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**STATE POLICY ON SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE PATRIOTIC WAR  
INVALIDS IN POST-WAR UKRAINE IN 1945 – 1950**

**Abstract.** The paper focuses on a special status of the Patriotic War invalids as a social group in a post-war Ukrainian society as well as the attitude towards them by the Soviet state. **The Purpose of the Research.** The objective is historically to reconstruct the basic principles of the Soviet policy on social protection of veterans with disabilities and its first results during the first post-war years. **The Methodological Basis.** The principles of objectivity, historicism, system, and research comprise the methodology basis. There have been applied historical and genetic, comparative, statistic, diachronic, historical and anthropological methods. **The scientific novelty** of the study consists in doing for the first time the analysis of the Soviet regime's attitude to the Patriotic War invalids against the background of the Third famine in Ukraine. **The Conclusions.** The institutionalization of the social protection system for the Patriotic War invalids in the Ukrainian SSR took place during the period of 1940 – 1946. During the period of 1940 and 1941 the authorities legitimated pensioning for the potential war invalids. With the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the Union and Republic Governments identified people with disabilities as a result of the war with Germany among other invalids officially calling the first “the

*Patriotic War invalids” and adding some new forms of social protection for them. The number of the Patriotic War invalids abruptly increased under conditions of the worsened economic situation and the beginning of the Third famine in the Ukrainian SSR. We have determined the fact of decreasing the number of registered war-disabled people with the help of “thorough medical and labour examination”. Medical and Labour Examination Commissions took such actions under the pressure of the Party and Government of the Ukrainian SSR. They declared invalids as “fully recovered”. Besides, many front-line invalids were transferred to lower groups of disability. The Ukrainian Republic governance had to turn to such actions to avoid the budget deficit for the system of social protection and additional economy of bread.*

**Key words:** *The Patriotic War invalids, social protection, pensioning, social protection bodies, Medical and Labour Examination Commissions, group of disability.*

## ДЕРЖАВНА ПОЛІТИКА СОЦІАЛЬНОГО ЗАХИСТУ ІНВАЛІДІВ ВІТЧИЗНЯНОЇ ВІЙНИ В ПІСЛЯВОЄННІЙ УКРАЇНІ 1945 – 1950 рр.

**Анотація.** Досліджено статус особливої соціальної групи післявоєнного українського суспільства – інвалідів Вітчизняної війни і ставлення до неї з боку радянської держави. **Метою роботи** є історична реконструкція провідних елементів радянської політики соціального захисту ветеранів-інвалідів і її результатів у перші післявоєнні роки. **Методологію** складають принципи об'єктивності, історизму, системності, науковості. Застосовано історико-генетичний, порівняльний, статистичний, діахронний, історико-антропологічний методи. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше проаналізовано ставлення радянського режиму до інвалідів Вітчизняної війни на тлі Третього голоду в Україні. **Висновки.** Становлення системи соціального забезпечення інвалідів Вітчизняної війни в УРСР відбувалося упродовж 1940 – 1946 рр. У 1940 – 1941 рр. влада юридично впорядкувала пенсіонування майбутніх інвалідів війни. З початком німецько-радянської війни постановами союзного та республіканського урядів було виділено осіб з інвалідністю внаслідок війни з Німеччиною з-поміж інших контингентів інвалідів, присвоєно їм офіційну назву “інваліди Вітчизняної війни” й додано нові види соціального захисту. В умовах погіршення економічної ситуації в УРСР і початку Третього голоду в республіці відбулося різке зростання кількості інвалідів Вітчизняної війни. Встановлено, що під тиском партійно-урядового керівництва УРСР Міністерство соціального забезпечення і Лікарсько-трудова експертні комісії провели акцію скорочення кількості взятих на облік інвалідів війни за допомогою “глибокої лікарсько-трудової експертизи”, оголошуючи їх такими, що “цілком одужали”. Крім того, багатьом інвалідам-фронтовикам знизили групу інвалідності. Причиною таких дій керівництва республіки стала необхідність уникнути дефіциту бюджету системи соціального забезпечення й додаткова економія хліба.

