

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET STATE SYSTEM IN 1918-1940 (AS IN THE CASE OF INDIVIDUAL POWER STRUCTURES)

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Article History: Received on 25th July 2019, Revised on 31st August 2019, Published on 05th October 2019

Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines the problems of changing the systems of the structures of governance in the first years of the existence of Soviet rule using the example of the armed forces, the redistribution of powers between them, the strengthening of the administrative influence of individual departments on the most important decisions in this area.

Methodology: The basis of scientific research is the dialectical materialist method, which allows revealing the patterns of development of the relevant legal industry and suggesting the most likely options for the development of legislation and law enforcement practice. In addition, the authors use the historical-chronological method, the historical-systemic method, the formal-logical method, the method of comparative law, the system-structural method, the technical-legal method, etc.

Result: a dramatic change in internal political line with the advent of the Bolsheviks predetermined the sweeping changes in the approaches to public administration. Having no experience in organizing public authority, the leaders of the revolutionary movement proposed and approved numerous ideas related to improving the efficiency of the management of uniformed services, which was very important in the conditions of the civil war and foreign intervention.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of the development of the Soviet state system in 1918-1940 is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: *military law, recruitment for the army, militia system, the Revolutionary Military Council, the military administration, the development of the army, the Soviet period.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the state is associated with constant changes in the system of organs of government, in the division of powers between them, the emergence of new tasks and the formation of the structures meant to solve them. These transformations are inevitable and characteristic of the state at any historical stage, and at the current stage of development exactly.

As of today, the problem of studying the mechanisms that allows for the effective exercise of managerial powers in security agencies and, above all, in the bodies ensuring the state's defenses, remains relevant.

In the context of growing confrontation in the world political arena, a significant increase in expenditures related to the state's defense, if there are crisis phenomena in the Russian economy and as a result of limited financial capacity of the state, the question of using the most progressive control systems in the military sphere becomes acute.

The history of the development of military law makes it possible to identify optimal managerial models, in view of the fact that at present it is possible to give a more objective assessment of the experience gleaned in various socio-economic and political-legal conditions.

The closest, both in terms of chronology and content, to the modern realities of the development of military administrative law is the Soviet period, which predetermines interest in studying the formation of military authorities at this stage.

METHODS

The basis of scientific research is the dialectical materialist method, which allows us to reveal the patterns of development of the relevant legal industry and suggest the most likely options for the development of legislation and law enforcement practice. In addition, the authors use the historical-chronological method, the historical-systemic method, the formal-logical method, the method of comparative law, the system-structural method, the technical-legal method, etc.

DISCUSSION and RESULTS

In the first years of Soviet rule, military law developed rather vigorously on the one hand and chaotically on the other hand. In many respects, that was due to the lack of qualified managers and military officials of the highest rank, reorientation in matters of building an army, and serious opposition to internal political and foreign political opponents, an insufficiently clear understanding of the structure of command and control bodies of the armed forces.

By the early 1920s, some of these circumstances became less relevant, which allowed for a more balanced transformation of military legislation.

So, the legislator was quick enough to form a new element of management in the field of military affairs. It was the Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR, which was able to accumulate the main administrative powers in that area in its hands in a short time.

Since forming the USSR, the question of creating a single body for command and control of troops has arisen. In this regard, there are two positions regarding the time of the formation of the main military body of the union state. So, T.P. Korzhikhina believed that the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs of the USSR was created on July 6, 1923, i.e. since the adoption of the Constitution of the USSR ([Korzhikhina, 1917](#), p. 116, 170), as, according to the scientist, the transformation of the main military authority of the RSFSR essentially took place. This assumption was suggested by the content of Art. 37, 51 of the first Constitution of the USSR, which directly indicated the creation of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs.

However, V.A. Borisov, to refute this opinion, pointed out that after the revolution in the RSFSR there was no single military command structure, therefore mechanical renaming of structures could not take place ([Borisov, 1996, p. 102](#)).

The question of creating a single structure was raised a little later and resolved on August 28, 1923, by transforming the Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR into the eponymous body of the union level.

The broad competence of the new structure allowed saying about the creation of a fully-fledged military department at the new historical stage, within which the most significant powers in the sphere of military control were accumulated.

The people's commissariat for military and naval affairs of the USSR was vested with the right of legislative initiative within the powers granted to it. In addition, it was quite natural to issue own orders, instruction and local acts within the framework of the Commissariat.

The competence of the superior military body on change on the basis of its own decisions of the organization and the structure of lower bodies was innovative. If such actions used to be the prerogative of the supreme power, then since 1923, the accents have been shifted to the provision of greater independence of the new bodies of executive power.

