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It Takes A Union To Raise A Soviet: Children's Summer Camps As A Reflection Of Late Soviet Society

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Abstract
This dissertation examines the functioning of Soviet children’s summer camps throughout the period from 1953 to 1970. Researchers conceptualize these years marked by the rule of Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev as the time of transformations of Soviet state and society. The goal of my project was to closely analyze how these transformations affected Soviet children using the example of children's summer camps. Khrushchev’s ascendance to power changed summer camps from being the institutions which combined rest and education to purely educational ones. All the summer camps’ resources had to be mobilized to fulfill the task of Soviet children’s political indoctrination. Soviet leadership saw summer camps as ideal spaces that immersed children in a special way of life most appropriate for the future builders of communism. Typically for the USSR, by far not all the camps created this type of environment and routine for the young. Yet, there were model institutions, like Artek camp in the Crimea, which represented the Soviet vision of utopian children's world that educated the younger generation as politically active Soviet citizens devoted to the Communist Party. Analyzing a unique body of sources that include archival records, oral history interviews, camp guidelines, diaries, and photographs I demonstrate that summer camps played an important role in Khrushchev’s reform of children's education aimed at making manual labor a shared experience for all the Soviet youth. My research also highlights the paradoxes of this project. Owned by Soviet enterprises and organizations and administered by their trade unions, instead of creating a shared experience, summer camps reflected hierarchies that existed within the Soviet society between people belonging to different workplaces as well as between rural and urban populations. Run by trade union officials, summer camps also allow scholars to examine the process of negotiation between the Communist Party, the Soviet state, and society over the model version of the Soviet childhood that summer camps had to create. I also see children as very important actors who shaped the work of summer camps by choosing to involve, disengage, or openly contest the way of living that these institutions involved them into.

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IT TAKES A UNION TO RAISE A SOVIET: CHILDREN’S SUMMER CAMPS AS A REFLECTION OF LATE SOVIET SOCIETY

Iuliia Skubytska

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in

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IT TAKES A UNION TO RAISE A SOVIET: CHILDREN’S SUMMER CAMPS AS A
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For my parents
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ABSTRACT

IT TAKES A UNION TO RAISE A SOVIET: CHILDREN’S SUMMER CAMPS AS A REFLECTION OF LATE SOVIET SOCIETY

Iuliia Skubytska

Benjamin Nathans

This dissertation examines the functioning of Soviet children’s summer camps throughout the period from 1953 to 1970. Researchers conceptualize these years marked by the rule of Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev as the time of transformations of Soviet state and society. The goal of my project was to closely analyze how these transformations affected Soviet children using the example of children’s summer camps. Khrushchev’s ascendance to power changed summer camps from being the institutions which combined rest and education to purely educational ones. All the summer camps’ resources had to be mobilized to fulfill the task of Soviet children’s political indoctrination. Soviet leadership saw summer camps as ideal spaces that immersed children in a special way of life most appropriate for the future builders of communism. Typically for the USSR, by far not all the camps created this type of environment and routine for the young. Yet, there were model institutions, like Artek camp in the Crimea, which represented the Soviet vision of utopian children’s world that educated the younger generation as politically active Soviet citizens devoted to the Communist Party. Analyzing a unique body of sources that include archival records, oral history interviews, camp guidelines, diaries, and photographs
I demonstrate that summer camps played an important role in Khrushchev’s reform of children’s education aimed at making manual labor a shared experience for all the Soviet youth. My research also highlights the paradoxes of this project. Owned by Soviet enterprises and organizations and administered by their trade unions, instead of creating a shared experience, summer camps reflected hierarchies that existed within the Soviet society between people belonging to different workplaces as well as between rural and urban populations. Run by trade union officials, summer camps also allow scholars to examine the process of negotiation between the Communist Party, the Soviet state, and society over the model version of the Soviet childhood that summer camps had to create. I also see children as very important actors who shaped the work of summer camps by choosing to involve, disengage, or openly contest the way of living that these institutions involved them into.
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ARCHIVAL ABBREVIATIONS USED

Central State Archive of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine — TSDAVO
State Archive of Kharkiv Region — DAKhO
Russian State Archive of Social and Political History — RGASPI
State Archive of the Russian Federation — GARF
LIST OF TERMS

Young Octobrists – Soviet state political organization that worked with children aged 7 to 10.

Vladimir Lenin All-Union Pioneer Organization – Soviet political organization initiated by the Communist party to work with children and adolescents aged 10 to 14.

International Communist Youth League or Komsomol (the Russian abbreviated version of the term) – Soviet political organization created by the Communist Party to work with the youth aged 15 to 27.

Pioneer detachment – a functional unit within the Pioneer Organization that encompassed around 30 to 40 children.

Zveno (a link in English) – a functional unit within the detachment that usually consisted of 8 children.

Pioneer druzhyna (a squad in English) – a functional unit within the Pioneer Organization that united several detachments based on their belonging to an institution, a school or a camp, or territorial proximity, a city district.

Great Patriotic War – Soviet term for the period of World War II that lasted from June 22, 1941, when Germany attacked the USSR, till May 9, 1945, when Germany capitulated.
Introduction

Childhood, I shall argue, is the true missing link: connecting the personal and the public, the psychological and the sociological, the domestic and the state.

Steven Mintz

In 1960, Philippe Aries published *Centuries of Childhood*, a book that claimed that our assumptions about the early years of human life were a mere construct, having taken shape in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As big of a breakthrough as Aries’ book was, it did not move the topic of childhood to the forefront of historical research. Multiple factors contributed to this state of affairs. Children were not considered as actors who made history or the citizens who shaped the functioning of their state. They did not start revolutions or overthrow existing orders, their place was in the private sphere, at home, where they played the role of dependents. Paradoxically, this view was shaped by the very assumptions about the nature of modern childhood that Aries revealed in his work. With time, scholars were gradually discovering why childhood matters, and why children as subjects are no less deserving of historical inquiry than adults. The transformation of the historical discipline itself made this growing attention to children and childhood possible. When such topics as the history of everyday life, microhistory, oral history, and women’s history came to the fore, the interest in ordinary people, their stories and beliefs, opened the door for a new appreciation of childhood. After all, starting from the philosophers of Enlightenment, childhood was perceived as the time that laid the ground for the formation

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of human memory, identity, and the resulting coherence of an individual’s unique experience in time.  

For scholars who study modern states, childhood also became an important object of inquiry. Through various population management strategies, modern states intruded into the family’s private space and pulled children into the public sphere constituted by schools, hospitals, sanatoriums, children’s organizations, and summer camps. Family turned into a barrier that prevented the country’s leadership from establishing control over the future of the country. Childhood became a matter of public policies and debates uncovering anxieties, hopes, and beliefs characterizing the societies to which children belonged. As Perry Nodelman formulates it, children are born into relations of power, which include the power of their parents, the power of children, and the power of the state.  

The perception of childhood as a starting point of one’s entrance into a certain matrix of power allows Paula Fass to emphasize global and comparative approaches to the history of childhood. While the cultures and societies children adjust to vary, the very experience of adjustment is relevant to children all over the world, which creates a possibility for dialogue between those who study different regions within the field. This dissertation has also been written with the global perspective in mind. It is grounded in an understanding that Soviet children grew up in a modern state that interfered significantly in their lives and in the lives of their parents. Yet, as unique as the Soviet state apparatus

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was in its policies, it still shared much with and can be better understood when compared to other modern states, particularly the US, its ideological counterpart. Summer camps, whose functioning in the 1950s-1960s I closely examine, were not invented in the USSR. Soviet leaders, like the deputy People’s Commissar of Healthcare Zinovii Solov’ev, adopted this form of children’s organized recreation from the West and then consciously worked on distinguishing Soviet summer camps from their US analogues.\(^6\)

The fact that summer camps were transplanted onto Soviet soil from the environment that Soviet leaders saw as the opposite of what they were trying to create emphasizes parallels between the US and the USSR. In both societies, educators and health professionals cared about the way children spent their free time, feared the negative influence of the family on children, and believed that a rural environment was good for the young. Here, however, the similarities ended. In the first decades of the twentieth century, theoreticians of the American summer camp movement targeted middle-class children and feared that savagery was an important element in young people’s lives, which they could not practice in the civilized world of the middle-class urban household dominated by women.\(^7\) Soviet authorities at that time were engaged in an almost impossible effort to provide food and shelter to the millions of abandoned or simply poor children in the country.\(^8\) Experiencing serious reservations towards family influences over the young, Soviet authorities tried to intervene in the process for a different reason than their US

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counterparts. They did not consider women to be incapable of educating good communists. Rather, they distrusted the adult population of the country in general, assuming that Soviet people who were born and grew up before the revolution were unable to eliminate the negative effects of life in a capitalist society from their minds.

In the 1920s, American camp organizers were centering summer camps’ architectural layouts and everyday routines around the “savage” life of the Native American population. In the meantime, their Soviet colleagues wanted their camps to be modern in every way, advocating for comfortable housing and strictly regulated daily routine. Such an approach was to a large extent determined by the disastrous situation of the Soviet children in the 1920s. After the devastation of World War I and the Civil War, Soviet children did not experience a lack of barbarism in their lives. The streets of Soviet cities were flooded by orphans, who engaged in organized crime and threatened public safety. Children’s involvement in crime and the state’s inability to solve the problem for an extended period of time could have affected the way Soviet ideologues viewed the relationship between savagery and childhood. While American educators considered them intertwined and created spaces, where children could imitate savage life, in the USSR theoreticians of education opposed it throughout the whole period of Soviet history. Soviet summer camps were not created to let children return to the wild; they were supposed to prevent them from doing so.

American and Soviet approaches to summer camp pedagogy came closer to each other after World War II, when American camp educators started prioritizing supervision
in their summer camp organization and routines. At that time, Native American tipis, so popular in the 1920s-1930s, gave way to more comfortable cabins, whose spatial organization resembled the layout of an American suburb. The cabins’ interior spaces allowed for uninterrupted adult supervision, making all children visible to their counselors, who also had to observe all the activities children engaged in outside of the cabins. At the same time, Soviet summer camps’ routines were gradually eliminating children’s free time from the daily schedules, while their architecture, when possible, started resembling urban structures typical of Soviet cities.

Soviet and American post-war approaches to summer camp organization resembled an important element in the ideology of childhood that these societies shared during the second half of the twentieth century, a belief that children needed to be protected and controlled. In *The End of American Childhood*, Paula Fass argues that in the 1960s, the US ideology of childhood changed dramatically. The model of raising children that American society developed in the 19th century emphasized independence. School was one of the major institutions promoting this quality in children. According to Fass, young people’s independence fostered generational change in American society. Starting from the 1960s however, American parents tended towards a style that emphasized parental supervision. The anxiety over being an ideal parent combined with technological advancements, specifically television, pushed American mothers to closely observe their children and limit

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9 Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, p. 36-37.
10 In some cases, when summer camp organizers could afford it, the bedroom units resembled apartment blocks that were typical both for other Soviet recreational facilities for adults (sanatoriums and houses of rest) as well as the Soviet bedroom communities. The examples of this are the Gorny camp complex in Artek and Zaslavov camp in Yevpatoria.
their liberties. This process coincided with the anxiety over the disappearance of childhood in the Western world as children became exposed to consumerist culture and through television received unrestricted access to information their parents and educators feared was not age-appropriate.

Soviet educational strategies, as this dissertation will show, had always combined the goal of children’s independence with a strong desire to control children’s behavior. A comparison with an American case highlights the uniqueness of the Soviet approach. To exercise ideological control over children, in 1922, the Young Pioneers’ and the Young Octobrists’ organizations were established in the USSR. The Young Octobrists’ organization was open to boys and girls aged seven to nine. At the age of ten, children could enter the Young Pioneers’ Organization. At fourteen, young people could take exams to join the International Communist Youth League. All of these organizations were essentially extensions of the Communist Party of the USSR designed for children’s indoctrination. Despite the fact that the goal of their work was to exercise control over children’s behavior and way of thinking, they also were expected to foster children’s independence to create the new generation of political leaders. The Statute of the Pioneer Organization proclaimed that it was grounded in children’s self-rule. The organization offered multiple opportunities for learning leadership skills, as children had to take charge of various structural units such as the zveno (the English analogue would be a link of a chain), a unit of eight children, the detachment that consisted of around four zveno, and the družyna (a “squad”) that united the detachments of one school. The youth’s indoctrination was also one of the tasks the Party set for children’s summer camps. Political education was one of the core elements of their agenda.
My research about Soviet summer camps was driven by questions about the possibility of implementation of modern states’ utopian aspirations. The Soviet state presents a great opportunity to study this topic since summer camps were important to its leadership and they put considerable effort into popularizing them and regulating their functioning. Children’s poor condition in the 1920s left Soviet authorities with deep fear of unattended youth. Summer camps were one of the ways to ensure that the young were engaged in activities that helped them become exemplary Soviet citizens. This dissertation is thus driven by several analytical questions. The first concerns the concept of Soviet childhood Soviet authorities produced. Summer camps were artificially created spaces aimed at immersing children into the way of life that Soviet authorities considered most beneficial for them as young citizens. What was their material environment like and what was their routine? Did they change over time, indicating that the concept of childhood in the USSR changed as well? If the state suggested a new understanding of childhood, how did the population interpret and/or accept it? How much agency did children have in negotiating the forms of behavior suggested to or imposed on them? Summer camps were supposed to be spaces for children’s transformation. In these institutions, young people’s bodies and souls had to change to fit the image desired by the state. What was this image of a young communist? What was he or she supposed to know and be able to do? Summer camps were created to control children, but who in practice controlled the camps’ work, to what extent, and how did that change the message that they sent to children and their parents?

My research examines these questions throughout the period of Nikita Khrushchev’s and early Leonid Brezhnev’s rule focusing on the time period between 1953
and 1970. This chronological frame allows to study the evolution of Khrushchev’s reforms in education up until some of these initiatives were curtailed under his successor. One of the key concepts that researchers operate in their analysis of Nikita Khrushchev’s leadership is the “thaw”. The term describes the loosening of state’s control over the population after Stalin’s death. Yet, scholars debate both the scale of the “thaw” as well as the depth and durability of its transformative effect on Soviet society.\textsuperscript{12} My project contributes to this debate examining the negotiations between the Soviet state and society over the shape of the Soviet childhood. As I mentioned earlier, the destitute condition of Soviet children in the 1920s had deeply brought education to the fore of the Soviet leaders’ concerns. The 1920s were the time of educational experiments, however, by the mid-1930s Soviet schools’s curricula gradually transformed to resemble pre-revolutionary gymnasiums with their insistence on strict discipline and return to highly theoretical approach in children’s learning.\textsuperscript{13} Yet, while scholars like Ann Livschiz empathize the


conservatism of Soviet education during that period, Thomas Ewing and Maria Mayofis focus on the innovative and experimental trends within that aimed at the system’s modernization.\textsuperscript{14} Mayofis’ work is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the variety of educational experiments of the late and post-Stalin era. In her article devoted to the early attempts to introduce child-centered education in the USSR in the 1940s, Mayofis highlights the trend associated with the “thaw” in Soviet pedagogy.\textsuperscript{15} Confronted with the poor quality of the Soviet schooling in the 1940s, a group of Soviet educational officials saw the individual approach promoted in the child-oriented pedagogy as a solution to the poor results that Soviet schoolers were demonstrating. The school had to abandon strict discipline and dry theory in favor of a practice-based method accompanied by the teachers’ effort to understand every child’s individual situation and adjust their teaching accordingly. Rooted in the 1940s, the child-centered education, however, gained wide popularity only in the late 1960s, under Khrushchev’s rule, marking a break with more conservative practices associated with the Stalin’s school. When it came to one of the school reforms initiated by Khrushchev himself, however, Mayofis portrays not a “thaw”, but the tightening of governmental control over the population that Livschiz attributes to the Stalin’s school system.\textsuperscript{16} Mayofis develops this argument in her study of an ambitious residential school project that Khrushchev initiated as he came to power. Residential schools had to remove children from parental care to provide them with wholesome


\textsuperscript{15} Mayofis, “Predvestia ‘ottepeli’ v sovetskoi shkol’noi politike pozdnestalinskogo vremenii.”

education in secluded institutions situated in healthy environment outside of Soviet urban centers. The project was not realized full scale, but it lead to the creation of a very problematic system of institutions that hosted children and youth with various health problems. Highlighting the variety of educational policies and practices that developed after Stalin’s death, Mayofis’ scholarship reflects a larger debate regarding the time of Khrushchev’s rule characterized both by both reforms and conservative backlashes.

My research complements Mayofis’ work by showing the realization of one of the versions of Khrushchev’s educational project based on the study of the Soviet summer camps. First and foremost, it is important to say that summer camps were an integral part of the Soviet educational system. Soviet leadership initiated several reforms that had to transform the work of summer camps at the same time as Khrushchev was designing the reform of the Soviet schooling. Mayofis argues that one of the main reasons why the Soviet leader became so interested in the residential schools’ project was the desire to exercise better control over the Soviet labor market making sure that Soviet youth chose blue-collar professions that the state needed most to foster its economic development. My research shows that the same considerations affected summer camps during this period. Starting from 1955, manual labor was strongly encouraged in summer camps. Moreover, during this period Komsomol initiated the creation of the work and rest camps for adolescents, where they had to perform agricultural work four hours per day. Despite the fact that one of the purposes of summer camps’ work was provision of children’s healthy rest, under Khrushchev, these institutions were mobilized to serve the bigger goal of promoting manual labor among Soviet children and youth.
One of the problems with the residential schools’ project, Mayofis demonstrates, was its costs. The state could not afford such expenses. Popularization of summer camps however, was a success because it was grounded in economic decentralization that Khrushchev initiated. Of course, summer camps were still cheaper than residential schools. Yet, a study of this case demonstrates the benefits of the more hands-off approach in Soviet economy, when the Party initiated certain projects leaving their organization to local economic agents who possessed resources of their own. Moreover, it also highlights the power of these economic agents within the Soviet system highlighting their ability to get things done. Finally, my research also points to the fact that when it came to monitoring the implementation of the Party’s initiatives, its representatives, such as Komsomol, found themselves much less empowered than the representatives of the state, specifically the police and the sanitary inspection.

Inconsistency is one of the major characteristics that scholars attribute to Khrushchev’s reforms. Polly Jones argues that a belief that reforms should be implemented with caution was the result of the Soviet leaders’ experiences of the 1930s. My research shows that in the reform of the summer camp routine, the Party occupied a double position which allowed for certain freedom in implementation of its orders. On the one hand, Khrushchev, as mentioned earlier, transformed the summer camp routine with an emphasis on work education. During the time of his rule, summer camps’ daily schedules became tighter, while the number of requirements for various educational activities increased significantly. So did the number of books advising camp organizers on how to perform

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their work. In this respect, my findings resonate with Oleg Kharkhordin’s conclusions that Khrushchev did not aim to loosen state control over the population, but rather sought to tighten it through allocating more functions of population control to the progressive members of the society. Indeed, at the XXth and XXIst Party Congresses Khrushchev called for the population to take a more active stance in production and interpretation of the Soviet ideological message. This was supposed to increase popular participation in the execution of state policies, however, it also opened a possibility for their negotiation.

A study of the summer camps’ everyday functioning suggests that the lack of control over the application of Soviet policies combined with the call for their individual interpretation created possibilities for summer camp workers to be selective in implementing the state orders. Oral history interviews suggest, for example, that summer camps rarely fulfilled the state’s requirements to engage children in agricultural work. They also demonstrate a strange collective amnesia regarding political lectures and readings that state ideologues considered very important in summer camp pedagogy. Freedom of interpretation of the ideological message, in the meantime, helped summer camp workers be more inventive when it came to the activities they organized. In this respect, my dissertation modifies Alexei Yurchak’s theory that highlighted disengagement of the Soviet population from the Party’s ideological message at the time of second-generation socialism because the Party’s leadership did not manage to occupy the position of the

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master of this discourse. I argue that Khrushchev’s course on decentralization of the official discourse that encouraged popular participation in the process of its interpretation created opportunities for ordinary people to adjust Soviet ideological discourse to their views and needs. This, on the one hand, raised the level of popular engagement with official ideology, but on the other hand it blurred the contours of the message itself. Moreover, it demonstrated that some components of the ideological message could be disregarded, a view that could lead to contestation of the Soviet leadership’s authority.

As for the summer camps, the institutions, which among other things had to serve the goal of children’s indoctrination, the possibility to be creative was one of the reasons that still make people nostalgic about their work there. The same can be said about those who stayed there as children. Freedom of interpretation transformed the ideological message that summer camps sent, yet it also created deeper engagement of the population with the way life that these institutions, profoundly embedded in the Soviet ideological project, offered.

Numerous scholars highlight the importance of welfare provision in the USSR under Khrushchev’s and Brezhnev’s rule. Steven Harris argues that the majority of Soviet

21 Roger Chartier, for example, argued that de-sacralization of the monarchy manifested in changes of print-culture was one of the factors that opened the door for the French Revolution. Before killing the king, people had first to believe that something like this could be done. See Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1980).
citizens experienced Khrushchev’s thaw through the acquisition of individual housing that dramatically transformed their lives.\textsuperscript{24} Natalya Chernyshova suggests that Khrushchev and Brezhnev indeed created a new type of Soviet person, the Soviet customer.\textsuperscript{25} I also conceptualize summer camps as a part of the Soviet welfare project that can help us better understand the functioning of the welfare system in the USSR. Knowing that in the USSR welfare served among other things the goal of fostering Soviet people’s loyalty to the state, my inquiry into the issue of welfare organization is driven by two questions. Who was responsible for providing access to summer camp rest in the USSR, and how did that authority shape the message that summer camps sent as welfare goods? Beginning in 1938, Soviet trade unions assumed full responsibility for provision of organized rest to Soviet children. In 1958, summer camps became the Soviet enterprises’ financial responsibility. This made summer camps part of the package of benefits that Soviet citizens received from their workplace and not directly from the state. Scholars who study Soviet trade unions argue that their primary role was not defending workers’ rights but assuring that the production goals set by the state were fulfilled.\textsuperscript{26} Summer camps in this system became one of the incentives for shaping the choices people made while searching for a workplace. Another important function that summer camps were supposed to perform was tying children to their parents’ profession and workplace. The guidelines often advised that camp organizers created a gallery of portraits representing prominent workers from the enterprise


that owned a given camp. They also suggested that these workers visit camp children to tell them exciting stories about their profession.

Aside from the trade union camps, in the USSR there also existed regional and republican camps for young pioneer activists. Their goal was to develop the future political leadership of the country, people who would be running the Party organs locally and at the Union level. The oldest and most prominent of these camps was Artek, established in 1925 on the southern coast of the Crimean peninsula. One of Artek’s unique features lay in the fact that it hosted children from all Soviet republics as well as their peers from all over the world. Thus, a study of Artek, can yield unique insights into the inter-national relations within the USSR and the way Soviet children and adults interacted with foreigners. Artek counselors’ diaries and oral history interviews from the 1960s and 1970s suggest that in the USSR, children’s experiences were very diverse. They had very different access to education, welfare, and healthcare, as well as economic and cultural goods. Artek educators avoided recognizing this diversity. They believed that children could be united simply through collective engagement certain in activities, despite the fact that some campers were unable to do so because of their poor knowledge of Russian.

For a global history of childhood, Soviet summer camps provide ample opportunities for researching children’s culture and the processes of adjustment to life in a highly controlled environment. For Soviet authorities, summer camps’ primary goal was to assert the state’s control over children, their bodies, thoughts, and behavior. Yet, even in the situation of highly regulated camp life, children still managed to develop a culture of their own. Seeing summer camps primarily as spaces without parental control, children explored their identities by engaging in activities that did not always correspond with the
behaviors expected from them in life beyond the camps’ walls. In fact, summer camps were full of rituals and practices that reflected children’s resistance to the camps’ routines. Children left the premises, stole food from the canteen, created mocking songs, defied counselors’ authority, fell in love and explored sexual relationships with each other. Camp nights were filled with horror stories and various types of ritualized pranks that children played on each other.

My exploration of summer camps’ everyday functioning relies on multiple types of sources aiming to portray a comprehensive picture of summer camp life. Thus, the voices of the state and trade union camp organizers are presented here through archived reports and records of various republican and regional meetings. There are several problems pertaining to these archived materials that heavily influenced my research. As expected, archival records were both incomplete and biased, yet their limitations opened a systemic problem that scholars of the late Soviet Union are going to face very soon. The problem is that aside from the central bodies of rule and various agencies connected with the Party, all other organizations in the USSR stopped submitting their materials to the state-run archives around the year 1970. The next archival deposition deadline was supposed to be the year 2010. However, by that time the country ceased to exist. Some of these materials were preserved by the enterprises and organizations themselves. A great deal has already been destroyed however. For example, documents produced by the Kharkov trade unions are preserved in the local trade union archive. Yet, due to space and labor limitations, the archive destroyed everything except for the records of regional trade union meetings and employment information. This creates an enormous gap in archival evidence when it comes to looking at the actual implementation of state policies.
The voices of Soviet camp ideologues are captured in multiple guidelines regarding summer camp routines published in the USSR. These guidelines were often issued either by Komsomol or by trade union publishing houses and disseminated among trade union workers and sent to local libraries. Some camp guidelines were prescriptive. For example, the Central Trade Union Council issued a collection of materials for summer camp organizers. These collections contained the most up-to-date legislation on summer camp work, which sometimes was complemented by guidelines on how to organize certain activities in summer camps. Other guidelines were less prescriptive, containing suggestions on the development of summer camp material environment as well as suggestions on how to implement Komsomol requirements for the organization of camp everyday routine. My work has also relied on several dissertations produced by camp educators. The voices and perspectives of camp counselors and children rarely appear in archival records. Camps like Artek, however, required counselors to keep pedagogical diaries, which became very useful in my research. The Russian State Archive of Social and Political History preserved such diaries, which were produced throughout the period from 1947 to 1967. Artek counselors recorded their observations of working with children, which makes them an excellent source for investigating everyday life in Artek. To better understand what it meant to work in other camps, I conducted 45 interviews with 35 people living in Ukraine, Russia, and Latvia. In this dissertation I also use the materials my interviewees preserved in their home archives, primarily photographs and diaries.

The dissertation’s primary focus is on the Khrushchev and early Brezhnev era, from 1955 to 1975. One of the factors that defined the chronological limits was the existence of archival records, which become rather scarce starting in 1970. Some of my interviewees
went to summer camps in the early 1970s however, and I use their testimonies not to talk about the introduction of new policies, but to corroborate the information that comes from the written sources produced earlier. The main reason why I chose the period of second-generation socialism, however, was that it was the time when summer camps became ubiquitous and affected children’s lives on a mass scale. According to the collection of statistical data *Children in the USSR*, in 1960, 4,464,100 children between the ages of 7 and 14 went to the camps in summer, which constituted 14 % of 31,800,000 children of that age who went to school in the USSR. In 1975, 9,933,600 children attended summer camps. This constituted 37% of the Soviet Union’s 26,620,000 schoolchildren, whose age would make it possible for them to go to summer camps.

The first chapter looks at the summer camps as an element of the Soviet welfare system. Here, I highlight the importance of children for Soviet authorities who recognized the right to rest and provided means for its fulfillment. I also argue that the system which Soviet authorities created to administer children’s organized rest created inequalities at two levels. Because summer camps were administered by trade unions, children’s access to rest started to depend on their parents’ workplace. Moreover, the appearance of collective and inter-collective farm camps in rural areas points to the inequalities between rural and urban children. In the 1950s urban children were entitled to summer camp rest. In the meantime, rural children who went to the collective and inter-collective farm camps had to earn their right for organized summer rest through working in their community farms.

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27 Unfortunately, there are no clear statistical data regarding the issue. The fragments of statistics that exist show that, for example, in Kharkiv in 1978 28% of children could go to a camp in summer, while in 1979, this figure was 43%. “Ohtch o rabote pionerskihlagerei v letnii period,” 1978, DAKhO, f. P-14, op.17., d. 9.,p. 38.
28 *Deti v SSSR (Statisticheskii Sbornik)* (Moskva: Statistika, 1979), pp.24, 51.
The second chapter closely examines the evolution of summer camp pedagogy in the USSR from the 1920s to the 1970s. I demonstrate that from the start, summer camps had to serve two goals: improve children’s health and indoctrinate them. In different periods of time one or another goal was prioritized. Nikita Khrushchev’s summer camp reforms that introduced work into the summer camp routine were a case when the Soviet leadership sent a clear sign that indoctrination was prioritized over health improvement. Overall, the transformation of summer camps’ education agenda throughout the 1950s-1970s points to the tightening of control over children’s lives through increasing the number of adult-mediated activities paralleled by an emphasis on creativity in these activities’ design.

Chapter Three focuses on the utopian aspect of the Soviet summer camp project. It takes a close look at Artek, the USSR’s first and most enduring camp, created in 1925. Artek was situated in a picturesque park on the southern coast of the Crimean Peninsula. Thanks to a flood of books, films, and radio shows, it became the most celebrated camp in the country, the utopian land of Soviet childhood. The chapter thus looks closely at the shape this utopia took under Khrushchev’s rule. It also studies children’s experiences of it as well as adults’ educators’ efforts to turn life in Artek into a truly memorable experience.

In the fourth chapter, I look at the implementation of the official guidelines regarding summer camp agenda. I demonstrate that it was shaped by often conflicting requirements of the Komsomol, police, and sanitary inspections, which allowed some freedom in camp counselors’ interpretation of the Komsomol instructions regarding summer camp routine. This chapter offers a closer look at summer camps’ interactions with the surrounding environment, specifically forests and villages. It also analyzes specific
ways in which camp counselors tried to make Komsomol requirements for summer camp routines more engaging for children. Finally, based on oral history interviews, it presents the meanings that summer camps acquired in the memory of those who experienced them as children.

The final chapter of my dissertation is devoted to children’s summer camp experiences themselves. To understand what going to a summer camp meant for Soviet children, I decided to compare three sets of evidence and analyze them using a microhistorical approach. I look at the oral histories of two women, Larisa Bugaenko and Natalia Martinkus. I chose their cases because Larisa has a diary that she kept during her stay in Artek, while Natalia has numerous photos from Maiak camp. The existence of these additional sources created in the past allowed me to look at Larisa’s and Natalia’s stories from different angles, the way they are told now, how they are affected by documents from the past, and how these personal documents are shaped. Larisa’s and Natalia’s stories about everyday interactions among children in summer camps provide new a dimension to the narrative of these institutions, the dimension that emphasizes private experiences of children that escaped state orders or counselors’ control.
Leisure occupied an important place in Karl Marx’s political economy. In *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, he highlighted the importance of free time for social transformation:

The saving of labor time [is] equal to an increase of free time, i.e. time for the full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labor as itself the greatest productive power. From the standpoint of the direct production process it can be regarded as the production of fixed capital, this fixed capital being man himself. It goes without saying, by the way, that direct labor time itself cannot remain in the abstract antithesis to free time in which it appears from the perspective of bourgeois economy. Labor cannot become play, as Fourier would like, although it remains his great contribution to have expressed the suspension not of distribution, but of the mode of production itself, in a higher form, as the ultimate object. Free time – which is both idle time and time for higher activity – has naturally transformed its possessor into a different subject, and he then enters into the direct production process as this different subject.”

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This passage explains why the provision of rest played such an important role in the Soviet welfare system from the very onset of Soviet state-building.\textsuperscript{30} As one can see from Marx’s quote, he defined two types of free time, idle time and time devoted to “higher activity,” claiming that both “naturally” transform their possessor into a different subject. As this and other chapters show, Soviet authorities prioritized higher activity time over idle time, especially when it came to children, which clarifies their understanding of vacationing in general. Diane Koenker’s \textit{Club Red} distinguishes between two main types of vacation. The first type was rest or \textit{otdykh} which “was meant to be taken in a stationary, medicalized institution such as a sanatorium in a health spa, the \textit{kurort}, or in a natural area, preferably near the water.”\textsuperscript{31} The meaning of the Russian word \textit{otdykh} is analogous to that of \textit{rest} in English. The second type of vacation was \textit{turizm}, which “initially connoted a physically active form of leisure, involving travel to see natural wonders and social attractions through self-locomotion, by foot, bicycle, canoe, or rowboat.”\textsuperscript{32} This dissertation is mostly concerned with \textit{otdykh}, which Diane Koenker defined as “an empty vessel which had to be filled with socially, culturally, and economically meaningful activity.”\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Otdykh} was “purposeful, a joint investment by the state and the individual to restore socially useful labor power and to improve the self.”\textsuperscript{34}

This explains the emphasis Soviet authorities put on organized vacations. As Koenker notes, “the annual vacation was the most original contribution of Soviet socialism

\textsuperscript{31} Koenker., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{32} Koenker., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{33} Koenker., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{34} Koenker., p. 14.
to promoting the welfare of its workforce.”

Igor’ Orlov and Elena Iurchikova also show that, by 1923, the newly created Institute for the Methods of Extracurricular Work (Institut metodov vneshkol’noi raboty) had already developed a special route for organized tourism in Crimea, attended by 1355 people that year. In addition to that, the Soviet labor code of 1922 was the first in the world to require that after at least five and a half months of work tenure all workers were entitled to an annual two-week vacation. The state’s commitment to the provision of access to organized rest for Soviet adults and children only strengthened under Khrushchev’s rule. Testifying to this is the Third Party Program adopted at the Twenty Second Convention of the Communist Party of the USSR in 1961. There, the foundational principle for the section titled “The Party’s Tasks in Improving the Material Well-Being of the Population” was that “The Party relies on Lenin’s statement (polozhenie) that the process of building communism is grounded in the principle of financial incentives (material’naia zainteresovannost’).” Among other things, this section mentioned the provision of universal access to sanatoriums, houses of rest, and pioneer camps for both rural and urban populations at an affordable cost as an important goal the Party set for itself. This allows looking at organized rest as a form of economic good that the state offered to its population to foster the process of proceeding towards the communist future. Analyzing the access various groups of Soviet children had to organized rest, this chapter claims that while the Third Party Program did not make distinctions in this regard, they

35 Koenker., p. 12.
36 Igor’ Orlov and Elena Iurchikova, Massovyi turizm v stalinskoi povsednevnosti (Moskva: Rosspen, 2010), p. 34.
37 Koenker, Club Red. p. 12.
existed. To be more precise, the organizational structure of children’s summer rest created by the Soviet state was neo-corporatist in nature and created inequalities in the way different groups of children experienced Soviet citizenship.

If the Party saw provision of rest as an economic good it offered to the population, it recognized the population’s right to it. Thus, organized rest was a part of an agreement between the state and its citizens. To further understand this deal, one should look more closely at the meaning of rights within the Soviet system of legislation. As Benjamin Nathans points out in his compelling examination of the evolution of Soviet Constitutional discourse, in the USSR, the concept of Soviet rights consisted of two elements. The first was the statement of the people’s right to something, while the second was the obligation of the state to actually invest materially in ensuring the fulfillment of the declared right. Thus, the key to understanding Soviet rights discourse the way it was formulated in Soviet Constitutions lies in the second component, which made the realization of rights contingent on the performance of duties. As a result, Soviet citizens never had “natural” rights, as their rights were bestowed by the state, required them to fulfill certain duties, and were conditional on the state’s material assistance. Soviet citizenship had to be an active one, which means that rights could only be fulfilled if the state received a contribution in return, and the major contribution every citizen could make was his or her labor.

Having taken such shape, Soviet rights first and foremost were best suited to regulate the lives of the working population. Elderly people were also entitled to the

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40 Nathans.
fulfillment of rights because they had contributed their labor in the past, while children had rights of their own because they could contribute in the future. Though not completely excluded from the ranks of citizens whom the state really cared for, elderly people and children were to a certain extent marginalized. Childcare institutions, for example, received funding on the left-over principle. Yet, claiming that children in the USSR were a disadvantaged group is certainly incorrect. For example, in 1921, the People’s Commissar of Public Health Nikolai Semashko wrote in the Soviet Russia newspaper that “the toiling population of the suffering Republic gave away its last piece of bread and the last yard of cloth for children, because the toilers of the Soviet Republic are conscious that the children represent our better future, that upon their health depends the success of our Socialist construction work.” Soviet authorities perceived children as a vital resource and invested considerable effort into their mobilization. Looking at how Soviet central authorities approached the provision of children’s organized rest, this chapter demonstrates that, the fulfillment of this right was contingent on children’s social origin and their parents’ occupation. This means that, depending on the aforementioned two factors, when it came to access to welfare, children were subjected to the same social hierarchies as their parents.

**Political Status of Children in the USSR**

Bellamy, Castiglione, and Santoro define three approaches to assessing citizenship, identifying it with the possession of individual rights and active participation in the national

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community.\textsuperscript{43} When it comes to children, of course, defining citizenship is very difficult. As Van Bueren acknowledges, in most cases it is passive citizenship, meaning that children have some, but not all attributes of this status.\textsuperscript{44} In the Soviet case, the situation was further complicated by several factors. As Nathans highlights, Stalin’s Constitution of 1936 distinguished between having a right and being granted material means to exercise it, with the latter reserved for the “toilers,” people “engaged in fulfilling the preeminent duty of labor.”\textsuperscript{45} Because children did not participate in the labor effort, their needs were of high, but not supreme, importance.\textsuperscript{46} Another issue was that the USSR had never developed a codex of children’s rights, instead scattering them in family law, labor protection, and civil and criminal codes.\textsuperscript{47} By the late 1920s and early 1930s, however, the situation for Soviet children became even more complex, as the educators and authorities started perceiving them as agents of the revolution who could foster their parents’ transformation into exemplary Soviet citizens.\textsuperscript{48} This idea originated from the belief that being born under Soviet rule, the young were not corrupted by the capitalist system their parents grew up in. As a result, one can claim that authorities and educators did aspire to increase children’s autonomy from their families. The amount of effort invested into the creation and functioning of various childcare institutions run by the state testifies to this approach as well.

\textsuperscript{44} Nathans, “Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era.” p.171
\textsuperscript{45} Kelly, \textit{Children’s World}. p. 62.
\textsuperscript{46} Kelly. p. 63.
Nevertheless, in many ways children were still perceived as a part of a family unit, which made them dependent on their parents and their status in Soviet society. During the purges, children shared the punishment for their parents’ alleged crimes. They were deported and sent to special orphanages. They also lost access to their parents’ property, further education, career advancement, or the right to work at all. Stalin’s principle that “the son does not bear responsibility for his father,” proclaimed in 1935, had only partly improved this situation. As a result, Soviet children’s status within Soviet society, as well as their relationship with the state, was vague and depended on many factors, among which their origin played a prominent role. The system of summer camps’ organization, in fact, supports the claim that this situation did not only pertain to the specific conditions of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. When it came to access to certain goods, like organized rest for example, the situation remained unchanged until at least mid-1970s.

Despite a rather unclear legal relationship that the Soviet state established with children, they occupied a very special place in its propaganda. This made children the only group of Soviet citizens entitled to a very special feeling, the feeling of happiness. Catriona Kelly stresses that “The Soviet state placed children’s affairs at the heart of its political legitimacy, emphasizing that children were treated with greater care than they were anywhere else in the world.” 

The image of a happy Soviet childhood was one of the most powerful propaganda tools mobilized in both Soviet home and international politics. Foreign delegations often visited childcare facilities, which had to demonstrate to them the achievements of the Soviet state in building its future with healthy and happy young

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citizens. The essence of this propaganda was brilliantly reflected in Viktor Koretskii’s 1948 poster “Road of a talent… (in capitalist countries)/ Way for talents! (in a socialist country)” (Doroga talanta…/ Dorogu talantam!). The poster compared the lives of children in the USSR and Eastern Bloc with those outside. For capitalist countries, very likely represented by the United States, the poster portrayed a poorly dressed boy with a look of hopelessness on his face, holding a violin. The boy was depicted against the background of rich men and cars passing by a group of buildings adorned with brightly lit advertisements that read “café,” “cabaret,” and “restaurant.” These spaces of commercialized low-brow entertainment had room for neither the poor boy nor his violin. Contrary to this gloomy image, the part of the poster devoted to socialist countries showed a well-dressed, strong, and healthy boy confidently though modestly playing his violin against the background of an orchestra, a pipe organ, and the Soviet national emblem. The Soviet boy looked calm and secure, unlike his American counterpart, who seemed lonely and rejected. In this way, Koretskii demonstrated the essence of Soviet ideology regarding children and childhood. The boy’s artistic achievement is attributed to the freedom he had to develop his talent, as provided by the supportive Soviet state. In the outcome, both the state and its citizens benefited from each other’s contribution. While capitalist countries rejected their youth, thus wasting their potential, the USSR developed their talents to become stronger and achieve the goal of building communism.
This concept of mutual benefit made a happy and fulfilling childhood a part of the Soviet political economy. Investing in its young generation, the state had to make sure that in the future its efforts would be repaid. For this, it created numerous organizations to indoctrinate the young and ensure that they would grow up to be proper Soviet citizens. The most prominent of these organizations were the Communist Youth League (hereafter referred to as the Komsomol, the Russian abbreviation), the All-Union Pioneer Organization, and the Young Octobrists’ Organization. Membership in all three was strongly encouraged by the state and usually administered through schools. Thus, the Party
expected a Soviet child to join the Young Octobrists’ at the age of seven. At the age of ten, he or she passed a grand ceremony of acceptance to the Pioneer Organization. Finally, at the age of fourteen, a Soviet adolescent was expected to take exams to enter the Komsomol.

