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The Soviet and British Governments' Policies Concerning Participation of Women in Paramilitary Organizations of the Interwar Period

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Abstract. The aim of this article is to compare the policies of the British and Soviet governments regarding the participation of women in paramilitary organizations of the interwar period. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism and consistency. Both general scientific (analysis and synthesis, abstraction, system analysis, generalization) and special-historical (critical analysis of sources, retrospective, historical-comparative) methods, as well as the gender approach were used. The scientific novelty. The article compares for the first time the peculiarities of the participation of Soviet and British women in paramilitary organizations of the interwar period in the context of state policy in this area. Conclusions. The author concludes that the approaches of the authorities to the involvement of British and Soviet women in paramilitary organizations differed significantly and directly depended on the foreign policies of these countries. In the USSR, which despite its pacifist statements during the interwar period gradually prepared for war, its government in the 1920s began to take specific steps for organization of military training of its population without any distinction based on sex. In Great Britain, against the background of economic crisis and peculiarities of foreign policy, women have long been out of such training. In addition, both countries significantly differed in the patterns of behaviour of women imposed by their governments and societies. In particular, in the British public discourse, women were represented as a non-combat, auxiliary force during the future war, the femininity of members of women's paramilitary organizations was emphasized. Instead, the imposed pattern of women's behaviour in the Soviet Union was the opposite. They were strongly encouraged to follow the male example; the possibility of their participation in the war as soldiers was often emphasized. At the same time, they shared common arguments in campaigning for women to join paramilitary organizations and held public events to promote such organizations.

Keywords: women, paramilitary organizations, civil defence, Great Britain, USSR.

During the interwar period, which was characterized by an unstable international situation, the foundations were laid for women's participation in the future world armed conflict of 1939–1945. In particular, special training in volunteer reserves and civil defence organizations preceded their service in the different branches of the military during the World War II. Both countries recruited women to serve in the armed forces during the war. Thus, in the USSR, some women officially served as combatants. In Great Britain, despite the official line from the government was that women served only as non-combatants, some of them gained combat experience too. The government reclassified some of the combat positions to non-combat to make them available for servicewomen

without changing its official position'. It lead to the absurdity of the situation when in the anti-aircraft divisions "a male gunner was a combatant, the woman next to him was not"². In addition, sometimes they used lethal weapon despite the official taboo³. In this regard, it would be interesting to compare how the governments of the two countries dealt with the development of women's reserves for their armed forces in the interwar period.

This paper will focus primarily on those British and Soviet organizations that were considered paramilitary. According to the definition from Merriam-Webster's dictionary, paramilitary organizations "formed on a military pattern especially as a potential auxiliary military force"⁴. Here we use the term paramilitary in its narrower sense to denote "forces formed by a government"⁵.

Certain aspects of the participation of Soviet and British women in paramilitary organizations of the interwar period have repeatedly been the subject of research⁶. However, scholars have studied the experience of each of these countries separately, without looking for common and distinctive features in the Soviet and British policy on this issue. At the same time, the comparison would make it possible to explore the gender policy of the totalitarian and democratic regimes of the interwar period in greater depth.

The article compares for the first time the peculiarities of the Soviet and British governments' policies concerning participation of women in paramilitary organizations of the interwar period. Such organizations, in view of the mentioned above, included the Emergency Service, Auxiliary Territorial Service, Women's Auxiliary Air Force, Women's Royal Naval Service in Great Britain, and the Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction (Osoaviakhim) in the USSR. This study will be mainly devoted to them.

It is worth noting that during the interwar period, the British government paid little attention to measures aimed at creating and maintaining a civil defence system, the development of paramilitary volunteer services, which in case of war could supply personnel to the army. First, there was the economic crisis, which did not allow to allocate significant funds for these measures. Second, in the 1930s, Great Britain hoped that peace would be maintained through the policy of appeasement, and therefore the initiatives striving towards preparation for war were not on the agenda of its governments. At that time, it opposed the military response to the aggressive actions of some states in different parts of the world. Alternative points of view from some politicians who

¹ *Campbell D.* Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union // *Journal of Military History*. – 1993. – Vol.57. – №2. – P.313.

