

WORLDVIEW PORTRAIT OF A UKRAINIAN REFUGEE

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Epigraph

I am Ukrainian. I wish to at least do something to help my country. This desire prompted me to write this article. Many people tell me: the main thing is that you are alive now, you are safe, you have food and a roof over your head. Rationally I agree with these statements and am grateful to the people who sheltered me and helped me in a crisis situation. However, having become a war military refugee in a foreign country, with a different language, culture, way of life, and mentality, we must evaluate what the future holds for a person who managed to escape and get the opportunity to settle stay, hopefully temporarily in another country.

Problem statement. To date, as a result of the full-scale military invasion by the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine, about four million Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes and move to other countries or at least become internally displaced. The humanity of the developed countries of the world in this crisis situation in relation to ordinary people is beyond doubt, since humanitarian, social, military, and other types of support have become the hallmark of each of these countries. Moreover, some countries have suffered significant financial losses due to the support of sanctions and the closure of businesses in Russia. However, most countries of the world took this step, realizing that doing business with a country that destroys civilians is too high a price for their own well-being.

On the one hand, it is absolutely clear that the financial support of Ukrainians and the placement of war refugees creates significant social burden for each of the countries that agreed to accept them. We greatly appreciate these sacrifices. On the other hand, the vast majority of war refugees from Ukraine are conscientious citizens who had the courage to cross the border and take a step into a different lifestyle. In addition to financial losses of social security, each of the countries hosting refugees was able to close the gaps in with mostly low wage jobs and select the best teachers and other specialists from among the new settlers for the needs of universities, hospitals, enterprises, etc. However, all of the above are external factors and benefits that both parties receive. Countries that have accepted war victims receive a human resource, and a refugee – the right to live and work. Another question remains open, and what happens to the inner world of a war refugee. We will try to find an approximate answer to this question.

Analysis of recent publications. One of the most complete sources concerning the rights of refugees is

the textbook by A. Svyashchuk «Problems of the rights of refugees and the challenges of our time»¹. In it, the author raises legal issues related to the protection of forced migrants and displaced persons who received such status as a result of armed conflicts, ATO, occupation, war, etc. Svyashchuk explores the general global problem of refugees, considers universal international agreements that protect the rights of these people in the EU and in Ukraine, analyzes the prospects for Ukraine's entry into the EU legislative field, and the improvement of its own norms on these issues. Similarly, the legal aspect of refugees is explored by V. Pavlova in the article «Refugees as a legal figure in the politics of Ukraine»². The author connects the legal status of refugees, status in international documents, methods of protection during political and armed conflicts. A. Pushkin and T. Chebykina in the publication «Guarantees for the protection of the rights and freedoms of refugees»³ analyze the theoretical and practical ambush of the legal regulation of the status of refugees and the protection of their rights. In order to develop an effective migration policy, G. Moskal studied «Problematic issues of protecting the rights of migrant workers and refugees»⁴. In addition, in 2021 the thesis "Administrative and legal status of refugees and persons in need of additional or temporary protection: theoretical and praxeological aspect" was defended⁵ under the authorship of V. Bosogo.

From the point of view of psychology, the problems of refugees, in particular children, were studied in the work of M. Markova «The impact of forced displacement on the psycho-emotional sphere of a person»⁶. In the work, the author relied on a large array of scientific data on the negative impact of forced displacement on the psycho-emotional state of a child. N. Palagin in her dissertation on the topic «Peculiarities of the social and psychological adaptation of forced migrants in

¹ Свящук А. Проблеми прав біженців та виклики сучасності : навч. посіб. Харків : ФОП Лисенко І. Б., 2018. 324 с.

² Павлова В. Біженці як правова фігура в сьогоденній політиці України. *Актуальні проблеми політики*. 2014. № 53. С. 218–224.

³ Пушкіна О., Чебікіна Т. Гарантії захисту прав і свобод біженців. *Актуальні проблеми вітчизняної юриспруденції*. 2016. № 5. С. 164–167.

⁴ Москаль Г. Проблемні питання захисту прав трудящих-мігрантів та біженців. *Журнал Верховної Ради України «Віче»*. 2013. № 21. С. 19–22.

⁵ Босий В. Адміністративно-правовий статус біженців та осіб, які потребують додаткового або тимчасового захисту: теоретичний та праксеологічний аспект. Київ, 2021. 419 с.

⁶ Маркова М., Піонтовська О., Соловйова А. Вплив вимушеного переміщення на психоемоційну сферу дитини. *Український вісник психоневрології*. 2017. Т. 25, № 4(93). С. 41–48.

overcoming a life crisis” notes that in the conditions of social and psychological adaptation of refugees, there are certain changes in the self-perception of a person who feels inferior, while such people take a defensive position. They show their activity quite chaotically, as a result of such changes the emotional background of the refugee is lowered, tense, irritable. Accordingly, adaptation is more difficult than in a voluntarily resettled person, which, according to the researcher, is due to the fact that one of the deepest layers of the personality is affected – identity⁷.