Aside from the Young Octobrists, Young Pioneers, and Komsomol organizations, Soviet authorities used a wide range of other institutions to indoctrinate the young generation. Among them, one could include schools, kindergartens, children’s homes, specialized boarding schools, tourist bureaus, sports clubs, pioneer palaces, and, of course, summer camps. A significant number of organizations on this list were responsible for children’s leisure activities. This alone testifies to the fact that Soviet authorities recognized children’s right to organized rest and provided material means so that they could exercise this right. The way they decided to administer it, however, was quite unexpected and refers to the paradoxical nature of children’s status in the USSR. Soviet children’s access to secondary and higher education was administered directly by state institutions, such as the Ministry of Education. Children’s access to organized rest and leisure, in the meantime, was provided by the Soviet trade unions, who ran the majority of pioneer palaces, summer camps, and various types of summer playgrounds.

**Children’s Rest Organization and Administration in the USSR**

To understand how this hybrid system of state childcare came to life let us look more closely at the history of the trade union movement and organization of rest in the USSR. Before the Revolution of 1917, Russian trade unions did not side with the Bolshevik Party. Moreover, Bolsheviks were suspicious of trade unions, believing that these organizations were ready to give up on the revolution if factory managers met their demands regarding workers’ rights and wages. The relationship between the Party and the
unions did not improve much in the 1920s, as some union representatives sided with the Workers’ Opposition within the party, demanding that the power in the state be transferred to the workers as Marx suggested. All of this ended with Stalin’s purge of trade union leadership in 1928-1929. From then until 1957, Soviet trade unions had very limited authority and were essentially turned into another executive organ of the Party. The serious change in the trade unions’ status happened only after Khrushchev’s reforms of 1956-1958. Then, trade unions received the right to participate in the drafting of production plans, establish work quotas and wage payments, review reports from the management on the fulfillment of production plans, supervise production conferences, oversee the observation of labor laws by management, distribute worker housing, check on the functioning of factory dining rooms and consumer goods stores, and administer social security laws.50

Although local trade union councils’ functions and rights increased significantly, historians of Soviet trade unions agree that, as Blair Ruble put it, “Soviet trade union leaders perceive the interests of the assembly-line worker and those of the state (and, through that state, factory management) as identical.”51 Provision of access to organized rest and leisure was one of the important responsibilities of trade unions starting in the 1920s. They administered workers’ clubs responsible for hobby groups for adults and children, as well as houses of rest, sanatoriums, tourist stations, pioneer palaces, and children’s summer camps.

The organizational scheme for children’s summer camps came to life in a contingent rather than thoroughly planned manner. According to Liia Klenevskaia, the first pioneer camps were rather ascetic when it came to their equipment. Children lived in tents and performed the majority of duties connected with running the camp. Then, in 1925, Soviet authorities decided to start involving local trade union committees’ financial resources in summer camps’ organization. Two reasons can help explain this move. First, early pioneer detachments were usually organized at the Komsomol cells that functioned as Soviet enterprises. The first summer camps, thus, were already connected to these enterprises rather than, for example, to schools. Second, from the early 1920s, Soviet trade unions had already been engaged in the administration of rest homes and sanatoria. While the system of Soviet tourism management was rather complicated and involved over different periods of time the Ministry of Healthcare, Sovtur, the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions, and the Central Committee on Physical Culture and Sport, by the late 1930s trade unions began to dominate this landscape. This coincided with the fact that in 1938, trade unions also became fully responsible for children’s organized summer rest. The process of finding a place for pioneer camps in the Soviet administrative system was finalized in 1958, when they were transferred to the economic jurisdiction of Soviet

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54 Koenker, Club Red., p. 73.
enterprises, institutions, and organizations.\textsuperscript{56} This decentralized summer camp management and lowered its dependence on centrally allocated resources. However, the quotas for children whom the authorities expected to participate in organized rest were still produced by the Central Trade Union committees, then sent to regional committees of the respective industries, which had to organize the trade union leadership of specific enterprises to fulfill the plan.

**The Development of Summer Camp Movement in the USSR**

The institution Soviet authorities considered most suitable for providing children with organized rest was the summer camp, which appeared in the USSR in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{57} Though it is difficult to firmly establish the date of the first Soviet summer camp, scholars have settled on two facts. First, in 1925 the most prominent camp in the USSR, Artek, opened its doors for the first time. Second, it was not the first summer camp in the country, although in the late 1920s it became the first camp that hosted children not in tents, but in wooden constructions. It is also correct to call Soviet institutions responsible for organizing children’s leisure in summer pioneer camps rather than ordinary summer camps. The name reflects the origin of these institutions and their politicized nature. The Young Pioneers Organization, a state-sponsored political body responsible for engaging children ages ten to fourteen in the Soviet project, initiated the creation of the summer camps for children. The lack of clarity about the time of pioneer camps’ emergence on Soviet territory is partly due to the fact that in the early 1920s, these institutions were very


\textsuperscript{57} In a book “Nasha smena” (Our Shift) there is information that the first camp gathering was organized by Moscow pioneers in 1922. However, the fact that the publication was issued much later, in 1959, creates a certain level of distrust to the source. See: *Nasha Smena* (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1959). p. 41.
small and encompassed between one and eight pioneer detachments, in which case they were called cooperative camps.\textsuperscript{58} These camps were organized on the initiative of the pioneers themselves or their older patron Komsomol members.\textsuperscript{59} The first pioneer camps were distinct in several ways. First, they were comprised of permanent pioneer detachments\textsuperscript{60} and had to strengthen children’s ties within them. Second, the children themselves were the driving force behind their organization and operation, with limited participation by adults.\textsuperscript{61}

By the 1930s, however, pioneer camps organized by district and regional pioneer bureaus started gaining prominence. These camps no longer united pioneers from permanent detachments, but instead hosted children from different places within one district or region. Such camps were also bigger. Enlarged camps hosted 150-180 children, and gigantic camps hosted 300 to 500 children. Thus, during the second half of the 1920s children’s rest became more regulated from above with increased adult participation involving various organizations. One of the major developments that drove this process took place in 1925, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered Soviet trade unions to take responsibility for material support for “equipping pioneer clubs,

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\textsuperscript{58} Klenevskaya, Osobennosti protsessa formovaniia detskogo kollektiva v pionerskom lagere (na opyte raboty Vsesoiuznogo ordena Trudovogo krasnogo Znameni pionerskogo lageria Artek im. V. I. Lenina). Dissertatsiia na soiskaniie uchenoi stepeni kandidata pedagogicheskih nauk. P.34
\textsuperscript{59} At this time pioneer organizations were a part of Komsomol organizations affiliated with different enterprises.
\textsuperscript{60} Permanent detachment meant that children were engaged in its activities the whole year several years in a row. At the time of second generation socialism, pioneer detachments were children’s classes at school. In them children normally stayed and performed their duties together for four years in a row.
\textsuperscript{61} The Young Pioneer Organization was grounded in children’s self-rule and encouraged initiative. In this respect, the shape assumed by the early pioneer camps directly corresponded to the values that the Pioneer Organization promoted.
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pioneer playgrounds, organization of pioneer camps.”

At the same time, the main functional division within the camp system appeared. Pioneer camps split in two groups. The goal of the first group organized healthy rest for children with no serious medical problems, which is why it included mass or health-improving (ozdorovitel’nye) camps. The second category encompassed sanatorium camps, which took care of sick children.

Although enlarged mass camps became the prevailing form of pioneer camps by 1930, it is not exactly clear why. One of the most influential Soviet pedagogues of the period, Anton Makarenko, was rather critical of them. In Makarenko’s view, children learned most effectively within a collective of peers with whom they interacted for prolonged periods of time. That is why a twenty-day session in a camp, uniting children from different pioneer detachments, seemed insufficient to him to build a collective that would exercise an enduring influence. “Such fragmentation of the educational (vospitatel’nyi) process split between different institutions and people, who are not connected by mutual responsibility and are not united under one leadership, cannot be useful,” Makarenko believed. His reservations on this matter were not groundless. According to pedagogical theory, what emerged in mass pioneer camps was called a temporary collective. Soviet educators had to invest significant effort and creativity in turning this type of collective into a productive educational tool, but had rather questionable results.

64 Ibid., p. 120.
There is no clear evidence explaining why the Communist Party decided to prioritize large camps uniting different children instead of supporting small ones constituted by one or several permanent detachments. Nevertheless, the history of the pioneer camp movement allows for interpretation regarding this matter. One of the problems with small, tent-based camps was that they were hard to control. The need to have a better grasp over what was happening in these spaces arose from multiple considerations about their educational effectiveness to basic safety concerns. Seen as important spaces for children’s political education, on a basic level, summer camps, nevertheless, had to ensure two things, namely, to prevent children from engaging in various sorts of criminal activities and keep them in good health. Both were very important in the context of the 1920s, when, after a long Civil War, Soviet children suffered from all sorts of deprivations. Because of this, for example, the first group sent to Artek, the best camp in the country, consisted of children from the Volga region, affected by famine in 1921-1922. Under these circumstances, the possibility that big, permanent camps would keep children safe and in good health was much higher compared to what small, tent-based camps could offer. However, big camps were expensive. As a result, money factored greatly in deciding the fate of pioneer camps, significantly affecting their educational agenda.

**Children’s Summer Camp Organization During Late Socialism**
Nathans and Fitzpatrick compellingly demonstrate that even if the early USSR was becoming a less hierarchical society, it was doing so at a very slow pace. The introduction of trade unions as providers of goods and services adds a new element to the picture. In her profound examination of Soviet vacationing, Koenker argues that “The post-Stalin years thus witnessed the transformation of the Soviet consumer regime from hierarchy to relative abundance that permitted personal choice and distinction.” Yet, as Koenker highlights, even then, the intelligentsia maintained better access to Soviet recreational facilities. Predictably, among the relatively disadvantaged were workers and peasants.

This argument can be further detailed by adding to the traditional hierarchy of workers, intelligentsia, and party officials whom Keonker discusses, a new hierarchy, which had never changed in the USSR, the hierarchy of belonging to a certain trade union and workplace. In addition to this, archival documents and guidelines for pioneer camp organizers bear traces of another fundamental hierarchical distinction, the one between urban and rural populations. In sum, a study of the children’s summer camps shows that, in the words of the head of the Ukrainian Council of Trade Unions, comrade Drozhzhin, in the USSR, “it is better to be a worker in metallurgy than a medic,” yet it was still better to be a medic than a peasant.

The fundamental truth about Soviet summer camps is that they required considerable resources to run. Thus, the quality of children’s rest in them depended on the

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67 “Stenogramma republikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiashchikh kul’tmassovvykh i fizkul’turnyykh robotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.,” 1954, TSDAVO, f. P-2605, op. 8, d. 966., p.135.
specific trade union’s ability to effectively mobilize these resources. I will discuss the challenges that trade unions had to overcome throughout the camp organization campaign based on the record of a Republican Conference of Sports and Cultural Administrators held in Kiev in 1954. I closely analyze this particular conference because it was dominated by trade union camp organizers who criticized the current state of affairs in the sphere of their work. Moreover, the conference brought together representatives of the three major agencies responsible for organizing children’s summer rest – trade unions, the Komsomol, and the Ministry of Education – and thus allows us to see how they approached their obligations. Overall, the records of the Republican Conference of Sports and Cultural Administrators presents the most comprehensive picture of what it took for trade union camp organizers to fulfill their duties and successfully create a pioneer camp where children could spend their summer.

Although summer camps only seemed to be a temporary seasonal concern, in fact, they required attention throughout the whole year. The budgeting process, which included funding requests for renovations and further development of camp territories, had to start during the last quarter of the year preceding the summer campaign. Then, starting from March, trade unions had to organize renovations, find and train personnel, and figure out the food supplies. All of this required a great deal of work and interfered with the schedules of the heads of the regional trade union committees, as well as the heads of the trade union committees of specific production units (factories, state agencies, research institutions, and
By the beginning of May each year, the camps had to pass an assessment by the sanitary commission, which had the right to forbid the opening of a camp due to unsanitary conditions. This right of veto made the sanitary commission the most important agency with which trade unions had to negotiate on the issue of the summer camps’ functioning.

Trade unions could not simply close a camp and wait until money for renovations arrived because they had no choice when it came to the number of children they had to take care of during the summer months. The Central Trade Union Council issued quotas without consultations regarding local trade unions’ capacity and funding. As a result, the industries that could accomplish the task successfully were the ones which were able to rely heavily on alternative resources, such as the director’s fund, instead of relying solely on social insurance funds and central branch trade union funds which were centrally allocated for this purpose, but were rarely sufficient.

With the pressure for the fulfillment of quotas combined with insufficient resources required to build a stable camp, many enterprises and organizations had to enter negotiations with other agents, who extracted all the possible benefits from this situation. In the mid-1950s, the majority of summer camps run by the trade unions fit into one of the two categories: those owned by unions and those rented by the unions. The records of the sanitary commission included a list of quotas issued to each union.

68 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditel’skov kul’tmassovych rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 107.

69 For example, the budget of Pomerki summer camp run by the trade union of Khar’kov Tractor Plant for the year 1953 was 570,360 rubles. In it, the share of the social security fund money was only 115,730 rubles. The plant’s trade union received nothing from the central committee of the trade union of mechanical engineering workers, thus the rest of the sum was covered by the plant. For this and other enterprises of Khar’kov region in 1953 see: “Utverzhdenie smety pervichnykh profsoiuznykh organizatsiy na soderzhanie pionerskih lagerei na letnii sezon 1953 goda,” 1953, DAKhO, f. R-4993, op. 2, d. 144.; Liubov’ Zhdanova, Razvitie Pionerskih Lagerei v Sovezkom Soiuze (1945-1975). Dissertatsiia Na Soiskaniie Uchenoi Stepeni Kandidata Pedagogicheskikh Nauk (Moskva, 1975). pp. 28-31.
Republican Meeting of Cultural and Sports Administrators held in 1954 provides insight into various shapes that the material environment of summer camps could assume.\(^{70}\) While summer camps initially started as tent camps, the meeting participants did not mention any of those, partly because the tents themselves were hard to obtain and because, as the head of the Ukrainian Central Committee of Komsomol comrade Drozdenko\(^{71}\) mentioned, concerns about children’s safety dominated summer camp organization. As a result of high quotas and insufficient funding for camp construction, many trade union camps were situated in buildings designed for other purposes. For example, comrade Zimkina, the head of the cultural department of the Republican Trade Union of Agricultural Workers, mentioned that a summer camp building they owned in Voroshilovgrad region was, in fact, a vacant industrial building given to them by the management of the local flour mill industry.\(^{72}\) Yet, the possession of such summer camp space was better than its total absence. In that case, trade unions had to rent a building which usually was a village school.

The process of renting a school uncovers one of the major flaws pertaining to summer camp organization in the USSR, specifically the lack of cooperation between various agencies whose collaboration was key to the successful accomplishment of the task. As the Council of Ministers assigned the job of providing children’s summer rest to the trade unions, all other agencies relieved themselves of the obligation to care about the

\(^{70}\) “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodashchikh kul’tmassovyykh i fizkul’tturnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”

\(^{71}\) Unfortunately, the majority of participants in this conference were mentioned without their names, that is why here they will be referred to the way they were addressed during the meeting.

\(^{72}\) “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodashchikh kul’tmassovyykh i fizkul’tturnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”., p. 60.
issue. Taking into account the fact that the pool of agencies involved included the Ministry of Education and the Komsomol organization, this raises questions about the balance between the ideological and pragmatic approaches to the organization of children’s ideological education in the USSR. The Ministry of Education, of course, cared for its own summer camps, which were numerous. However, it did not care for two other very important things: control over rent prices set by rural schools and the provision of teachers for summer camps.

For community farm schools, the trade unions’ need for buildings in the countryside suitable for children represented a great opportunity to raise funds. As a result, their demands were often overblown and included both monetary compensation and requests for major renovations. During the 1954 meeting, every trade union organizer who had to rent schools complained that they were overpriced. Below is an example of such a complaint voiced by comrade Tabenko, the head of the cultural sector of the Republican Committee of State Trade and Public Food Supplies:

Who allows them to demand 15,000 rubles to rent their schools? This year the headmaster of Demidovka school, comrade Kanevskii, said ‘give me 20,000 rubles and renovate the school’s roof.’ Last year, we renovated two floors of their stone building and bought them a piano, and now he wants another 20,000, saying that someone with a car had already visited him and promised this amount of money, so if we don’t provide, we will not get the school.73

73 “Stenogramma republikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodstv kommunal'noj rabotnikov SSSR po voprosam kul'tury, fiziroskoly i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionercampakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 100.
The passage demonstrates that competition between different trade unions that lacked space for summer camps unexpectedly created new financial opportunities for another category of institutions suffering from insufficient funding, collective farm schools. Their headmasters soon realized the power they wielded in this situation of scarcity and used it successfully to their own advantage. The relations established between different agencies in this case resemble the model developed by Ronald Wintrobe in his Political Economy of Dictatorship. \(^{74}\) Wintrobe’s theory points out an important tension within the economic structure of a dictatorship, in which vertical orders that the dictator communicates to his subordinates often conflict with these subordinates’ wishes to pursue their own interests through engaging in horizontal relationships. The application of this model to the Soviet 1930s case accomplished by Paul Gregory and Andrei Markevich perfectly illustrates a situation in which trade union organizers and collective farm school headmasters found themselves. Not possessing enough resources to complete their plans or ensure that the institution each was in charge of worked as it should, managers had to be very entrepreneurial because they could not achieve their goals without additional resources, personal initiative, inventiveness, and horizontal cooperation. \(^{75}\) Yet, horizontal cooperation was often impeded by the fact that various organizations had conflicting goals and competed for limited resources. The work of this principle is best demonstrated by the tensions between the Ministry of Education and other trade unions. While trade unions

desperately needed the resources only the Ministry of Education could provide, namely rural school buildings and teachers, at a 1954 meeting, the Ministry’s representative, comrade Sushan, made it very clear that her organization not going to do anything to resolve the problem. The Ministry’s goals were to protect teachers’ right to a vacation and help rural school headmasters fulfil their duties. Thus, trade unions had to figure out how to solve their problems on their own on a case-by-case basis.

The situation was the same with another vital necessity, that of cadres. As of 1954, people who went to work in pioneer camps received standard wages established for these institutions by the staff register (shtatnoe raspisanie). In 1956, this sum constituted 130 rubles per month. Here is how the head of a tourist camp described the worth of this wage in 1956:

People who have been working in the camp have been receiving only 130 rubles and were spending most of them on food right in the camp, while working from morning to evening. The majority of the employees were students who sacrificed their summer to work and earn. They received only work and no earnings. This question should be raised. This is why a teacher who works hard the whole year long is using every excuse to avoid participating in a summer health improvement campaign.

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76 “Stenogramma republikanskogo soveschaniia rukovodashchikh kul’tmassovvykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p.115.

77 The decision regarding the number and specialization cadres employed by summer camps was regulated by the state document called shtatnoe raspisanie. In their financial reports, camps had to provide shtatnoe raspisanie. As a result, introducing changes into the structures of employment imposed by the state was very difficult.

78 “Stenogramma republikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov,” 1956, TSDAVO, f. 2605, op. 8, d. 1295., p. 71.
This passage to a certain extent explains why it was so difficult to find qualified cadres for summer camps. Ideally, the director and the head counselor of a camp were expected to have higher education and experience working with children. Of course, they had to be Party members. As for the counselors, they fell into two categories: the counselors themselves and educators (vospitateli). The position of a vospitatel’ had to be filled by a schoolteacher. The latter was especially important because teachers could organize activities for the camps’ hobby groups especially if they taught natural sciences or even subjects such as history. The importance of such specialists in a pioneer camp could not be overestimated because, as of 1954, the camps’ staff register did not include a position of a massovik-zateynik (a person responsible for children’s entertainment) or any kind of a hobby group organizer. The only option available for camp organizers was to hire hobby group organizers and pay them by the hour. This was very inconvenient as comrade Davydovich, the head of the metal industry trade union, noted in his presentation at a meeting in 1954:

In the resolution of the All-Union Central Trade Union Council we can hire a person to curate a hobby group on an hour to hour basis. This, of course, does not work. We have to bring these people who are paid by the hour from 100 kilometers away, and then take them back. Naturally, this is not working. What should be done? We have now raised the question regarding the creation of Capable Hands (umelye ruki) workshops. We have a camp that belongs to Lenin factory. They organize Capable Hands workshops every year. Children work with wood, iron, clay, and other materials. All boys in the camp younger than twelve and thirteen years old are busy in these workshops. So now, the decision of the XII Komsomol Convention stresses the need for such activities. We should be allowed to
have a least one person like this. [...] It would be even better if we were allowed to have a *massovik-zateynik*, and two hobby group organizers so that we could proceed with the work of technical and aviation modelling Capable Hands workshops.\(^{79}\)

The complaint and suggestion of comrade Davydovich demonstrate that while various guidelines for pioneer camp organizers issued in the period between 1930s and early 1950s highlighted the importance of hobby groups and workshops in the pioneer camps, implementing these guidelines was almost impossible. The camps’ staff register adopted by the All-Union Central Trade Union Council did not have a position for a person who would specialize solely in organizing creative activities for children, which made the process of hiring this person extremely inconvenient. Thus, only wealthy trade unions could afford to bring hobby group organizers from a nearby city and pay for their transportation home. Those who lacked resources had to rely on the counselors and teachers working in the facility, if they were able to attract them in the first place.

This once more confirms that while children were indeed important and trade unions were investing significant effort into organizing children’s summer rest, the amount of money the state allocated for this purpose was insufficient. As a result, when people on the Central Trade Union Council and the Central Komosomol Committee were designing the staff registry, they made it as small as possible. Certainly, in assessing this situation one should keep in mind that less than a decade before the meeting of 1954, the summer

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\(^{79}\) “*Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodashchikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’tturnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.*”, p. 88.
camps’ main benefit in the eyes of children’s parents were the hot meals they provided.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, even in 1954, the only person at the All-Ukrainian meeting of camp counselors who raised the issue of the quality of children’s hobby groups at the summer camps was comrade Davydovich from the metal industry, whose trade union was among the wealthiest. He was also the only person complaining that the plan they received was too small and did not reflect the capacities of the camp system the trade union owned. The problems of other organizers were very different, for the majority of them simply had no means to fulfil the plan they received.

Comrade Davydovich shared one concern with his colleagues, however. It was the lack of teachers among camp personnel. Even if the staff register changed, giving the camps an opportunity to hire \textit{massoviki-zateyniki} and hobby group organizers, the positions of \textit{vospitateli} had to filled by schoolteachers. Yet, teachers did not want to work in pioneer camps. This happened for three reasons: teachers defended their right to have summer vacation and were unenthusiastic about wages and pioneer camp working conditions. Sometimes, however, teachers, the majority of whom were women, as well as doctors and nurses agreed to work in pioneer camps for family reasons. Primarily these were women who saw no other opportunity to organize summer rest outside of the city for their own children. This is how, for example, my interviewee Larisa Bugaenko first went to a summer camp in the early 1950s. Her family was very poor and had no opportunity to go somewhere on vacation. They also did not have access to a summer camp facility. Because of this,

Larisa’s mother, a pediatrician, worked as a doctor in summer camps so that her child could enjoy a healthy leisure time in the countryside.\textsuperscript{81}

As we see from Larisa’s story, the medics’ trade union had little means to help its members provide healthy rest for their children. Medics were not the only trade union that experienced this problem. The contrast between what different trade unions could offer to their members becomes especially striking if we compare the issues raised by comrade Davydovich, the head of the metal industry trade union, and comrade Gnuskin, the head of the cultural work department in Voroshilovgrad regional trade union council.\textsuperscript{82} Davydovich’s main concerns included small quotas (he believed his trade union could provide healthy rest for more children), absence of qualified personnel, possible dullness of children’s camp life, and absence of playground equipment. In the meantime, comrade Gnuskin’s challenges were of quite a different nature. In 1954, the Central Trade Union Council increased the Voroshilovgrad region’s plan for children’s summer health improvement campaign to 43,155 children and adolescents, which was 2,394 children more than the previous year.\textsuperscript{83} However, in 1954, the capacities of Voroshilovgrad camp system remained the same, while the Ministry of Education decided to severely cut the funds they spent on rented camps. As a result, as of May 5-6, 1954, comrade Gnuskin still did not know whether 3,000 to 3,500 children whose summer rest had usually been organized by the regional bodies of education, would be taken care of at all, because the Ministry of

\textsuperscript{81} Bugaenko, interview.

\textsuperscript{82} “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiaschchikh kul’tmassovyykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, pp. 59 -67.

\textsuperscript{83} “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiaschchikh kul’tmassovyykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 71.
Education had not yet confirmed their funding. The problem was further exacerbated by the fact that the camps organized by the regional department of education helped several other trade unions with their health improvement campaign. The trade unions of medical and cultural workers, which were assigned to take care of 1,200 and 900 children, respectively, usually benefited from the extended capacities the educators possessed. As the situation changed in 1954, their prospects of fulfilling the plan looked rather bleak.

In addition to these problems, medical and cultural workers did not have what Gnuskin called the “material foundation” (material’naia baza) for organizing the summer campaign. It meant that aside from not possessing any camps, these trade unions did not have furniture, bed linens, kitchen utensils, and all the other things crucial for a camp’s functioning. The key to the problems experienced by medics and cultural workers lay in the fact that they did not have additional resources. The trade union of agricultural workers experienced the same problems with centrally allocated funding, which was completely insufficient. Despite that, their representative comrade Zimkina was rather optimistic. To ensure the fulfillment of the plan, she claimed that her trade union would solve the problems by mobilizing the resources of patronizing organizations (shefy), as well as regional councils, big factories, and construction organizations. One of the scenarios

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84 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditsekhikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”., p. 59.
85 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditsekhikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”., p. 60.
86 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditsekhikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”., p.71.
meant to solve the problem was to mobilize big community farms and trusts creating small camps using their resources.\(^{87}\)

Thus, in a way the trade union of agricultural workers appeared to have more resources to mobilize than the trade unions of medical and cultural workers who had no one to turn to for help. The reason was that, aside from the potential possessed by the big community farms, big factories indeed had to help the agricultural sector in various ways, including by raising the cultural level of community farm workers. Because of this, comrade Zimkina could ask for their help in organizing children’s health improvement in the countryside. Meanwhile, no one had an obligation to help medical and cultural workers. Moreover, as the head of the cultural department of the republican trade union of medical workers comrade Zubar’ highlighted, the only source of funding his trade union could rely on was social security money allocated for this purpose. This resource was of course insufficient. As a result, children of medical workers not only suffered from very limited access to healthy rest, but also spent it in much worse conditions. For example, one of the few camps that the medical workers’ trade union owned in the Stalino region was “the worst in terms of its equipment, and not because people don’t want to work there, but because the material base, the bed linen we receive is the one that has been used in hospitals, and we cannot abandon this practice.”\(^{88}\)

\(^{87}\) “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiatshchikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 72.

\(^{88}\) “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiatshchikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 80.
This comparison of the problems experienced by different trade unions demonstrates several important characteristics pertaining to their functioning. First, and foremost, cooperation between different agencies in summer camp organization was often impeded by a lack of regulations and incentives to help one another. Trade unions not only experienced problems with pioneer camp cadres, but they also could not buy furniture and sports equipment because in Soviet legislation pioneer camps were not listed among children’s organizations. While practically all trade union camp organizers had to struggle with some problems, the key to their successful resolution lay in the internal resources each trade union could spare for the summer campaign. The head of the metal workers’ union, for example, mentioned that they used their workshops to produce furniture, yet they could neither produce nor procure tents for hiking. The situation with the trade union of medical workers differed drastically. Their summer campaign was gravely affected by the overpriced rent for community farm schools, absence of furniture, and severe lack of funding in general. The problem, as one can see, was not only of a financial nature. Money could not help with furniture. The key to creating a good summer camp lay in possessing a variety of resources, including furniture workshops, construction departments, and even transportation units. Because of this, children whose parents worked for organizations with no internal resources to spare were in a disadvantaged position. This fact also demonstrates that in the USSR, the strongest industries which could provide the best for their workers were the ones that did not depend on any other organizations nor, in a way, on the state.

**Rights and Duties of Urban vs Rural Children**
During the Republican Methodological Conference held in 1956 to discuss the results of children’s summer rest, among other things, camp organizers discussed a recently created type of camps, the community and inter-community farm camps for children. The records of the preceding 1954 meeting mention the existence of the trade union of agricultural workers’ camps. Community and inter-community farm camps were rather different, however. Various sources give different dates on when they appeared. For example, in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the first camps of this type were created in 1953.\(^\text{89}\) A report on the work of collective farm camps in Arzamas region dates them to 1951.\(^\text{90}\) That same report also suggests that these camps appeared because in agricultural areas, like the Lukoianovskii district of Arzamas region, very few adults were trade union members. As a result, only ten percent of children had access to summer camps. Thus, collective and inter-collective summer camps were a way to equalize urban and rural children in their rights to access organized summer rest. The significant difference between these camps and trade union camps lay in the fact that the former had to rely on the funding provided by the local communities. This highlights the problem with provision of rest for Soviet children. By delegating the function of rest provision to the trade unions, the Soviet state created a gap in access to welfare services such as organized summer rest between children whose parents belonged to a trade union and those who did not. In this respect, Soviet society of the 1950s reflected the neo-corporatist model much more than the socialist one that Khrushchev advocated.

\(^{89}\) “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.” p. 44.
The need to procure funding locally, specifically from the community farms, meant that the resources community and intercommunity farm camps possessed were rather limited. Because of this, their organizers had to be very creative in finding ways to compensate for the funding restrictions. In the Staro-Ivantsevo district of the Arzamas region, for example, sixty campers lived in a tent they constructed themselves from tree branches and roofing felt.\textsuperscript{91} If this is true, then one cannot help but ask a question about the sanitary service’s control over these spaces. During the 1954 meeting, trade union activists complained that the sanitary service’s inspection requirements for tent camps were so strict that they raised the costs of such camps almost to the level of the built ones.\textsuperscript{92} The sanitary services not only required that real tents be used, but also that they had a double roof, had a floor covering the ground and be at least a meter and a half in height. The tents allegedly created by the children from the Staro-Ivantsevo’s camp fulfilled none of these requirements. Moreover, it is rather unclear whether community and inter-community farms camps in 1956, early in their existence, were on the radar of the sanitary service at all. What one can firmly claim is that the quality of accommodation that these camps provided was worse than what trade union camps offered.

Another important difference between trade union camps and community and inter-community farm camps was that, in the latter, the pioneers, children between ages ten to fourteen, actually had to work every day. Community and intercommunity farm camps were not unique in this respect. In 1955, the Komsomol issued new regulations for summer

\textsuperscript{91} Komsomol’sko-Molodezhnyie i Pionerskiye Lageri v Kolkhozah. p. 51.
\textsuperscript{92} “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditsekhikh kul’tmassovkhk kul’tmassovkhk i fizkul’tturnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.” p. 127.
camps which strongly encouraged camp organizers to involve pioneers in agricultural and other types of work during their stay in the camp. However, only young people between ages fourteen and sixteen were expected to engage in agricultural work for four hours a day. For the rest, the suggestion was that they work for two hours and engage in various work-related activities that included cleaning the camp, helping in the kitchen, working in a petting zoo, or helping the collective farm. In the collective farm camps, pioneers (children aged ten to fourteen) had to engage in agricultural work from two to four hours a day, as well as help in the kitchen and clean the premises, because these camps had very few staff members.

Community farm camps for rural children had much in common with work and rest camps for urban young people. The goal of the work and rest camps was to teach adolescents aged fourteen to sixteen to love and respect work, thus preparing them for adult life, and to help Soviet community farms during the high season of summer. The everyday routine of work and rest camps, as a result, included four hours of agricultural work per day. The rest of the time, young people could play sports or engage in useful educational activities. The introduction of work into children’s organized summer rest was a preparation for Khrushchev’s famous educational reform of 1958. That reform aimed at bringing school and industry closer, thus it required that adolescents spend the last two years of school learning basic industrial or agricultural skills.

The demand that urban young people start working in high school was difficult for Soviet educators to digest, taking into account that abolition of child labor was one of the

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93 Instruktivnye materialy v pomoshch rabotnikam profsoiuznykh organizatsii i pionerskih lagerei po letnemu otdyku detei (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo VTSSPS Profizdat, 1959), p. 76.
major Soviet gains in the sphere of children’s rights.\textsuperscript{94} Tellingly, however, the expectation that peasant children should start working at an even younger age was not discussed at all. On the contrary, it was presented as something natural. Moreover, the organizers of these camps presented them as institutions beneficial for community farms’ economies. The head of the Lukoianovskii District’s Department of People’s Education, comrade Ustimov, noted several times such benefits of community farm camps in his article:

All community farm heads, who participated in camps organization, recognize that they are by far not loss-making enterprises for the community farms. Why? For many reasons. During their working hours children are performing useful work for the community farm. […] In the pioneer camp, children of the community farm workers have good rest and get stronger (nabiraiutsia sil). The very organization of a pioneer camp raises the authority of the community farm’s administration and the local Party cell in the eyes of community farm workers. It helps to organize community farm workers to perform community farm work.\textsuperscript{95}

This passage from an article printed in 1957 shows that while trade unions were struggling with quotas set by the Council of Ministers of the USSR and allocated by the Central Committee of the Trade Union Councils, the organization of community farm camps was not compulsory for community farm administrators. Moreover, community farm camp

\textsuperscript{94} See, for example: V. Aranskii, \textit{Opyt trudovogo vospitaniiia v letnee vremia (Sbornik statei)} (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo Akademii pedagogicheskih nauk RSFSR, 1957). The introduction of work into the summer camp routine in 1955 will be further discussed in chapter two.

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Komsomol’sko-molodezhnye i pionerskie lageri v kolkhozakh (Iz opyta raboty shkol i otdelov narodnogo obrazovaniia)} (Moskva: Tsentral’nyi institut povysheniia kvalifikatsii rukovodashchikh rabotnikov narodnogo obrazovaniia, 1956). p. 56.
organizers used the arguments from political economy to persuade community farm administrators that summer camps were not “loss-making enterprises.” Thus, while urban children’s right to access the services provided by summer camps was enforced by the state, rural children, who for some reason could not go to a trade union camp, had to prove that they deserved access to the same type of services through their work and by gaining body strength that would improve their working abilities in the future. In this case, Ustimov could have been appealing to Marx’s theory of fixed capital constituted by workers themselves. This, and the fact that children’s access to organized rest in general depended on the trade union their parents belonged to, point to one of the ways that neo-corporatism pertaining to Soviet rights discourse in the Constitutions of 1918 and 1936 continued to manifest itself during the later stages of the Soviet project, as well.

The concepts of civil rights in the USSR underwent an evolution from the neo-corporatist Constitution of 1918 to the concept of the USSR as an “all-people’s state” which no longer needed to be a dictatorship of the proletariat, as Khrushchev proclaimed in 1959. This statement, however, deeply contradicted the processes that shaped children’s free time in the early 1950s. The introduction of community and inter-community farm camps testifies to two important facts. First, the USSR was characterized not only by hierarchies when it came to the fulfilment of social and economic rights, it also had an established hierarchy of duties, in which the peasant population owed more work to the state. Second, the fact that children were involved in this hierarchy of duties means that the state did not intend to change this situation and create a more equal society in the future.

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The biggest problem that the introduction of community and inter-community farm camps revealed was child labor in the countryside. Of course, in the transnational perspective there is nothing surprising about children working in the fields in the 1950s. It was a norm rather than a deviation. Still, for the USSR, the claim that it had eliminated child labor was a powerful propaganda tool both at home and abroad. In this context, the invisibility of peasant children’s labor combined with its normalization strengthens the argument about the hierarchical structure of Soviet society in which peasants occupied the most disadvantaged place. This becomes especially visible if one takes into account that, in the U.S., children’s work in the fields was a family matter and not a direct state policy, while in the USSR it was exactly the opposite.

All their drawbacks notwithstanding, community and inter-community summer camps had to improve peasant children’s working conditions. A number of presentations delivered at the Ukrainian Republican Methodological Conference devoted to the outcomes of the 1955 summer rest organization campaign testify to the fact that children were working in the fields without supervision or consideration for their special status and needs long before the introduction of community farm camps. That this disparity in working obligations between rural and urban children existed long before the 1950s is demonstrated by the story of several rural pioneers who were awarded various Soviet orders for their agricultural work. The most famous among them was, of course, Mamlakat Nakhangova, who received Lenin’s Order, the highest sign of distinction in the USSR, at

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98 See for example, the presentation of comrade Kud’, the secretary of Volynia regional Komsomol committee. “Stenogramma respublikanskoj metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykh a pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 81.
the age of eleven for picking cotton in her native Tadzhikistan. The group of children who were awarded Soviet state orders in the 1930s was heavily dominated by representatives of rural areas. For example, out of nine pioneers with orders who visited Artek in 1936, only one girl, Eteri Gvantseladze, was from a city (Tbilisi). All the rest came from rural areas.  


The discourse of guide books for community farm camp organizers supports the argument that neither authorities nor educators planned to withdraw peasant children from agricultural work in the summer. In a 1957 Ukrainian guide book devoted to peasant children’s summer rest, a Komsomol activist Hrybova stated that village schoolchildren’s summer has its own peculiarities, connected to the conditions of people’s lives on a community farm, with territorial proximity of the school to agricultural production. This proximity, completely naturally, creates a connection between the school and the community farm, the connection which exists during the whole school year, yet becomes especially strong during summer holidays. It is a long-lasting tradition for children in our villages to help adults during summer holidays, performing various types of work in the fields and helping with the cattle.  

100 L. Hrybova, *Lito sil’s’kykh pioneriv* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo TsK LKSMU “Molod’”,” 1957), p. 3.

One can, of course, attribute Hrybova’s words to their historical context in the year 1957, when children’s and adolescents’ involvement in agricultural work was highly encouraged by the government. At the same time, it is important to stress that no one was
claiming that Soviet society had to proceed with “old traditions” of “children’s help” in industry. The proximity of urban schools to factories did not create a strong connection between them, neither in the summer nor during the school year before children reached the age of fourteen. This explains a difference between the discourses of legitimization of children’s and adolescents’ work in summer camps starting from 1955. While for the urban population the argument was that summer labor was good for their health and also necessary as an educational tool, for rural dwellers the argument formulated by Hrybova emphasized a “natural connection.”

In other words, while children and adolescents from urban areas had to be taught to work, their peers from rural areas were already born with the inclination for agricultural work and were naturally involved in it starting from the age of ten. According to this logic, rural children as citizens were far superior to their urban counterparts because they didn’t need to be taught the most important and fundamental of socialist values, the love for work.

With love for work and engagement in real work came rural children’s developed self-discipline. From the inception of the community farm camps, the guidebooks suggested that these camps could be run with very limited engagement from adults. The reason was very pragmatic: all the adults were “fighting for the harvest” and the camps’ goal was to ensure that community farm women could devote themselves fully to work without worrying about their children. In this respect, community farm camps did not differ much from the trade union ones, whose major goal was also to take care of children.

during the summer school break when their parents were working. In terms of funding, community farm camps’ budgets were filled from several sources: the spare money from the community farm funds allocated for mass and cultural work or the mutual help fund.\textsuperscript{103} At the organizational level, these camps were a step forward in the provision of well-being for rural pioneers, as they introduced regulations into their working conditions. However, in all other aspects, community and intercommunity farm camps resembled work and rest camps much more than trade union camps.

**Conclusions**

The analysis of children’s summer rest organization in the USSR deepens our understanding of the structure of Soviet society. While numerous researchers characterize the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev as a country focused on the provision of welfare and even aimed at the creation of a consumer society, it is important to understand how this society functioned when it came to access to goods.\textsuperscript{104} Summer camps were an important part of the Soviet welfare system, as they provided for children’s safety and even health improvement in the summer and allowed parents to continue contributing their efforts to the improvement of Soviet production rates without worrying about their progeny. The way the system of summer camps was organized, however, uncovers important details about the structure of access to welfare in the USSR. To begin with, the provision of summer rest to children was not administered or financed by the central state organs, but for the most part was delegated to the local trade unions. This created a gap in

\textsuperscript{103} Pokhil’ko and Gershenovich., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{104} See, for example: Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street*; Chernyshova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era*. 

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access, which came to depend upon the wealth of the factory or organization that children’s parents were working for. As a result, children whose parents were working in cultural, educational, medical, and agricultural sectors found themselves in a disadvantaged position compared to children whose parents were employed in industrial sectors. In rural areas, the authorities tried to improve the situation by introducing community and intercommunity farm camps. Yet, community farm camps provided a very different type of rest for rural children compared to what urban children enjoyed. The fact that, in these camps, rural children were expected to work like adolescents, highlights rural children’s underprivileged status as citizens in Soviet society as they had less access to welfare combined with more duties to the state. While at the beginning of this chapter, I talked about deep inequalities in experiencing citizenship between rural and urban children of the USSR at the time of the adoption of the Third Party Program in 1961, archival documents suggest that the situation remained the same well into the 1970s. In her dissertation “The Development of Pioneer Camps in the USSR (1945-1975)” Liudmila Zhdanova mentioned the intense development of the network of community and intercommunity farm camps, which expanded from serving 388,200 children in 1971 to 512,000 children in 1973.\textsuperscript{105} The records from the State Archive of the Kharkov Region confirm that these camps were functioning throughout the 1970s, although their number seems to have declined severely towards the end of the decade. Thus, in 1970, there were 33 community and inter-

community farm camps in the region. By 1977, various districts reported the existence of only three intercommunity farm camps.

