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**SOCIALIZATION PROBLEMS OF “AFGHAN” SOLDIERS IN UKRAINE
IN THE COVERAGE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BODY
OF THE LKSM OF UKRAINE – THE NEWSPAPER “KOMSOVOLSKOYE ZNAMIA”**

Abstract. *The purpose* of the research consists in the attempt to differentiate the problems of socialization of “Afghan” soldiers in Ukraine during the 1980s chronologically and thematically. **The scientific novelty** – for the first time in the Ukrainian historiography the materials of the official publication have been analyzed in order to cover the problems of “Afghan” soldiers in Ukraine of the period under analysis. **The Conclusions.** *Some aspects of the problem of socialization of “Afghan” soldiers began to be analyzed in 1986 – 1987 against the background of the “opening” of war to the society of that time with a message to “open” the soldiers themselves, the organization of “Afghan” soldiers societies (clubs, sections of “soldiers-internationalists”) and their involvement into the*

education of the younger generation, the need to preserve the memory of their fallen comrades. The coverage of the socialization problems of “Afghan” soldiers at the national level took place in the second half of 1987. Despite the measures developed by the Secretariat for state support of “Afghans”, which were published by the newspaper “KZ”, there were still problems with the Komsomol organizations patronage over young veterans and families of fallen servicemen, there were problems with veterans’ societies, in particular, concerning financial and material support, which was covered by this newspaper. The role of the newspaper is important in publishing the letters of participants in the hostilities in Afghanistan on the problems of the state support of “Afghan” soldiers and families of fallen soldiers. Such official publications require further elucidation of comprehensive information on the “Afghan” movement in the USSR, the problems of re-socialization of veterans, implementation of the state policy towards them, reflections of “Afghan” soldiers on the state policy on these issues; intensification of the search of a source base for a comprehensive study of the socialization problems of “Afghan” soldiers in the USSR in 1980 – 1991.

Key words: “Afghan” soldiers, Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, “Komsomolskoe Znamia”, socialization, adaptation, state support.

ПРОБЛЕМИ СОЦІАЛІЗАЦІЇ ВОЇНІВ-“АФГАНЦІВ” В УКРАЇНІ У ВИСВІТЛЕННІ ОРГАНУ ЦК ЛКСМ УКРАЇНИ – ГАЗЕТИ “КОМСОМОЛЬСКОЕ ЗНАМЯ”

Анотація. Метадослідження полягає у спробі диференціювати хронологічно та за тематичними складовими проблеми соціалізації воїнів-“афганців” в Україні впродовж 1980-х рр. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше в українській історіографії проаналізовано матеріали офіційного видання на предмет висвітлення у ньому проблем воїнів-“афганців” в Україні вказаного періоду. **Висновки.** Окремі аспекти проблеми соціалізації воїнів-“афганців” виданням почали підійматись у 1986 – 1987 рр. на фоні “відкриття” війни тогочасному суспільству із посилком до “відкриття” самих воїнів, організації “афганських” осередків (клубів, секцій “воїнів-інтернаціоналістів”) та залучення їх до виховання підростаючого покоління, необхідності увінчання пам’яті загиблих побратимів. Висвітлення проблем соціалізації воїнів-“афганців” на республіканському рівні відбулося у другій половині 1987 р. Незважаючи на розроблені Секретариатом [ЦК ЛКСМ України – вставити] заходи щодо держпідтримки “афганців”, котрі були опубліковані виданням КЗ, наявними лишилися проблеми шефства комсомольських організацій над молодими ветеранами та сім’ями загиблих військовослужбовців, мали місце проблеми ветеранських осередків, зокрема щодо матеріально-технічного забезпечення, що висвітлювалось даним друкованим органом. Важливою є роль видання в опублікуванні листів учасників бойових дій в Афганістані з проблем реалізації державної підтримки воїнів-“афганців” та сімей загиблих військових.

Подібні офіційні видання потребують подальшого виявлення різнобічної інформації стосовно “афганського” руху в УРСР, проблем ре соціалізації ветеранів, реалізації державної політики щодо них на місцях, рефлексій “афганців” на державну політику щодо цих питань, активізують пошуки джерельної бази для комплексного дослідження проблем соціалізації воїнів-“афганців” в УРСР 1980 – 1991 рр.

Ключові слова: воїни-“афганці”, ЦК ЛКСМ України, “Комсомольское знамя”, соціалізація, адаптація, державна підтримка.

