The Victim as Hero

By Margaret Sleeboom

The great merit of _The Victim as Hero. Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan_ lies in its synthesis of sources of the peace movement and the light it sheds on the notion of Japanese self-victimization from various political and historical perspectives. Its relevance lies in its comprehensive description of the political role of the victim narrative in Japanese post-war state policies. In short, it is a systematic account of the pacifist movement and its co-optation by state nationalism. The book is of great value to anyone interested in the history of Japanese political attitudes toward the Pacific War and the way it influenced the educational system.

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The victimization of Japan in wartime has indeed become a victim. The question is indeed: Did they become victims? The answer is yes, but not at the hands of the German people, but in a world in turmoil. Disregarding the notion that the Japanese people were spared the painful confrontations of war, which the German people have undergone, it is not clear, even to readers without any background knowledge of Japanese history, that the Japanese were spared the painful confrontations of war, which the German people have undergone. The fact that philosophical and Marxist debates on 'victimage' ideologically depict the Japanese as being too passive, and criticized them for being irresponsible in maintaining an ideological distance from the state, does not take away the historical reality that many Japanese indeed became victims. The question is what.

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