



The Last Heroes of Leningrad

Coping strategies of Siege survivors in Soviet and post-Soviet society

by Alexandra Wachter

DESCRIPTION:

Alexandra Wachter investigates how survivors of the Siege of Leningrad (1941-44) were able to come to terms with their memories in Soviet and post-Soviet society. Subject to political fluctuations, official remembrance ranged from enforced silence to extensive exploitation for propaganda purposes, a framework which corresponded with psychological strategies to cope, but not deal, with trauma: repression, denial, acting-out and idealization. Based on a combination of oral history interviews, ethnographic and archival research, this study examines narratives and activities of child and adolescent survivors. Individual experiences are related to varying degrees of involvement in survivors' organisations, and thick description adds to the understanding of trauma in the context of a (post-)totalitarian society.

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Alexandra Wachter holds a PhD in history from the University of London and is currently working as a researcher with the Austrian Society for Contemporary History. Her research interests include architecture and urban history, resistance to National Socialism and (post-)Soviet history with a focus on memory cultures and trauma.

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