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Le régiment Azov et les « camps d'été militaires ukrainiens » pour les enfants

- International -



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Ci-dessous, vidéo du [The New York Times](#), « Ukraine Summer Camp : Learning To Fight », 19 juillet 2017, par Alexey Furman, Sergiy Polezhaka, Veda Shastri et Kaitlyn Mullin. « This is a Ukrainian military summer camp for children ages 9 to 17. It was started in 2015 by the Azov Battalion ».

[Copie](#)

Alex Masi, « Photography special : the Ukrainian children learning battlefield skills at summer camp », thetimes.co.uk, 26 août 2018 :

« Children aged seven to 15 are spending their holidays training at military camps organised and run by Ukrainian nationalists fighting Europe's forgotten war.

It is the first day of summer camp and the kids are playing with Kalashnikovs. Tarakan, a girl of 15, takes just 25 seconds to complete the rifle's maintenance. "Remove the magazine and cocking lever, release the gas cylinder, then put it back together again," she says. "Be careful : never aim the barrel at a person. Unless you know for sure that you want to shoot."

The Azovets camp, for children aged seven to 15, is organised by Azov Battalion, a radical Ukrainian nationalist militia founded by volunteers following the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014, and swiftly incorporated into the National Guard of Ukraine. Azov leads the fight against pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine – a conflict that is now entering its fifth year.

Many of the camp's 400 attendees are children of Azov fighters or have been recruited from primary schools. The children are taught Ukrainian history, battlefield tactics, how to retrieve a body, first aid, gun maintenance and survival skills. Military-style punishment is also an important part of the regime, as is praying to the "motherland" and singing traditional Slavic songs.

Azov insist these aren't child soldiers. "We don't train children for frontline activities here," says one leader. "The objective is to raise their awareness about the war." At dusk, the sound of prayer rings through the compound. "Burn all weakness from my heart," recite the cadets, "so I will not feel fear or doubt. Make my spirit strong." » **Alex Masi**



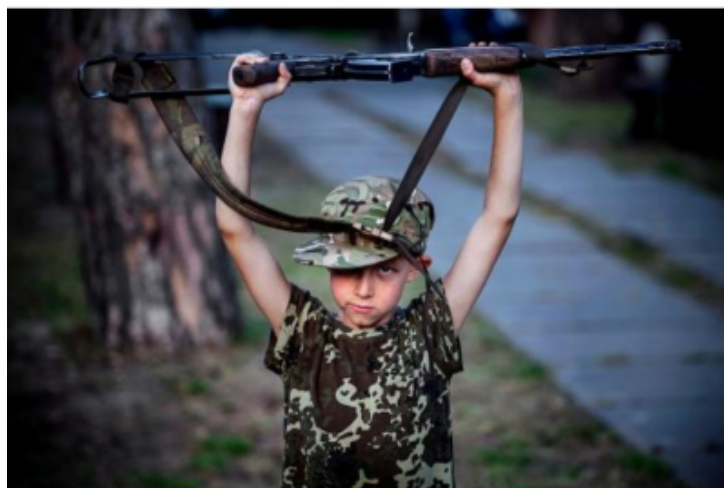
A boy practises with a wooden replica rifle in a field 20 miles west of Ukraine's capital, Kiev

ALEX MASI



The wooden guns appear almost toylike, but war games form part of the children's tactical training

ALEX MASI



As a punishment, a young boy is made to hold an AK-47 assault rifle over his head

ALEX MASI



Tarakan (centre) and her friends chant patriotic slogans with their fist over their heart

ALEX MASI



Sunbathing on the banks of the Dnieper river, a carefree moment after another gruelling day

ALEX MASI



Gently does it — a young girl learns how to handle, clean and maintain an AK-47 assault rifle

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