ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВО САНКТ – ПЕТЕРБУРГА КОМИТЕТ ПО ОБРАЗОВАНИЮ

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RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE PROJECT TOPIC**

**«Дети и война»**

**«Children and war»**

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INTRODUCTION

May 9, 1945 was a historic day for which hundreds of millions of people all over the world had waited. The Red Army together with its Allies won a great victory over fascist Germany. The war was over. The 9th of Mayis celebrated in our country as Victory Day. It is a special holiday, different from all others. It is to war and labour veterans that Russia owes its Great Victory in the bloodiest of all wars. It is a national holiday and a very personal one. Seventy years have passed since that victory, but it is very important to remember it. 20 or 10 years ago people believed that time would not take that historic day away from people’s hearts and memory. There was hardly a family in our country where those who had fallen for our Motherland were not commemorated on the 9th of May. Every year veterans come together to celebrate Victory Day and to remember their brother-soldiers. They visit war memorials to honour the memory of the fallen. Former front-line soldiers go to schools to share their war stories with the young generation.

However, these days we can see that people start forgetting those terrible days of war. Our veterans are leaving us and few of them are still alive. Do modern children remember their names, their deeds, and their heroic sacrifice? Do modern children know those children, children of war, who suffered from cold and starvation, who saw their parents’ death, who forgot the childhood.

The subject of the research is children’s behavior and way of life during the Great Patriotic War and the days of the 900-day Siege of Leningrad.

The object of the research is the role of children during the war.

The research objective is to study children’s behavior, their attitude to war, life, and the psychological and moral sources of their heroism.

The hypothesis of the study is to show that patriotism and loyalty to the Motherland, civic engagement featured the way of life and behavior of the children of Great Patriotic War.

The goals of research is

* to study historical literature on the topic;
* to study children’s heroism and the moral sources of their heroism;
* to show children’s contribution during the war;
* to interview veterans (children who lived in Leningrad during the siege);
* to make conclusion.

CHILDREN AND WAR

Children and war are incompatible! However, the children of the blockade city had to carry all the tragedy of war. They did not understand what had happened : their fathers had gone, their mothers cried , there wasn’t anything to eat, shelters became their homes... they felt the trouble came into their house. Children of Leningrad fought to protect home. They worked at factories, put out fire in attics, watched the dangerous sky to warn about bombs, worked in the fields, nursed the sick and wounded. More than 5000 children were awarded for courage and heroism.

In September, 1941, there were 400 000 children, babies and teenagers. The care of children was the most important thing those days.

Famine is the most terrible page of Leningrad siege. The lowest rates were registered from November till December 1941. People could take bread only for rationing cards and not more than a small slice of bread about 125 grammes (photo 1). The bread was given out for one day. Leningraders had to use joiners glue for food. They used leather items for consumption: belts, gloves and bags. A 10-year-old boy Valera Sukhov wrote in his diary about the cat that was eaten. People died. Heaps of corpses were lying on the ground. It was not possible to bury all the bodies.

Photo 1 «Rationing cards and glue bread»

A young girl of sixteen called Valya Chepko had a dream to eat porridge and wrote the menu of her dream in her diary but she died in 1942 when she was only 16 (photo 2).