² *DeGroot G.J.* Whose Finger on the Trigger? Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries and the Female Combat Taboo // *War in History*. – 1997. – Vol.4. – №4. – P.434–453.

³ *Campbell D.* Women in Combat... – P.313; *Broad R.* Conscriptio in Britain, 1939–1964: The Militarisation of a Generation. – London, 2006. – P.151; *Harris C.* Women at war in uniform 1939–1945. – Stroud, 2003. – P.39.

⁴ Paramilitary. Merriam-Webster's dictionary [Електронний ресурс]: <https://bit.ly/3al9e4N>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Кобченко К.* Жінки як військовий ресурс тоталітарної влади: радянські гендерні стратегії передвоєнного часу // *Жінки Центральної та Східної Європи у Другій світовій війні: гендерна специфіка досвіду в часи екстремального насильства / За ред. Г.Грінченко, К.Кобченко, О.Кісь*. – К., 2015. – С.61–78; *Никонова О.* Как из крестьянки Гайдиной сделать Марину Раскову, или О теории и практике воспитания советских патриоток // *Новое литературное обозрение*. – Москва, 2011. – Т.112. – №6 [Електронний ресурс]: <https://bit.ly/3kCt13B>; *Её же.* Осоавиахим и военно-патриотическое воспитание населения в Уральском регионе (1927–1939 гг.): Автореф. дисс. ... канд. ист. наук. – Челябинск, 2013. – 46 с.; *Brayley M., Bujeiro R.* World War II Allied Women's Services. – Oxford, 2001. – 48 p.; *Crang J.A.* The revival of the British women's auxiliary services in the late nineteen-thirties // *Historical Research*. – Vol.83(220). – 2010. – P.343–357; *Gould J.M.* The Women's Corps: The establishment of women's military services in Britain. – London, 1988. – 487 p.; *Harris C.* Women at war in uniform 1939–1945; *Maartens B.* 'To encourage, inspire and guide': National Service, the People's War, and the promotion of Civil Defence in interwar Britain, 1938–1939 // *Media History*. – 2015. – №21(3). – P.328–341.

advocated decisive action, such as W.Churchill, were not taken into account⁷. The dominance of proponents of diplomatic solutions in Great Britain has a negative impact on the development of military capabilities⁸, and on policies towards establishing and maintaining women's services.

At the same time, many representatives of British society were aware of the inevitability of military conflict in the near future. Among them were the active participants of the World War I E.Helen, the Marchioness of Londonderry and Dame H.Gwynne-Vaughan, who periodically submitted proposals to the relevant state bodies to create a women's reserve for the army. This idea was rejected for a long time, but little success was achieved in the summer of 1936, when the authorities approved the establishment of the Emergency Service, headed by H.Gwynne-Vaughan⁹. This organization trained officers for women's auxiliary services. During its independent existence, about 400 volunteers joined and trained¹⁰.

Only in 1937–1938, alongside with another deterioration in the political situation, the British government intensified measures against possible foreign invasion. It began to establish a system of civil defence and gradually changed its mind concerning creation of a women's reserve¹¹.

The Women's Voluntary Service was established in June 1938 to prepare women for work in civil defence. Before the war, it managed to attract 336 000 members, and during the armed conflict, this number reached 1 million women. The organization trained staff for air defence services, volunteers for field kitchens, rest centres for people made homeless by bombing, canteens for servicemen, escorts for evacuated children, etc.¹²

At first, the British people were reluctant to train for civil defence, so the government had to launch a large-scale campaign. The civil defence and territorial reserve services were recommended to build their agitation around the needs of the population, to convince them to join national service. In early 1939, Prime Minister N.Chamberlain during the broadcast on the BBC told that joining the ranks of national service (civil defence and the voluntary reserve) is the key to successful repelling possible foreign attacks. The newspapers actively asserted that a new war will not “discriminate between civilian and soldier; between men, women and children”, and therefore all categories of the population should be able to protect themselves¹³.

At the same time, the authorities eventually agreed to a proposal to create a voluntary women's reserve and decided to make it a part of the Territorial Army¹⁴. Thus, in September 1938, the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was founded; de facto it was the successor of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (1917–1921). Women joined ATS voluntarily and retained civilian status. The organization had a strict discipline, close to the military. ATS units were formed in each county, and headed by their commandants. The training was to take place on the premises of local communities, as well as during the annual camping¹⁵.

