Camp Israel

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Camp Israel/ Camp Eretz

Draft

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**Historical background:**

**Russia** is a country in Europe and Asia. By land area, it is the largest country in the world. Today (2006) Russia’s population is about 144,000,000.

Between 1546 and 1917, Russia was ruled by a royal family of Czars. Towards the beginning of the 20th century, opposition towards the Czar family grew rapidly in Russia. The Czar ruled fiercely, as the king had unlimited rights; the royal family and the aristocracy lived in extraordinary wealth while the peasants experienced poverty and the lack of basic freedom.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 displaced the autocracy of Czar Nicholas II and sought to establish in its place a liberal republic. Vladimir Lenin, supported by the workers and the Bolshevik, party took over and formed the **The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics** more commonly known as the **Soviet Union**. It was a socialist state that existed from 1922 to 1991. The USSR was created and expanded as a union of Soviet republics formed within the territory of the Russian Empire. The geographic boundaries of the Soviet Union varied with time, but from 1945 until dissolution, they approximately corresponded to those of late Imperial Russia, with the notable exclusions of Poland and Finland.

The Soviet Union, founded three decades before the Cold War, became a primary model for future Communist states; the government and the political organization of the country were defined by the only permitted political party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (see more information below).
Russian Flag

State Coat of Arms

Work in the Agrarian Farms

Young Communist Pioneer
Day 1:

9:00-9:30  Campers arrive

A counselor collects lunches (from the campers?) and brings (takes?) them to the office without explanation. If they ask- give a neutral answer like the need to refrigerate their food.

9:30-10:30  Ice breakers

10:30-11:00  Albert Einstein arrives
Where am I?
He realizes that he invented a time machine.
He encourages campers to come and see.
He states that no one will believe- we must journal all events.

A counselor hands out journals

Another counselor decorates room with pictures of Russia and puts up the Berlin wall.
Time machine says: 1985

11:00-11:30  Arrive in Russia 1985

The Berlin wall is up with some graffiti notes already on it.

Campers get a Russian Snack- there isn't enough for everyone
*campers must decide how to share*
**12:00-1:00**

Where did we land?

Someone from the camp office, wearing a red scarf, enters and asks if they already have tickets for lunch. When campers say they don’t, the official:

1) says that only loyal communists will get their lunch today  2) screams at them that they must wear their red scarves and learn about communism. 3) leaves with them a list of questions every good communist should know.

*The campers need to decide how to find answers to the questions*

Counselors do not give them ideas to find the answers but keep them in historical context (for example - there is no Internet in 1985, so there is no option of using computers for the information). The campers can work individually, in pairs or as a team.

When they come back with answers, reflect also on the methods they used. If they did not work as a team, point out - how would your work be more efficient had you split the questions between you or shared the answers you got...

At the JCC, people with red scarves are available to answer their questions. One of them gives them an envelope with Shabbat candles in it. Says to them to hide it until they return to their room.

Participants wear red scarves before they go out to look for the answers

**1:00-1:30**

Lunch:

Campers have to queue in front of camp office to receive lunch

Must have a ticket

*Some campers and counselors must bribe to get tickets*

A camper who does not wear a scarf (or does not wear it neatly) gets in trouble by camp office staff.

Journal time - reflect on the day

**1:30-2:30**

*Swim - must bribe to get in.*

**2:30 - 3:00**

Prepare for dismissal/mifkad
What is Communism?

Who is Lenin?  Who is Stalin?

Religion in Communist Soviet Union

The Berlin Wall
What is Communism?

A hundred years ago, Russia was ruled by a Czar. A Czar is a very powerful king. The Czar and his family were very rich. They owned many of the lands in Russia, and the farmers who worked those lands were poor and often hungry for food.

After World War I (1914-1917), the Russian people revolted against the rule of the Czar. They wanted to own the lands on which they worked. They wanted more equality. Communism began.

Communism comes from the word "community". The idea of Communism was that the community should own everything and that all people should have an equal share. The Communists wanted to create a society where there are no poor and no rich. Every one was supposed to work hard. The product of this work was supposed to be shared equally among all people.

The idea of Communism looked good at the beginning. Lenin, who was the first Communist leader, divided farmland among peasants. He also united several republics under his rule and named it the “Soviet Union”. However, Lenin was a firm ruler. Those who opposed the revolution were expelled to the Siberian ice lands and often murdered. When Lenin died, Josef Stalin became the Communist ruler. Stalin was a ruthless man. He forced Russian peasants to work on huge collective farms and arrested anyone who was not loyal to him. Often he had his opponents murdered. Lenin

Life in Communist Russia was becoming scary. People did not vote because there were never elections. Newspapers were not allowed to tell the public about things that really happened. People were afraid they might be arrested and sent to death if they said anything against the ruler. No one was allowed to leave the Soviet Union and move to another country. People couldn’t even travel for a short time outside the Soviet Union. Communism felt a little like living in jail.
Communism and Religions

According to the Communist belief, all people were created equal and no differences should exist between them. In order to achieve this equality, Communist rulers banned all religions.

Judaism, Christianity, Islam and all other religions were banned. The Communist rules did not allow for any religious institutions to exist anymore.

All Synagogues, JCCs, Jewish schools and all Jewish agencies could no longer exist. Rabbis, Jewish teachers, Jewish social workers and leaders were all fired. It became illegal to practice religious life and Jews were not allowed to celebrate holidays, learn Hebrew, pray or even just gather socially together. A good communist was a person who was loyal to Communism, did not believe in God and did not belong to any religion.
The Berlin Wall

About 50 years ago, more and more people who lived under Communist rule tried to run away and move to democratic countries. The Communists, who ruled in several countries in Eastern Europe, did not want people to be able to escape.

On August 13, 1961 they built a wall in the middle of the city of Berlin in Germany. This was a high wall that created a border between the Communist and the democratic world. All the countries east of the wall were Communist and on the west of the wall were democracies.

The Berlin Wall divided the city of Berlin for 28 years. Two hundred people tried to climb the wall and run to the other side but they were killed by the Communists.