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Spain in the Depths of Russia 1941-1944

Larry E. Holmes

On July 17, 1936, Spanish officers launched a military putsch in garrisons throughout the country. They succeeded only partially, failing to take any of the nation's major cities. A long and bloody civil war followed between the rebels, labeled nationalists, supported by Italy and Germany, and loyalists, including socialists, communists, and anarchists, backed by the USSR. By the end of 1936 rebel forces under the command of Francisco Franco controlled about half of the country. In 1939, they brought the war to a close with their complete victory. Meanwhile, in early 1937 military reverses prompted loyalist forces to send abroad over thirty thousand children, some of them orphans, many others with one or more parents still alive. Of the total number, approximately three thousand children evacuated to the USSR. Others went to France, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, Denmark, and Mexico. With the exception of the Soviet contingent, many of the youngsters returned home soon after the end of the civil war.

This article examines the history from 1941 to 1944 of one of the orphanages created in the Soviet Union for these children. It analyzes the relationship of Spaniards, both adults and children, with their Soviet counterparts at that facility and in the surrounding community. It also measures the extent of a Soviet commitment to the well-being of its young guests and the revolutionary cause abroad. Moreover, because of its focus on this single Spanish institution, this article assesses, if ironically, the loci and practice of political power at the Soviet Union's center and periphery. In so doing, it emphasizes the importance in an admittedly highly authoritarian USSR of such contingencies as the geographical proximity to the orphanage of major state organs and the involvement in the orphanage's fate of Soviet officials in ways that transcended the agenda of the governing bodies that they represented.

Clenched Fists and Smiling Faces

Upon their arrival in the USSR, young Spaniards became part of the Soviet Union's very public and emotional involvement in the war. On October 16, 1936, Iosif Stalin had written to the Central Committee of Spain's Communist Party that "Spain's liberation from fascist reactionaries is not Spain's private concern but rather a matter for the entirety of progressive humanity."¹ *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, the daily press arms of the Communist Party's Central Committee and

¹I am grateful to Karl Qualls and to two anonymous readers for insightful comments on an earlier version of this article. My thanks to Russia's archivists, especially Vladimir Zharavin, for sharing their expertise.

I. V. Stalin, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 3 vols. (Kirov: "Semeko," 2004), 2:376.

Soviet government respectively, assiduously followed the conflict as did Soviet newsreels and radio. *Izvestiia* sent to Spain a special correspondent, Ilya Ehrenburg, who would later gain great fame as a front-line reporter during World War II. In October 1936, *Izvestiia*'s coverage of the conflict peaked with a quarter of its column inches devoted to events in the Spanish Republic.²

The media blitz had a ready audience. "During the war," Lisa Kirschenbaum has written, "a craze for all things Spanish overtook Soviet mass culture."³ "In the minds of an entire generation," Kurt Schögel has observed, "Spain became the focal point of the impassioned struggle between freedom and oppression, good and evil, of self-sacrifice to the point of death and cold-blooded power politics."⁴ Years later, a Soviet citizen recalled how adults turned immediately to *Pravda*'s third page to read about the civil war.⁵

Soviet youths got caught up in the enthusiasm. As Irina Volkova has recently shown, youngsters drew parallels of events in Spain with what they thought had occurred in the 1917 Russian revolution and the civil war that followed.⁶ After seeing a newsreel at the movies, the sixteen-year old, David Samuilovich Samoilov, the future poet, wrote in his diary on October 22, 1936, of his desire to serve in Spain in defense of the Republic.⁷ At Moscow's School No. 25, attended by Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, the tenth grade's wall newspaper in the 1936/37 academic year featured articles by students on the war.⁸ Farther afield, in the provincial town of Bui, located three hundred miles northeast of Moscow, the senior pupil, Iurii Baranov, recorded his emotional involvement in

² See Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *International Communism and the Spanish Civil War: Solidarity and Suspicion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 126.

³ Kirschenbaum, *International Communism*, 126.

⁴ Karl Schlögel, *Moscow, 1937*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Malden, MA: Polity Pres, 2012), 103.

⁵ See the interview for the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (Harvard Interview Project) (hereafter HIP) available at <https://library.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/index.html> (accessed July 27, 2020). This interview at HIP, Schedule A, vol. 3, case 25, 13. Another Russian resented, as she later remembered it, that she had to pay dues for "starving Spanish children." HIP, Schedule A, vol. 8, case 107, 5. Some Soviet citizens resented the apparent privileges, real and imagined, accorded Spanish orphanages. One Soviet youngster later recalled that the Spanish youths in the Caucasus "lived and dressed better than the Russians." HIP, Schedule A, vol. 25, case 493, 30. Another Russian remembered: "They were given the best of everything when the Russian children had nothing. They were given their choice of beautiful expensive fur coats." HIP, Schedule A, vol. 36, case 1705, 56.

⁶ Irina Volkova, "Spanish Republicans' Struggle and Its Impact on the Soviet Wartime Generation," *Kritika* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 329-334.

⁷ David Samoilov, *Podennye dni*, 2 vols (Moscow: Vremia, 2002), 1:86.

⁸ Larry E. Holmes, *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 56.

multiple entries in his diary from November 1936 to March 1938.⁹ On November 22, 1936, he wrote: “Madrid is burning.” In February of the following year, now in the ninth grade, Baranov penned an impassioned poem, “Today They Are Taking Barcelona.”¹⁰

Three thousand Spanish children as well as many adult caregivers and teachers came to the USSR in five expeditions in 1937 and 1938, most of them arriving in Leningrad. The journey was an arduous one, the children sleeping on mats in dark cargo holds, many of them seasick and desperately lonely for home.¹¹ *Pravda* punctuated its detailed coverage nevertheless with photographs of smiling children, happy to enter the Soviet Union. Although the newcomers were young, one was no more than one year and ten months of age, they acted, at least according to *Pravda*, as well-disciplined and politically mature adults. Upon seeing an Italian ship while en route, they “showered the vessel with passionate Spanish curses.” Upon first sight of the Soviet flag and Soviet territory, children raised their clenched fists in the revolutionary salute and broke out in a Spanish rendition of the “Internationale.” One girl clutched a photograph of Lenin and Stalin to her breast. Leningrad responded with flowers, an orchestra, and salutations of “Long Live Free Spain.”¹²

In 1937, Moscow released a twelve-minute film, “Spanish Children in the USSR.” It portrayed the bombing of Spanish cities by Franco’s forces, people fleeing in panic, and the lifeless body of an adolescent female. These gruesome scenes then gave way to uplifting vistas of young smiling faces upon the youth’s warm reception in the USSR. At a youth camp in the Crimea, the children performed a highly disciplined series of calisthenics. They then joyfully celebrated Soviet holidays. The film ended with a panoramic view of Moscow and a large portrait of Stalin.¹³ That same year, the children’s writer, Elena Viktorovna Kononenko provided much the same narrative in her amply illustrated pamphlet, *Little Spaniards*, released by Moscow’s Children’s Publishing House in

⁹ See entries of November 7, 10, 11, 22, 25, 1936, and of January 17, May 5, 1937, and of March 2 and 3, 1938, in Iurii Baranov, *Goluboi razliv: Dnevnik, pis'ma, stikhotvoreniia, 1936-1942* (Iaroslavl': Verkhne-volzhscoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1988), 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 32, 51.

¹⁰ Baranov, *Goluboi razliv*, 23, 51. Baranov died at the front in 1942.

¹¹ Karl D. Qualls, *Stalin's Niños: Educating Spanish Civil War Refugee Children in the Soviet Union, 1937-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 19-22.

¹² *Pravda*, April 1, 1937, 6; June 26, 1937, 6; September 29, 1937, 6; and December 7, 1938, 6. Quote from September 29 edition. See similar accounts, always on the fourth page, in *Leningradskaiia pravda*, June 21, 24, 26, and 27, 1937. The issue of June 26 highlighted the special greetings given the children. For later recollections of their enthusiastic and festive reception in Leningrad, see Alicia Alted Vigil, Encarna Nicolás Marín, and Roger González Martell, *Los niños de la guerra de España en la Unión Soviética: de la evacuación al retorno, 1937-1999* (Madrid: Fundación F. Largo Caballero, 1999), 55-59.

¹³ The film is available on youtube. See a description of the film in Daniel Kowalsky, “The Soviet Cinematic Offensive in the Spanish Civil War,” *Film History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 13-14.

a generous press run of fifty thousand copies.¹⁴ Through stories about individual children, Kononenko portrayed the difficulties of everyday life in Spain, the horrors of the civil war, and the torture of youngsters by Franco's legions. She then recounted the children's warm reception in the Crimea and fullness of life that followed.

To care for these youths, the Central Committee's Politburo ordered the creation of special orphanages (*detskii dom*, in the Russian singular). The first opened in 1937 in the center of Moscow. A second soon followed in the Moscow suburb, Mozhaisk. Five others were established in the Moscow area, four in the Leningrad region, including two in the town of Pushkin (before 1918 Tsarskoe Selo). Altogether, the Soviet Union founded twenty-two of these special orphanages. World War II dramatically altered their fate.

Spain in Focus: Scope, Theses, Sources

Scholars have written extensively about the life in the Soviet Union of these Spanish children. Karl Qualls, Andrei Elpat'evskii, Natalia Kharitonova, and Immaculada Colomina Limonero have presented detailed information on the hazardous journey to the USSR, the initial reception there, and the number, gender, and age of the young emigres. They have described as well the physical

¹⁴ Elena Viktorovna Kononenko, *Malen'kie ispantsy* (Moscow: Detgiz, 1937).

conditions at the orphanages created for these children.¹⁵ Kharitonova and Qualls have analyzed especially well the content and methods of instruction.¹⁶

¹⁵ Karl Qualls has published a number of excellent articles on the subject. They may be found in greatly expanded form in his recent book, Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*. A. V. Elpat'evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia v SSSR: Istoriografiia i istochniki, popytka interpretatsii* (Moscow-Tver': Izdatel'stvo GERS, 2002); Natalia Kharitonova, *Edificar la cultura, construir la identidad: el exilio republicano español de 1939 en la Unión Soviética* (Sevilla: Renacimiento, 2014); N. Iu. Kharitonova, "Sistema vospitaniia v detskikh domakh dlia ispanskikh detei v Sovetskom Soiuze: K istorii pedagogicheskikh ideologem," *Shagi* 1 (no. 2) (2015): 74-95 (available at http://shagi.ranepa.ru/files/shagi15_1/shagi15_1_06.pdf, accessed July 27, 2020); N. Kharitonova, "Sovetskie pedagogicheskie rabotniki detskikh domov dlia ispanskikh detei glazami byvshikh vospitannikov," in *Antropologiiia sovetskoi shkoly: Kul'turnye universalii i provintsial'nye praktiki. Sbornik statei* (Perm': Permskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2010), 175-193; Immaculada Colomina Limonero, *Dos patrias, tres mil destinos: vida y exilio de los niños de la guerra de España refugiados en la Unión Soviética* (Madrid: Ediciones CINCA, 2010). Anna Pavlovna Fernandes-Eres has written several brief but informative items on the orphanages: A. P. Fernandes-Eres, "Ispanskije detskie doma v SSSR kak model' sotsial'noi adaptatsii (1936-1939)," in *Chastnoe i obshchestvennoe v povsednevnoi zhizni naseleniia Rossii: Istoriia i sovremennost. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii* (Sankt-Peterburg: Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2018), 211-217; A. P. Fernandes-Eres, "Sotsial'naia adaptatsiia ispanskikh detei v SSSR," *Natsional'naia assotsiatsiia uhenykh*, no. 9-4 (14) (2015): 37-39; A. P. Fernandes-Eres, "Zastavit' ikh poliubit' etu zhizn': Ispanskije detskie doma SSSR (1937-1939)," *Vestnik RGGU: Seriia: Istoriia, Filologiiia, Kul'turologiiia, Vostokovedenie*, no. 1 (22) (2017): 63-71. For general information, see also Enrique Zafra, Rosalia Crego, Carmen Heredia, *Los niños españoles evacuados a la URSS* (Madrid, Ediciones de la Torre, 1989); M. E. Savchenkova, "Ispanskije deti v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," in *Istoricheskie issledovaniia: Materialy V Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii (g. Samara, mart 2017 g.)* (Samara: Izdatel'stvo ASGARD, 2017), 46-49 (also at <https://moluch.ru/conf/hist/archive/242/11991/>, accessed July 27, 2020). See also Daniel Kowalsky, chapter five, "The Evacuation of Spanish Children to the Soviet Union," in *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War*, e-book (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) (available at <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/kod01/index.html>, accessed July 27, 2020) and Daniel Kowalsky, *La Unión Soviética y la Guerra Civil Española: Una revision crítica* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2003). For a work that discusses in detail the fate of these children after 1945, see Alted Vigil, *Los niños de la guerra de España*. Over half of the children were from the Basque region and Asturias. It is estimated that somewhat more than half of the children coming to the USSR were male and about three-fourths were from six to thirteen years of age.

