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Personnel Component in the Process of Transformation of Internal Affairs Agencies of the USSR: Ratio of Goals and Consequences: 1953–62

Abstract

This article, based on principles of objectivity and systematicity of scientific analysis, uses historical-genetic, comparative-historical, and structural-functional methods to substantiate

transformations of the law enforcement system in 1953–61 with regard to one-dimensional political task of strengthening the personal power of the new Soviet leadership. Consideration of the process of transformation of the internal affairs bodies in 1953–61 in historical and political context not only reveal the circumstances, but also substantiate the ultimate goal of the transformations. Law enforcement agencies, by nature of their construction and activities, attract attention of both state leaders and general public. Often it is the action or inaction of internal affairs bodies that accompanies changes in political situation. In the Russian history, the internal affairs bodies most often fulfilled government order to facilitate a political course. This explains periodical internal transformations of the law enforcement system. Depending on strategic or tactical goals, the state either weakened or strengthened the security wing. One of such points in the history of internal affairs bodies were the events of 1953–62, when the Soviet law enforcement agencies were subjected to a profound transformation and there was a large-scale renewal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs personnel, both in the center and the periphery. A comprehensive scientific study of the issue has not yet been conducted. Most of the works available today are devoted to some particular point (staffing, educational level of personnel, etc.), while synthetical analytical study remains to be carried out. One of the negative results of the implementation of this task was destruction of professional personnel, both in the central apparatus and in its territorial agencies. The large-scale purge of personnel, alongside with systematic criticism of the government and unflattering publications in the media, caused serious damage to prestige and authority of the entire law enforcement. Party and government goals were to reduce unjustifiably high role of the security wing in state mechanism and to replace the leaders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, thus placing law enforcement agencies under total control of the party and the government. Systematic solution of this task resulted in constant shortage and turnover of personnel, low educational level of common and commanding staff, and decreased efficiency of almost entire structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Attempts to remedy the personnel problems at ministerial and local level were doomed to failure without radical change in party and government policy.

Keywords

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RSFSR, militsiya, reform, personnel, recruitment, educational level, discipline, legality.

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