The Problem Statement. The topicality of the research is due to its scientific, theoretical and practical significance to a domestic historiography. After all, the materials of the press body of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, which are an important component of the source base and historiography of the socialization problem of “Afghan” soldiers in Ukraine during the period under study, were not comprehensively analyzed. At the same time, they were the sources of information that testified to the state policy on “Afghan” soldiers in terms of positioning demobilized soldiers in the society, which influenced the relevant conditions of a social adaptation, the position of the Central Committee

of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League in the USSR on problems of the state support for "Afghans" and the families of fallen servicemen. The publication contains a valuable empirical material – reflections of the "Afghan" soldiers on the experience in Afghanistan, expectations after the return and the reality of that time, among which there was a feeling of needlessness in a "peaceful" life. The demobilized "Afghan" soldiers witnessed how and to what extent the Komsomol "youth" solved their problems.

We consider the practical significance of this issue in the need to study the experience of adaptation, which is close to the Ukrainian society, to a peaceful life of "Afghan" soldiers, in particular, in the matters of a social communication of young veterans in the Soviet society during the 1980s, solving the problems of a self-realization of veterans after returning from the war, which may be useful in developing decent conditions for re-socialization of participants in the hostilities in eastern Ukraine – defenders of the Ukrainian statehood.

The Analysis of Recent Researches. The socialization issue of "Afghan" soldiers in historiography is multifaceted. Let's pay attention to the coverage of the topic in periodicals. The problems of returning demobilized Afghan soldiers to peaceful conditions have long been ignored by the media (hereinafter – the media) and researchers. Only under the conditions of perestroika publicity, as the "opening" of the war to the society and the involvement of "Afghan" soldiers into the socio-political life of the state, the development of the "Afghan" movement the party officials emphasized the importance of the role of the latter in the Soviet society.

At the same time, the Soviet periodicals began to discuss the problems of "Afghan" soldiers and the relatives of the fallen soldiers they faced in the society. Such article was published in the "Pravda" newspaper on August 5, 1987, and it received a title that became "a motto" – "I did not send you to Afghanistan...". Topical "Afghan" issues concerned the ban cases on submitting an obituary on the death of an "Afghan" soldier to a local newspaper; a refusal to help arrange a grave for a buried soldier; prohibitions, when perpetuating the memory of the deceased, to indicate on the monuments the death in Afghanistan; bureaucratic problems of the state support implementation for "Afghan" soldiers (Ya vas v Afganistan...1987, p. 3). Problems of a formal bureaucratic attitude to the medals awarding to demobilized "Afghans" were raised in the central edition of the Ukrainian SSR "Pravda Ukrainy" (Medal v polgolosa, 1988, p. 4). There was elucidated the issue of the state support realization of "Afghan" soldiers and families of the fallen soldiers at the all-Union level (Afganskaya bol... 1989, p. 3).

The issue of the current image of the war in the Soviet society and the reflections of its participants on this issue, the attitude to young veterans, the disabled, the families of fallen soldiers and the problems of their social protection (employment of "Afghan" soldiers with disabilities, poor pensions, housing problems of "Afghan soldiers"), etc.) became the subject of discussions with "Afghan soldiers" (Nam bylo legche... 1990, pp. 28–34; My ne pyl...1990, pp. 41–45; I ona mne...1990, pp. 48–55).

An important issue of the "Afghan syndrome" was raised in the Soviet periodicals. In particular, at the pages of the "Literary Review" a specialist in social psychology, D. Olshansky, resorted to the comparison of "Afghan" and "Vietnamese" syndromes, the state policy of the United States and the Soviet Union, the reaction to it by the American and Soviet societies (Olshanskiy, 1990, pp. 15–18).

The official discourse on the "Afghan war" of 1979 – 1989, the changes in the narrative concerning the Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the columns of the newspapers "Pravda", "Komsomolskaya Pravda", "Pravda Severa", "Ogoniek" were analyzed by N. Avdonina, the Russian researcher (Avdonina, 2015, pp. 189–206). The issue of the representation of the

“Afghan” theme of the 1980s by the newspaper under analysis was raised in the domestic historiography (Ostrovkyk, 2019, pp. 43–65). However, the set of problems of “Afghan” soldiers socialization, which were retransmitted to the public during the 1980s, was omitted by researchers. The lack of analysis of this layer of information in domestic historiography determines its topicality.

