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Tolyatti's Rivals: The Volga Cities Competing for the New Automobile Plant as an Instance of Regional Lobbying in the Late Socialism Era

Abstract

The article addresses the topic of interactions of center and periphery in the recent national history. The publication of the office memorandums that are being thus introduced into scientific use throws light on the construction of the industrial plant. The article examines the problem of regional lobbying in the USSR in the mid-1960s, at the dawn of the Brezhnev era. It focuses on the declassified archival documents from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) and the Center for Documentation on the Contemporary History of the Yaroslavl Region (TsDNIYaO). The article analyzes office memorandums on the organization of a new

car plant. The record keeping documents of 1965, sent to the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the RSFSR from several regions, are well reasoned petitions. The authors of the memos are Soviet regional leaders of the 1960s: A. A. Skochilov and V. P. Vasiliev (the Ulyanovsk Obkom of the CPSU and the Regional Executive Committee), S. L. Knyazev (Tatar Obkom of the CPSU), F. I. Loschenkov (Yaroslavl Obkom of the CPSU). The analysis of the documents provides answers to a number of questions. Firstly, what were the general trends of lobbying for regional interests in the system of arguments of the local elite? Secondly, what hidden potential problems of regional development of the RSFSR in the mid-1960s can be traced in the petitions of Soviet regional leaders? Thirdly, what were the peculiarities of the local elite language in lobbying for regional interests? Well-reasoned petitions of regional leaders of the late Soviet era on the organization of a new industrial facility are original and little-studied historical sources. The analyzed type of archival documents carries high source study potential, it is of great value for studying regional lobbyism in the early Brezhnev era. The study of such documents can shed light on the invisible processes of the economic life of the late USSR.

Keywords

Archival sources, car industry in the USSR, L. I. Brezhnev, late socialism, lobbying, regional elite, communication practices, AvtoVAZ.

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