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Children of Buryatia: Everyday Life in the Conditions of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45

Abstract

The article is devoted to little-studied topic of children's daily life in the provincial rear towns.

Studying daily life of wartime childhood drawing regional materials seems an urgent task for historical science, since each region is unique due to its historical, socio-economic, socio-cultural, natural-climatic, and other peculiarities. Such studies expand geographical scope and allow us to identify similarities and differences of regions and country in the whole, to recreate the atmosphere of provincial towns and villages, and to make an important contribution to creation of large-scale objective picture. The study is to identify the main features of everyday practices and adaptation strategies of Buryatia's children under the conditions of wartime rear reality. The author pays special attention to school education, labor routine, material and domestic conditions, recreational activities, and problems of child neglect in the region in 1941–45. The sources are documents from the State Archive of the Republic of Buryatia, statistical collections, materials of central and local periodicals: newspapers Pravda, Buryat-Mongolskaya Pravda, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda. Of particular value for reconstruction of children's wartime everyday life are personal memoirs of participants of the events of the studied period. A significant part of the sources is being introduced into the scientific use for the first time, hence the novelty of the research which permits to reach the set goal. The work uses principle of historicism, as well as special methods, typical for historical research: problem-chronological, comparative-historical, historical-genetic. It has been established that daily reality of children was hard work to meet the needs of the front and their own basic physical and domestic needs. There are known children practices of coping with war, including games offering distraction from harsh everyday realities. The materials of the article can be applied in the preparation of monographs and notes on the history of the Great Patriotic War, for studying everyday life in the rear, as well as for development of seminars and special courses in the field of national history. Children of the Great Patriotic War are a special generation, becoming an object of increasing scholarly attention.

Keywords

Historical sources, Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, Buryatia, children, rear childhood, children's wartime everyday life, labour mobilization, assistance to the front.

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