¹⁶ Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 7, 64, 153. Qualls writes of an "amalgamation or hybridization" of the Spanish youngsters (12). Soviet orphanages for Spanish youth were a "liminal third place" between Spanish and Soviet values (7, 40). Kharitonova focuses especially well on extracurricular activities. See not only Kharitonova's work mentioned in reference n. 15 but also N. Kharitonova, "'Querida madre': terminos de parentesco en las cartas de los niños de la guerra en el exilio soviético a los dirigentes del PCE," in *Actas del IV Congreso Internacional El Exilio Republicano de 1937 y la segunda generación* (Sevilla: Renacimiento, 2011), 284-289. For efforts by the USSR's Young Communist League to inculcate Spanish youngsters in Soviet patriotism and revolutionary values, see V. A. Talashova, "Sovetskii Komsomol—aktivnyi uchastnik organizatsii priema i vospitaniia ispanskikh detei v SSSR v period natsional'no-revoliutsionnoi voiny v Ispanii v 1936-1939 gg," in *Vologodskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut. Aspirantskii sbornik*, vol. 1 (Vologda, 1972), 69-78.

Unlike these scholars, I have chosen to examine the history of only one of these institutions. I focus on Spanish Orphanage No. 10 beginning in 1941, the year of its evacuation from the Leningrad region to the town of Molotovsk (Nolinsk before 1940 and after 1957) in the Kirov region, five hundred miles northeast of Moscow, and ending in 1944 with its relocation to Cherkizovo in the Moscow region.¹⁷ In comparison with its Spanish as well as other, Soviet, brethren, No. 10 prospered in luxury. Its relative wealth resulted from a surprisingly aggressive patronage of individuals and governing organs in the town of Molotovsk, in the regional capitals of Kirov and Leningrad, and at the center, Moscow. Yet while as one in their desire to help the orphanage, the party's regional party committee in Kirov, the regional soviet's department of education, and the center's Commissariat of Education (Narkompros), now relocated in evacuation in Kirov, quarreled among themselves over how best to assist it. In so doing, they departed in practice from the official model of Soviet governance in which power was reputedly exercised vertically in unchallenged fashion from top to bottom. Soviet reality was, as we will see, far messier than that. Nevertheless, by their lavish support these Soviet institutions, even when in conflict, delivered on the USSR's rhetorical commitment to the welfare of its young Spanish guests and, more broadly, to the advancement of global communism.

In addition to an appraisal of Soviet governance and ideals, this study analyzes the relationship between children and adults at the orphanage and in Molotovsk. A multi-textured canvas emerges of the interaction in the town between Spanish and Russian youths and at the orphanage between children and the staff, the staff and the director, and Spanish and Russian caretakers. Although not without some difficulties, Russian and Spanish youngsters in the community and Russians and Spaniards on the orphanage's faculty often responded to each other in mutually supportive ways. Unlike what scholars have found at many other Spanish orphanages, most Spaniards on the staff at No. 10 remained in place despite criticism of their alleged "political illiteracy." This article suggests that their presence and long tenure at No. 10 meant less assimilation there of Spanish youngsters into Russian life and Soviet culture than at other Soviet orphanages for Spanish youths.

Spanish Orphanage No. 10's symbolic importance and its extensive patronage help account for the compilation and preservation of an abundance of material from its three years in the Kirov region. In Moscow, the State Archive of the Russian Federation contains numerous items, including reports by and about the orphanage; a "Book of Commands"—a chronological compilation of orders

¹⁷ Basic information on this particular orphanage may be found in Elpat'evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia v SSSR*, 57, 91, 105, 134, 139, 156; Larry E. Holmes, *Stalin's World War II Evacuations: Triumph and Troubles in Kirov* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 64-69, 113-116.

issued by the orphanage's director to teachers, pupils, and auxiliary personnel; and accounts of sessions of the orphanage's pedagogical council attended by administrators and teachers.¹⁸ Kirov's provincial archives have preserved the orphanage's reports to the Molotovsk district's party committee and to Kirov's regional party committee. They also have kept detailed reports on the orphanage by inspectors of the regional party committee, by the regional prosecutor, by a special envoy of Leningrad's municipal soviet, and by a representative of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions.¹⁹ Both central and provincial archives possess deliberations about the orphanage by Narkompros's leadership, the Central Committee's schools department, Kirov's regional party committee, and Molotovsk district's party committee. On October 3, 2009, I interviewed Viktor Sergeevich Putintsev in his apartment in Molotovsk (now Nolinsk). He recalled the Spanish children from his own youthful days in the town. Putintsev brought an album put together in the late 1950s by a local schoolteacher, Petr Demidovich Suntsov, and his students on the history of the local secondary school. Its first section, "Spain's Children in Our School," contained photographs of and reminiscences from these youths.²⁰

War and Evacuation

On June 22, 1941, a Sunday, German troops attacked Soviet-held territory. By mid-July, they had advanced within two hundred miles of Moscow. On July 29, the Luftwaffe commenced bombing of the capital. Farther north, on September 4 the city of Leningrad experienced its first artillery bombardment and a few days later its first air raid. On September 8, enemy troops cut off Soviet access by land beginning a nine hundred-day siege of the city. Two months later, in November, the German Army was within twenty miles of Moscow, encircling the capital on three sides.

¹⁸ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation) (hereafter GARF), collection A-307. References below to specific items in this and other Russian archives uses the following abbreviations when citing them: f. for collection (*fond*), op. for inventory (*opis'*), d. for file or folder (*delo*), l. (*list*) for page and ll. (*listy*) for pages, and ob. (*oborot*) for reverse side of a page.

¹⁹ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Kirovskoi oblasti (State Archive of the Kirov Region) (hereafter GAKO) and Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii Kirovskoi oblasti (State Archive of Social and Political History of the Kirov Region) (hereafter GASPI KO). For administrative purposes only, Kirov's two archives, GASPI KO and GAKO, housed in separate buildings, were recently merged into a single unit as the Central State Archive of the Kirov Region. To avoid any confusion as to the precise location of documents hereafter cited, I will continue to refer to GASPI KO and GAKO.

²⁰ See the first section, "Deti Ispanii v nashei shkole," in the album, "Istoriia srednei shhkoly No. 1 g. Nolinsk," vol. 3, available at Nolinsk's Secondary School. In 1997, Putintsev wrote in his own hand his recollections of life with his counterparts from Spain: see GASPI KO, f. 6810, op. 1, d. 95, ll. 1-2.

The enemy's onslaught set off a massive evacuation of people, factories, and government institutions. Among those evacuated institutions were orphanages for Spanish children located in Ukraine and in the Moscow and Leningrad regions. Their number included the two orphanages in Pushkin, one of which, No. 10, departed for the Kirov region. It was only one among many children's institutions, administrative organs, and industrial enterprises that evacuated to that province. Of special importance to Orphanage No. 10, its immediate supervisor, Narkompros, left Moscow for Kirov in several waves from July through October 1941. The commissariat maintained a substantial presence there until its return to Moscow in mid-1942. Some of its staff remained in the city until early 1943.

Bound for Kirov

With enemy forces rapidly advancing on Leningrad, Spanish Orphanage No. 10 left its home in Pushkin on July 3, 1941. As with most evacuating institutions, the process, even by rail, was a painfully protracted one, with multiple delays caused by the huge number of people fleeing to the south and east and the movement of troops in the opposite direction toward the front. Finally, in late August, the orphanage's 133 children, its caretakers (*vospitateli*), teachers, and the director, Mariia Ivanovna Matskevich, reached Kirov.²¹

Within several weeks of its arrival, the orphanage traveled farther afield to the remote town of Molotovsk located eighty-five miles south of the provincial capital, Kirov. In 1940, the town had 8,500 inhabitants and the Molotovsk district about 39,000.²² No. 10's children were not the only newcomers. By early 1942, as many as 3,000 evacuees had taken up residence in the district. Thanks largely to this influx, the town's population had increased to 10,555 residents by January 1, 1942, despite the draft of many of its citizens into the army and the mobilization of still others for work in factories in the city of Kirov and elsewhere.²³ Some of Molotovsk's latest arrivals worked for Narkompros. In November 1941, the commissariat had relieved some of the pressure on accommodations in the provincial capital of Kirov by dispatching eighty-four of its people to the town.

²¹ It is possible that the orphanage did not reach Kirov until early September. Information on evacuation is in a report by a representative of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, N. G. Nikiforov, July 25, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, ll. 6 ob.-7. The number of children who came to Kirov and then to Molotovsk varies from 123 to 133 depending on the source. According to Elpat'evskii, 133 children were evacuated with Orphanage No. 10 to Molotovsk: Elpat'evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia*, 156. A report from Molotovsk district's department of education in late 1941 put the number at 123 with the number circled: GAKO, f. R-2342, op. 2, d. 245, l. 92. The report in November 1941 by a special emissary of Leningrad's municipal soviet indicated that the orphanage arrived in Molotovsk with 124 children: GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 284, l. 1.

²² See the report to the regional investigative arm of the party's Central Committee, Kirov's Party Control Commission, in GASPI KO, f. 1291, op. 1, d. 7, l. 3.

²³ Report to Kirov's Party Control Commission in GASPI KO, f. 1291, op. 1, d. 7, l. 10.

Their numbers included the thirty-six employees of the Schools Institute and their families and seven staff members of the Institute for Special Schools and Orphanages.²⁴ Narkompros's contingent in Molotovsk was significant enough that its Commissar, Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, made one of his deputies, Pavel Vasil'evich Titkov, responsible for the operation there.²⁵

The great number of evacuees in Molotovsk placed considerable demands on local resources. Narkompros's people aside, only one-third of the arrivals were employed. Many of them came from urban areas such as Leningrad and proved incapable of or unwilling to work on collective farms. They took up residence in the town and insisted on staying there.²⁶ Moreover, as late as mid-1943, more than one-third of the district's evacuees were youths under fourteen years of age.²⁷ Their number included about 650 children living in six orphanages, including Orphanage No. 10, all evacuated from the city and region of Leningrad.²⁸ The town was also home to a School for the Deaf and a School for Physically and Mentally Challenged Children, both relocated in 1941 from the city of Kirov.

Far, Far Away

Molotovsk's evacuees were pleased no doubt to be far from the horrors of the front. Yet the place would not have been their first choice. It lacked many of the amenities to which they had grown accustomed. Molotovsk had no rail connection. Without a sewage system or an effective program of waste disposal, stench from outhouses engulfed the town. Inhabitants often went without electrical current and a regular and adequate supply of food. The local bakery, even when in full operation, frequently relied for illumination on kerosene lamps. The town's citizens as well as their compatriots in the district suffered from epidemics of scarlet fever, diphtheria, dysentery, and measles. Typhus was such a

²⁴ Three instructions from the Commissar of Education in GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 3537, ll.71-72, 78, 100.