**Ключові слова:** *інваліди Вітчизняної війни, соціальне забезпечення, пенсіонування, соцзабези, лікарсько-трудова експертні комісії, група інвалідності.*

**The Problem Statement.** Coming of the next victory anniversary of the Anti-Hitler coalition forces over Nazi Germany and deepening in connection with this the conflicts of historical memories about World War II naturally increase the research interest of historians and specialists in various sectors of social sciences and the Humanities. A special place in the Ukrainian historical memory of World War II is the victory issue. In our historical science, this historical memory is expressed in the actualization of the human measurement of the war, in the transfer of research center to various social groups and communities under the conditions of war and peaceful time, and also in the growth of research using the methodology of social history, historical demography and historical anthropology. During the first post-war years the price of the victory was clearly illustrated by a large number of the war invalids, who returned home and had to adapt to extremely complex post-war conditions of an everyday life. In Soviet Ukraine problems of the war invalids' adaptation to a normal

life were significantly aggravated as a result of the Third famine of 1946 – 1947, which as well as the previous Holodomors became the result of the Soviet regime actions.

**The Analysis of Recent Research.** The beginning of research on this topic is illustrated by the works of famous Ukrainian historians – O. Lysenko, O. Perekhrest (Lysenko & Perekhrest, 2015), I. Mukovskyi (Mukovskyi & Lysenko, 1997), T. Vronska (Vronska & Lysenko, 2012). In particular, in a historical essay “Demographic Losses of Ukraine during World War II”, which was written by O. Lysenko, O. Perekhrest, I. Perekhrest, A. Irzhavska, for the first time in the Ukrainian historiography of World War II, there were summarized the study results of the special social group conditions of a post-war Ukrainian society – the Patriotic War invalids. The research is on the number of veterans-invalids in Soviet Ukraine, the main directions of the government social protection policy. The authors elucidated the complex of problems that arose in an everyday life of the Patriotic War invalids during the first post-war years (Lysenko, Perekhrest, Perekhrest & Irzhavska, 2011).

Among the few foreign researchers who during the last decades studied the life of the Patriotic War invalids in the postwar USSR, it is worth mentioning the Russian historians H. Horohorina (Horohorina, 2005), I. Pelih (Pelih, 2005) and O. Bolle (Bolle, 2009), as well as a German researcher B. Fieseler (Fieseler, 2014). The works of the Russian authors are characterized by a tendency to avoid or mitigate the dramatic and unattractive aspects of the interaction between the Soviet state and the war invalids. The works of B. Feseler, the German historian, on the invalids of the Patriotic War under conditions of Stalinism are more thorough. But her research is locally limited to the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and is based on the materials of the Russian archives. It should be noted that in Soviet Ukraine, the post-war life of the Great Patriotic War invalids had its own dramatic history, which remained beyond B. Feseler’s research interests.

**The Purpose of the Research.** Taking into consideration the fact that the study of this issue is at the initial stage in the Ukrainian and foreign historical science, on the basis of new archival materials we intend to do comprehensive research on the basic principles of a social protection of the Patriotic War invalids, which was conducted by the party-government leadership of the Ukrainian SSR, and consequences for the veterans against the background of deteriorating socio-economic situation and the beginning of the Third Famine in the Ukrainian Republic.

**The Main Material Statement.** The institution formation of a social protection of the Patriotic War invalids began in 1940, i.e., before the emergence of this group of people, and lasted until 1946. In the context of preparations for the imminent war, the Council of People’s Commissars of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (the CPC of the USSR) adopted two resolutions, which regulated the system of retirement, war invalids, who were bound to appear as a consequence of the imminent hostilities. It should be emphasized that the resolutions of the CPC of the USSR under No. 1269 “On Pensions to Servicemen of the Rank and Junior Chief Conscripts and their Families” of July 16, 1940 (Slobodianskyi & Hitman, 1949, p. 32) and under No. 1474 “On Pensions and Benefits to Servicemen of Senior and Middle Chief Conscripts, Servicemen of Junior Chief Conscripts of Overtime Service, to Specialists of the Rank-and-File of the Overtime Service and their Families” of June 5, 1941 (Slobodianskyi & Hitman, 1949, p. 23) did not concern the invalids of the local military conflicts of 1938 – 1940 in any way. And only with the beginning of the German-Soviet war the resolutions came into force. Heavy defeats of the Red Army, large-scale medical losses and a rapid increase in the number of the wounded and invalids made the Soviet government adjust the social protection of the war invalids significantly, adding new areas of social

protection: employment, prosthetics, training and retraining, medical rehabilitation, material and household support. On May 6, 1942, the CPC of the USSR, with its resolution under No. 640 “On Employment of Invalids of the Patriotic War”, not only introduced the official name of the contingent of people with disabilities as a result of the war with Nazi Germany—“the Patriotic War Invalids”, but also defined a special status of the contingent (Central State Archive of Higher Authorities in Ukraine – CSAHAU), f. 348, d. 3, c. 12, p. 33). On May 20, 1942, the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (the CPC of the UkrSSR) and the Central Committee of the Communist Party (the Bolsheviks) of Ukraine (Central Committee of the CP(b)U) adopted a resolution under No. 115 almost identical in content (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 12, p. 35).

