists who sought to develop a set of ideological attitudes by introducing them into the readers' consciousness, through appropriate readings. The importance of the pioneer hero figure is discussed, for example, in Natalia Vodina's doctoral dissertation, which was devoted to the role of children's

literature in shaping the moral ideal of a pioneer.⁹ It was a timely ideal in the post-war situation under the communist regime, when memories of the war were still alive, and young people needed a hero of their own age. Brave thirteen-year-old Timur Garayev, the leader of a group of young people anonymously helping people and fighting against Mishka Kvakín's bunch of hooligans, could become a role model for teenage readers. Since the book was meant for students in the fifth grade of primary schools, its potential readers were 11-12 years old and their desire to become as brave and wise as Gaidar's hero seems quite natural.

Moreover, despite the story being embedded in Soviet conditions, Polish children were able to identify themselves with members of the youth (backyard) groups, where the good fight evil and perform good deeds. They could also identify themselves with a scout-like organization, especially since the memory of the teenage fighters of the 'Gray Ranks' (the underground paramilitary Polish Scouting Organization during World War II) was still alive. Other books promoted a similar ideal of a youthful romantic hero, for example Polish writer Seweryna Szmaglewska's novel *Czarne stopy* [Black Feet] (on the reading list in 1960) about scouts. The youths taking part in 'Niewidzialna ręka' [The Invisible Hand] a television campaign of the 1970s, were also supposed to anonymously help elderly and sick people, just as Gaidar's pioneers did.

Thanks to the already mentioned potential (and as it seems assumed) identification of Polish readers with Timur's team, the book seemed well chosen for developing so-called communist attitudes, which was the government goal in the USSR and its then subordinate Polish People's Republic. The literary and personal legacy of Gaidar was to serve the formation of such ideals among youth.¹⁰ These endeavors of Soviet authorities are noted more and more frequently by contemporary researchers. The exploitation of Gaidar's works in Soviet propaganda as well as the mythologizing of the writer himself was the subject of Margarita Kazachok's doctoral dissertation.¹¹ Anna Kadykało examines the sources of this

mythologizing, and present-day efforts to undermine the legend of the writer and the Timurites, whose numerous teams were active in the Soviet Union, helping those in need, especially war veterans. She also notes attempts to reactivate the Timurite movement.¹²

The Polish Reception of *Timur and His Squad*

It seems that Polish readers' attitude towards Gaidar's novel were largely influenced by the romantic attitude of the young characters already mentioned. Interestingly, a Timurite team functioned in Poznan in the years 1970-1979, in Primary School No. 89. Its initiator was Jerzy Hamerski, who recalls:

Thus scouting has become a bridge between school matters and environmental issues. As for program ideas for the newly created teams and squads, I borrowed them from an old reading, *Timur and His Squad* [...]. In spring the 'Timurites' went on reconnaissance of the backyards. As part of the 'Sandpit' campaign they recognized places of children's play, their technical condition and level of security, in order to prepare the grounds, with the support of the local administration, for scouts' actions.¹³

This account posted on the Internet is useful in understanding Polish readers' reaction to Gaidar's book. Opinions on this topic nonetheless vary from an emphasis on the ideological indoctrination of the young to interest in the adventures of Timur and his colleagues. The Polish reception of Gaidar's book reflects positive and negative assessments and chronologically, reactions by readers of the People's Republic of Poland era and those of the present time. In addition, it is worth paying attention to the controversy surrounding the anti-Polish undertones to be found in *Timur and His Squad*.

Clearly negative statements usually emphasize the anti-Polish character of *Timur and His Squad* and its propaganda features. For example, the Biblionetka web site offers comments entitled "*Timur and his squad: How It Really Was*" by askolo2, who claims to be a lover of history.¹⁴ He says that when he read Gaidar's book as a primary school pupil he understood it as:

a nice tell-tale for the youth about a group of good pioneers who fight against local hooligans and care for the families of soldiers stationed 'at the border.' There was information about the death of individual soldiers killed at the border by some unnamed enemy. For me, the enemy was Nazi Germany, of course.¹⁵

Returning to the book years later, he realized that the story was not about the Second World War, but about the Battles of Khalkhin Gol at the Japanese-Mongolian border, where fighting took place in the spring and summer of 1939. The final scene, when Colonel Alexandrov goes to war, was interpreted by askolo2 as a harbinger of the invasion of Poland:

The final scene of the book is particularly significant. The main character's father is a high-rank officer of the Red Army. He meets with his daughter at a train station in Moscow, while passing through in a train, with his unit, towards the western border. Towards a new enemy. Poland. It's the end of August 1939, the moment of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.¹⁶

And he concludes: 'The book is filled with a lot of seemingly innocent details that – in a proper context - are strongly anti-Polish'. The conclusion about the invasion of Poland made by the author of these considerations derived from the information that it is August 1939, and that the father of the main character and his unit are on their way "toward the western border." Although this interpretation is possible, it raises serious doubts because Gaidar's book contains no information about a journey to the west – Aleksandrov gets aboard an armored train and leaves Moscow – or about it being August, and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed on August 23, 1939. Moreover, the father of Ola and Zhenia gets on a Soviet armored train, and no Soviet armored train participated in the Soviet Union's assault on Poland.

This comment gave rise to a variety of responses. For example, Rafal Kłopotowski (USA) congratulated the author on his insight, pointing to other anti-Polish features present in the novel.¹⁷ He cites the song of Timur's uncle, which contains a reference to a war twenty years ago and which Kłopotowski interprets as the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1920. However, from the perspective of 1939, the words "twenty years ago" mean the year 1919, the time of the Russian civil war and fighting with the Entente, but there was no war with Poland then. On the contrary, July 1919 saw the launch of Polish-Russian negotiations on the shape of the Polish border and Poland's non-involvement in the war between the White Russians and the Bolsheviks, which was extensively described by Richard Pipes.¹⁸

Another anti-Polish element mentioned is Timur's declaration about the letter that Zaporozhye Cossacks sent to the Turkish Sultan: "They had all seen the picture of Cossacks writing their ultimatum and they had read about how the brave fellows fought the Turks, the Tatars and the Poles."¹⁹ This statement can be interpreted as being anti-Polish, but it is worth remembering that Ilya Repin's picture *Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire* was painted in the 1880s, and that the Cossacks actually fought with the Tatars, Turks and Poles.

Russian researchers and Internet users also try to determine which war was written about by Gaidar. Most often they mention the war with Finland and the Japanese-Mongolian episode. No one mentions the invasion of Poland. Mark Solonin goes so far as to conclude that the writer invented a non-existent war because:

The plot of the story is set in June 1939, the beginning of summer holidays. There was no 'front' at that time. The armored train commanded by 'Colonel Alexandrov' could in no way reach the Khalkhin Gol. There are no rails there. But the writer had such a strong feeling of the upcoming war that he invented this coveted 'front'²⁰.

Not all Polish Internet users refer to *Timur and his Squad* in negative terms. Often, despite comments concerning its propaganda functions, they mention the book as an interesting adventure story, as the following statements from one of the blogs illustrate:

I've read it! A loooooong time ago, indeed, but I've read it and still remember a little bit. I associated it with the Invisible Hand then and I did not notice any overtones;²¹

I liked this book very much. These two teams competing worked on the imagination. Any political overtones escaped my notice somehow and that was good;²²

I love this book. Historical poppycock does not matter :) it was a great story about something like the Invisible Hand which I watched on TV at that time;²³

... a great book for young people; that the Russians have never been our friends is one thing ... what is important is how a young reader regards the story. It contains positive educational elements which outweigh all anti-Polish details. Greetings to all for whom this book was inspiring enough to make them perform a good deed (for me it was)²⁴;

There was also a memory of the film adaptation of *Timur and His Squad*:

And the movie? No one remembers the movie? Astonishing that after viewing the movie I wanted to be Timur. Irrespective of all household experiences of my grandmothers and parents.²⁵

It is interesting that there are also comments of contemporary readers, free from prejudice against anything Soviet, which are aptly illustrated by the words of a co-author of the *Young Reader's Classic* blog signing as lilybeth:

This Soviet curiosity was not my childhood reading. [...] I must add that I am irritated by looking for anti-Polish accents [...] in this or any other Soviet book (even if there were some in many of them). [...] And even if the father of the heroines goes to the Polish-Soviet war, it is not clearly written anywhere, you have to guess this, because the author does not mention that the characters are going to fight the bad Poles.²⁶

To conclude this topic, let me quote excerpts from one more statement:

... It seems to me that the target audience of the novel, that is youth aged 11-14 years [...] wouldn't be able to find these hidden anti-Polish contexts [...]. Even I, being almost thirty, couldn't see the anti-Polish character of this book, all the more a teenager can't! For me, it was first of all a tale of exemplary Russian youth [...] But most of all a reading that allowed me to go back almost 15 years, to a period when along with other children of our backyard we created our own teams with respective positions, orders, signals, etc., and we 'patrolled' our housing estate.²⁷

Translation and Political Propaganda

In assessing the popularity of *Timur and His Squad* in Poland, it is also worthwhile to see whether the translations may have affected the reception of the text. Arkady Gaidar's book appeared in three Polish translations. The first one, by Helena Jarmolińska, was published in 1946, the second, by Danuta Wawiłow, in 1950, and the last one was made two years later, in 1952, by Aleksander Wat. The best known version today is that by Wawiłow. Wat's translation is a little less well-known, while Jarmolińska's version has been virtually forgotten. Accordingly, our analysis will focus primarily on the text known to the greatest number of readers, namely Wawiłow's version, which had many subsequent editions, but some attention will also be paid to Wat's translation. It is important to note that the reading lists did not recommend any specific translation for use at school.²⁸

When a text is recognized by many readers, such as Internet users, as being Communist propaganda, one expects to find many elements indicative of Communist propaganda in the original and the translations. However, Gaidar's book does not contain many such elements, other than the red stars with which boys mark the houses of Red Army soldiers, the red star

embroidered on Timur's shirt and the red stars on the Red Army uniforms. Pioneers appear in the story several times, but not in an overtly political context. Timur and his colleagues are pioneers, which is associated with doing good deeds: У тебя на шее пионерский галстук, но ты просто негодяй” [You may wear a Pioneer tie, but you're nothing but a scoundrel!], says Olga to Timur, when the boys satisfied with themselves are singing:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawilow |
|---|--|---|
| Мы не шайка и не банда, Не ватага удалцов, Мы веселая команда Пионеров-молодцов У-ух, ты! ²⁹ | To nie banda ani zgraja, Nie łobuzy-zawadiacy. To wesoła mknie drużyna, Pionierzy-junacy! Hu-ha-ha! | To nie zbóje, nie bandyci, choć o nich tak myślicie. Czy kto wierzy, czy nie wierzy, to weseli są Pionierzy, Hej, Ha! |
| L. Stocklitsky's translation from Russian | Back translation from Polish ³⁰ | Back translation from Polish |
| We are not a gang of roughs Nor a rabble band. We are disciplined and tough And our pranks are planned. Pioneers all are we! Pioneers are we! (20) | We are not a band or gang Nor scamps-blusterers. We are cheerful team of Pioneers! team of Pioneers! | We are not ruffians nor bandits Though you may think so Believe it or not We are cheerful team of Pioneers! |

Other than their organisation of a feast celebrating the anniversary of the Red Army's victory over Japanese forces at Lake Hassan, Komsomolets are not represented in overtly political actions. At one point, Timur becomes angry at Olga for behavior unbecoming to a Komsomol member:

- Она лжет, -- возмутился Тимур, -- а еще комсомолка! (Gaidar: 510)
Translation: 'She's lying', retorted Timur indignantly. 'A Komsomol member, too...' (Stocklitsky: 36)

Neither in the original nor in the translations do we find any direct mention of the leaders of the revolution and of communism. Thus, it seems that the only political agitation factor was the attitude of the young people, expressed by their helping the families of Red Army soldiers who were doing military service or have been killed.

Another frequent propagandist element is atheistic agitation. The story about Timur only contains one exchange between the sisters Olga and Zhenya loaded this way:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawilow |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| - Оля, бог есть? - Нету, - ответила Ольга и подставила голову под умывальник. - А кто есть? - Отстань! - с досадой ответила Ольга. - Никого нет! (459) | - Olu, czy jest Bóg? - Nie ma - odpowiedziała Olga nachylając twarz nad umywalką. - To kto jest? - Daj mi spokój - zniecierpliwiła się Olga - nikogo nie ma. | - Olu, czy jest Bóg? - Nie ma - odparła Olga i pochyliła się nad miednicą. - A kto jest? - Nikogo nie ma! - zirytowała się Olga. - Daj mi spokój! |
| L. Stocklitsky's translation from Russian | Back translation from Polish | Back translation from Polish |
| 'Olga, does God exist?' 'No', replied Olga, lowering her face to the faucet. 'Well, who is it up there, then?' 'Leave me alone!' Olga exclaimed impatiently. 'There isn't anybody!' (8) | - Olga, does God exist? - No, replied Olga, lowering her face to the sink. - So who is it up there, then? - Leave me alone - Olga lost patience. There isn't anybody. | - Olga, does God exist? - No, replied Olga, lowering her face to the wash-bowl. - So who is it up there, then? - There isn't anybody! - Olga lost patience. Leave me alone! |