Chapter Two: Summer Camp Routine and Soviet Ideology of Childhood

In summer, children leave schools for holidays. Yet, as we know, the Pioneer Organization does not go on holidays. [...] So many children stay at home in summer. They stay in dusty and sultry cities and, as they say, twiddle their thumbs. Unfortunately, they not only do that, they also break the windows in the yards during wild football matches. They try to ride the passing cars. They swim in the zones, where swimming is prohibited, and often drown as a result. In short, the problem of children’s summer rest organization remains to be a problem.107

This citation from Vladimir Taborko’s introduction to “Pioneer Summer,” a collection of articles he edited and published in 1966 following a conference for summer camp organizers, demonstrates how anxious Soviet educators were about children’s unmediated socialization during their free time. Taborko believed that without state supervision children were left on their own, their parents were nowhere in the picture). As a result, they harmed other people or at least destroyed socialist property (broke windows) and put themselves in danger (drowned). Moreover, children behaved like barbarians by playing “wild” games and engaging in the activities that in the USSR qualified as hooliganism.108

That children’s vulnerability lead them to engage in socially disruptive activities is rather remarkable for 1966, a time when Soviet leadership considered the country to be at

108 Hooliganism was a form of petty crime in the USSR.
the stage of mature socialism. This implies that the Soviet people’s consciousness had evolved compared to the early stages of the Soviet project. Yet, it seems that children’s immaturity posed a challenge in this respect, thus making the country’s development extremely fragile. Every new generation of Soviet citizens had to receive a state-approved upbringing; otherwise, the movement towards building communism could have been disrupted at any moment. In Chapter One, I demonstrated that Soviet authorities cared about children and recognized their right to access various forms of organized summer rest. Based on Benjamin Nathans’ research, I also showed that in the Soviet context, there were no natural rights. By giving something, the state usually expected something in return. While in chapter one I focused on the expectations that the Soviet state set for rural children, in this chapter, I argue that there were also universal expectations. The provision of services for all Soviet children was a trade-off. In return for receiving access to organized rest, all children had to engage in mandatory camp routines developed by Komsomol officials. I will look at the shape these routines took in different periods of the Soviet Union’s existence to show that, although during the period of second-generation socialism the Soviet educational system was characterized by the rise of innovative educational techniques that insisted on the individual approach to every child and took into account children’s interests, for summer camps this period was characterized by the tighter regulations and intensifying politicization of their daily schedules. In a way, it was a serious offense on childhood experiences unmediated by adults.

**The Foundations of Summer Camp Educational Approaches**
In 1933, Bronislava, daughter of two active Communist Party members and an outstanding pioneer, was rewarded with a trip to Artek, one of the first and by then the most famous Soviet summer camp, situated on the Crimean Peninsula.\(^{109}\) The road to the Crimea from Gomel was hard, as she struggled with motion sickness on the bus that took a group of Byelorussian pioneers to the USSR’s premier summer camp. When I talked to Bronislava, she was ninety years old, but right from the start she seized my attention by claiming that Artek had defined her professional career. In the camp, Bronislava had joined a medical detachment (sanitarnaia druzhina). There she was responsible for overseeing the execution of medical procedures that doctors prescribed for children. This experience was so rewarding that Bronislava decided to pursue a medical career. In the 1940s, this daughter of two workers defended her dissertation and joined the faculty of Kharkov Medical Institute, launching a prominent dynasty of physicians in my home city.

Aside of showing Bronislava a possible new profession that she could learn, Artek left another important impression. At the beginning of our interview, she stressed the high quality of Kharkov summer camps’ healthcare and nutrition. I attributed this to her occupation. However, I was wrong. Food was no less important than the interests Bronislava pursued in Artek, as it was the first time that she tasted white bread. In her own words, “When I arrived there, I was of approximately your constitution [meaning she was very thin]. […] And I came there in a summer dress. By the time I left, I did not fit in it. So we cut it here and put laces in this dress. And when my sister met me in Gomel she said

\(^{109}\) Bronislava Smolkina, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, August 17, 2013, Kharkiv.
“Oh, Bronechka, you are swollen!” because a lot of people were swollen from hunger at this time.”

Bronislava Smolkina’s memories about Artek amazingly reflect the goals set for the camp by its founder, Zinovii Solov’ev, the deputy People’s Commissar of Healthcare of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Head of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Red Cross Society. Solov’ev established Artek in an already existing park on the Southern shore of the Crimean Peninsula in 1924. The goal of the camp was to strengthen children’s health, which is why among the first groups who stayed in Artek were children from the Volga region, who survived the famine of 1921-1922. To popularize Soviet achievement in providing healthy rest for the young, in 1926, Artek’s director, doctor Fiodor Shishmarev, issued a book called “Crimea to the Pioneers.” Solov’ev authored its introduction in which he criticized early approaches to camp organization in the USSR that had been borrowed from the West, calling them “playing Indians” and “bourgeois boy scouts.” Unlike his Western counterparts, who believed that camps were created to temporarily neutralize the negative effects modernization had on childhood, Solov’ev strived to use the benefits of modernization to help young Soviet citizens:

For us, pioneer camp is a big, serious and important affair. We are building the new human society based on the improvement of spiritual and bodily health of the working masses, the builders of this new society. A pioneer camp should serve this

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110 Smolkina.
111 indeischina
112 Solov’ev, “Krym - pioneram.”
113 ozdorovlenie
goal. That is why we should approach its organization with a clearly defined task: the creation of a healthy pioneer everyday life.\textsuperscript{114}

With this quote Solov’ev merged together education, understood as gaining spiritual health, and rest, understood as the recovery of bodily health, thus creating the foundational formula for a Soviet summer camp. This formula will be later reinforced by an influential Soviet theoretician of education, Lenin’s wife Nadezhda Krupskaia. In 1937, Krupskaia wrote an article titled “About Life in the Camps. (A Letter to Pioneers),” in which she claimed that “there is rest which strengthens one’s body and raises one’s consciousness, and there is rest which leads to exhaustion and dullness.” Because of this, “summer camps should be used to strengthen children’s health and restore their strength,” but it is also important “to spend one’s time so that the camp life was used to develop new habits without which one can never become a true Leninist.”\textsuperscript{115} In 1924, Krupskaia delivered a speech at the Fourth Convention of the Russian Leninist Communist Youth League, where she defined young Leninists as people who “have to strive to entangle our private lives with the task of the struggle, with the task of building communism.”\textsuperscript{116}

Solov’ev and Krupskaia conceptualized summer camp as a place of transformation. These aspirations corresponded to the views that drew the American middle class to create summer camps in the first place, as they started to believe that a proper childhood leading to the reproduction of their values in the next generation was threatened by urbanization,

\textsuperscript{114} Solov’ev, “Krym - pioneram.” p. 6.
\textsuperscript{115} Nadezhda Krupskaia, \textit{Pedagogicheskie Sochineniia}, vol. 5, 10 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo Akademii pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1959)., p. 593
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 593.
modernization, and immigration. American summer camp organizers of the 1890s, like Henry Gibson, would have fully agreed with Krupskaia’s conviction that children’s free time could be, in Gibson’s words, a period of “moral deterioration.” However, although Western and Soviet camp theoreticians were genuinely concerned with the mores of the young, the approaches to organizing their summer time differed. In the U.S., Abygail van Slyck argues, the camps “were overtly antimodernist, self-consciously celebrating the past in search for authenticity.” Such an approach could not be adopted by Soviet camp organizers; indeed, it was explicitly criticized by Solov’ev, who claimed that imitation of the American frontier life expressed in living in a self-built hut, freezing under an old coat at night, and cooking inedible porridge were the Western luxuries Soviet society could not impose on its children. The critique originated not only from the fact that anti-modernist sentiment was incompatible with the utopian aspirations of the Soviet state, but also because American camp organizers concerned themselves with middle and upper-middle class children, whereas the Soviet state prioritized toilers. Yet, the Soviet summer camp agenda was shaped not only by matters of class. First and foremost, it was defined by the way Soviet authorities understood childhood and approached children’s education. I will discuss this question in depth in this chapter.

Philippe Aries was the first scholar who came to the conclusion that in different time periods childhood acquired different meanings. Thus, he discovered that the

118 Slyck, A Manufactured Wilderness. p. xxiii.
120 For more information on the shape that the discourse of rights took throughout Soviet history see: Nathans, “Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era.”
121 Aries, Centuries of Childhood.
modern way of understanding childhood, which implied a strict separation between different periods of a person’s life, was only one of the possible interpretations. The idea started being shaped in the seventeenth century and had a significant effect on policies towards children by the nineteenth century. At that time, under the influence of Jean-Jacque Rousseau and Christian theology, West European elites began to perceive childhood as a sacred period in a person’s life that had to be deliberately separated from the dangers of the adult world, especially from industrial work. By the time the October Revolution erupted, these ideas had settled in the minds of European political elites and shaped state policies towards the youngest citizens. One of the landmarks in this process was the introduction of universal education reforms in Britain and the U.S. in the 1880s. It was also during this decade that the first summer camps appeared in North America. The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the publication of Ellen Key’s The Century of the Child, in which the author argued against the existing attitude towards childhood as a time when the individual’s personality had not yet developed. For Key, the opposite was the case. Human personality was fully present at the stage of childhood, while behavioral deviance and social malaise were the result of adults’ violent intrusion into the delicate balance between children’s psyche and the outer world. Calling the twentieth century “the century of the child,” Key believed that the road to a better society could be found in reform of the family and children’s education.

125 Ibid., p. 110.
The newly created Soviet state took a rather radical stance towards childhood and the family, a position significantly affected by Marx and Engels. In his “Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State,” Engels de-naturalized the monogamous family, claiming that it was not the only possible relationship men and women could engage in.\(^{126}\) In Engels’ opinion, the monogamous family was in a way a forced relationship heavily shaped by male domination and property rights. In such a family, Engels claimed, children became heirs to their parents only if their paternity was undisputed. Thus, children turned into the property of their fathers. This put a wife in a disadvantaged position in relation to her husband, who could neglect her, divorce her, or even have extra-marital affairs. The wife, in the meantime, was deprived of many freedoms in relations with her partner. In a capitalist society, only the working class could overcome this inequality. The workers had no property to inherit. Moreover, working-class women engaged in industrial work, which made them equal in rights with men and eliminated male supremacy. In “Communist Manifesto,” Marx and Engels went further, arguing, “The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.”\(^{127}\) Thus, the family had to vanish when capitalist relations did.\(^{128}\) As for children, Marx and Engels advocated that the intrusion of society into children’s upbringing was a necessary measure aimed at subverting the domination of the ruling class.\(^{129}\) The influence of the bourgeois family on children had to be curtailed. Thus, the family, in a Marxist


\(^{128}\) Ibid. p. 24.

\(^{129}\) Ibid. p. 24.
imagination, was an important battlefield for the revolution in citizens’ hearts and minds. It is no surprise, then, that from the onset of the revolution, Bolsheviks paid a lot of attention to children’s education.

Lisa Kirschenbaum traces the transformation of Soviet ideology of childhood to 1924, when the State Academic Council created the first unified preschool curriculum that had to teach children how to become builders of communism. Among other things, this document marked a transition between Soviet educators’ vision of children as “self-disciplined and instinctively creative small comrades,” essentially Ellen Key’s position, to perceiving the young generation as a tabula rasa. This transformation of views had a significant impact on Soviet pedagogy of the 1930s, since such an interpretation left children with no agency in the educational process. If a child’s mind was a complete blank page, then educators could write anything on it.

The 1934 decree issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, “On Overloading Schoolchildren and Pioneers with Social (Obshchestvennyi) and Political Tasks,” demonstrated that, as time went by, Soviet ideologues were discovering that this approach had serious limitations. The decree criticized the Pioneer Organization for exposing children aged eight to twelve to political issues and forms of political work that were “completely inaccessible for their understanding, very abstract and eliminating their interest even in those phenomena of social life (javleniia obshchestvennoi zhizni) and socialist construction (sotsialisticheskoe stroitel’stvo) that they could understand.”130 It

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also reflected the conflict between school educators and Komsomol and Pioneer organizations in which the Party sided with the former demanding that all decisions issued by the Central Bureau of the Pioneer Organization were first approved by the People’s Commissariat of Education. The tension between the school educators and both the Pioneer Organization and the Komsomol, however, was not resolved in 1934. In 1948, the Party issued another decree, which disapproved of children’s excessive involvement in various extracurricular activities organized by the Pioneer Organization. Thus, the battle for children’s time between educators and ideologues had been ongoing throughout the whole period of Stalin’s rule. Under Khrushchev, this tension received a new resolution. While in the decree of 1948 one can see that the Komsomol and the school educators were trying to involve children in their activities throughout the same period of time (the time children were supposed to spend at school), by the 1950s, Komsomol officials came up with the suggestion that children’s ideological education should proceed beyond the school walls, for example in summer camps.

This approach relied heavily on Nadezhda Krupskaia, who took Marx’s distinction between the two types of rest and prioritized time devoted to higher activity, like education, over idle time when it came to children. Such views seem to have affected even the organization of summer camps’ administration. In chapter one, I mentioned that the first pioneer camps of the early 1920s were organized by pioneers themselves. By the late 1930s, however, the Council of Ministers transferred pioneer camps to the sphere of the

131 Khanchin. p. 56.
trade unions’ responsibility. By that time, trade unions were already administering organized rest for Soviet adults in sanatoriums or houses of rest. Remarkably, however, trade union officials did not integrate pioneer camps into this preexisting system. In the trade unions’ classification, they fell into another category, that of *vospitanie* or character shaping. Thus, while the Central Council of Health and Resorts’ Administration managed the resorts for the Soviet adult population, summer camps were the responsibility of the Culture and Masses (*Kul’turno-Massovyi*) Division within the All-Union Central Trade Union Council.\(^{134}\) Thus, adults had resorts, while children received personal development or *vospitanie*. *Vospitanie* was a broad term. As a result, the summer camp routine was quite flexible when it came to adjusting to the goals set by the country’s leadership. As I will show later in this chapter, the ideology of childhood that existed under Stalin allowed the summer camps to combine both types of rest identified by Marx. Under Khrushchev, however, the balance shifted towards the time devoted to *vospitanie*.

**Khrushchev’s Vision of Childhood and Summer Camp Reforms**

In 1951, Maria Evteeva, the deputy head of the Culture and Masses Department of the All-Union Central Trade Union Council opened her book *The Pioneer Camp* (1951) by saying, “In no other country of the world are children surrounded by so much love and attention as in the USSR. The Communist Party, the Soviet government and comrade Stalin personally are incessantly taking care of raising (*vospitanie*) a healthy and strong, cheerful and happy young generation of the builders of the communist society.”\(^{135}\) Of course, under

\(^{134}\) Culture and Masses Division is a direct translation for the title that indicated cultural work or cultural education of the masses. The facilities run by this division were, for example, palaces of workers, which provided spaces for concerts and lectures, and hosted various hobby groups, like dance ensembles, and libraries.

Stalin a lot of big claims were made. One cannot expect that Evteeva’s strong statement reflected the reality of children’s lives in the post-war USSR. Yet, this claim at least reflected an official Party position. More importantly, claims like this disappeared from summer camp guidelines in the mid-1950s, suggesting that the attitude towards children as the benefactors of state policies aimed at making the young happy, healthy, and cheerful had changed.

The first signs of the transformation of the Party leadership’s views on childhood appeared in 1954. On April 10 of that year, Komsomol established a series of badges that aimed to stimulate children’s involvement in hobby activities prioritized by the state, such as “Young Engineer” (Iunyi tekhnik), “Young Naturalist,” and “Young Hiker.”\(^{136}\) Then, on March 28, 1955, the Central Committee of the Komsomol Organization issued new summer camps’ regulations. There, in the chapter “Organization of Educational (vospitatel’naia) Work in a Pioneer Camp,” Komsomol ideologues stated that “A pioneer camp provides rational organization of children’s rest, strengthening of their health, and broadening of the world outlook of pioneers and school children.”\(^{137}\) The statement excluded considerations for children’s happiness and cheerfulness as the ultimate goal of summer camp work. “Organizing the work of zveniia, detachments, and squads in camps,” the regulations noted, “one should take into consideration children’s longing for romance, games, interesting and captivating activities.”\(^{138}\) The question whether during Stalin’s rule

\(^{136}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoizuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iiul’ 1958 gg.), p. 69.

\(^{137}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoizuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iiul’ 1958 gg.), p. 83.

\(^{138}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoizuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iiul’ 1958 gg.), p. 84.
children’s happiness was more important to Soviet ideologues than under Khrushchev requires further investigation. However, the comparison between Evteeva’s book and 1955 summer camp regulations shows an important shift in the Soviet ideology of childhood. Evteeva’s grand statement portrays children as beneficiaries of the state’s effort to create a happier life for them. The 1955 regulations, instead, made a much more modest claim. Summer camps provided rational organization of children’s rest. In the meantime, children’s enjoyment stopped being a goal, and turned into a tool utilized for achieving results in the process of summer camp *vospitanie*.

The change in the state’s attitude to the role of summer camps within the Soviet educational process in the mid-1950s was also reflected in the transformation of the guidelines for the summer camps’ daily routines. To understand what exactly happened, let us compare a suggestion for a summer camp’s daily schedule issued in 1951 and a newer version issued in 1959. In 1951, a summer camp daily schedule was supposed to look this way:

Awakening — 7.00 am

Morning exercises — 7.05-7.20 am.

Making one’s bed, hygienic procedures — 7.20-7.50

Line-up parade, raising of the flag — 7.50-8.00

Breakfast — 8.00-8.30

Free time — 8.30-9.00

The work of detachments, *zvenia*, engineering and naturalists’ hobby groups — 9.00-10.30

Sunbathing, swimming — 10.30-12.00
Free time — 12.00-13.00
Lunch — 13.00-14.00
Afternoon rest — 14.00-16.00
Tea — 16.00-16.30
Socially useful work, sports, games — 16.30-18.30
Free time — 18.30-19.30
Dinner — 19.30-20.00
Collective activities, the work (zaniatiiia) of hobby groups, amateur concerts (vechera khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel’nosti), camp fires — 20.00-21.30
Line-up parade, lowering of the flag — 21.30-21.40
Preparations for the night sleep — 21.40-22.00
Night sleep — 22.00.139

But by 1959, an approximate daily schedule of a pioneer camp looked this way:

Awakening — 7.30
Morning Exercises — 7.35-7.50
Making one’s bed, hygienic procedures — 7.50-8.10
Line-up parade, raising of the flag — 8.10-8.20
Breakfast — 8.20-9.00
Participation in the work at the camp’s kitchen garden, community farm,

139 Pionerskii lager’ (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo TsK V Laksm “Molodaia gvardiia,” 1951)., p. 29.
garden, petting zoo, cleaning the camp, collecting medicinal herbs — 9.00-11.00

Free time — 11.00-11.30

Health improving (ozdorovitel’nye) activities — 11.30-13.00

Lunch — 13.00-14.00

Afternoon rest — 14.00-15.30

Making one’s bed, hygienic procedures — 15.30-16.00

Afternoon tea — 16.00-16.30

The work of detachments, zveno, hobby groups; organized activities and sports teams’ games — 16.30-18.30

Free time — 18.30-19.00

Dinner — 19.00-20.00

Collective activities, amateur concerts (vechera khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel’nosti), camp fires — 20.00-21.30

Line-up parade, lowering of the flag — 21.30-21.45

Preparations for the night sleep — 21.45-22.00

Night sleep — 22.00.140

Both schedules should be seen as suggestions rather than strict orders, since it was nearly impossible to implement some of the proposed activities. For example, at that time, few camps had kitchen gardens or any other gardens. Only wealthy camps could afford a petting zoo. As for the work on the collective farms, accomplishing that was also difficult.

140Instruktivnye materialy v pomoshch rabotnikam profsoiuznykh organizatsii i pionerskih lagerei po letnemu otdyhu detei., p.76.
logistically especially for the camps situated far from any collective farms. Yet, a comparison of these regulations allows us to see two important transformations in a children’s camp daily routine that happened in the 1950s at the state policy level. First, the schedule became tighter and the amount of free time decreased. Second, the 1959 schedule expected that children would work in the camps for two hours every day. As one can see, in 1951, scheduled work was only one of the suggested types of activities for a one-hour time-slot. The increase in the amount of work expected of children in summer camps and the assignment of it to a special time slot signified an important shift in their role in Soviet society. From institutions that provided rest and *vospitanie*, summer camps became focused primarily on *vospitanie*, with an emphasis on developing in the young generation a love for work.

One of the documents generating these changes was the decree *Regarding the Measures Aimed at Improving the Work of V. I. Lenin’s Pioneer Organization*, issued following the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Komsomol held on November 28-29, 1957. One paragraph in this document criticized the Pioneer Organization for limiting its work to the time children spent at school, despite the fact that pioneers spent most of their free time outside of this institution.\(^{141}\) This critique meant that, according to Komsomol officials, children’s free time was no longer at their disposal. The Pioneer Organization had to take control over it to implement the goals that the Party and the Komsomol set for children’s ideological education. Summer camps, thus, became one

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\(^{141}\) *Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iiul’ 1958 gg.),* p. 40.
of the institutions that had to administer this ideological education by “providing the rational organization of children’s rest.”

A look into the suggestions for summer camp activities can help us see exactly what the Komsomol’s vision of children’s ideological education was. The prescriptions for Soviet summer camps’ agendas assumed and retained their shape, with only minor changes, until the collapse of the USSR during the first three years of Khrushchev’s rule. Their finalized version appeared in the Resolution of the Thirteenth Congress of the Komsomol held in April of 1958. The components of the communist youth education that the Resolution highlighted included youth participation in building the socialist economy, internationalist education, and ideological education. The ideological education consisted of Marxist and Leninist propaganda, aesthetic education, moral education, physical culture and sport education, and provision of generational continuity based on the “military and working traditions of the working class.” By 1961, this mixed agenda was restructured, creating a standard set of “directions” (napravleniia) for summer camp work. Those included, in order of importance: political education, work education, physical education, and aesthetic education. Each of the “directions” included specific activities that camp counselors had to organize and later report on to their respective regional trade union councils and Komsomol organizations.

143 The term directions is a direct translation of a Russian term napravleniia, which indicates that we are not talking about specific activities, but rather about directions in which summer camp work had to develop.
144 The first publication in which this structure appears is Vladimir Lebedinskii, ed., Vospitatel’naiia rabota v pionerskom lagere. Sbornik instruktsionnykh i metodicheskikh materialov v pomoshch rabotnikam pionerskikh lagerei i raionnym sovetom pionerskoi organizatsii, Gor’kovskii oblastnoi sovet pionerskoi organizatsii im. V. I. Lenina, Gor’kovskii institut usovershenstvovaniia uchitelei (Gor’kii, 1961), pp. 41-48. The first publication in which this structure appears is Lebedinskii., pp. 41-48.
In addition to the “directions,” starting in 1959, pioneer two-year plans, marches, expeditions, and operations appeared. Having specific time limits, these activities had to be more focused and more result-oriented than the general directions. In this respect, they seem to have resembled the Soviet system of five-year plans. The structure of these plans, marches, and expeditions varied. The Pioneers to the Motherland two-year plan (1960-1962), for example, was very broadly formulated and included all the aforementioned “directions,” in which children had to outperform themselves. Among other things, pioneers all around the USSR were called on to gather 100 tons of scrap metal, actively help rural pioneers in breeding rabbits and poultry, and help Komsomol members in planting new orchards and cleaning city streets and yards. Every pioneer was expected to create a visual aid for his or her school, improve his or her grades, and do many other things. In comparison, operation Chukotka had a far more narrow goal: raise money for building a palace of pioneers in Chukotka. Marches, operations, and expeditions further complicated the summer camp routine, making it more and more difficult to follow due to limited camp resources and the low level of political education of camp personnel.

Leonid Brezhnev’s rule was marked by a further proliferation of various marches and expeditions and an addition of a new “direction” in 1966. Military and patriotic education were separated from political education and became a priority, just as work

146 One of my interviewees, Liudmila Smirnova, who in the 1980s was responsible for summer camp supervision in the Khar’kov region, mentioned that during preparatory courses, a lot of future counselors had a hard time understanding the Komsomol’s requirements for summer camp work. The problem was that a lot of these people were the workers at the enterprises that owned and administered summer camps and did not have a higher education. Smirnova had to explain everything to them in a simplified manner.
education had been a priority under Khrushchev. The late period of Brezhnev’s rule also saw the return of children’s health as an important aspect of the pioneer camp agenda. It was less theorized than the “directions,” yet new literature focusing on it appeared and camp reports started devoting a significant amount of space to this issue.  

Soviet summer camps’ pedagogical approaches were various and rich in substance. Their goal was to develop in children a wholesome personality fully devoted to the Soviet cause, more specifically an ideal Soviet citizen for whom the private was completely dominated by the political. Yet, first and foremost, it is important to understand what constituted the essence of the Soviet summer camp character shaping agenda, and establish what qualities it had to develop in children. The rest of this chapter will therefore be devoted to the analysis of the specific “directions” of summer camp work and the pedagogical approaches they implied. I will discuss these “directions” in chronological order, highlighting the time when they gained prominence in the summer camp educational agenda. My approach in this analysis is also rather selective because in discussing specific directions I focus primarily on the ones that were not supposed to just build certain skills or required certain actions, such as international education, but were intended to affect the character of the children and develop in them the qualities of excellent communists.

Sports Work

Sports work was one of the most important activities in Soviet summer camps. Early guidelines on summer camp work paid a great deal of attention to it for a very pragmatic reason. A chapter on Physical Culture and Sports in the Camp from *Pioneer Camp*, issued by the Komsomol in 1937, argues that through sports children had to prepare their bodies for work and defense. At the core of the sports curriculum, not only in the 1930s but throughout the whole of Soviet history, was the set of exercises called Ready for Work and Defense. The first version of this complex adopted in 1931 by the All-Union Council of Physical Culture included only one level (*stupen ’*) and addressed young men starting from age 18 and women starting from age 17.\(^{148}\) That initial complex included 21 tests, 15 of which were practical and six were theoretical. Gradually, two additional levels of Ready for Work and Defense were introduced, including the complex Be Ready for Work and Defense for adolescent boys aged 13 to 14 and girls aged 15 to 16. The complex was changed in 1940, then in 1946, 1955, 1959, 1965, 1972, and 1985. The changes that occurred in 1955 were remarkable, because they equalized boys and girls in terms of the age of participation (ages thirteen to fourteen) and increased the number of tests for adolescents from seven to ten. The exercises that the complex Be Ready for Work and Defense included also varied over time. For example, in 1937, they included running, climbing, throwing a grenade, jumping, swimming, rowing, and shooting.\(^{149}\) In 1960, there were morning gymnastics (not a test), rope climbing (without legs for boys and with legs


\(^{149}\) *Pionerskii lager’: spravochnik dlia vozhatykh i rabotnikov pionerskich lagerei* (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1937), p. 60.
for girls), running, high jumping, long jumping, grenade throwing for boys and tennis ball throwing for girls, swimming, ski racing, and hiking.\textsuperscript{150}

While the norms of Be Ready for Work and Defense were central for any sports work in the USSR, other types of sports, like active games and various team sports, were highly encouraged, as well. Their meaning in camp routine, however, changed over time. In \textit{Pioneer Camp}, issued in 1937, various types of sports were praised for improving children’s health and bodily strength and for being an engaging type of activity for the young.\textsuperscript{151} In \textit{Pioneer Camp} issued in 1951, however, sports already had to have a goal, otherwise they were useless for children who would have soon become bored with them.\textsuperscript{152} Thus, children were presented as rational creatures who thought in a rather utilitarian way. They considered sports purposeful and, when engaging in them, children developed the skills they learned at school. “Everything that children have learned in a gym or on a sports ground, they have only half-learned. It should be improved and repeated for better assimilation (\textit{zakrepliat’}) by engaging in practical activities. It is possible, for example, to demonstrate excellent results in jumping, when one runs on smooth track, and jumps into a sandpit, and in the meantime to be incapable of jumping over a deep ditch or a stream.”\textsuperscript{153}

In this quote, a pioneer camp environment is given priority over the school environment because it is closer to the “real-life” conditions, or in this case the “real” natural world.

Under Khrushchev, sports stopped being an activity that only concerned children’s bodies and also became the means for children’s character development. Thus, Ivan

\textsuperscript{150} Khanchin, \textit{Direktivy i dokumenty po voprosam pionerskogo dvizhenia.}, pp. 205-206.
\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Pionerskii lager’: spravochnik dlia vozhatykh i rabotnikov pionerskikh lagerei.}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Pionerskii lager’}, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Pionerskii lager’}, p. 76.
Merkuris, the Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, mentioned in his 1964 article that physical exercises, games, and sports were not only engaging for children, but also helped “develop creative and physical abilities, develop initiative, collectivism, and strengthen children’s health.” Petro Naruts’kii, who published *Physical Culture and Sports in a Pioneer Camp* in 1958, expressed the same idea and provided more detail on how sports had such an effect on children and adolescents’ morale. For example, he argued that adolescence is a good time to engage young people in gymnastics and complex sports games. At this age, he suggested, a sense of belonging to a collective or a circle of friends becomes very important for young people. Capitalizing on this, athletic games helped the young to develop such qualities as willpower, persistence in achieving their goals, and the ability to subject one’s interests and wishes to the interests of the collective.

The ideology of sports education evolved from the 1930s to the 1960s. It started as an example of the body politics grounded in the Soviet leadership’s need to raise healthy workers and soldiers. Under Khrushchev, the assumptions regarding the effects of sports on youth evolved. Soviet educators started seeing these activities as an important element in building children’s character. The possible repercussion of these assumptions could have been the diversification of the understanding of what it meant to be an excellent Soviet citizen. One of my interviewees, Larisa Bugaenko, who excelled in rhythmic gymnastics as a schoolgirl, mentioned during our talk that she managed to avoid participating in Komsomol gatherings because she fulfilled her duty as a member of this organization by

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performing her gymnastics routines at various events and competitions. Gymnastics also
gave Larisa an opportunity to go to Artek, the famous summer camp for children who
achieved high results in political work, at school, in the arts or in some other activities that
contributed to the USSR’s social, cultural, and economic development. Larisa’s case, thus,
could demonstrate that Soviet authorities accepted various versions of what it meant to be
a good citizen attesting to the general diversity pertaining to the second-generation
socialism’s ideological project.

Political Education

In 1951, Mariia Ievteeva described the goals of educational work as “educating
pioneers and school children in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, unconditional devotion to
the Soviet Motherland, the cause of Lenin’s and Stalin’s party.”¹⁵⁶ This statement is very
telling of the goals set for the summer camps by the party officials. The specificity of
political education as one of the elements of the summer camp agenda is that, on the one
hand, all organized camp activities were supposed to have political meaning to some extent.
On the other hand, however, there was still a specific group of activities titled and reported
by camp organizers as children’s political education. Throughout its history, political
education was conservative in its pedagogical approach. Focusing mainly on lectures,
disputes, organization of a pioneer room (a special place containing information about the
Soviet leadership and its achievements), readings of the Soviet press and books, and movie
demonstrations, it did not change significantly from the time of Stalin’s rule.¹⁵⁷ If camps

¹⁵⁶ Evteeva, Pionerskiye lageria profsoiuzov., p. 10.
¹⁵⁷ Lectures and readings were considered too theoretical starting in 1944 when the “struggle with
formalism” in Soviet education was announced and Soviet educational leadership made the first steps
towards introducing the practice-based approach in Soviet pedagogy. Thus, instead of listening to a lecture
could afford it, they invited special lecturers instructing children on the achievements of
the seven-year plan, the life of Vladimir Lenin, or the latest international developments. It
was also important that pioneers understood pioneer symbols, the history of the Komsomol
and Pioneer organizations, and pioneer rituals.  

The Komsomol leadership’s concerns regarding pioneers’ knowledge on all these
matters were not unfounded. Even though all of these topics were taught both at school and
in pioneer camps, sociological research conducted in Artek in 1969 showed discouraging
results. Scholars found out that pioneer activists who stayed in Artek that year not only
knew very little about the history of the Pioneer Organization and its international
analogues, but also had minimal understanding of how to organize basic pioneer activities,
like gatherings and line parades. Few children knew the signals of a bugle and a drum, two
indispensable companions of pioneer marches. In general, the researchers concluded, while
pioneers knew about all-union pioneer actions organized by Soviet authorities, and even
participated in these activities, they did not “always leave an imprint in children’s minds
and feelings.”

To the fact that Soviet pioneers were rather indifferent to political education in the
summer camps testify the 45 interviews I conducted in Kharkov in 2015-2016. Among the
35 people I interviewed, only one woman recollected being present at a political lecture,
although she mentioned this important activity while commenting on the boys’ uncultured

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about Lenin, children could stage a song about his life. Yet, particularly in this area, the forms of
pedagogical work did not evolve to assume more creative shapes.

158 Pioneer symbols included a tie, bugle, drum, and banner. Pioneer rituals were diverse, but the main one
of them was the line-up parade, which accompanied the raising of the Soviet flag.
159 “Ob Itogah Issledovaniia Prolemny Obschchestvennoi Aktivnosti Shkol’nikov,” 04 1970, RGASPI, f. 2,
op. 2, d. 446. “Ob Itogah Issledovaniia Prolemny Obschchestvennoi Aktivnosti Shkol’nikov.”
160 “Ob Itogah Issledovaniia Prolemny Obschchestvennoi Aktivnosti Shkol’nikov.”, p. 10.
behavior in the camp (apparently, the boys were throwing apple cores at the backs of children who sat in the front rows during the lecture).\footnote{While in my interview with … this topic came up accidentally, a question about political lectures and other related activities was a part of my questionnaire and I asked it directly to everyone.} This collective amnesia is quite striking when taking into account that camp reports devoted a special section to political education, which means that camp organizers did not underestimate its importance. Presently, however, it is hard to say to what extent the measures required by the Soviet ideologues in this sphere were implemented and why they seem to have been so thoroughly forgotten.

\textbf{Work Education}

Certainly, the major transformation of the summer camp routine under Khrushchev was the strengthening of work education. The first signs appeared in the new camp regulations issued in 1955. “Socially useful work in a summer camp should aim at developing in pioneers and schoolchildren love for physical work as well as their skills in taking care of themselves. To achieve these goals, children get engaged in cleaning and development (blagoustroistvo) of the camp’s territory, performing feasible agricultural work in the nearby collective farm (kolhoz), community farm (sovkhoz), machine and tractor station (MTS), in the camp’s kitchen garden, service in the kitchen, canteen, bedroom units,” the new regulations suggested.\footnote{These skills included the ability to make one’s bed, clean the room, serve food, clean one’s clothes and other, everyday chores.} Then, the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Komsomol held on April 5-6, 1956 issued recommendations to create special camps for schoolchildren in economically well-developed collective farms.\footnote{\textit{Komsomol’sko-molodezhnye i pionerskie lageri v kolkhozakh (Iz opyta raboty shkol i otdelov narodnogo obrazovaniia).}, p. 11.} On
April 20, 1956, these recommendations were followed by the resolution of the Central Committee of the Komsomol establishing the terms of children’s work in summer camps. These decisions gave life to a new type of work and rest camp for adolescents (ages 15-16) in which young people had to be engaged in agricultural work for four hours a day. Finally, after a special meeting held on May 11 – 12, 1956, the Komsomol leadership decided that all pioneers and schoolchildren should participate in all types of work.164 Before, pioneers and schoolchildren had to participate only in work aimed at taking care of themselves and in camp development (blagoustroistvo). After the change, they were obliged to work in camp gardens and kitchen-gardens, camp workshops and numerous hobby groups and “systemically provide help to collective farms according to children’s possibilities.”165

Talking about the transformation of the summer camp routine is impossible without mentioning the 1958 school reform initiated by Khrushchev. The goal of the reform was to overcome the drawbacks of Stalin’s school system that educators had been trying to address since 1944. It was then, Maria Mayofis argues, that Vladimir Potiomkin, the People’s Commissar of Education, declared the “struggle against formalism.” The new course attacked the practices of learning by heart, which, in the opinion of the educational leadership of the country, did not provide children with a deep understanding of the subject and was qualified as detached from practice.166 Echoing the concerns that Potiomkin voiced in 1944, the Teachers’ Newspaper further criticized the fact that children at school were almost forcefully engaged in the work of various hobby groups without any consideration

164 Alla Gukasova, Trudovoie vospitanie v zagorodnom pionerskom lagere (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo Akademii pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1957)., p. 5.
165 Gukasova., p. 5.
for their personal interests. It is significant to note the role in the “struggle with formalism” campaign belongs to the temporary period of openness of Soviet pedagogues to their Western counterparts. For example, Mayofis mentions a pedagogue, Akhshaurova-Medynskaia, who in an article referred to an American educator, John Studebaker, while calling for the reform of the teaching of mathematics. She believed that it was crucial that children learned how to apply mathematical knowledge in practice. Learning by practice would become a new motto in Soviet pedagogy after Khrushchev’s ascendance to power. It is also due to this change that Soviet educators started seeing summer camps as an extension of the school system, where children could apply theoretical knowledge they acquired during the school year, for example, in biology or geography.

Aside from the “struggle against formalism,” Khrushchev’s school reform was also affected by more immediate considerations, specifically the country’s need for a qualified industrial and agricultural workforce. Khrushchev was concerned that school graduates were unwilling to take industrial or agricultural jobs and instead did everything to receive a university education. On September 21, 1958, Soviet newspapers published an article by Khrushchev in which he diagnosed the situation in Soviet education and presented ways to overcome its drawbacks. The Soviet leader condemned the fact that secondary schools did not develop a love of physical work in young people. To overcome this malaise, he

167 Mayofis, p. 43.
suggested that during the two years of high school, young people should engage in industrial work combined with evening school education.\textsuperscript{169}

Thus, one can see that the introduction of work into the summer camp routine was a part of a bigger movement aimed at transforming the Soviet educational system in general by adjusting it to the vision of the new state leadership. Organizing children’s work in summer camps was not easy, however, due to the lack of experience and guidance on the matter. Books like \textit{Pioneer Camp}, \textit{Pioneer Summer}, and \textit{Pioneer Counselor’s Book}, as well as \textit{Pioneer Counselor} journal, contained only rudimentary pieces of advice on children’s work in the camps. Because of this, in 1957, several publications devoted to the issue appeared. Their goal was not only to explain how to organize children’s work in a camp, but also to justify why it had to become a part of their summer rest.\textsuperscript{170} These guidelines demonstrate that while Krupskaia’s approach to rest created space for various versions of it, the introduction of manual labor in summer camps tested the limitations of her concept. The abundance of publications on the topic, as well as the diversity of views their authors expressed, demonstrate that the introduction of work in summer camps was a radical step that pushed educators and ideologues towards rethinking not only the concept of children’s rest but also the meaning of Soviet childhood in general.\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{170} Earlier in the chapter, I demonstrated that the Soviet understanding of rest transcended to notion of an inactive state of body and mind and could include, for example, various educational activities. However, the complications that Soviet educators experienced in justifying manual labor in summer camps testifies to the fact that they were still considered as spaces for rest, albeit broadly interpreted.
\textsuperscript{171} After all, children’s disengagement from industrial work was one of the core messages of Soviet propaganda under Stalin’s rule and an important principle in Marx’s approach to childhood.
One of the first books explaining why children’s work in the camps was important and necessary was a collective advisory manual titled Experiment (Opyt) of Work Education During Summer Time (1957).\textsuperscript{172} It presented an explanation which aimed to integrate the new concept of work into the concept of healthy rest that prevailed in the post-war USSR. The resulting hybrid was rather clumsy and had not been used anywhere else. However, this hybrid is important because it shows why the Soviet public had never merged work and rest together. One of the book’s authors, A. Speranskii, in his chapter “From the Experience of Organization of Children’s Active Rest,” when describing his participation in the organization of children’s work in a camp belonging to “Stroitel’stvo,” in the Tomsk region, created this hybrid line of argument.\textsuperscript{173} He referred to Krupskaia’s ideas and claimed that “a healthy school pupil does not need rest in the form of doing nothing. The most effective form of rest is active rest that combines various activities for children and satisfies their needs and interests. Socially beneficial and collectively performed physical labor is an important type of such activities.”\textsuperscript{174} To make this statement more convincing, Speranskii brought up the case of a “Stroitel’stvo” camp in which children, despite being well-fed, were not gaining weight. It is important to note here that weight-gain, starting from the early 1920s, was a major indicator of children’s health improvement. To examine the causes of the problem, Speranskii supposedly accompanied the camp doctor and conducted an observation which indicated two reasons for such a deplorable outcome. First, children were playing soccer too much, so they were involved

\textsuperscript{172} Aranskii, Opyt trudovogo vospitaniia v letnee vremia (Sbornik statei).
\textsuperscript{173} A. Speranskii, “Iz opyta organizatsii aktivnogo otdayha detei” in Aranskii., p. 7.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p. 7.
in only one type of active rest. Secondly, the weather was bad during the camp session and children were doing nothing most of the time. They were leading a “sedentary life.” Paradoxically, Speranskii and the doctor decided that, because of this, children’s “life tone” was low and this was why they were not gaining weight.\(^\text{175}\)

In another article in the same volume, G. Gasparov and A. Permiakov came up with a different explanation of manual labor’s positive influence on children in summer. Their approach agreed more with the reasoning of Khrushchev and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. Gasparov and Permiakov presented the idea that work was a part of the communist upbringing which could not be successfully fulfilled in the camps solely by means of exercise, strict observation of the daily schedule, and good hygiene (despite the central place they already occupied in Soviet summer camp life).\(^\text{176}\) Gasparov and Permiakov concluded: “The most important elements of summer camp’s work are solidification of knowledge children receive at school, broadening of their polytechnic world outlook and cultivation of working skills.”\(^\text{177}\) This idea also appeared in the Resolutions of the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Komosmol regarding the work of the Pioneer Organization. The resolutions, following the orders of the Twentieth Party Congress regarding the work of the Soviet school, mentioned that “the most important task of the pioneer organization is wide involvement of pioneers, in a form comprehensible to them, into active social and political activities, first and foremost into the socially beneficial work, into feasible \((posil’nyi)\) participation in the fight of Soviet

\(^{175}\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^{177}\) Ibid., p. 59. V. Aranskii, the editor of the book chooses the same explanation añditionaly mentioning the importance of the romantics in work. See: Ibid., p. 27.
people for communism.”¹⁷⁸ This more general formulation was restated in 1957 more succinctly and precisely by Alla Gukasova, whose dissertation, devoted to the organization of work in summer camps, was turned into a major manual devoted to children’s work education. On the first page of her book, Gukasova proclaimed, “only at work one can become a true communist,” providing her own answer to the open question posed by Krupskaya’s definition of rest.¹⁷⁹ While Krupskaya did not give a clear answer to what kind of active rest created true Leninists, Gukasova turned work into a major factor shaping the road of transformation from a child to a true communist.

