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“The Gorky Komsomol – to the children!: Archival documents. Memoirs”: Revisiting the Book Publication in Nizhny Novgorod

Abstract

The problem of children upbringing is always significant, especially in difficult, critical social situations. In modern times, it seems necessary to reconsider the Soviet experience in systematic solution of this problem: in the period when the Soviet state was emerging after the Civil War, in the days of its further development, in the most difficult period of the Great Patriotic War, in the post-war decades, and in the difficult years of the Perestroika. Documents collection “The Gorky Komsomol – to the children!” includes all types of documents (protocols, background informations, reports, information, memos, documents of personal provenance, photographs, etc.); it is the first publication that comprehensively covers the Komsomol members work with children in the Nizhny Novgorod (Gorky) region. In working on the book, materials of 47 district committees, city committees, and Komsomol committees have been used, 550 sources have been identified. 215 documents and 90 photographs are included in the collection, almost all of which (with exception of 11) are being published for the first time. Previously, the Nizhny Novgorod archivists published two collections: “You and I, Leningrad” (2014) and “Childhood seared by the war” (2015). Thus, the documentary material on important and practically unstudied by the Nizhny Novgorod researchers “children” topic is being introduced into scientific use. The documents in the collection allow us to reconstruct the forms of Komsomol members’ participation in the upbringing children and adolescents. Much attention is paid to the Komsomol patronage over children’s institutions, the Komsomol members’ fight against child neglect, the activities of pedagogical groups, and the organization of children’s leisure. Of particular interest are new photographs from the personal provenance archives and memoirs of the Komsomol activists. This collection, on the one hand, helps to fill the gap in the picture of historical past of the Gorky region, on the other hand, mainstreams the “children” topic and invites historians to turn to its further study.

Keywords

Archival document, Komsomol, children, upbringing, Soviet society, childcare facilities, extracurricular activities.

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