This circumstance can be attributed to the fact that the new government, having completely rejected the previously established system of government, at that stage, was not able to offer its own universal version of administrative and management activities. Accordingly, overcoming this problem was seen by the authorities in shifting the issue of the optimal structure of government to a lower level.

The CEC of the USSR and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR dated November 12, 1923, stipulated the functioning of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR as part of the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs as Chairman of the Council, Deputy People's Commissar, Commander-in-Chief, and other members who were approved at the level of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.

In fact, the personnel influence of the Council of People's Commissars the USSR on the Revolutionary Military Council was even more significant, since the question of the appointment and deprivation of powers of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces was also resolved by the authority.

Based on the situation in a particular territory, the armies, formed chaotically, were not regular for some time. The situation began to change in the second half of 1918.

The creation of regular military units required proper legal implementation, so on December 5, 1918, the CPC of the RSFSR approved the Regulations on the commander of the front armies and the commander of the army. In both cases, the Council of People's Commissars offered to manage on a collegial basis. It is quite predictable that the command of armies and fronts was given to the Revolutionary Military Council.

The remoteness of the command and control body from the front and the collegial nature of the administration would not allow for making operational decisions, in connection with which such questions remained at the level of the commander of the respective subdivision that did not relieve him of responsibility to the Revolutionary Military Council for the decisions made. Also, the right to make personnel decisions was retained at the command level. However, the orders of the commander of the military unit were considered valid only if there was the signature of one of the members of the Revolutionary Military Council.

Subsequently, by order of the Revolutionary Military Council №477/67 of December 26, 1918, the standard structure was set at the level of the field directorates of the front and the army. In this case, the regulations of the tsarist army were taken as a basis.

At the same time, the very program of the RCP (b) suggested the formation of an army having “an openly class character”. The upbringing of the Red Army was supposed in the conditions of “class unity” and “socialist education”, the formation of military-political schools. The issues of enhancing trust in law enforcement agencies and the need for planning their strategic development within a particular state are the subject of concern and are widely discussed in legal literature ([Heeuk, et al. 2019](#); [Hoffman, 2009](#); [Zare & Rajaeepur, 2013](#); [Alexandrovna, et al. 2018](#)).

The Political Directorate of the Red Army, formed in 1919, had been the most important military-political governing body in the military until 1991. The name of the body was repeatedly corrected, but the essence of its work and the main tasks remained unchanged throughout the entire period of the RSFSR and the USSR.

Personnel training for the Armed Forces of the USSR have acquired particular relevance. This component from the point of view of military analysts is important today ([Golkar, et al. 2014](#)).

The report by N.V. Kuibyshev of January 5, 1927, classified secret, noted that military educational institutions needed to be re-profiled since the individual specialties for which specialists were trained had no practical interest in the army. In turn, there was a need for military experts on the movement of troops.

N.V. Kuibyshev asked to take into account the needs of the army and the “natural loss” of military personnel on the score of illness, death, and dismissal in the allocation of state funding for the maintenance of military schools. At the same time, the head of the command department acknowledged that the existing situation in the field of higher military education did not allow for filling the sufficient need of the Red Army for specialists, and even more so contributing to the formation of a mobilization reserve of troops ([Ameen, et al. 2018](#)).

The presence of significant personnel problems created the need to find additional options for strengthening the army. The solution to this question was found by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR in obliging civil institutions of higher education to conduct “the higher pre-prescription military training”, which was reflected in their joint decree.

The staff of educational institutions provided for an additional unit, the so-called military leader, who monitored the pre-prescription military training, determined the methodology for conducting classes, adjusted the curriculum, established the procedure for checking the mastery of the material and took an active part in conducting the training.

The archival materials of the Red Army SI on pre-prescription training state that all the above activities are united in the goal of implementing “the idea of the armed people” ([Ayebo & Mrutu, 2019](#)) to ensure a high level of mobilization and readiness for any military conflicts.

The issues of the material supply of the armed forces in accordance with the Provision “On the People’s Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs of the USSR” were the subject of competence of the chief supply officer. His appointment was predetermined by the relevant decision of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, to which he subsequently submitted ([Ferris, J. R. \(1991\)](#)).

In the first years of Soviet power, in the presence of military conflicts, military units were formed not according to the principle of administrative-territorial division, but on the basis of decisions of local authorities to concentrate militarized units and subunits in places of greatest resistance to the current public authorities ([Grivins, M., & Tisenkopfs, T. \(2015\)](#)).

In the early 1920s. The idea of the need to transfer troops to the so-called militia system, the essence of which consisted of the fact that in peacetime the number of army units was significantly reduced due to the rank and file of the army and individual command positions. These persons continued to bear a commission at their place of residence, periodically taking part in special gatherings.

