

STUDY: CHILDREN'S PALACE



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## INTRODUCTION

Children's Palace or Palace of Young Pioneers is a unique functional type in socialist countries, originated in the Soviet Union (USSR).

It is provided by the government and designated for extracurricular activities, ranging from music programs to sports camps to young-naturalist clubs.

Some of these were conducted by enthusiastic teachers at the regular schools after school hours. Others were conducted at independently run youth centers.

Every large city had at least one of those, commonly known as the City Young Pioneer Palace (or, nowadays, the Palace of Youth). Many smaller municipal districts had one as well. Even in the countryside there were similar opportunities provided by local municipal units or state farms.

### DIFFERENCES WITH SCHOOLS

- Usually educational programs in Palace of Young Pioneers were designed so that they didn't duplicate school programs.
- The organization educational programs consisted of different specialized hobby groups and sections. There were various sports, cultural and educational, technical, political, artistic, tourist, and young naturalist hobby groups in a Palace of Young Pioneers.
- Usually, the quota of members was allocated by each elementary school, each school can only be allocated a few places, so they just sent a few "genius children".
- Educational work at the Palaces was more designed to cultivate children's interests in amateur talent activities.

### SIMILARITIES WITH SCHOOLS

- Hobby groups were organized by children's ages, similar to school classes.
- The teaching-learning way in a classroom was similar to school classes.
- Admittance to Young Pioneer Palaces was completely free of charge.

A PARADISE FOR CHILDREN

A "CHILDREN'S WORLD" OF WONDER AND MAGIC

AN INSTRUMENT OF STATE-SPONSORED FANTASY

*It was a contribution to the reemergence of an important cliché of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea of the "children's world". An idyll originally of impeccably bourgeois provenance had been restored, but this time in different form:*

*it was now all children, irrespective of their social background, who were supposed to inhabit a world of wonder and magic.*

*The Pioneer Palace became an important instrument of this state-sponsored fantasy.*

...

*(It was more but not a lie to insist that) Pioneer palaces represented some kind of paradise available to Soviet children, ... that here all wants would be satisfied, and all social ills healed, and that the child would then be sent back, remade, into the world from which it had come.*

*Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*  
p270, edited by Christina Kiaer, Eric Naiman  
2006 by Indiana University Press

*THE PALACE OF YOUNG PIONEERS IN SOVIET UNION*





## DURING THE 1920S AND 1930S

The predecessors of Young Pioneer Palaces were established in Moscow and later in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg in Russia), Sverdlovsk (a Russian city), Tbilisi (now the capital of the republic of Georgia), Kiev (now the capital of the republic of Ukraine), Irkutsk (now a city in Eastern Siberia of Russia) and other cities or towns of the Soviet Union.

The early ones were organized at re-equipped palaces and personal residences of aristocrats of the Russian Empire, and were nationalized shortly after Soviet power was established in 1922.

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### SEPTEMBER, 1935

The first Young Pioneer Palace was established in Kharkov (The second largest city in Ukraine) in the former House of the Assembly of Nobility.

### UNTIL THE LATE 1950S

Newly built ones were constructed in the architectural style of ancient palaces, then new architectural styles began to be introduced.

1960s

Two of the largest Young Pioneer Palaces were built in the new style: the Moscow Palace of Young Pioneers, built in 1959-1963, and the Kiev Palace of Young Pioneers, built in 1965.

1991

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, most of the Young Pioneer Palaces were closed, and some became strip clubs or casinos, some transformed into depoliticized youth extracurricular establishments, but admittance ceased to be free of charge.

1971

There were more than 3,500 Young Pioneer Palaces in Soviet Union.



Late 1930s, Moscow House of Young Pioneers and Octobrists on Stopani Pereulok. Photo by Tsukner.