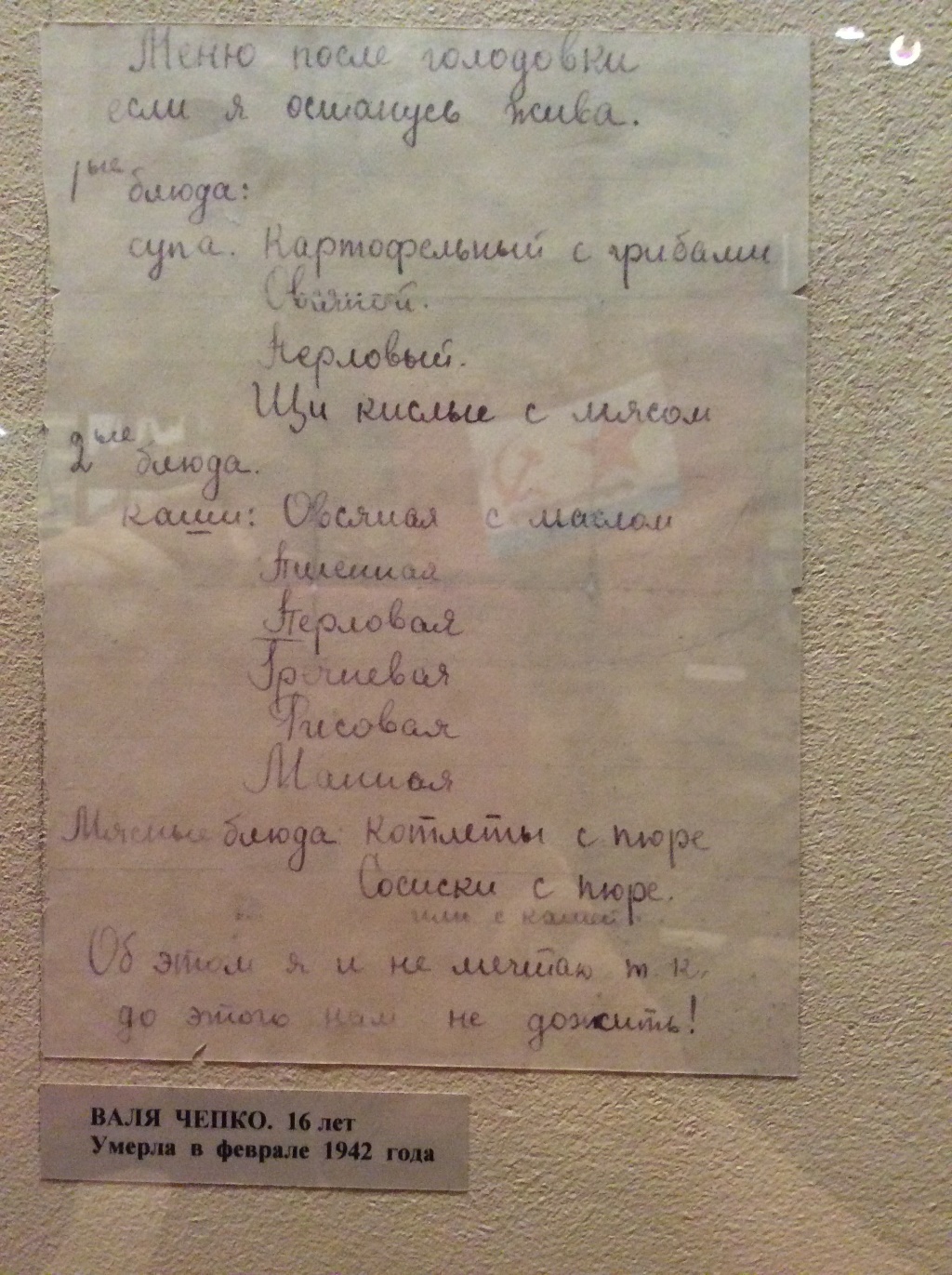


Photo 2 «The dream»

The children of blockade Leningrad went on to say, “The most vivid memories of their childhood were that they were always hungry. Small children always cried for food and told their mums they wanted butter and bread. Parents re-baked the bread in an oven to make it dry, brought water from the Fontanka River, and boiled it on the stove. Everything went into the oven in those days, even furniture and books. any of children survived because their mothers made soup from pieces of dried bread boiled in water. Very rarely, who could, they added a bit of cereal or a spoonful of oatmeal, which they had managed to get somewhere”.

In time of famine some people turned out marvellous, incomparable heroes. Others turned out scoundrels, villains, murderers, cannibals.

Tanya Savicheva wrote in her diary: ‘28 December 1941 - Zhenya died. 25 January 1942 - Granny died. 17 March - Lyoka died. 13 April - Uncle Vasya died. 10 May - Uncle Lyosha died. 13 May at 7.30am - Mama died. The Savichevs are dead, everyone is dead. Only Tanya is left.’ Tanya was 12. Irina Bogdanova, who was eight and was left alone in the family flat when her mother, aunt and grandmother died one by one from dysentery in February, 1942. She was found ten days later and handed in to an orphanage where she woke up to realise that the girl sharing her bed was dead. The days Irina spent along with her dead family were a total blank.