At the same time, other authors started presenting manual labor as the activity that exercised an immediate transformative effect on children’s discipline. Ilya Kukulin demonstrates that the idea about children’s high capacity for self-discipline was circulating in pedagogical circles in the late 1940s and even received coverage in Family and School magazine in 1949.¹⁸⁰ By 1956, some political activists connected it with work education. For example, at the All-Ukrainian Methodological Conference on the Results of Children’s Rest Organization during the summer of 1956, the deputy head of the Lviv Regional Department of People’s Education comrade Sukhorskii expressed a belief in adolescents’ extraordinary ability to organize themselves if they went to work and rest camps.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Gukasova, Trudovoie vospitaniie v zagorodnom pionerskom lagere.
¹⁸¹ “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoj konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykhka pionerov i shkolnikov.”, pp. 66-68.
Like many of his colleagues, Sukhorskii was concerned with the fact that few children were involved in various collective activities organized by the state during the summer time. It is, however, important to take a close look at the way he expressed his concerns. Sukhorskii complained: “In our region, only one sixth of school children are receiving an opportunity to improve their health from the state through organized leisure. The rest are left without any organization during summer time. We cannot put up with the fact that most our schools are closed in summer and children are organizing their leisure by themselves.”

In his statement Sukhorskii merged health-improving activities with organized leisure, a move quite symbolic at the meeting, where the secretary of Volyn Regional Komsomol Committee was complaining that children with health problems stopped receiving free vacations to improve their condition. Comrade Kochetov’s presentation further highlighted the insignificance of the concerns for children’s health at this meeting. As the head of Kharkov tourist camp, Kochetov boasted that he helped children who didn’t like beds and tents to change their opinion by putting them in “more severe natural conditions” so that they could feel the improvement. In complete accordance with the spirit of the time, comrade Sukhorskii also criticized existing trade union pioneer camps for formalism, which meant learning through lectures and conversations and devoting too little time to practical activities. The result, the Lvov official claimed, was that children

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182 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykhakh pionerov i shkolnikov.”, pp. 67-68.
183 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykhakh pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 82.
184 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykhakh pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 75.
were so bored in these institutions that they left them, forcing summer camps to close. As one can see, to prove his point, comrade Sukhorskii carefully manipulated children’s agency. On the one hand, children could not organize their rest, and on the other hand, they were capable of rightfully rejecting inappropriate forms of its organization.

The tourist camps, however, were places where children and even adults were happy, Sukhorskii believed. The reason was that “in the collective farms, people are not afraid of work, if this work is properly organized.” As a good example, Sukhorskii described a “tourist camp” that had been working in the region for the past four years. The camp was so successful that in the summer of 1956, Lvov schools number 44 and 34 created their own camps. An important feature of these camps was that they had almost no personnel – only one supervisor and one teacher; the rest was of the camp chores were taken care of by children themselves. Sukhorskii considered these camps a big success. “They had no discipline violations. I believe that we should pay more attention to this, when the staff is very small, increase the number of such camps and take children to the countryside so that they received work education and have an organized rest,” he claimed.

What Sukhorskii suggested was a self-disciplining utopia which seemed to have been desirable at the moment yet completely unreachable. The interviews with people who

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185 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 66.
186 He somehow merges tourist and work and rest camps.
187 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 67.
188 vospitatel
189 “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 67.
190 This notion correlates with the goals Khrushchev set for Soviet society in his speech at the XXth Party Congress.
worked and stayed in summer camps disabuse us of the idea that any camp in the country could boast an absence of discipline violations. Even Artek, which was privileged to receive children proven to think and act as exemplary communists, had cases of children running away or walking around the territory unattended, and theft also occurred there.¹⁹¹ Yet, Sukhorskii’s claims are important because they reflected a new ideology of childhood and, in this case, adolescence, in which the country’s leadership supported by the educators and ideologues returned to Marx in highlighting the role of work in personal transformation.

The justifications for introduction of manual labor into children’s summer camp routine allow us to closely observe the process of transformation of the Soviet ideology of childhood throughout the early years of Khrushchev’s rule. They highlight the radical character of the new vision of childhood, which ran counter to some of the core values of Stalin’s propaganda, including the withdrawal of children from industrial work. As for the implementation of the new policies, it is difficult to judge. Summer camps reported successful application of the new agenda, yet seem to have exercised a certain freedom in choosing specific activities they engaged children in. Part of the problem were state regulations. For example, children learned how to work through various venues, including hobby groups. Yet, for a long time, state regulations did not allow for hiring a hobby group leader as member of the summer camp staff. Organizing the help for the collective farm was also problematic, especially for summer camps situated far from the collective farms.

¹⁹¹ Liudmila Smirnova, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, October 22, 2015, Kharkiv; Larisa Bugaenko, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, August 2, 2016, Kharkiv.
As I showed earlier, camps’ daily schedule suggestions allocated two hours for children’s work. If they had to take a long walk to the work site, their actual working hours became very short. Moreover, long walks outside of camp territories posed numerous dangers to children’s health and safety. As a result, if camps did not have transportation, they saw it as a legitimate excuse not to fulfill the requirement for agricultural work. My interviews show that the working activities that summer camp organizers definitely implemented were related to the cleaning of camp territory, which included the bedroom units, and service in the kitchen, which excluded food preparation. Thus, it is hard to make a conclusion regarding the extent to which the new vision of children’s rest and *vospitanie* was implemented in Soviet summer camps. It seems that camp organizers could have resisted implementing the new measures and this resistance could have been further boosted by structural impediments to the successful introduction of the new camp routine.

**Military and Patriotic Education**

After Khrushchev was removed from power, camp policies changed, giving way to newly prioritized “directions” of children’s education, first and foremost to military and patriotic education. It took some time for it to become an essential element of the summer camp agenda in the instructional manuals for the camp organizers. The *Pioneer Camp* (1951) had no chapter on military education but suggested that children celebrate the Day of the Military and Marine Fleet of the USSR during their summer camp holidays.\(^{192}\) The book provided a good example of the holiday’s organization. For one day, the whole camp could turn into a ship on which children pretended to be marine soldiers and counselors.

\(^{192}\) *Pionerskii lager* (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1951), p. 45
acted as if they were officers. Moreover, marine fleet terminology would be used when possible. Preparation for the event could include instructive conversations with children about the Soviet military and marine fleet. In the evening, the real marines could visit the camp. They would participate in a big camp fire ceremony, and organized a quiz check of children’s knowledge of their guests’ occupation.

By 1956, the instructional materials on military education in summer camps had increased significantly as the Voluntary Society for the Assistance to the Army, the Aviation, and the Fleet stepped in with its own publications on the matter. Yet, even then, the brochure stated, “Defense work in summer camps is not a goal in itself, but part of the whole complex of pioneers’ organized, active rest and upbringing. At its foundation lies the upbringing of the young generation in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, devotion to the Soviet Motherland, the Communist Party, love for the Soviet Army and Military and Marine Fleet.” Starting in 1967, however, military education gained new prominence, as Soviet authorities introduced a military game called Zarnitsa (Lighting), which they wanted to turn into a state-wide children’s movement.

Before Zarnitsa’s introduction, there were many other educational strategies that bolstered children’s patriotism. One of them was studying the biographies of Civil and Great Patriotic War heroes. Between the two, the Great Patriotic War dominated. Schools and camps invited its veterans to tell their stories, named themselves after its heroes, and learned everything about these people’s lives and accomplishments. Moreover, schools and camps organized detachments of the Young Red Pathfinders to search for the graves of

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193 Oboronnaia rabota v pionerskih lageriah (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo DOSAAF, 1956), p. 3
soldiers who died fighting in their region. It was also common to organize a
commemoration day on June 22, the day when the USSR was attacked by Germany, or on
the date of the region’s liberation. If camps were situated in villages, they would also hold
commemoration ceremonies near the monuments to the fallen soldiers who either died in
that area or were from it.

In 1967, a new form of military and patriotic education was introduced: the military
game “Zarnitsa.” Military games for children had always existed in the USSR. However,
one achieved the scale of Zarnitsa, an all-union state-organized movement. Zarnitsa was
played year-round in different weather conditions in order to “assist in mastering the
program of primary military preparation in high school, and enhance military and patriotic
as well as physical education (vospitanie) of pioneers and schoolchildren.”194 Zarnitsa was
an obligatory game for summer camps, but schools also had to organize it, preferably twice
a year in winter and summer. This game stood out from the rest because it included an all-
year preparation program, during which children were expected to learn how to shoot,
provide first aid, march together, and execute numerous military commands. With
Zarnitsa’s introduction as an important extracurricular activity, it became clear that the
state had taken a serious step towards militarization of children’s education. However, the
way military and patriotic education was interpreted in the USSR in practice strengthened
the heroic myth of war by disentangling it from the actual military way of life and practical
preparation for military service.

Only one of my interviewees admitted playing Zarnitsa at a serious level that required full-scale military and medical training. The rest remember Zarnitsa as a fun time spent with classmates outside of the city trying to capture a flag and eating delicious porridge at the end. A report issued by Artek educators after the camp hosted the all-union Zarnitsa competition demonstrates that even when schools took Zarnitsa seriously and actually competed at a high level, the training children received was rather superficial. Although the situation could have changed after 1970, one can say with certainty that from 1967 to 1970, the military preparation children received in the framework of Zarnitsa left much to be desired and prioritized parades over shooting. My interviews suggest that this situation continued after 1970 with rare exceptions.

Starting in the early 1960s, Artek had specialized sessions hosting, for example, young reporters, sportsmen, or the best Zarnitsa players. It stopped hosting Zarnitsa, however, in 1970. It is an interesting coincidence, then, that the report about the meeting of Zarnitsa players in 1970 contained harsh criticism. It stated:

The meeting demonstrated that in the past few years the organizers of Zarnitsa and its local headquarters learned how to hold line review and young friends of the army parades, celebratory line parades and rallies, hold meetings with war veterans and Red Army soldiers, organize extensive cross-country games, competitions, tourist hikes, quizzes and other mass events. In the meantime, little attention has been paid to individual work with the young friends of the army, development of hobby work in the young friends’ detachments and battalions, pioneers preparation in the young

195 Natalia Martinkus, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, February 5, 2016, Kharkiv.
friends’ specializations, teaching every young friend to shoot, orient him or herself in an unknown locality, mask themselves, respond to the signals of the civil defense, and learn the basics of the first aid.\textsuperscript{196}

According to the report, only 85 out of 900 pioneers who participated in Zarnitsa in Artek passed a shooting exam.

The interviews I conducted and archival sources both demonstrate that prioritization of parades and commemoration of the Great Patriotic War over teaching children actual military skills persisted throughout the 1970s. Military camps existed, but they were organized for juvenile delinquents only. Even the camps famous for fulfilling all the requirements set for children’s summer rest by the Young Pioneers organization and the Komsomol never included consistent training in shooting. Very rarely were children taught to orient themselves in unknown localities.\textsuperscript{197} This happened because practical military skills were not actually listed as a required part of the camp agenda.

What the military and patriotic education’s program included were pioneer parades, collective marching and singing, hikes along the paths of the local partisan detachments, Great Patriotic War veterans’ visits and talks, visits by military officers and talks with them, Zarnitsa (played without using rifles), and the work of the Red Pathfinders. As a result of this approach, the narrative of the Great Patriotic War and the narrative of parades became two essential parts of my interviewees’ images about their pioneer childhood. As one can see, the elements of military education were performative in nature, meaning that

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\textsuperscript{196} Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, f. 2, op.2, d. 451, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{197} State Archive of the Russian Federation, f. P-5474, op. 20, d. 7997.
\end{flushright}
children played as soldiers in various capacities or participated in ceremonies commemorating them. The realities of military life and training, however, were carefully hidden from them until ages 15-16, when boys were introduced to some elements of military training, specifically shooting. Such theatricalization of war for young people (aged 10 to 14) is remarkable when compared to Khrushchev’s reforms, which introduced work into the summer camp routine for the same age group. It is significant that, while emphasizing military education, Brezhnev did not cancel the changes introduced by his predecessor. Yet, as the new Soviet leader changed the priorities in camp education to better reflect his agenda, he did not follow his predecessor’s path by testing the limits of what the notion of a Soviet childhood experience could encompass. This could testify to the perceptions of warfare in the USSR more generally. While the suffering during the Great Patriotic War was only cautiously explored as a topic, for example in Soviet cinema, it was not suppressed from people’s memories. As a result, the introduction of military experience into the sphere of childhood did not happen, despite the challenges posed by the Cold War politics of the 1960s and 1970s.

**Aesthetic education**

Although always a major component of children’s pioneer camp education, aesthetic education was properly theorized only in the 1960s. Among the pioneers studying the role of music in summer camp life was Dmitrii Kabalevskii, a Soviet composer who wrote extensively for children. Kabalevskii visited Artek several times and wrote numerous songs for this camp. He worked with Artek very closely in the 1960s, a time when music and the arts more generally started receiving more attention from Soviet pedagogues.
To be sure, the resolution of the Thirteenth Congress of the Komsomol (1958) highlighted the importance of aesthetic education for the young. In the resolution, aesthetic education was a part of ideological education (ideino-vospitatelnaiia rabota) and indirectly connected with moral education. The resolution stated: “Komsomol organizations should significantly improve aesthetic education of youth and children, cultivate their good taste, teach them to assess correctly what is beautiful and artistic.”\(^{198}\) The following paragraph called for fighting against hooliganism, although by the end of it the Komsomol ordered its organizations around the country to “Provide full support to developing good habits and traditions of celebrating important events in the lives of young people.”\(^{199}\) Thus, aesthetic education had to serve the goal of shaping young people’s everyday behavior and, especially, their leisure time.

The text of the Resolution also addressed the neglect towards music and the arts in the Soviet educational system of the 1950s. As a remedy, the Convention suggested introducing new subjects such as the foundations of aesthetics, music, painting, and choreography in pedagogical education.\(^{200}\) Even in the 1960s, however, aesthetic education had not yet been included in all summer camp manuals. For example, in 1964 the Chuvash State Pedagogical Institute prepared “To Camp Counselor about a Pioneer Camp,” a compilation of the most popular pioneer camp guidelines, including one about Artek.\(^{201}\)

\(^{198}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iuil’ 1958 gg.), p. 20.

\(^{199}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iuil’ 1958 gg.), p. 20.

\(^{200}\) Sbornik dokumentov TsK VLKSM o rabote Vsesoiuznoi pionerskoi organizatsii imeni V. I. Lenina (aprel’ 1954 - iuil’ 1958 gg.), p. 20.

\(^{201}\) S. Uhiyankin, G. Tushina, and G. Iakovleva, eds., Vozhatomu o pionerskom lagere (Cheboksary: Chuvashskoie knizhnoie izdatel’stvo, 1964).
However, aesthetic education was not even mentioned in this book as an important component of pioneers’ education. Rather, the list of the most important skills for a pioneer counselor focused on his or her ability to organize sports activities, hikes, and games, as well as to provide first aid.\footnote{Uhiankin, Tushina, and Iakovleva.\textit{,}, p. 3.} A manual for summer camp organizers in the Kharkiv region stands in stark contrast to the Chuvash publication. It paid considerable attention to the aesthetics of camp spaces and rituals, stressed aesthetic education as one of the major elements of summer camp life, and even contained a list of songs for summer camps, including their music scores.\footnote{M. Kliuchareva, \textit{V pomoshch nachal’nikam i starshim vozhatym pionerskih lagerei} (Kharkov: Prapor, 1965).}

In 1968, Kabalevskii wrote an entry in Eduard Abdullin’s “Musical Work in a Pioneer Camp,” claiming that every camp needs to have two specially trained instructors: one for sports and one for music.\footnote{Eduard Abdullin, \textit{Muzykal’naia rabota v pionerskom lagere. posobiie dlia muzykal’nyh rukovoditelei, vozhatyh, vospitatelei} (Moskva: Muzyka, 1968)., p. 3-6.} “In a pioneer camp, a musical worker can observe children during a relatively short period of time (only 30 to 40 days),” Kabalevskii noted, “but he literally can do it 24 hours in row.”\footnote{Abdullin.\textit{,}, p. 3.} Thus, if during the day camp speakers transmitted music that was “easy for comprehension but rich in content” it would “without pressure, gradually enter children’s consciousness, educating their taste in music.”\footnote{Abdullin.\textit{,}, p. 6.}

Soviet theoreticians of music education took these ideas even further. Harlamov (1973) wrote: “The art of music can reflect the most nuanced emotions, affect people’s thoughts and feelings, giving life to various moods, wishes, and dreams. Therein lies the
power of music, and there lies its immense significance in shaping human personality.”

Music for Harlamov, like summer rest for Krupskaia, was not an art of entertainment. He asked, “Does music exist to entertain people, to divert their attention from the daily chores, or is music itself a human soul expressed in sounds? Was entertainment the only goal pursued by terminally ill Mozart when he was writing his Requiem […]?” Here, Harlamov highlights the ability of music to create empathy, a connection between people. Describing music as a “human soul expressed in sounds” that “can reflect the most nuanced emotions, affect people’s thoughts and feelings,” Harlamov arrives at the same conclusions as Plato: “It is true that music cannot move stones, but a human under the influence of music is capable of great breakthroughs, of noble acts and deeds.”

Most certainly, not all music was appropriate for children in general and for summer camps in particular. Harlamov, Abdullin, and Kabalevskii expressed serious concerns about such a dangerous phenomenon as pop music penetrating children’s summer camp spaces. All the authors of music education manuals acknowledge the fact that often what children were hearing from camp speakers were pop songs and not classical music or pioneer songs. The same was the problem with music instructors’ repertoire – children wanted to learn pop songs.

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208 Kharlamov, Malov, and Zhukova., p. 8.
209 Kharlamov, Malov, and Zhukova., p. 9.
210 Soviet pop music differed significantly from its Western analogue. It was strictly controlled by numerous agencies in terms of genre, content, and aesthetic qualities. This, however, does not mean that the resulting product was completely unappealing for wider audiences. The problems that Soviet composers and educators attributed to musical education in summer camps support this argument.
Despite the fact that popular music was carefully censored in the USSR, it was still considered inappropriate for children to learn. Kabalevskii believed that it was simply too “bad and vulgar” to serve the goal of developing children’s good taste in music. Harlamov, caring less about aesthetics and much more about ideological upbringing, argued that popular songs were not meant to be performed collectively. For example, Alexandra Pakhmutova’s “Tenderness” lost all its charm when performed by a choir. In a camp, music had to unite children, developing character traits such as collectivism in them. Singing together served this goal particularly well, in Harlamov’s opinion, while popular music did not. Quite typically for 1973, Harlamov found pioneer, folk, tourist, and Komsomol songs perfect for teaching and performing in a summer camp.

Rather interestingly, Harlamov did not mention military songs as part of an acceptable summer camp music repertoire. This could be explained by a belief that military songs were part of military and patriotic education. Nevertheless, in these songs’ performances, aesthetic and military education intersected, utilizing music the way Harlamov suggested – to shape children’s emotions about the Soviet past. Earlier in this chapter, I presented a scenario of a military imitation game (when, for a day, children pretended to be military marines). It had to both acquaint the young with a certain image of military life and make children feel what it could be like in the form of a game. The goal was to develop an attachment to the Soviet Army and motivate boys to serve in it in the future. Presented in the form of a game, the army had to appear exciting. A marching and

singing parade was another immersion game. It developed collectivism and discipline in the form of a drill teaching children group marching skills. Moreover, it had to make children feel like soldiers; hence, in the best case, children made soldiers’ costumes for the event. The same goal was set for staging military songs. Reading and hearing about Great Patriotic War heroes was not enough. Music and theater had to help children incorporate the Soviet ideological message more effectively by mobilizing the power of performativity in shaping their identity.  

Conclusions

The Soviet summer camp educational agenda went through several stages of development. In the 1920s—1930s, the first pedagogical theories appeared, which affected the overall understanding of the notion of Soviet children’s rest and did not change drastically until the 1980s. According to these views, passive rest was harmful for Soviet children, who should have been passing their leisure time engaging in activities which would turn them into exemplary communists. While during Stalin’s rule this principle was only moderately implemented, Khrushchev changed the situation. No longer seeing children as weak, sick, or in need of protection, he introduced mandatory work in ordinary summer camps and created a special new category of work and rest camps. Khrushchev’s rule was also the time when summer camp daily schedules tightened, leaving very little free time for the children who went there. Under Brezhnev, the situation grew even more complicated with a proliferation of marches, operations, and plans, in addition to the “directions” introduced under Khrushchev. Brezhnev also changed the priorities in summer

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camp education, bringing military and patriotic education to the fore. What remained unchanged in the approach to children’s summer camp routine was the assumption that leaving the young on their own was dangerous. Strikingly, as Soviet authorities were making public statements about the evolution of Soviet society in general and taking steps towards delegating more responsibilities to the people and loosening control over interpretations of the Soviet ideological message, when it came to children, the situation was rather the opposite. Children were still perceived as modern-day barbarians who caused trouble when left on their own. Thus, while childhood in the USSR was perceived as a special time in a person’s life and distinct from adulthood, this very concept could have been the cause of serious anxiety for Soviet statesmen. The state wanted to control childhood as much as possible, and the summer camps’ primary goal was to return the ownership of childhood to adults representing the state, reverse the process of its alienation, and make it manageable and comprehensible.
Chapter Three: Sentimental Education: Artek as the Ultimate Soviet Utopia

Few pioneer camps survived the dissolution of the USSR. One, however, not only survived it, but continued to be at the center of the post-Soviet nations’ attention. It was Artek, the first and the most famous Soviet camp, the ultimate utopia of the Soviet childhood. When in 2014 the Russian Federation annexed the Crimean Peninsula, the Russian propaganda channel Life News presented a story about concerned Russian citizens wishing to contribute to the peninsula’s revival. These citizens, who were employees of the Rostov-na-Donu strip club chain Provintsiiia, decided to donate their daily earnings to the reconstruction of a children’s camp Artek. The club’s male owner said: “We cannot be indifferent to the fate of this camp because it is always in our memory, we wanted to go there since we were schoolchildren. I have not succeeded, but this camp is still in my memory. Naturally, we wanted to support it.” The majority of comments to this video were ironic primarily due to the donors’ occupation, however, this story reached its goal — demonstrating how deeply ordinary Russian people cared about the situation in the Crimea, specifically in the dreamland of their childhood, Artek.

Life News’ story about Provintsiiia’s initiative was only one of numerous mentions of Artek in Russian news since 2014. If the camp’s deterioration served as the symbol

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214 “Strip klub Rostova zhertvuet zarplatu lageriu Artek, Krym” (Life News, July 4, 2014), https://life.ru/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/130732.
215 The owner of Provintsiiia was by far not the only public figure on Post-Soviet space who dreamt about going to Artek. For example, in 2012, Viktor Yanukovych expressed the same sentiment during his visit to the camp: “Sbylas’ eshche odna mechta Yanukovicha -- on stal artekovtsem,” August 15, 2012, Censor.net edition, https://censor.net.ua/news/214808/sbylas_esche_odna_mechta_yanukovicha_on_stal_artekovtsem.
of the failure of Ukrainian state-building project in the Crimea, Artek’s reconstruction signified the peninsula’s recovery in the caring hands of Russian politicians bringing stability and prosperity to the region. Why did the Russian propaganda machine choose Artek as a means to strengthen popular approval for the Crimean annexation? What was so special about this place? Why would an owner of a strip club, who has never been to Artek, want to donate money to its reconstruction? Even if this story was completely invented, then why do its creators believe that the story might turn popular opinion?

Artek opened its doors on June 16, 1925. The camp was organized using the framework of the Russian Red Cross Society, which aimed to improve Soviet children’s health. Yet, right from the start, the ambition of its founder Zinovii Solov’ev went much further than the creation of a mere healthcare facility. As already mentioned in the second chapter, for Solov’ev, Artek was a political project aimed at fostering the transformation of Soviet society.217

One reason why Artek’s revival after the Russian annexation of Crimea had such meaning was that, Artek did not only improve children’s health, as Solov’ev intended, but created an experience that left a long-lasting impression in these children’s hearts and minds. The close attention the Russian press has paid to the camp’s reconstruction in recent years suggests that Artek’s emotional appeal continues into the present, twenty-six years after the USSR’s collapse. In this respect, the fact that even a provincial strip club owner wants to help rebuild a camp, which he has only dreamt of visiting, is very significant. One did not have to go to Artek as a child to care deeply about this camp’s fate. An important

role in creating this effect, as I demonstrate in this chapter, was performed by the emotions successfully attached to the camp. These emotions were the result of a whole industry of books, films, and television reports accompanied by the concerted efforts of Artek educators. Artek was first and foremost a utopia of feeling, the home of happiness Soviet style.

In Chapter Two, I analyze the evolution of the Soviet camp education throughout 1950s-1960s. In this chapter devoted to Artek, the most desirable place to go for Soviet children, I focus on a particular aspect of Soviet political education, education of and through feelings. Emotions played an important role on the Soviet project overall. As for the children, a look at the camp guidelines shows that in the 1960s-1970s Soviet educators focused a lot on children’s feelings. In 1964, the head of Stremitel’nyi complex in Orlenok camp Alisa Debol’skaia described children’s supposed expectations of camp life using the language full of words that referred to emotions:

These are the pioneers going to a camp! They are going towards big friendship, engaging work, entertainment. They are going with a celebratory mood (edut kak na prazdnik). It is easy to understand their joy. In the camp they will learn interesting pioneer activities, find new friends, develop new skills in sports and tourist work, learn a lot of cheerful and intimate songs; they will grow a bit, get tanned, get stronger and healthier. It is so good to walk around the forest, bathe in the sea, dream in the starlight evenings, admire the morning sunrises.218

Debol’s kaia’s colleague, Aleksei Alferov, who in 1962 defended a dissertation *Development of Collectivism and Comradely Mutual Help among High School Students in Student Brigades* also highlighted the importance of emotions and impressions in summer camp work: “Schoolchildren’s impressionable nature will preserve long-lasting memories about the beauty of the starlight night, an intimate conversation near the fire, the meetings with outstanding people, representatives of interesting and useful professions. Children develop spiritually, get physically stronger, and stiffen their moral convictions.” During this period, children’s feelings and their cultivation also attracted a lot of attention from Soviet pedagogues, psychologists, and even journalists.

Artек pedagogues researched children’s feelings as well. In the 1960s, camp’s educators developed a theory in which emotions played a central role in human transformation. “What is comprehended not only by the mind but also by the heart becomes a conviction,” Artek’s Office of Pedagogical Methods (*Metodicheskii cabinet*) wrote this in its report to the Central Committee of Komsomol in 1966. This quote show that Artek educators saw emotions as a tool serving reason. They believed emotions could be attached

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221 “Godovoi otchet o rabote pionerskogo lageria Artek za 1966 god, Metodicheskii kabinet,” 1967, RGASPI, f. M-8, op. 1, d. 544., p. 13. From the report it is unclear when Artek educators developed this idea. The document only says that they decided to make it central to their pedagogical research in 1966.
to events and actions, and thus help reason to form convictions and personal qualities. To
go further, convictions could not have been formed without “comprehension by heart.”
This term defined emotional reaction to something as just another cognitive process,
different from “comprehension by reason,” yet no less important. Following this logic, just
like children’s reason could be persuaded by, for example, lectures, debates, films, and
radio programs, their emotions could be persuaded as well. Because of this, an important
term used in this chapter is emotional management. Under this term I understand the
specific means by which Artek educators were trying to shape the ways, in which children
“comprehended by heart” certain activities, concepts, and events. In this chapter, I will
analyze emotional management as one of the tools that contributed to the creation of the
cult of Artek.

The prominence of emotional management as one of the major educational
approaches at Artek is highly controversial in the Soviet context. According to Marx, the
change in people’s living conditions, their place in the relationship to production,
automatically changes the people’s consciousness and behavior. The pedagogical ideas of
Artek demonstrate that by 1966 it was evident, at least for the camp’s pedagogues, that
Marx’s theory was not working. Artek educators did not believe that the ideal conditions
of camp life would transform children into new people capable of building socialist society.
They believed that more was needed to create this effect, a cultivation of specific feelings
about events, concepts, and actions; basically, an approach through culture. As Jan Plamper
put it “Cultural valences have feedback loop effects on “states of mind”; the two are
Artek educators understood that very well. Their project was ambitious. By cultivating specific emotions about certain events and activities, they aspired to give life to a new culture, the culture of communism. As demonstrated above, Artek educators were not unique in paying attention to children’s emotions. Yet, they started studying the issue rather early and preserved the archive of camp counselors’ diaries which allows to look closely at the method’s application.

Artek has been promoted as a utopia of a Soviet happy childhood. Yet, in this chapter I demonstrate that life in Artek meant an exposure to various emotions, which children often experienced rather intensely. Soviet utopia was not for everyone. Thus, one of the goals of Artek counselors’ work was to guide children through their feelings and help them focus on the positive ones.

The first section of this chapter A Utopia Conceived examines how goals and tasks set by the state for Artek changed over time. I focus on the 1960s, when emotional education became a specific goal. That moment is contextualized, however, by tracing the meanings that Artek acquired along a timeline that dates to the 1920s. The second section of the chapter is called A Utopia Questioned. While in the first section examines the evolution of Artek as the place of utopian aspirations for the Soviet state, in A Utopia Questioned, I demonstrate that for children Artek’s experience was often not associated with positive emotions. Particularly, the camp’s routine was ill-suited for children who came from Soviet republics other than Russia and often had a poor command of the Russian language. Both sections, thus, pose the question of how the image of Artek as the

dreamland of Soviet childhood could become so powerful in Soviet and Post-Soviet societies. In the third section, titled *A Utopia Construed*, I look at the various techniques Artek educators used to stimulate strong emotions in children to shape the experience of camp life in a way desirable for Soviet authorities and educators.

**A Utopia Conceived**

The projection into the future, the attempt to create a new culture through educational means, characterizes Artek as the ultimate Soviet utopian space. It was expected that the experience of staying in Artek would have a transformative effect on children enabling them, as they grew up, to build a communist society. Regularly surveilled by the Komsomol, local party organs, writers, photographers, journalists, and foreign delegations, the camp was also a perfect example of what Michael David-Fox called a “cultural show.”223 The term referred to a strategy of Soviet authorities to expose numerous foreigners visiting the country to only a limited number of facilities, the model ones.224 In the interwar period, as David-Fox demonstrates, model institutions, by demonstrating their potential for modernization, were the only way for the USSR to gain support in the international arena. Yet, Fox also emphasizes that “the ideological significance of model institutions spanned the divide between displays aimed specifically at outsiders and the simultaneously emerging Soviet and Stalinist domestic order, centrally concerned with altering the psyche of its own citizens.”225

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224 David-Fox., pp. 98-141.
225 David-Fox., p. 100.
This strategy explains Artek’s functioning within the Soviet context. Moreover, while David-Fox analyzes model institutions in the USSR exclusively in the interwar era, a further look at Artek’s case demonstrates that this camp remained an example of a Soviet model institution that state authorities considered very important for both home and international politics until the collapse of the USSR. This status was the reason why Artek was also a site of continuous experiments, which, at times, yielded questionable results and were abandoned. Soviet visions of the future evolved and so did the Soviet Union’s major site of experimentation.

From its early years, Artek had several characteristics that turned it into an object of Soviet authorities’ close attention. Situated in a beautiful park on the Black Sea, Artek was the first sanatorium camp established for children. For a while, Artek was also directly managed by one of the top Soviet healthcare officials, the head of the Russian Red Cross Society Zinovii Soloviov. Soloviov was very ambitious with his project. In the 1920s, numerous foreign delegations, which included such prominent leaders of the international communist movement as Sen Katayama, Klara Zetkin, and Henry Barbusse, visited the camp. Starting in 1927, Artek became the major international camp of the country, as it hosted the first delegation of children from Germany. In 1929, the camp finally changed from tents to much more comfortable houses, becoming the first children’s summer camp in the USSR with stable housing. Thus, the combination of an incredibly beautiful natural setting, close attention from high-ranking Soviet officials, comparatively comfortable living conditions, and openness to foreigners, made Artek an important tool of Soviet propaganda in both domestic and international politics. By 1930, the camp was gradually transforming from a place for sick children into a place for all children, whom Soviet
authorities and educators saw as the future of the country. In 1929 already, Artek had hosted the delegates of the 1st All-Union Pioneer Convention. A year later, it greeted the delegates of the 1st World Pioneer Convention. Both events marked the status of the camp as a place for the most politically conscious children of the USSR. Starting in 1935, this tendency strengthened as the Central Komsomol Committee rewarded 250 pioneers with a trip to Artek for achievements at school and “exemplary conscious attitudes towards preservation of socialist property.”

Two stories of Soviet child-heroes explain what ideals children with “exemplary conscious attitude towards socialist property” were expected to pursue. A better understanding of the models Artekovites tried to follow sheds light on the pressures they faced having received a trip to the camp. The first story is about Pavlik Morozov, a boy murdered by his relatives in a far distant Siberian village for, supposedly, denouncing his father’s attempt to conceal crops from the Soviet authorities. Pavlik embodied the highest degree of vigilance a Soviet citizen could demonstrate, as he was ready to sacrifice his family for the public good. An indirect mythical product of numerous Soviet policies,

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226 In the USSR, there were three state-sponsored organizations for moral and ideological educations of children and youth. At the age of six, children entered the All-Union Young Octobrists’ Organization, from age ten to fifteen, they were the members of the All-Union Young Pioneer Organization, finally starting from fourteen to twenty-seven years old, they could be the members of the All-Union Komsomol Organization.


228 Of course, as Catriona Kelly compellingly proved, Pavlik’s story was a myth. Yet, this myth was not sanctioned by Soviet central authorities. It gradually took shape due to the work of several journalists who covered the investigation of Pavlik’s murder. The popularity of Pavlik’s myth soon rose to the level when it started irritating even comrade Stalin, who nevertheless could not affect the situation. Thus, a martyr boy-hero became an indirect product of numerous Soviet policies, including collectivization and anti-wreckage campaigns, taking them to the extreme point at which even Soviet children were shown ready to sacrifice everything dear to them to advance the Soviet cause.

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including collectivization and anti-wreckage campaigns, Pavlik became an archetype of a Soviet child-hero ready to sacrifice everything, including his own life, to advance the Soviet cause.

Another heroic archetype was Mamlakat Nakhangova, a cotton-gatherer from Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic. Mamlakat received Lenin’s Order for gathering 80 kilograms of cotton when the adult norm was 13 kilograms. In 1935, the girl was invited to the Kremlin where she met with Stalin, and in 1936 she was awarded a trip to Artek. While Pavlik represented sacrificial heroism more reminiscent of the Civil War time, Mamlakat was a hero of peaceful work, a highly-motivated and productive child-citizen, who understood the needs of the Motherland and used innovation to provide for the Motherland’s needs. Although Mamlakat and Pavlik were both the products of the Soviet 1930s, the messages sent by their stories remained significant in defining the Soviet authorities’ expectations for the children of the country for decades to come.

Mamlakat Nakhangova was only one of numerous children who performed their duties as Soviet citizens so diligently that they were awarded a trip to Artek. To strengthen the connection between such children and Soviet authorities, in 1934, the Head of the Council of People’s Commissars Viacheslav Molotov visited Artek, and in 1936 he invited 200 Artekovites from the Lower Camp to the Kremlin. These visits were highlighted in the Soviet press, positioning the camp in the popular imagination as an institution that received only outstanding children. Artek became a place where “model”

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230 Children who went to Artek were called Artekovites. Artek pedagogues, however, gradually developed a method of stimulating children’s good behavior by telling them that the title of Artekovite had to be earned through certain behaviors children had to demonstrate while staying in the camp and after leaving it.
citizens met the highest authorities, including international visitors of various ages and ranks. It was a perfect site where a “cultural show” could not only be displayed for outside viewers (foreigners and top-tier Soviet officials), but also performed for the purposes of domestic politics.

One of the major messages of Soviet propaganda that the camp had to communicate was the image of the happy Soviet childhood.\textsuperscript{231} To prepare children awarded with a trip to Artek for what they would experience, the authors of books, films, and newspaper articles depicted the camp as a place of ultimate joy. “What child does not dream of going to the best, largest, and most beautiful pioneer camp – Artek!” gushed Iakov Taits in his book \textit{Artek}. “Now, open your eyes wider! So much light, so much sun, so much blue sky! And that greenish blue space beneath – it is the Black Sea. There, very far away it blends with the sky, so that at first sight it is hard to distinguish between the sky and the sea …”\textsuperscript{232} Taits depicts a poetic picture to try to shape children’s emotional expectations of the place. Like many other authors, Taits was communicating to children a specific set of feelings associated with a trip to Artek. Such publications, as well as documentaries about life in Artek, turned the camp into a place where the only appropriate emotion was continuous delight.

In 1958, the state became even more ambitious regarding Artek’s role in Soviet society. The Council of Ministers of the USSR ordered the reconstruction of the camp, which had to change its status from a healthcare and educational to a purely educational

\textsuperscript{231} According to Catriona Kelly, this was one of the key messages of Soviet propaganda machine. See: Kelly, \textit{Children’s World}. p. 1.
facility. The reconstruction of the Artek was one of the symbols of a new life for the whole country. Anatolii Polianskii’s project of the New Artek used the language of modernist architecture to create a functional space which could host a lot of children and ensure the eventfulness of their everyday routine. Aside from this, the new project made steps forward in two important directions: its functional spaces raised the level of ideologization of children’s lives in the camp and, at the same time, made these lives significantly more comfortable. The shift towards comfort and modernization can easily be noticed in these photographs.

Figure 2. Artek in the summer of 1957 (before the reconstruction). Larisa Bugaenko is leaving the girls’ tent in Nizhniï camp. Personal archive of Iuliia Skubytska.
Figure 3. Anatolii Polianskii, *Artek* (Moskva: Izdatel’stvo stroitel’noi literatury, 1967).

These photographs allow to see the drastic modernization Artek underwent in the 1960s. The camp turned into a showcase of the most innovative tendencies in Soviet architecture. The return to modernism, so popular in the USSR of the late 1920s, was, of course, a sign of departure from Stalin’s architectural taste, which favored historical styles. Polianskii was no longer building the palace of rest reminiscent of imperial era mansions for the rich. Columns and decorations in his project gave way to prefabricated materials, transparent glass walls, and visually attractive bright colors. Yet, the turn towards higher functionalism did not mean abandoning propagandistic message. The difference between the way Stalinist architecture and, for example, Constructivism, delivered

233 A feature typical of avant-garde Soviet architecture, as well.
propaganda messages was profound. Throughout 1930s-1950s, Soviet architects demonstrated the triumph of the Soviet project to ordinary people by creating grandiose buildings reminiscent of old regime palaces. Modernists, however, believed that elevated feelings could be created without entering into a referential relationship with the past. Constructivists’ conviction, for example, was that an effectively organized functional space would bring discipline to people’s lives, while specific choices of colors could also raise their spirits and enhance their devotion to work. Under Stalin, these ideas were mostly limited to industrial construction, while in public spaces and housing architects created the images of richness, grandeur, beauty (communicated through the scale and decorations of the buildings), and, of course, “realistic” depictions of the happy present and future of the Soviet people. Yet, Khrushchev’s ascendance to power brought a profound change to Soviet architecture prioritizing modernism after several decades of oblivion.

Polianskii’s modernist architecture built upon the heritage of his Constructivist and Rationalist predecessors. The design of children’s rooms serves as an example to prove this. The Red bedroom unit’s façade overseeing the sea is made of glass, which eliminates the border between the nature outside and the inside space of the room (a concept profoundly explored by Mies van der Rohe). The goal of such a solution was to raise the emotional effect children experienced from the proximity of their housing to the sea. In his bedroom units, Polianskii took the principle of romanticism, so important in pioneer work, to the new level. An interview with Tamara Protasevich, who went to Artek in the 1970s, demonstrates that, for at least some children, Polianskii managed to create the romantic effect he was searching for. Tamara stayed in Gornyi camp, but in her interview, she
mentioned that all Gornyi was envious about Morskoi camp “because there, the waves are beating and the windows look straight into the sea (volny biut i okna v more).”

Another important feature of the new housing was the design of the rooms. Though its practical application is questionable (it is unclear how exactly the author saw the organization of a camp detachment), Polianskii designed every single bedroom to host one zveno, a functional unit within a pioneer detachment, which often was responsible for organization of various activities and had to work together. A zveno usually contained children of both genders, which is why it is unclear how Polianskii envisaged communal life of zveno in one room. Yet, it is significant that even while planning the bedroom units, the architect based his decision on the considerations of political upbringing. It is also notable that though Polianskii decreased the number of children who lived in one room (before the new housing, all the boys of one detachment lived in one room and all the girls lived in another), his project did not aim to increase children’s privacy. This, again, was consistent with the party line, as collectivism was one of the core values that Soviet authorities were trying to develop in the young generation.

Artek’s architecture was later emulated by other summer camps, if the enterprises, which owned them, could afford such expensive construction. Yet, like so many other mass construction projects initiated by Khrushchev, Artek suffered from a typical deficiency: the development of playgrounds, gyms, movie theaters, kitchens, laundries, warehouses, and even heating did not follow the pace of bedroom units’ construction, thereby creating

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234 Tamara Protasevich, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, April 23, 2016, Moscow.
numerous inconveniences. The major problem, however, was not the slow development of Artek’s infrastructure. Khrushchev’s reform of the camp was concerned not only with changing its architecture, but also with transforming its daily routine. Starting from 1958, Artek turned into a facility whose sole goal was to prepare the future political leaders of the country. As a result, its daily schedule became extremely regimented leaving little time for children’s leisure activities. This and other deficiencies of the new Artek, in 1969, landed the camp on the front page of Pravda newspaper.

