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The History of Life and Scientific Activities of the Soviet Microbiologist Z. V. Ermolyeva in Documents from Federal Archives

Abstract

The article analyzes unpublished sources stored in the Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), and the Russian State Archive in Samara (RGA v Samare) to determine the representativeness of these documents in

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reconstruction of the scientific biography of the Soviet microbiologist Zinaida Vissarionovna Ermolieva (1898-1974). The coronavirus pandemic, which has engulfed all the humanity, has changed the vector of biomedical research subjects. In this regard, one of the important tasks of humanitarian researchers is to update historical knowledge about extreme periods. The task of studying the life and work of Soviet scientists who made a significant contribution to studying epidemic diseases and fighting them seems significant. Scarcity of publications devoted to the activities of Z. V. Ermolyeva means that an extensive layer of unpublished documents remains out of view of researchers. Source analysis, archival heuristics, and historical-comparative method permit to conduct research and to assess the informative value of different types of documents for comprehensive reconstruction of Z. V. Ermolyeva's scientific fate. In the RGAE, a great number of documents is concentrated in the scientist's personal fond, its analysis shows that official, scientific, and personal documents are stored there. In addition to text documents, there are photos of Zinaida Vissarionovna with her colleagues in various scientific institutions which are of great interest. Some official documents also provide personal information. In the GARF, documents on this topic are dispersed in different fonds. The fond of the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine, where Z. V. Ermolyeva worked, contains information on preparation of first Soviet penicillin and launch of its production. The fond of the People's Commissariat of Health of the USSR permits to follow the discussion of her scientific works at its Scientific Medical Council meetings. The documents of the Committee for the Assistance of Scientists under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR help to reconstruct elements of material support provided to Ermolyeva in the 1930s. Among the sources stored in the RGA in Samara, of interest are application documents for inventions, in which Zinaida Vissarionovna participated. They show the scientist as the author of inventions and scientific discoveries. The analysis demonstrates that conjunctive use of documents from federal archives showcase multifaceted activities of the well-known microbiologist.



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Keywords

Historical sources, Soviet medical science, microbiology in the USSR, Ermolyeva Zinaida Vissarionovna, Zinaida Ermolyeva, Soviet scientists, women scientists in the USSR, history of science, source studies, antibiotics, cholera, archives.

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