G. Soldatov emphasizes the crisis of refugee identity⁸, L. Shaigerova⁹. We agree with E. Mygashko and N. Tymoshenko, who note that «the life situation of refugees contributes to the fact that in this category of people the old, habitual forms of interaction with the environment are destroyed, the refugee has not only to form new values, beliefs, forms behaviors characteristic of the new environment, but also find the strength to abandon the former»¹⁰. Problems of social and psychological adaptation of refugees were studied by I. Leonova, analyzing the negative and positive factors of their impact on forced migrants¹¹. A valuable source for studying the psychological characteristics of refugees is a textbook by M. Slyusarevsky, O. Blinov "Psychology of Migration", where the authors consider the socio-psychological nature of such a phenomenon as migration, explore the behavior of such people, clarify the social identity of migrants, especially if this applies to forced migration¹². But in fact, there are no works that would explore and show the psychological state of refugees who were forced to leave Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian war directly from the lips of the author of the publication, and show his vision of prospects in another country.

Presentation of research material. For clarity, what is happening with the personality of a war refugee will be illustrated by the example of the properties

of solid bodies. Due to various types of interatomic bonds in solids and the action of various mechanical influences, some metallic materials can be deformed, destroyed, formed, processed, etc. In the same manner, different categories of war refugees may be distinguished. Some quickly adapt to new conditions, customs, and circumstances. Others are not able to withstand the avalanche of cardinal changes in life and are destroyed due to the sometimes too unstable circumstances. Some have the strength to survive the hostilities and return to the destroyed country (shape memory effect). However, war is usually a long and protracted process which has no regard for the inner life of an individual. Those who were forced to leave their country, as a rule, have a double feeling. On the one hand, you saved yourself and your children from possible death, and on the other hand, you have left to the mercy of fate those who are unable to leave the country for whatever reason. Therefore, the feeling that you are a conditional traitor to your homeland (a mental condition also known as «survivor syndrome») haunts the refugee, preventing her or him from fully concentrating on creating conditions for a new life.

The war destroys not only the nation, the country, it takes the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. It leads to the fact that a whole generation who manages to survive it, sees or participates in it, will have a warped or distorted worldview, which sometimes takes years to restore. Let's try to depict this process illustratively, and then comment in detail.

Destruction of the country. Before the war, when my family and I visited other countries for work or leisure, we realized that this was just a short visit and we would soon return to our homeland; it inspired our interest for travel abroad and stimulated the desire to see something new. The status of a war refugee, whose home and hometown is destroyed as a result of the war, as well as most of the sights and cities of your homeland are destroyed under rocket fire, leads to a loss of feelings of affection. We learned the history of our country as children at school, the biography of prominent people who built this country and fought for its independence, we knew it from childhood, we understand the mentality and habits of our people. They remain in our character and blood. Therefore, as an adult, understanding the meaning of famous personalities or outstanding historical events in another country to which you have resettled is a difficult task, and seems almost impossible. If before the war you believed in the prospect of improving life in the country where you were born, then after its daily destruction there is no prospect of living for high goals. A foreign country, a foreign history will always remain foreign, and even if children grow up in another country, parental memories of the place where they were born will leave an imprint on the worldview of refugee children.

⁷ Палагіна Н. Особенности социально-психологической адаптации вынужденных мигрантов в преодолении жизненного кризиса. Автореферат на соискание уч. ст. канд. психол. наук. Курск, 2007. 23 с.

⁸ Психологическая помощь мигрантам : травма, смена культуры, кризис идентичности / ред. Г. Солдатов. Москва : Смысл, 2002. 479 с.

⁹ Шайгерова Л. Психология идентичности личности в ситуации вынужденной миграции : дис. ... канд. психол. наук : 19.00.01. Москва, 2002. 218 с.

¹⁰ Тимошенко Н., Мигашко Є. Соціально-психологічні особливості біженців. *Проблеми та перспективи розвитку науки на початку третього тисячоліття у країнах Європи та Азії* : Матеріали X Міжнар. науково-практ. інтернет-конф., м. Переяслав-Хмельницький, 30 січ. 2015 р. Переяслав-Хмельницький, 2015. URL: <https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/5928/> (дата звернення: 05.04.2022).

¹¹ Леонова І. Теоретичний аналіз проблеми соціально-психологічної адаптації вимушених переселенців в Україні. *Актуальні проблеми соціології, психології, педагогіки*. 2015. № 4(29). С. 94–100. URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/229859203.pdf> (дата звернення: 06.04.2022).