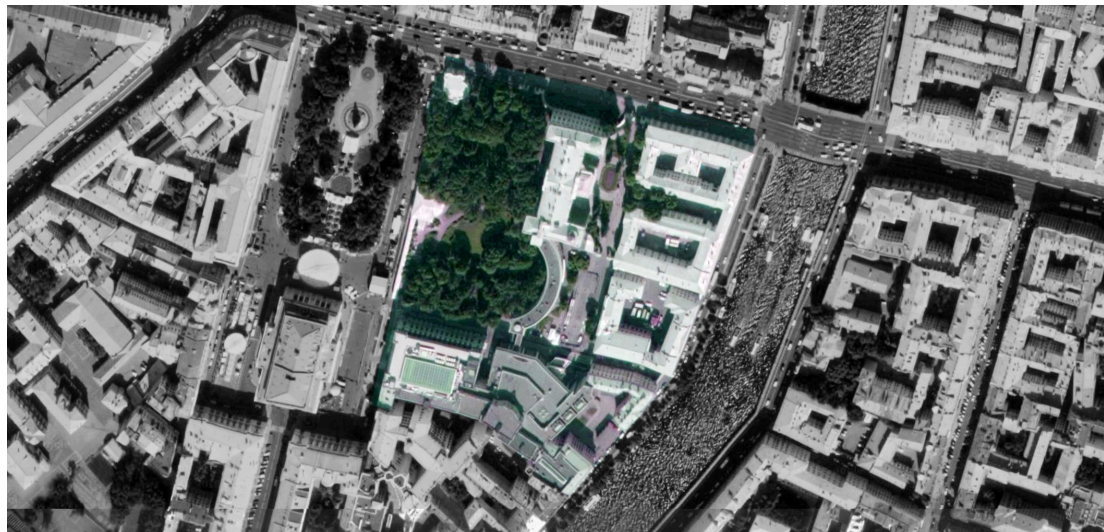
December, 1940. Girls during a simultaneous display with Soviet chess champion Yelizaveta Bykova at the Moscow House of Young Pioneers. Photo by N. Agafonov.

December 1955, dance class at the Moscow House of Young Pioneers. Photo by M. Filimonov.



August 1946. Participants in a meeting of young tourists from across the country walking in the garden of the Moscow City House of Young Pioneers. Photo by E. Yevzerikhin.



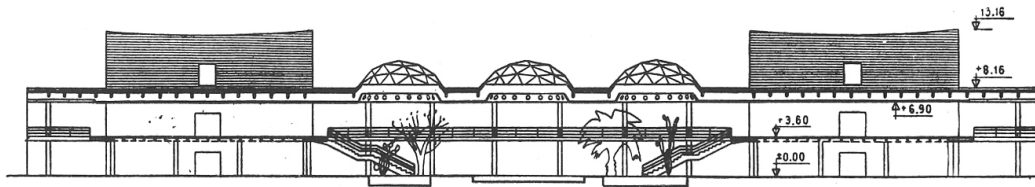


*LENINGRAD'S PIONEERS' PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIAN, 1934*

Anichkov Palace was commissioned by Empress Elizabeth in 1741. The original architect, Mikhail Zemtsov, gave the building its form and dimensions, while Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli completed the original baroque decorations.

After the October Revolution, the Anichkov Palace was used briefly as a museum of St. Petersburg, and since 1934, it was converted into Leningrad's Pioneers' Palace.

Now named the Palace of Youth Creativity, it is home to a variety of organizations offering after-school education in arts and crafts, sport, sciences, and engineering.