The People’s Commissariat of Social Protection (PCSP) (since 1946, the Ministry) was the leading institution that carried out the state policy of a social protection of the contingent of the Patriotic War invalids in the Ukrainian SSR. The PCSP as an important unit included Medical and Labour Expert Commissions (MLECs), at which the disability of veterans was diagnosed and the degree of disability, i.e., a disability group was defined. Local social protection bodies took into account invalids-veterans, assigned them a pension, employed them and organized reviews of the cases regularly.

Quarterly reports of the PCSP (MSP) from January 1, 1944 to September of 1946 illustrate a steady increase in the number of registered Patriotic War invalids by social protection bodies. As of July 1, 1945, 331 965 invalids of the Great Patriotic War were registered by the social protection bodies in the Ukrainian SSR. And on January 1, 1946, there were already 458 880 invalids-veterans in Ukraine. There were 401 030 war invalids, sergeants and non-commissioned officers and, accordingly, 57 850 officers among them (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 4, p. 2). By August 1, 1946, the social protection bodies of the Ukrainian Republic registered 503 224 soldiers-invalids of the Patriotic War, and at that time 49 963 officers-invalids were registered (Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine (CSAPAU), f. 1, d. 23, c. 3071, pp. 13–17).

From the middle of September of 1946, the statistics of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs illustrated the opposite process: the number of the Patriotic War invalids registered by social protection bodies began to decline sharply. But before that, statistics showed two bursts of growth in the number of veterans with disabilities registered in the UkrSSR. The first – in April, and the second – in August-September of 1946. In particular, during August and until the middle of September of 1946, the increase in the number of the Patriotic War invalids of the rank and file, sergeants and officers was 62 076 people, or 12%. Accordingly, the number of the war officers-invalids increased by 1137, or 2.2%. In total, there were 616 400 Patriotic War invalids who were registered by the social protection bodies of Ukraine before September 16, 1946 (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 5181, pp. 92–137, 104). The April flow of veterans to social protection bodies can be explained by the beginning of dry winds and an unprecedented drought, which made many of them think about the dangers of famine (Lel’chuk, 1967, p. 74). Apparently, many war invalids were delayed in registering in social protection bodies due to various circumstances. It is worth mentioning only one. The war invalids of Group II and Group III had to be re-examined by MLECs four times a year. It should be noted that the medical industry was recovering slowly and only in 1950 the amount of beds fund reached the pre-war period. For many veterans, it was not only humiliating, but also too burdensome. A disabled person who did not arrive on time for the next re-examination at MLECs was expelled from disability list and deprived of pension without

further explanation. Thus, when there was a threat of famine, many veterans went to social protection bodies because they knew that after registering, they had the right to count on little, but still guaranteed support. Analyzing the situation of that period of time, modern Ukrainian researchers use the expression “catastrophic decline in living standards” (Patryliak & Hryn 2020, p. 187).

The increase in the number of registered invalids of the Patriotic War in August – September, in our opinion, is caused by the adoption of the resolution under No. 1516 of July 9, 1946 by the Union Government (Hlazunov, 1970, p. 37) This document allowed social protection bodies register as invalids of the Patriotic War those veterans who, due to severe injuries at the front, lost their ability to work after the end of the German-Soviet war. Many Ukrainian veterans exercised their right under conditions of the imminent Third Famine.