The purpose of the article: based on a study of the publications of the newspaper “Komsomolskoe Znamia” to differentiate the problem of “Afghan” soldiers socialization in Ukraine during the 1980s chronologically and thematically.

The Basic Material Statement. The official press played an important role in the socio-political life of the Soviet Union, forming and promoting ideological and educational principles for the Soviet youth. This is what the activities of the Komsomol were aimed at. One of the official press publications of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League in Ukraine was the newspaper “Komsomolskoe Znamia” (during 1938 – 1956 it was published under the name “Stalinskoye Plemya”). Realizing the presence of an ideological component of the official publication, which should make researchers be careful with such materials, we will try to analyze them in accordance with the above given topic.

The interest of the printed bodies of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, both the researched publication and the newspaper “Youth of Ukraine” in “Afghan” topics during the “perestroika” period took place under conditions, when the solution to the “Afghan Issue” became one of the main for the Soviet Union. At the same time, the appearance in the columns of materials devoted to “Afghan” soldiers was due to a revision of the state youth policy by the party leadership. The approaches to the activities of informal youth groups, among which “Afghan” soldiers had been for a long time, changed. Thus, the interaction of this category of youth with Komsomol structures, such as the involvement of yesterday’s fighters into the military patriotic education of a younger generation was a worthy example of a social activity of “Afghan” soldiers, which needed to be promoted in the society.

The socialization issues of “Afghan” soldiers in Ukraine by the editions of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, in particular, “Komsomolskoe Znamia” (hereinafter – KZ), as mentioned above, began to be raised during the “perestroika” period.

One such publication is an extensive article by Captain V. Hrynychak, a participant in the war in Afghanistan, a Hero of the Soviet Union. In particular, the combat officer spoke about the military service of the Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan: “... I remember how in December of the eighty-third we accepted replenishment. Everything was unusual for the boys, from the strict routine of the army life to the landscape, the sparse air of the highlands. *Heavy marches through the mountains, when not one hour, not two – not one day exhausting ascents and descents. And the throat from thirst becomes like..., and the water, though running along the bottom of the gorge, but to go down to it – a few hours. And at every step it is possible to meet with the enemies...*” (Po dolgu sovesti...1986, p. 1). In addition, the officer’s article is important in terms of the “Afghan” soldiers socialization in a peaceful life. After all, in the context of the Afghan period of young people’s lives, talking about “normal outings to areas where enemy gangs operated”, about real, not “training” battles of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, about the wounds and losses of comrades, V. Hrynychak, as an officer, who was wounded, emphasized the importance of support from the others for soldiers, who were wounded and returned to the Soviet society, the support for the families of the fallen “Afghan soldiers”, as well as soldiers and officers in the DRA – by letters (Po dolgu sovesti..., 1986, p. 2).

Despite the “opening” of the war to the public, the thesis of “international duty” remained a “red line” in the coverage of “Afghan” materials in the columns of the “KZ”. At the same time, in the message to servicemen, who left Afghanistan with units and subdivisions in 1986, the message of the Central Committee of the CPSU of October 14, 1986, there were indicated the names of soldiers posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the USSR; for the first time at the pages of the publication it was announced about the tribute of memory and honour to the fallen soldiers of the Soviet society, about the duty of “every party, the trade union, the Komsomol organization, the Soviets of People’s Deputies” to show care and attention to their families, to “reduce” the pain and bitterness of loss of theirs (Voinam-internatsionalistam, vozvrashchayuschimsya..., 1986, p. 1).

It is obvious that the instruction given in one of the press bodies of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine is the position of the central leadership of the party and the Komsomol in Ukraine – in particular, on the issue of popularization of “Afghan” soldiers in the Soviet society, those who had fulfilled the “international duty”.

Thus, among the first issues of 1987 there is a message to open “yesterday’s warriors” to the society. In the “conversation”, the “Afghan” soldier, the Hero of the Soviet Union, V. Kapshuk, emphasized that it was not enough for the Komsomol committees to restrict their activity to compiling lists of soldiers and “gather” them for solemn meetings. “*They need to be entrusted with serious, great things. Consult with them more often. They are worth it*” (Pisma lichno tebe, 1987, p. 1).