²⁵ Potemkin designated Titkov in his instructions of November 4: GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 3537, l. 27.

²⁶ See figures on employment of evacuees as of late 1941 in a report to Kirov's Party Control Commission in GASPI KO, f. 1291, op. 1, d. 9, l. 88.

²⁷ GAKO, f. R-3071, op. 1, d. 38, ll. 15-20. As adult evacuees returned home, children, many of whom were in orphanages, remained behind. By late 1943, about 50 percent of Molotovsk district's evacuees were children under the age of fourteen.

²⁸ On the number of orphanages and children, see reports from the head of the Molotovsk district's department of education in late 1941 in GAKO, f. R-2342, op. 2, d. 245, l. 92; from the deputy prosecutor for the Kirov region to Molotovsk district's party committee, January 24, 1942, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 128, l. 2; from the regional soviet in mid-1942 in GAKO, f. R-2169, op. 1, d. 681, ll. 26 ob.-27; and from Molotovsk district's party committee in late 1943 in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 173, l. 29. The percentage of the town's population in early 1942 in just the children's institutions evacuated from Leningrad was about 6 percent.

recurring problem that in August 1942 authorities launched a program to examine every inhabitant in the district.²⁹

Narkompros's Administration for Orphanages, Leningrad's municipal soviet, Kirov's regional party committee, and the district party committee repeatedly instructed Molotovsk's government to provide its evacuated orphanages with adequate physical facilities, food, furniture, fuel, and firewood.³⁰ It was more easily said than done. Even if inclined to help, local agencies had at their disposal insufficient resources to care for their own people not to speak of evacuees.³¹ Newly arrived institutions were left begging.

In August 1941 and in the same month of the following year, inspections of Molotovsk's orphanages found that they failed to provide adequate medical care, textbooks, food, fuel, clothing, shoes, and shelter. Even in the rare instances when food was reasonably plentiful, they lacked kitchen utensils to prepare it and glasses, plates, and tableware to serve it.³² Without proper nourishment, heated facilities, and medicine, children suffered epidemics of flu, diphtheria, and scarlet fever.³³ It did not help matters that at least until the spring of 1943, local officials illegally added their children to the rolls of the town's orphanages. They did so in order to receive a portion of what little food these institutions had on hand.³⁴ A report in early 1943 found especially atrocious conditions at the evacuated orphanage for mentally and physically challenged children. "In [German] concentration camps," its author thought, "such a situation would be intolerable."³⁵

²⁹ Report filed on August 13, 1942, by the senior inspector of the department of evacuated military hospitals of the regional health department, V. I. Pivovarov: GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 152, l. 5 ob.

³⁰ See such instructions issued in 1941 and 1942 in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 128, l. 3 and f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 143.

³¹ On shortages and difficulties in overcoming them, see reports from the regional prosecutor's office and the district's party committee in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 128, l. 2 and d. 127, ll. 11-12. According to a report by its director in early 1942, the School for Physically and Mentally Challenged Children received food on a hit-and-miss basis and its children went hungry. See the director's complaint to the district's party committee in GASPI KO, f. 1291, op. 1, d. 17, l. 11.

³² See the report in August 1941 by representatives of Narkompros, Leningrad's municipal soviet, Molotovsk district's party committee, and Molotovsk district's department of education to the chair of the district soviet in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 128, ll. 3-3 ob.; and the report by Pivovarov, August 13, 1942, on four orphanages but not on No. 10 in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 152, l. 4. Orphanages No. 8, 57, 60, and 69 were the subjects of this report.

³³ See information provided by the district's party committee in early 1942 in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 127, ll. 11-12 and d. 128, l. 2.

³⁴ On March 23, 1943, the party cell of Molotovsk district's department of education discussed in detail the problem: GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 168, l. 36.

³⁵ See a report to the party cell of Molotovsk district's department of education, March 3, 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 168, l. 18.

Molotovsk's Spanish Orphanage No. 10, however, led by comparison an exceptional existence. It largely avoided the difficulties experienced by other children's institutions. It was also distinguished by its own special curriculum.

Speak Spanish

Contingent on the availability of facilities and qualified teachers, all orphanages for Spanish youths taught the first five grades according to the standard Soviet curriculum with two exceptions. First, all classes, excluding lessons in Russian language, were offered in Spanish. Second, students took special courses in Spanish language, literature, and history. In succeeding grades, Russian was the primary language of instruction except for lessons in Spanish language and literature.³⁶ This emphasis on instruction in the Spanish language and culture reflected Moscow's hope that these youths would soon return home to become the cadre for a new socialist Spain. Franco's victory and the outbreak of World War II put an end to such thoughts.

Qualls and Kharitonova have written extensively about the curriculum designed for these orphanages. They have found that in the late 1930s and early 1940s Narkompros issued directives to create, as Qualls has put it, "Hispano-Soviet youth."³⁷ The standard subject-matter fare as well as the overall environment (the hidden curriculum) emphasized the importance of discipline, order, and authority. Moreover, in order to inculcate loyalty to the Soviet party-state and veneration of its leaders, the orphanage arranged a variety of extracurricular activities: celebration of Soviet and Spanish revolutionary holidays, reading of newspapers, listening to the radio, and penning letters to the leaders of the Partido Comunista de España in exile in the USSR.³⁸ This instruction in and out of the classroom, calculated to achieve what Kharitonova has called a "sovietization" of Spanish youngsters, led to the dismissal of a number of Spanish teachers and caretakers for an alleged inadequate degree of "political development," "unhealthy political attitudes," and an inability to discipline the youngsters in their care.³⁹ At Narkompros, administrators had

³⁶ Some of the orphanages for Spanish children had their own classrooms for all grades; others sent their children to schools, which organized classes exclusively for these children. See Veronica Sierra Blas, "Educating the Communists of the Future: Notes on the Educational Life of the Spanish Children Evacuated to the USSR during the Spanish Civil War," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 4 (2015): 504.

³⁷ Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 153. Qualls refers to the curriculum as "national in form, socialist in content" (156).

³⁸ Kharitonova, *Edificar la cultura*, 32-63; Kharitonova, "'Querida madre,'" 284-289. For a discussion of the education of these children, see also Colomina Limonero, *Dos patrias*, 33-55.

³⁹ For "sovietization," Kharitonova, *Edificar la cultura*, 58-61. For a discussion of the dismissal of Spanish caretakers and teachers, see Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 48, 58-60, 66, quotes on 58. These Spanish teachers and caretakers, however, were rarely targeted as political enemies. Lisa Kirschenbaum has written extensively of the treatment of Spanish adults living in the USSR

notoriously bemoaned the absence of self-discipline and of a work ethic among Spanish adults and youths.⁴⁰ In their reminiscences, perhaps as a point of pride, these children tended to agree about their own behavior. They acknowledged that they were more “naughty” and “impertinent” than their Russian counterparts.”⁴¹

Like other orphanages for Spanish children, No. 10 offered the first five grades in Spanish with special classes in Spanish language, culture, and history. After completing the fifth grade, children spent the next two years at one of Molotovsk’s two secondary schools, where all lessons were conducted in Russian except, as was the case elsewhere, for those in Spanish language and literature. In the seventh grade at Molotovsk’s secondary school, Putintsev shared a desk with a Spanish boy.

But unlike elsewhere, No. 10 had an unusually high proportion, more than half, of Spaniards on its staff. When it left Pushkin, it had fourteen teachers and caregivers, of whom eight were Spanish.⁴² In 1943, of its adult personnel of fifteen excluding the director, nine were Spanish, six Russian. Five of the Spaniards had probably been with the orphanage since its founding and were an experienced group with a tenure as educators ranging from twenty to twenty-nine years. By contrast, none of the Soviet caretakers had been associated with No. 10 at its origin. They did, however, have on average nineteen years of service as caretakers or teachers.⁴³

during the late 1930s and the war. “Despite the increasing prominence of Russian nationalism in Soviet propaganda and the rising xenophobia that accompanied the purges,” she concluded, “internationalism—here in the form of a powerful, almost pathological, attachment to heroic Spain—remained a vital element in Soviet conceptions of what it meant to be a communist.” See Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, “Exile, Gender, and Communist Self-Fashioning: Dolores Ibaruri (La Pasionaria) in the Soviet Union,” *Slavic Review* 72, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 573. Non-party adults, however, especially those who expressed a desire to leave the USSR, were arrested and placed in labor camps. Kirschenbaum, “Exile, Gender”: 579. At the beginning of World War II, none of the Spanish officers then finishing the Soviet Union’s Frunze Military Academy received commands in the Red Army. Twenty-one of the two hundred pilots who had been training in the USSR when the civil war ended and who had expressed a desire to leave were sent to the gulag. About fifty of the Spanish sailors stranded in the Soviet Union and who hoped to leave were arrested in June 1941 despite their offer to join the fight against the Nazis. See Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *International Communism*, 202. On the arrest and dispatch of some Spanish adults to labor camps in Kazakhstan in 1940 and 1941, see Luiza Iordache, *Republicanos españoles en el Gulag (1939-1956)* (Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, 2008), 29-36.

⁴⁰ Kharitonova, “Sistema vospitaniia v detskikh domakh,” 77-78; Fernandes-Eres, “Ispanskie detskie doma v SSSR,” 214.

⁴¹ Kharitonova, “Sovetskie pedagogicheskie rabotniki detskikh domov,” 184.

⁴² Report by Nikiforov, July 25, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 1.

⁴³ Report by I. E. Fomin, an inspector of the regional party committee, December 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 27 and GASPI KO, f. 6808, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 27-28. Three of the Spanish caretakers had begun work at No. 10 in 1940, 1941, and 1943. A fourth had accompanied children transferred to No. 10 from Spanish Orphanage No. 5 in Saratov. In other orphanages for these children, many Spanish instructors quit or were dismissed after 1938. See reference n. 39.

The Spanish faculty remained distinctly “Spanish” in their command of language. They could not help children prepare their lessons in Russian because they themselves were so poorly acquainted with the language. Two of them knew no Russian at all.⁴⁴ When in late 1941, Evgeniia Fedorovna Nikitina, the deputy director for academic affairs, assembled her staff for a reading of and commentary on Stalin’s famous speech of November 6 on Red Square, where the Soviet leader predicted eventual military victory, she had to ask for its simultaneous translation into Spanish.⁴⁵ At about the same time, when a representative from Leningrad’s municipal soviet, Nikolai Mikhailovich Verzilin, conducted an investigation of the orphanage, he had to use a translator when interviewing its Spanish instructors. Their Russian counterparts, in turn, knew little or no Spanish.⁴⁶

Their native tongue and culture a point of pride, No. 10’s Spanish adults and children performed concerts of Spanish songs and dances for the local community.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, by 1943 the Russian speech that surrounded children in town and at school was beginning to dominate their conversation. In response, the orphanage’s administration planned to redouble efforts at encouraging spoken Spanish.⁴⁸

Upon completion of the seventh grade, the best pupils in Molotovsk proceeded to a school’s division offering grades eight through ten. The remainder, along with other adolescents who had reached the age of fourteen, was compelled by law to join the workforce or enroll in vocational schools that combined study with work. In July 1942, Orphanage No. 10 accordingly assigned its poorer and average graduates from the seventh grade and five other children aged fourteen and older to either a factory or a vocational school. It sent several good students who had finished the seventh grade to an advanced trade school (technicum). Only two graduates, the very best academically, entered the eighth grade that fall at the local senior secondary school.⁴⁹

“The longer the homes stayed open,” Qualls has reported, “the fewer Spanish teachers remained”: Qualls, *Stalin’s Niños*, 66.

⁴⁴ See Verzilin’s report in GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 209 and the orphanage’s report to Narkompros on the first half of the 1941/42 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, l. 5.

⁴⁵ Verzilin’s report, GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 212. Verzilin’s entire four-page single-spaced report is in GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, ll. 208-212. It mistakenly refers to the author as M. M. Verzilin rather than N. M. [Nikolai Mikhailovich] Verzilin.