Notwithstanding Olga's remark, the religious question remains unresolved. What seems a lot more appealing than talking about the existence of God is replacing the sink with a basin, as seen in the translation by Wawilow. It is as if the translator decided to show a simpler, poorer reality than that of the original.

A similar change can be seen in both Polish descriptions of the carriage which Zhenya asks about. Wawilow introduced a 'first class' carriage instead of a sleeping-car (мягкий вагон). Wat replaced the parlor car with 'a comfortable second-class' car:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawilow |
|--|--|---|
| - Почему? Папа, ведь у тебя билет уже есть? - Есть. - В мягком? - В мягком. - Ох, как и я хотела бы с тобой поехать далеко-далеко в мягком!... (516) | - Dlaczego? Chyba już masz bilet? - Mam. - Drugiej klasy? - Oczywiście, drugiej. - Och, jakżebym chciała pojechać z tobą daleko, bardzo daleko, wygodną drugą klasą! ... | - Dlaczego? Przecież masz już bilet? - Mam. - W pierwszej klasie? - W pierwszej klasie. - Och, tak bym chciała pojechać z tobą daleko w świat... w wagonie pierwszej klasy. |
| L. Stocklitsky's translation from Russian | Back translation from Polish | Back translation from Polish |
| 'Why? You've got your ticket already, haven't you?' 'Yes.' 'In a first-class sleeper? ' 'Yes, in a first-class sleeper.' 'Oh, how I'd love to travel far, far away with you in a first-class sleeper! ' (41) | Why? You've got your ticket already, haven't you? Yes. In a second class? Yes, in a second class of course. Oh, how I'd love to travel far, far away with you in a comfortable second class! | Why? You've got your ticket already, haven't you? Yes. In a first class? Yes, in a first class. Oh, how I'd love to travel far, far away with you in a first class! ... |

While first class can be considered (to a certain degree) as an equivalent for a luxury sleeping-car, it is difficult to accept a second-class carriage in this function. Besides, the Polish expression “wygodna druga klasa” (comfortable second class) seems almost ironic, and even oxymoronic. This transformation can be interpreted as another attempt at ‘simplifying’ the depicted reality and masking the availability of ‘bourgeois’ goods to the Colonel’s family. Still, one can also speak about some kind of adaptation of the text for the reader who has probably never heard of a luxury sleeper. Another attempt at simplification can be found in replacing the words “укрытая плющом дача” [a **house** with **ivy-covered** walls] with the expression “porośnięty dzikim winem domek” [a **small cottage** with **creeper-covered** walls] in Wawilow’s version. In Wat’s text this is rendered as ‘a **villa** with **ivy-covered** walls.’ Moreover, the estate of summer cottages – “дачный поселок” – has disappeared from Wawilow’s text, and the truck carrying the heroine just turns into a narrow street.

