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Letters to the Leaders of the USSR Requesting Rehabilitation of the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad: 1947–48

Abstract

The article introduces into scientific use two letters requesting restoration of the Institute of the Peoples of the North (hereinafter - Institute), which functioned in Leningrad in 1930–41. The first letter was written by former students and teachers of the Institute and addressed to the Minister

of Education of the RSFSR. The second letter was written by corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and addressed to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR J. V. Stalin. Thematically these sources belong to the problematic field of the history of the Institute of the Peoples of the North, which played a leading role in training cadres from among the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, in developing alphabets for their unwritten languages, and in the economic and scientific study of the North. There are noteworthy differences in accents of former employees and those of external experts. The first letter underscored the practical role of the Institute in training personnel for the North, while the second argued the importance of studying the North and the impact of the Institute's publishing and educational activities. However, despite these weighty reasons and recitation of creative, academic, and practical achievements of the Institute's students, professors, and graduates, the appeals came to nothing. The status of a separate institution was not returned. The Institute continued its existence in form of faculties and departments in other educational institutions. Thus, the letters are drawing a line on the independent history of the Institute, while describing its main achievements. The published documents have been identified in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). The text is transmitted with preservation of stylistic and linguistic features in accordance with rules of modern spelling and punctuation. Necessary explanations for better understanding of the historical context are provided in the footnotes. Of particular importance is commentary preceding the publication of the documents, which characterizes the place of the Institute's activity in the development of the North in the 1930s.

Keywords

Historical sources, Institute of the Peoples of the North, Ministry of Education of the RSFSR, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, indigenous peoples of the North, Northern workers' faculty, education, Leningrad.

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