⁴⁶ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, ll. 208-209.

⁴⁷ See reports in Molotovsk’s local newspaper, *Kolkhoznaia gazeta*, January 21, 1942, 2 and August 12, 1942, 2. Also Putintsev’s recollections in GASPI KO, f. 6810, op. 1, d. 95, l. 2.

⁴⁸ See the orphanage’s report for the 1942/43 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 294, l. 6.

⁴⁹ Report from the orphanage’s director: GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 289, ll. 1 ob.-2. In the 1942/43 academic year, several of the orphanage’s children were enrolled in vocational schools in Kirov and subsequently worked in factories there. They received clothing from the orphanage. See the report in GASPI KO, f. 6808, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 14-15. In the summer of 1943, ten of the orphanage’s

All-Union Significance

The orphanage had arrived in Molotovsk with 133 children, about two-thirds of them boys. Over the next few years while the preponderance of males remained the same, the number of youths at the institution varied. As adolescents left for work or education elsewhere, by September 1, 1942, 113 youths remained.⁵⁰ That fall the number increased when thirty youngsters were transferred from the Saratov region's Spanish Orphanage No. 5.⁵¹ Thereafter, No. 10 maintained an enrollment of about 140 until its departure for Cherkizovo.⁵²

The orphanage's relatively small numbers belied its significance. The institution symbolized the nobility of the nation's concern for children and its past support of the Spanish cause. Narkompros's evacuation to Kirov, only a short distance removed from Molotovsk, enhanced its interest in the orphanage. Important agencies of the commissariat were even closer. Its Schools Institute and Institute for Special Schools and Orphanages worked in Molotovsk until their return to Moscow in January 1943. Despite the lack of a rail connection between Kirov and Molotovsk, Narkompros's deputy commissar, Titkov, frequently visited the orphanage and was partially responsible for the relatively good conditions prevailing there.⁵³

Because of the large number of Leningrad's children evacuated to Molotovsk the northern city commissioned the aforementioned Verzilin to look into its youths' fate there. After graduating in 1928 from Leningrad's Agricultural Institute, Verzilin taught in the city's Pedagogical Institute and the Institute for Teachers In-Service Training. He had relocated in 1941 to Molotovsk where in August, acting as a representative of Leningrad's municipal soviet, he asked the local soviet to provide tables, chairs, beds, and firewood for Leningrad's several

children were working in Molotovsk's seamstress factory while still living at the orphanage: GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 9, d. 174, l. 42.

⁵⁰ On the preponderance of boys, see figures in reports from and about the orphanage in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, l. 6; GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 288, l. 2; and GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 139. On numbers: report from Orphanage No. 10, September 1, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 290, l. 2 and the orphanage's report for the 1942/43 academic year in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 93 ob.

⁵¹ See a report from Orphanage No. 10 on the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, ll. 1-2. Orphanage No. 5 was disbanded in 1943 (Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 46).

⁵² See the item appended to instructions issued by the Russian Republic's government, June 5, 1944, in GARF, f. A-259, op. 5, d. 1563, l. 4 and instructions from the orphanage's director in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 293, ll. 37-37 ob., 46.

⁵³ A report on the orphanage by an inspector of the regional party committee, Fomenko, May 1942, mentioned Titkov's frequent visits that included having lunch there: GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 140 ob.

orphanages evacuated to the town.⁵⁴ Verzilin was especially interested in the Spanish orphanage, undertaking a thorough inspection of it that fall from October 28 to November 15. Verzilin filed his report with Andrei Aver'ianovich Pis'menskii, a fellow representative of the Leningrad soviet, who had been sent to Kirov to oversee conditions for the more than two hundred orphanages created for the twenty-eight thousand children evacuated there from Leningrad.⁵⁵

Verzilin adopted the orphanage almost as his own. So did Kirov's regional party committee. In April 1942, its bureau heard reports on it from an official of its own schools department, Evgeniia Nikolaevna Petrova, and from Pis'menskii, now since March 5, the head of the regional department of education.⁵⁶ In April 1942, the committee dispatched Viktorina Aleksandrovna Fomenko, an inspector from its department for agitation and propaganda, to Molotovsk for an investigation that lasted more than ten days.⁵⁷ Not to be outdone, that year the All-Union Council of Trade Unions sent its representative, N. G. Nikiforov, for an investigation that continued from the tenth to the twenty-third of July.⁵⁸ While Nikiforov was there, No. 10 had an even more important visitor. On July 14, the regional party committee's first secretary, Vladimir Vasil'evich Luk'ianov, dropped by during his mission to encourage local organizations to increase deliveries of food and other items to the orphanage.⁵⁹ The following year, another inspector of the regional party committee, I. E. Fomin, carried out a thorough examination that extended from the fourteenth to the twenty-sixth of November.⁶⁰ His then was but the last of four major appraisals, each of which had placed the orphanage under a microscope for periods ranging from ten to seventeen days.

⁵⁴ GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 128, l. 3. In addition to Verzilin, the head of the party's district party committee, an inspector of Narkompros's Administration for Orphanages, and the chair of the district's department of education signed the request. Verzilin had come to Molotovsk with Narkompros's Schools Institute, evacuated there in 1941. He remained in Molotovsk as a senior associate of the institute until its departure in 1943. Verzilin would become well-known as an author of textbooks on plants and of children's books, especially for his book, *Po sledam Robinzona* (In the Footsteps of Robinson Crusoe) (Moscow-Leningrad: Detgiz, 1946).

⁵⁵ Before his posting to Kirov, Pis'menskii had a distinguished career as a teacher and educational administrator. In 1932, he graduated with an advanced degree in history from the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad and taught history there for the next four years. From 1936 to 1938, he served as a propagandist in Leningrad for the municipal party committee's schools department. From 1938 until his departure for Kirov, Pis'menskii was the director of Leningrad's Institute for Teachers In-Service Training and head of its department of modern history. See GASPI KO, f. R-1290, op. 17, d. 307, l. 1.

⁵⁶ See materials from the bureau's session of April 22, 1942, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 9, l. 66.

⁵⁷ Fomenko's report in GASPI f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, ll. 139-140 ob.

⁵⁸ On Nikiforov's visit, see his report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 1.

⁵⁹ Nikiforov mentioned Luk'ianov's visit: GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 4 ob.

⁶⁰ See Fomin's handwritten report in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 23-30 ob.

Spanish Orphanage No. 10 had a powerful patron in the apparatus of the Communist Party's Central Committee—Dmitrii Vasil'evich Krupin, head of the committee's administrative office. Born in 1895 in Viatka province, as the Kirov region was known before 1934, he held several posts there from 1917 to 1919 before his assignment south to the Kuban and Rostov regions. In 1938, he took up his important berth at the party's Central Committee, a position which he held until 1959.⁶¹ In April 1942, Krupin sent Kirov's regional party committee a telegram, inquiring about food and consumer goods at the orphanage.⁶² A year later, in May 1943, he sent another telegram to the committee, asking about living conditions at the orphanage and in particular about the supply of food.⁶³ That November, not Krupin personally but the Central Committee's schools department inquired of Kirov's regional party committee about the orphanage's welfare.⁶⁴

As might be expected, No. 10 benefited immensely during the trying days of World War II from such an aggressive interest in its fate.

Relative Plenty Amidst Poverty

During the first two decades of Soviet rule, almost all children's institutions, even those in Moscow, occupied dilapidated physical facilities and suffered from shortages of pens, paper, textbooks, and firewood. Those with a buffet or cafeteria lacked sufficient food. Conditions rapidly deteriorated during World War II. Some institutions, and not just those in territory occupied by the enemy, ceased to exist. Many of those that remained surrendered their building for use as dormitories for workers, military hospitals, army recruitment centers, and even offices and apartments for none other than the employees of the Commissariat of Education evacuated to Kirov. Children in boarding schools and orphanages now lived in ramshackle structures; teachers and pupils crowded into offices, clubs, theaters and other inapt facilities, their lessons in three, even four, shifts, the last one ending at 11 or 12 p.m.⁶⁵

⁶¹ For Krupin's early life, see his correspondence in 1965 with Kirov's journalist, Vasilii Georgievich Plenkov, in GAKO, f. R-128, op. 1, d. 511, ll. 375-376. See also a questionnaire he filled out in September 1923 in GAKO, f. R-791, op. 4, d. 1112, ll. 20-24.

⁶² Krupin's telegram to Luk'ianov in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 67, ll. 35-35 ob. Krupin mistakenly referred to Spanish orphanages in the region in the plural.

⁶³ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 9, d. 174, l. 43.

⁶⁴ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 124.

⁶⁵ On conditions for children's institutions during the war, see Holmes, *Stalin's World War II Evacuations*, 62-64, 69-70, and Ann Livschiz, "Pre-Revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content? Wartime Educational Reforms and the Postwar Quest for Normality," *History of Education* 35, no. 4-5 (July-September 2006): 542-554. In the city of Kirov, Narkompros appropriated several school buildings for its own use. See an extended discussion of Narkompros's behavior and local resistance to it in Holmes, *Stalin's World War II Evacuations*, 69-70, 125-130.

As Qualls has shown, orphanages for Spanish children led during the war a “relatively privileged life” in comparison with other children’s institutions. Yet conditions there were “often horrific.” Following “the chaos of evacuation,” instructors and youths occupied unsuitable, even crumbling, physical structures. They endured shortages of clothing, bedding, furniture, firewood, soap, food, and potable water. With little or no access to a steam bathhouse (*banya*) and decent medical care, children fell victim to skin diseases. They also succumbed to dysentery, bronchitis, typhus, typhoid fever, and tuberculosis.⁶⁶ Although in 1942, most of the Spanish orphanages had “found stable accommodations, all was far from perfect.”⁶⁷ They continued to experience shortages of food and firewood, the children, as before, beset with a variety of illnesses. In 1943, Dolores Ibarruri, head of Spain’s Communist Party and in exile in the USSR, wrote Georgii Maksimilianovich Malenkov, head of the Central Committee’s cadres department, to inform him of the terrible state of affairs at most Spanish orphanages. She urged him to move as many as possible to the Moscow region where they might benefit from better food, clothing, and shelter.⁶⁸ She complained in vain. “As late as January 1944,” Qualls has concluded, “conditions remained horrible for many.”⁶⁹

Especially dreadful conditions prevailed at four Spanish orphanages relocated to the Saratov region—an area astride the Volga River and five hundred miles southeast of Moscow.⁷⁰ In September 1943, a desperate Narkompros

⁶⁶ Qualls, *Stalin’s Niños*, 102-111, quotes in succession on 103, 103, 105. On conditions in these orphanages, see also Alted Vigil, *Los niños de la Guerra de España*, 146-149, 153; Savchenkova, “Ispanskii deti,” 47-48. As bad as conditions were, they hardly matched a description of the fate of these orphanages and their youths during the war by David Wingeate Pike. Basing his work on memoirs that likely exaggerated the negative, the author spoke of rampant disease and death of many children and of the abandonment of many others to a life of crime and prostitution. See David Wingeate Pike, *In the Service of Stalin: The Spanish Communists in Exile, 1939-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 153.

⁶⁷ Qualls, *Stalin’s Niños*, 106.

⁶⁸ Colomina Limonero, *Dos patrias*, 80.

⁶⁹ Qualls, *Stalin’s Niños*, 109. In mid-1943, the provisioning of food for the Soviet population at large improved. Yet Soviet citizens continued to suffer from malnutrition and hunger. On the Kirov region, including reports of cannibalism and difficulties experienced by children’s institutions throughout the war, see Holmes, *Stalin’s World War II Evacuations*, 33, 38, 63-64, 68-69, 81-84. On the Soviet home front, see Wendy Z. Goldman, “Not by Bread Alone: Food, Workers, and the State,” in Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer, eds., *Hunger and War: Food Provisioning in the Soviet Union During World War II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), especially 62-65 and in the same volume, Donald Filtzer, “Starvation Mortality in Soviet Home-Front Industrial Regions during World War II,” 265-338. Filtzer found that in 1943 industrial workers perished in great numbers from starvation and from tuberculosis, a disease highly sensitive to acute malnutrition. Improvement occurred only in the second half of 1944.

