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Being the Mom. Childcare Strategies in Soviet Lithuania

ABSTRACT

Soon after the end of World War II in 1945, the involvement of women in the workforce in Soviet Lithuania, as was the case in the whole European part of the USSR, reached unprecedented levels that were incomparable with any other country in West/North Europe. By the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, more than 80 percent of women in the Soviet Baltics were working full-time. These were women who strove to accomplish the worker-wife-mother ideal, which had been designed by Soviet propaganda. The purpose of this presentation – is to uncover the childcare strategies in Soviet Lithuania during the period 1945-1970, i.e. in the time of chronic shortages and lack of day care centres. Since there was no tangible help from fathers, Lithuanian mothers were left on their own while struggling to reconcile family and work. Accordingly, Lithuanian women tried turn for help to day care centres, sought relatives' assistance, or applied other, more individual, childcare strategies. The presentation is based on interviews with Lithuanian women that were conducted during 2000-2006 in different regions of Lithuania.