We consider important the role of the newspaper in the publications of citizens’ correspondence on the discovery of young soldiers in the society. Among other things, the following lines were written in the letters: “... *But when I started talking about specific people, the children changed. They had no idea, for instance, that Volodymyr Plastun, a member of the bureau of the city Komsomol, had been awarded the Order of the Red Star for his international duty in Afghanistan. The classroom became quiet, the eyes “sparkled”, the faces “brightened”. And I thought about how often in educational work we pass by living, concrete examples. And they are the strongest argument*”; “... *I brought to the first meeting the guys, who served in Afghanistan. Many of them have military awards. Their classmates had no idea, who they were studying with. They were very reluctant to talk about themselves. Especially, Mykola Savchenko. He never told anyone that he had the Order of the Red Star, the medals. We need to “discover” these guys. And the Komsomol should be the first here*”; “... *I have been working with teenagers for twenty-eight years. Not at secondary school or vocational school. At the educational and labour colony... I look at them and think: what kind of people will they be after the release? We try to make them understand that life is not over, we need the courage to start from “zero”. When they leave us, they cannot be left alone, we must fight for everyone. They really need the word of those, who went through a real battle, who carried their comrades out from bullets, who knows the price of a human life... Soldiers, who returned from Afghanistan, can become tutors of “difficult” teenagers. They will follow them, believe them*”; “*I envy the lives of our guys in Afghanistan. I collect newspaper notes about them. I already have a whole folder. I’m rereading everything about Mykola Chepyk. I have an acquaintance, who served with him. He talked a lot about him. That is why, I offered to organize the Komsomol meeting, to tell about the guys, who served in Afghanistan, to invite the guy. But the leader of the Komsomol organization was getting married, and she was not up to the meeting. The deputy stated that there was no such “topic of conversation” in the schedule. So there is nothing to organize. So everything remained unchanged*”

(Pisma lichno tebe, 1987, p. 2). We should note the presence of interest in the demobilized “Afghan” soldiers socialization, because in the columns of the Komsomol publication we find the message about the need to “open” soldiers, who returned from the war, to the Soviet society, as well as their involvement into the education of the youth.

At the same time, for the first time in the materials of the “KZ” in 1987, they “talked” about the problems of “Afghan” soldiers, holding a “round table” discussion together with Donetsk regional committee of the Komsomol on the “platform”. Its participants were the Komsomol official – the second secretary of the regional committee, E. Anoprienko, demobilized “Afghan” soldiers, the students: D. Dorokhov and E. Yasinsky, a chairman of the council of soldiers-internationalists of the district Komsomol organization, S. Sopolev, schoolchildren (Otkrovenno o vajnom..., 1987, p. 2). The issues of preserving the memory about fallen soldiers, helping their families, “Afghan” soldiers, who were seriously wounded, meetings of “soldiers returning home”, opening corners of memory at school museums dedicated to graduates – “soldiers-internationalists”, functioning of reserve soldiers councils and clubs of “soldiers-internationalists” at the Komsomol committees, involvement of “Afghan” soldiers societies into the education of “problem” adolescents and the younger generation in general (Otkrovenno o vajnom ..., 1987, p. 2). It should be also noted that it was in this publication that “soldiers-internationalist” were first called “Afghan” soldiers for the first time. A characteristic symbolism could be seen in it. A. Hurbych, Head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of Donetsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, rightly pointed out the drawbacks in the work with “Afghan” soldiers, which turned out to be “unforgivably many” (Otkrovenno o vajnom ..., 1987, p. 2).

It is obvious that such openness on the part of the party functionary was possible owing to the “perestroika” publicity, which contributed to a certain openness in the columns of the official publications on “Afghan” soldiers problems and the families of fallen soldiers.