⁷⁰ On the horrid state of affairs in these orphanages in Saratov, see Qualls, *Stalin’s Niños*, 106; Vigil, *Los niños de la guerra de España*, 146; A. P. Fernandes, “Ispanskii ‘deti voiny’ v

transferred thirty youths from that region's Orphanage No. 5 to Molotovsk's Orphanage No. 10. They arrived sick with bronchitis and malaria. Moreover, they were so weak academically that many had to be placed in a lower grade.⁷¹

In sharp contrast with all other orphanages in the USSR, including those for Spanish children, Orphanage No. 10 enjoyed a grand existence.⁷² Numerous accounts, even those meant to be critical, acknowledged that the orphanage had excellent physical facilities. And it had an ample staff, one adult for about every eight children.⁷³

Upon arrival in Molotovsk, the orphanage received in its entirety a two-storied brick structure at 14 Lenin Street and the second floor of another, albeit less suitable, facility located some distance away. Within a few months, thanks to Titkov's efforts, the local government awarded the orphanage the second floor of a brick building at 16 Lenin St., located next to its main facility.⁷⁴ The two structures were in reasonably good condition and contained more than enough space to house staff, children, classrooms, a well-equipped kitchen, and a sports hall.⁷⁵

Yet for the first nine months at its new location, with the exception of its ample physical accommodations, Orphanage No. 10 experienced shortages of

1941-1944 gg.: Opyt evakuatsii v glubokii tyl," *Izvestiia Samarskogo nauchnogo tsentra Rossiiskoi akademii nauk* 16, no. 2 (3) (2014): 503-508; and A. P. Fernandes, "Istoriia odnoi evakuatsii: Ispanskii detskii dom No. 1 v sele Kukkus," *Izvestiia Saratovskogo universiteta. Novaia seriia. Seriia: Istoriia* 14, no. 2 (2014): 115-120.

⁷¹ See Fomin's report of December 1943 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 23-25 and No. 10's report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, ll. 1-2. Children's grasp of the Russian language was especially poor. On the presence of malaria in the Saratov region at that time, see the report from the World Health Organization, "Quartan Malaria in the Soviet Union between 1923 and 1948," 6-7, available at https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/65221/WHO_Mal_465.pdf;jsessionid=6C9B239AA380092D0BCA4DB4801B50DB?sequence=1 (accessed July 25, 2020).

⁷² Daniel Kowalsky has commented that before the war, children in Spanish orphanages in the USSR lived in comparative luxury and led privileged lives. However, during World War II such "special treatment" ended as orphanages that had been evacuated to "Asiatic Russia [sic] quickly gave up claims to privilege and celebrity." Kowalsky, *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War*. This book, an e-copy, is not paginated. For the comment cited here, see section seven, "Abandoned and Stranded," in chapter five, "The Evacuation of Spanish Children to the Soviet Union."

⁷³ Information in the orphanage's annual report for the 1942/43 academic year in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 94 ob.

⁷⁴ On the structures, see Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 1 and a report from the orphanage, dated September 1, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 290, l. 1. Information presented at a meeting of Narkompros's leadership in April 1942 indicated that Titkov's intervention had helped the orphanage receive a portion of the facility at 16 Lenin Street: GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2802, l. 69.

⁷⁵ See Fomenko's report in May 1942 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 139 and a report from an inspector for the regional party committee in December 1943 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 23.

almost everything conceivable. In its haste to leave the Leningrad area and then during the protracted trip, first to Kirov and then to Molotovsk, it had abandoned or lost considerable clothing, towels, and bed linen.⁷⁶ Upon arrival in Molotovsk, it lacked mattresses and even the straw to make substitutes. Caregivers and children scattered to nearby collective farms to stuff pillowcases with straw, an initiative not appreciated by the farms affected.⁷⁷ In those first months, an absence of paper meant that children took notes on old receipts and in the margins of discarded newspapers.⁷⁸ A shortage of food was a more serious problem exacerbated by mice and rats in the storeroom.⁷⁹

That first fall and winter, children were cold. Molotovsk's municipal fuel department provided little firewood, and what it managed to deliver was damp. The staff and older youths harvested what they could, but it was not enough. In late 1941, the temperature in the building at 14 Lenin Street never exceeded 6 to 8 degrees Celsius (43 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit) and even fell to 2 to 4 degrees Celsius (36 to 39 degrees Fahrenheit). As a result, children had swollen hands and feet despite their efforts to spend as much time as possible by the stove. Thirty youngsters suffered frostbite of whom five required hospitalization.⁸⁰ Without hot water and soap necessary for a thorough washing of their bodies and clothing, lice infestation became a major problem.⁸¹ In 1942, there were sixty-eight cases of intestinal illness.⁸² Moreover, that first year the orphanage went without electrical current and had no kerosene lamps. Children studied by the light produced by wick lamps (*koptilki*, in the Russian plural), covered tin cans filled with kerosene with a hole at the top for a tightly wound rag that served as a wick. Youths sat around a small table at night and read, albeit with difficulty, by the light of one of these devices.⁸³

Throughout the orphanage's stay in Molotovsk, it continued to experience irregular and weak electrical current and shortages of paper.⁸⁴ In the middle of the

⁷⁶ Information on evacuation in Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, ll. 6 ob.-7.

⁷⁷ See a report from Kirov's regional department of education to the regional party committee in late September or early October 1941: GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 7, d. 145, l. 145.

⁷⁸ See the orphanage's report on the first half of the 1941/42 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, l. 2.

⁷⁹ Nikiforov's report, GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 4, on mice and rats l. 7 ob.

⁸⁰ See the orphanage's report for the first half of the 1941/42 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, ll. 2, 5 and Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, ll. 1-1 ob.

⁸¹ Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, l. 8.

⁸² See the report from an associate of Narkompros's Institute for Special Schools and Orphanages, F. M. Khramtsov, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 296, l. 3. Khramtsov was at the orphanage July 5-12, 1943.

⁸³ The orphanage's report for the first half of the 1941/42 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, l. 2.

⁸⁴ On the winter of 1942/43, see the report by Khramtsov in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 296, l. 1 and the orphanage's report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d.

1943/44 academic year, it had many of the textbooks it needed, but it was almost out of notebooks.⁸⁵ In all other critical areas, however, dramatic improvements occurred thanks to the interest shown by prominent institutions and individuals in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kirov. By early 1942, No. 10 provided each child with a mattress, three changes of bed linen, shoes, including winter boots, and more than enough outer and under garments.⁸⁶ While it struggled at times to get sufficient firewood and itself harvested much of what it needed, it never again experienced the freezing temperatures of that first fall and winter.⁸⁷

At the beginning of 1942, the supply of food remarkably improved. On January 5, for example, Orphanage No. 10 displayed menus that promised meals fit for kings and queens in comparison with that provided at other children's institutions. For breakfast, it served sausage with bread; for lunch, pea soup with meat bullion and breaded cutlets with potatoes. For supper, it offered barley porridge with butter, coffee, and bread. Other menus for the period from January 20 to July 5 listed cabbage, mushrooms, meat, beets, eggs, milk, cucumbers, noodles, and tea.⁸⁸ To be sure, by the spring of 1942 its supply of some products had run low. In this instance, Krupin's aforementioned inquiry and the subsequent involvement of Luk'ianov and the regional party committee produced a bonanza of meat, butter, vegetable oil, milk, eggs, and sweets.⁸⁹ That fall, the orphanage reported to Narkompros that it planned to serve three square meals a day to include a breakfast matching 30 percent of a child's daily required caloric intake; lunch consisting of two dishes meeting 40 to 50 percent; and supper good for 25 to 30 percent.⁹⁰

Shortages of some products occurred the following year from February through early May, once the orphanage had consumed most of the food grown on

300, l. 2. See also Fomin's report based on a visit in November 1943 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 23.

⁸⁵ See the orphanage's report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, l. 2.

⁸⁶ Information in the report based on an inspection by Pivovarov, August 13, 1942, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 152, l. 4. In July 1943, the orphanage had sufficient clothes and footwear for children: Khramtsov's report in July 1943 in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 296, l. 1 ob. Fomin's report based on a visit in November 1943 indicated the orphanage had sufficient linen and clothing: GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 24.

⁸⁷ See the orphanage's report on the 1942/43 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 294, l. 1; Khramtsov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 296, l. 1; Pivovarov's in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 52, l. 5; and Fomin's in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 23.

⁸⁸ Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, ll. 4 ob.-5 ob. The coffee was probably made from the fried roots of dandelions.

⁸⁹ On the vast improvements in the delivery of food products, see information, including, perhaps, inflated figures, provided by Luk'ianov to Krupin on May 15, 1942, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 67, l. 34 and information in Nikiforov's report in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 287, ll. 4 ob., 5 ob.

⁹⁰ Report from the orphanage's director, September 1, 1941, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 290, l. 8 ob.

its own plot and the berries and mushrooms gathered the previous fall by its children.⁹¹ Yet by the end of May, again because of the interest shown by Krupin and the regional party committee, local and regional agencies met all of their obligations for the delivery of meat, fish, potatoes, and vegetables. Only the most privileged state and party organs in the city of Kirov could boast of similar generosity accorded them.⁹²

In November 1943, the Molotovsk district's party committee required the district's government to provide No. 10 with more food and soap.⁹³ That winter, the orphanage succeeded in giving its weaker children extra butter, milk, and vegetables.⁹⁴ Until its departure for Cherkizovo, No. 10 continued to feed children three meals a day.⁹⁵ Unlike at other orphanages and many schools in the region, hunger at No. 10 was not an issue.

An improved diet and warmer facilities meant healthier children. Moreover, by late 1942, each week a doctor and nurse examined children for lice and skin diseases and every three months administered a complete medical examination. Children visited a banya once every ten days.⁹⁶ Most of the orphanage's sick children in late 1943 were those who had recently arrived from Saratov.⁹⁷

Well fed, clothed, and healthy, children of Orphanage No. 10 dominated the local soccer scene in pick-up games and in organized competition. During the 1942/43 academic year, its squad took first place in a district tournament.⁹⁸ A Russian rival, Putintsev, later recalled that the Spaniards proved largely invincible in part because they wore shoes, while many Russians performed barefoot. They

⁹¹ On the gathering of these items in addition to firewood in the fall of 1942, see reports in Molotovsk district's newspaper, *Kolkhoznaia gazeta*, August 12, 1942, 2; November 18, 1942, 2; and October 1, 1943, 1.

⁹² On shortages in November 1942, see information provided to Narkompros by the orphanage in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 294, l. 2; also a report by the orphanage's director to Molotovsk district's party committee in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 9, d. 174, ll. 47-47 ob.; on improvements, the orphanage's report for the 1942/43 academic year in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 93.

⁹³ See the deliberations of the committee on November 27, 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 127.

⁹⁴ See the orphanage's report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, l. 6.

⁹⁵ See Fomin's report in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 24; information presented to the bureau of the Molotovsk district's party committee on November 27, 1943, and February 4, 1944, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 127 ob. and f. 790, op. 2, d. 182, ll. 23-23 ob.

⁹⁶ The orphanage's report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, ll. 6-6 ob. Nevertheless, there had been a case or two of tuberculosis and also several positive responses to the tuberculin skin test indicating the possibility of the disease's presence.

⁹⁷ Fomin's report based on his visit in November 1943 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 23-25.