The author of the Pravda publication, Tatiana Matveeva, argued that with the new educational agenda, over which Artek pedagogues had little control, children’s wishes and hence their happiness were neglected. Matveeva was dissatisfied with the core of the educational curriculum that Artek had been developing since 1962, the specialized sessions. Specialized sessions became one of Artek’s main educational patterns beginning with the Second All-Union Pioneer Convention of 1962. After this, most of the time, the camp was hosting not just children who stood out because of their achievements at school and Pioneer Organization, but those who succeeded in specific types of pioneer work. For example, throughout 1968, the camp hosted the conventions of the Young Friends of the Soviet Army, Young Correspondents, Red Pathfinders, Banner Carriers, Young Atheists, Timur Followers, and Octobrist Counselors. The goal of specialized sessions was professionalization of children’s political activities and deepening of their knowledge of

237 The movement of the Young Timur Followers was based on a novel by Arkadii Gaidar Timur and His Team, describing a boy who organized his friends to secretly provide help to people in need.
the subject. The problem with specialized sessions was that far too often children who were sent to Artek did not fit the profile of the session because local Komsomol cells chose candidates not because they succeeded in a particular activity, but because they fit a generalized image of a good pioneer.  

Aside from not fitting the profile of a particular session, children were often not educated in the intricacies of the Pioneer Organization’s work, symbols, and rituals in general. The declared importance of children’s indoctrination, which in 1922 resulted in the establishment of the All-Union Pioneer Organization, had not lead by the 1960s to the creation of the corpus of professional cadres for pioneer work and a well-organized curriculum for preparation of pioneer activists. Remarkably, Khrushchev’s educational reform also did not yield positive results in this area. When, in 1969, a group of researchers from Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical Institute, along with a representative of the Central Council of the Pioneer Organization and the Head of Artek’s Office of Pedagogical Methods conducted a sociological study of Artek pioneers’ obshchestvennaia aktivnost, the results were quite discouraging. Older pioneers demonstrated “a lively interest in social and political life. However, in the majority they were best informed about those events in our country and abroad that had global significance (they are being written about

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238 Quite often that simply meant that these children received good grades at school.
239 The need to raise the level of pioneer counselors’ education was acknowledged by Soviet authorities. That is why in 1962 the first department of pioneer pedagogy started accepting students in Kostroma Pedagogical Institute. See: Smirnova, Interview.
240 The closest term to obshchestvennaia aktivnost’ in English is civic engagement. However, in Soviet context its use is problematic due to the fact that the state expected this activity to be consistent with the Party line rather than independent and at times critical of it.
242 The term referred to children who were 13 to 14 years old.
and discussed) or were sensational (sensatsionnogo kharaktera).”

In the meantime, pioneers were very poorly informed about the life of their own cities and regions. The biggest problem, however, that the 1969 study demonstrated was children’s incapability for actual organizational work. Pioneers possessed certain theoretical knowledge about the Pioneer organization, but when it came to organizational skills, which supposedly were the main criteria for selecting children for Artek, everything fell apart. Artekovites did not know how to organize a pioneer meeting, a line-up parade, how to make a wall newspaper, they did not know the signals of the drum and the bugle. Taking into account that in 1958 Khrushchev started his school reform, which aimed to highlight the practical aspect of children’s education, the survey in Artek testified to the complete failure of this agenda in the sphere of children’s ideological education.

Matveeva’s critique resulted in declarations that Artek would change. The dissertation written by the camp’s director Evgenii Rybinskii demonstrates that in the 1970s, the camp was reimagined first and foremost as a facility for children’s international cooperation and health improvement. The reports issued by the camp during this period testify to this as well. Yet, the promise of relaxing the children’s routine in Artek was not implemented. The yearly report for Artek from 1973 demonstrates that out of eight sessions organized in the camp four were still specialized.

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244 “Ob itogah issledovnia problemy obshchestvennoi aktivnosti shkol’nokov.”, p. 11.
247 “Otchet Vsesoiuznogo pionerskogo lageria Artek ob uchebnoi, vospitatel’oi i ozdorovitel’oi rabote.”, p. 2.
posed new challenges to Artek educators because children had to be educated in several spheres at a time. The state was not relaxing its grip over the children and neither was Artek.

**A Utopia Questioned**

As a facility that hosted children only temporarily, Artek, in its everyday life, was marked by continuous tensions between the real world children came from and the ideal world the counselors tried to build with them. This tension is exactly what makes Artek so interesting. Educators there, fully aware of this problem, developed their programs to eliminate it. As a result, Artek became the measure of the Soviet project’s utopian potential at a particular moment in time. Like a mirror, it constantly reflected how far the Soviet state and society would go to achieve the goal of building communism both in practice and imagination.

My analysis focuses specifically on Khrushchev’s radical experiment that started in 1958 and, despite its public denunciation in 1969, continued to shape everyday life in Artek until the dissolution of the USSR. Several considerations determined the choice of this time period. First and foremost, the report featuring the importance of emotions in children’s political education was filed in 1966. As I demonstrated earlier, emotions played a significant role in the propaganda of Artek starting from the 1930s. This camp was a place of happiness, a reward for children devoted to the Soviet cause. By the 1960s, however, Artek’s function changed. When Mamlakat Nakhangova went to the camp in the 1930s, it meant that she reached perfection as a Soviet citizen and thus deserved a trip to the best childcare facility in the country. When children went to Artek in the 1960s, it meant that they only embarked on the road of transformation into exemplary citizens. This meant
that starting from 1958, in Artek children had very little free time. Here is, for example an ordinary day schedule for the sixth detachment that stayed in Artek in July-August 1964.

There day started at 7 in the morning, then they had to organize a line up parade and eat breakfast, at 8.30 the detachment had to go for a photoshoot. From 9 to 10 children were preparing for a nature-exploration game Green Friends’ Day. From 10 to 11, they stayed at the beach, from 11 to 12 am they were preparing an exhibition. The time between 12 and 13 was free. Then children had lunch followed by an hour and a half sleep. After this they worked as a detachment to prepare for the upcoming events. From 17 to 19 the detachment participated in the Green Friends’ Day game that was followed by a movie. This was an example of a relaxed schedule. For example, another detachment that stayed in Artek in May 1964 had days like this. They woke up at 7 in the morning, had breakfast, from 8 to 13.30 they went on a hike to Aiu-Dag Mountain situated near the camp. Then they had lunch and an hour and a half rest. From 17 to 19 children attended the school of pioneer activists, then they had dinner, and at 20 watched a movie. The detachment went to bed at 22.

The camp’s routine became very demanding physically and emotionally. All of this was based on a set of Soviet ideologues’ assumptions about the functioning of children’s psyche. It was true that in the USSR children had to be happy, but they also had to be brave, helpful, diligent, and excited about work. They were expected to develop leadership skills

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248 Dnevnik pionerskogo vozhatogo Arteka Lazurnogo lageria 6 otriada, 6 smeny 1964 goda. Vozhatye Zagorodniaia Valentina Alekseevna, Sarafanova nadezhda Sergeevna. RGASPI f. 8m, op. 1, d. 466. P. 14.
and eagerly engage in the life of the society around them. Under Stalin, summer camps were recreational and educational institutions. Because of this, at that time personal improvement (moral education) and happiness (recreation) harmoniously co-existed with each other. Under Khrushchev, however, summer camps were transformed into the educational institutions. Personal improvement became a priority leaving little space for happiness and creating tensions. In ordinary summer camps, the conflict between the two was resolved by adjusting the camps’ routines and creating more recreational opportunities. These camps could afford to do this because they were loosely monitored by state representatives. Artek did not have this luxury. The Komsomol and Pioneer Organization monitored it thoroughly. I contend that the change in Artek’s routine created a strong incentive for the camp’s pedagogues to explore children’s emotional management as a method of work. This section demonstrates why they were compelled to do so.

The diaries of Artek counselors show that implementing Khrushchev’s ambitious project of creating the future leadership for the country was not an easy task. As mentioned earlier, children often came to Artek lacking the basic skills and knowledge of pioneer work. Because of this, instead of teaching advanced subjects, counselors often had to go back to the basics. Often, they saw this as an obstacle to the successful performance of their duties. Artek’s routine was built on a series of competitions between detachments. Despite all of the problems, the camp remained a place of high achievement, and when that achievement did not happen, the counselors could be blamed for not exercising a required level of pedagogical skills and devotion to the cause of children’s education. The attention

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paid to the counselors’ work by the senior counselor is visible in the counselors’ diaries, designed to inform the counselors’ superiors about their work. Every diary entry contained information about the detachments’ daily activities, analysis of children’s behavior, and counselors’ observations regarding their own work. Every entry had to be signed by the senior counselor and a doctor. If the entries were absent or superficial, counselors could expect strict reprimands on the pages of the diaries.\textsuperscript{251}

The measurement of children’s performance as exemplary Soviet citizens in Artek was closely observed through more than just the counselors’ diaries. A lot of Artek activities had public significance and aimed to demonstrate children’s capabilities to other detachments, counselors, and visitors of the camp. In this respect, the level of privacy (understood as having the right to do something meaningful for oneself and not others) in Artek was very low, and the expectations were very high. Liubov’ Sorokaletova and Gennadii Nikudimov’s diary demonstrates very well the tensions that arose under these circumstances. On the second day after their arrival, the children started working in the kitchen: “It is the first time we are on duty during this session. I do not know the children at all. In the meantime, being on duty today was difficult.”\textsuperscript{252} Liubov’ Sorokaletova who made this entry felt anxious about children’s work in the kitchen. She felt responsible for the children’s possible mistakes, and she regretted her lack of control over the situation because she did not know the children well yet.


For the children, activities like helping in the kitchen were often very meaningful performances. In the camp children were taught that the title of an Artekovite was something to be earned. It was not simply awarded when children entered the camp. Throughout the whole session, children had to demonstrate that they possessed the qualities of true Artekovites. While working in the kitchen, for example, they could show their love for work and ability to work well. Tamara Protasevich, a head of the detachment council (председатель совета отряда) from Svobodnyi, a town in the Amur region, who went to Artek in the mid-1970s) had very vivid memories during our interview about being on duty in the kitchen:

Once our detachment was on duty, and then, also this impression which I remembered for a long time, that there are different ways in which one can work. One can talk a lot and attract attention, and in the meantime, do very little. Or it is possible not to attract attention, and without much noise, without looking like a leader, silently, unnoticeably work more than others, better than others. And we had such a girl, Katia Cheklubaieva, who demonstrated exactly this type of work. And she was always in the proper place when needed, and she knew so much, unlike us more domestic people, that it was easy to notice, not just for us, but also for adults. So, the next day for her, she along with three others from our detachment was raising the flag during the line-up parade, during the morning line up parade. It is when they march and bring out a flag, so one of them was Katia Cheklubaeva, who without saying a word, like a bee was working in the canteen and was absolutely necessary, because she knew what to do, how to do it, and all of it was silent and unnoticeable. I admired this skill of hers. I honestly did
everything, I wanted to be like her, but she was doing everything better (she smiles).

And until now, a lot of surnames are lost, but I still remember Katia Cheklubaieva.253

The fact that after all these years Tamara remembers the name of the girl she envied for her work skills suggests that not only counselors felt urged to perform well. Tamara presented herself as having been an overachiever at school when she was sent to Artek. She was used to demonstrating high achievement in everything she did. As a schoolgirl from a small town in Siberia, Tamara actively participated in the Pioneer Organization, won third place at the regional Olympiad in mathematics, tried rhythmic gymnastics, went to a music school, participated in a drawing group (*kruzhok*), and was a member of her town’s basketball team. For a girl like her, going to Artek was a challenge not because of its demanding routine, but because there she became immersed in an environment of equals and, at times, superiors like Katia Cheklubaieva. These feelings were further stimulated by Artek counselors, who rewarded Katia for her work with the honor of raising the flag at the line parade the next morning. Another important obstacle to the counselors’ and children’s performance of the Soviet utopia was the children’s diversity. The USSR of the 1960s was still a very heterogeneous country, but in the highly organized and competitive routine of Artek there was no place for otherness. The camp, of course, had a holiday called *Fifteen Republics, Fifteen Sisters*, celebrating the unity of various nations within the USSR. It also celebrated the holidays of each republic, when children were encouraged to present their cultures with songs, dances and other forms of staged performance. This, however,

was not very helpful in integrating children of non-Russian nationalities into the routine at Artek. The book Hello Artek! presents a good description of how the integration of the various Soviet nationalities in Artek’s collective was supposed to go. The book features a story of Chuvash musher Innenlikey. When Innenlikey receives an invitation to Artek, he takes his best national costume and having received blessings from the whole village embarks on a journey to the camp. There,

A new life full of wonderful (chudesnykh) discoveries started for the boy. Every day he learned something new. He saw evergreen cypresses. And high mountains. And he met wonderful children. Volodia Belkin was teaching him to swim. Kerim explained how to collect minerals, a French boy Rene taught him two words in French: Rene and bien. Everyone tried to make something pleasant for the young kaiur [supposedly translated as the musher from local language].

Unaware of the weather in Artek, the first day in the camp Innenlikey dresses in his national fur clothing, but he is gently corrected and does not make such a mistake again. Knowing how good Innenlikey is with animals, his counselor gives him a little goat to take care of. The goat and Innenlikey become best friends as the goat follows him everywhere. When Innenlikey’s detachment goes on a hike and gets caught in a rainstorm, Innenlikey saves the day by starting a fire using a piece of dry moss he has been carrying with him. At the end of the session Innenlikey participates in the festival at Artek, impressing everyone with his “walrus dance.” The story of Innenlikey is a story of successful integration Soviet-style.

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which also demonstrates the stereotypes pertaining to the official representation of Soviet nationalities in the Soviet media.

Nina Bogomolova, a girl from a village in Ukraine, in her recollections paints her encounter with girls from Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in a rather different way:

So, there were these Yakut girls, they were sixteen years old, but… their development was probably at the level of the first or second grade. They didn’t see anything in their lives, they were only working, helping parents to take care of the deer. Nobody had read books, no television, no films. They went and spent time in the Tundra. So, generally, very… Yet, still, first, they all were very benevolent, kind-hearted, told everything about themselves. So, I don’t know, it was very interesting, like this, I don’t know.255

In her “So, generally, very…” Bogomolova hesitates in her judgement about her Yakut peers. She tries to avoid being pejorative, yet the beginning of her comment testifies to the fact that at least now she perceives Yakut girls’ life as something that was completely alien to her as a child and did not fit into her vision of a proper lifestyle for a child her age. One can only imagine how Yakut girls felt in Artek. An interview with Sergei Shushkanov can shed light on the shape of their experiences. Sergei was the son of a military officer and a seamstress, and he lived in an enclosed military town called Kapustin Iar. He was in the fifth grade when, suddenly, an opportunity to go to Orlenok opened up for him in either

255 Nina Bogomolova, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, April 2, 2016, Kharkiv.
1968 or 1969 (he does not remember the exact year). Orlenok was the second prestigious camp in the country after Artek. It served the same purpose as Artek, was also run by the Central Komsomol Committee. However, it only hosted children from the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic. Examining the question of inequalities in Artek and Orlenok, I asked Sergei whether in the camp there were some children who “differed from others.” His answer was the following:

No, all children differed. Because, in any case, the ones I was spending time with, they had already been living in normal big cities, yes, so their world outlook was much broader. This was noticeable, because you felt like you came from a deserted island, well, as far as I remember, there were also children from some Kalmykia, there was a boy, he was at the same level of development as I was. And, I think there was some other one, completely from somewhere [pause] from Chuvashia. So, I understood that I was [a pause, non-verbal expression of “I was not that bad”], I understand at least something in this life. Otherwise, all these children from Moscow, Krasnoyarsk, Vladivostok, Nakhodka, Yaroslavl,’ Pskov and all of this, no-no-no, completely… right now I cannot reproduce these conversations in detail, but when they were discussing some topic you understood that you missed out on something. Because school program, school program, this is understandable, but there are numerous things in this life, completely interesting ones, and for some reason in our town… well as I said it’s the specificity.\textsuperscript{256}

\textsuperscript{256} Sergei Shushkanov, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubyt ska, audio recording, August 29, 2012, Kharkiv.
Aleksandr Pokornyi’s experience testifies to the fact that the integration of a boy from the periphery (Aleksandr came to Artek from Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic) could be a less peaceful process than Sergei described:

In Artek, initially, there were certain problems, because people came from all over the USSR. They were all completely different. […] The problems were, well, adaptation, adjustment (*pritirki*) within the collective. Because there were ten of us in the room. Among us, some people were one year older, who… Because there were people, for example, I came after the sixth grade, and there were people after the seventh grade, which means that this is already certain…Moreover, I came from a provincial town, let’s be honest here. And there were people from big cities, like Moscow, Vladivostok. So, with this there were also certain problems at the beginning.²⁵⁷

Aleksandr did not want to specify what exactly was happening at the beginning of the session in his room. Yet, the way he talks about the issue and the fact that later in the interview he mentioned that he felt sad departing, even missing those people with whom he had problems in those early days, suggests that conflicts could have gone beyond light disagreements and perhaps included fighting.

Nina Bogomolova herself recollected having difficulties following Artek’s routine. As a child, she was overweight, which made it difficult for her to take long walks to a from Gornyi camp, which was situated on a hill. When Nina’s detachment went on a hike, at some point they left her behind with one of the counselors. She could not walk as fast as

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²⁵⁷ Aleksandr Vladimirovich Pokornyi, Interview, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, September 2, 2016, Kharkiv.
everybody else, while the group could not slow down, because there were other groups following them. Right now Nina remembers Artek as one of the best things that happened in her life, yet she still felt compelled to tell me this story.

Nina’s, Sergei’s, and Aleksandr’s recollections testify to two important qualities of camps like Artek and Orlenok. On the positive side, brought together from different places, children opened their horizons and learned about diversity and possibilities in life that went beyond their everyday experiences. On the negative side, they also learned the hierarchies between different places, and they often discovered their own backwardness in some aspects of life. Sergei, Nina, and Aleksandr positively reflect on their experiences in Orlenok and Artek. Sergei told me that he made a lot of friends from different places in the USSR and exchanged letters with them for several years. Aleksandr remembers that he was crying when he had to leave. Their narratives are built around successful integration into the collective. Archival evidence, however, shows that things did not always develop that way, especially when the counselors were unprepared to navigate the diversity of children’s backgrounds they encountered.

Such evidence is present in the counselor diary of Liubov’ Sorokaletova and Gennadii Nikudimov, who worked with the detachment of young friends of the Soviet Army in May 1963 in the Gornyi camp. Early in the diary it becomes evident that one of the counselors, Liubov’, did not like a boy whose name is mentioned as Anton. In the pedagogical diary’s entry on May 11, the third day of the session, she wrote: “What did they send Anton to Artek for? Either he has a bad command of Russian, or the boy is
inattentive and short-tempered.” The fact that children chose Anton to lead the third zveno of the detachment was also a disappointment for Liubov’, who perceived this choice as an obstacle to the zveno’s high performance. On May 20, she wrote: “Today, it was especially evident that Anton is out of his league (ne na svoem meste): he cannot be a zveno commander (komandir). The boy speaks Russian poorly and it is very difficult for him to do the job.” This entry demonstrates a very important thing, that, at least in Sorokaletova’s view, children with poor Russian language skills could not occupy leading positions in the children’s self-ruled bodies at Artek. Built around communication in Russian, Artek’s routine made it very difficult for children with poor command of this language to become leaders. Although some counselors tried to help such children develop their language skills, the time for language development was limited because of the length of the session and the demanding nature of the everyday routine at Artek.

An entry from the pedagogical diary of Liudmila Kuznetsova and Galina Ivochkina provides a glance at how regulated children’s lives in Artek were: “They have not brought a movie today, so because we have not been outside the whole day today and because we only have one hour free, we decided to go to Soloviev’s pavilion to look at the evening sea.” The situation described by Kuznetsova and Ivochkina referred to a detachment containing children of seven to eight years old who came to Artek in January of 1962. As one can see, even for children of this age, Artek’s daily schedules did not provide much

259 Sorokaletova and Nikudimov.
261 Kuznetsova and Ivochkina., p. 15.
space for extracurricular activities, while Artek’s core curriculum did not contain any language classes for children with, for example, poor Russian language skills.

An entry in Sorokaletova’s diary on May 26 demonstrates that ignoring the needs of non-Russian-speaking children could have caused distress for them: “Learning the detachment’s song proceeded in an organized way. It turned out that Lesha Arolbaev and Agunik with Anaïda [two Armenian girls] have not yet managed to learn the words of the song. The reason lies in their poor knowledge of the Russian language. I feel that they are very anxious about this (perezhivaiut sil’no), especially the girls. Anaïda and Agunik need a special approach and more attention.”

Yet, the problems connected to children’s command of the Russian language were only the tip of the iceberg. On May 25, Sorokaletova noticed a very disturbing thing: “Zukhra is very anxious (perezhivaet) about the dark color of her skin. It is all because of Tatiana’s careless (neostorozhnyi) comment. Such a careful girl, and now this…”

Artek counselors rarely mentioned situations like this one, and they may not have been aware of them often. While Artek reports contain methodologies of working with children from foreign countries, they did not have a developed approach to dealing with the diversity within the USSR. In this case, children and counselors were on their own in trying to resolve the problems, which, as Sorokaletova’s and other diaries show, arose when children and counselors from different countries were together at the camp. Yet, while non-Russian speaking children who earned their trips to Artek at least worked hard to fulfill the tasks set for them by the counselors, there was a group of Artekovites who did

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not care at all. These were children of high-ranking parents who could afford to purchase a spot for their child at Artek. This was usually possible for summer sessions, and when it happened it seriously compromised Artek’s image as a place for the most deserving children of the country. Unsurprisingly, camp counselors were especially dissatisfied when they had to deal with this: “The fifth session was a session of the winners for the best pioneer detachment. The majority of children in the detachment, however, were not the winners, but the beach-bums, and maybe because of this, until the last day a good, united collective in the detachment did not appear.”

During an Artek pedagogical research conference in 1970, the same concerns were raised about children whose trip to the camp was not earned by high achievement. Liudmila Trepukhova, a counselor from Ozernyi camp, complained that children whose parents bought trips to Artek were very hard to motivate. When she tried asking them what they would bring from Artek to their schools, the answer would often be the following: “we were not sent here by our schools.”

Yet, one did not have to be a beach-bum to get in trouble for misbehaving in Artek. A lot of counselors, while assessing children at the beginning of the session, mentioned inability to obey as a character flaw in some children that had to be corrected. The most typical misdemeanor was walking somewhere alone, for example exiting Artek to go to the nearby settlement, Gurzuf. This infraction was usually committed by boys. The punishment usually was exacted following Makarenko’s methods, through the collective. All the detachment gathered, discussed what had happened and condemned the violators’

wrongful behavior. The guilty party had to confess and acknowledge their wrongdoing, and, for example, promise that they “will be worthy of being called Artekovites.”

This section demonstrates that building a Soviet utopia in one summer camp was a very difficult task. In 1958, when Artek became an educational camp for politically active children, the routine of the camp was designed to fit a very particular set of visitors. Children who felt most comfortable in these conditions came from intelligentsia families in big cities, were very disciplined, spoke Russian, and had no need for personal space or time. For everybody else, a trip to Artek could produce anxieties and frustrations. The situation was no better for the counselors, who sometimes were ill-prepared to deal with children’s differences and, thus, could often aggravate the situation. Yet, Artek educators put a lot of effort in making Artek a memorable positive experience. In the next section, I will closely examine, what methods they used

A Utopia Construed

The story of Artek is very often the story of a remarkably happy trip. Despite an extremely busy schedule and various factors that could significantly complicate children’s lives in Artek, my interviewees, as well as the interviewees recorded by Anna Kozlova, and the thousands of people who join various groups devoted to Artek on Facebook, Vkontakte, and Odnoklassniki, remember their experiences of going to this camp as something truly remarkable and happy. Moreover, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, even people who had never been to Artek as children feel attached to the camp.

265 “Dnevnik pionerskogo vozhatogo 3 lager’, 1 otriad, 5 smena, 3.08.--10.09. 1964.”, p. 28.
266 Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki are two Russian social networks which resemble Facebook, but have unique features, as well.
These happy memories were shaped by multiple factors that included the industry of books and films that developed around Artek, the fact that going to Artek was considered a privilege and a reward for the outstanding children, by Artek’s beautiful nature and food. Also, Artek counselors and educators considered the production of positive emotions in Artek an important goal of the camp’s educational program.

Outside of its borders, Artek existed as a myth about a happy and fulfilling life. Children who returned from Artek, as well as other camps that followed its model, often felt that camp life could not be recreated where they lived. Tamara Protasevich mentioned that she did not have enough leadership skills to implement what she learned in Artek in her detachment at home. She stated, “I had this emotion, impression which totally belongs to Artek, that pioneer life, which in our school was amorphous (vialotekushchiy): it could be, it turned out, like in Artek, festive and bright. And I wanted to transfer something, a part of this to Svobodnyi.”

This, as Tamara herself admitted, did not happen. What was left was an emotion located within the boundaries of a specific place, Artek. As a result, nostalgic feelings appeared. Having left the camp, children experienced the feeling of longing for something that was beyond one’s reach. In 1962, in her letter to Artek, Helle Kel’der from Tallinn wrote, “Yes, I think about Artek every day. Were it possible, I would go there right now.”

Not only pioneers experienced difficulties leaving the camp. A teacher from the school at Artek, Zinaida Bondar’, also had a hard time adjusting to the new school where...

267 Interview with Tamara Protasevich, 04/23/2016.
268 “Pis’ma pionerov, detei i chastnykh lits zarubezhnykh stran,” 1962, RGASPI, f. M-8, op. 1, d. 402., p. 166.
she worked in Ust’-Kamenogorsk. In 1962, she wrote a letter to Vladimir Svistov, the head of the Office for Pedagogic Research at Artek, asking for help: “Please, help me to organize the work of our hobby groups. Something strange is happening in our school. I demand something and argue that it is the right thing to do while they tell me that this is wrong.”

The same year, a former Artek counselor also wrote Svistov a letter asking for help in her work at the Palace of Pioneers in Kazan’, arguing, “Here, people are very isolated (variatsia v sobstvennom soku) and the head of the Pioneer Office is very weak.”

It is hard to assess whether the model of work at Artek could really be transferred to the rest of the USSR. A lot of children who normally led a very active lifestyle, and had strong character, could enjoy this camp’s routine (although even they admitted that it was quite exhausting). Even for the high-achieving children there, it was difficult to overlook the overall suppressive nature of the routine, which to a large extent excluded the rights to personal privacy and freedom if they did not correspond to the tasks of the detachment.

These qualities of life at Artek could not be perceived as beneficial by everyone. Yet, as letters and interviews indicate, for a particular group of people, the high-achievers who enjoyed living and working in Artek, this camp could be a paradise lost after they left it.

Another incentive for happy memories about Artek was the power of its myth, as created through books, films, radio programs, newspaper articles, and the stories of children who returned home after a trip to the camp. Children started dreaming about Artek

269 “Pis’ma pionerov, detei i chastnykh lits zarubezhnykh stran.”, p. 79.
270 “Pis’ma pionerov, detei i chastnykh lits zarubezhnykh stran.”, p. 106.
long before they received an opportunity to go there. Receiving a trip to the camp was a sign of distinction and recognition of a child’s achievements by the state.

I went to Artek, yes. But this trip was, … I would say, to a certain extent well-deserved, because they were, these trips were given when, you could not buy them, they were given as a reward for some, let us say… Particularly, I received it as an award for taking a second place at the regional Olympiad in mathematics. So, the first three finalists were given this honor, so to speak.

Despite the rather restrained emotional style of Aleksandr Pokornyí’s interview, it is still visible that receiving a trip to Artek enhanced his feeling of achievement as a good pupil. Pokornyí empathizes that one could only be awarded a trip to Artek; these trips were not for sale. Of course, this emphasis might be the result of Artek’s reputation as a place of corruption. It is an established fact that one could buy a trip to Artek, if only he or she had enough money (those trips were very expensive). Moreover, sometimes trips to Artek were awarded to children based on the achievements of their parents and not their own. These factors can be the source of pressure for people like Aleksandr who now talks about his trip to Artek as a sign of recognition for his achievements, recognition which he and campers like him cherished. Nevertheless, for all my interviewees, getting a trip to Artek was something they now feel proud of.

As I demonstrated earlier, these feelings were fostered by a whole industry of books, newspaper articles, films, and radio programs about Artek. I used Iakov Taits book to

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271 Pokornyí, Interview.
demonstrate what message these representations of the camp in various media sent to Soviet children in the 1930s. In the 1960s, the situation did not change. During this period, Leonard Kondrashenko, for example, wrote multiple books praising Artek poetically:

Artek, this word is full to the brim with joy and laughter, like a huge vessel shining at the sun. It is the sound (*rokot*) of the waves of the kind Black Sea. It is the crunch of a dry branch on a path that leads to the mountains. It is a stroke of a ripe acorn on a drum under an old oak-tree, surrounded by pioneers sitting near their camp fire. Artek! It is the sea of [pioneer] ties and a sea of happy (*radostnykh*) eyes. It is children’s long-cherished dream, it is childhood and youth of their fathers and mothers, their older brothers and sisters.\(^\text{272}\)

This excerpt encompasses all the elements of Artek’s popular mythology that evolved around the beauty of nature and legends surrounding it, the romance of pioneer life, the intimacy of a pioneer community and resulting friendships, the connection to the previous generations of devoted sons and daughters of the Motherland, and finally the happiness generated by the experience of camp life. Yet, Artek life was something outstanding for children not only because it was poeticized. Nina Bogomolova, Tamara Protasevich, and Larisa Bugaenko told me that when they were children, their families could not afford travelling to the sea. They now remember Artek’s landscape as something new and strikingly beautiful. The same could be said about food. Artek served fruits to children

every day at the time when not every family could provide that. Larisa Bugaenko
mentioned that both in her diary and during our interview.^{273}

Pedagogues at Artek also paid a lot of attention to children’s emotional
management. Camp counselors were taught to closely observe and manage children’s
emotions. Stimulation of “proper” emotions was, in fact, an important part of their work.
This is clear from the diary of Veronika Anatolievna Iurova, a counselor of the eighth
detachment of the second camp in charge of thirty-four children, eleven to fourteen years
old. Iurova wrote this diary during the ninth and last winter session, held between
November 16th and December 27th, 1964. Typically for the 1960s, her detachment had a
specialization: they were ship boys (iungi). On the ninth day of the session, Veronika
Anatolievna took the children on an excursion to the Morskoi camp, where among other
things they visited the grave of an Unknown Sailor:

I had told them about the unknown sailor earlier. And today we went to see the
monument. They really liked the Morskoi camp, they were running around and playing.
Yet, when we held a line-up parade near the monument, when they took out flowers
with such dedication, they were very serious. And when I asked them in the end, where
they had been and what they liked, they told me with a special pride that they went to
the monument to the Unknown Sailor, and not to the Morskoi camp. I like how, passing
by our hill, they always somehow pull themselves together and stop talking. It means
that our conversation “We Honor Fallen Heroes” did not go in vain.^{274}

^{273} Bugaenko, Interview; Larisa Illarionovna Bugaenko, “Diary,” 1957, Personal archive of Iuliia
Skubytska.
1, d. 458., p. 13.
This diary entry reflects a broader program of emotional management developed by the Office for Educational Methods at Artek, which in its yearly report for 1966 stated, “Emotions define human behavior as actively as reason does.”

This quote explains why it was so important for Artek educators to connect certain activities and ideas with specific emotions. The fallen heroes had to be honored. Veronika Iurova’s diary demonstrates how a ceremony and conversation developed this feeling in children who supposedly started changing their behavior after passing by the monument devoted to the Unknown Sailor. Labor, in the meantime, had to be connected with joy and a feeling that one was committing an act of heroism, which explains why such event was called a Labor Landing Operation (trudovoi desant):

An alert signal brings all pioneer camps (druzhiny) to the line parade decorated with posters, mottoes, and tools for work. After the command of the head of the Labor Headquarters, all detachments line up. In the meantime, the March of Communist Brigades is performed. The Labor Headquarters order: “All the boys and girls from Lazurnyi camp! Today, we announce the landing of labor troops. Today, all detachments become labor brigades headed by a brigadier and receive a task from the Labor Headquarters. […] The labor Headquarters take into consideration pioneers’ activity, the amount and quality of the work done, and diligence. For everyone, work has always been a joyful activity. So let us raise today the detachment’s banner of work, and do everything to make our Artek better and more

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275 “Godovoi otchet o rabote pionerskogo lageria Artek za 1966 god, Metodicheskii kabinet.”, p. 16.
beautiful. Labor Headquarters is waiting for your rapports on the completion of the
tasks at 12.30.276

As this excerpt from a Labor Day ceremony demonstrates, when it came work, Artek
educators tried to develop in children the feeling of high responsibility. In the meantime,
they also wanted to instill joy towards the work children were doing. This was Artek’s
version of labor education. Work had to be associated with the greatly elevated feelings
one experiences doing something extremely important and urgent. The ultimate goal of
such education was improving the labor productivity of the future Soviet labor force. A
key to achieving this, as this excerpt demonstrates, was connecting work and battle. Work
had to feel like war in times of peace. To achieve this effect, preparation for work was like
a form of military ceremony lead by a militarized Labor Headquarters. This type of
approach was borrowed from Makarenko’s pedagogy. After World War II, and the cult of
heroism that developed around it, militarized methods of improving children’s attitudes
towards something were applied widely.

Associating work with battle and the legacy of World War II was perceived as an
effective way to shape children’s emotions regarding work by ascribing to it a certain set
of meanings, both emotional and rational. Yet, it also was important to find a way to ensure
that these meanings and feelings would last. This is where mass ceremonies came to the
fore. Based on interviews with campers, the counselors established that emotions
experienced in a collective were much stronger than the ones experienced individually:

276 “Dnevnik pionerskogo vozhatogo Artega, 2 lager’, 8 otriada.”, p. 33.
The educational significance of the ceremony is very powerful. Not only the children’s reaction (for example mourning silence of thousands of children at a stadium during the ceremony of putting the ‘Garland of Fame’ to the monument of the Unknown Sailor) testifies to this, but also children’s verbal responses. In most cases these responses confirm that a ceremony is a powerful educational tool capable of “convincing without words” by directly addressing the child’s emotions, elevating him to recognizing the social significance of his existence.277

This explains why Artek was famous for its grandiose celebrations, which often united the whole camp in one place.278 One of the most striking memories Liudmila Anatolievna Smirnova had about Artek was its fireworks.279 Reports from the camp demonstrate that fireworks were an indispensable part of every big ceremony, which usually consisted of consecutive parts such as a thematic introduction, parade, official part, artistic part, and celebratory fireworks.280 Words were important, but non-verbal means, like fireworks, played their role as well by creating strong feelings which later affected the overall impression and understanding of the message that a ceremony aimed to deliver.

Another powerful tool Artek counselors used for children’s emotional management was the music of Artek. While music helped to “directly address the child’s emotions,” the lyrics attached them to specific meanings. Singing was a big part of a child’s life at Artek. Music lessons, which focused on learning Artek’s songs, were compulsory. Aside from

277 “Godovoi otchet o rabote pionerskogo lageria Artek za 1966 god, Metodicheskii kabinet.”, p. 16.
278 Protasevich, Interview; Smirnova, Interview.
279 Liudmila Smirnova, Unrecorded conversation, October 19, 2015.
280 “Godovoi otchet o rabote pionerskogo lageria Artek za 1966 god, Metodicheskii kabinet.”, p. 22.
them, there were marching and singing competitions, as well as competitions for the best theater performance of a song. Songs were an indispensable part of everyday life. Singing together was evening entertainment, especially indispensable when children went on a hike or excursion. It was a way of passing idle time that filled children’s lives in Artek with senses that united emotions with reason, constructing the meaning of life at Artek. Working with Artek songs, the camp composers and music instructors fully developed the songs’ potential as emotives. An emotive in William Reddy’s terminology is an utterance that both describes and transforms the world.281

Children’s eyes are shining
From the happy smiles.
Pioneers are grateful
For a flourishing garden-city.
We are for peace
Let the gardens flourish everywhere.
Let friendship, sport, and work
Live to make children happy.282

Lyrics like these were not simply describing a certain reality of children whose eyes were lit up by their joyful smiles, but they also prescribed the normativity of feelings appropriate for the singers. They brought emotional education and experience-norming to a

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performative level. Children were not just singing about an abstract entity, they were singing about themselves, thus moving towards being like the children described in a song. The music, in the meantime, further helped to immerse children in these same feelings so that they immediately experienced them.

Another important pedagogical tool for generating proper emotions were games. To improve their pedagogical skills, Artek counselors had to write papers based on their work. In 1965, Nina Semina, the counselor from Kiparisnyi camp in Artek wrote a paper on the role of games in her detachment’s everyday life.283 In her paper, Semina not only presented the games she played with her detachment, but also analyzed their ability to transform children and develop specific feelings in them. She highlighted that one of the feelings that collective games developed was the feeling of collectivism. For example, Artek had its own sports game Sniper. In Sniper children had to throw balls at each other and either catch a ball or avoid being hit. Sniper was played by mixed gender groups of children. Here is how according to Nina Semina, Sniper developed in children the feeling of collectivism:

This game is especially effective in developing the feeling of collectivism. Sasha K. has a strong throw and is good at hitting the target, while Natasha B. is a good catcher and also avoids being hit very well. If in this game children manage to allocate responsibilities within the team, they get half-way closer to the victory. Of course, the trainings develop children’s accuracy and other physical abilities. This game also

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283 Nina Semina, “Rol’ igry v zhyzni otriada,” 1965, f. 8M, op. 1, d. 499, RGASPI.
strengthens friendship within the pioneer collective. Children who don’t play, support
their peers as much as they can.\textsuperscript{284}

The collective, as already mentioned, was considered one of the most important
educational tools. Throughout the session in Artek, there were very few activities that
children could do on their own. The exception was individual sports competitions, although
in these each participant was still representing his or her detachment. Otherwise, in Artek,
children spent most of the day doing something in smaller (\textit{zveno}) or larger (detachment)
groups, their successes and failures thus influencing these groups. Such interdependence
created the situation in which peer judgment became a powerful tool for enforcing
appropriate behavior on those who failed to demonstrate it.

When Liubov’ Sorokaletova’s detachment lost the competition of marching and
singing together because of three boys, she did not gather the detachment to condemn their
actions. Even without such measures, the boys felt terribly, giving Sorokaletova hope that
this failure would help them improve their behavior in general.\textsuperscript{285} Not mentioning specific
details, Tamara Protasevich also remembers the consequences of her mistake at the
marching competition, which cost her detachment the first place, as “not the most pleasant
moment.”\textsuperscript{286} Overall, the method of weaving interdependencies among children through
collective competitions seems to have been a very effective disciplining measure. Living
and working together constantly, children were eager to maintain friendships with other

\textsuperscript{284} Semina., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{285} Sorokaletova and Nikudimov, “Dnevnik pionerskogo vozhatogo.”, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{286} Interview with Tamara Protasevich, 04/23/2016.
detachment members, and the stability of those relationships could be threatened when someone “failed the collective.” In the meantime, as the pedagogues at Artek believed that the collective could strengthen such “good” emotions as moral uplift, the main goal was to create a hierarchy of attitudes within the detachment by using feelings to stimulate some behaviors and suppress others.

Conclusions

A study of Artek demonstrates that the utopia of Soviet childhood was very demanding. In the 1930s, the popular message sent by books and newspaper articles about Artek empathized that only the most deserving children of the Motherland could go to the camp. One literally had to commit a heroic act to go there. By the 1960s, this discourse changed. However, the transformations in Artek’s everyday routine aimed at turning the camp into a place of intense educational experience made Artek’s routine very demanding. During the period of the 1920s-1950s, when Artek was a sanatorium camp, one had to be sick to get into it. After 1958, sick children could not survive Artek’s everyday life and were actually forbidden from the camp.287

Throughout the whole period of its history, Artek was also the sight of pedagogical experiments aimed at developing the best approaches to children’s indoctrination. That is why a close look at this particular camp’s functioning provides a unique opportunity to see an implementation of the boldest ideas of Soviet ideologues. This is true for the period of Nikita Khrushchev’s rule characterized by a contestation of the notion of Soviet childhood by introducing in it the elements which earlier were considered rather alien, like work.

Artek in this respect represents the most radical case of the implementation of Khrushchev’s agenda. The camp’s routine during the time of his rule became so demanding that it was hard to call the camp a place of rest.

With all this in mind, while talking to people who stayed and worked in Artek it is hard to avoid the difference between them and people who went to trade union summer camps. Artek is a place that still produces a strong emotional response among people who have not even been there. Indeed, Artek educators were very interested in children’s emotions and in the 1960s even tried to develop a methodology of programming them. While this pedagogical approach could have contributed to the development of Artek’s cult, it does not seem to have been a success, especially since in many cases children could not recreate the experiences they lived through in Artek after their return home. Artek’s cult, as a result, rather became a fertile ground for political manipulation.
Chapter Four: Control, Contestation, and Creativity in Summer Camp Work

Summer camps in the USSR were supposed to be utopian spaces that immersed children in a distinct, everyday routine to improve their health and raise their political consciousness. In Chapter Two, I devoted a lot of attention to the educational agenda that served as a unifying force for Soviet children’s summer camp experiences. Soviet Komsomol ideologues and educators invested significant effort into ensuring that at camp, a Soviet child was exposed to a standardized set of activities that would help him or her become a better member of the communist society. Among other things, the Komsomol published numerous guidelines and organized seminars for camp workers, various groups of inspectors visited summer camps, and camp organizers filed yearly reports. Despite these efforts, summer camps still enjoyed a considerable level of autonomy both because Komsomol’s guidelines were permeated by contradictions and because in its strive to control summer camps it had to compete with two other agencies, a sanitary service and a police.