On August 11, 1987, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the LKSMMU considered the issue “On strengthening the patronage of Komsomol organizations of the Republic over soldiers-internationalists and the families of the fallen”. It was decided to implement instructions and take measures to improve this work in Ukraine (Chervonopyskyi, 2008, p. 51; Ostrovyk, 2019, pp. 157–159). It is important that the Secretariat ordered to publish the statement of the developed guidelines in the republican “youth” newspapers (Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine, f. 7, d. 18, c. 1995, p. 7). On August 21, 1987, the “editorial board” of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine pointed at a “formal bureaucratic attitude” of certain Komsomol committees regarding the requests of soldiers-internationalists and the families of fallen soldiers; non-compliance of the requirements for the organization of patronage over demobilized soldiers and the families of fallen “Afghan” soldiers by a number of the Komsomol committees; a “superficial approach”, “heartlessness” and inefficiency of the Komsomol functionaries – secretaries of city and district committees of the Komsomol in resolving requests and appeals of soldiers-internationalists, failure at establishing “necessary contact” with military commissariats and social security bodies, failure at having information on retired soldiers, who arrived at their organizations (Voinam-internatsionalistam, semyam..., 1987, p. 1). The facts of formalism and bureaucracy regarding the “Afghan” soldiers and the families of the fallen soldiers were described as “political short-sightedness” and “heartlessness” of the first secretaries of city and district committees of the Komsomol (Voinam-internatsionalistam, semyam..., 1987, p. 1). Critical remarks were followed by measures to solve these issues.

Regional, district, city committees of the Komsomol, social security bodies and military registration and enlistment offices were instructed to analyze the state of patronage of hospitals, “soldiers-internationalists”, the families of the fallen soldiers and to take measures to facilitate this work; the departments of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine and their committees were ordered: to increase the demands to the Komsomol officials concerning a careful consideration of the written and oral appeals of “Afghan” soldiers, families of fallen soldiers, to hold meetings of bureau members, the Komsomol officials with soldiers in reserve; to establish records of soldiers-internationalists and to ensure their “active involvement into public work”, to demand “a specific party, Komsomol or public order”; “to nominate soldiers-internationalists actively, who have authority in the youth environment” for the Komsomol work, in the governing bodies of the Komsomol organizations, and recommend the “best” ones for joining the CPSU; in 1987 to complete the establishment of regional, city and district councils of soldiers in reserve, directing their activities to improve the military patriotic education of the youth, training young men for a military service, propaganda of different types of the Armed Forces, control over observance of government privileges provided for “invalids of the Soviet Army”, soldiers-internationalists, etc. (Voinam-internatsionalistam, semyam..., 1987, p. 1; Ostrovyk, 2019, pp. 157–159).

We state that the complex of problems of “soldiers-internationalists” in the USSR and measures to solve them in the materials of the Komsomol newspaper were first covered only in the second half of 1987.

In 1988, the “KZ” newspaper pointed out the typical problems of participants in the hostilities in Afghanistan. In particular, there was criticized the issue of “patronage” of city and district Komsomol organizations over demobilized soldiers, who, after leaving the TurkVO hospital, (Turkestan Military District – Author), returned home. The cases when city and district committees did not inform the hospital about “Afghan” soldiers took place in Kharkiv, Chernivtsi, Zhytomyr region (Delo chesti, 1988, p. 2). The issue of organized appeal of “Afghan” soldiers of Bila Tserkva plant, members of the city club “Internationalist” to resolve the housing problem was raised. “Afghan” soldiers “encountered” the problem of “visiting offices”, the trade union, the director of the plant, the deputy chairman of the city executive committee, the secretary of the city party committee and formal “replies” and “excuses” (Delo chesti, 1988, p. 2). Although, it was noted that caring for “Afghan” soldiers should be the matter of honour not only for the Komsomol organizations, but for all those, who surround “Afghan” soldiers (Delochesti, 1988, p. 2).

The inattentive treatment of “Afghan” soldiers was discussed at a rally of the Crimean veterans, where they discussed the lack of proper premises and sports equipment in the club for teenagers and “fake promises” by the city executive committee in resolving this issue, a lack of practical measures of executive committees of city and district councils in the implementation of the decision of the regional executive committee to improve the living conditions of “Afghan” soldiers’ families (Net drujby krepche..., 1988, p. 2).

It should also be noted that the leadership of the party and the Komsomol, in general, tried to use the experience of yesterday’s “Afghan” soldiers in the Soviet realities. After all, as it was written in the newspaper, the decision of the “final document” adopted during the All-Union meeting of young reserve soldiers (held in Ashgabat in November 1987), – “... in the work on military patriotic education of young people, their preparation for service in the army and navy, perestroika is extremely slow. This work remains “flagship”, “boring”,

“formalized” (Shkolamujestva, 1988, p. 2). At the beginning of 1988, V. Popko, a head of the sports and defense department of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, wrote in the comments of the “KZ” that “Afghan” soldiers had a real authority among young people and were a “colossal reserve”, which the Komsomol did not use enough” (Net drujby krepche ..., 1988, p. 2).