¹² Слюсаревський М. Психологія міграції: навчальний посібник. Кіровоград: ТОВ «Імекс ЛТД», 2013. 244 с.

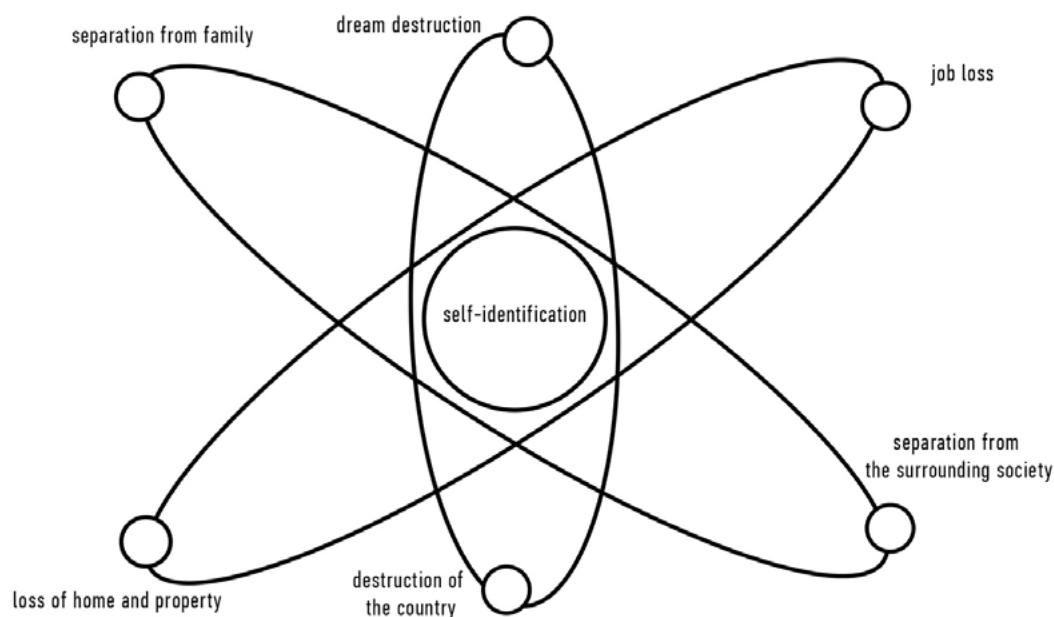


Figure 1. Social portrait of a citizen

Separation from family. A family is not just husband, wife, and children. There are the parents, grandparents, cousins, sisters/brothers and others who were part of your existence. Relatives visited you on your birthday, went on vacation together, supported you in difficult circumstances of life and, most importantly, could understand you in most situations, even those in which you are wrong. The war in Ukraine separated husbands and wives. Men remained to fight for the sovereignty and independence of their homeland, the children and women were often sent abroad. Saying goodbye to me at the border, my husband said: «So I will be calm knowing that you are alive and no one will rape you in front of me».

The war has been going on for more than a month. There is constant anxiety in my soul, whether one day a shell will fall on the building of my parents, who remained in the occupied territory. What if a rocket hits the house of my husband and his parents; a similar situation happened with a work colleague. They built a house for 40 years, and in one minute it burned to the ground having been hit directly by a rocket. Thank God that they are living, but the burnt hands of the husband's colleague will forever remind them of what happened. Children at the borders are crying for their dads; mothers courageously comforting them, hoping that everything will be over soon. But time passes; the situation does not change, children are forced to go to foreign-language schools and ask their parents to return to Ukraine soon, because there is not enough of a familiar, native circle, which provides the basis for the formation of a self-sufficient personality.

Loss of home and property. The house and property can be restored with intensive work in a few years.

However, one needs to consider the lost years and effort to build and equip a house in Ukraine. We had to work for about 10 years to have a house where we liked to spend time and live. Only in the apartment where we lived, I could we completely relax and unwind and isolate myself from the difficulties at work. Conventionally speaking, my house is my castle. But now, not having a home, not having my own room, all that we worked so hard for, I must convince myself that the main thing is that we are alive and not crippled, and that we will restore and make up for everything else. However, there will be no feeling of peace, even after you earn and restore, because the experience of losing everything in one moment will haunt you all your life. Very often I heard a phrase from my grandmother, who participated in World War II: «You don't know, child, what hunger is, if you knew, you would never throw away leftover food». This may be a phrase I will repeat to the younger generation.

Loss of Job and Educational Retraining. A different language, different working conditions, and often the inability to take a similar position leads to depression, especially for those who selflessly worked for the development of the company that gave them a job. The loss of one's business and the inability to find work abroad in accordance with one's profession may result in personal devastation. Before the war, I worked as Vice-Rector for Research and Associate Professor of the Department, but in the country that hosts me, it is much more difficult to find appropriate positions. Used to give me pleasure to teach students whose mentality I understand. In the educational sphere of Ukraine, I was like a fish in water. But abroad, you have to start all over again.