In terms of the elements typically associated with religion, besides the conversation about God quoted above, an old chapel is mentioned next to which boys are playing cards. However, neither the original nor the translation develops the political propaganda or anti-religious activism dimension of this scene; it is just presented as the place where the story happens to take place:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawilow |
|--|--|---|
| На Малой Овражной, позади часовни с облупленной росписью, изображавшей суровых волосатых старцев и чисто выбритых ангелов, правой картины ‘страшного суда’ с котлами, смолой и юркими чертями, на ромашковой поляне ребята из компании Мишки Квакина играли в карты. (467) | Na ulicy Małej Owrażnej za kapliczką z łuszczącymi się malowidłami, przedstawiającymi brodatych starców i starannie ogolonych aniołów, trochę na prawo od wielkiego obrazu Sądu Ostatecznego z kotłami, smołą i skaczącymi diabłami - na polanie, gęsto obsianej rumiankiem, chłopcy z bandy Miszki Kwakina grali w karty. | Na ulicy Małej Owrażnej, pod starą kaplicą pokrytą osypującymi się freskami, które wyobrażały groźnych, brodatych apostołów i gładko wygolone anioły, tuż pod wizerunkiem Sądnego Dnia z kotłami, smołą i wszędobyłskimi diabłami, na polanie porosłej rumiankiem, chłopcy z bandy Kwakina grali w karty. |
| L. Stocklitsky’s translation from Russian | Back translation from Polish | Back translation from Polish |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| On a daisy-covered green off Maly Ovrazhny Lane, behind the chapel whose peeling murals depicted stern, bearded old men and clean-shaven angels, and somewhat to the right of the picture of Judgement Day with its cauldrons, boiling oil and darting devils, Kvakin's gang was playing cards. (22) | On Maly Ovrazhny Lane, behind the chapel with peeling off paintings that showed bearded old men and clean-shaven angels, a little to the right of the huge picture of Judgement Day with its cauldrons, boiling oil and jumping devils - on the glade studded with camomile, Kvakin's gang was playing cards. | On Maly Ovrazhny Lane, behind the old chapel covered with peeling off mural paintings that showed bearded preachers and clean-shaven angels, just under the picture of Judgement Day with its cauldrons, boiling oil and ubiquitous devils, on the glade with camomile, Kvakin's gang was playing cards. |
|--|---|--|

More elements associated with religion can be found in the translation made by Wawiłow, where they seem to have been used primarily for the purposes of adapting the text to Polish culture and covering up words that could be considered ironic in relation to the elements typically associated with Soviet Russia. The translation of the terms “пропагандист” [propagandist/agitator] and “церемония” [ceremony] is a case in point. While Wat translates the former almost literally – “agitator” [propagandist] and the latter ironically (in accordance with the original) by “delegacja” [delegation/deputation] –, Wawiłow uses “apostoł” [apostle] and “procesja” [procession], as can be seen in the following examples:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawiłow |
|---|---|---|
| Это еще что за пропагандист выискался (457) L. Stocklitsky: Who's that agitator ? (5) | Cóż to za agitator się znalazł? Back translation from Polish: Who's that agitator ? | A to co znowu za apostoł ? Back translation from Polish: Who's that preacher ? |
| тут к тебе какая-то церемония пришла! (467) L. Stocklitsky: There's a sort of delegation here to see you! (23) | Tu przybyła do ciebie jakaś delegacja . Back translation from Polish: There's a delegation here to see you. | Jakaś procesja do ciebie! Back translation from Polish: There's a procession here to see you! |

In both versions, the idiomatic phrase “Жили-жили, ни о чем не тужили” [Here we were, minding our own business...] has been translated with an idiom: “żyć jak u Pana Boga za piecem” [to thrive behind God's oven]:

| A. Gaidar | A. Wat | D. Wawiłow |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| -- Жили-жили, ни о чем не тужили... | Żyło się jak u Pana Boga za piecem ... | Żyliśmy sobie spokojnie, jak u Pana Boga za piecem ... |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| This is not translated in Stocklitsky's translation | Back translation from Polish: We lived as snug as a bug in a rug... | Back translation from Polish: We lived quietly, as snug as a bug in a rug... |
|---|--|---|

Like the Russian text, the Polish translations do not appear to reflect an overtly propaganda approach.

Conclusion

The most 'political agitation' element of the Polish translations of *Timur and His Squad* is undoubtedly their graphic design. This is particularly true of some covers, and especially those published in the 1950s. The covers are adapted to the contents of the book, but also to the ideological demands of official Soviet propaganda, which stressed the importance of the artistic shape of a book for the educational process.³¹ The ideological function of illustrations in Soviet children's books is of importance also today.³²

In the case of *Timur and His Squad*, this ideological function part is played primarily by the cover, because it is colorful (illustrations inside the book are black and white sketches) and it shows clearly the red star embroidered on the blue shirt of the main character. Interestingly, the most modest covers are those of the first editions of the book from the 1940s. The cover is simple, in shades of brown and beige. This may have been the result of Poland's post-war situation: it was necessary to print books quickly and cheaply, therefore only the most important information was placed on the cover. A quite different impression is created by the work of Mieczysław Kościelniak and Juliusz Makowski, who illustrated the translations done by Wat. Their covers show the figure of a boy at the helm in a shed. This was a way of highlighting the leadership qualities of Timur, the helmsman. Zbigniew Łoskot, the illustrator for Wawiłow's translation, had children bustling in the backyard, one of them being Timur with a red star on his blue sleeveless shirt. A boy with a red star also appears on the cover of Wat's translation of 1953.

