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Social and Economic Development of the Suchan Coal Mine in the 1920s in the Documents from the State Archive of Khabarovsk Krai

Abstract

The study addresses the socio-economic development of the Suchan coal mine, the oldest coal-mining enterprise in the Russian Far East; it draws on archival sources in order to highlight the pages of history of the coal industry in the region. Taking into account the results of their predecessors' work, the authors study the characteristic features of the coal industry development in the Far East under the conditions of the New Economic Policy of the Soviet state. There was a lack of diversified assistance from the Center, while the attention of the party elite to the resources of extractive industries increased: these were traditionally redirected for the needs of the Western regions or exported. The novelty consists in a comprehensive study of the development of the Suchan mine in the 1920s in the context of political and socio-economic situation in the country and the region. The study shows the role of central and local authorities at the stage of reconstruction of the coal industry, the participation of trade union organizations in the formation of labor collectives in the Suchan. It considers the mechanism of regulation of 'collective agreement relations, the participants of which were the miner trade union and the Suchan mines. Analysis of the socio-economic development of the coal mining enterprise in the era of transformation contributes to formation of ideas about the material and living condition of the miners. The causes of unstable social situation in the Suchan mines are revealed in the context of social policy of the Soviet state. There were problems with wages and unsettled system of coal mining prices, which repeatedly became a cause for conflict between the coal hewers and the administration, attempting to avoid strikes. The social image of the Suchan workers has been reconstructed: they were mostly from rural areas and kept a close connection with the village. The unsolved housing problem had an impact on the miners' way of life. It is concluded that with completion of the restoration of the industrial sector of the Soviet Far East economy, the model of state patronage over the region had been established; alongside with military and strategic tasks, it focused on the coal industry. However, the complex of social and household problems of the Suchan miners remained unsolved.

Keywords

The Far East, Suchan mines, coal industry, archival sources, political mood of workers, miners' trade union, collective agreement.

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