⁷ Bell P. 'Thank God for the French Army': Churchill, France and an Alternative to Appeasement in the 1930s / Ed. by C.Baxter, M.L.Dockrill, K.Hamilton. – London, 2013. – P.175–176.

⁸ Ражев А. Сухопутная армия Великобритании в 1935–1939 гг.: модернизация стратегии и политика умиротворения: Автореф. дисс. ... канд. ист. наук. – Екатеринбург, 2014. – С.21–22.

⁹ Crang J.A. The revival of the British women's auxiliary services in the late nineteen-thirties. – P.346; Gould J.M. The Women's Corps: The establishment of women's military services in Britain. – P.363, 366.

¹⁰ Gould J.M. The Women's Corps: The establishment of women's military services in Britain. – P.364.

¹¹ Maartens B. 'To encourage, inspire and guide'... – P.330.

¹² The Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) [Электронный ресурс]: <https://bit.ly/2ZQMW5x>

¹³ Maartens B. 'To encourage, inspire and guide'... – P.330.

¹⁴ The Territorial Army is a volunteer reserve of the British Army.

¹⁵ Crang J.A. The revival of the British women's auxiliary services in the late nineteen-thirties. – P.350–351.

At the end of September 1938, the conditions of service and peculiarities of recruitment to the organization were announced. In particular, they were looking for drivers, clerks, cooks, nurses, storekeepers, etc. It was announced that ATS was looking for 25 000 new members (2000 of them for the positions of officers and 23 000 for the positions of various specialities). However, only 17 600 women were recruited before the war, despite the fact that they were more willing to join the territorial reserve voluntarily, than men were¹⁶.

Initially, recruitment to the ATS was organized at a low level. For example, recruitment criteria were not clearly developed, recruitment activities were aimed only at certain segments of society, etc. In November 1938, in the House of Commons, Labour MP E.Wilkinson ironically asked Minister of War L.Hore-Belisha, if he really believes that the fact that as many as 40% of ATS members were “from a very narrow social set (upper class – N.Z.) is a wise thing in a force, which is expected to be a national force, and whether he expects the qualifications of a good Mayfair hostess are the sort of qualifications needed for posts of this kind?”¹⁷. E.Wilkinson expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the ATS is managed by members of the aristocracy, believing that this resulted in a reluctance to agitate women-workers to join the ranks of the service¹⁸.

Women of a certain age could join the ATS. Married or single women aged 18–47 were wanted for service in their home country and abroad and older women (47–55 years) – only for service near their homes. The duration of service for non-officer positions was 4 years with the possibility of extension, and officers were recruited for an indefinite period. The women had to buy the uniform, they were given 16 £ allowance for this¹⁹. They also received travelling and drill allowances, but they were far below those of the Territorial Army²⁰.

Injustice for ATS members was also observed in the awarding of prizes for participation in competitions. Thus, in 1939, a member of the organization Miss Foster showed high results in shooting at the annual competitions during the Bisley Rifle Meeting. However, the King’s Medal – the award for the best shooter of the Territorial Army – was not awarded to her, referring to the fact that she is a member of the ATS, not the Territorial Army, and therefore, awarding her a medal would be a violation of the rules of the Territorial Army Rifle Association²¹. At the same time, there were no such problems in the USSR. There women, who had successfully passed the test, could get the “Voroshilov Shooter” badge²² equally with men.

In peacetime, ATS members had to undergo at least 10 drills per year and participate in one camp training lasting 7–15 days²³. They received 2/3 of the pay of men of the similar ranks.

Given the fact that the ATS was not able to train specialists for the Royal Air Force, in the spring of 1939 began preparations for the establishment of a separate service for this

¹⁶ Ibid.; *Harris C.* Women at war in uniform 1939–1945. – P.12.

¹⁷ Auxiliary Territorial Service (15 November 1938) // Hansard, the Official Report of debates in Parliament. – 1938. – Vol.341. – P.671.

¹⁸ Ibid. – P.673.

