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Mikheev, Mikhail V., Bedel, Alexander E., Institute of History and Archeology, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation

Specifics of Staffing of the Soviet Joint Stock Company “Wismut”: Correspondence of the Apparatus of the First Main Directorate under the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Sverdlovsk Regional Committee of the AUCP (B) Party Organizations in 1949

Abstract

The publication introduces into scientific use correspondence of the deputy head of the First Main Directorate (PGU, executing agency of the Soviet nuclear project) under the Council of Ministers of the USSR P. Ya. Meshik with the party organizations of the Sverdlovsk Regional Committee of the AUCP (B) on the issue of recruitment for work abroad. The analysis of references to the resolutions of the Council of Ministers known to researchers establishes that the Soviet Joint-Stock Company “Wismut” located in Germany recruited mining engineers and specialists in the field of geological exploration. Its subordinates were engaged in search and development of uranium deposits in the Soviet zone of occupation of Germany. A raw material base for extraction and processing of uranium-containing ores was formed for implementation of the Soviet nuclear weapons program in the second half of the 1940s. For reasons of state secrecy, researchers are still significantly limited in access to archival documents on the history of the nuclear project. Thus, introduction into scientific use of new historical sources related to the project implementation already seems sufficiently relevant and high-demand scientific task. In this case, it is a selection of five documents deposited in the materials of the Sverdlovsk City Committee of the AUCP (B) Documentation Center of Public Organizations of the Sverdlovsk Region associated with the mass recruitment of mining and exploration workers entrusted to the Sverdlovsk Regional Committee of the AUCP (B) in spring of 1949 in the interests of the nuclear project. At the direction of the Regional Committee (obkom), the Sverdlovsk City Committee selected a number of necessary specialists, and the First Main Directorate began their registration for work abroad. In the autumn of 1949, a request came from the PGU about expediency of such transfer for one of the selected specialists. Doubts were caused by minor flaws indicated in his generally positive characteristic. Responding to the request, the city committee withdrew its decision. The introduction of the identified documents collection into scientific use is due to two reasons. Firstly, at the grassroots stage, it fixes the recruitment system for the Soviet nuclear project, which has been little studied up to date. Secondly, on a hypothetical level, it can be considered an illustration of a mechanism of evasion from

mobilization into the atomic project system, which frightened many specialists with its obscurity.

Keywords

Historical sources, archival sources, Soviet nuclear project, personnel mobilizations, evasion of mobilizations, P. Ya. Meshik, Middle Urals, East Germany, geological survey, uranium mining, late Stalinism (1945–53).

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About the authors

Mikheev Mikhail V., PhD in History, Institute of History and Archeology, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Center for Methodology and Historiography, senior researcher, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, +7-967-909-61-25, mikheeviiiauroran@yandex.ru

ORCID: 0000-0001-8097-4953

Bedel Alexander E., PhD in History, Institute of History and Archeology, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, economic history center, senior researcher, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation, +7-912-287-93-13, bedel54@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0001-6091-913X

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