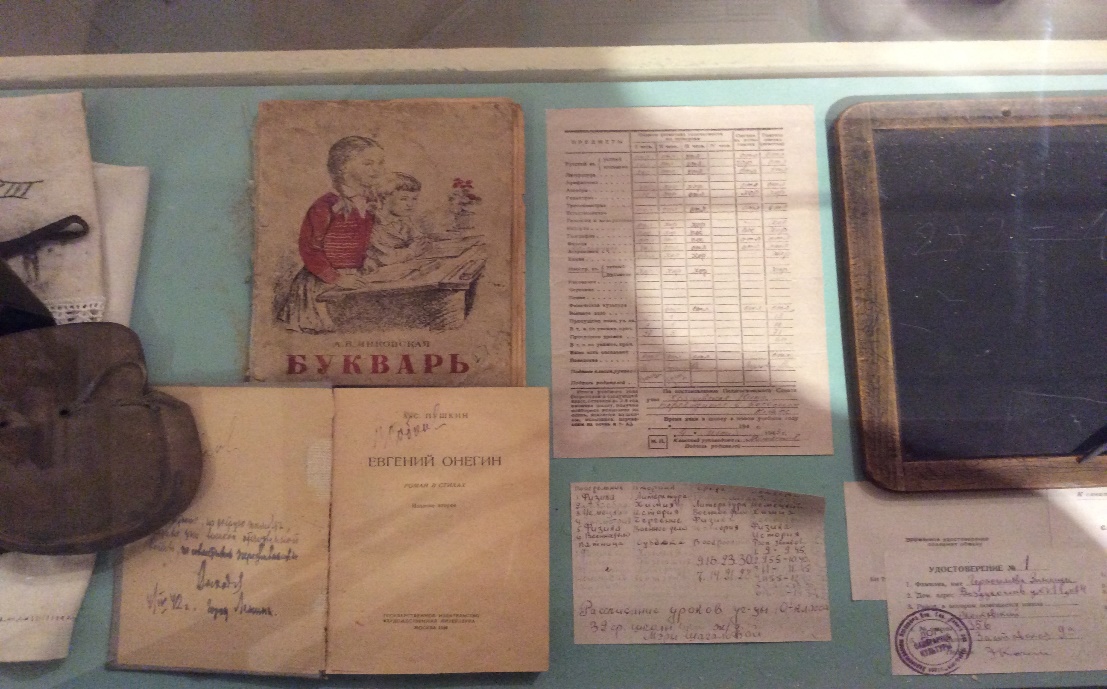
However, despite famine and other troubles children went to school. It was a great deed. During the most severe days of the siege of the winter of 1941-1942, 39 schools worked (photos 3 and 4). Lessons were in unusual places. Often during a lesson, children heard a siren announcing the next bombing or shelling. The students quickly went down to shelters where classes continued.

Photo 3 «School books»



Photo 4 «39 schools»

Students ran from the classroom to the shelter and back, that is why the lessons were in the shelters. Here is a wonderful copybook where you can see the shelter instead of school (photo 5). It was possible only in Leningrad!

To study in winter became difficult. Teachers and students looked for the fuel, and carried water, cleaned the school. The lesson lasted about 25 minutes; neither teachers nor students could work and study more. It was so cold that the ink could freeze. Lessons were learnt by heart. One pupil wrote in his diary: "The temperature is 2-3 degrees below zero. We sit in the coat, shoes, gloves or even hats..." Nevertheless, despite all the difficulties, the people passed exams, finished schools. Many children died and it was unusually quiet at schools. Exhausted, hungry children stopped running around and making noise during the break. When they fought, teachers were even glad because children got alive.

The head of the research and exhibition department of the State Memorial Museum of Leningrad Defense and Siege Irina Aleksandrovna Muravyova remembered about New Year trees for children with soup and tangerines for presents. Children were very happy.

Irina Aleksandrovna told us about her friends who lived during the siege of St.Petersburg. She said that children, suffering from hunger and cold, fought against soldiers and enemies.