¹⁹ *Harris C.* Women at war in uniform 1939–1945. – P.11; Auxiliary Territorial Service (Uniforms) (07 March 1939) // Hansard, the Official Report of debates in Parliament. – 1939. – Vol.344. – P.1937W.

²⁰ Auxiliary Territorial Service (25 July 1939) // Hansard, the Official Report of debates in Parliament. – 1939. – Vol.350. – P.1231–1232.

²¹ Auxiliary Territorial Service (Bisley Rifle Meeting) (25 July 1939) // Hansard, the Official Report of debates in Parliament. – 1939. – Vol.350. – P.1287–1288W.

²² “Voroshilov Shooter” badge – chest badge of Osoaviakhim and the Red Army, which was awarded to Soviet citizens, who have passed special shooting tests.

²³ *Harris C.* Women at war in uniform 1939–1945. – P.27–28.

purpose. The Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) appeared in late June²⁴. Members of the organization also had civil status. It trained managers for the department's female staff – cooks, drivers, clerks, responsible for balloon fabrics, etc. On the eve of the war, 1700 women were recruited to the WAAF²⁵. However, they did not have time to undergo proper training before the war, as their leadership sent them on vacation in July and August 1939.

In April 1939, the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) was restored. The centres of the organization were created around the main seaports, they recruited women aged 18–50. WRNS also had a civil status, and its members held the positions of cooks, clerks, stewards, drivers, liaison officers. On the eve of the war, it had 1000 members²⁶.

The state tried in every possible way to emphasize the prestige of the national service. In addition to a powerful media campaign, it also organized public events. In the spring of 1939, there were several parades of regular, reserve and civil defence forces. In addition, on July 2, 1939, a large-scale rally of volunteer services took place in Hyde Park in London, the purpose of which was to attract more participants to its ranks. The women's services also took part in the event.

The members of the national service lined up from Hyde Park to Grosvenor Square. A convoy of motorcycles, trucks and armoured personnel carriers from the regular army took part in the event. The Ministry of Aviation provided six balloons for the event, and the orchestra of the Guards Brigade provided the musical accompaniment. It was possible to enrol in the ranks of national service directly during the rally. It is worth noting that the government's measures achieved the goal, there were many volunteers among the British people to join national service – at the beginning of World War II in civil defence, support services, and the volunteer reserve was already 1,9 million people²⁷.

As for the USSR, its approach to recruiting women for military service and membership in paramilitary organizations differed significantly. During the interwar period, the Soviet Union, under the slogans of creating a system of collective security in Europe, tried to realize its geopolitical interests. Ukrainian researcher Sh.Ramazanov concludes: "The Soviet government imposed its own understanding of the mechanism of protection of the third countries that could be victims of aggression, pushed those provisions that granted to it the right to interfere in the internal affairs of such countries as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland"²⁸. Of course, potential partner states (Great Britain, France) did not want to agree to such terms, so negotiations with them several times had stalled. The relations between the USSR and Germany developed with mixed success, especially after A.Hitler came to power²⁹. Clearly aware of the inevitability of future of armed conflict and its participation in it, the USSR actively increased the military power. Within the industrialization, in conditions of strict secrecy, the country was rearmed³⁰.

The USSR regarded its population as a much-needed resource in the war, and therefore did not intend to neglect any of its categories, including women. USSR government did not create exclusively women's organizations to prepare a reserve for

²⁴ Women's Auxiliary Air Service // The Advocate. – July 3, 1939. – P.2; Women's Service Auxiliary Air Force To Be Formed // The Daily Advertiser (Wagga Wagga, NSW). – July 3, 1939. – P.1.

²⁵ *Crang J.A.* The revival of the British women's auxiliary services in the late nineteen-thirties. – P.353.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Maartens B.* "To encourage, inspire and guide"... – P.335–336.