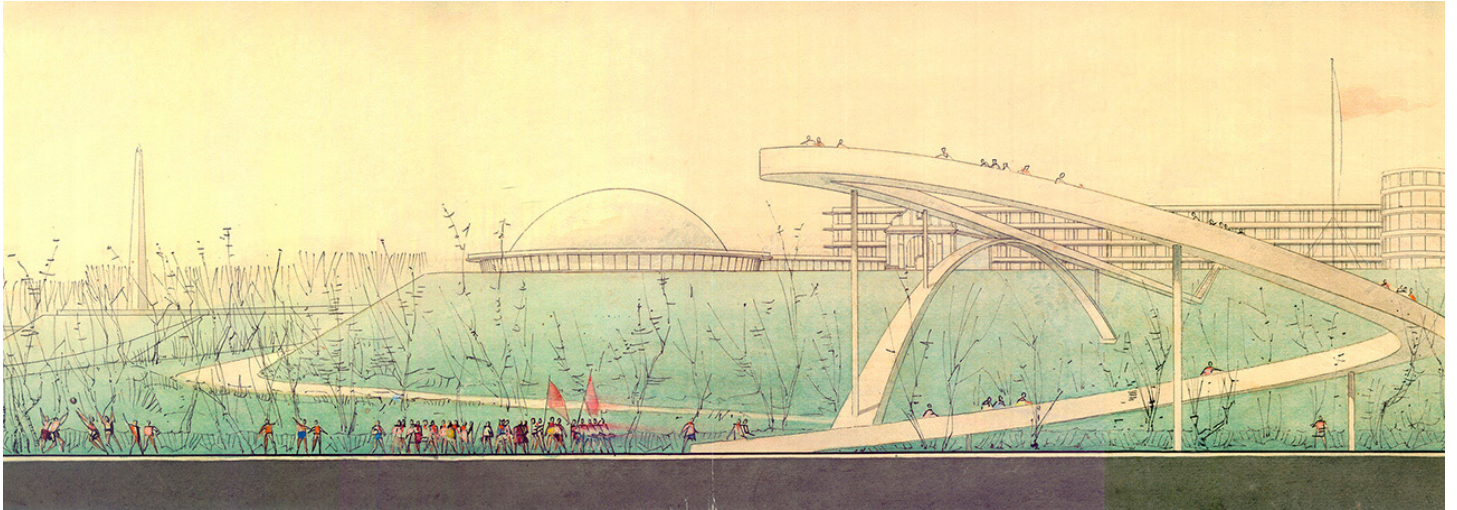


*MOSCOW CITY PALACE OF YOUNG PIONEERS AND SCHOOLCHILDREN, RUSSIAN, 1962*

This building is perhaps the best example of the new course of Soviet architecture at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s. Planned by a group of like-minded young people, the Pioneer Palace demonstrated the wide spectrum of aesthetic possibilities afforded by modern compositional methods, materials, and construction.

In essence the Pioneer Palace is a whole town, a complex of buildings, picturesquely situated on an abundant green area.

The main building is a functionally complicated architectural organism; its compositional relationships correspond to its functions.



First option of the Pioneers Palace design, 1960.

### *THE PIONEERS PALACE IN KIEV, UKRAINE, 1962-1965*

Architects: A. Miletsky, E. Bilsky; Engineers A. Pechenov, L. Linovych; Artist: A. Rybachuk, V. Melnichenko; Sculptor: V. Boroday, V. Seliber.

The Kiev Palace of Pioneers is an architectural attempt to develop a space which is maximally adapted to the needs of children. The unique nature of the project by architect Edward Bilsky and Abraham Miletsky and artists Ada Rybachuk and Vladimir Melnichenko is in this attempt to move away from the standards of architecture as the embodiment of the "adult" world.

The project was the second time, after the project of the Central bus station, that these monumental artists closely collaborated with the architect group, without limiting themselves to purely decorative tasks. The architects tried to "open" the inner space of the Palace to the existing historic architectural environment (Lavra, Park of Glory) and the picturesque Left Banks of the Dnipro river as much as possible.

*THE CHILDREN'S PALACE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA*

*1950s and 1960s*

Children's palaces began to be established in all major cities across the country.

At first, China's Children's Palace is trying to completely replicate the Soviet Union in the establishment of the system.

Some of them were directly transformed from an old dignified building, like those in Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing.

However, some newly built ones were even constructed with the same drawings.

*June, 1953*

The Children's Palace of Chinese Welfare Society was established in Shanghai, which was the first Children's Palace in China.

In this period, Children's Palace was not only a place where children's elites gather, but also the training base for the Young Pioneers.

*1956*

Beijing Children's Palace was established in the Shouhuang Palace (the place where the emperor's ancestors were enshrined in ancient times) in Jingshan Park.

*From 1967 to 1977*

Most economical and construction activities stopped because of the Culture Revolution.



FROM 1990S

1980S

*In this period, still only students with expertise in morality and literacy, art, technology or sports could have the opportunity to enjoy the education and training of the Children's Palace.*

*But the political color had been slightly weakened, replaced by a relatively relaxed atmosphere. Children's Palace then payed more attention to hobby groups that were not available in schools, and amusement facilities that were difficult to see elsewhere.*

From 1990s, the Children's Palace gradually moved from elite education to social education.

In principle, governmental financial support is difficult to guarantee the operation of these children's palaces.

Meanwhile, because of the lack of social educational resources suitable for the growth of children at that time, also related to China's college entrance examination system, Children's Palaces began to become an institution of fee-based training.

1983

There were 106 children's palaces in the provincial cities of China, and 102 children's palaces in small cities and towns, and more than 7,000 children's activity stations in countryside.

NOW

Across 70 years, the children's palace in China has grown from "genius training camp" for a few "genius children" to "hobby training center" for all children, and to "children's amusement park" now.



In 1960, the Friendship Choir sang "Viva Three Red Flags" in front of the Beijing Children's Palace.



In 1980, children were writing calligraphy in Shanghai Children's palace to welcome French friends.

In 1961, children were divided into maritime model group, aircraft model group and radio group in the Shanghai Children's Palace



In 1982, a group of Chinese children playing traditional instrument pipa and others in Shanghai Children's Palace.





