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Organization of Soviet Higher Pre-Conscription Military Training in the Second Half of the 1930s

Abstract

The article assesses organizational changes in the process of higher pre-conscription military training in civilian educational institutions of the USSR in the second half of the 1930s. This

system was the most important element of training Red Army reserve personnel for the upcoming Great Patriotic War. It was created in 1930 during forced industrialization when specialists were in urgent demand in the national economy. Thus, the Soviet leadership faced the task of creating a system permitting to train future commanders without discontinuing their profession educational. The current geopolitical situation increases relevance of studying history of military personnel training in the USSR in the 1930s. The novelty of this study is that it describes for the first time the process of transformation of the institute of higher pre-conscription military training in civilian educational institutions of the USSR in the second half of the 1930s. The research is based on the office documents of the People's Commissariat of Defense and those of military districts, stored in the fond 62 of the Russian State Military Archive. The author has established reasons that influenced structural changes in the process of training reserve personnel and identified decisions of the top military leadership on the matter. The article also reveals the impact of the Red Army's repressions of 1937–38 on the system of higher pre-conscription military training. It is noted that in the new conditions, the approach to students selection changed, more attention was paid to political reliability of personnel and students. In addition, the top military leadership decided to reduce the period of higher pre-conscription military training from three to two years, while increasing training hours. The list of educational institutions with higher pre-conscription military training also changed. However, by 1938 the geopolitical situation had changed significantly, and the position of the USSR in international politics had deteriorated greatly. The military leadership faced the problem of forced training of personnel for the regular army, and therefore the institute of higher pre-conscription training was no longer relevant. In August 1938, the system was eliminated; there was a transition to accelerated pre-army training.

Keywords

Historical sources, reserve cadre training of the the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, military training, institute of pre-conscription military training, pre-army training, Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, Red Army

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