²⁸ *Рамзанов Ш.* Зовнішня політика Радянського Союзу у міжвоєнний період (1930-ті – початок 1940-х рр.) // Сторінки історії. – 2017. – Вип.44. – С.108.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Дейвіс Н.* Європа: Історія. – К., 2020. – С.991.

the armed forces. In fact, many different organizations and movements, the purpose of which, at first glance, did not include paramilitary training, were involved in this process. For example, the Komsomol (The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League), the pioneer movement, etc. Their members took part in trainings and competitions aimed at preparing the population for active participation in the coming war. In 1927, the Society for the Assistance of Defence, Aircraft and Chemical Construction (Osoaviakhim) was founded. The purpose of the organization was to increase the country's defence capabilities through military training, patriotic education, as well as the development of aviation and chemical industries.

The structure of the Osoaviakhim based on the territorial-production principle. The lowest level of the organization was the cell headed by the executive secretary. The branches were united into district, provincial, regional, oblast and republican organizations, which were headed by the council of the organization. In cooperation with the Komsomol, the Osoaviakhim supplied students to naval schools, and established air defence groups, where volunteers were taught how to protect against air and chemical attacks³¹.

At the beginning of the Soviet-German war, the total number of the Osoaviakhim members was 13 673 840. The organization consisted of 156 000 training groups, 26 680 teams, and 3500 units in which 2,6 million people received military specialties³². The training included physical, tactical and shooting training. Reserve commanders trained the volunteers, and the training conditions were close to combat³³.

Almost from the beginning, the organization focused on both men and women. In particular, on June 9, 1927, the Central Council of the Osoaviakhim adopted a resolution "On the role of women in the defence of the country" and created a special section for recruiting women. In its Bulletin, this organization actively developed the issue of various forms of their participation in the previous wars and called for proper preparation for future-armed conflicts by training in the Osoaviakhim³⁴.

Interesting in the context of our study are the common features in public discourse aimed at encouraging women to acquire special military knowledge and skills, to join the ranks of civil defence organizations and the army reserve. In particular, in the USSR, as well as in Great Britain, the statement that during the new war there would be no clear line between the front and the rear was actively promoted. One of the 1927 campaign pamphlets, aimed at working-class and peasant women, stated that they "need to be able to handle weapons. They need to be able to use gas masks. They need to know how to help a gas poisoned person. In the new war, not only the Red Army on the battlefield will face the enemy. The border between the rear and the front will be erased. The enemy will focus on the rear too. The enemy will try to sow panic among civilians"³⁵. Similar allegations were made in the British media, but during their own campaign to recruit volunteers for the Territorial Army and Civil Defence Services, which began ten years later³⁶.

³¹ Общество содействия обороне, авиационному и химическому строительству СССР (Осоавиахим), 1927–1948 [Электронный ресурс]: <https://bit.ly/3tuEKVO>

³² История Второй мировой войны / Под ред. П.Деревянко. – Т.3. – Москва, 1974. – С.405–406.

³³ Кулабухов Н.С., Исаев А.А., Федирко О.П. Добровольные оборонные организации на Дальнем Востоке СССР как форма организации политико-идеологической работы среди населения в 1920–1930-е гг. // Исторические, философские, политические и юридические науки, культурология и искусствоведение. Вопросы теории и практики. – 2017. – №6-1(80). – С.97.

³⁴ Бюллетень Осоавиахима. – 1927. – Вып.17. – С.9; Памятка активиста Осоавиахима: Для деревенских организаций (Приложение к журналу «Осоавиахим»). – Москва, 1930. – С.51–55.

³⁵ Богат А. Работница и крестьянка на страже СССР. – Москва, 1927. – С.9; Никонова О. Осоавиахим и военно-патриотическое воспитание населения в Уральском регионе (1927–1939 гг.). – С.28.

³⁶ Maartens B. 'To encourage, inspire and guide'... – P.332–333.

O.Nikonova notes that “in terms of the mechanisms of the Stalinist regime, the paramilitary organization Osoaviakhim not only reproduced patriotic symbols and norms of patriotic behaviour, but also played the role of an institutional ‘range’ for testing ways to include women in mobilization plans”³⁷. The campaign to involve women in the organization was quite successful, although its results differed in republics. The number of women among its members, depending on the republic, ranged from 10% to 20%³⁸.

