

Gochman Lecture:

WHO SHOULD TEACH WHOM TO READ TOLSTOY?: CURATING THE 1928 CENTENARY

TATYANA GERSHKOVICH

The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment greeted the centenary of Leo Tolstoy's birth with some trepidation. In the words of one official: "An inept, politically illiterate approach to Tolstoy's anniversary can turn into a harmful sermon on Tolstoyanism." My talk will examine the pamphlets, bibliographies, and lecture scripts produced by the Commissariat to chaperone new readers through Tolstoy's oeuvre. How could Tolstoy be taught, and put in service of the Soviet cause, while inoculating the reading public against his religious and philosophical ideas? What interpretive strategies were brought to bear? I use this historical episode as a lens through which to consider, more broadly, what constrains the political use of artistic works.

February 27th, 2020 at 4:30pm
Plimpton Room

Недѣля Толстого и больших маневровъ въ СС



Тѣнь Толстого: — Боже мой, на кого здѣсь люди стали похожи!