



The Centre for Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Wrocław has the honor to invite you to the first lecture in the series "International Voices in Children's Literature Studies"

Prof. Marina Balina

Writing Ancient History as "Oppositional Enlightenment": On Historical Novels in Soviet Children's Literature of the 1960s–1970s



DATE: 10 March 2021

TIME: 18.00 (CET)

VENUE: MS Teams

If you are interested in taking part in the lecture, please contact us by email by 8 March at the following address:
mateusz.swietlicki@uwr.edu.pl

At the core of my presentation is the rise and transformation over time of the historical canon in Russian children's literature. While historical prose for children written during the soviet period consistently retained its mandatory ideological agenda, its educational role remained equally important, thus either eliminating the obligatory ideological spin or at least often reducing it to a minimum. Compared to authors of literature for adults, children's writers could more easily turn to the events of ancient history; as a result, this prose became a desired arena for professional historians who began to use it as a creative outlet that freed them from the constraints of politicized history (Mili Ezerskii, Aleksander Nemerovskii, Samuil Lur'e, Melitsa Mat'e). These stories, often written as paratexts, with an abundance of footnotes and references, created an antidote that satisfied the mutual longing for historical knowledge that both the writers and their readers needed in their lives.

Marina Balina is Isaac Funk Professor and Professor of Russian Studies Emerita at Illinois Wesleyan University. The focus of her scholarship is on historical and theoretical aspects of twentieth-century Russian children's literature. She is editor or co-editor of eleven volumes, most recently on *Hans Christian Andersen and Russia*, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2020. Her collective monograph (with Serguei Oushakine) entitled *The Pedagogy of Images: Teaching Communism to Children* is coming out in the spring of 2021 from the University of Toronto Press.