In 1985, Wuhan Air Force presented a trainer plane to the children's palace of Wuhan City.



In 2002, children were practicing traditional musical instruments in Beijing Children's Palace.

In 1994, the children of the Wuhu Children's Palace in Anhui Province was practicing taking photos in the park.



In 2011, a mother standing outside the classroom window was watching for her child and watching the "hobby" training class in the Children's Palace of Nantong City in Jiangsu Province.





*THE FIRST CHILDREN'S PALACE OF CHINA IN SHANGHAI, CHINA, 1953*

Formerly known as Kadoorie Residence, it was built in 1919 and later changed to the Children's Palace in 1953. The building was a elegant European Renaissance-style building. There was a large lawn in front of the door, and there were often activities taking place here.

There was a large sport hall on the first floor; beautifully decorated with statues, carvings, pools and stages. The zenith is high on the second floor and is engraved with delicate patterns.

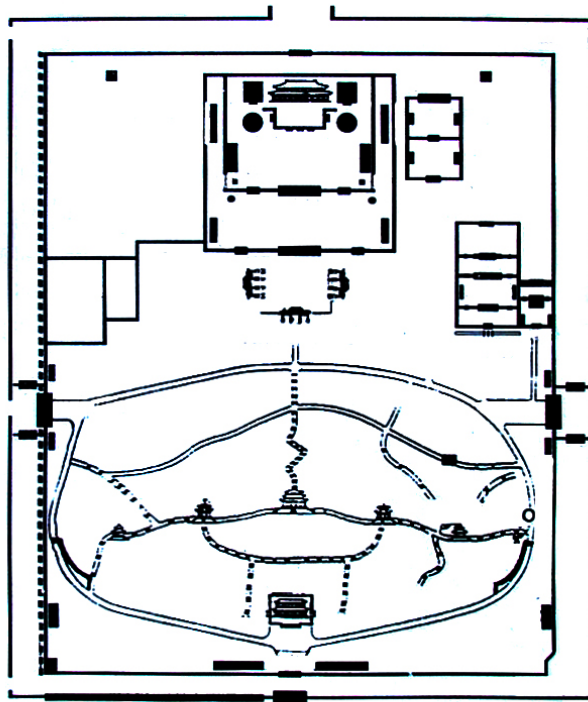


### *THE OLD CHILDREN'S PALACE IN BEIJING, CHINA, 1956*

In 2013, the 57-year-old Beijing Children's Palace officially moved out of the Shouhuang Palace on the north side of Jingshan Park.

The Shouhuang Palace, where the old Beijing Children's Palace located, was once used to place the portraits of ancient ancestors of the Qing Dynasty's emperors. In the beginning of 20th century, it used to be changed to an antiquities exhibition hall here.

This Children's Palace is so special that many people missed it after hearing the news of its moving out.



*THE OLD CHILDREN'S PALACE IN BEIJING, CHINA, 1956*

This is the plan of the whole Jingshan Park in Beijing, in which the children's palace occupied the central northern area.

The black squares and dots are some pavillions and kiosks surrounding the central Shouhuang Palace, surrounded by which, the courtyard played the most important and central role here. And many activities happened here for the children.



### *THE OLD CHILDREN'S PALACE IN NANJING, CHINA, 1954*

Founded in 1954, the first children's palace is originally called "Nanjing City Youth House", which situated on the Huanzhou island in Xuanwu Lake.

This building is used by the "Leidong Alumni Association" in the beginning of 20th century, which has been listed as a cultural relics protection unit now.

There was also a children's playground on the island. During the holidays, the children came here to play and then could visit the Xuanwu Lake Zoo besides.



*THE NEW CHILDREN'S PALACE IN BEIJING, CHINA, 2013*

The new Beijing Children's Palace is located beside a lake, standing in the green. The building area is 40,000 square meters and it is composed of art, sports, science and rehearsal area.

The plan is shaped like flowers, which implies the relationship between volumes and functions.





*THE NEW CHILDREN'S PALACE IN NANJING, CHINA, 2019*

The area of this new children's palace will reach 65,000 square meters, of which the above-ground building area is 24,200 square meters, with a total of five floors. The ground floor is the international cultural center, the first floor is the youth social literacy experience center, the second floor is the youth aesthetic center, the third floor is the technology experience center and the fourth floor is the comprehensive service center. Underground the sports training center is located.

The function is organized vertically here.