Women were also actively encouraged to participate in sports competitions in various fields (car and motorcycle races, air travel, equestrian competitions, etc.)³⁹, to set records. Thus, in 1936 the first women’s rally on the route Moscow – Petropavlovsk – Aral Sea – Kyiv – Moscow took place. The motorcade of 15 cars (10 GAZ-A and 5 pickups) was headed by Commander A.Volkova. The total number of participants was 45 women from Moscow, Leningrad, Gorky and Yaroslavl⁴⁰.

In 1938, pilots V.Grizodubova, P.Osipenko and M.Raskova set a record for the distance of flight among women, making a non-stop flight from Moscow to Komsomolsk-on-Amur. Due to difficult weather conditions, the women failed to land at the planned location and had to resort to an emergency landing. However, all three survived and received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Since 1931, for the civilian population of the USSR at the age of 10–60 years, a special program of physical training was introduced within the state program of patriotic education – GTO (“Gotov k trudu i oborone” – “Ready for work and defence”). Those who met the relevant standards were awarded GTO badges of the appropriate degree. As of 1936, among workers in the machine-building, coal, and textile industries, as well as in ferrous metallurgy, an average of 33% of men and 10% of women received the GTO I (basic) degree badge, and another 17 and 12%, respectively, were drafting standards at the time of the survey⁴¹.

Important for comparison are the features of recruitment for civil defence training and service in paramilitary organizations in Great Britain and the USSR in the context of gender roles promoted by the authorities and society. In the United Kingdom, women were recruited in view of the socially assigned function of caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and men in view of their role as defenders⁴². The auxiliary role of the British women in the army was emphasized in every possible way, and the possibility of their participation in the battles was ruled out. Thus, in one of his essays – “Women in War”, which was published in the February issue of *The Strand Magazine* in 1938, the famous British politician W.Churchill concluded that women should not be able to become soldiers because it is, in his view, an attribute of the age of barbarism. Instead, for modern society “the idea of women entering the line of battle and fighting in war is revolting”⁴³.

Also in the public discourse within the measures to recruit more women the femininity and glamor of members of female services were emphasized. For example, on the first agitation posters of the ATS, its members were depicted with bright

³⁷ Никонова О. Как из крестьянки Гайдиной сделать Марину Раскову, или О теории и практике воспитания советских патриоток.

³⁸ Там же.

³⁹ Авиновицкий Я. Защита Отечества есть священный долг каждого гражданина СССР. – Москва, 1937. – С.82.

⁴⁰ Марасанова В. Испытательные пробеги ярославских предприятий в период индустриализации: опыт решения технических и идеологических задач // Экономическая история. – 2016. – №3(34). – С.77.

⁴¹ Кобченко К. Жінки як військовий ресурс тоталітарної влади: радянські гендерні стратегії передвоєнного часу. – С.69, 77.

⁴² Maartens B. “To encourage, inspire and guide?... – P.332.

⁴³ Churchill W.S. Women in War (1938) // The Churchillian. – Spring 2012. – Vol.3. – Issue 1. – P.14.

make-up, manicure, hairstyle and vacant expressions. As a result, some women joined the organization in the hope of starting a similar life there. Of course, when they found themselves in a training camp with close to military orders and ascetic conditions, they were disappointed⁴⁴.

Instead, in the USSR, everything was exactly the opposite. Women were encouraged to follow the male example. As O.Nikonova notes, “women’s images structurally repeated the concept of ideal Soviet masculinity, and were formed in the context of anticipation of the next ‘imperialistic’ war”⁴⁵. Such kinds of images were depicted in poster propaganda, in which there was no space for sexual imagery. The public discourse constantly emphasized the equality of men and women, the inclusion of women on a parity basis in areas previously inaccessible to them. This approach was expressed by Comrade Krasnova, a delegate to the All-Soviet Meeting of the Wives of the Command Staff of the Red Army: “Soviet women are ready to defend the country. The enemy will not cross our borders. We will take rifles and together with men will stand up for the homeland. Moreover, those who will not be able to go to the front will work in factories. At the first demand of our party, a Soviet woman will go to war for socialism, for a happy, joyful life”⁴⁶.

