

Education in Ukraine during Martial Law: Own vision – Review

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Abstract

Ukrainian society is going through a difficult time of testing by military aggression. The war, which began in 2014, took on a new scale in February 2022. The Ukrainian nation has begun to assert its own statehood, but its northern neighbor still cannot come to terms with the loss of its imperial possessions. A whirlwind of disaster has engulfed the entire country, forcing it to rebuild all spheres of economic, social, educational, and scientific life. The ongoing war has posed many new challenges and problems.

We can already predict what education will be like when Ukraine wins, what changes and innovations educational institutions should prepare for now, and how this sector may change in Ukraine. It is with the belief in Ukraine's inevitable victory over evil that the purpose of our manuscript is to analyze the impact of the war on the state of education in Ukraine.

Keywords: Children, Freedom, Education

Introduction

Ukraine, as a democratic state, began its development of sovereignty in 1991, when it declared independence. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia constantly tried to control Ukraine, as without Ukraine, global dominant politics would not exist. That is why, in 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and provoked the war in Donbas (Topusov et al, 2022).

In the early hours of Thursday, February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed his nation, announcing a “special military operation” against Ukraine. Vladimir Putin unleashed the biggest war in Europe since World War II with the justification that modern, democratic Ukraine was a constant threat and Russia could not feel "safe, develop and exist”.

There are almost 11,000 students enrolled in universities under quota 2; which means no available budget; that includes residents of temporarily occupied and dangerous territories. As of September 13, 2022, more than 131,000 students in occupied territories. At the beginning of the 2021/22



academic year, there were— 450 education institutions in Ukraine with 1,028,350 students. According to the report, in one year (compared to October 1, 2020), the number of students decreased by 3.5%, that is, by almost 37 thousand people. This is reported by [RBC-Ukraine](#) (Higher education in Ukraine, 2022)

Many students today have the experiencing living in a war. They know what is bombings, evacuation and the worst thing is the death of loved ones, the loss of their home. Some students arrived in Kyiv from the temporarily occupied territories. I am very worried about what will happen next. When will it end? Whether Putin will carry out his intentions and whether he will use nuclear weapons against Ukraine? Now the Russian army is being defeated at the front, and therefore the situation is very unpredictable.

At the end of August 2023, Serhiy Shkarlet explained that the format of each student's education will depend on where he/she lives. There are several "mixed" formats. Face-to-face and distance education are most often combined. The final decision on the format of the organization of the educational process in each school or region is made by regional military and administrations of educational institutions, depending on the situation.

Despite the martial law and active military operations, many Ukrainian school children have returned to full-time education on September 1. Today, schools are opening their doors (and bomb shelters) for students. Law enforcement officers told what things, in addition to mandatory stationery, schoolchildren should have with them when attending classes. What to bring to school: bottle of clean water; nutritional bars, snacks; a note from the parents, which indicates the child's full name, contact details of parents and close relatives (names, telephone numbers, addresses); phone (if possible) + charger + power bank; an individual set of necessary medicines (supply for several days); a set of changeable underwear and clothes; a favorite toy or thing (Lokshyna et al, 2022).

Since beginning of war, thousands of people have died, towns and cities such as Bucha, Irpin, Gostomel, Mariupol lie in ruins. According to UN forecasts, the total number of internally displaced residents in Ukraine may reach 6.7 million people, and the total number of refugees and displaced persons overseas may reach 10 million. About 500,000 Ukrainian children have arrived abroad since the beginning the war. 13 thousand Ukrainian teachers teach in Ukrainian schools from abroad.



Western military experts explain such large losses among the civilian population is due to the weak organization of the Russian army. Such analysis of the actions of the Russian Army leads to another point - large losses are not a consequence of Russia's military campaign, but its direct goal, which are aimed at the destruction of Ukrainians as an ethnic group and a political nation. For example, the famous Mariupol theater was hit by a guided aerial bomb, despite the fact that there are few of them were Russian. In front of everyone's eyes, the building of the Mariupol Drama Theater was destroyed and hundreds of people were trapped under the rubble. Probably, everyone also knows that on the perimeter of this theater there were large inscriptions in Russian "Children" specially for the pilots (Fig. 1).

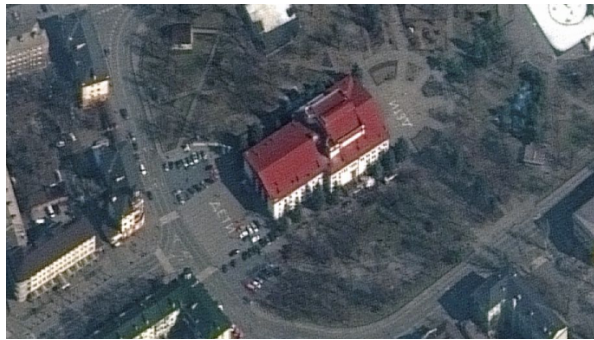


Figure 1. Near the drama theater in Mariupol, there was an inscription "Children" that could be seen from the Sky. Source: Ukrinform

In the period from February 24, 2022 to October 2, 2023, according to the official information of the juvenile prosecutors, 504 children died and more than 1127 wounded (<https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>).



Figure 2. Number of children dead, wounded, disappeared, deported or forcibly displaced, or sexual abused violence as a result of actions committed by the Russian Federation

Source: <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>



More than 2605 educational institutions are damaged due to bombing and shelling by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, 407 of them, were completely destroyed.

Creation of an “enemy” image of Ukraine. How it works?

In one of Moscow schools, students are shown a presentation about the "special peace keeping operation" called "Conversation about important".

Russian school teenagers are told about the "nationalists" in power in Ukraine, the "oppression of the Russian-speaking population", the nuclear threat from NATO and the "suffering of the people of Donbas".

