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GERMAN SPECIALISTS AT OKB-456 (USSR): 1946 - 1950

Abstract

First samples of German rocket technology were received in USSR in autumn of 1944. In 1st quarter of 1945, it was decided to form groups of Soviet specialists and send them to Germany to study, collect and delivery of German rocket technology to USSR. Special government commission under leadership of General L.M.Gaidukov and State Commission chaired by People's Commissar of Armaments D.F.Ustinov were created in Germany. Glushko arrived in Germany in July 1945. Under Glushko's leadership, "Department of Liquid Propellant Engines in Germany" was created. The work was carried out with involvement of German specialists under control of OKB-SD employees. German specialists included 20 certified engineers, technicians and craftsmen, 24 highly qualified workers, but according to Glushko, "... there was not one among them who would play significant role in development of engine, personnel involved are not suitable for independent work." In 1946, Glushko was appointed chief designer of Design Bureau at plant No. 456 in Khimki, plant was responsible to reproduce engines of V-2 rocket. A number of German specialists were sent to work in Khimki. A total of 23 specialists arrived, together with family members, their total number was 65 people. At first, they were settled in sanatorium about 30 km from Khimki. Soon they were moved to first Finnish houses built in Khimki. Among these German specialists were designers, mechanical engineers for testing, assembly, welding, bench equipment, etc. Basically (with rare exceptions) they treated their work disciplined, our experts noted their erudition and literacy. But there were also comments to some of them who were reluctant to work, inert, violated labor discipline. For reasons of secrecy, since mid-1948, when OKB-456 started work on creation of RD-101 and RD-103 modifications, German specialists were removed from main work in OKB, began to perform auxiliary work. All German specialists who worked in OKB-456 were sent to Germany at end of 1950. They fulfilled their task, RD-100 engine was reproduced, their participation in development of more powerful rocket engines is meaningless due to their insufficient qualifications, as well as inadmissibility to our new secret developments. As a result, work of a group of German specialists in OKB-456 was useful for reproduction of German A-4 rocket engine from domestic materials by hands of Soviet specialists for R-1 rocket. Further development of these engines (RD-101 and RD-103), creation of new powerful engines (RD-107/108) for R-7 missile took place in OKB-456 without participation of German specialists.