Until the middle of 1946, the party-government leadership of the Ukrainian SSR adopted resolutions, orders, and instructions aimed at creating a regime of the greatest assistance to the Great Patriotic War invalids. But later the situation changed radically. Archival sources make it possible to determine the fact that the turn in the attitude of the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR towards the Patriotic War invalids took place after September 16, 1946, when at the same time there began reduction of the number of veterans-invalids registered in all social protection bodies of the Ukrainian Republic. On this day, an emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was held in Kyiv, entirely devoted to the work of social protection bodies in Ukraine. The Ministry for Social Security of the UkrSSR and the Minister V. Muratov were severely criticized at the meeting. From the excerpt text of the minutes of the emergency meeting, it is known that the Minister was criticized for the unsatisfactory state of work, especially in the field of social protection of veterans-invalids. The drawbacks listed in the excerpt, in particular: “extremely neglected pension economy”, stealing and squandering of funds for war invalids, unsatisfactory work on employment, bureaucracy – really took place in the post-war social protection bodies. But in order to understand how the emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U affected radical changes in the social protection policy of veterans-invalids and why, in fact, it was “emergency” meeting, it is worth analyzing the items of the document that concern MLECs and the heads of local social protection bodies. Thus, more than 900 MLECs of the Ukrainian Republic were accused of the fact that the share of invalids of World War II during the re-examinations “remains excessively and unreasonably high”. This issue needs further explanation.

As early as the beginning of the German-Soviet war, when many veterans-invalids appeared in the country, officials from the social protection system of the RSFSR came to the conclusion that the principles of determining disability should be reconsidered. As invalids of Group I and Group II were considered to be completely incapable of work, and therefore did not obey the strict Soviet labour legislation, it was decided with the help of MLECs to limit the number of Group II invalids. On August 9, 1941, the People’s Commissar of Social Security of the RSFSR A. Hryshakova by her order forbade MLECs of the Republic to determine disability for veterans, who with severe injuries (loss of an arm, a leg, an eye) were able to work according to their pre-war profession diploma. If a veteran with a disability had to choose a less skilled job, he was allowed to have Group III of disability (Feseler 2005, p. 23). In the bureaucratic depths of the People’s Commissariats of Social Security and Health Care, there was elaborated theory that “... all war injuries, in contrast to those acquired at the workplace, are nothing but locally limited dysfunctions that are easily compensated and do

not have particularly negative consequences for the body” (Feseler, 2005, p. 24). Based on this “theory”, in 1945 Russian MLECs established the following ratio among the disability groups of veterans: Group I – 2%, Group II – 23%, Group III – 75%. In the UkrSSR, officials of the social protection system together with MLECs began to “level” the ratio among the disability groups of veterans according to the Russian model in 1945. But this process was slow (it requires a separate study). As of September 1, 1946, the share of veterans-invalids of disability Group II was still 41.1% in the UkrSSR (Ananchenko, 1948, p. 7). This was the reason for the party leadership’s criticism of the post-war Ukrainian MLECs, but not only that. Behind this criticism there was the government’s dissatisfaction with the fact that social protection bodies and MLECs allowed a significant increase in registered veterans-invalids.

An excerpt from the minutes of the emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U of September 16, 1946 also contains the resolution text from the report of the Minister for Social Security. It is quite interesting, the resolution lacks an item on the party’s task of MLECs of the Ukrainian Republic, despite harsh criticism in the statement part of the document. In our opinion, based on the logic of party resolutions, the directive for MLECs could be one – with the help of medical and labour examination to transfer a significant part of the Patriotic War invalids from disability Group II to Group III. Moreover, MLECs were apparently tasked with depriving many Group III invalids of the Patriotic War of their disability. The party leaders of the Ukrainian SSR did not dare to record such a directive on paper. Such instructions, in our opinion, were sent to the heads of social protection bodies and heads of MLECs only orally.

The matter is that the excerpt text from the resolution of September 16, 1946 did not include all the resolutions of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U is evidenced by the following facts. The new Minister for Social Security F. Ananchenko during his speech at a national meeting of employees of his department on March 22 – 26, 1947 said that, according to the decision of the Politburo of September of 16, the heads of district and city social protection bodies were included into the nomenclature with the obligatory approval of the local party committee. There is no this item in the excerpt text (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 204, p. 24). The true goal of the resolution of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U of September 16, 1946 was well known for local social protection bodies. Thus, in his speech Malkevych, the head of the district social protection body in Vinnytsia region at the same meeting said: “In our region there has been done a lot since the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U on the work of MLECs in 1946, in particular in 1946, 4 162 invalids were expelled from the register lists as those, who fully recovered, more than 9000 people were transferred from disability Group II to Group III...” (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 204, p. 127).