Thus, in the interwar period, the government’s approaches to involving British and Soviet women in paramilitary organizations and civil defence differed significantly and depended directly on the foreign policy of their countries. The long road to establishing the women’s reserve in Great Britain was a consequence of the policy of diplomatic solutions, while the active promotion of women’s participation in a wide range of paramilitary events run by the state was within the hidden military agenda of the USSR. In the USSR, which despite its pacifist statements during the interwar period gradually prepared for war, its government in the 1920s began to take concrete steps for organization of military training of its population without any distinction based on sex. In Great Britain, against the background of economic crisis and peculiarities of foreign policy, women have long been out of such training. At a time when the population of the USSR at the age of 10–60 was learning the basics of civil defence, undergoing various trainings, British women tried to prove to their government the need to create an army reserve for them that could supply personnel for the armed forces during the war. In fact, only ATS members had more or less significant training on the eve of the war, as the WAAF and WRNS were established much later, and the members of WAAF did not have training during the summer months of 1939. That is why significant are the differences in the scales of involvement of female population into civil defence trainings and participation in paramilitary organizations. In the USSR, it was much higher.

In Great Britain, there were inequalities between men and women in the territorial reserve in terms and conditions of participation in competitions and receiving awards for it. Women received less amount of traveling and drill allowances. In the USSR, there were no such restrictions.

The two countries shared some arguments about the need for women to acquire military knowledge and skills, including the assertion that a future-armed conflict would not make a clear distinction between front and rear, and therefore everyone would need to be able to defend themselves. The British and Soviet governments actively used media and launched public events to promote paramilitary services and civil defence organizations.

At the same time, we recorded significant differences in the gender roles offered to women. Thus, the British public discourse appealed to women as non-combatants,

⁴⁴ *Brayley M., Bujeiro R.* World War II Allied Women’s Services. – P.9.

⁴⁵ *Никонова О.* Осоавиахим и военно-патриотическое воспитание населения в Уральском регионе (1927–1939 гг.). – С.28.

⁴⁶ *Авиновичкий Я.* Защита Отечества есть священный долг каждого гражданина СССР. – С.89.

an auxiliary force that will work during the war, tried to emphasize the femininity of members of women's services. Instead, the imposed model of women's behaviour in the Soviet Union was the opposite. They were strongly encouraged to follow the male example; the possibility of their participation in the war as combatants was often emphasized.

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Політика британського та радянського урядів щодо залучення жінок до парамілітарних організацій міжвоєнного періоду

Анотація. Мета статті – порівняння політик британського й радянського урядів щодо залучення жінок до парамілітарних організацій міжвоєнного періоду. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму та системності. Застосовано як загальнонаукові (аналізу, синтезу,

абстрагування, системного аналізу, узагальнення), так і спеціально-історичні (критичний аналіз джерел, ретроспективний, історико-порівняльний) методи, а також гендерний підхід. **Наукова новизна.** Уперше здійснено порівняння особливостей участі радянських і британських жінок у парамілітарних організаціях міжвоєнного періоду в контексті державної політики у цій сфері. **Висновки.** Підходи влади до залучення британських та радянських жінок до парамілітарних організацій суттєво відрізнялись й безпосередньо залежали від зовнішньої політики країн. У СРСР, де, незважаючи на пацифістські заяви міжвоєнного періоду, поступово готувалися до війни, ще в 1920-х рр. почали здійснювати конкретні кроки для організації військової підготовки населення незалежно від статі. Натомість у Великобританії на тлі економічної кризи та особливостей зовнішньої політики жінки впродовж тривалого часу були позбавлені такої підготовки. Крім того, зафіксовано суттєві відмінності в моделях поведінки жінок, що їх нав'язували уряди й суспільства обох країн. Якщо у британському публічному дискурсі жінок представляли небойовою, допоміжною силою під час війни, намагалися підкреслити жіночність членок жіночих парамілітарних організацій, то нав'язувана модель поведінки жінок у СРСР була протилежною – тут їм наполегливо рекомендували наслідувати чоловічий приклад; часто підкреслювалася можливість їх прямої участі у війні. Водночас обидві держави мали спільні аргументи при агітації жінок до вступу у воєнізовані організації та проводили публічні заходи задля пропаганди таких організацій.

Ключові слова: жінки, парамілітарні організації, цивільна оборона, Великобританія, СРСР.