⁹⁸ See the orphanage's report for the 1942/43 academic year in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 95 ob.

also won because they had played together over the course of several years, while Russian teams were often put together on an ad hoc basis.⁹⁹

Discipline and Punish

Regimen, discipline, and order had become cardinal features of soviet schooling during the 1930s. The nation's most prominent school, Moscow's Model School No.25, one famous well beyond the borders of the USSR, helped make it so. There its administrators imposed on their instructors and pupils a strict schedule for lessons and all other activities and enforced rules for proper dress and comportment in and out of the classroom.¹⁰⁰ During World War II, as Ann Livschiz and other scholars have pointed out, the Soviet government put that school's regulations into law applicable to all the nation's schools.¹⁰¹ In August 1943, it famously promulgated the "Rules for Pupils" that demanded punctuality, obedience, proper posture, and correct study habits.¹⁰² Of course, kids will be kids, wherever they are. Children at School No. 25 acknowledged the need for order, but they also inevitably displayed the restlessness, energy, impulsiveness, and spontaneity of youth. At this and other children's institutions, administrators and teachers alike understood that such behavior, when relatively harmless, had to be tolerated if they were to maintain a respect for their own authority and excuse their own occasional waywardness. However, Spanish Orphanage No. 10 proved to be an exception. Narkompros demanded that its adults and youths adhere to the rules more tenaciously than their comrades elsewhere.

While officials in Molotovsk, Kirov, and Moscow sympathized with Orphanage No. 10's need for material assistance, they did not respond so kindly to reports of misbehavior by its staff and children. It was in this respect that the orphanage continued to be special. Other institutions might get off lightly following reports of disciplinary problems. For example, at Molotovsk's Orphanage No. 8, caregivers allegedly stole food and linen designated for children's use. They also behaved rudely toward youths and punished violators of house rules by depriving them of lunch. A mere denial by the institution and by the local party secretary ended the matter.¹⁰³ Orphanage No. 10, a far more important institution symbolically, could not brush off similar accusations so easily.

⁹⁹ Interview of Putintsev, October 3, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ See "Order," chapter four in Holmes, *Stalin's School*, 46-62.

¹⁰¹ Livschiz, "Pre-Revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content?": 543-546.

¹⁰² The rules can be found in George S. Counts, *The Challenge of Soviet Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 74-75. In the original Russian, see *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR: Obshcheobrazovatel'naia shkola. Sbornik dokumentov, 1917-1973* (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1974), 178.

¹⁰³ See the charges made on October 26, 1943, by a representative of Kirov's Party Control Commission and the subsequent denial in GASPI KO, f. 1291, op. 1, d. 35, ll. 168-169.

Matskevich had been the orphanage's director since its founding in October 1937. She was already an experienced educator. During the 1920s, she had taught and served as director of an elementary school and from 1932 to 1937 had been director of an orphanage for preschoolers.¹⁰⁴ In her first official report from the new location in Molotovsk, submitted in January 1942, Matskevich told Narkompros's Administration for Orphanages of multiple disciplinary problems with her children. They fought amongst themselves. Worse yet, they stole food and other items from the storeroom, from other orphanages, and even from nearby apartments. Her orphanage had experienced so many cases of bad conduct and defiant behavior that over the course of a week it had conducted a special campaign against the expression, "I don't want to."¹⁰⁵ The effort, Matskevich admitted, was not her staff's only response. She acknowledged without comment that at mealtime her caregivers deprived children of the very kinds of food that the youths had allegedly stolen.¹⁰⁶

Matskevich had little choice but to be so forthcoming. A month and a half earlier, in mid-November, Verzilin had filed his report after his seventeen-day visit at the orphanage. Verzilin emphasized over and over again the very problems Matskevich now acknowledged, but he did so in greater and stunning detail. He spoke of bullying by children of other children (especially adolescent boys of their female counterparts), truancy, mutual intimidation by caregivers and their young charges, and the absence of esprit de corps among the staff. He also spoke of theft by children of items at the school, public banya, and library and the use of foul language by both youngsters and adults. Several youths refused to study Spanish in grades six and seven because they did not like the caregivers who taught the subject. Worst of all, Verzilin reported on the use of corporal punishment by Spanish and Russian adults. To some observers, the cases might seem relatively mild enough from the boxing of ears to a vigorous shaking by the shoulders. But for Verzilin, they were serious violations of a strict Soviet code forbidding physical measures against children. He singled out in particular two Russians, a certain Iakovleva and Nina Aleksandrovna Fomina for beating, in

¹⁰⁴ See information in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 160a, ll. 95-95 ob. and Matskevich's personnel file at Narkompros in GARF, f. A-307, op. 2, d. 1883, ll. 1-8. She joined the party in 1931.

¹⁰⁵ Matskevich's report on the first half of the 1941/42 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, ll. 3-3 ob. She may have been accompanied in evacuation by her husband. Information on evacuees in Molotovsk mentions a Leontii Ivanovich Matskevich from the Leningrad region, now assigned to Molotovsk district's food combine: GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 112, l. 63.

¹⁰⁶ GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 291, l. 3. Based on interviews and published reminiscences of Spanish youths, Kharitonova concluded that deprivation of food was a common form of punishment: Kharitonova, "Sovetskie pedagogicheskie rabotniki detskikh domov," 187. Children might also be deprived of an opportunity to go to the movies.

ways unspecified by Verzilin, their young charges.¹⁰⁷ Verzilin was told by a caregiver that Fomina declared that the first law of the USSR “is not to beat, but she herself beats [children] most of all.” At least a few youths responded in kind. One third grader purportedly attacked several caregivers. In this instance, however, the bad behavior went unpunished. The director blamed the adults who failed to understand that “Spaniards are indeed quick-tempered.” Holding Matskevich accountable for all these assorted ills, Verzilin concluded that “the sooner she is removed, the better.”¹⁰⁸

Perhaps Matskevich hoped that her frank acknowledgment of indiscipline would neutralize Verzilin’s recommendation. She had fought his investigation from the beginning, questioning the validity of any report by a representative of Leningrad’s government of an institution, such as hers, under the jurisdiction not of Leningrad but of Narkompros.¹⁰⁹ Matskevich had refused to convene the orphanage’s pedagogical council of teachers and caregivers for a special session with Verzilin.¹¹⁰

And yet despite her own harsh appraisal, Matskevich had not been completely forthcoming. She knew perfectly well that disciplinary measures taken by her staff went well beyond what she was willing to admit. Before the orphanage’s relocation to Molotovsk, one of the Spanish teachers, Navarro Consuelo, had physically beaten some of the children.¹¹¹ In an entry in December 1941 in her “Book of Commands,” Matskevich recorded her rebuke of a teacher who had struck a child in the nose if only with a hat.¹¹² Matskevich also documented there her reprimands of Spanish and Russian members of her staff who violated any number of rules including a ban on washing clothes in the kitchen.¹¹³

There were ill feelings all around. Matskevich’s employees held her in contempt. Even before the orphanage’s departure for the Kirov region, both Russian and Spanish members of her faculty had complained about her to Narkompros.¹¹⁴ Once in Molotovsk, relations rapidly deteriorated. Verzilin had

¹⁰⁷ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, ll. 208-212. On corporal punishment, l. 210. Verzilin had nothing to say about the difficult material conditions then prevailing at the orphanage.

¹⁰⁸ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, quotes in succession on ll. 210, 210, 212. Verzilin also recommended the dismissal of Iakovleva and two Spanish caregivers. Curiously, he seems to have only recommended in Fomina’s case her removal from teaching Russian language (l. 212).

¹⁰⁹ See Verzilin’s comment in GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 214.

¹¹⁰ Matskevich had agreed to such a session but then neglected to summon her staff to it: GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 208.

¹¹¹ Elpat’evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia*, 139. See also Verzilin’s memorandum, citing instances of corporal punishment in Pushkin: GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 212.

¹¹² GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 285, l. 12.

¹¹³ See Matskevich’s “Book of Commands” for 1941 and 1942 in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 285 (unpaginated but entries in chronological order).

¹¹⁴ Elpat’evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia*, 91.

undertaken an investigation, he said, because of multiple complaints from Russians and Spaniards about the director and their threats to resign.¹¹⁵ They told him that Matskevich addressed them in a rude and sharp manner. Children described the relationship as one between “the mistress of the estate and her servants.”¹¹⁶ Matskevich’s deputy, Nikitina, and Fomina informed Verzilin that they could not work much longer under Matskevich’s leadership.¹¹⁷ Audible grumbling as well as loud protests reached such a pitch that in early April 1942, Matskevich traveled to Kirov to meet face-to-face with Pis’menskii, the head of the regional department of education, in order to respond. Pis’menskii refused to discuss the matter with her until his department and Narkompros completed a full investigation. An angry Matskevich returned to Molotovsk where, on April 15, she convened the orphanage’s pedagogical council. There she demanded that her subordinates cease providing outsiders, Narkompros implicitly, with, she said, false testimony.¹¹⁸

Pis’menskii responded in his own angry way. He now wrote directly to Narkompros with a copy to Kirov’s regional party committee. There he called for Matskevich’s dismissal, which, he added, Narkompros had heretofore refused to endorse despite repeated demands from his office. Multiple investigations, he insisted, especially Verzilin’s, had demonstrated poor instruction and a near total lack of discipline. As evidence, Pis’menskii attached Verzilin’s report. Pis’menskii also made new accusations. After repeating Verzilin’s harsh assessment of behavior by adults and children, he proceeded to make it all very political in a way that Verzilin had not. He singled out Spanish caregivers and teachers for knowing nothing of the basics of Soviet pedagogy. They were also politically illiterate. As a result, the orphanage’s children avoided joining the party’s youth arm for adolescents, the Young Communist League. In the five to six years they had been in the Soviet Union, Pis’menskii complained, these children “have not been schooled in the spirit of a love of our Motherland. Many of them have refused to become citizens of the USSR.”¹¹⁹

On April 21, Potemkin convened in Kirov a meeting of the commissariat’s leadership to discuss disciplinary problems with youth and staff at the orphanage and, presumably, Pis’menskii’s recommendation.¹²⁰ In defiance of information coming from Verzilin and the regional department of education, Potemkin

¹¹⁵ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 208.

¹¹⁶ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 211.

¹¹⁷ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, ll. 208-209.

¹¹⁸ This information from the session of the orphanage’s pedagogical council, April 15, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 286, l. 9. The session was attended by fourteen people.

¹¹⁹ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 214.

¹²⁰ GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2802, ll. 75-77. At this session, Narkompros considered the state of all Spanish orphanages. It called for a special review of the work of three, including that of No. 10.

insisted that conditions at the orphanage had significantly improved thanks in large part to the efforts undertaken by his deputy, Titkov. At this point Narkompros limited its response to commissioning its Administration for Orphanages to undertake a thorough review.¹²¹

Kirov's regional party committee was not so patient. On the very next day, April 22, it heard reports on No. 10 from Pis'menskii and from its own schools department. Focusing on the absence of discipline among children, even instances, it said, of hooliganism, the committee blamed Matskevich and, for good measure Titkov, and called on Narkompros to remove the former from her post.¹²² That day Luk'ianov sent a telegram to Krupin in Moscow, blaming Matskevich for any and all of the orphanage's problems and adding that his regional party committee had just demanded of Narkompros her dismissal.¹²³

In the meantime, the regional party committee sent its inspector, Fomenko, to examine the orphanage. On May 5 she submitted her report, a harsh assessment that expanded on Verzilin's earlier finding of improper children's behavior. While acknowledging that continued shortages of firewood meant cold temperatures inside, Fomenko nevertheless censured youths for wearing their overcoats and hats when in the building. This pedantic criticism then gave way to serious charges. Children treated the adult personnel rudely, behavior that should not have been dismissed by the director as an expression of "Spanish temperament." Children stole, skipped school, and, if and when attending lessons, refused to answer teachers' questions. Only three of twenty-two adolescents eligible had joined the Young Communist League. After mentioning the week-long campaign against "I don't want to," Fomenko approvingly quoted one of the Spanish caregivers' opinion: "We are not training communists here, but rather anarchists who do what they want."¹²⁴ The orphanage needed a change in leadership, specifically Matskevich's removal, but Narkompros, Titkov in particular, had dawdled.¹²⁵

Russians and Spaniards

Reports from Fomenko and from other observers of life at Orphanage No. 10 indicated that not just language but politics and culture separated Spanish and Russians at the orphanage. Months before Fomenko's visit, Spanish caretakers had told Verzilin that their Russian counterparts spoiled children to the point that it would be shameful to return such "wild animals" to their father-revolutionaries

¹²¹ GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2802, l. 65.