One more item of this document is worth mentioning. Minister for Social Security V. Muratov lost his post. At the same time, the resolution called for radical personnel changes at all lower levels of the social protection system. There was an issue of full management updating of the social protection bodies and MLECs. Reliable cadres were needed to carry out the important but immoral task of the party. In order to encourage the heads of social protection bodies to perform such task, they were included into the nomenclature and an appropriate material support (special distributors, rations, etc.). According to S. Kulchytsky, “the state-commune did not rise above the society, but absorbed it: absorbed all the horizontal links and structures that functioned, stitched the society to its full thickness with its own vertical structures...” (Kulchytskyi, 2021, p. 184). Thus, the turn of the party-government

leadership of the UkrSSR in the attitude towards the Patriotic War invalids was expressed in the fact that invalids began to be massively deprived of disability and transferred from disability Group II to Group III.

As soon as the resolution of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U was studied by the local social protection bodies and verbal directives were received, a sharp reduction in the number of registered veterans-invalids began immediately. In just two weeks, the social protection bodies provided the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with information according to which the number of the Patriotic War invalids decreased by 55 306 people in the country. Then, during January – September of 1947, the reduction was somewhat slower (from 7 to 12 thousand per quarter). From October of 1947, the rate of decline in the number of invalids increased again: 17 925 were deregistered in October, 19 948 people – in December of 1947. The archival materials make it possible to determine precisely that the reduction in the number of war invalids in the UkrSSR, starting from October 1, 1946 and ending on January 1, 1950, was done by MLECs who recognized invalids as completely “recovered” and deregistered them as the Great Patriotic War invalids. The state, accordingly, completely waived all obligations to veterans. In his letter to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) Mykyta Khrushchov dated January 8, 1948 with a request to help conduct a new register list review of the Patriotic War invalids in the UkrSSR, the head of the Ministry for Social Security F. Ananchenko wrote: “... The Ministry for Social Security of the UkrSSR on the basis of a number of measures taken from October of 1946 and in 1947, as a result of a thorough medical and labour check up reduced the number of Group II of the Patriotic War invalids by 10.1% and transferred to the category of healthy 62.5 thousand people. This measure saved the state funds for the payment of pensions together with a bread allowance of up to 160 8 million krb. The urgent need for revision is dictated not only by saving public funds for the payment of pensions, but by the need:... B) to check the correctness of determining the degree of disability and determination of a disability group... We anticipate a reduction of Group II invalids by 8% and a transfer to the category of healthy over 39 thousand people. This measure will save public pensions funds up to 120 million krb. per year” (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 5181, p. 3–4) (underlined by us. – The authors).

High “efficiency” of the re-examination of invalids by means of the so-called “thorough medical check up” prompted F. Ananchenko to initiate another large-scale re-examination campaign, which was held during the first quarter of 1948. As a result of this review and re-examination, 53 555 veterans were declared completely healthy and expelled from the disability pensions lists (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 5181, p. 70).

Thus, from October 1, 1946 to April 1, 1948, 116 055 invalids, former defenders of the Soviet homeland, were deprived of the status of “the Patriotic War invalids” in the Ukrainian SSR and expelled from the disability pensions lists. There is no information on 55 306 veterans-invalids during the period of the last two weeks of September of 1946, and due to a lack of archival sources, we can only make assumptions. The archival document, a letter from I. Kononenko, the Minister of Health of the Ukrainian SSR, to F. Ananchenko, the Minister for Social Security of the Ukrainian SSR, partially clarifies the situation with the sudden reduction in number of war invalids. In the letter I. Kononenko reports that in regional social protection bodies of Mykolaiv region as of November 1, 1946 there were registered 113 Patriotic War invalids who died, and also 613 veterans-invalids who moved to another places of residence. 171 dead invalids-veterans and 1 632 war invalids who left the place of permanent residence were still registered in the district social protection bodies

security of Stalin region (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 149, p. 94). In other words, the officials took into account the arrival of disabled veterans, and those who died or moved were left on the register lists due to negligence or selfish intent. It is worth noting the statement of a modern researcher that under conditions of austerity the crime against invalids grows even in a relatively prosperous society (Healy, 2020, p. 176). The documents of the Ministry for Social Security of the Ukrainian SSR of this period are replete with materials about “schemes” of pension funds stealing. In the middle of September of 1946, when a strict directive was received from Kyiv to reduce the number of the Great Patriotic War invalids, the social protection bodies “cleaned” the lists of veterans immediately.