Loss of Spheres of Social and Cultural Communication. Friends, neighbors, and acquaintances are the socio-psychological foundation--little pebbles that are built into the daily life of the individual. The loss of the opportunity to talk to them on various topics, except for searching for answers to the question: «Are you still alive, because we heard that your city was bombed today?» Did you manage to hide in a bomb shelter? Do you have something to eat, or have you bought the medicine you need? etc. all of it causes sadness and depression. No matter how strong psychologically a refugee person is, she or he needs this simple, ordinary communication that relieves tension and gives the feeling that someone needs you. Cultural communication also includes religious life, and visiting a church in a foreign language exacerbates the feeling of uselessness and inspires the opinion that in these circumstances even God does not understand you.

Destruction of the Dream of Having a Child, Improving the Country and Living a Happy Life. Perhaps there is rarely a person who does not dream of living a happy life. Refugees are no exception. For example, before the war, there were plans to complete their advanced studies and have a baby next year. Now not only is the study incomplete; there is a forced separation from her husband. You suppress the thoughts of having a child. You say to yourself, thank God, that you didn't give birth this year, because running away with a baby in your arms from rocket fire is could be deadly for both therefore, I concluded that the destruction of a person's dreams is worse than losing a home or homeland. This is the loss of one's very core-- the goals of your life. It takes time to find and restore goals. A person's dreams are as individual as the person her/himself. Knocking the foundation out from under your feet is like taking away half of your life. The forced formation of new goals and dreams in a foreign country leads to the birth of an internal paradigm. The mind forms the goal of life under new conditions, and the heart constantly thinks about the situation in your native country because the heart always remains where you were born.

Destruction of Self-Identification (Self-Esteem), Who am I A forced war refugee, who did not plan to be that yesterday, from the first day of his or her stay in a foreign country, feels a decrease in self-esteem. This happens as a result of several factors. A new environment does not always understand your feelings. Finding a job that often does not meet your inner preferences. Individual restrictions in living conditions and adjusting to new rules weakens you. You begin to lose a sense of who you are and who you wanted to be, as self-identification is replaced by the following questions: what will I eat tomorrow, where to find a job, how long will the state financially support me, what can I do now for my relatives who remained in war conditions, will my

children get used to the new school, etc. A lot of these problems and questions take time getting used to. But while you are solving them, your inner self-identification is being hit from many sides. And not everyone and always does one have the opportunity to withstand these blows psychologically. In this context, the saying is appropriate: if you were born and feel like a microscope, then you will not be good at hammering nails. As a result of the above processes, there is a forced process of re-identification, a new search for oneself. For some war refugees, the process of personal re-identification will be successful, while others cannot withstand the pressure under the changed circumstances of life' they may have difficulties to complete the new process of self-identification.

Therefore, it makes no sense to write about the irrationality of the war and its consequences. Every educated person understands that lost lives, disfigured destinies, a badly destroyed nation will for a long time or never be the same as before the war. But the destruction is still happening; humanity has not yet fully grasped the scale of the losses. Two world wars, genocide, famine, rape of women, senseless death of men of all ages, etc. Moreover, as I write this article, I understand that soon the news about the war in Ukraine will replace other problems and questions. But war refugees, whose country, nation, home, and their world are destroyed, who are forced to look for themselves, will continue to support with the words: «The main thing is that you are alive and have a roof over your head. There are many options for what to do, if you want to help, come back to Ukraine». However, there is nowhere to return, because apart from the burnt land on the site of which your house once stood, only memories remain.

Conclusions

Therefore, today I appeal to the entire civilized world, both to politicians and to all people of good will, with a request not only to help refugees or solve other humanitarian issues (after all, this assistance is now tangible and Ukrainians are very grateful for this), but also to do everything in order to protect and preserve Ukraine as the country of every Ukrainian's dream, the country of their self-identification, their life and freedom. History shows that evil, when not stopped in time, will still need to be stopped later, but at the cost of much greater sacrifices for many countries, as for example the Second World War. Today, millions of refugees are a consequence of the completely unjustified, criminal Russian aggression from which the Ukrainian people are now suffering. Isn't it better to put an end to the cause (Putin's Russian aggression) than to constantly struggle with its consequences? If the World, in addition to its assistance, takes decisive steps to protect freedom and democracy in the center of Europe and comes to a victorious end for

the Ukrainian people, most everyone will benefit from this. For, like other European peoples, Ukrainians have the right to live on their own land and it is on it that

they can make their dreams come true. However, this is also a sad paradox: in order to protect some, you need to harm others, even if they are the guilty party.

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