



# **A Child Hero: Heroic Biographies in Children's Literature**

**Svetlana Maslinskaya**

Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House)

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**Location:  
BUCHN 1940**

The idea of child heroism in Russian literature for children first can be traced to state ideology and analyzed as part of patriotic pedagogical discourse both in the Russian imperial period and in the Soviet Union. Secondly, models of heroic behavior and their narrative representations closely resemble models of behavior by saints found in hagiographic literature. Finally, a character of a child hero who commits an act that is both extraordinary and valuable for the community partakes in an international repertoire of motifs encountered across genres. The poetics of heroic narrative in Soviet children's literature since the 1920s retains features formed in the previous period and invents some new features, especially by transforming the category of the enemy. This talk focuses on typological and genetic analysis of Soviet narratives of a child hero, with particular attention to works by leading authors of Soviet children's literature.

Svetlana Maslinskaya is a Research Fellow in the Research Center for Russian Children's Literature at the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) in St. Petersburg, Russia and head of the Research Center for Russian Children's Reading at the Leningrad Regional Children's Library. She is also editor of the journal *Children's Readings: Studies in Children's Literature*.

Sponsorship: Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, Program in Comparative Literature, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, Department of Education, and History Department.