



Camp Israel

2006



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Camp Israel/ Camp Eretz

Draft

ISRAELⁱⁿDC

An Initiative of

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Day 2:

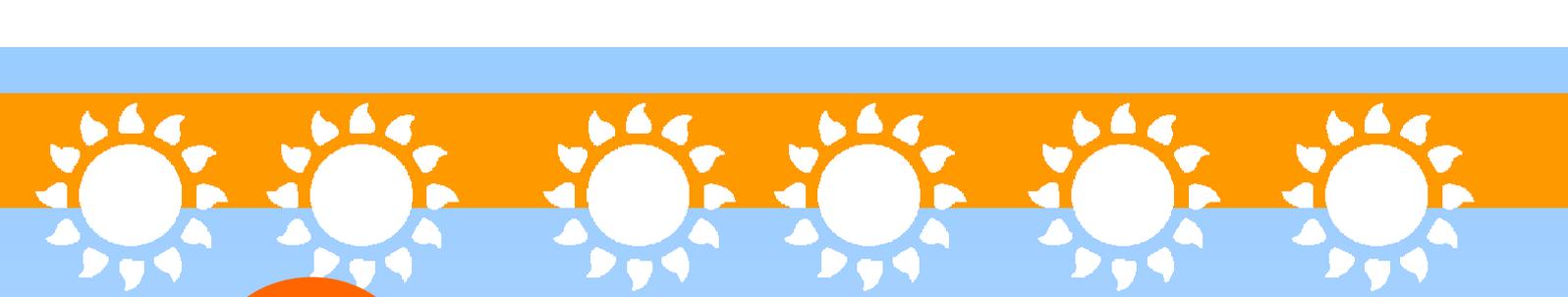
Russia 1988

Historical Background:

Life in Communist Russia was hard for most people. For the Jews it was even harder. Though religion was banned and Jews did not go to synagogues, celebrate Jewish holidays or study in Jewish schools, they never felt totally equal. Anti-Semitism was always a threat. Jewish children were often beaten by other children in schools, humiliated by teachers and found that not all opportunities were equally open to them. Jewish identity was something they tried to hide. There were Jews who changed their last names to get a “less Jewish” sound; others hid the fact that they were Jews from their children, hoping to save their children from anti-Semites. Few Jews continued lighting Shabbat candles, studying Torah and practicing the holidays. When they did, it was underground, risking discovery by the Russian secret services. For Jews in the Soviet Union maintaining Jewish identity was a huge challenge.

Life was always with fear and under a threat. The only way out of the Soviet Union was through a relative who sent a Soviet citizen an invitation to come to Israel. In very small numbers, people could leave under the title of “family reuniting”. Getting invitations from Israel was very hard. The big risk was that when people got the invitation they usually automatically lost their jobs, or their request to leave the Soviet Union was denied. In both cases, Jews who wished to leave Russia entered the “Black Lists” of KGB and faced an unknown future.





Day 2:

9 - 9:15

Campers arrive-
On the Berlin wall written in BLACK is:
“End Communism”
Rumor that communism may end

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9:15 - 9:30

One of the counselors tells the campers that yesterday there was a secret conference for teachers of Hebrew. Wants to share with them what was taught there.
Secretly teaches Hebrew.
While teaching Hebrew, tells the kids stories about Jews who were arrested for practicing Judaism. Says that there are Jews in America who are trying to help.
Counselors- this is the time to talk about the value of “All Israel are responsible for each other”. In World War II 400,000 Russian Jews fought the Nazis with the Soviet Army. Many of them participated in liberating the Jews in death camps. In the 70s-80s, Americans did everything they could to free Soviet Jewry.

9:30

Someone from camp office, wearing a red scarf and a KGB hand banner comes and says it is illegal to teach Hebrew. The counselor is taken to a KGB inquiry. Campers are instructed to march.

KGB hand banner

9:30 - 10

Campers march with other counselors all over the building. Another KGB person comes to inspect them.

KGB person

10 - 10:30

Snack- wait in line for it
loaf of bread, cheese and raisins*
Campers get all products in a bag. Have to decide how to use them

Products for snack



10:30 - 11

Counselor that was taken away comes back. Says that he heard that if we go to the Volga River and ice skate...we will meet agents that have invitations to Israel
We must go today - counselor goes to see if we 'can get transportation'*

11:00 -1:30

Skate - receive letters
on bus open letters- 1/2 are invitations, 1/4 are coded messages, and 1/4 are the de-code

1:30 - 2:30

Art project Matushka Dolls-
Counselors- this is a great time to discuss identity issues. What are the components of our identity? – How big in our “identity pie” is the slice of “Jewish identity?” What in our identity do we show outside? What is hidden deep inside.? Discuss who has an invitation
How to get everyone to Israel*
Journal and reflect

Dolls
Markers
Paint
Glue