In the context of this “youth-Komsomol” problem, the newspaper once again raises the issue of establishing creating “Afghan” soldiers centers and their involvement into the education of youth. For instance, there were covered the issues of improving a military patriotic education, preparation of young people for a military service, which were discussed during the rally of Kyiv reserve soldiers (there was the creation of a regional council of reserve soldiers. “Afghan” participants were positioned as the core of the union, as those, who did not want to “put up with inertia and drawbacks in the work of people responsible for a military patriotic education of the youth”); it was informed about organizing a district rally of reserve soldiers (also in Kyiv region), the creation of a veteran unit “Podvyh” (was engaged with the club of conscripts “Desantnyk” and the section “Memory” (specialized in caring for veterans’ graves, helping veterans and war invalids) (Slet voinov zapasa, 1988, p. 1; Soldat vseгда soldat, 1988, p. 4).

Secretary of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, Yu. Sokolov, emphasized the importance of using the experience of “Afghan” soldiers as the example of determination and effectiveness in promoting a “military patriotism” among the Soviet youth. He also noted that this issue was the subject of discussion in the republican Komsomol organization at the end of 1987. The organization of the all-Ukrainian meeting of reserve soldiers in June of 1988, as it was mentioned, was aimed at “generalizing the best” in the direction of educating the younger generation, developing “prospects for working with the growing military generation” (Vnimanie, my nachinaem, 1988, p. 2). The head of the Ukrainian Komsomol pointed at the Komsomol committees formalism in solving the problems of “Afghan” soldiers, widows, families of fallen soldiers, which was also the subject of dialogue in developing the ways of improving this situation; learning from the experience of the Komsomol societies, which managed to help demobilized “Afghan” soldiers “find their place in life, obtain a profession” (Vnimanie, my nachinaem, 1988, p. 2). The drawbacks in the patronage of “Afghan” soldiers can be traced from the words of the Komsomol official: “... Personally, my opinion is that experience is accumulated there, where there is a high notion of humanity, where the one was to realize what a difficult burden fell on the fate of not yet grown up guys. Where the one solves the problems of yesterday’s soldiers from a human rather than a bureaucratic standpoint, they do patriotic work at the call of the heart, not because someone has instructed them to do so...” (Vnimanie, my nachinaem, 1988, p. 2).

On May 15, 1988, the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan began. In an official address to the “Afghan” soldiers returning home, the party leadership emphasized the need for their “energy” for “perestroika, the case of renewing socialism, defending its conquests” (Obraschenie TSK KPSS..., 1988, p. 1). However, as it was mentioned above, the issue of “Afghan” soldiers was far from being resolved. For instance, the newspaper published the letters of appeal from soldiers to the editors: “Hello, editors! I turn to you not only for help, but also for advice. A lot is being written, said and shown about soldiers-internationalists. In general, all this is a real “show”. I performed an international duty from December of 1983 till October of 1985. There took place many things. I served in the artillery. Started as a soldier, ended as a sergeant. I performed my military duties honestly. When going to the reserve, the unit commander, the zampolit said: “Guys, in a civilian life you are the hope and

support. Carry your honour high. You are soldiers-internationalists. Be proud of it". And I, like everyone else, went home with this "load". But here everything turned out not as we dreamed. There are so many of you in the Union. We won't get everything for you" – that's how my former boss at my previous job answered my question concerning housing problem ...” (Gorkie pisma, 1988, p. 2). The “Afghan” soldier continued: “... *A small retreat: in March, the “Afghan” soldiers were gathered to meet with the city authorities, representatives of the trade department, social security, police, housing and communal services, the city Komsomol. It was a real “fake”, a show. Many questions were asked to these representatives. However, some specific answers were received. Everything else was “blurred”, “vague”* (Gorkie pisma, 1988, p. 2). The family of an “Afghan” soldier from Odesa pointed out the problematic cases of the state support for the families of the military fallen in Afghanistan. In particular, the young veteran and his wife wrote to the editorial board about the refusal to provide a voucher for the rehabilitation of a diabetic and hypertensive patient, the mother of the soldier, who died in 1984; the problem of “including” the surname of the widow of an “Afghan” soldier into the shop list for war invalids; a promise to help repair an apartment, which was “delayed” for two years for the sick mother of another “Afghan” soldier. “... *What benefits for “Afghan” soldiers can we talk about, even if the families of those killed in Afghanistan are not provided with benefits?*”, the authors of the letter to the editorial office wrote (Gorkie pisma, 1988, p. 2). Thus, the cases show how in the Soviet reality of that time the “Afghan” soldiers lost their vital ideals of experience, when, returning from the war, they witnessed “ostentation”, “bloated” support for them by the authorities. At the same time, they testify to the fact that the families of soldiers, who died in Afghanistan, remained hostages of the state support implementation.