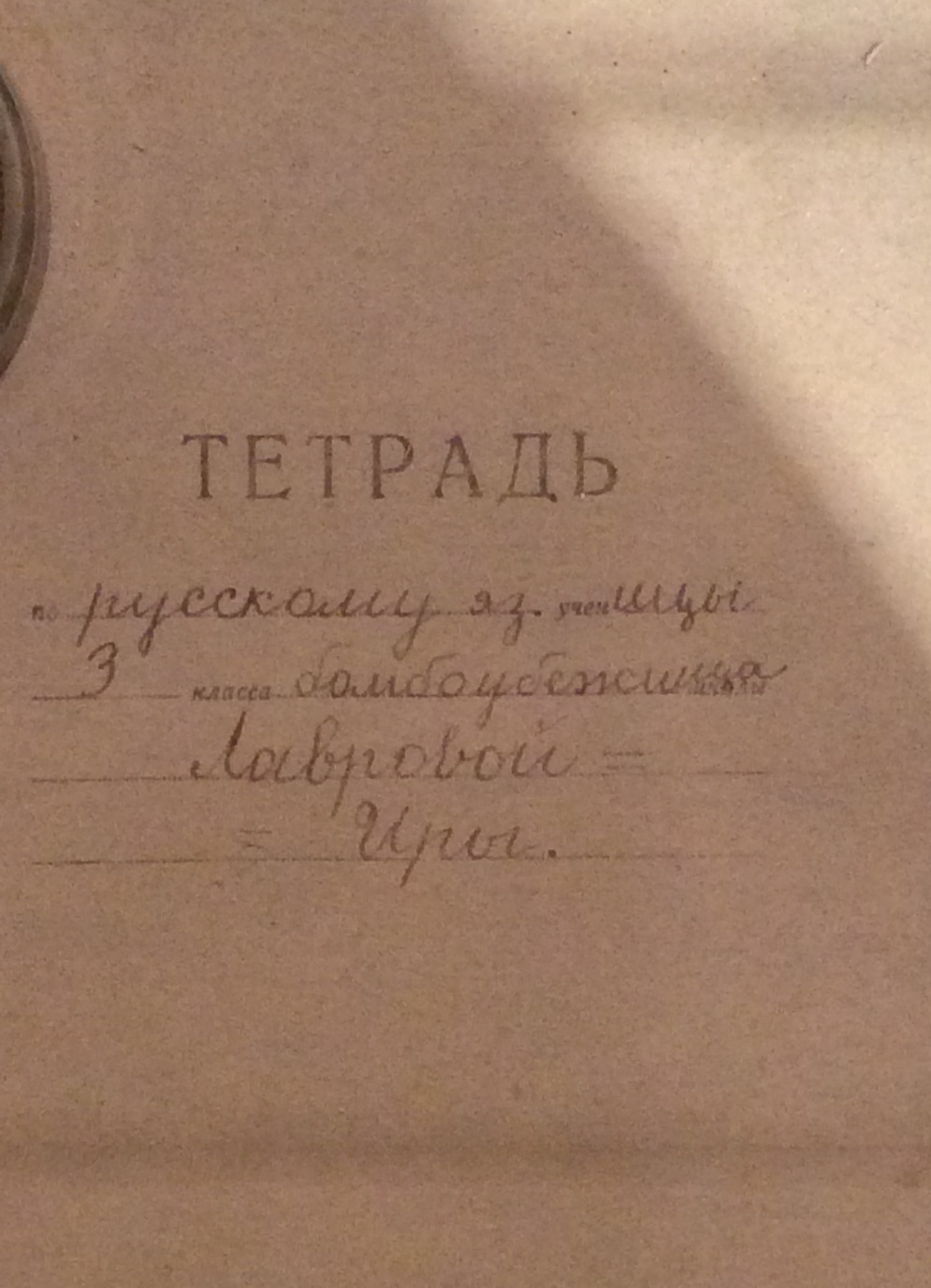
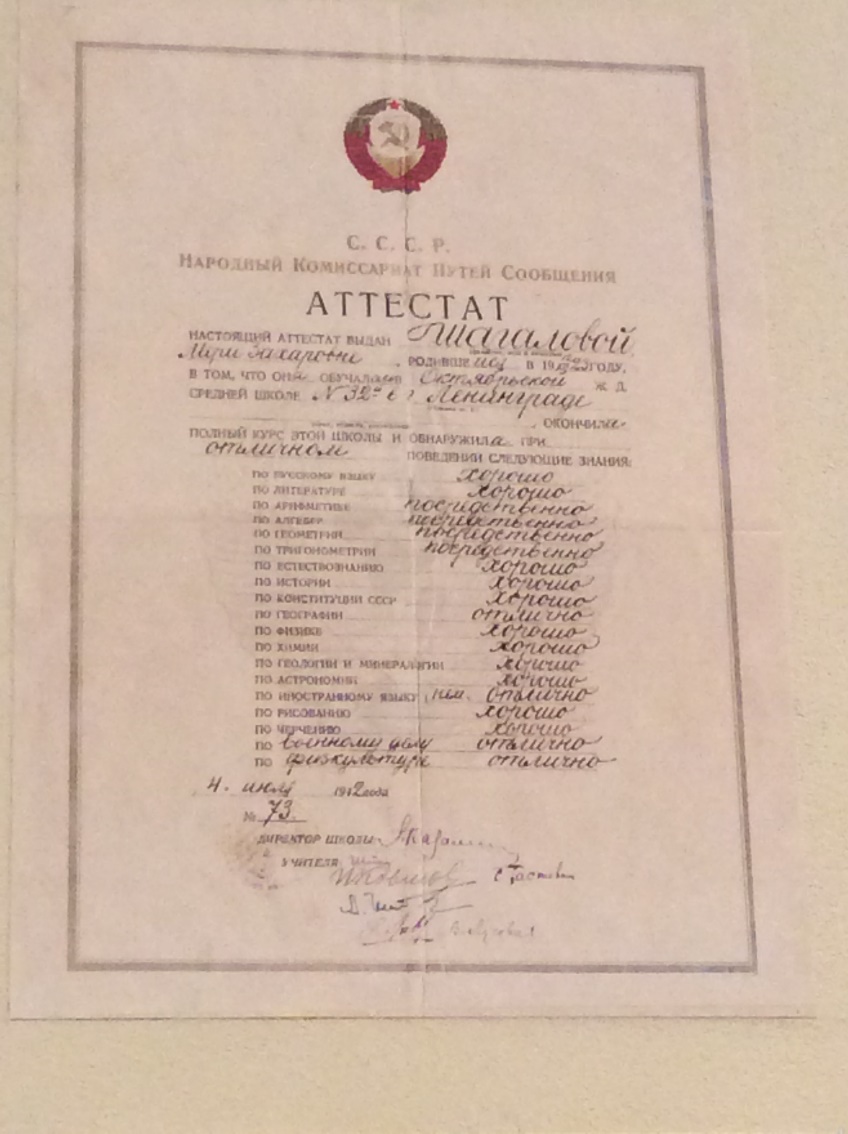