Thus, as we can see, the rapid growth in the number of the Patriotic War invalids registered by the social protection bodies during the Third Famine in Ukraine was simply stopped by a resolution of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U of September 16, 1946. In fact, this growth necessitated an emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U, at which the resolution was adopted.

Having determined the interference fact by the party and government leadership of the UkrSSR in the work of MLECs in order to stop the growth in the number of the Patriotic War invalids in the Ukrainian Republic, and then reduce the number of the latter, we will try to find out the reasons for this action. This interference fact is evidenced by the archival document “Brief Information on the Work of the Ministry for Social Security on Social Protection and Employment of the Patriotic War Invalids”, which was prepared for D. Korotchenko, the secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U by V. Muratov, the Minister for Social Security of the UkrSSR. This document was prepared for the above-mentioned emergency meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U. The date under the document is September 14, 1946.

The first section of the document entitled “Pension Provision” contains information on the growth of the number of the Patriotic War invalids of the rank and file, sergeants and officers during the period of 2,5 years – from January of 1944 to July of 1946. It was significant that it indicated not only the total amount of pensions paid each year, but also the total amount of monthly pensions, which increased in proportion to the increase in the number of war invalids registered by social protection bodies. In the document it was written that in 1944 the amount of the monthly pension for the entire contingent of the Patriotic War invalids amounted to 24 171 krb., and in July of 1946 it reached 68 672 krb. (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 3064, pp. 28–29). If we take into account that as of September 16, 1946, the average pension of a war invalid was 147 krb. in the USSR, and the social protection bodies registered 565 300 veterans-invalids of the rank and file, sergeants and officers, then the monthly pension of the Patriotic War invalids should have been 83 099 krb. If such number of them had been the same in the future, the annual amount of pensions only for veterans-invalids would have reached 1 billion krb. in the UkrSSR. It is known that in 1946 a total sum of 3 277 billion krb. was planned for pensions and social security benefits in the state budget of the UkrSSR. The sum of 886 million krb. was planned for pensions to the Patriotic War invalids in the UkrSSR in 1946 (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 4891, p. 35). Thus, the sharp decline in the number of the German-Soviet war invalids during the second half of September of 1946 practically made it possible to maintain the monthly amount of disability pension at the level of August 1, 1946, and the annual amount of pensions for veterans-invalids did not exceed 824 million krb. Although, from the point of view of a modern theory of social protection of people with disabilities, income support funding, medical and social services should be planned as a single package because, only in this case it is possible to prevent

health deterioration and provide invalids with an early in-time treatment and support for a long-term treatment (Macdonald & Morgan, 2021, p. 1125).

As a result, it should be noted that a sharp change in the Soviet leadership social protection policy on the Patriotic War invalids, which took place in September of 1946, was due to socio-economic reasons. Due to the drought, Ukraine did not fulfill the plan of grain procurement, and therefore could not increase funding of social protection, the amount of which was approved in March – August of 1946. Reducing the number of war invalids registered by social protection bodies not only helped save social security budgets, but also created conditions for saving bread in the Ukrainian Republic. And this fact could be reported in the Kremlin. Social protection of 171 361 veterans-invalids was transferred from the state to the society, to invalids' families and, finally, to invalids themselves. If we add to this figure another 21 000 veterans expelled from the list of invalids during the revision of 1945, it turns out that 192 361 veterans lost their disability group, or one in three Ukrainians injured during the German-Soviet war.

Based on these facts, we can determine the closest to reality the number of the Patriotic War invalids in the UkrSSR during the post-war period. Thus, some Ukrainian historians stated that every second war veteran out of 3,5 million veterans who returned home was an invalid (Kondratiuk, 2007, p. 196). But in this figure, obviously, it is not taken into account that disability must be determined aptly. As it was mentioned above, there were 616 400 veterans-invalids in Ukraine before “a thorough medical check up”. To this number there should be also added the Patriotic War invalids – soldiers and officers of the NKVD troops who were registered and got pensions in their department. In the summer of 1945 there were 12 000 invalids (CSAPAU, f. 1, d. 23, c. 1841, p. 126). Thus, in the middle of September of 1946, there were at least 628 400 Patriotic War invalids in the Ukrainian SSR.