Terrible things were discussed with the “Afghan” soldiers of Poltava region: the correspondent learned that their fellows cut off his hand after “solving” his “housing problem”; “... And only after that the boy received a residence permit, a job and a disability document”. Apparently, again, there was a loss of a person’s life ideals, because, as presented in the material, the “Afghan” soldier, disappointed, “*realized that everyone lives only for himself and tries to “grab” more*” (this case was discussed at the meeting of the Central Committee Plenum of the Young Communist League of Ukraine, with reference to the publication in the “KZ”) (Pamyat v podvale, 1989, pp. 4–5; CSAPAU, f. 7, d. 18, c. 2096, p. 170). “Yesterday’s soldiers” talked about the problem of housing for “Afghans”, demanding the premises for the Konotop Club of soldiers-internationalists (they were given a basement), “searching for” building materials for repairs on their own, no hope in the Komsomol help, a two-year visit by a widow with two children in the issue of housing repair assistance (Pamyat v podvale, 1989, pp. 4–5).

As an example of inadequate support for “Afghans”, we should mention the situation with the transfer of housing by Kyiv City Committee, which was built for government officials (representatives of the Council of Ministers and the State Plan), to “Afghans”, families of victims, war veterans and invalids, large families. The housing turned out to be unfinished (Razjalovannyiy dom, 1990, p. 4). “Afghans” of Novomoskovsk (Dnipropetrovsk region) united in the center of Afghanistan veterans, who worked to help the families of the dead, the disabled, etc., needed premises and funds to increase production (“Espada” jdet pomoschi, 1990, p. 4). Chernihiv “Afghans” raised funds in a self-organized manner, deciding to hold a charity concert and transferring funds to the families of those killed in Afghanistan (I kak je mne..., 1990, p. 5).

Regarding the state support of “Afghan” families, the resolution of the Central Committee of the LKSMU was published, which indicated the payment of a pension to children, whose parents died in Afghanistan; the amount of payment was 40 rubles per month for each child under 18 years of age. However, as N. Serhienko, the head of the sports and defense-mass work department of the Central Committee of the LKSMU, pointed out, one million was not enough; the Komsomol hoped for support of “other organizations and people” (Ne jal potratit..., 1990, p. 4).

The Conclusions. Thus, the materials of the newspaper under analysis highlight the problems of “Afghan” soldiers socialization in the USSR, which can be differentiated according to a thematic focus.

The appearance of this issue at the pages of the press body of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Ukraine “Komsomolskoe Znamia” is traced with the onset of the “perestroika” period. At the end of 1986, in the government address, for the first time it was mentioned about commemoration of the victims and the obligation to support their families. A qualitatively new stage in the coverage of the “Afghan theme” by this newspaper began in 1987 with a message to various aspects of “Afghan” soldiers socialization in Ukraine: the need to “open” yesterday’s soldiers to the society, to which they returned after the war, to popularize their experience and to use it in the upbringing of the younger generation. At the same time, in August of 1987, there were highlighted systemic drawbacks in the implementation of the “patronage” of the Komsomol committees over “soldiers-internationalists” and the families of fallen soldiers in Ukraine, and organizational and practical measures were taken to facilitate this work. At the same time, there were raised the problems of a material support of “Afghan” societies, unsatisfactory patronage of the Komsomol organizations, problems of “Afghan” soldiers at the local level.

With the beginning of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, in the articles of the “Komsomolskoe Znamia” the problems of demobilized “Afghan” soldiers were pointed out by “Afghan” soldiers and representatives of families, whose members died in Afghanistan, appealing to the ostentation and “bloated” support of young veterans by the authorities and the problem of implementing the state support for the families of fallen soldiers. In general, the analysis of the newspaper publications showed that the conditions for the social adaptation of yesterday’s soldiers against the background of the war and the expectation of a decent reception were not in favour of young veterans in the Soviet society.

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