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Dynamics of production and structure of the gold mining industry of the USSR in 1928–1943 according to data from the Main Directorate of the Gold and Platinum Industry of the People's Commissariat of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR

Abstract

The article examines the key tables containing gold production data from the Main Directorate of the Gold and Platinum Industry of the People's Commissariat of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR (Glavzoloto CNFM USSR) for 1928–1943, including data by type, method, and region of operation. These materials provide a comprehensive analysis of the industry's development in the pre-war decade and during the Great Patriotic War. The tables presented in this publication are part of Appendix No. 1, «Summary Tables on the Performance of the Gold

Industry of the Glavzoloto CNFM USSR», of the Collection of Materials on the Gold Industry. 1493–1943. State Institute for the Design of Gold-Platinum Industry Enterprises, Glavzoloto, People's Commissariat of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR (Giprozoloto), prepared in 1944. A copy of the working copy of the collection was made at Glavzoloto for the Main Directorate for Construction of the Far North, People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR (Dalstroy NKVD USSR); it is preserved in the State Archives of the Magadan Region (SAMR). The published documents reveal the general dynamics of gold mining, divided into the state and artisanal sectors, as well as a more than fourfold increase in production volumes by the beginning of the war and a sharp decline in subsequent years. Fluctuations in the ratio of the state and artisanal sectors are analyzed, indicating a certain flexibility in the industry's management system. The volumes and shares of placer and ore gold mining are studied, demonstrating the predominance of state-owned enterprises in ore production and artisanal miners in placer production. The article reveals an increase in the share of mechanized mining methods while manual labor retains a significant role. Indicators for key advanced methods of the time – full-cycle factories and amalgamation – are analyzed. A rise in their productivity and geographic expansion are noted. The article demonstrates changes in the territorial structure of gold mining across the USSR, identifying key growth and decline points in production by region, including a decline in the role of traditional gold mining territories (the Urals) and the active development of new ones (the Far East). Overall, new industry statistics demonstrate the rapid growth of the USSR gold mining industry in the 1930s. Its contribution to the country's economy and the provision of gold reserves is noted, while a severe systemic crisis in the industry during the war years is revealed. The ability of the Soviet management system to flexibly allocate resources between the state and artisanal gold mining sectors is emphasized. The published documents contain important statistical information on the dynamics and structure of the USSR gold mining industry from 1928 to 1943, the analysis of which allows for a deeper understanding of the industry's development trends.

Keywords

Main Directorate of the Gold and Platinum Industry of the People's Commissariat of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR (Glavzoloto CNFM USSR), gold, gold industry, gold mining, Glavzoloto, gold resources of the USSR, prospectors, artisanal mining, ore gold, placer gold, gold mining industry of the Russian Far East, Dalstroy, North-East of the USSR.

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