The above mentioned fact raises some questions: What was “a thorough medical check up”? Perhaps, there were purely medical and scientific grounds for the mass deprivation of veterans of disability group and their transfer from disability Group II to Group III? These questions are answered by a fragment of V. Aber's speech, the director of the Central Institute for the Expertise of Invalids' Working Ability (CIEIWA), at the above-mentioned Republican meeting of social protection bodies in March of 1947: “This year we are striving for one important event, we want to create something in the form of diseases lists in different groups to determine disability and decide on employment prospects” (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 204, p. 188). In other words, it is said that the leading scientific institution for the examination of working ability only intended to elaborate clear guidelines for more than 900 MLECs of Ukraine on the correct determination of a disability group for veterans, while in the Ukrainian Republic there was already in a full swing “the fight against the inflated percentage in disability Group II” by means of “a thorough medical and labour expertise”. Thus, the so-called “thorough medical expertise” was a fiction. This term was used to cover up injustice towards veterans.

Disability Group II turned into a kind of “deficit” organized by the heads of social protection bodies. Group II certificate was often obtained by officials and the party nomenklatura, or “people of administrative and economic department”. The phenomenon was so widespread that in Dnipropetrovsk region it was decided to conduct a review in MLECs among the Patriotic War invalids who held leading posts. As a result, among 87 war invalids of Group II, 31 representatives of the nomenklatura had to be transferred to Group III, and among 167 invalids of Group III, 64 people were excluded from the list of disability Group. Among them there were those who obtained a disability certificate without having any injuries even (CSAHAU, f. 348, d. 3, c. 383, p. 47).

Another nuance is worth noting. The actions of the social protection bodies and MLECs aimed at establishing the “correct” ratio of disability groups among veterans-invalids in 1946 – 1948 became a sign of a political campaign. Like any political campaign initiated by the party, the campaign to combat the “inflated percentage of Group II invalids” was accompanied by storming events, an appropriate party and bureaucratic vocabulary, competition between social protection bodies, the announcement of “leaders” and “those who lag behind”.

However, this campaign took place during the end of 1946 and the beginning of 1947, not at the pace expected by the leaders of the Ukrainian SSR. We do not know the fact that anywhere in the USSR two members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (the Bolsheviks) were present at the Republican meeting of social protection body clerks at the same time. Such phenomenon took place in Soviet Ukraine. Two comrades of Stalin: Lazar Kahanovych, at that time – the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U and Mykyta Khrushchov – Chairman of the SNC of the UkrSSR – on March 24, 1947 were present at the Republican meeting of the Ministry for Social Security of the UkrSSR. The transcript of this meeting, which is stored in the archives, does not contain their speeches. However, knowing the peculiarities of the Soviet meeting, it is difficult to imagine that two well-known party leaders occupied the seats in the presidium and kept silent during the meeting. Apparently, the stenographic report was censored carefully, and their speeches were deleted from the text after the meeting. Perhaps, stenographers were instructed during the meeting. But even if we assume that Lazar Kahanovych and Mykyta Khrushchov did not say a word at the meeting, it is important for us to know what the meeting participants were concerned about in their presence. In the speakers’ speeches, in addition to the standard expression of calls to take care of employment, material support, treatment and recreation of the Patriotic War invalids, the main issue was one – reduction of the number of Group II war invalids by means of a “thorough medical and labour expertise” and their transfer to Group III. By their presence, Lazar Kahanovych and Mykyta Khrushchov “showed the sign” to intensify the campaign of “ousting” of Group II war invalids to Group III.

**The Conclusions.** Thus, the party-government leadership of the UkrSSR, verbally expressing concern for veterans-invalids, during the period of 1946 – 1950 initiated an action of mass reduction of the number of the Patriotic War invalids registered in the social protection bodies of the Ukrainian Republic. To do this, they used the mechanism of re-examination and review in MLECs using the so-called “a thorough medical and labour check up and expertise”. The basis of “a thorough medical and labour check up and expertise” was the manipulation with the category of “disability”. “A thorough medical check up and expertise” was used under pressure by social security officials also to reduce the amount of the disability group veterans in Group II and register them in Group III. All this was done in order to relieve the burden on the budget of the Ministry for Social Security and prevent its deficit against the background of a total regime of saving money and bread in the Ukrainian Republic, which “did not fulfill the plans of grain procurement” from the point of view of the Kremlin leadership. As a result, during the Third Famine, many Great Patriotic War invalids lost even the meager financial assistance provided by the Soviet state to veterans-invalids during the postwar period.

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