In conclusion, it would appear that at the present time when both the canon of school readings and the attitudes to those texts have changed, books from the past may be viewed more objectively. On one hand, it is important to note the propaganda goals that guided the designers of school reading lists for the child and young adult readers at the time and the attempts to inoculate only the 'proper' ideology supported by the state authorities. On the other hand, cases of excessively 'ideological' treatment of those texts in the eyes of current, usually adult, readers, must also be taken into account.

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Notes

¹ See Anna Franaszek, *Od Bieruta do Herlinga-Grudzińskiego. Wykaz lektur szkolnych w Polsce w latach 1946-1999* [From Bierut de Herling-Grudziński. Index of required readings in Poland during the period 1946-1999] (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2006).

² See Kazimierz Czarnecki, *Książka jako czynnik oddziaływania wychowawczego na postępowanie młodzieży szkolnej* [The book as an educational factor which influences the behaviour of schoolchildren] (Katowice: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1963); Włodzimierz Goriszowski, *Książka a wychowanie* [The book and upbringing] (Katowice: 'Śląsk', 1973); Anna Przećławska ed., *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w procesie wychowania* [Literature for children and youth in the process of upbringing] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1978); Maria Tyszkowa, "Wychowawcze oddziaływanie literatury pięknej w okresie dzieciństwa i młodości" [Educational influence of literature in childhood and the youthful ages]. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 1974, no. 3.

³ Любовь Гурович, Любовь Береговая, *Ребенок и книга* [The child and the book] (Москва: Просвещение, 1980).

⁴ See Евгений Штейнер, *Авангард и построение нового человека. Искусство советской детской книги 1920-х годов* [Avant garde and creation of the new human. Art of the soviet children's book in the 1920 century] (Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2002); Ольга Трыкова, "Детская литература: основные функции, особенности восприятия,

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⁵ See Николай Богданов, “Пионерская романтика в книгах для детей” [Pioneer’s romantic in the children’s book]. In *Детская литература* [Children’s literature]. Ed. Иван Давыдов. (Москва: Детская литература. 1961, pp. 5-24); Наталья Водина, *Воспитание нравственного идеала пионеров средствами современной детской литературы* [Upbringing of the pioneers’ moral ideal with the device of the contemporary literature for the children] (Научная библиотека диссертаций и авторефератов disserCat., 1984). <<http://www.dissercat.com/content/vospitanie-nravstvennogo-ideala-pionerov-sredstvami-sovremennoi-detskoi-literatury#ixzz2KPDL6c48>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

⁶ Ирина Тихомирова, “Литературные герои как модели поведения для читающего ребенка” [Heros of Literature as models of the demeanor for reading children], *Педагогика культуры. Научно-просветительский педагогический журнал*, no. 9 (2010). <http://pedagogika-cultura.narod.ru/private/Articles/N_2010/Tihomirova_10_3.htm>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

⁷ Борис Емельянов, *Рассказы о Гайдаре* [Tales about Gaidar] (Москва, Детская литература, 1972, pp. 15-17). Translation mine. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent quotes from websites are translated by the author.

⁸ Apart from the story of Timur, they were the *School* and *Smoke in the Forest*, which, however, were included in the supplementary reading list and were present only in certain years, the *School* in 1953, and the *Smoke in the Forest* in 1956.

⁹ Наталья Водина (Vodina), *Воспитание нравственного идеала пионеров средствами современной детской литературы* [Upbringing of the pioneers' moral ideal with the device of the contemporary literature for the children], Научная библиотека диссертаций и авторефератов disserCat. (1984). <<http://www.dissercat.com/content/vospitanie-nravstvennogo-ideala-pionerov-sredstvami-sovremennoi-detskoiliteratury#ixzz2KPD6c48>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

¹⁰ Идея Свирская, *Формирование коммунистических идеалов юных читателей в библиотеке средствами литературы* [Created the communist ideals for the young readers in the library with the literary device] (Ленинград: Ленигр. гос. ин-т культуры им. Н.К. Крупской, 1975).

¹¹ Маргарита Казачок, *Гайдар в критике и литературоведении* [Gaidar in criticism and studies of the Literary] (Волгоград, 2005), <<http://bookos.org/book/522090>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013 (doctoral dissertation). Website consulted January 15, 2013.