¹²² See the committee's session in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 9, l. 66 and additional information in Luk'ianov's follow-up telegram to Moscow's Krupin in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 67, l. 31.

¹²³ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 107, l. 140 ob.

¹²⁴ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 140. Fomenko added that she thought Narkompros should have already fired Matskevich: l. 140 ob.

¹²⁵ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 167, l. 140 ob.

in Spain.¹²⁶ Matskevich had criticized her caregivers for failing to understand that Spanish children were “quick-tempered.” In his recommendation to Narkompros, Pis’menskii singled out Spaniards as a politically illiterate and unreliable element.

Yet Spanish and Russian adults often worked in concert and Spanish and Russian children interacted amicably. Almost everyone on the staff, as reported by Verzilin, Spaniards and Russians alike, held Matskevich in contempt. Ironically, it was Spanish caretakers who thought that it was Russians who spoiled Spanish youths. And no one believed that interethnic strife characterized relationships between the Spanish children and local population. If and when the youths of No. 10 stole, they took from their own at the orphanage as well as from Russians at school.¹²⁷ Even though the Spaniards’ soccer team had all the advantages that shoes and teamwork provided, Putintsev and his friends did not resent their own losses. “Spanish youths were our guests,” Putintsev emphasized during my interview with him, “and we treated them as such.”¹²⁸ After these spirited matches, Russian and Spanish boys joined together as “bosom buddies” for a swim in the local river.¹²⁹ Other competitions at school, including the game of musical chairs, could take on a biting edge, according to Putintsev, but never resulted in hostility. Local children and adults appreciated the concerts, dance performances, and acrobatic displays performed by young Spaniards at school and at the local House of Culture. Although Spanish youths often tended to keep to themselves, nevertheless some of them and their Russian counterparts became close friends. Several romances flourished between young Spaniards and Russians. In one instance, in a display of what Putintsev called “hot Spanish blood,” a girl threw herself off an embankment into the river below after a Russian boy spurned her romantic advances. She survived.¹³⁰ Putintsev himself may have been smitten. In my interview with him, he recalled the name of what he described as a beautiful Spanish girl.¹³¹

If only reluctantly, No. 10’s youths helped out at a nearby collective farm, weeding in the summer and bringing in the harvest in the autumn. They also collected medicinal plants for themselves and for soldiers at the front. To be sure, the effort did not always go well. In September 1942, members of the orphanage’s staff and a number of the children were mobilized for the gathering of dog rose, a

¹²⁶ GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 212.

¹²⁷ See Verzilin’s comment: GASPI KO, f. 1682, op. 2, d. 106, l. 210.

¹²⁸ Interview of Putintsev, October 3, 2009. Volkova concluded that Soviet children were not jealous of the privileged treatment of young Spaniards. They responded to their guests with goodwill. In so doing, they hoped to teach the young Spanish cohort a proper communist perspective on the past and present. Volkova, “Spanish Republicans’ Struggle,” 338-339.

¹²⁹ V. S. Putintsev, *Nolia vstrokokopytaia: Stranitsy istorii nolinskogo sporta* (Kirov: Kirovskaiia oblastnaia tipografiia, 2003), 15.

¹³⁰ Putintsev’s memoir in GASPI KO, f. 6810, op. 1, d. 95, ll. 1-2.

¹³¹ Interview of Putintsev, October 3, 2009.

plant with fruit rich in vitamin C, for the inhabitants of besieged Leningrad. They were left stranded and angry in the absence of adequate transport.¹³²

New Leadership

Under pressure from the regional department of education and the regional party committee, Narkompros finally removed Matskevich on May 8, 1942. A week later, as if a miraculous transformation had occurred, Luk'ianov told Krupin in Moscow that recent efforts by the regional party committee had led to improvements in pupils' and teachers' behavior.¹³³

Matskevich did not go away quietly. Her subsequent career demonstrated that "the more things change, the more they remain the same." Fired on May 8, one week later, on May 15, she completed a striking parallel move with her appointment by Narkompros as director of one of Molotovsk's schools.¹³⁴ She continued on as an active and sometimes embittered member of the district department of education's party cell. In early 1943, that cell discussed Fomina's application for candidate membership in the Communist Party. Knowing full well that she could go only so far in pursuing her own agenda, Matskevich voted to approve the application. But she also made it known that Fomina had been guilty of spreading lies and of insubordination. Matskevich did not provide details, but everyone understood that she was expressing her anger over the resistance by Fomina and others to her leadership at No. 10 and the falsehoods, in her opinion, that they had provided on cue to higher authorities.¹³⁵

In the meantime, life at Orphanage No. 10 took a decisive turn for the better under the new director, Nikolai Georgievich Sokol'skii. Since 1915, Sokol'skii had served in the Petrograd-Leningrad region in schools as a teacher and director and as the head of an orphanage. In August 1941, he evacuated to the Kirov region to become director of an orphanage in Zuevka, seventy-four miles east of the provincial capital. He remained there until his appointment to Orphanage No. 10.¹³⁶ Sokol'skii had the good fortune to take over at precisely a time when delivery of food improved considerably and when, according to his

¹³² See reports by Sokol'skii to Molotovsk district's party committee and by the orphanage's Pioneer leader to Sokol'skii, GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 138, ll. 27-29.

¹³³ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 8, d. 67, l. 36.

¹³⁴ See the item added in pencil to biographical information compiled in 1942 in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 160a, l. 93 ob.

¹³⁵ See the party cell's session of February 3, 1943: GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 168, l. 13. Matskevich charged Fomina with groveling before higher authorities.

¹³⁶ See information presented at a discussion of the bureau of Molotovsk district's party committee, June 3, 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 1, d. 164, l. 89 ob.; Sokol'skii's personnel files at Narkompros in GARF, f. A-307, op. 2, d. 2301, ll. 1-19 and d. 2032, l. 4. See also information in the instructions dismissing Matskevich and appointing Sokol'skii as director, May 8, 1942, in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 288, l. 1. Sokol'skii had joined the party in 1938. On Sokol'skii's earlier career, see <http://www.eco.nw.ru/lib/data/06/7/030706.htm> (accessed May 28, 2010).

opinion, children's behavior improved as well (perhaps not coincidentally, although he did not say so). Sokol'skii's report to Narkompros on the 1942/43 academic year declared that recently only eleven children had received a grade of "poor" for conduct whereas in the past, even as late as the beginning of the year, up to 50 percent had merited a grade no higher than "acceptable" or "poor."¹³⁷ His children had solicited donations worth 18,500 rubles for the production of tanks and military aircraft.¹³⁸ He blamed unnamed Spanish caretakers on his staff for any remaining disciplinary problems with the children. These adults, Sokol'skii alleged, failed to plan their work properly and had raised their voice when challenged.¹³⁹ In November 1943, I. E. Fomin, an inspector for the regional party committee, visited the school and reported that children were better behaved than in the past. Any problems with conduct were limited primarily to the thirty youths recently transferred from the Saratov region.¹⁴⁰

However, Fomin found much to be desired on the part of the orphanage's faculty. In this instance, his conclusions were predictable, somewhat the product, perhaps, of his marching orders than of what he himself witnessed. Weeks before, on November 6, the Central Committee's schools department wrote Kirov's regional party committee with information that the faculty, implicitly Russians and Spanish alike, treated children rudely and, far worse, resorted to the beating of children with Sokol'skii's full knowledge and occasional participation. The schools department wanted an investigation. The regional party committee obliged by sending Fomin to Molotovsk.¹⁴¹ There he found that Spanish and Russian caregivers, including Fomina, punished children by withholding a particular dish or an entire lunch. At least on one occasion, the deputy director had struck a child on the cheek. If Sokol'skii had not personally administered physical punishment, he had failed to stop it.¹⁴²

Before submitting his report to the regional party committee, Fomin shared it on November 26 with Sokol'skii and the orphanage's pedagogical council. Sokol'skii and his staff endorsed Fomin's findings and promised to

¹³⁷ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 95 ob. To some extent, Sokol'skii's findings may have been part of a nationwide discursive maneuver. In her study of childhood in the USSR during World War II, Julie K. deGraffenried found that in early 1943 official reports on children's behavior shifted from a previous emphasis on youngsters' poor discipline to an insistence on their proper comportment. Julie K. deGraffenried, *Sacrificing Childhood: Children and the Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 146-153.

¹³⁸ Sokol'skii's report at a meeting of the party cell of Molotovsk district's department of education, February 3, 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 168, l. 14.

¹³⁹ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 94 ob.

¹⁴⁰ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 23-25.

¹⁴¹ See the memorandum from the Central Committee's schools department in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 124.

¹⁴² Information in Fomin's report submitted to the regional party committee on December 2 in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 27-30.

improve their behavior.¹⁴³ The following day, November 27, both Fomin and Sokol'skii attended a session of the bureau of Molotovsk district's party committee. The bureau reprimanded the teacher, Fomina. It put Sokol'skii on notice for failing to stop corporal punishment.¹⁴⁴ Thereafter, at least according to official reports from and about the orphanage, adult personnel refrained from such abusive treatment. Children's behavior also reportedly continued to improve.¹⁴⁵ That December, Luk'ianov wrote the Central Committee's schools department to inform it of Fomin's report and improvements at the orphanage that had immediately followed.¹⁴⁶

Escape Plans

Even as material conditions and behavior of children and adults alike improved, the orphanage's administration lobbied for salvation from Molotovsk. While in his report for the first half of the 1943/44 academic year, Sokol'skii told Narkompros of better food and medical care, he nevertheless demanded a relocation. The orphanage's isolated position, he said, threatened its food supply and children's health.¹⁴⁷ He would soon get his wish.

On June 5, 1944, the Russian Republic's Council of Peoples Commissars ordered the transfer of Spanish orphanages, including No. 10, to the Moscow region.¹⁴⁸ The orphanage's evacuation to Cherkizovo followed in two waves, the first in the latter half of June of about twenty youths and the second in late August with 117 more children.¹⁴⁹ In the meantime, on June 23, the regional soviet's executive committee awarded Sokol'skii, among other adult personnel of orphanages in the region, with a certificate for excellent instruction and communist upbringing of children.¹⁵⁰

Sokol'skii may have temporarily regretted the departure. It involved multiple delays in securing vehicles to transfer people, personal baggage, and the orphanage's moveable property from Molotovsk to Kirov before proceeding farther by rail. Complicated arrangements had to be made for getting meals while

¹⁴³ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 126-126 ob.

¹⁴⁴ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, ll. 127-127 ob.

¹⁴⁵ See Luk'ianov's report to Krupin, December 1943, in GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 129; a session of Molotovsk district's party committee February 4, 1944, in GASPI KO, f. 790, op. 2, d. 182, ll. 23-23 ob.; and the orphanage's report on the first half of the 1943/44 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, l. 2 ob.

¹⁴⁶ GASPI KO, f. 1290, op. 10, d. 169, l. 129. Luk'ianov reported to Iakovlev at the schools department.

¹⁴⁷ GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 300, l. 6 ob.

¹⁴⁸ GARF, f. A-259, op. 5, d. 1563, l. 16. On the re-evacuation of these institutions, see Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 122-129.

¹⁴⁹ On evacuation, see the orders of the regional soviet in GAKO, f. R-2169, op. 1, d. 834, l. 415 and d. 929, l. 178 and Sokol'skii's instructions in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 293, ll. 36 ob.-37.