However, main goal of the Russian war against Ukraine is the destruction of the state and national self-determination of Ukrainians, their assimilation and integration into the socio-cultural space of the "Russian world", the new imperial project of the quasi-USSR.

Assimilation. How it works?

Russian educational process begins in the occupied territories.

In the Russian Federation, much attention is given to the launch of schools in the occupied territories since they are the most critical infrastructural element in building the occupation "power" in the occupied territories, conducting campaigning, and implementing political initiatives. About 250 thousand school-age children are in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories.

According to the Minister of Education and Science Sergei Shkarlet, another 800,000 school children are currently abroad, where they can freely continue to study according to the Ukrainian program remotely or go to local schools (Melnyk, 2022). In Mariupol, temporarily occupied by Russian troops, Dmitry Sablin, deputy of the State Duma of Russia, came to school with a gun to first-graders, adviser to the mayor of Mariupol (<https://t.me/andriyshTime/2623>) Peter Andryushchenko said in Telegram. He also added that Russian invaders searched all the children at the entrance to the school. City occupied and destroyed by the Russian army, local schools did not start working at the beginning of the school year. There is only one surviving educational institution left in Mariupol. Schools are not open and all children are at home. Only eleventh grades are forced to come to class time and listen to “how to love a family,” he stressed.



In fact, the occupiers destroy Ukrainian textbooks, methodical guides, books on the history of Ukraine, books by Ukrainian writers, and make the Ukrainian language optional in schools. Even fairy tales and children's illustrated books, where there is almost no text, were destroyed. According to Andryushchenko, the Russians took away the remains of Ukrainian textbooks from all schools. They are transported by truck loads to Novoazovsk for recycling (https://24tv.ua/education/osvita-okupatsiyi-rosiyani-mariupoli-znishhuyut-zalishki-ukrayinskih_n2156635).

Ukraine claims that teaching under the Russian program is illegal in Ukraine Territory, teachers can be held liable and offers an alternative, distance learning in local schools under the Ukrainian agenda. "Since 2014, in Russia and its temporarily occupied territories, there has been a trend towards the militarization of education... Due to their age, children and adolescents cannot adequately assess the harmfulness of information and the future threats it carries. Therefore, the militarization of children is a cynical crime.

According to V. Zelensky, the occupying forces forcibly took 2 million Ukrainian citizens to Russia 250 000 are children. They are currently being deported to depressed regions of the aggressor country. Identity documents, mobile phones and personal belongings are taken from Ukrainians by the Russian Federation. Sometimes parents are separated from their children and the later are planned to be handed over to Russian families for illegal adoption. According to the Geneva Convention, Russia's actions against Ukrainian children fall under Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. According to it, the forcible transfer of children of the group to another group means genocide. This is dangerous because a child may lose their identity, connection with their parents, homeland and home country.

On the 1 September 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarked and answered to questions at a meeting with MGIMO students, teachers and professors on the start of the new academic year.

Myth #1.

Russia was provoked by NATO expansion which forced Russia to attack Ukraine. No one with common sense would want to attack Russia, a nuclear power. Simply because it does not make sense. Why would any country or a group of countries spend enormous resources to occupy 17 million square kilometers of Russian territory and risk eliminating life on Earth? In order to have



its natural resources? But buying those resources is much cheaper. European countries and the US have been long buying what they needed from Russia (hopefully they will soon stop). China may want back its historical lands in the far East of Russia? But it would regain these lands with economic and political power rather than a direct military attack (Russia has already given some islands to China).

Many Eastern European countries in the 1990s as well as Sweden and Finland today have joined NATO because they were threatened by Russia, not vice versa. Additionally, failing to permit NATO membership to Ukraine and Georgia in 2008 allowed Russia to attack Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Thus, if NATO countries have anything to blame for, it is closing their eyes to Russia's aggression and war crimes around the world and increasing their dependence on Russian energy.

Myth #2.

The propagandists' fresh thesis: "Ukraine can create nuclear weapons. Under the current government in this country, which is a direct threat to Russia." Ukrainian Nazis engaged in shelling to disrupt IAEA delegation's visit.

Hybridity of the crisis is characterized by the appearance of non-traditional types of weapons, aggressive propaganda, energy resources (a critical element of the country's energy system - the South Ukrainian Nuclear Power Plant, the largest in Europe). Since July 2022, Russian troops have set up a military base at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

The head of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Valery Zaluzhny, together with the first deputy head of the Defense Committee of the Rada M. Zabrodsky wrote an article "Prospects for the military campaign in 2023".

The war drew a line under the fairy tale about the fraternal Ukrainian and Russian peoples, about the possibility of their peaceful coexistence, exposed the hostile attitude against Ukraine (and the entire democratic community of Europe) of the Russian political "elite" and a powerfully zombified society. It left a negative (sometimes destructive) imprint on economic and cultural Ukrainian-Russian ties, dooming Ukraine to the feeling of a constant threat to its security from its northeastern neighbor for many years to come.



This is a huge problem that makes this war not only costly, very long, very bloody, totally destructive, but also makes it historic enmity between nations for centuries. In this article, we considered only a fraction of myths that Russia spreads or methods that it uses. However, in the end, the reality is very simple: Russia has started the largest war in Europe since World War II.

Lastly, below is address by President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyi:

Russia uses war crimes as a method of war. Russia is an aggressive state that uses terrorist methods and supports terrorism around the world. It should be officially recognized a terrorist state and treated accordingly. Russian Denazification in this case is pure Nazism, the destruction of the Ukraine as democratic nation.

This was exactly the case in the 1940s in Germany. They "denazified" the Jews. The Russians are doing it now. I am shocked. I didn't know that in today's world you can be allowed do such things. Freedom will always prevail.

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