¹² See Anna Kadykała, “Arkadij Gajdar i jego timurowscy. Początki legendy i współczesne próby jej demitologizacji” [Arkady Gaidar and his Timurites. Start of the legend and the contemporary attempts to demythologization], *Slavia Orientalia*, LX, no 3, 2011, pp. 349-364; and *Dzieciństwo jako rosyjski temat kulturowy w XX wieku* [Childhood as the Russian cultural theme in the 20th century], *Rozprawa doktorska* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Interdyscyplinarnych UW, 2012), pp. 257-266, <https://depotuw.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/item/86/Rozprawa%20doktorska_Anna%20Kadyka%20a%20C5%82o.pdf?sequence=1>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

¹³ Jerzy Hamerski, “Timur i jego poznańska drużyna” [Timur and his Squad in Poznan], <<http://www.lejery.art.pl/index.php?section=2&chapter=0&article=2>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

¹⁴ askolo2, “Timur i jego drużyna’: jak to było naprawdę” [‘Timur and his squad: how was it in fact’], <<http://www.biblionetka.pl/art.aspx?id=73459>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

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¹⁶ askolo2, “Timur i jego drużyna’: jak to było naprawdę” [‘Timur and his squad: how was it in fact’].

¹⁷ Rafal Kłopotowski, *Odpowiedź na: Mam 50 lat, z zamiłowania...* [Answer to: I am 50, I am passionate...] <<http://www.biblionetka.pl/art.aspx?id=73459>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

¹⁸ Richard Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików* [Russia under the Bolshevik Regime] (Warszawa: Magnum, 200).

¹⁹ Arkady Gaydar, *Timur and his Squad*, trans. Leonard Stocklitsky (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973, p. 21), <<http://pl.scribd.com/doc/51696048/Arkady-Gaidar-Timur-and-His-Squad-1940>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013. All unmarked English quotes from *Timur and His Squad* were taken from the same translation.

²⁰ Марк Солонин, “Взбесившиеся псы хозяина тупого...” [Furious dogs of the stupid Master], *Огонек*, no 48, 2006, <http://www.solonin.org/article_vzbesivshiesya-psyi-hozyaina>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²¹ Agnes, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²² American Corner Łódź1, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²³ To przeczytałam, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁴ Anonimowy, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁵ Janek, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁶ Lilybeth, <<http://klasykadlamlodych.blogspot.com/2012/01/timur-i-jego-druzyna-arkady-gajdar.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁷ weisse.taube, <<http://domowabiblioteczka.blox.pl/2010/11/Arkady-Gajdar-Timur-i-jego-druzyna.html>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁷ See Marta Kaźmierczak's article, "Translated Literature: In and Out of the School Canon," in *La voix du traducteur à l'école / The Translator's Voice at School I – Canons*, eds. Elżbieta Skibińska, Magda Heydel, and Natalia Paprocka (Montréal: Éditions québécoises de l'œuvre, collection Vita Traductiva, 2014).

²⁸ Аркадий Гайдар, *Тимур и его команда* [Timur and his Squad], in *Избранное* [Selected] ГАЙДАР, (Москва: Правда, 1986, p. 510). <<http://lib.ru/GOLIKOW/timur.txt>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

²⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from Gaidar's text are from Аркадий ГАЙДАР (GAIDAR), *Тимур и его команда* [Timur and his Squad], in *Избранное* [Selected] ГАЙДАР, Москва: Правда, 1986, pp. 455-519. <<http://lib.ru/GOLIKOW/timur.txt>>. Website consulted January 15, 2013.

³⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, all back translations from Polish are mine.

³¹ Алексей Сидоров, Виктор Истрин Eds., *Основы оформления советской книги* [Base for creating the Soviet Book] (Москва: Гос. изд. «Искусство», 1956); Ефим Адамов, *Иллюстрация в художественной литературе* [Illustration in the literature] (Москва: Гос. Изд. «Искусство», 1959).

³² Мария Osorina, “Идеологическое лицо книги: психологический анализ обложек советского ‘Букваря’ и ‘Азбуки’ А. Бенуа” [Ideological image of the book: psychological analysis of the cover of the Soviet ‘Azбуka’ by A. Benua]. In *Детский сборник: Статьи по детской литературе и антропологии детства*. Eds. Кулешов Евгений, and Антипова Ирина (Москва: ОГИ, 2003, pp. 155 – 168).