¹⁵⁰ GAKO, f. R-2169, op. 1, d. 834, l. 435 ob.

in transit.¹⁵¹ In Cherkizovo, No. 10 received a facility from which another orphanage had previously been removed because the structure was under threat of collapse.¹⁵²

Mission Accomplished

That first September in Cherkizovo, Orphanage No. 10 underwent an extensive turnover of its youthful cohort. It sent ninety-six children to three other orphanages, sixteen to technicums, and twenty-three to trade schools. Eight children remained to study at a local school in grades eight through ten. In turn, No. 10 received a number of children from other orphanages.¹⁵³

In 1947 and 1948, the Soviet government closed most of these institutions for Spanish children, their charges now having entered adulthood. The last one was disbanded in 1951. Several of the children from Orphanage No. 10 went on to graduate from the Moscow Aviation Institute. Another pupil, Paquita Bernal, completed a degree in history from Moscow State University, married a Bolivian, and subsequently taught Russian in Bolivia, where she was imprisoned for a time for communist activity. Elena Bernal earned a degree in philology from Moscow State University and worked as a translator for the Latin American department of the Soviet government's Committee for Radio and Television. She later recalled: "We frequently and with great warmth remember the difficult and trying years spent in Molotovsk. We remember the school and its dear selfless teachers."¹⁵⁴

After an agreement in 1956 between the Soviet and Spanish governments (the latter still under Franco's command), about one-half of the youths who had evacuated to the USSR returned to Spain. In the 1960s, more of their brethren left for Spain as well as for Mexico, Cuba, and the United States. Some of those who emigrated adjusted poorly to life in their "new" country and returned to the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ On difficulties with transport, see correspondence with Kirov's regional administration for vehicles in GAKO, f. R-2169, op. 1, d. 928, l. 403.

¹⁵² Elpat'evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia*, 105.

¹⁵³ The report of Spanish Orphanage No. 10 for the first half of the 1944/45 academic year in GARF, f. A-307, op. 1, d. 299, l. 1.

¹⁵⁴ See the first section, "Deti Ispanii v nashei shkole," in the album, "Istoriia srednei shhkoly No. 1 g. Nolinsk," vol. 3.

¹⁵⁵ On the life of many of the children after 1945, see Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, 159-163. Qualls notes that "hybridity allowed some to adapt while preventing others from integrating into Spanish life" (166). See also chapters six and seven in Alted Vigil, *Los niños de la guerra de España*. On the adult lives of some of the children at Spanish Orphanage No. 10, see L. Zhukov, "Deti Ispanii v Nolinke (stranichka istorii)," *Sputnik agitatora*, no. 10 (May 1975): 22-23. On repatriation, difficulties in Spain, and the return to Russia, see Dorothy Legarreta, *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1984), 237-240. Blas indicates that more than half of the Spaniards who departed for Spain in the mid-1950s subsequently returned to the USSR: Blas, "Educating the Communists of the Future,"

One of the Spaniards who remained in the USSR, Carmen Oribe Abad, married a Russian and gave birth in 1948 to Valerii Kharlamov. The son became a prominent member of Soviet ice hockey's famous Big Red Machine until his death in 1981 in a car accident. Another young émigré, Angel Navalon, arrived in the Soviet Union in 1937 and lived in a Spanish orphanage first in Odessa and then, during the war, in the Saratov region. He married a Russian and had two children. The family moved to Kirov in the mid-1960s. When the possibility of repatriation arose in 1956, Navalon hoped to return to Spain with his family. A meeting in France with his sister and parents and a subsequent two-month vacation in Spain in 1967 enhanced that desire. His wife, however, preferred to remain in her homeland with their children. In 1975, after thirty-eight years in the USSR, Navalon emigrated to Spain without his family. He periodically returned to Kirov and almost decided to stay on one occasion. An eleventh-grade student in Kirov, Lidiia Bogatyreva, interviewed him in 2001 during one of those visits. She sensed that "Angel has two motherlands but only one aching heart."¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

Orphanage No. 10 was the subject of a narrative expressing official concern from Moscow to Molotovsk for the welfare of Spanish children. But it was not just for show. The party's Central Committee, Leningrad's municipal soviet, Narkompros, Kirov's regional party committee, Molotovsk district's party committee, and rivals on the soccer field wished the orphanage success and assisted their Spanish guests as best they could. The orphanage enjoyed a privileged existence as a result.

The Soviet government had hoped to support generously all orphanages and especially those evacuated from Leningrad. However, Leningrad's orphanages, including the five in addition to No. 10 relocated to Molotovsk, received far less assistance than that provided their Spanish counterpart. Moreover, Orphanage No. 10 fared far better than other Spanish orphanages in the USSR, certainly in part because of Krupin's interest and, when itself in evacuation, Narkompros's geographical proximity.¹⁵⁷ Its powerful patrons

517. A young Spaniard, Libertad Fernandes, from one of the other orphanages, apparently lived and worked in Kirov from about 1950 to 1956: Alted Vigil, *Los niños de la Guerra de España*, 164-165. Although she found life and work there difficult, she thought the local citizens to be most pleasant.

¹⁵⁶ Lidiia Bogatyreva, "Dve rodiny—i odno serdtse (Sud'ba 'russkogo ispantsa')," Kirov, 2001, in GASPI KO, f. 6808, op. 1, d. 4, l. 23.

¹⁵⁷ Conditions at Orphanage No. 10 were better than those existing in some of the colonies in Great Britain for the almost 4,000 young evacuated Spaniards, who lived there from 1937 to 1939. See Adrian Bell, *Only for Three Months: The Basque Refugee Children in Exile*, 2nd ed. (Norwich, England: Mousehold Press, 2007), especially chapter three, "Life in the Colonies," 59-103. By 1940, almost all of these youngsters had been repatriated to Spain: 127, 133, 143-144.

included not only Krupin but also Verzilin, Pis'menskii, Titkov, and Luk'ianov, all of whom possessed considerable authority and chose to exercise it as they deemed fit in support of the orphanage. And yet in so doing, they and the governing organs they represented frequently disagreed as to how best to do so. Leningrad's special emissaries to the Kirov region, the region's department of education, and the regional party committee aggressively pressured a reluctant Narkompros to fire the orphanage's director, Matskevich. She in turn worked to exploit the difference between them and Narkompros in hopes of retaining her position. In this instance, the Soviet system of governance from Moscow to Kirov while monolithic in form emerged as something far more nuanced, even messy, in practice.

Faculty and children at Orphanage No. 10 quickly learned of the perils of privilege. While their institution's importance brought it considerable material bounty, it also provoked the kind of scrutiny that highlighted any real or imagined violations of the rules of Soviet pedagogy. Matskevich probably performed her duties as director no less faithfully in Molotovsk than previously in Pushkin. The inevitable difficulties of life in Molotovsk along with the high expectations of Narkompros now nearby and of Kirov's regional authorities doomed her tenure. Rumors of corporal punishment in 1943 were sufficient to ensure that in November Fomin found egregious instances of it at the orphanage, whatever the facts of the matter.

The criticism nevertheless was part of a larger and uplifting story in which Spanish Orphanage No. 10 validated the USSR's delivery on one of its sacred promises. The Soviet government had assured Spanish loyalists of special treatment of their children. It then did so when Narkompros designed and the staff at Orphanage No. 10 implemented a curriculum, albeit one fraught with Soviet political and ideological values, designed to remind children of their Spanish heritage and keep alive their native language. Promises were kept as well when Narkompros and regional authorities opposed any form of corporal punishment.

Russians and Spaniards in Molotovsk for the most part lived up to Soviet internationalist ideals. The young of each group enjoyed each other's company, even when competing on the playing field. Putintsev tellingly thought of these fellow children as "our Spanish guests." Interethnic tension in Molotovsk was limited largely to disagreements between Russians and Spaniards on the staff. They united as one, however, in their opposition to Matskevich. Soviet officials responded to alleged transgressions by Spanish adults and children, if condescendingly so, with forbearance. Pis'menskii, complained that Spanish children and adults were not sufficiently "Soviet" in their conduct and attitudes. Yet he took no punitive action beyond the removal of the orphanage's Russian director, Matskevich. In early 1943, the orphanage's new director, Sokol'skii, blamed Spanish caretakers on his staff for children's misbehavior. But later that

year he, a Russian, was officially charged for his own improper conduct—a permissive attitude toward corporal punishment by, implicitly, his Russian as well as by his Spanish caretakers.

Perhaps Spanish and Russian adults in all of the orphanages for Spanish children taken as a whole personified distinct childrearing cultures. One, the Spanish, was excessively permissive but prone to the use of corporal punishment, the other, the Soviet, excessively authoritarian but adhering to the Soviet ban on physical abuse of children.¹⁵⁸ But if these differences prevailed at some or most of these orphanages, it was not evident at No. 10. It was Spanish caregivers there who blamed Russians for encouraging children's "anarchistic and wild" behavior, conduct too obviously, ironically, "Spanish." Verzilin charged both Spaniards and Russians on the staff with the use of corporal punishment. He singled out, however, not Spaniards but two Russians for the practice and blamed the Russian director, Matskevich, for allowing it. Matskevich was subsequently removed in early 1942 from her post. Yet apparently unrepentant of any responsibility for such punishment at an institution for Spanish youths, she immediately landed safely as director at a local school largely for Russian children, where, presumably, nothing of the sort could be tolerated. In Matskevich's absence, corporal punishment nevertheless continued at No. 10. But reports of it in late 1943 by the Central Committee's schools department and an inspector for the regional party committee blamed Spanish and Russian caregivers. Both reports criticized in particular not Spaniards but two Russians, a caretaker, Fomina, and the director, Sokol'skii, the latter for allowing, if not administering, such punishment.

Children at No. 10 remained more "Spanish" than, it would seem from the work of Qualls and Kharitonov, their brethren elsewhere. Throughout the period under study, the curriculum at No. 10 remained oriented toward Spanish language and culture. The presence at No. 10 of a relatively large contingent of Spanish caretakers, more than half of the adult staff, and the lengthy tenure there of several of them helped maintain a Spanish ambience. Occasional dalliances with local adolescents aside, when Spanish youths entered the broader public realm, they did so as a Spanish collective—a soccer team, a group performing Spanish dances and songs, a crew harvesting firewood, or a unit performing their civic duties by gathering medicinal plants or working on a collective farm.

¹⁵⁸ Qualls, Kharitonova, and Fernandes-Eres provide information that both supports and rejects these stereotypes. Their presentation of a messy rather than monochromatic canvas is consistent with my own understanding of instructional methods prevailing at No. 10. See Qualls, *Stalin's Niños*, pp. 48-53, 118-122, 136, especially 56-57 and 118 on punishment; Kharitonova, "Sistema vospitaniia," 78-79; Kharitonova, "Sovetskie pedagogicheskie rabotniki," 184, especially 187 on punishment; and Fernandes-Eres, "Ispanskie detskie doma," 214.

It must be said that No. 10's excellent physical facilities and relative bounty of food came at the expense of the welfare of other children's institutions. Officials in Molotovsk, Kirov, and Moscow made no secret of it. They believed the orphanage deserved the very best as a demonstration of their and the USSR's dedication to revolution abroad and to its children.

In that embrace of Orphanage no. 10, state and party organs at the center and periphery competed one with the other to portray themselves as the most solicitous in word and beneficent in deed. They and their representatives, Krupin in Moscow and Pis'menskii in Kirov, among others, and the pupil Putintsev in Molotovsk made Spanish Orphanage No. 10 a shining example of the USSR's much touted commitment to the well-being of these living symbols of the Spanish revolutionary cause. In the case of this one institution the Soviet party-state indeed meant just what it said. The magnanimity shown these Spanish children, however, stood in stark contrast with the Soviet Union's brutal policies toward the young and old alike of its own, Soviet, ethnic groups judged to be enemies of the state. During World II, it deported en masse and at considerable loss of life Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachays, Balkars, and Meskhetian Turks.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ For a survey of forced evacuations of Soviet nationalities during World II, including reference to historical scholarship on the subject, see Holmes, *Stalin's World War II Evacuations*, 22-23. See especially, Brian Glyn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: The Diaspora Experience and the Forging of a Nation* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2001).