Soviet summer camps presented a very peculiar interpretation of this institution. Their goal was to take children from their everyday surroundings and immerse then into a new space and routine, which could improve their body and spirit. This could be the abundance fresh air, the proximity of a river, a forest, or the camps’ everyday routine that could raise children’s political consciousness. Yet, it was no less important that being different from the environments that children were used to, summer camps did not put the Soviet youth in danger. Children could poison themselves by eating something in the forest, drown in a river, or get hurt while performing their working duties in a camp kitchen garden. Being proactive in issuing suggestions for children’s camp routine, the Komsomol
did not advise camp organizers and counselors on accidents’ prevention. The accidents, however, happened and sometimes led to criminal charges against camp personnel. As a result, sanitary services and police’s agendas were prioritized over the one that the Komsomol developed. With Khrushchev’s ascendance to power, summer camps received even more autonomy in their work because the new Soviet leader decentralized their finances and encouraged freedom in the interpretation of the ideological messages the Party produced. As a result, summer camps’ everyday routine opened up for more creativity in which the Komsomol’s guidelines sometimes became only a framework that camp workers filled with the senses they considered most engaging for children.

**Spaces of State Control**

In Chapter Two I analyze the Komsomol guidelines that were supposed to created unified experiences of Soviet children’s leisure in summer camps. Here, I show that this project faced serious barriers in its implementation. In part, the problem lay in the fact that summer camps were geographically removed from the centers of authority and, thus, allowed camp workers to minimize their interactions with these centers. The way that the systems of summer camp management and control over their activities were built limited ideological control. During Khrushchev’s rule, Komsomol ideologues did a great deal to inform camp administrators and counselors of the best way to organize camp life. There were serious impediments, however, to the implementation of these efforts. Under Khrushchev, Komsomol guidelines prioritized children’s education over their health. Yet, among the agencies that monitored the work at summer camps, those that prioritized health over education had more leverage over summer camp organizers than the Komsomol.
Another important reform that contributed to the diversity of summer camp experiences was Khrushchev’s decentralization of these institutions’ financial administration. Moreover, Khrushchev even opened the door for freedom in interpreting the requirements for the daily camp routine. This removal of control from the center in some cases turned summer camps into very dangerous places for the young. Yet, it also created a possibility for making summer camp life a unique experience that helped the population to see that the Soviet Union was indeed a country of a happy childhood.

Starting in 1948, summer camps’ finances and administration were managed by the Soviet trade unions. After the purges of trade union leadership in the 1930s, trade unions ceased to be independent bodies in the Soviet political system. Blair Ruble presents them as agents responsible for the implementation of state labor policies who did not see the difference between the interests of the state (which also meant the workplace) and the workers, while only defending workers from inadequate administrators. Yet, he also highlights the fact that, after the December 1957 Central Committee resolution that acknowledged trade unions as important participants in managerial decision-making, things changed. Starting then, trade union officials could ask for the Party’s support to defend workers’ rights before factory administrations. They also gained a voice in the decision-making process regarding the appointments of these administrators in the first place. The year 1957 marked the improvement of the trade union position in Soviet labor politics as these unions received new responsibilities, even though they remained mere pawns in the Soviet authorities’ plan to raise workers’ productivity.

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289 Ruble, p.33-34.
Throughout the 1950s, Khrushchev was taking consistent steps towards economic decentralization, which also encompassed the decentralization of trade union management. In May 1957, the USSR Supreme Council abolished the majority of the federal ministries, creating 105 regional economic councils instead.\textsuperscript{290} Summer camps were also affected by economic decentralization. In 1958, the USSR Ministry of Finances transferred the responsibility for organizing children’s summer camps from the trade unions to the enterprises. This move significantly decreased the dependency of summer camp management on centrally allocated funds or other resources, for example, the resources needed for camp renovation. This, as I will demonstrate, helped increase the administrative efficiency of these facilities and could have become a strong incentive for their development in the USSR. Statistical data shows that in 1960, there were 14294 summer camps in the Soviet Union. By 1975, this number increased to 45980.\textsuperscript{291} Decentralization, however, was a double-edged sword. It provided opportunities for the enterprises, which possessed considerable resources and leverage needed to procure what they did not have, but it complicated the situation for everybody else. I looked closely into the negative effects of decentralized summer camp funding in Chapter One. Here, I focus more on the opportunities it created.

In 1954, Ukrainian railroads filed a report to the Central Trade Union of Railway Workers regarding the work of their pioneer camps. The tone of the report was rather gloomy. Local trade union organizations did not receive enough funding to fulfill their

\textsuperscript{290} Ruble., p.30.  
\textsuperscript{291} Deti v SSSR (Statisticheskii Sbornik)., p. 51.
At that time, trade unions responsible for organizing children’s summer rest could only use funds provided by the social security fund (fond sotsial’nogo strakhovaniia) and the special fund of the enterprise’s director (fond direktora). To improve their financial situation, Ukrainian Railroads asked the central committee to extract three million rubles from the revenue earned by the trade union newspaper Gudok (the Horn). The picture of the organization of children’s summer rest portrayed in this report shows chaos further complicated by bureaucracy. In this system, local trade unions were responsible for organizing children’s rest during the summer, but they did not fully control the resources needed for its successful administration. For example, the author of the report filed by the Southern Railroad claimed that while trade unions had to build and maintain summer camps, the Ministry of Railway Communication (Ministerstvo Putei Soobshcheniia) did not include these expenses in the construction budget for 1955. This meant that the ministry did not fulfill the order issued by the Council of Ministers of the USSR in 1953. That order mandated that, starting in 1954, the ministries should allocate budgetary funds for pioneer camp construction. One of the solutions to the deeply problematic situation of funding children’s summer rest, the author of the report suggested, was to transfer this responsibility from the trade unions’ to the enterprises’ economic jurisdiction. This happened in 1958, giving local trade unions (which remained responsible for summer camp organization) and enterprises wider autonomy in the decision-making process regarding children’s rest.

To see how the new status within the Soviet economic system helped to organize children’s rest more effectively, let us look at the reports produced by the Malyshev Plant (Kharkov). The Malyshev Plant was a military enterprise specializing in the production of tanks. It was one of the largest and wealthiest enterprises in the Kharkov region. The 1960 report produced by the plant’s trade unions demonstrates that their preparation campaign for pioneer summer camp seemed to be going very smoothly. The trade union had developed a plan of renovations required in order to open the enterprise’s camp in Zanki (the Kharkov region). As early as March 19, the plant’s director signed the order for renovations and the process started. Unlike in the period before 1958, no one had to wait for the ministry or the central trade unions to issue orders or provide funding to start renovations. The Malyshev Plant had also successfully found the counselors and vospitateli (whose functions were performed by teachers). Aside from the schoolteachers and perhaps some counselors, the rest of the camp employees were affiliated with the plant. The plant was also capable of providing a lot of equipment by using its own resources. It repaired and transported a refrigerator to the camp, provided bed linen from its own warehouse, and used and transported its own gas and coal.

In preparing for the camp’s opening, the organizers, however, encountered a problem with food provision. “We have received funds in the City Fruit and Vegetable Trading Organization (Gorplodovoshchetorg) for the supply of potatoes, but we have not

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yet resolved the question regarding their quality,” the report said.\textsuperscript{296} The problem was not new or local. In 1951, the head of a summer camp for children of peat industry workers complained to the trade union administration of the Kiev region that the camp had not received any milk products because the milk station in Bucha did not have enough of them.\textsuperscript{297} The situation appeared to be the same with greens, potatoes, and berries.

To overcome problems connected with the food supply, especially when it came to fruits and vegetables, some camps organized orchards and kitchen gardens on their territories. Organizing these in a camp was strongly advised under Khrushchev, when camp guidelines insisted on children experiencing agricultural work while in the camp. Unfortunately, there are no data on whether this campaign was a success. However, camp reports sometimes mention that orchards and kitchen gardens helped solve the problem of obtaining produce – a significant challenge in the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{298} As one can see, often when organizing summer camp, the more resources an enterprise possessed the better conditions for children’s rest they could provide. The process of procuring resources (such as food or equipment) from other state agencies always introduced uncertainty in camp organization due to the scarcity of goods characterizing the Soviet economy in general.

When the resources of one enterprise or organization were insufficient, several of them could unite to organize a camp for their workers’ children. In the Kharkov region,

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\textsuperscript{297} “Otchety i informatsii Raionnykh komitetov profsoiuzov I Dorprofsozhei Ukrainskoi SSR ob ozdorovlenii detei v 1951 godu,” 1951, f. 2605, op. 8, d. 416, TSDAVO., p. 37.
\end{flushleft}
this was the case with a camp that provided summer rest for the children of people engaged in the cultural sphere.\textsuperscript{299} The camp was technically owned by the Frunze Printing Factory, but it was funded by this and twenty-six other enterprises and cultural organizations. When it came to the camp’s renovations, the regional trade union of cultural workers allocated the responsibilities among the twenty-seven organizations, whose employees had to invest their work into preparing the summer camp for its opening. Thus, for example, in 1968 the Frunze Printing Factory had to renovate bedroom unit #1, take care of the surrounding territory, repair the washstand near the bedroom unit and the water-pipes in the whole camp, repair the kitchen equipment, a newsstand, and a tribune, create three flower beds, and plant 50 trees.\textsuperscript{300} In the meantime, the Sculpture Factory, which invested less money and consequently sent fewer children to the camp, only had to install three statues, paint existing statues and flower vases, and paint and install new racks in the storage room.\textsuperscript{301} The Kharkov Zoo had to build two benches, plant 30 roses and 50 trees, plant flowers in the lower part of the camp, and create an aquarium and a petting zoo.\textsuperscript{302} These examples show that, while the enterprises were cooperating financially to run their camp, they also invested many other resources when it came to the camp’s renovation. It is easy to see that the renovation obligations were allocated with respect to what each organization could provide independently. This also significantly influenced the individual face of each camp and the way its daily routine was organized. While the enterprises belonging to the trade union of cultural workers had modest financial resources, their camp still stood out among

\textsuperscript{300} “Protokoly zasedanii Prezidiuma obkoma profsииуза рабочих культур 1968-1969.”, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{301} “Protokoly zasedanii Prezidiuma obkoma profsииуза рабочих культур 1968-1969.”, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{302} “Protokoly zasedanii Prezidiuma obkoma profsииуза рабочих культур 1968-1969.”, p. 36.
Kharkov summer camps because they could decorate it well and provided highly qualified personnel to work with the children.

I already mentioned that according to the Statute of Summer Camp, the agencies responsible for the functioning of the Soviet summer camp system were trade unions, the Komsomol, and the Pioneer Organization. Yet, the number of agents involved in shaping the Soviet summer camp routine went far beyond the ones the Statute mentioned, even though they rarely appear in the camps’ reports. The amount of power exercised by these agents varied, as well. For example, archival records show that Komsomol organizations sometimes tended to withdraw from the process of organizing children’s summer rest.303 Moreover, in 1954, the head of the Ukrainian branch of the Komsomol, comrade Drozdenko, called on trade union organizers to be more independent and creative in devising their camps’ everyday routines. Drozdenko reminded the trade union organizers that the Twelfth Komsomol Convention issued a resolution in which its members identified formalism as one of the biggest vices in children’s education. In the case of summer camps, Drozdenko claimed, formalism appeared when counselors tried to follow the Counselor’s Book in their work. In his opinion, this guide was too abstract and did not take into account the specific conditions under which each summer camp was functioning. “There are no provisions for anything in this book,” Drozdenko argued. “In the meantime, we know that Petrovsky Plant’s camp is situated at the Dnieper’s river bank and the regional camp is in Pereshchepino. This means that the conditions for both of them are completely

303 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditshchikh kul’tmassovikh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”; “Stenogramma respublikanskoi metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdyka pionerov i shkolnikov.”, pp.66-68.
Moreover, Drozdenko called for more flexibility of camp routines to accommodate children’s interests: “They say that everything should be useful for children, including the camp’s daily schedule, but what if the camp’s day lasts from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.? What if children want to go fishing? They cannot leave the bedroom units before 9 a.m. and who is fishing after this hour?”

Drozdenko’s rather radical calls for decentralization did not mean that trade unions received full freedom in designing summer camps and their routine. Camp organizers were still diligently reporting their efforts in implementing the political education agenda produced by the Komsomol. Yet, the Komsomol’s leverage among the organizations responsible for monitoring the work at summer camp was rather limited. It did not have the power to do two things: close the camp and put camp organizers in jail. The two agencies who had such powers were the police and the sanitary service. Because of this, if the instructions issued by the Komsomol contradicted considerations for children’s safety or simply ran counter to the norms established by the sanitary service, summer camp organizers prioritized the latter.

The involvement of the police and sanitary service in the organization of summer camps was restricted to what one could call preventive (as opposed to creative) functions, meaning that their major goal was to prevent any damage that camps could cause to

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304 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiashchikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 128.
305 “Stenogramma respublikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovodiashchikh kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniiia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.”, p. 128.
306 Several conversations with camp organizers also pointed to the fact that they could use safety concerns to justify selective implementation of the Komsomol’s requirements.
children’s health. The police and sanitary service exercised their functions differently. A camp could not open without approval from a local sanitary service, while the police barely visited the premises. Still, the costs of breaking the rules established by both of them were grave. As a result, camp organizers kept the police and the sanitary service in mind during their work.

The police visited camps very rarely and their visits were usually the result of an accident. Yet, if that accident happened and became public knowledge, everyone was affected, even though camp employees often had very limited means to prevent the tragedy. One of the most notorious accidents of poisoning occurred in the Kirov pioneer camp (which belonged to the Mykytivka mine in Gorlovka). Tania, a thirteen-year-old girl suffering from epilepsy, was sent to the camp without any mention of her disease in medical records. One day, during nap time, she gave her medication to twenty-two children, claiming that the pills were sweets. The children were poisoned and one boy, who ate eleven pills, died.\(^{307}\) The report does not mention what happened to the counselor of Tania’s detachment, but the camp’s director was fired and expelled from the Party. The results were even worse for the employees of the Dneprogeologiia camp.\(^{308}\) During parent visiting day, Dima Vcherashnii, an eleven-year-old boy from Leningrad, stayed in the camp with nine other children with their counselor and *vospitatel’*. After dinner, Dima decided not to follow the order of his counselor to go to bed and instead went to swim in the nearby river, where he drowned. Two days after this happened, the accident was already discussed

\(^{307}\) “Dokladnyie zapiski i informatsii OSPS o provedennoi rabote profsoiuznymi organizatsiiami po preduprezhdenui neschastnykh sluchaev v pionerskih lageriakh Ukrainskoi SSR 1967 g.,” 1967, TSDAVO, f. 2605, op. 8, d. 5577., p. 1.

\(^{308}\) “Dokladnyie zapiski i informatsii OSPS o provedennoi rabote profsoiuznymi organizatsiiami po preduprezhdenui neschastnykh sluchaev v pionerskih lageriakh Ukrainskoi SSR 1967 g.,” p. 11.
at the meeting of the regional trade union and “people guilty of the child’s death were severely punished.” The head of the pioneer camp along with Dima’s detachment’s counselor and vospitatel’ were fired for “criminal negligence” and disruption of the camp’s daily schedule. Moreover, the police launched a criminal investigation. Camp workers could be punished even if children were under parental supervision at the time of the accident. In Volodia Dubinin’s pioneer camp, owned by the Yenakiyevo Metallurgical Plant, nine-year-old Iura Bandilovskii drowned as he was spending time with his mother during parent-visiting day. Camp workers were considered guilty in the boy’s death because they broke the rules and allowed the boy to spend time with his mother outside of the designated space within the camp.

The conflict between the Komsomol, sanitary service, and police is visible at the Ukrainian republican meeting of camp administrators in 1954. There, the secretary of the Ukrainian Komsomol’s Central Committee, comrade Drozdenko, complained that in summer camps children were cared for too much, which eliminated all their childishness. “God forbid a child would jump!” Drozdenko exclaimed. In 1956, at another all-Ukrainian meeting of camp organizers, the head of the cultural work department on the Voroshilovgrad regional trade union council, comrade Gomuskin, accused the sanitary inspectors of preventing his union from fulfilling the plans of the All-Union Central Trade

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309 "Dokladnyie zapiski i informatsii OSPS o provedennoi rabote profsoiuznymi organizatsiiami po preduprezhdenui neschastnykh sluchayev v pionerskih lageriakh Ukrainskoj SSR 1967 g.", p. 11.
310 "Dokladnyie zapiski i informatsii OSPS o provedennoi rabote profsoiuznymi organizatsiiami po preduprezhdenui neschastnykh sluchayev v pionerskih lageriakh Ukrainskoj SSR 1967 g.", p. 14.
311 “Stenogramma republikanskogo soveshchaniia rukovoditeley kul’tmassovykh i fizkul’turnykh rabotnikov USSR po voprosam fizkul’tury i ozdorovleniia detei v pionerlageriakh letom 1954 goda, 5-6 maia 1954 g.", p. 122.
Union Council and implementing the Komsomol’s orders. Particularly, Gnuskin complained that while the Komsomol was calling for the creation of youth camps providing healthy rest for young people aged 15-17, his trade union could not fulfil this requirement. Youth camps had to be organized in tents. In the meantime, the sanitary inspection required tents to be situated on a solid floor and have an additional roof above them. Gnuskin claimed that, in a situation where acquisition of tents was already difficult, it made no sense to impose such restrictions on creating a tent camp. Sanitary inspection also prevented the Voroshilovgrad trade union regional council from fulfilling the quotas set for the pioneer camps. Specifically, it stalled the Artem Plant’s construction of a summer camp, even though the enterprise was ready to start it and had already received 400,000 rubles for this purpose. However, the sanitary inspection insisted that the plant create a sewage system, which increased the costs to 1,400,000 rubles and delayed the process for several years.

Sanitary services played an even more active role in monitoring summer camps’ everyday functioning. In the note describing the Malyshev Plant’s trade union preparations for the opening of its children’s summer camp, the organizers mentioned that on May 4-5, the direktsiia of one of the USSR’s most important military enterprises, planned to visit the camp to negotiate with the local sanitary service about the renovation requirements. This ritual was typical of the summer camp preparation process, and it reflects the importance of the sanitary service, as well as the amount of attention that Soviet enterprise

312 “Stenogramma respublikanskoii metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 128
313 “Stenogramma respublikanskoii metodicheskoi konferentsii po itogam organizatsii otdykha pionerov i shkolnikov.”, p. 128.
administrators had to pay to issues not directly related to their primary obligations. The reason why they had to act this way can be explained by a note, filed by an inspector of the sanitary and counter-epidemic service, comrade Toborov. In 1960, Toborov inspected the camp of Lenin’s Plant, another big defense industry enterprise in Kharkov. At the inspection, he found numerous problems. A hole in the camp’s fence allowed a neighbor’s chickens to get in. Because of a lack of space, the camp stored bed linen in the same underground facility as the vegetables. The camp’s canteen was missing a window and had flies inside as a result. The camp also lacked storage for children’s clothing. The reports of Komsomol officials in the Kharkov region had never been so meticulous in searching for problems. The sanitary inspection was very precise, and, since it had the power to close the camp, camp organizers took it very seriously. There is no evidence, unfortunately, about whether, in this situation, camp organizers could solve their problems informally, though.

At the same time, the absence of vigilance by sanitary inspectors could create fertile ground for camp accidents. Testifying to this is a report issued in 1957 by a sanitary commission for the pioneer camp of the regional trade union of cooperation workers in the Vinnitsa region. It is unclear whether the commission allowed the camp to open, but the report compellingly demonstrates that the camp was unsafe for children. It lacked a fence between its territory and an open mine twenty meters away. The camp’s restroom, situated outside of the bedroom unit, had no light inside, and the walk to the restroom had no lights.

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either. The sewage system needed renovations. Children’s beds were too close to each other, leaving less than two square meters per person in the bedroom unit.\textsuperscript{317} It is easy to see how even these deficiencies could have led to injuries and the spread of infectious diseases, accidents that usually resulted in criminal charges against camp workers. In this respect, it is important to highlight the detachment between the camp workers and people responsible for preparing the camp to open. While in the case of the Vinnitsa cooperation workers’ trade union, the camp director was present during the inspection by the sanitary commission, this did not provide leverage over the camp’s renovation process. It was run by the trade union and primarily depended on the enterprise’s director and the heads of the agencies responsible for renovation. In case of an accident, however, the responsible party was the camp director.

This partly explains why camp directors tried to do everything to avoid thorough investigations into work at their camps. The usual way to solve the problem was to distract the various commissions that occasionally visited with food and drink. Liudmila Smirnova, who was often on such commissions in the 1980s, told me that camps often had a special duty for children to stand at the gates and promptly inform the camp’s director of these visitors so that they could prepare a reception.\textsuperscript{318} As the head of a small camp for young engineers, Liudmila Gopta even acknowledged that when she learned about a commission’s visit, she usually sent all the children away for a hike and received the guests in an empty facility to avoid problems.\textsuperscript{319}

\textsuperscript{317} “Direktivy, informatsii i drugie materialy o provedenii detskoi ozdorovitel’noi kampanii v 1957 godu.”, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{318} Smirnova, Interview.
\textsuperscript{319} Gopta, interview.
Summer camp administrators resisted monitoring for good reason. I have already shown that, although they were held responsible, they did not exercise full control over either the camps’ territories or the children’s behavior. Often, however, they even had to invest considerable efforts to control camp employees. This was especially true for everyone connected with food procurement and allocation. While the salaries of camp employees often left much to be desired, some of them found alternative means of compensation for their work. The need to constantly monitor kitchen workers was one of the major topics that came up during my interviews with camp organizers. Their stories are corroborated by sanitary service reports. For example, a report from the Lvov region’s sanitary inspectors mentioned that they had to fire three cooks from summer camps and reprimand a fourth.\textsuperscript{320} Sanitary inspectors highlighted that they visited 62 camp kitchens to check their hygienic conditions, as well as the quality of and calories in the children’s food.

While Soviet ideologues saw summer camps as a part of a centralized system of facilities providing children with direct contact with the state through a uniform educational routine, this ambitious plan looked rather different in practice. Starting in 1958, the state voluntarily decentralized financial management of summer camps, thereby increasing the diversity of their environments, educational services, and even food provision. This decentralization allowed some camps to thrive, but also significantly complicated the work of others, which relied more on centrally allocated funds. In terms of control over implementing the camps’ political agenda, the Komsomol had rather limited power to impose some of its regulations. Summer camps were not only environments for

\textsuperscript{320}“Spravki i informatsii o rabote profsoiuznykh organizatsii po podgotovke i provedeniu ozdorovleniia detei respubliki za 1967 god,” 1967, TSDAVO, f. 2605, op.8, d. 5578., p. 24
children’s political education, they were also material environments that had to secure children’s safety. Because the sanitary service and Soviet police had more power than the Komsomol, their priorities came first.

**Camp Physical Spaces: Alienation**

The contradictions in the requirements for summer camps’ routines had a significant effect on their relationship with the surroundings. The Komsomol provided multiple guidelines on how campers had to interact with a forest or a village, in which camps were usually located. Yet, camp administrators had to take these guidelines with a grain of salt, since for the most part they were detached from the reality on the ground, first of all considerations for children’s safety. Summer camps were isolated spaces, alien to their surroundings. This tension between the inner and outer spaces seriously affected the infrastructure of the camps. While Abygail Van Slyck calls American summer camps “a manufactured wilderness,” Soviet summer camps require a different kind of metaphor. They had to be islands of civilization in the midst of the savagery of either nature or the village.\(^{321}\)

This civilization was not only imbedded in the camps’ everyday routines, but also in the requirements that Soviet sanitary services set for camps’ environments.

Bringing this civilization to the frontier was a very expensive task, which only a few of the enterprises could afford. For example, the cost of a sewage system that sanitary inspectors sometimes required from camp organizers could exceed the rest of the camp construction costs. Electricity was another problem. If the camp were situated in the woods, there might not have been an electric circuit to connect it to, so the organizers had to buy

\(^{321}\) Two types of spaces where pioneer camps were normally located.
generators to produce electricity. Arkadii Kassel, an experienced camp organizer, who in 1971 started his career in a camp jointly run by the Govorov Military Engineering Radiotechnical Academy and the Organizational Appliances Plant, mentioned that the camp needed two soldiers to run the manual generator to produce electricity. The generator worked for only a few hours a day to ensure the functioning of the kitchen and provide the camp with light in the evening. Another problem with the camp was that it had no local water source. All the water had to be brought in by car, making the camp’s operation an unsustainable enterprise.

It is quite striking that another example of a similarly unsustainable space was represented by one of the most highly ranked camps of the Kharkiv region, the Zaslonov’s camp built by the South Railroad in Yevpatoriya. The camp was a completely artificial environment that required enormous resources to maintain. While Artek, for example, was created in an already existing park that had been cultivated in the 19th century, the Zaslonov’s camp organizers had to bring in special soil to grow trees, bushes, and grasses at the camp. All of this was supposed to transform the plain landscape of the Yevpatoriya’s seashore into a healthy and beautiful space for children’s rest.

However, the tension between the camp and the existing landscape manifested itself in more than just infrastructure problems. In different ways, both the forest and village environments were alien for urban children. In the forest, the major problem was children’s curiosity. Getting out of the city was a road to discovery, stimulating children to explore their surroundings. As a result, they often ate poisonous berries or grasses, a situation that

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322 Kassel’, interview.
323 Polovnaia, interview.
could have led to criminal charges against their counselors and camp administrators. For Varvara Klimenko, who unwillingly became a camp counselor, the whole camp session was a trial; yet, the thing that drove her to a nervous breakdown was a hike she took with the children.\textsuperscript{324} As a child herself, Varvara had gone to a sanatorium camp where she learned about edible and poisonous plants. Later, as a counselor, she passed her knowledge on to the children she took on the hike. Despite her instructions, several of them tried mushrooms and berries on the way. Everybody coped with the poisoning quite well, except for one boy, who became severely ill. Luckily for Varvara, the boy survived. Aside from the poisoning, during the hike, one girl managed to disturb the nest of wasps, several of which bit a boy. When the detachment stopped near a lake, several children ran into the water to swim without asking for permission. The stress Varvara experienced during that hike drove her to promise herself that she would never again occupy a position as caretaker for a group of children. Varvara’s story is corroborated by archival evidence. For example, in 1964, eight young children at the camp of the Dnepropetrovsk regional committee of state organizations, situated in Feodosiia, ate seeds of a plant nightshade during a military game.\textsuperscript{325} All suffered severe poisoning, and two died as a result.

In addition to the problems that originated from children’s unfamiliarity with the wilderness, the forests hid another threat specific to the European part of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. This threat was posed by the remnants of war. Unexploded bombs were mostly removed from cities, but the forests still contained dangerous munitions that could

\textsuperscript{324} Varvara Klimenko, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, May 11, 2016, Kharkiv.
\textsuperscript{325} “Докладные записки о несчастных случаях в пионерских лагерях республики и о принятых неотложных мерах по организации безопасных условий отдыха детей рабочих и служащих предприятий Украинской ССР за 1964 год,” 1964, TSDAOV, f. 2605, op. 8, d. 4305. p. 3.
injure or kill. Even though Soviet children were repeatedly instructed about these dangerous artifacts, curiosity often overshadowed caution and they could bring something they found into the camp or try to interact with their findings in the forest. During our conversation, Vladimir Trushin recollected how children in the camp he attended in the early 1960s were regularly finding cartridges on the camp’s territory. Once, he went on a hike with his detachment and they found a military blindage and explored it. Overall, Trushin perceived the forest as a very dangerous place, especially for children who went there without supervision. Soviet authorities and educators were well aware of the dangers posed by the remnants of war, especially since their dissemination was not limited only to forests. Valentina Annenkova remembered how she and her friends discovered an arsenal of weapons in their apartment block and even managed to play with them before the adults noticed.

Things were especially complicated in cases when children from areas not touched by the war came to places like Ukraine. This was the situation with a summer camp organized in 1964 by Pechora City’s Department of People’s Education (Republic of Komi) in Staryie Petrovtsy (Kyiv region, Ukraine). Overall, the camp was a nightmare, where children did not receive enough food, bed linens, and blankets. Young campers were also left completely unattended and entertained themselves by exploring the local forest. What they found were numerous bombs, grenades, and other artifacts of war. Fascinated by these discoveries, children organized a competition in which everyone tried to collect

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326 Vladimir Trushin, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, February 25, 2016, Kharkiv.
327 “Dokladnye zapiski o neschastnyh sluchaiah v pionerskih lageriah respubliki i o priniatyh neotlozhnyh merah po organizatsii bezopasnych uslovii otdyha detei rabochih i sluzhaschih predpriiatii Ukrainskoi SSR za 1964 god.”, pp. 20-21.
as many war artifacts as possible. Bombs and grenades were stored in the attic of the school hosting the camp. At some point, four children aged eight to ten decided to dismantle a small aviation bomb and died when it exploded.\footnote{“Dokladnye zapiski o neschastnyh sluchaiah v pionerskih lageriah republiki i o priniatyh neotlozhnyh merah po organizatsii bezopasnyh uslovii otdyha detei rabochih i sluzhaschih predpriiatii Ukrainskoi SSR za 1964 god.”, pp. 20-21.}

While at the level of practice, wilderness posed a significant danger for children and a source of anxiety for camps’ personnel, the Komsomol guidelines encouraged interactions with it with very little safety provisions. For example, summer camp guidelines contained a lot of information on various activities connected with the forest, but none of the ones that I read had a detailed chart listing inedible mushrooms and berries. Komsomol ideologues considered the wilderness a missing element in urban children’s lives. Yet they mythologized wilderness much more than focused on developing children’s practical skills needed for interacting with it. Sometimes educators’ concerns regarding urban children’s interactions with the wilderness went beyond addressing a lack of knowledge, which was already discussed in this chapter. For example, the authors of a chapter devoted to children’s physical education in the “Pioneer Camp” guidelines issued in 1951, emphasized that a summer camp provided an excellent opportunity for children to gain new skills in physical training that they could not develop working out in school gyms and stadiums. “This is why it is important to teach children how to swim, develop in the wilderness the skills of playing, running, jumping, throwing, climbing, and balancing that children already acquired at school,” the book authors claimed.\footnote{Pionerskii lager’, p. 76.}
The attitude towards nature evolved between the early 1950s and mid-1960s. The guidebooks issued under Stalin’s rule stressed the transformational effect of human activities on nature, which was presented as an asset that had to be intelligently mobilized. “Nature and human beings, the power of a human being in socialist society — this is the core of children’s exploration of nature. The issues that every study of nature should address at some point relate to the ways in which human beings use and transform nature, adjust it to their needs, and explain the work of socialist agriculture,” Pioneer Camp authors suggested.330

By the 1960s, however, this attitude changed to some extent. The natural world remained an object of investigation, although the approach shifted away from learning how to conquer nature.331 Instead, ideologues emphasized that children had to develop a friendly relationship with the forest that would serve them well in the future. The claims that the ultimate goal of nature’s exploration is for young people to learn how to use and transform it disappeared. “A camp is a school. A forest, a river, a field can teach urban dwellers a lot. They can learn how to row, how to orient in the forest, to see the beauty of the forest, and understand birds’ songs,” according to the guidelines for camp counselors and organizers issued by the Moldavian Republican Council of Trade Unions.332 Here one can see that emphasizing some practical skills, like orientation in the forest, Moldavian trade unionists also presented a forest as an object of aesthetic contemplation.

330 Pionski lager’, p. 140-141.
331 It is important that many of the aspects of Soviet ideology of nature that were emphasized in the 1960s already existed in the 1950s. What makes a difference is that the call for conquering nature disappears, while friendship, exploration, and aesthetic contemplation gain prominence.
332 Metodicheskii Material v Pomoshch Rabotnikam Pionerskih Lagerei (Kishinev: Moldavskii republikansii sovet profsoiuzov, Tsentral’nyi komitet LKSM, Respublikanskaia shkola pionerskih rabotnikov, 1966)., p. 22.
Soviet ideologues also tended to present nature as an object of playful interaction. At that time, camp guidelines were full of various forest-related activity suggestions. The most popular ones were forest carnivals. They created the perception of the forest as a space of magic and entertainment associated with fairytales. For the carnivals, children created costumes of various plants, animals, and magic creatures (gnomes, for example). The Moldavian Republican Trade Union Council suggested that a magician open the carnival and that, during it, children organize various types of entertainment and games they could play in smaller groups. One of the key elements of the opening of the carnival was a magician asking the children whether they had prepared well for the holiday, made costumes, and rehearsed dances, songs, and other forms of entertainment. When the children replied to the magician that they were ready, they could proceed with having fun.

Another event, Neptune’s Day, had the same scenario. The almighty god of water usually sailed to the beach with his entourage of mermaids and devils. Having reached the land, he asked the children there whether they had learned to swim. Then the devils and mermaids started stealing people from the crowd and throwing them into the water. Some Neptune’s Day scenarios resembled the Forest Carnival. After Neptune’s speech, various types of entertainment on the water and beach started as children were showing what they had prepared. Yet, the Neptune celebration also had the potential to include more Bakhtinian carnivalesque elements, especially when the god’s entourage received permission to steal people and throw them into the water. These actions could create inversions of power structures in the camp. Liudmila Gopta told me that in her camp it was

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333 Metodicheskii Material v Pomoshch Rabotnikam Pionerskih Lagerei., p. 87.
a tradition to throw her, the camp’s director, into the water from a small pier during the Neptune celebration.\textsuperscript{334} She believes that campers were really waiting for this moment and her photos confirm that her perception was quite right.

Figure 5. Campers playing little devils are taking Liudmila Gopta, their camp director, into the water. Courtesy of Liudmila Gopta

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the wilderness was a space of warfare, as well. Soviet ideologues kept this in mind and wanted to prepare children for another possible military conflict. Military games were suggested as a part of the summer camp routine from the 1930s on. When, in 1967, Leonid Brezhnev introduced Zarnitsa, it was organized only in the wilderness, outside of any type of settlement. The military agenda was also part of thematic hikes that retraced the steps of partisan detachments, immersing children in World

\begin{footnote}{334} Gopta, interview.\end{footnote}
War II Soviet mythology. Such hikes, as another way to explore nature, recalled the early summer camps, which were usually organized in tents. By the 1950s, organizing a tent camp was sometimes more difficult than creating a stable one. As a result, tent camps were not used very often, specifically because they required access to a very limited resource – the tents, which enterprises could not compensate for by themselves. Yet, a limited number of them were obtainable and sometimes children could go on a two-day hike. The goal of a hike was to immerse children in the forest environment, develop their ability to orient themselves in it, and provide them with a romantic experience of cooking over a fire, setting up tents, singing songs and telling stories in the evening. These activities were associated with the romantic aspect of pioneer life, which ideologues recognized as important and thus encouraged. “Unfortunately, there are still a lot of camps where children are bored in summer. A boy or a girl regards a trip to a camp like this as the harshest punishment from their parents. A pioneer can spend twenty-six or even fifty-two (two sessions!) days in a camp without having seen a sunrise, sitting near the fire, or eating a baked potato!” complained Vladimir Taborko in 1966. His comments were first and foremost connected with a discussion of the level of freedom to explore the wilderness that Soviet children could experience in summer camps. Unfortunately, while encouraging children’s interaction with nature, Taborko did not provide any guidance on how ensure that these interactions were safe.

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335 Soviet sanitary inspection had very specific requirements for tent camps, which made them difficult to organize. Tents had to be purchased and since the supplies were limited, camp organizers avoided creating this particular type of camp environment. Later in the chapter, I will present a particular case that testifies to this.

336 Taborko, Leto Pionerskoie., p. 6.
Taborko was not the only person concerned that children were not truly experiencing the connection with nature in the camps. Their questions regarded the shape that this connection should take. Those advocating for tent camps were referring to the early days of the revolution and the image of pioneers as explorers, who were not afraid of hardship. Yet, in 1975, Vladimir Matveev and Oleg Gamanin, two prominent summer camp educators who worked in the All-Russian Komsomol Summer Camp Orlenok, still agreed with their early predecessor Zinovii Soloviov, who associated the “spartan” living conditions of early pioneer camps with poverty. They reiterated Soloviov’s thesis that childhood had to be comfortable and pioneers were better off in “warm bedrooms, beautiful canteens” and “well-equipped stadiums.” It would be strange indeed to ride a horse-drawn cart on a bumpy road at the time when modern cars are speeding on a highway nearby,” Matveev and Gamanin claimed, thus reasserting that for Soviet educators, unlike their Western counterparts, summer camps were first and foremost modern spaces in which priority was given to children’s comfort. These ideas were very much in line with the ideological message that Soviet sanitary services, doctors, and police sent. Children’s rest in the USSR had to be safe and comfortable, something that Komsomol often disregarded.

Not only were the camps alien structures in the forest, but they also did not fit into villages, either. In the case of the forest, the problem lay in the natural environment and geographical position. When it came to the village, the problems related to social origin. Inserted into village spaces, summer camps became the enclaves of the unknown and

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338 Matveev and Gamanin., p. 15.
339 Matveev and Gamanin., p. 15.
340 Matveev and Gamanin., p. 15.
forbidden for the locals, especially children and adolescents, who, as demonstrated in Chapter One, had much more restricted access to such kinds of services. Interestingly enough, even though the Komsomol actually had a program that engaged urban adolescents and youth in helping village schools, there was no formal way to integrate summer camps into village life. Locals could attend certain events, including evening dancing parties, but there was no conscious effort, no thought put into establishing a dialogue between the camps and the surrounding villages.

Studying various summer camp guidelines, one finds a lot of information about teaching children how to interact with the surrounding natural environment, even if these guidelines are often impractical. However, many camps were situated in or near Soviet villages. These same camp guidelines contain only a few suggestions on establishing a relationship between campers and village-dwellers. During the time of Stalin’s rule, ideologues advised that children make excursions to nearby villages. When Khrushchev came to power, the Komsomol issued guidelines that encouraged camp organizers to engage children in agricultural work and help nearby villages. As time went by, village life started to resemble the romantic lure of life in nature. In his passage about the necessary elements of a romantic pioneer life that were associated with the summer camps, Taborko claimed that it was also incomplete if “throughout the summer children do not meet with the community farm workers, do not help them in the fields or at their school garden, do not go to a night shift with them.” Camp guidelines often suggested that campers go

341 Pionerskii lager’, p. 188-189.
342 These measures are discussed in detail in chapter two.
343 Taborko, Leto Pionerskoie., p. 7.
hiking to a village, meet the war veterans there, talk to the community farm workers about their occupation and help them. Moldavian trade union educators also suggested that children could learn a lot from the village children when exploring the forest. Another activity that connected campers with the community farms were concerts that campers could prepare and then perform in nearby villages. These often were presented as a civilizing mission. Vladimir Matveev described a club day organized by children from the Torch camp through short scenes that, among other things, depicted a pioneer telling the elderly collective farm workers about the latest developments in the use of herbicides. The civilizing mission was further pursued as pioneers held talks about medicine and hygiene, and presented the peasants with the latest political news. The example of the lecture on herbicides especially highlights the presentation of the village as a space where people were ignorant, even on the matters that were supposed to be their field of expertise.

The problem with all these interactions is that they presented the villagers not exactly as people, but as representatives of a particular group that had different competencies that were, at times, beneficial for urban children. Simply put, these were not personal interactions with neighbors; villagers were presented as a friendly but often underdeveloped ‘other’ within the structure of Soviet society, economy, and geography. This lack of structured personal interactions, which could have helped village and urban children create a meaningful connection, could be one of the reasons for tensions that occurred when camps were situated in villages. The most striking recorded case of conflict

344 Metodicheski Material v Pomoshch Rabotnikam Pionerskih Lagerei., p. 122.
between campers and local youth happened in the village of Khorly, in the Kherson region, in June 1963. There, the counselors of a pioneer camp belonging to the Kharkiv Air-Conditioning Factory got into a fight with students of a local agricultural mechanization college. The fight developed to involve a local border patrol who, according to the report, had to shoot 600 bullets and use 30 rockets to stop it. As a result, three students went to jail and one was taken to a hospital, while the head of the border patrol, who was hit by a ceramic trash can, also needed medical treatment. The head of the Khorly village council, according to various reports, spent the fight hiding either in his car or in the bushes. One of the dangerous facts that the Khorly fight brought to light was that villages did not have sufficient police to successfully deal with instances of large-scale fighting. Khorly, in fact, did not have police at all. As a result, if it were not for the border patrol, the consequences of the fight could have been much worse. The fight in Khorly was not a singular case. A 1973 report by Lira summer camp, organized by the trade union of cultural workers in Vysokii village in the Kharkiv region, says: “In the summer camp we organized the patrols of trade union committee leaders (predsedateli), parents’ aktiv, and the members of the people’s vigilante brigade. Yet, despite this, there were days when local adolescents disrupted the events we organized.”

An essential feature of Soviet summer camps was their alienation from the environment in which they existed. Komsomol ideologues made an effort to erase this

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346 “Dokladnyie zapiski i spravki o neschastnykh sluchaiakh, proizoshedshikh v pionerskikh lageriakh USSR i merakh po ikh ustraneniuiu 1963g.,” 1963, TSDAVO, f. 2605, op. 8, d. 3914., pp. 2-4.
347 The word aktiv is very hard to translate and means an organized group of people who take upon themselves obshchestvennyie responsibilities within a certain collective.
348 “Informatsii i spravki ukraineskago respublikanskago komiteta I okhomov profsoiuza rabotnikov kul’tury ob ozdorovlenii detei ve letnii period 1973 goda.”, p. 70.
alienation, however, their suggestions often were impractical and badly informed on the real state of affairs. In the meantime, camps’ alienation from their surroundings created serious threats for children’s well-being. Taking into account that camp staff prioritized the latter, they developed a selective attitude to implementing Komsomol instructions. My interviews suggest that even if children went of a hike in summer camps, it was usually a one-day hike, they did not spend the night outside a camp. Neither interviews nor archival documents mention summer camps organizing lectures or other festivities in the villages. Children from a camp and a village sometimes could play sports with each other outside the camp, yet generally the camp and the village remained separated entities that interacted very cautiously with each other.

