

Yuriy Paskevich And His Friends



My friends and I, Yuriy Paskevich at the pioneer camp Artek (I am standing on the right). In 1945 I spent two terms in Artek, the main pioneer camp in the USSR. I went there on 15 May and returned home by 1 September. The camp was celebrating its 20th anniversary. There were festive celebrations; even some government representatives from Moscow were present. We went to pick up apples in a Tatar village. This was in 1945. The Tatar people had been recently deported and

the villages were absolutely empty. Everything, all their possessions were in place. Nobody took anything with them. The Tatar families were thrown out of their houses and into the barred vehicles. The only man left there was an elderly man, a janitor. He knew that we were from the Artek. We could do or take what we wanted. It was an empty village, with nobody around. It was empty and strange. It was terrifying. There was a tree on the main square with many ribbons on its branches. It's a Tatar tradition to put little ribbons on the branches on a holiday. I will never forget this. One can never forget such things.