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Letter to the Editor

Asylum: Psychiatric and Social Aspects

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The immigration process is a risk factor for psychiatric problems putatively due to stress, stigmatization, losses in social status, etc. [1] Factors related to the asylum process and immigration affect the psychological functioning of refugees [2]. It is not surprising that the incidence e.g. of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is enhanced among asylum seekers (AS) [3]. Frustrating and stressful experiences can lead to unhealthy coping strategies with alcohol drinking, smoking and drug abuse [4]. AS are at elevated risk for attempted or completed suicide [5]. The presence of co-morbid depression seems to enhance the effect of PTSD on suicidality [6]. Psychological problems are relatively frequent also among refugee children, although their extent tends to be reduced over time [7].

During the 20th century, millions of refugees found asylum in other countries. This agrees with the principles of humanity. However, new social aspects have come to the fore during the last decades. Along with true refugees, the AS population contains large numbers of economical migrants, asocial elements and criminals. The latter are sometimes dominating and bullying others. Furthermore, it is well known among AS that information provided to the authorities as reasons for the asylum is often invented. Apparently, truthfulness is not always checked. AS live in

the receiving county without work permit, which motivates many of them to work illegally, to engage in business with their ethnic communities, often without paying taxes, or commit crime e.g. shoplifting. Prisons in the West are comfortable compared to those in less developed countries, so that some AS are not against imprisonment for some time. AS loiter in public places, occupy libraries with a free internet access, some of them burrow in dustbins and then go to public places. In this way, the concept of asylum is discredited. In Russia, the procedure of application for asylum was reported to be associated with a difficult access, shortage of information, queues, unfriendly attitude, bribery, threats of expulsion etc. [8] Certainly, the problem cannot be viewed separately from the global overpopulation, ethnic and gender shifts [9]. Concentrating authority by a powerful international executive, based in the countries receiving the majority of AS, the globalised leadership could maintain human rights all over the world thus eliminating grounds to seek asylum. Large-scale projects could be accomplished by the globalised mankind: construction of irrigation facilities for drought-stricken lands; nuclear, solar, tidal and other power plants to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, etc. Furthermore, it is known that fraud in the healthcare and medical research can be conducive to an elevation of risks [10, 11]. Research should be purified from scientific misconduct, generally revitalized and better planned. These measures would create many jobs. Accordingly, the propaganda should popularize the image of modest and hardworking people.

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