**Camps’ Inner Spaces: Creativity**

Alexei Yurchak authored a famous theory that Soviet ideology had been losing its power over Soviet society because Khrushchev and Brezhnev did not manage to occupy the place of the masters, who interpreted the ideological message. This, according to Yurchak, led to the gradual ossification of Soviet ideological discourse because, aside from the country’s leadership, nobody else dared to interpret it. The authors of the edited volume *Obshchestvennost’ and Civic Agency in Soviet and Imperial Russia*, however, claim that Khrushchev believed that Soviet society was ready for the decentralization of ideological discourse. The progressive part of Soviet society, or *obshchestvennost’,* had to assume a greater role in interpreting Soviet ideology by actively working in their professional communities, on councils of assistance, with vigilante brigades, and on comrades’
courts. At the XXth Party Congress in 1956, Khrushchev called for an “increase in the working people’s creative activity and initiative, as well as for the broader participation of the masses in the management of state affairs.” At the XXIst Congress held in 1959, he highlighted the key role of the obshchestvennost’ in the progress of Soviet movement toward a point when the state as a political element would cease to exist. As one can see, Khrushchev initiated not only economic but also ideological decentralization.

The speech delivered by the Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Komsomol Committee, comrade Drozdenko, in which he called on camp workers to abandon the Counselor’s Book and pay more attention to the specific situation of individual camps, suggests that ideological decentralization affected the work at summer camps, as well. Of course, the 1950s and 1960s were also the time when the central publishing house of the Komsomol, the Young Guard (Molodaia Gvardiia), was actively issuing guidelines for camp organizers, covering various aspects of these institutions’ educational work. Yet, in the 1960s, numerous books started to be published on the periphery of the USSR by republican and sometimes even city Komsomol committees. These peripheral

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352 Uhiiankin, Tushina, and Iakovleva, Vozhatomu o pionerskom lagere; V. Bozhik, Vospitatel’naia rabota v pionerskom lagere. V pomoshch vozhatomu i vospitateliu (Rostov-na-Donu: Rostovskoie knizhnoie izdatel’stvo, 1964); Lebedinskii, Vospitatel’naia rabota v pionerskom lagere. Sbornik instruktivnyh i
publications did not contest the ideological message produced by the center. Rather, they provided possibilities for its creative interpretation, ones that were better adjusted to local conditions. I believe that these creative interpretations, which existed not only on the periphery as camp guidelines but also at individual summer camps, were essential in making the Soviet ideological message more engaging for children. At the level of memories about summer camp, the creative interpretations of established routines are an important part of the positive assessment of Soviet summer camps by my interviewees.

The goal of the summer camps was to immerse children into specially designed spaces with specially devised routines that would help them transform into exemplary Soviet citizens. The autonomy associated with summer camps’ functioning created fertile ground for creativity in summer camp life. While the camp routine was heavily ideologized, the Komsomol guidelines left space for its creative interpretation. As a result, even when following Komsomol prescriptions, camp employees carved out space for inserting their own voices into the general framework of the Soviet educational agenda. Moreover, after the Twelfth Komsomol Congress, individual creativity in summer camp work was actually encouraged. Reports that camp organizers submitted to the regional trade unions in the 1960s show their pride in all creative activities that they designed to make children’s leisure time in the camp more special.

353 The goal of this section is not to argue that all summer camps were full of creative people who made children’s rest there unforgettable. Rather, it is to show the possibilities that summer camps allowed for and present the cases when these possibilities were used.

354 Various books for camp counselors contained information on how to organize certain events. However, access to them was restricted.
To more closely analyze the creative approaches of summer camp workers, I will look at the ceremony and place that constituted the heart of the summer camps as spaces of ideological education – the ceremony of raising and lowering the Soviet flag. This was organized every morning and evening at every summer camp at the camp’s mast ground throughout the whole period of their existence. The mast-ground was supposed to be the heart of the pioneer camp. The first chapter of the book “Pioneer Camp” issued by the Komsomol in 1937 is called “The Mast.” Its opening paragraph states: “The raising and lowering of the flag is an impressive moment in camp life. It strengthens the sense of collectivism, pioneers’ responsibility for each other, for their zveno, detachment, for the whole camp in general.”

The mast ground was the place for public political and disciplinary spectacle. There, children started their day by raising the flag during a line-up parade and learning about the day’s scheduled activities. In the evening, the whole camp gathered for another line-up parade. Children lowered the flag, reported their detachments’ achievements and learned about their comrades’ disciplinary violations.

Every Soviet summer camp strictly observed the ceremony of a line-up parade. yet, interviews suggest that in the 1960s and later, for a lot of young participants, the meaning of this ceremony was largely lost. It is unsurprising that my interviewees did not talk about these activities. After all, they were rather routine. What was more interesting to me was that they answered a direct question about the purpose of the line-up parades by claiming that they did not know it or guessing that the goal was probably to take attendance and announce the daily schedule. It is impossible to say how exactly children perceived

355 *Pionerskii lager*: *spravochnik dlia vozhatykh i rabotnikov pionerskikh lagerei.*, p. 5.
line-up parades back then or what they knew about them. Yet, documents demonstrate that trade unions were taking steps to make these ceremonies more powerful in terms of the experiences they created. For example, the trade union of the railroad workers involved a children’s orchestra in the ritual of raising and lowering the flag in their camp in Yevpatoriya.\(^{356}\)

The authors of the *Guide for Camp Directors and Senior Counselors* issued in Kharkov in 1965 seemed to recognize that there was a problem with the line-up parades. That is why they presented some suggestions from the Kharkov regional camps. The Kharkov Tractor Plant’s camp Daisy put a big paper daisy with 26 petals on its mast ground.\(^{357}\) During the evening line-up parades, the best detachment of the day had to take one petal with them. In a different camp, also called Daisy and organized by the trade union of cultural workers, there was a special ceremony of taking the petal of the daisy to a mast ground. Children wrote the most interesting activity on the petal and later added it to the chronicle of the camp’s life.\(^{358}\)

A report filed by the Daisy camp of the Kharkov tractor Plant in 1961 allows us to learn more about the line-up parades they were organizing.\(^{359}\) Camp organizers specifically mentioned that they had changed that ceremony compared to previous periods. Strikingly, however, their description of the ceremony did not even mention the raising of the flag.

\(^{356}\) We do not know when the camp started doing that, but it is mentioned in the trade union newspaper issued in 1979 and is also in the recollections of Svetlana Polovnaia, who went to the camp in the early 1970s. See: “Otriad iunykh muzykantov,” August 18, 1979, luzhnaia magistal’ edition.

\(^{357}\) Kliuchareva, *V pomoshch nachal’nikam i starshim vozhatym pionerskih lagerei*, p. 3.

\(^{358}\) Kliuchareva., p. 3.

What it mentioned was children reporting who was present in the morning and their counselor announcing the schedule for that day. In the evening, each detachment reported what it did. It is hard to say whether this report means that the flag was not raised at all in the Daisy camp. However, this excerpt suggests that the core of the line-up parades in that specific case was shifting from the flag-raising ceremony towards children’s self-presentation. This assumption is supported by the Daisy camp organizers’ description of celebratory ceremonies held at the mast ground. At the camp’s opening and closing ceremonies, or during the visits of foreign delegations, each detachment decorated its place at the mast-ground. Moreover, pioneers from each detachment recited to visitors the poems about their camp written by their counselors.\footnote{“Zavodskaia komitet professional’nogo soiuza rabochih mashinostroieniia Khar’kovskogo traktornogo zavoda. Materialy o rabote pionerskogo lageria zavoda za 1961 god.”, p. 18-19.}

Interviews I conducted with people who went to summer camps as children suggest that the creative efforts of their counselors and other camp workers did not go in vain. The camp activities that stayed in my interviewees’ memories for a long time were the ones that required creative action from them and put them in the spotlight. An excerpt from my conversation with Sergei Ugol’nikov is a good example of how it works:

Of course, they were searching for talents in each detachment. For example, sportsmen because there was a \textit{Spartakiada}.\footnote{A type of sports competition named after a rebelling Roman slave Spartak.} You run or you jump, whatever you know how to do. If someone was engaged in the artistic creative sphere (\textit{khudozhestvennaia samodeiatel’nost}), then at some point a concert of artistic talents was organized and every detachment had to send someone to participate in it. Well, there were
Spartakiadas. And then this competition of marching songs usually was organized. It was different in different places. Well, we learned some marching (obshchestroevaia) song and marched at the mast ground. Sometimes it was theater, if a counselor was especially creative. For example, we sang some military song […] We arranged blankets to imitate military uniform.\textsuperscript{362} For the first row we made something like waterproof capes from something that I don’t remember now. In the workshop we also made wooden things that looked like machine guns and painted them. They were for the first rows.\textsuperscript{363}

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Sergei Ugol’nikov went to different camps as a child. Once, he was even sent to a Polish summer camp as part of a cooperation project between the Kharkov Turbine Plant and its Polish counterpart. In the interview above, he describes the camp activities typical for the Kharkov Turbine Plant. One can see that he keeps listing them until it comes to the marching and singing competition, which he goes on to describe in detail, which indicates that this particular event was still important for him.

The most pleasant moments that Sergei Grichanok remembered from his stay in the Red Clove camp, organized by the Malyshev’s Plant, were also associated with creativity. He went to the camp in the early 1970s, when he was around 13 years old, and the reason why he has warm impressions from that trip was his creative detachment, in which young people were constantly improvising and staging small performances.\textsuperscript{364} The activity that

\textsuperscript{362} The original word he uses here is skatka.
\textsuperscript{363} Ugol’nikov, interview.
\textsuperscript{364} Grichanok, interview.
Larisa Bugaenko remembered best from her trips to a summer camp for three consecutive years in the early 1950s, when she was six to eight years old, was her training with counselors for an acrobatic performance.\textsuperscript{365} Svetlana Polovnaia, who went to Zaslonov camp, administered by the Southern Railroad in Yevpatoria in the early 1970s, remembered how an orchestra greeted them at their arrival and how it accompanied every line-up parade, in which she participated.\textsuperscript{366}

Overall, my interviewee’s memories about Soviet summer camps often present them as spaces of freedom from authority rather than spaces of discipline or control. Grichanok, who had some conflicts with other boys in one of the camps he went to, highlighted the fact that he had to solve them himself because the camp counselors there were young and unprepared to work with children. The absence of adults, and first and foremost parents, however also had positive effects. It gave Grihanok an opportunity to explore and engage in activities that, he said, he would have never participated in at home:

This was the Southern Railroad’s camp, so children came there from all the region. I remember having a friend from Dnepropetrovsk. We left a lot of memories after ourselves. (laughs) We complemented each other. I would never allow myself to do something like this. He was a very mischievous guy, very decisive when it came to pranks, while I lacked it in my life. I even remember how we wanted to paint girls with the toothpaste. Girls closed the door on a key, but the keys got lost and then the counselors found them. So to prevent anyone from entering, they just blocked the door with a mop. It was so funny. We thought: well, it is almost the last night before our

\textsuperscript{365} Bugaenko, Interview.  
\textsuperscript{366} Polovnaia, interview.
departure, we have to do something to remember. […] We got to their balcony. The
door was closed despite the heat. We understand that we cannot get into the
room, because there is no step and one cannot calculate the trajectory of the toothpaste’s
flight. I came up with the idea to use the tooth cleaning powder. So we just scattered it
around the room. And there were four ghosts lying there covered with tooth powder.
(interviewee and interviewer laugh).\textsuperscript{367}

Svetlana Polovnaia’s case is especially interesting in this respect. Svetlana was born in
1965 to an engineer (father) and a school district instructor at the Communist Party district
committee (mother). Svetlana was a very independent and disciplined child. When she first
arrived at a pioneer camp in the Kharkov region, her major concern was that it did not have
a piano and she could not practice every day like she was used to.\textsuperscript{368} She was also often a
part of pioneer aktiv\textsuperscript{369} in the summer camps she attended. When Svetlana was around
eleven years old, she went to the Zaslonov camp in Yevpatoriya:

We also were sent to Zaslonov camp, just imagine it, a whole train of children. Children
in all carriages. With pioneer counselors. Only kids. Kids on all shelves. The
preparations for departure were thorough. Three days before we left, everybody who
went to the camp was called to a medical facility, where they checked our ears, heads,
all the medical documents. Then they set a date, when we had to arrive at the train

\textsuperscript{367} Grichanok, interview.
\textsuperscript{368} Svetlana went to a school for specially gifted children to prepare to become a pianist.
\textsuperscript{369} Every camp was expected to have a pioneer self-government body that had to actively participate in the
camp’s life. It is unclear to what extent this worked in practice, since archival documents do not mention
the role of this body in the camps. The pioneers who participated in the self-government organs were
called aktiv.
station. All of this was solemn, with music, they played a march at the station. We all boarded. There was so much joy! Such delight, it is all, parents are gone! The first time I went, I felt a bit cautious. Yet, the second time, it was so wonderful, freedom! You arrive to this pioneer camp, and there is a shop nearby. We ran there through a hole in the fence. And you know what it sold? Coca-cola.

Alexei Yurchak presented Soviet ideological discourse as some unified entity produced by the Party and the Komsomol. Yet, evidence from the workings of the Soviet summer camps suggests that Khrushchev encouraged the diversification of Soviet ideological discourse and called for Soviet citizens’ active participation in its interpretation. This allowed summer camp workers to enrich standard rituals with new and appealing meanings that could have turned them into memorable experiences and an important part of summer camp nostalgia. The excerpts from Sergei Grichanok’s and Svetlana Polovnaia’s interviews on their experiences in the Zaslonov camp in Yevpatoriya bring our attention to the fact that, now, positive memories about summer camps are not always connected to the ideological message camp workers tried to inculcate in children’s hearts and minds. However, these experiences do seem to be an important element in the nostalgia that people still feel about these institutions.

Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to show the complexity of the Soviet ideological messages and the opportunities this complexity provided. At the level of camp interaction with the surroundings, camp organizers’ guidelines were shaped by a significant paradox. On the one hand, camps were located in these areas in order to better integrate children into them.
At the same time, this integration was partial and rather superficial. It barely developed a feeling of belonging to the locality in which the camp was situated. As for the camps functioning within the Soviet ideological system in general, things were also contradictory. Khrushchev simultaneously called for freedom of interpretation of Soviet ideology and introduced radical reforms contesting the existing ideology of childhood. During his rule, the Komsomol printed a great deal of literature to ensure the uniformity of children’s summer camp routine. Yet, it had little power over summer camp organizers and had to support Khrushchev’s calls for ideological decentralization. In the meantime, a study of the organizations that had strong control over camp organizers demonstrates that the police and sanitary inspection services could have been a much bigger concern for summer camp administrators than the Komsomol. In Chapter Two, I showed that Khrushchev was ready to neglect the concerns for children’s health in order to intensify the summer camps’ educational agenda. This chapter shows that his plan could only receive limited implementation, however, because safety concerns could be successfully used to avoid fulfilling the new requirements.

The flexibility of ideological control opened space for creativity in summer camp routines. This creativity was something that left a long-lasting effect on both the children and adults who stayed and worked in summer camps. For the children themselves, the interviews demonstrate that, contrary to the goals of the Soviet authorities, the most meaningful part of the summer camp experience as remembered today relates to creativity and freedom from control, specifically parental supervision. I opened Chapter Two with a quote which indicated that Soviet authorities believed that without state supervision children were left on their own. Interviews with people who went to summer camps as
children suggest that they could perceive the camps as spaces of freedom because parental control for them was much more important than the control exercised by camp counselors.
Chapter Five: Telling Camp Stories: Diaries, Photographs, and Oral History

Interviews as Sources for Reconstructing Personal Experiences

The story of the Soviet summer camps encompasses a polyphony of voices. It is a story of camp administrators, counselors, kitchen workers, various inspectors, parents, and, of course, children. It also matters to whom they tell their stories. The stories recorded in the reports differ from the ones that a scholar hears when conducting interviews or looking at the interviewees’ personal photographs. The preceding four chapters of my dissertation primarily relied on the sources in which the subjects of my research addressed the state or their supervisors. I have used some of the interviews to address the way people remember summer camps; however, I did not closely analyze them. Moreover, I did not present the sources produced by children. This chapter fills this gap by addressing specifically children’s marginalized experiences of summer camp life. The abundant sources in which adults portrayed the everyday Soviet summer camp routine can only cover a limited part of the story when it comes to the way children experienced it. Many activities in the camps were performed collectively by both children and adults. However, it is highly likely that they experienced them differently. Moreover, there were parts of children’s lives in the camps that remained obscure to their adult supervisors. That is why hearing children’s stories about these experiences is so important.

Unfortunately, my access to children’s stories is very limited. Only one of my interviewees, Larisa Bugaenko, has kept a diary during her stay at Artek in the summer of 1957. Another interviewee, Natalia Martinkus, went to the Maiak camp in approximately
1971. There, one of her friends happened to have a camera and took several photos of her and her friends. These two sets of sources are unique because children produced them for private use. To highlight the unique qualities of these sources, as well as their potential to provide us with information about the historical past, I will corroborate them with another set of sources. I will compare Larisa’s diary to diaries written by the first and second detachments of the Kharkov Tractor Plant’s summer camp in 1951. I will compare Natalia’s photos to the photo album created in the German Titov’s camp, situated in the Brusino village near Horlovka in 1967. The materials constituting this set are analogous in genre to the first set, but address the public. Finally, I will compare these two sets of evidence to the interviews I conducted with Larisa and Natalia about their summer camp experiences. This methodological procedure will allow me to touch on the experiences that escaped official records and sometimes even private documents because of the genre limitations or other forms of their authors’ self-censorship. In the case of the private photo archive, it will help me show that the gaze of the archive’s owner, the person whose experience and photographs the scholar addresses, is an indispensable part of the research process that should be honored and taken into account.

The narrative of the Soviet summer camps has been constructed not only through multiple voices but also on multiple levels. In the previous chapters, I talked about summer camps as administrative units, spatial and social structures, material environments, and educational and welfare institutions. This chapter presents them through the lens of personal experiences. This perspective is no less important than the others, because it

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371 The author of the album is unknown.
deepens our understanding of everyday life in the USSR and the way people remember it now. In historiographical terms, the story of Larisa Bugaenko, further tests the limitations of the narrative of Artek as the place for a happy childhood, discussed in chapter three. It also improves our understanding of how international friendship ties between children and young people were established under Khrushchev and the results of this highly promoted campaign. The case of Natalia Martinkus uncovers another topic, without which any narrative about youth would be incomplete, the narrative of youth sexuality. It is especially valuable because adolescent sexuality was a taboo subject in the USSR, testified to by its absence from camp counselors’ guidelines. Natalia’s story, however, demonstrates that despite all the taboos young people found ways to express their interest in each other.

Everything was Normal: The Story of Larisa Bugaenko

This subchapter relies on the diary and interview of Larisa Bugaenko. Thus, it is only logical that before proceeding with the contextualization of her diary, I first introduce its author. Larisa Bugaenko was born in Kharkov in 1945 to an engineer and a pediatrician. Her family was very poor and lived in a communal apartment in the city center. While her living conditions were rather restrictive, the geographical location gave Larisa access to the most important institution in her childhood and adolescent life, the Kharkov Pioneer Palace, situated close to her house. As a child, Larisa joined a dance ensemble there, and then joined a rhythmic gymnastics group. By the time she went to high school, Larisa had already been participating in republic-level championships and had even won some of them. Despite being a successful gymnast, she went to the Kharkov Polytechnical Institute, graduated as a biologist, and began graduate school. Because of personal conflict, she did
not defend her dissertation. In graduate school, Larisa was offered a position as a gymnastics instructor in her institute, which she occupied for a very long time.

Larisa’s self-narrative, when we talked, was centered around two concepts: dignity and resistance. She presented herself as a person who has never been particularly enthusiastic about the Soviet rule, tracing this position to her childhood and family stories about Stalin’s repressions. This, as I will show, does not prevent her from having warm memories about, for example, the pioneer palace she went to and which, even now, she calls her second family. Dignity is no less important to Larisa, who throughout our interview highlighted her autonomy and independence. Larisa presented herself as a person who had never begged for anything but rather deserved everything she received. As for the current context of her life, since 2014, Larisa has been an active participant in the Revolution of Dignity in Kharkov.\(^{372}\) When the war in the East started, she joined a voluntary organization of women making special nets to mask the military equipment at the frontline. At the age of seventy-six, she is still actively involved in the city’s civic life.

To contextualize Larisa’s diary, I will first look at two diaries produced by the first and third detachments of Eskhar camp belonging to the Kharkov Tractor Plant. These diaries present a radical case of what diaries could turn into under Soviet rule. Heavily influenced by adults, they turned into an exercise in ideological proficiency. Yet, though these diaries test the limitations of the genre, they highlight children’s vulnerability to the presence of the adult gaze in such documents. As deviant as they can be, these diaries can

\(^{372}\) The Revolution of Dignity marks the events that happened in Ukraine between November 2013 and February 2014, when thousands of people took to the streets of Ukrainian cities to protest against the policies of the former president, Viktor Yanukovych.
be instrumental in uncovering the same tendencies in other children's diaries, for example in the diary of Larisa Bugaenko. In terms of the exploration of everyday life in a summer camp, they also testify to the limitation of what this type of source covered. Their analysis brings to light the selection process that shaped the presentations of everyday summer camp routines. Moreover, diaries from Eskhar camp share this characteristic with Larisa's diary, as well. They all portray censored and polished images of children's camp lives, trying to convince the readers that, as Larisa told me several times throughout our interview, “everything was normal.” Thus, in terms of providing access to children's experiences in summer camps, the Eskhar diaries show us one aspect of them, that in which young campers adjusted their stories mirror to the gazes of the counselors and possibly camp administrators or inspectors. The resulting picture focused attention on one part of the children's lives in the camp and completely obscured the rest. Larisa's diary, thus, is a step away from this black and white scale. It introduced shades of grey. At the same time, my interview with her allows us to assume that at the time of writing this diary she also decided to keep quite important experiences in complete darkness.

While the majority of scholars analyze diaries written by one person, Yasuhiro Matsui highlights that diaries could also be produced by a group of people. Unlike the rather secretive diary practices that Hellbeck focuses on, Matsui looks at collective diaries, which served the purpose of creating a community of people in time and space. In my archival work, I came across three diaries produced collectively by pioneers who went to

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the summer camp of the Kharkov Tractor Plant situated near the Eskhar *urban poselok* in 1951. Yet, while Matsui’s collective of authors decided to keep a diary voluntarily, the pioneers at the Kharkov Tractor Plant summer camp did not decide to do it by themselves. Their diaries were an obligation imposed by the counselors. The purpose was the same, to strengthen the ties within the collective by chronicling its life and achievements. The documents were called diaries and were created to record the everyday life of the collective; however, judging by the way these diaries were decorated, they also served a representational purpose. They were not private documents that a group of people addressed to each other. They were a public record of the group’s life, a polished version of it that was very likely affected by adults. These diaries were created to show that children from the Tractor Plant had a good understanding of Soviet ideology and were exemplary members of Soviet society. This affected the shape of these diaries in a significant way.

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374 Throughout the history of Soviet rule, authorities perceived the village as a backward entity that had to be transformed. This is how *urban poselki* appeared. The term *poselok* can be defined as a small settlement situated either at the outskirts or close to the city. It is also usually smaller than a village and does not constitute an autonomous administrative unity (is a part of village council). In rural areas, *poselki* often emerged at the place of former *khutor*, a small rural entity constituted by several families living close together. This is what Eskhar initially was until in the 1930s Soviet authorities decided to build a power plant there. The name Eskhar literally means Electric Station Khar’kov.
The title page of the diary of the first detachment of Eskhar camp belonging to the Kharkov Tractor Plant. The diary was begun on August 1, 1951.\textsuperscript{375}

The title page of the diary of the first detachment (13 to 15-year-old children) demonstrates that those who were responsible for keeping it were quite well versed in Soviet political education. The dominant color of the picture is red, symbolizing allegiance to the cause of the Communist Party. In the upper left corner of the page, one can see the symbol of the Komsomol, the organization primarily responsible for the political education of youth. It is likely that at least some of the detachment members were already Komsomol members or were preparing to enter this organization. The upper right corner features the

symbol of the Pioneer Organization. At the bottom, one finds more symbols of the Pioneer Organization: two pioneer bugles and a drum. Under the drum, there is a volleyball and a tennis racket. This combination of pioneer and sports symbols refers to the major goal Soviet summer camps served, to combine political education with healthy, active leisure. A young person clearly made the picture, although it is quite possible that an adult helped with the design.

The title page of the third detachment, where children were younger, was much more neutral and featured an imaginary landscape.
This landscape is imaginary because it features a mountain and tents. There are no mountains in the Kharkov region. Additionally, in the diary children mention living in wards (palaty), which presupposes some sort of stable constructions rather than tents. Nevertheless, this depiction also demonstrates an understanding of what a camp should be, just a different version of it. It relates to the romantic exploration of nature combined with the early versions of summer camps, which primarily used tents. In the middle of this small watercolor, one can also spot a little mast with a red flag, the ideological heart of the camp. This way, it is easy to identify this picture as a summer camp rather than just a tourist camp.

The verbal discourses of both detachments also demonstrate children’s excellence in reproducing the Soviet ideological message. Let us compare the way the dairy keepers from both detachments described meetings with colonel Panchenko, organized in the first detachment on August 14 and in the third detachment on August 15 (both 1951).377

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377 Komsomol officials advised that summer camps invited war heroes to give talks about their life and the war as a part of children’s military and patriotic education.
One of the important elements of this page that catches a researcher's attention is the correction written over the text with a different pen and in different handwriting. That this inscription was very likely made by an adult once more confirms that this diary was closely censored, probably by a camp counselor. As for the text itself, the diary entry made on August 14 reports that on that day the first detachment had several exciting events organized for them. They recorded these events in the style of a chronicle, both in text and pictures, typical for these types of diaries. Thus, one can learn that on August 14, the first detachment took a river trip on a motorboat. Later that day, its girls, led by Maia Meleshko,

won a volleyball match against a team from the adjacent Eskhar camp. Finally, “After dinner a Hero of The Soviet Union, Colonel I. Panchenko visited us. He told us about his life path. We went to bed very impressed.” Here, it is worth noting the word combination “life path” that sounds like something borrowed from a rather formal language. Another part of the entry, “we went to bed very impressed” also requires attention. I will focus on it now, and then return to the mention of “life path.”

Evening in the camps was always a time of subversion of power. It was the time when children and adolescents, left alone in their rooms, often tried to contest adults’ authority by telling scary stories, leaving the premises to see their friends, or playing pranks on each other. This was especially true for detachments with adolescents, who were more likely to defy camp discipline in general and tended to develop romantic relationships, which often implied late-night visits. The short “we went to bed very impressed” or an even more artificial entry from August 20, 1951, “content and cheerful (dovol'nyie i zhyzneradostnyie), children went to rest,” suggest a significant gap between what was written in the diaries and what was actually happening.

With this in mind, let us look at the diary entry of a camper who kept the third detachment’s diary on August 15, 1951.379

379 “Dnevnik tretiego otriada pionerskogo lageria Eskhar Khar’kovskogo traktornogo zavoda.”, p. 18.
Here, I will provide a translation of the full page:

The weather was good today. The day was particularly interesting. We had a meeting with the Hero of the Soviet Union colonel Panchenko, who told us about the heroic deeds of the Red Army soldiers and his combat experience (boievoi put’). He told us that the Soviet Army is the liberation army. It brings victory, saves all nations from fascist domination. The life path of this hero is interesting and remarkable. Only in our country, every citizen can live and work happily. We will always honestly serve our
Motherland and its people, follow the example of this great son of the Soviet people. This is how this day went.\textsuperscript{380}

In this entry, we again find the “life path” word combination. Moreover, this record is full of other clichés. Even the style of writing sounds bureaucratic. For example, what I translated as “combat experience” is closer to “combat path” in a word-by-word translation and is a cliché, as well. The combination “interesting and remarkable” is a cliché as well. While in 1951 it would be completely normal for children to be excited about meeting a real Red Army colonel who fought in the Great Patriotic War,\textsuperscript{381} the language they chose to describe this experience in a diary entry is highly formalized. The origin of this language, however, is obscure. It is entirely possible that the entry was dictated or edited by the detachment’s counselor or vospitatel’,\textsuperscript{382} although it looks more like the author was retelling the phrases he or she had heard during the meeting. It is also unclear to what extent the child who made the entry mastered this language and how he or she treated or used it in everyday life. What we can say is that, even if the author of the entry did not master this type of language and composed this text with the help of an ideologically sophisticated adult, this was a learning experience for the pioneer, who made the diary entry.

\textsuperscript{380} “Dnevnik tretiego otriada pionerskogo lageria Eskhar Khar’kovskogo traktornogo zavoda.”, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{381} The Great Patriotic War refers to the part of World War II that involved the Soviet Union. In this case, I use the language of the subjects of my study.

\textsuperscript{382} Camp detachments were supposed to be supervised by two people performing two different roles. A counselor was responsible for organizing daily activities and could be a university student or Komsomol activist from the enterprise that owned the camp. Vospitatel’ was responsible for children’s moral education and various hobby groups (kruzhki). It was highly desirable that a school teacher occupied this position.
What unites both diaries, in addition to the use of language and a chronicle-like style, is the absence of introspection. In chapter three, I discussed the diaries of Artek counselors. In addition to closely following the children’s daily routine, they also had two other important goals. First, they had to contain observations of the states of mind of the children. These were the observations of how the children personally evolved in camp. Second, they had to contain the counselors’ self-reflections on their work. Artek counselors often wrote in their diaries late at night, when they were tired and did not have the time or energy to deeply analyze the day they had spent with their detachments. Nevertheless, traces of such attempts are still visible in their diaries. The collective diaries from Eskhar camp have no introspection at all. There are no reports on the development of the children, either. All the pioneers are depicted as very disciplined, cheerful, and obedient. The only names we find are those relating to the chronicle, like the name of the volleyball team captain, Maia Meleshko. Children play games, prepare for concerts, attend meetings and lectures, and then immediately go to bed, cheerful and content. We learn nothing about their interactions with each other. What these diaries lack are personalities, living human beings. In this respect, they differ from the collective diaries analyzed by Matsui and stand very far from the personal diaries researched by Hellbeck. These sources do tell us about the daily life in Eskhar pioneer camp, yet they significantly restrict it to the accounts of organized camp activities and weather conditions, providing to the adult gaze a picture in which "everything was normal."

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383 Nadezhda Okonova, an Artek counselor in the 1960s, made this valuable comment about counselors’ diaries during our conversation in the archive.
The personal camp diary of Larisa Bugaenko is less restrictive. She attended Artek at the age of twelve in 1957. At that time, Larisa was a member of a dance ensemble and this passion became the reason why she went to Artek and managed to stay there during the international session. During that session, children at Artek organized a series of concerts representing their countries, if they came from abroad, or republics, if they were from the USSR. Because of this, talented children performers received preference when it came to participation in that particular session. The Soviet Union had to stage the best and most impressive shows compared to everybody else.

To my delight, Larisa kept a diary through the first twenty days of the forty-day session. Yet, just like Eskhar pioneers, her decision to keep it was not on her own initiative. As Larisa told me in an interview, she had never kept a diary before that one. It turned out that the choreographer of her dance ensemble, Piotr Slonim, was the inspiration behind this personal document. On the title page of her diary, we find an inscription: “Piotr L’vovich gave us this workbook in Simferopol’ and told us to keep a diary. Many thanks to him.”

I will demonstrate that Slonim not only inspired Larisa’s decision to keep a diary but also became its imaginary audience, which shaped the diary’s content in a significant way.

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384 International sessions were usually organized in summer, specifically in July-August. Soviet children, who went to the camp at that time, especially the ones that stayed together with foreigners, were carefully selected. It was a big reward for a child to go to Artek for an international session.

385 Larisa Bugaenko, Diary, Courtesy of Larisa Bugaenko.
Figure 10. The opening page of Larisa Bugaenko’s diary and a separate page with one of Artek’s songs she preserved.

I discovered Larisa’s diary during our first interview on February 8, 2016. Aside from the diary, Larisa kept some of the printed materials she received at Artek, including a guide to organizing line-up parades and several prints of Artek songs that she had learned. Larisa decided to look at the diary as she was doing the interview. Like most of my interviewees, she distrusted her memory. At the same time, the diary allowed her to connect with the past. She herself mentioned, “It was pleasant for me to dive into my childhood.” Through analyzing the combination of Larisa’s diary and interview, I show how the selection of information about one’s summer camp experiences worked at the time.

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386 In this case, it seems that the diary played the role of the trace connecting past and present.
387 Bugaenko, Interview.
when the diary was written and how it works now. I demonstrate that the transformation of Larisa’s self-narrative turned out to be very helpful in bringing to light a fuller picture of her life at Artek. Moreover, the solidification of certain elements in this narrative also provided me with a key to understanding why her camp diary took the shape it did.

For a while, I did not know how to approach Larisa’s diary. The reporting style she chose made them look rather uninformative for a scholar trying to study personal experiences. Here again, here approach to diary writing echoed the one that that Eskhar pioneer chose. In this respect, the most informative diary entry dated from July 24, 1957:

![Image of Larisa Bugaenko’s diary entry from July 24, 1957.](image)

Here is a translation of this diary entry:
Today in the morning, we were getting ready for the king’s arrival. I fell badly during the rehearsal and injured my knee and elbow. I did not know how was I going to perform because I could not stand on my knee [direct translation here implies not her agency, but rather prohibition]. We waited for the king for a long time. At first, a ship appeared on the horizon, everybody thought that this was the king, but it was a scout. The king arrived later. They were supposed to film our dancing, so I decided to perform. Our performance went very well. I stood on my knee and later it hurt. After the performance, the king left for Yalta. Today the regime got disrupted. After absolute,\textsuperscript{388} I went to the detachment. I made the acquaintance of a German girl Gera (later crossed and Hela written over). Then, one girl suggested that we exchange our badges. I did not know what to do, and in the meantime the girl gave me her badge. There was nothing left for me to do except to give her mine in return. Later, Gera gave me her badge. \textsuperscript{389}

We can see that a day at Artek was full of events, but also that children were involved in activities such as long waits for the arrival of guests. If I translated the whole page of this diary, one would learn that during that day Larisa managed to participate in two welcoming delegations. In the morning, she was in the group greeting the king of Afghanistan, and in the evening, she was giving flowers to a Luxembourg delegation. One can also learn that the first days of the international session in Artek were rather confusing, as the badge

\textsuperscript{388} This is how the midday nap was called in Artek. The term signified the strictness of restrictions on any activities except for sleep during this time. Children absolutely had to sleep.

\textsuperscript{389} Larisa Illarionovna Bugaenko, “Diary.”
exchange shows. Finally, it is easy to notice that her identity as a dancer was very important for Larisa at that time. Despite her injury, she participated in a performance for the king because it was filmed. This identity remains quite strong throughout the diary. The rest of the entries in it are short, but they often mention sports competitions or performances in which Larisa participated. Considering that the days at Artek were full of other events, it is easy to see the work of selection in this case. Larisa was inspired by her choreographer and dancing was a significant part of her life. Thus, the events she paid attention to in the diary were connected with either sports or dance.

Another important factor that shaped Larisa’s diary was time, or more precisely the lack thereof. As I mentioned earlier, the entry on July 24, 1957, was the longest entry in the diary. Then, between July 24 and August 1, the entries were no longer than a page. After August 1, some of them consisted of only a few lines, and, after August 10, they stopped completely. The reason lay in the intensity of the daily schedule at Artek. Larisa’s entry from August 8:

I have not been keeping my diary for several days. I did not have time. In the morning I did not want to get up. Yet, we were among the first to line up for the morning exercise. We marched together from the exercise ground. After breakfast, our detachment went to the beach. I did not go to swim however, because I was writing a letter home.”

There was one more combination of factors affecting Larisa’s diary. It is hard to say which one dominated in this case. On the one hand, the diary was written on the initiative of an

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390 Larisa Illarionovna Bugaenko.
adult, her choreographer Piotr Slonim, so it would have only been natural that Larisa avoided describing situations that could have shown her behaving poorly. On the other hand, Artek was famous for being the land of a happy childhood. As a result, certain negative experiences simply did not fit into the frame of what Larisa could have believed she was supposed to feel and live through in the camp. The absence of negative experiences is, as I mentioned earlier, also what Larisa's diary shares with the diaries of the Eskhar pioneers.

I discovered the effects of these factors while interviewing her. During our first conversation, Larisa was reading her diary and reflecting on it. The diary proved to be very useful in stimulating her memories from that trip. Sometimes she just read the entries, but often she added comments and details, enriching the information in the diary. One of these comments was a story about Larisa’s brief, antagonistic encounter with a princess of Luxembourg. Larisa recollected that when children from several detachments were splashing each other in the sea, she could have splashed the princess, who came to her and hit her lightly. Larisa said something, but the princess did not understand. During our interview, Larisa called this episode an “incident,” an interesting term that does not qualify an event in terms of moral judgement, but rather highlights its extraordinary and ambiguous character. The “incident” was not mentioned in Larisa's diary from 1957, but in 2015 she was eager to bring it up and describe it in detail.

Being a good child in the context of staying at Artek meant highlighting good experiences. To understand more closely how this worked in Larisa’s case, let us carefully

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391 Bugaenko, Interview.
analyze three excerpts from her interview, two devoted to the Luxembourg princess and one devoted to instances of theft. I learned the details about the sea splashing incident in two separate parts of the interview. Here is the first one:

I.S. What was your relationship with camp counselors like?
L.B. With the counselors? Well, I don’t remember anything remarkable. Normal.
I.S. Normal, yes?
L.B. Normal, yes. I did not develop a special friendship with them, they were completely normal. Of course, we thought that they were fawning on the Germans a bit, there were more kind of… Well…well, on the other hand, we treated it normally, so, in general, no…
I.S. Oh… sorry.
L.B. No negative emotions, impressions. I don’t remember. Everything was normal.
I.S. Apart from the Germans, where else were children coming from?
L.B. Oh, I remember. Luxembourg, by the way there was a princess of Luxembourg.
I.S. Yes?
L.B. … which also, I had an incident with her. (laughs)
I.S. What incident?
L.B. We were swimming naked, well, bathing.\(^\text{392}\) I remember that someone, well, someone was splashing, or I don’t remember… or something we were splashing, or somebody something, and the splashes of water fell on her. She came and hit me. Well, lightly, of course.

\(^{392}\) Larisa earlier told us that at that time children of younger ages were bathing naked in the sea.
L.B. It was so… She, of course, was pretty, a very pretty girl, somewhere around our age, maybe a bit younger. So, this happened, a princess, like this. Well, you know, she got splashes of water on her, but all children are splashing…

L.B. So like this, I recollected, yes, this happened. There were also Finns.[…]

The second fragment in which the story with the princess came up is also quite remarkable:

I.S. Were you somehow instructed on how to behave with children? (foreign children)

L.B. No, no.

I.S. Nothing like that?

L.B. I don’t remember such things. Maybe they told us something, but it did not stay in my memory.

I.S. So was there any development to the incident with the Luxembourg princess?

L.B. No, no, no. Well, I told her something as well, but she does not understand Russian, so [I or she] just expressed [my or her] indignation [L.B. laughs] and that’s it.

The way Larisa told me the story about the Luxembourg princess is very revealing in terms of her current perception of the time spent in the camp. She constantly tried to tell me that her stay there was “normal,” nothing “remarkable.” Yet, the very moment she mentioned it, she contradicted herself by recollecting the episodes in her life that, as she indicated, could reflect on the uncomfortable or negative side of her camp life. Remarkably, however,
none of them were ever entered in her diary back in 1957. In the case of the interaction with the Luxembourg princess, we can see that Larisa indicated her role in this “incident.” In the first excerpt, she did not say exactly who splashed the princess. She also forgot to tell me that after the princess hit her, she actually responded verbally. It seems that Larisa’s possible role in that conflict still runs against her identity as a “cultured” person. If that interaction really took place back in 1957, Larisa’s possible role in it could have run counter to the identity of a good child or, more specifically, a good Soviet child. The “incident” with the princess was not the only problem in the camp that did not appear in Larisa’s diary. Earlier in the interview, she mentioned a case when a chocolate bar was stolen from her bedside table. After telling me about the Luxembourg princess, she returned to the story about the stolen candy bar herself. The rhetorical device she used was similar to the one that started our conversation about the flaws in the counselors’ behavior. She first claimed that there were no conflicts, and then she proceeded to describe something that could be classified as a conflict. Another element that connects this excerpt with her story about the princess is that here she also uses the word “incident:"

L.B. [looking at the photograph] Here is this girl, Monica, I liked her very much, she has such big eyes in this photo.

I.S. Was Monica German, too?

L.B. Yes, she was German. They were all Germans.

I.S. All Germans, yes.