Such an approach, in the opinion of its supporters, made it possible to increase economic indicators and at the same time, to a certain extent, preserve the size of the army with a sufficiently high degree of its combat readiness ([Lewis, M. D. \(2007\)](#)).

Achieving the goal of reducing the army was set as the primary one at the end of 1920, the party leadership decided that it was necessary to reduce military units by 2 million people. In connection with the above, the ideas of a fundamentally different approach to recruiting an army acquired particular relevance.

The most principled advocate of this approach was L. D. Trotsky, who was the people’s commissar for military and naval affairs at that time and at the same time the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR.

However, this point of view, despite the high status of those who supported it, was rejected by the party majority, as evidenced by the circular letter of the party’s central committee dated January 12, 1921, in which the transition to the militia system was recognized to be premature and inconsistent with social and political realities ([Marques, et al. 2018](#), p. 264).

The abundance of military reforms in the pre-revolutionary period and they're not always high quality made the Soviet leadership think that scientific study of changes in the sphere of military control was mandatory.

As the researchers noted, "the continuous process of disbandment and re-formation, which had lasted for almost three years, interfered with the organization of planned military training of troops. The army was overloaded with numerous tasks in internal service ... The difficult financial situation, the lack of charters that would meet the character and new tasks of the Soviet Armed Forces negatively affected the life of the army, the quality of the training and education of the troops ..." ([Alexandrovna, et al. 2018](#), p. 149).

In 1922, a new law on undergoing military training was created. This document made it possible to clearly establish the order of recruitment to the army, by fixing the appropriate timing. The military age was adjusted to 21 years. However, already in 1925, the draft law was set at 19 years in the new law. The students were assigned the obligation to undergo pre-conscription training ([Loeber, D. A. \(1998\).](#)).

On the basis of the resolution of the Central Committee of the ARCP (b) "On the state of defense in the USSR" of July 15, 1929, the task was to prepare a military-technical base for defense needs. Essentially, the Soviet leadership transferred to the military sphere the practice of forming five-year plans for the development of the industry. In the future, this practice was continued ([Maandi, P. \(2010\).](#)).

The development of the personnel potential of the armed forces was formalized in several resolutions of the Central Committee of the ARCP (b), which worked out in detail and set the standard for improving the training of military officials.

Thus, on June 5, 1931, the decision of the Central Committee of the ARCP (b) "On the Command and Political Structure of the Red Army" was adopted. It reflected the problems that had taken place in the field of training of military specialists of the highest rank and the ways to solve them. One of those was the additional training of military leaders on the development of modern types of weapons in the context of the active development of technology in the army.

In the Soviet period, for the first time in national practice, highly specialized military schools such as the Military Engineering Academy, the Military Electrotechnical Academy, the Artillery Academy, and others were created. In addition, the government continued to develop a network of military schools, bringing their numbers to the mid-1930s to 75, as well as schools. The legal basis for such steps was the resolution of the Defense Commission under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of May 21, 1932.

By the decision of the Central Election Commission and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, dated September 22, 1935, the Statute on the Service was commanded by the command and commanding personnel of the Red Army. This enactment regulated the procedure for appointment to senior positions in army units; military service in general, established a system of titles, special insignia. Thus, during this period, additional ranks came into existence: junior lieutenant, junior political instructor, junior technician ([Mole, R. \(2012\).](#)).

The emergence of scientific research on the problems of border defense contributed to the adoption of the Provisional Field Regulations of the Red Army on December 30, 1936, where they received regulatory justification for the use of various types of troops in combat operations, including to protect the state border, as well as in the condition of "deep battle".

The tasks related to carrying out ideological work continued to be actively implemented. A confirmation of this fact was the approval in the spring of 1934 of the Instructions to the organizations of the CPSU (b) in the armed forces. On the basis of the aforementioned Instruction, the system of party cells in the armed forces continued to expand. It should be noted that in the mid-30s The Red Army consisted of about 200 000 communists ([Heeuk, et al. 2019](#)).

CONCLUSION

Thus, a significant change in the domestic political course, as well as an abundance of military conflicts influenced the prioritization in the formation of government bodies. With regard to military management, the Soviet government focused on strengthening agitation and educational work among military personnel and persons to be conscripted. This component of military service has received closer attention. In general, the administration of the military leadership was not united within the framework of one department, although throughout the period under study the public authorities tried to build a similar system.

Since the early 1920s, there has been a tendency to reduce the number of army and military officials. Moreover, this task was successfully implemented over several planning periods. Thus, the Soviet authorities demonstrated the ability to show flexibility in the issues of recruitment for the army, while maintaining the level of readiness required for protection against encroachment, largely due to the competent command and control system of the armed forces.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author confirms that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

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