Photo 5 «School»

There were no events in the city without young people. Children put out fires, destroyed tens of thousands of bombs, carried away debris of ruined buildings, cleaned roads and tram tracks. Students came to hospital to visit the wounded. They cleaned the chambers, fed tailoring. In 1943 in the city team Timurovcy were organized. They visited the elderly, the sick, carried the mail.  
They studied, fought, worked: 15 thousand students were awarded the medal "For defense of Leningrad"(photo 6).



Photo 6"For defense of Leningrad"

CONCLUSION

Seventy years have passed since those heroic and tragic days. We are living in a different country today. Everything has changed: economy and policy, money and food, standards and cost of living. Even the name of our country has changed. New heroes have come, new fashions and new ways of thought. How we still hope and believe that cardinal human virtues are eternal for every “true men, like you, men”. We live in a great country, which deserves a better future. The future belongs to the young. But there is no future without the past. We have no right to forget the people who perished in the prime of life. They also dreamt to live long and be happy. It is our privilege that many wartime veterans have lived to see the 21st century and we are their contemporaries. They need care and moral support. It is not difficult to be tolerant and humane.

The famous Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov said, “we, living people, have many rights. We have the right to work in the name of our Motherland, and the right to defend it, the right to love, the right to be happy. But we have no right to forget what our comrades did in the name of Victory, in the name of Motherland, in the name of life on Earth.”

We should not forget the war because we want to live at peace.

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