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395 She uses passive voice, leaving the question who caused the princess’s anger open to interpretations.
396 It is unclear what Larisa’s perception of this situation would have been if the other party were not the princess of Luxembourg.
L.B. We all went to an excursion. I don’t know, we did not have any conflicts, nothing like that. Maybe, somebody stole something from someone, then people were discontent, well someone was caught. Well, we played, well some toy there, or a chocolate bar could be stolen, something like that. Incidents like this happened unfortunately.\footnote{Bugaenko, Interview.}

The general tone of Larisa’s interview about Artek is calm and happy. She does not sound as excited as some of my interviewees, but such excitement would conflict with her current identity of a person who, since childhood, has been rather reserved in her attitude towards the USSR. It does not mean, however, that Larisa was telling me a story of a terrible Soviet institution, which oppressed her for forty days. Her story of going to Artek is a story of an opportunity to go to the seaside, which she received because of her involvement in sports. Larisa specifically mentioned to me that her family was very poor. She also told me that while her father managed to get trips to a sanatorium from the university where he worked, her mother had never seen the sea. During our interview, another identity that Larisa had built over time also played an important role in shaping her discourse. It was a narrower version of her identity as an athlete. When it came to her childhood recollections, Larisa several times highlighted the importance of the Kharkov palace of pioneers in her life. She called the environment of her dance and, later, rhythmic gymnastics groups a second family.\footnote{Bugaenko.} Artek, thus, became more related to this second family since she got there because of participation in the dance group.
Thus, while Larisa did not present Artek ominously, she found it important to fill in the lacunae regarding negative or uncomfortable experiences that exists in her diary. It is remarkable how she started talking about them. In the first excerpt, she recollected the story about the Luxembourg princess after my question about her relationship with the counselors. Having mentioned that there were “no negative emotions, impressions” and “everything was normal,” she first proceeded to claim that counselors treated Soviet children unfairly and then answered my next question about the geography of international delegations at Artek by focusing on a story with a princess that clearly instilled a feeling of discomfort in her. This, of course, does not mean that her current account of that situation is accurate or that this interaction even took place. However, this story in combination with the case of theft and unfair treatment, first of all, highlights a gap in her diary, which does not mention any of these stories or any other negative experiences Larisa had at Artek. This demonstrates to us the possible limitations of the children’s diary genre, as well as this genre’s potential to contextualize the stories my interviewee did not mention in the diary but revealed during our conversation.

First and foremost, it concerns the cases of theft. The interview and diary reveal that consumer goods, particularly food, room decorations, and toys, were something Larisa paid attention to. The diary entry from July 28, 1957, mentioned that Larisa and her fellow Kharkovites participated in the opening of the Peace and Friendship Relay in Artek. Throughout the relay, each country had to prepare a concert to represent itself. Ukraine was first. After the concert, Larisa wrote, “we were invited for an evening tea. We were very cheerful. They gave us tea, a pie, three pears, sweets, and three quarters of an orange.
We went to bed at twelve a.m.”399 Taking into account how much information was omitted in Larisa’s diary, it is striking that she so meticulously mentioned the details of fruits and sweets she received that day. The topic of access to food, or even its abundance, did not disappear in the interview. Larisa noted, “The food in the canteen, of course, was very, the food was amazing, like very, so to say, tables, cultured, beautiful, tablecloths. And what was interesting was that, for the third course there, as a rule, they served fruits, so, but these fruits were served in one vase. They were not served in portions.”400 Saying this, Larisa emphasized the abundance of fruits, the feeling that she could eat as much as she wanted. With this in mind, it is striking that the negative experience that Larisa recollected but that was not in the diary concerned the theft of food. It suggests that the topic of access to food or perhaps the topic of her personal welfare remained important throughout her whole life. As for the diary, if Larisa’s chocolate bar was really stolen, not mentioning the disappearance of such a desired treat looks like a conscious strategy of omitting certain information. The same can be said about toys. During our interview, Larisa told me that German children in her detachment were often visited by foreign delegations that brought them presents, particularly toys. Soviet children, in the meantime, received nothing, which is why some of them started approaching those delegations and asking for presents. If that were true, the fact that Larisa never mentioned it indicates a serious work of self-censorship characterizing her diary.

This censorship does not seem to be completely gone from her interview, either. The way Larisa told the stories of her negative experiences indicates hesitation on her part.

399 Larisa Illarionovna Bugaenko, “Diary.”
400 Bugaenko, Interview.
The fact that these recollections were preceded by the phrase “everything was normal” may mean that she has both a desire not to ruin a positive narrative of her life at Artek and a wish to bring up the episodes that clearly disrupted it. In Chapter Three, I highlighted the power that Artek’s myth has over people on post-Soviet space even now. Larisa’s hesitation in her interview might serve as one more testament to it. Combined with her identity as a person who has always understood the flaws of Soviet power and has never been a devoted communist, it allows us to suggest that memories about the Soviet past can be compartmentalized. These memories are fragmented and consist of multiple narratives that help people make sense of their past experiences. In Larisa’s case, these narratives might include the myth of Artek, the narrative of her experiences in the Pioneer Palace, and even the narrative of her dance group as a second family.

The combination of a diary and interview, thus, allows us to better understand both. The diary serves as a trigger for recollections by immersing a person in the past, giving the interviewee a feeling of solid ground. In the meantime, the interview helps reveal the factors that could have shaped the diary, which is especially important in the case of diaries which children did not initiate themselves. In this part, I looked at two types of diaries. The first was written collectively, and the children were told to keep it to reflect on their lives in the camp. The second diary was an individual one, though Larisa Bugaenko, its author, started it because her choreographer told her to do that as well. I showed that multiple factors contributed to the way children chose content for their diary entries and the way they framed it. Yet, among them, I believe that the presence of an adult gaze played a significant role. While time limitations, for example, simply reduced the amount of information that one entered into a diary, the adult gaze played a selective role. It
contributed significantly to the choice of language that the Eskhar pioneers used to express themselves. Larisa’s diary demonstrates that children did not tend to write this way in more private documents. Nevertheless, there is a similarity between her and the Eskhar pioneers. Both types of diaries lack introspection and are shaped as a chronicle of events rather than anything else. This, to a certain extent, could be caused by the fact that these diaries were covering a short time period, during which children’s daily routines were temporarily transformed. Moreover, in Larisa’s case, the whole mythology surrounding Artek could have contributed, as well. Yet, the fact that she received the workbook for the diary from her choreographer and went as far as mentioning his contribution to her keeping a diary on the first page suggests that she kept Piotr Slonim in mind while making her diary entries. Thus, in her case, the role of an adult’s gaze specifically altered the choice of information. She focused on her participation in sports, concert performances, and celebratory events. Additionally, she mentioned the excursions she took, the films she saw, the food she ate, and the new friends she made.

With her diary, Larisa created a chronicle of an athlete having a good time at Artek. Despite this, some of the exciting events that involved her are missing. Mostly, these are the trips. It is highly likely that she did not write about them in detail because she was too tired after a day trip or, once, even a two-day trip. With events that incited negative emotions, however, the situation is quite straightforward because they do not appear in her diary at all. An interview, thus, serves as an important complementary element. First, it brings to light areas of Larisa’s experience at Artek that otherwise would have remained in the dark. This gives us important information, for example, about the relations between foreign and Soviet children in the camp. In the diary, Larisa mentioned meeting her
German peers and making friends with them. At the end of the diary, we can even see how Larisa was trying to learn German as she was writing down simple words and phrases. Thus, without the interview, the diary would present to us a picture of harmonious friendship of the peoples. Yet, the situation was not exactly like that. Although she claimed that everything was “normal,” Larisa proceeded with recollecting experiences that were exactly the opposite and reflected tensions in the relations between German and Soviet children, with the latter feeling deprived of attention and access to goods (the cases of the visiting delegations and the counselors’ behavior).

**Not That Kind of Good Pioneer: The Story of Natalia Martinkus**

In the process of research, I managed to collect a set of camp albums, as well as numerous personal collections of photographs. One of them was especially rich, and I had a chance to interview its owner, Natalia Martinkus. The way Natalia talked about her childhood is notable for the integration of the personal and the political. She was born in 1956 to an aviation engineer (father) and a school music teacher (her mother, who was also an engineer by her first education). Her father taught at the Krylov Higher College of Engineering in Kharkov (Khr’kovskoie vysshee komandno-inzhenernoe uchilishche imeni Krylova). He also worked at the same Palace of Pioneers that Larisa Bugaenko went to, leading the airplane construction hobby group there. In addition to these occupations, Natalia’s father was the secretary of the Party Committee in his department. “And to this he also devoted a lot of health, nerves and everything in his life because then the Party Organization looked into (vnikala) everything, into the officers’ personal lives. Especially among the officers. Into the officers’ personal lives, their children’s performance at school,
into their living conditions, and so on,” Natalia told me.401 In the meantime, she also
mentioned that her father “deeply believed in that. He was one of those people who did not
do it superficially (nominal’no), he deeply (sviato) believed in what he was doing.”402 This
integration of the personal and the political seemed to be the norm for Natalia as she further
recalled her family life in the USSR:

N.M. […] Oh! I remembered! He was called the secretary of the party committee.
I.S. Oh, yes, of course.
N.M. Here, I remembered.
I.S. The party committee, the local committee, all those…
N.M. Yes, you know all of this was in our house, we heard it all the time. As I say, we
lived…
I.S. Really?
N. M. No, but we, when dad came home from work, my mother, this is all we talked
about.
I.S. All?
N.M. Mother came and talked about her communist construction (kommunstroi). My
dad, in our house we did not talk about classes at dinner. No, all of this fell by the
wayside at home. My dad, all these secretaries of the party committee… all of this we
discussed at home in the kitchen. My brother and I knew it all, we lived in this, all the

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401 Martinkus, interview, February 5, 2016.
402 Martinkus.
calls, all the friends, and all these showdowns, all of this took place in our house, happened in my life.”

Natalia also portrays her family as having many close friends. In this respect, when she says, “we lived in this, all the calls, all the friends, and all these showdowns, all of this took place in our house,” it, again, confirms that the personal and the political intertwined closely in her perception of the past. This explains why it was so difficult for her to reconcile the nostalgia for her Soviet past with the desire to be a good Ukrainian citizen in a time of war. Neither Natalia nor her brother (who started his career in the KGB and now lives in Russia) supported the Russian annexation of Crimea and the subsequent war in Eastern Ukraine. In 2014-2015, however the Ukrainian government was sending a clear message that nostalgia for the Soviet times among the population posed a threat to the country’s territorial unity and even survival. This message was embodied in a package of de-communization laws that Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted on April 9, 2015. The goal of the new laws was to “eliminate the consequences of Soviet ideology” in Ukraine. De-communization meant not only changes of city, street and village names, but one of its major laws also criminalized any display of the communist regime’s propaganda, including “public rejection of the criminal character of the communist totalitarian regime in Ukraine in 1917-1991.”

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403 Martinkus.
404 “Zakon Ukrainy 'Pro zasudzhennia komunistychnoho ta natsional-sotsialistychnoho (natsysts'koho) totalitarynykh rezhymiv v Ukraini ta zaboronu propahandy yikhnoi symvoliky’” (2015), https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD_%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D0%B8%C2%AB%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%BE_%D0%B7%D0%BO%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8F_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83%D0%BD%D1%96%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D1%82%D0%B0_%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD%BB-
Many people in Kharkov took de-communization very seriously. When I was conducting my interviews, several possible interviewees refused to talk to me or be recorded because of the new policies. As for Natalia, she was not intimidated by the new regulations. Yet, she openly recognized her inability to reconcile her own identity and memory with the one that Ukrainian authorities tried to impose:

N.M. (still talking about her father) What was also exceptional, he went to the university (*institut*), when he studied at the academy, he received a Stalin scholarship, yes. When I was a student, I received a Lenin scholarship…

I.S. Really?

N.M. … this is our family thing (*eto u nas semeinoe*). Yes, I was, when I studied at the university (*institute*), I received a Lenin scholarship.

I.S. Wow!

N.M. These days it may be shameful to talk about this.

I.S. I am not sure.

N.M. It is inappropriate, you know. Well, again, this is the way life is now, confusing, bifurcated. Yet, I was the only person in the whole university who received a Lenin scholarship. And my dad received a Stalin scholarship, that is why he was proud, when…”

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405 Martinkus, interview, February 5, 2016.
When working with oral history, especially one recently recorded, one often hears that too many things have happened, thus disrupting the information that interviewees are providing. This excerpt shows that there are limits to these disruptions. Another thing to take into account is that every person creates his or her own chronology of life-changing events that affect his or her narrative. Natalia Martinkus, as we see, was definitely concerned with how her nostalgia for the USSR fit into the current political narrative of Ukraine crusading against its Soviet past. She mentioned this state of “everything is confusing, bifurcated” to me, but it did not prevent her from further speaking about her past and political activities, in particular in a nostalgic manner. At the same time, her nostalgia is also of a hybrid nature. It is nostalgia for the time when there was a community of people with whom she was happy, her parents and their friends who are now gone. In the excerpt about the Lenin scholarship, it is especially visible. Receiving this scholarship is important to her not only because it singled her out among others, but also because it connects her to her father, because “this is our family thing.

This mix of the personal and political in Natalia’s discourse, combined with the way she presents her father, does not mean that her identity fully aligned with his. She manages to create her own story, even though it is a story about a good daughter in a family with a highly politicized private life. This story is visible in both her pictures taken during childhood and adolescent years and in her current narrative. Moreover, the pictures actually turned out to be an effective device in helping Natalia to assume more agency during our interview, leaving the political pattern and family framework of the narrative that my initial questions drove her into and asserting a narrative that in some ways ran counter to her narrative of nostalgia.
The dynamic during an interview is very important. The goal of an interviewer is to create space for an interviewee to tell his or her own story with minimal interference. In the case of my interview with Natalia, I believe that if it were not for the photographs, the shape of the interview and the information I received during it could have been very different. Natalia was one of my first interviewees, and, with her, I was still figuring out how to inquire about summer camp memories. To understand the personal contexts of my interviewees, I asked them to tell me about their parents at the beginning of our conversations. This helped me understand their childhood, immersed them in the past, and created trust between us. With Natalia, this technique worked very well. As I mentioned earlier, it also allowed me to see how she looked at her past. Yet, combined with my lack of experience, it could have created a serious limitation to the amount of information I would have learned from our conversation. This became clear when Natalia made a remark while looking at her album: “Well, please understand (ponimaesh), unfortunately, there are no such informative photos here, like the ones with the line-up parade.”

Because her album consisted of pictures made by private people for private purposes, it did not reflect camp life as presented in archival documents and, for example, camp photo albums. The moments of everyday camp life that Natalia’s photographs had captured were extremely precious for me as a researcher, yet, at the beginning of the interview process, I did not know how to inquire about them. Moreover, my interviewee seemed to believe that I was not even interested in them, which I assured her was not the case. In the rest of this section,

406 Martinkus.
I will analyze a camp album, compare it with Natalia’s photos, and show what kind of story they helped her to assert throughout our interview.

In my search for documents reflecting everyday life at the summer camps, I used a popular Ukrainian website olx. Olx is a local analogue of ebay, where people can sell goods they possess. Through that website, I met Vladimir, who was selling several albums from a camp named after German Titov, the second Soviet cosmonaut. The camp was in Brusino village, near Horlivka, in the Donetsk region. When the war started in that region in 2014, locals plundered the camp taking the albums with them. Vladimir later bought these albums and then tried to earn more from his purchase on olx. I had already seen examples of camp albums in Moscow archives, and the ones I purchased did not differ from them significantly. Again, they represented a genre of a chronicle, persuading the authorities that the camp was fulfilling the agenda they prescribed and that the children there were happy. Here are some examples of the photographs in the album, dated 1967.
Figure 12. The title page of the album of German Titov’s camp in Brusino. The inscription says: “A Chronicle of the pioneer republic named after G. S. Titov, 1967.” The page also features an image of a pioneer tie.
Figure 13. A page from the album of German Titov’s pioneer camp. The caption under the photograph says: Celebratory line-up parade devoted to the opening of the camp session.
В мире
Сказок
Figure 14. A page from the album of German Titov’s pioneer camp. The caption under the photograph says: “In the world of fairy tales.”

Figure 15. A page from the album of German Titov’s pioneer camp. The caption under the photograph says: “The most responsible duty.”

The photographs show the life of children in the camp focusing on the prescribed activities. Here, we can see a line-up parade, the fulfillment of kitchen duty, and the
preparations for some kind of festivity connected with fairy tales. The album also features a soccer game, a marching and singing competition, children watering flowers, a sanitary inspection, and a pause from a soccer game in a boys’ bedroom. It also includes a poetic entry devoted to the commemoration of fallen heroes from the Great Patriotic War.

Such albums were created to present a visual document of camp life for various inspectors. As a result, the activities they covered were quite limited. In this respect, they resemble the approach that Eskhar pioneers adopted in their diaries. Another genre of photographs a researcher can access while studying summer camps is group photographs of and for children. They were usually made by a professional photographer and featured a detachment with its counselor, vospitatel,’ and possibly regalia that children acquired during the camp session. Here is an example of such a photo from Aleksandr Pokornyi’s personal archive:
Figure 16. A photograph featuring Aleksandr Pokornyj’s detachment in Artek in summer 1974. Courtesy of Aleksandr Pokorny.

The photograph features Aleksandr’s detachment in Artek, where he went in 1974. A boy on the left is holding a banner telling us the number of the detachment. Two counselors are in the middle of the group of children, one above the other, while chairs are used to create a sufficient difference in children’s height and ensure that everyone can be seen. The picture also highlights the sea, something that, as I will show, was very important for other photographs taken at camps situated at the seaside. Two rocks in the sea on the
left, called Adalares, were among the major landmarks of Artek. Thus, they clearly tied the picture to a specific locality. An alternative version of this could have been an inscription made on the image, or in some advanced cases, a series of images on the margins of the image. Both are present on Vladimir Trushin’s photograph taken at Lira camp, in the Kharkov region, in 1987.

Figure 17. A photograph featuring Vladimir Trushin’s detachment at Lira camp, in the Kharkiv region, 1987. Courtesy of Vladimir Trushin.

The image informs us that the photograph was taken during the June session of 1987 at Lira camp near Kharkov. Vladimir Trushin, a counselor, is seated on a bench in
the middle of the group, accompanied by the camp director and a female counselor. Such collective photographs served as a memory tool. Looking at them, a person could recollect whom he or she stayed with in the camp, when, and where that happened. Typically for the USSR, the insistence was on portraying the whole detachment. The detachment had to be an integrated collective unit with strong ties between its members. It was also customary to dress nicely for such photographs. One can see that in Vladimir Trushin’s photo, many of the adults and children are wearing light-colored shirts combined with dark pants or skirts. Some of them are also wearing pioneer ties. Since it was the first detachment, some young people were already Komsomol members, which relieved them of the duty to wear pioneer uniform and attributes.407

Natalia Martinkus’ photographs run counter to many conventions established by both camp albums and group photographs. To be sure, she had the group camp photographs:

407 In the case of Aleksandr Pokorny, the picture was taken in Artek, where everyone wore pioneer ties all the time. However, children could also wear a parade uniform, since usually camps like this featured several sets of uniforms.
Nevertheless, a number of pictures in her album present something different:
Figure 19. Natalia (upper right corner), her friend, and their counselor, Volodia, relaxing on the beach. Maiak camp, the early 1970s.

It is rather unlikely that a picture like this would have entered a camp album. As I have shown, the concept shaping the construction of these albums could be formulated as organized active rest. Their authors aimed to show to the authorities that the camp was fulfilling the functions prescribed by the Komsomol. Pictures portraying pioneers’ rest at the beach occurred, yet their composition was different:

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408 I discuss the meaning of active rest in depth in the second chapter.
There are two significant differences between Natalia’s photo and the postcard featured above. First, Natalia’s picture features a small group of people. Shooting their postcard collection, Shagin and Soloviov also portrayed small groups of children several times. However, these groups are usually justified either by the fact that the activity was performed by a limited group, like an aviation modelling workshop, or by the limited nature of the activity itself like a group reading of the newspaper. Children were allowed to split up and have a certain level of privacy, and they were not obliged to do everything as a

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detachment as long as they were engaged in an organized, prescribed activity. Moreover, there were activities designed specifically for individual structural units of the detachment. A unit like this was called *zveno* (from the link of a chain) and consisted of eight people.

In the context of this visual discourse created by post cards, camp albums, and group photographs, Natalia’s picture stands out because it portrays a group of people who do nothing on the beach. What is more, it portrays a group of girls surrounding the detachment’s male counselor. A more traditional depiction of children with the counselor would make him or her stand out and visibly occupy a position of a teacher. For example, in her photographic sketch of Vasilek pioneer camp in the Poltava region, T. Petrova portrayed the work of young newspaper correspondents this way:
Figure 21. A photograph from T. Petrova’s Pioneer Camp Vasilek (cornflower).⁴¹⁰

Petrova’s photograph depicts a hobby group leader, who is also a counselor, surrounded by a group of pioneers. She is portrayed as a leader, an editor of the newspaper, who teaches young people in the relaxed atmosphere of a camp. In Natalia’s photograph, there is no such clear center of group interaction. Neither is the counselor performing a leadership role. He might be the reason why four girls gathered in the vicinity, but it is clear that at the moment the photo was taken he was not teaching them how to become

⁴¹⁰ T. Petrova, Pionerskii lager’ Vasilek (Kharkov: Prapor, 1980). Page numbers are absent.
better communists. Another of Natalia’s photographs provides further insight into interpersonal relations in her detachment:

![Figure 22. Natalia Martinkus and her friends in Maiak camp. Courtesy of Natalia Martinkus.](image)

This photograph, again, depicts only a group within the detachment, and this group is not preoccupied by any activity. Moreover, this group is predominantly male, featuring only three girls. When camp pedagogues were writing about the romantic aspects of pioneer summers, they usually mentioned evening fires, baked potatoes, and sunrises in the forest. These were things that children had to experience together with their peers from the detachment, not in a separate group that they formed based on personal interest. Pioneer romance never included attraction and flirtation between boys and girls, something that
occupied a prominent place in the narratives of several my interviewees, including Natalia Martinkus.

I conducted two interviews with Natalia. The first one was rather short. We talked in a crowded café and her time was limited, so I did not ask contextualizing questions about her family, school life, and childhood in general. Probably because of this, in the narrative she produced about three summers spent in Maiak camp, on the Black sea, she portrayed herself as an active agent often involved in rather mischievous activities. For example, she provided a detailed description of an important night camp ritual of covering your sleeping comrades with toothpaste. This ritual took different forms in different detachments and, at times, became rather vindictive. Through it, children often established the hierarchy of power in the group. In Natalia’s case, however, things were rather different:

I.S. How many people were there in the room?

N.M. Well, I only remember the girls’ room, also boys came to cover us with paste. They came and covered!

I.S. Did you sleep at that time or were you awake?

N.M. Usually, this tradition of covering people with toothpaste happened at the end of the session, that is why we were waiting, we were lying in ambush and they were lying in ambush.

I.S. How? Tell me more.

N.M. Well, again, I don’t remember the details, but it was important who goes first, it was important to take the other party aback. We wrapped ourselves in white bedsheets, like ghosts, and walked in those long sheets, of course only the most courageous ones
were walking, but I was always among the leaders (*zavodil*), for which I was frequently punished.⁴¹¹

This image of an active but mischievous pioneer (Natalia, after all, was the head of the detachment’s council at her school) appeared rather late in our second conversation precisely because I started with questions about her family. As I mentioned, these questions uncovered an important personal story that enriched my understanding of Natalia’s identity. Yet, this story was overshadowing not only the narrative of a mischievous pioneer, but also the narrative of coming of age as a girl in the USSR. This particular narrative came to the fore thanks to Natalia’s photo album. As an excerpt below demonstrates, we proceeded cautiously, but Natalia still provided me with some insights:

N.M. Yes. You see, it is written here Crimea, pioneer camp Maiak on the photograph, the year 1971.

I.S. 1971, wow. So this is, ok they are organized in chronological order.

N.M. This is all Maiak. Well, they were all made in one year, there was… So, for example, this one was taken on the roof of our bedroom unit. It was made like a solarium, this is how it was called.

I.S. Yes.

N.M. So above there are roofs, where we were kind of sunbathing, but we were not sunbathing there. There we held various gatherings and took pictures. This is how big our detachment was.

I.S. It was big.

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⁴¹¹ Natalia Martinkus, interview by Iuliia Skubytska, audio recording, October 18, 2015, Kharkiv.
N.M. Yes, it was.

I.S. How many people were there?

N.M. And here is a photograph, this is what I told you, that all the boys were ours. Here is Ania, a friend of mine I told you about. This is Tania, also my friend from Khar’kov. This was an all-union camp after all. All the boys, however, were Muscovites, here are all those boys and they were in such a good shape (we are looking at figure 17).

I.S. There are more boys than girls.

N.M. Not only that, here are three of us, as my grandma called pestrukhi.\textsuperscript{412}

I.S. Oh, wow.

N.M. This is Tatiana, me, and Ania, yes. The rest…

I.S. These are adolescents, I guess…

N.M. Yes.

I.S. Aged fourteen, or how old?

N.M. Well, no, not fourteen yet, around twelve.

I.S. Twelve?

N.M. It is just that the boys are very fit (nakachannyie).

I.S. Oh, yes, as I look at them, they are quite…

N.M. Yes, they are very.

I.S. This young man looks very serious.

\textsuperscript{412} A word for a girl who stands out and attracts attention often from the opposite sex.
N.M. Yes, and here we were making curls, here is my Ania /smiles/ here we also did back combing, I have an incredible back combing on my head. Ania also had some hair-curlers, something we were making (krutili).

IS. By yourself?

N.M. Of course by ourselves. Who would be doing it for us in a camp? They would have only curled pony-tails for us and put us into a corner.413

In this excerpt, we can see two identities of Natalia coming together. On the one hand, we encounter a grown-up woman looking at her past and being proud of it. It seems that the comments about the boys’ bodies were her voice. However, photographs help this woman to connect with herself as a young girl, who, for example, tried to look beautiful and attract boys. This opens a different story and a different identity of Natalia, not just the one of a good daughter or mischievous political activist. It is the identity of an adolescent girl exploring the world of relations with boys, attraction, and flirtation.

In general, sexuality was a topic that was hard to develop during my interviews. Several factors contributed to this. First, I found the majority of my interviewees through my parents. As a result, they still perceived me as a daughter of someone they knew and did not feel comfortable revealing the details of their personal lives to me. Second, and no less important, the topic of personal relationships and sex, especially for adolescents, was taboo in the USSR. Everything had to be very innocent and, of course, in no way could adolescents be seen as engaged in sexual behavior. Natalia herself communicated this

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413 Martinkus, interview, February 5, 2016.
attitude as we further proceeded to look at her album and found a picture in which she was portrayed with a boy hugging her.

Figure 23. Natalia and a boy she called her “bodyguard.” Courtesy of Natalia Martinkus.

N.M. And this is my bodyguard, he followed me everywhere.

I.S. Yes?

N.M. Yes.

I.S. So how did this courtship happen?

N.M. Well, like that…

I.S. Admirers.

N.M. Well, it was all very sweet of course. Not as dissolute and awful as now young, young, I can’t even say it young people, children communicate, what they allow themselves to do. This was all very sweet, like holding hands. I don’t even remember
if we proceeded to kissing or not, but somewhere at the dance parties we held closer to each other, this was as far as we could dream to go. Well, probably, during dancing some kisses on the cheek happened there. Somewhere near the fire, so it was obligatory to sit together and hold each other’s hands. If they were showing a movie, then also sit together and hold hands. Like this.  

Romantic relationships with the opposite sex were an important element of camp life for my interviewees. Several of them mentioned such relationships. Yet when I asked how far they went, everybody mentioned that in their case things were very innocent, while somewhere in the bushes other young people could have been doing something different and could have been caught. One male interviewee, when initially asked by my dad to talk to me, exclaimed that of course summer camps played an important role in adolescents’ lives because everyone had their first sex there. He did not discuss this with me later and I decided not to pursue it. This does not mean that everybody had sex in summer camps as an adolescent. It is highly possible that Natalia and her “bodyguard” were only holding hands and kissing each other on the cheek. Yet, for some people things could have been going further than that. After all, my interviewees were ready to point at certain developments happening in the bushes even if they were uncomfortable discussing further details.

Natalia Martinkus’ photo album turned out to be a great device that helped me enrich the diversity of the topics I brought up with my other interviews. It brought to the

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414 Martinkus.
fore the issue of gender identity and the question of what it meant to be an adolescent girl or boy in a camp. It also opened the topic of romantic relations, which were very important in summer camp life, but were completely concealed by camp reports, photo albums, detachments’ diaries, and counselors’ guidebooks. The guidebooks, with their advice on how to work with children and adolescents between ten and fourteen, said nothing about the mere possibility that young people could fall in love with each other. Pioneers had no sexuality at the official level. In reality, of course, they did, and this topic deserves further exploration.

**Conclusions**

Working with personal sources is like walking a tightrope. One has to be very careful in reaching conclusions regarding the statements made in diaries, memoirs, or oral history interviews. Visual sources constitute a whole different challenge, since their narrative has a logic of its own. As a result, all these sources need careful contextualization, an understanding that we are dealing with discourses rather than direct and transparent reflections of past events. Yet, believing that such transparent reflections even exist is rather futile, as historians have already shown. As complicated and peculiar as personal sources are, they can still provide information unattainable from other types of evidence.

Throughout my research, I discovered various types of personal sources, including diaries, photographs, and oral history interviews. I also discovered detachments’ diaries, camp photo albums, and professionally made group photographs. This created a unique opportunity for triangulation. I could contextualize private discourses by comparing them with more public ones, and, having done that, incorporate the information that interviews provided. The result of this procedure was the discovery of how the identities of the
narrators were affecting the information that entered a certain source, which showed both the sources’ potential and its limitations. Then, I compared the sources that my narrators produced or obtained at the time that the events we discussed actually happened with the way they talk about these events now. This procedure yielded the discovery of new, more complex narratives than the use of only one type of source could provide. In the case of Larisa Bugaenko, her diary made it possible to see her fascination with children who came to Artek from abroad. She actively made friends with them and even tried to start learning their language. Her interview, however, demonstrated that this process could have been more ambiguous than her diary portrayed. She claimed that German children were treated differently than their Soviet peers. They received more attention from counselors and were visited by foreign delegations, who often gave them presents while ignoring Soviet children. Artek was not only a place that united youth, but it also showed them that there were differences and hierarchies. It is unclear how deeply Larisa experienced this divide when she stayed in the camp. What we do know, however, is that now it occupies a prominent place in her narrative about life at Artek.

The case of Natalia Martinkus is rather different. Here, I paid more attention to the effect that a visual source can have on an interview. I demonstrated that photographs became an effective way to diversify the narratives of self that Natalia was presenting to me during our conversation. In terms of discovering new ways of thinking about summer camps, her photo album created an opportunity for me to address an important element in summer camp life that is not reflected in public documents and is hard to address in personal interviews. There was a good reason why romantic engagement among young people in the camps was a topic avoided in counselors’ books and camp albums. As I
showed in Chapter Two, falling in love was simply not on the agenda of the Soviet state. One would assume that adolescent love was an uncomfortable topic for Soviet educators because they worked so hard to avoid addressing it in their work. Natalia’s photographs also became evidence of another element essential for the analysis of summer camp life. This was the element of relaxation and sometimes even boredom, the times when children were not engaged in prescribed activities, the “uninformative” moments of their lives. Of course, her photograph at the beach is very informative, as it shows, for example, personal relations within the detachment, and between campers and their counselor. It also shows how important the beach was for the camps situated at the seaside. Moreover, this photograph helped Natalia remember her counselor. Finally, this and other photographs helped Natalia recollect how she was an adolescent girl, how she wanted to look, and how she carefully explored the world of relationships between young people. When analyzing personal sources, it is difficult to generalize. Things that some people experienced others did not. Statistics are not available and impossible to produce. What one can claim is that some things happened to some people, which puts them into the horizon of possibility. Such outcomes should not be discouraging though. The only thing it proves is the amazing richness of everyday life that presents a researcher with ample opportunities for further exploration.
Conclusions

What did it mean to be a Soviet child during second-generation socialism and what role summer camps played in shaping this unique experience? In Chapter One, I demonstrated that a look into the summer camps organization highlights the importance of family in the Soviet Union. Soviet state’s plans for intervention into the family were quite radical, yet their realization turned out to be moderate. Marx and Engels wished to liberate the young from the influence of their parents. For Soviet authorities, however, family remained an important agent of intergenerational information transfer. Moreover, during second generation socialism, Soviet authorities viewed the connections between generations in the family as a useful tool that could, for example, help them regulate the workforce market. Children went to summer camps, where counselors often were recruited from an enterprise or organization that administered them. Moreover, outstanding workers of the enterprises that owned the camps were supposed to visit and talk to campers about their professions. For the working class especially, this was a way of creating workers’ dynasties and controlling social mobility. The Bolsheviks came to power singing these lines of the International “We’ll change henceforth the old tradition/ And spurn the dust to win the prize.” Yet, in the late 1950s, Soviet counselors’ books were still talking about the “natural” connection between land and rural children, while their urban counterparts from the working class were learning how caring their parents’ enterprises were and how interesting were their parents’ professions. High-achievers from socialist republics, in the meantime, were learning in Artek that they were not good enough without a polished command of the Russian language. Throughout the whole span of the Soviet history, every young person had had an origin that played an important role in shaping their lives. Access to higher
education, to goods and services, young people’s duties to the state depended on the families they came from. Krupskaia advocated for full devotion of young Leninists’ lives to the cause of the struggle for the communist future. Yet, the organizations that the Soviet state created to turn children into the political subjects, the children of the state, never fully managed to do that. Even the most devoted Soviet pioneer was also a Russian, Kyrgyz, or Georgian, boy or a girl, whose parents came from a working class, peasants, or intelligentsia and worked at a particular enterprise, organization, or collective farm. Despite the Soviet utopian aspirations, heritage and lineage meant a lot for those who had to make these aspirations come true. Social transformation was a slow process in the USSR.

While stressing the importance of family in children’s lives, summer camps also removed children from their families and usual surroundings for a period of three to four weeks. Thus, paradoxically, despite their controlled everyday routines, summer camps were spaces of independence for children. Taken out of their comfort zones and stable power relations, in summer camps, children were shaping their lives through numerous independent decisions, which helped them explore their identities and behaviors. Nowadays, people who went to summer camps as children remember them primarily through interactions with their peers and not adults. This suggests a possibility that a process of making friends, resolving conflicts, and establishing oneself in a new group of people consumed a lot of energy and could have left strong imprints in my interviewees’ memories.

Being a Soviet child during second-generation socialism also meant being an object of experimentation. After his ascendance to power, Khrushchev contested the existing notions of childhood introducing into it such elements as manual labor. Larisa Bugaenko
remembered how her class spent two years working as laboratory assistants after Khrushchev’s 1958 reform. Liudmila Smirnova recollected that she never had a school graduation party because, when she finished school in the late 1950s, they were temporarily forbidden. Nevertheless, there were serious limitations to how far and how fast any change could go. When Larisa’s class was sent to the laboratory, its employees did not know how to incorporate children into their work, so Larisa and her peers spent most of their time doing nothing. In terms of the summer camps, the radical reforms were buffered by the existing camp monitoring system and administrative complications. Komsomol could require that children were actively engaged in the work of hobby groups in summer camps. Yet, for a while camp organizers could not hire hobby group leaders full time. The same happened with teachers. While it was strongly encouraged that one of two people responsible for a pioneer detachment in the camp was a teacher, for a while, low wages discouraged teachers from working in summer camps and the Ministry of Education refused to force them into this type of work.

Being a Soviet child meant being an object of anxieties of the state and one’s parents. To further complicate the situation, both parents and the state distrusted each other. The state feared that parents either could not provide enough control over children’s lives or that their love and care would prevent the young generation from developing the character qualities that exemplary communists needed. As for the parents, they often needed to rely on the state’s support in childrearing. Many urban families were disconnected from their older relatives who could look after their children. Soviet working

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415 Bugaenko, interview.
416 Smirnova, Interview.
mothers needed childcare facilities that the Soviet state established. Soviet authorities understood this need and aside of summer camps organized kindergartens, schools, sports schools and sections, Pioneer Palaces, city summer camps, school summer camps, monitored children’s playgrounds, young engineers’ and naturalists’ stations, and children’s sanatoriums.417 Young Pioneers’ Organization also did a lot to ensure that after leaving school Soviet children were engaged in activities designed for them by adults. My interviewees remember how after school they gathered scrap metal and old books for recycling or prepared for various competitions, like the marching and singing competition. Both in and outside of summer camps Soviet children had to be kept busy.

Parents, in the meantime, were expected not to intrude into these activities, entrusting their children to the care of professionals. For a long time, summer camps had only one parent-visiting day, during which families had to spend time together in a specific area of the camp. Leaving the camp was forbidden. Despite their dependence on such institutions as summer camps, Soviet parents still felt anxious about sending children there. One of the ways in which this anxiety manifested itself was food, which became a serious matter of contestation between parents and camp administrations. Parents always worried that camp food was not good enough. That is why, they brought it during every visit to a camp. Most often, however, they brought too much and as the camps did not provide individual food storage, every parental visiting day ended with a cleaning of children’s bedside tables of all the edibles except for cookies and sweets to avoid poisoning.

417 City summer camps were day camps usually organized in city parks. School summer camps were the day camps organized in schools. Monitored playgrounds were the playgrounds organized by trade unions, they had an adult supervisor, who organized various activities with children and took care of their safety. Sometimes, monitored playgrounds even provided meals. Young engineers’ stations were special spaces that had necessary equipment to engage children in the basics of engineering.
During the time of the second-generation socialism, Soviet children were also an object of thorough examination of Soviet psychologists and educators. Of course, one of the main issues Soviet scholars examined was the improvement of the system of children’s ideological education. The results of their work were often turned into publications accessible to general public, thus potentially enabling camp organizers and counselors to improve their work by relying on numerous guidelines produced by people with graduate degrees. Yet, it is unclear what part of this information camp employees received. The system of camps’ staff members training relied on the series of seminars organized by local Komsomol committees along with the educators and Pioneer Palaces’ specialists. Moreover, camp counselors, often represented by people with no or unfinished pedagogical education were not competent enough to understand all the intricacies of the new research developed by professional pedagogues. As a result, it is rather unclear how they interpreted what they heard and to what extent they were ready to implement it in their work. This points to a bigger issue concerning summer camps as spaces of children’s political indoctrination. The fact that Soviet authorities entrusted trade unions, who did not have leverage over the cadres that could provide the highest quality of children’s education pushes one to further examine the question: what was the primary concern of the state when it came to children’s summer rest? Why the system of institutions that were supposed to


419 See, for example: Gukasova, Trudovoie vospitanie v zagorodnom pionerskom lagere; Aranskii, Opyt tradovogo vospitania v letnee vremia (Sbornik statei); Lebedinskii, Vospitatel’naia rabota v pionerskom lagere. Sbornik instruktivnykh i metodicheskikh materialov v pomoshch rabotnikam pionerskih lagerei i raionnykh sovetov pionerskoi organizatsii.
immerse children into an experience of direct contact with the state and its futuristic aspirations were not entrusted to the organizations responsible for envisioning the Soviet utopia, the Communist Party or the Komsomol? As of now, it seems that the answer lies of the administrative and economic plains. The system of summer camp management came to life based on contingencies. In the 1920s-1930s trade unions proved to be capable of successfully mobilizing resources and effectively managing adults’ rest, so they were entrusted with the task of taking care of children as well. By the 1950s, it became clear, however, that more resources were needed, as a result, organization of children’s rest was further decentralized. Then, trade unions kept their administrative responsibilities, while the financial responsibilities were transferred to Soviet enterprises and organizations. This decentralization of children’s ideological education turned it into a much less unified experience than it should have been. The future communist society was not supposed to have distinctions between people belonging to different workplaces. Yet, this was one of the messages that summer camps communicated, a person’s workplace was a significant factor in shaping his or hers access to goods. Such choice of the path that Soviet state made might point to two questions for further research. Should we analyze the Soviet state as a homogenous entity or as a group of various actors? In what way the agency of each particular actor affected the Soviet people’s perception of the state? More specifically, when Soviet people had to negotiate to get a trip to a summer camp from the representatives of their enterprises’ trade union, did they think that they were dealing with the state? Did they still see summer camps as the state’s welfare project?

While Soviet trade unions’ management of summer camp system could have mitigated the effects of Soviet pedagogical experiments on them, it could not fully protect
children from a fundamental assumption that Soviet pedagogues had, that children did not have a right for personal space. Summer camps’ design fostered exposure, which during second generation socialism children who often lived in individual apartments found rather uncomfortable. Camp schedule also was supposed to provide very little time that a child could spend the way he or she wanted. Artek’s educational research represents a radical version of this agenda. The camp’s pedagogues’ belief in their ability to program children’s emotional reactions presupposed that children had nothing of their own, nothing that adults had no right to access and manipulate. Artek was not the only camp that developed such agenda. Orlenok, the second most important children’s summer camp in the country issued camp guides which taught camp counselors on how to effectively manipulate children’s decision-making process without them noticing it. The goal was to make children believe that they had agency, while exercising full control over their thoughts and actions. These pedagogical techniques do not present the time of second-generation socialism as a period of ideological liberalization. Rather the contrary, they indicate that Soviet authorities shifted from persuasion through violence to the development of various soft power techniques. The goal of these techniques, however, was not to increase freedom or independence for the young.

Despite this, my interviews demonstrate that children still had agency in summer camps and had certain level of freedom as well. They often eagerly engaged in various theatrical productions and sports, in decoration of the detachments’ special places, and organized festivities. Some of them, like Natalia Martinkus, were even excited about the line up parades. Yet, many of them, including Natalia, left the premises to explore nearby forests, or go fishing, or by coca-cola. They painted their peers with toothpaste at night,
took bread from the canteen to eat it later in the evening or even play with it. They went swimming by themselves, created horror stories, exchanged clothing, engaged in romantic relationships, and simply relaxed on the beach in the company of friends instead of working on something important with their detachment. Sometimes they even defied the authority of their counselors and refused to do as they said. Soviet summer camps combined control and freedom, agency and submission.
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