

Greta Lynn Uehling. *Everyday War: The Conflict over Donbas, Ukraine.*

Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2023. vii, 192 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$31.95, paper.

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Focusing on the first years of what is now understood as a nine-year Russian war in Ukraine, anthropologist Greta Uehling turns her scholarly gaze on ordinary Ukrainian citizens, especially those displaced by the war. Revisiting the stories of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), including sixty-five individuals she interviewed for her book, and reflecting on her own ethnographic fieldwork in Ukraine during the three summers (2015–17), in this book Uehling explores multiple complexities and overlapping meanings of everyday living in proximity to the war, and within social spaces created by the war's fault and front lines. Engaging with the scholarly literature on war and peace, trauma and human agency, Uehling develops her own conceptual framework while examining IDPs' personal relationships and how these were affected and pursued across opposing ideological terrains set off by the war.

An anthropologist, the author here examines interpersonal dynamics within the tenets of friendship, family, and romance, as well as in local interactions, such as between veterans-turned-café-owners and their clients, or between volunteers as caregivers and those whom they care for, oftentimes across the frontline and life/death divide. On the one hand, we learn about friends on different sides of the political divide sharing tea, political enemies becoming friends, and volunteers from the government-controlled territories building relationships of trust with pro-Russian separatists in order to pursue their volunteer work, as in the case of the body retrieving team working in the separatist-controlled territories. Yet on the other, we read about siblings or parents and children withdrawing from communication with each other because they support opposite fighting sides of the war. Their stories represent the two ends of the complex specter of war experiences. Some of these experiences, the author states, contribute to what she called "everyday peace," while others are a part of "everyday war." Uehling examines the ethics of wartime care and showcases various acts and practices of everyday peace-making pursued against the background of a "larger" war.

Ethnographic monographs usually promise readers rich, or as anthropologists would say, "thick" descriptions of how cultures operate on the ground and in highly local settings, and Uehling's monograph is no exception. Her book is based on numerous ethnographic engagements of the author with her field and its people, her travels to communities once close to the frontlines, conversations with IDPs across Ukraine and importantly, on interviews she recorded with those who agreed to be interviewed on the record. Uehling effectively grounds her analysis of the above in the existing scholarly discourses and offers useful conceptual vocabulary to frame discussions of ordinary people's war experience. Both notions, everyday peace and everyday war, are useful theoretical lenses that the researcher borrows from the field of peace studies, especially because this approach reminds us that everyday peace cannot be scaled up or translated into the larger political peace for the entire nation and that thinking otherwise is irresponsible. The author also rightly observes and warns the reader that in order to understand what informs the actions and choices of individuals she observed in the field, they cannot easily be reduced to experiences of trauma. In other words, following Lauren Berlant, Uehling acknowledges that relying on trauma in order to "anchor discourse on a crisis-filled present is wrong" (113).

The book is relatively slim and appears to be written in the style of an ethnographic case study that can be adopted for the purposes of teaching. Consisting of nine chapters, it progresses from the discussion of the overall geopolitical context of the war in the Donbas to the discussion of how people intimately affected by the war interacted with friends, partners, lovers, family members, caregivers, and volunteers in a variety of settings across and beyond real and symbolic frontlines. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of what is going to be discussed and then ends with a summary of what the chapter was about. Subsequent chapters add an overview of what was covered in the previous chapter, and the book ends with a brief summary of what the author aimed to achieve with her project. This strategy, repetitive for a conventional book reader, is possibly helpful to readers wanting only to access select chapters online.

This ethnographic study is carefully and ethically narrated, with the identities of those who shared their personal stories with the researcher properly protected. Uehling's own narrative is nuanced, attentive, theoretically informed, and even poetic, though the topics addressed and discussed here are broad and diverse, making the book's overall argument perhaps less focused. In her discussion of the opposing views on the war shared with her by her informants, the author attempts to be balanced and representative as anthropologists ought to be when writing about other people's lives. Thus, throughout the book, describing the events in Donbas, the author carefully alternates between politically charged vocabulary, at times labelling the events as a war, and at other times as a conflict. Profiling the pro-Ukrainian moods or positionalities of her interlocutors, we read about their aspirations as being nationalist or patriotic. While some readers may find this terminology alternation odd, this care in narrative crafting is most likely rooted in the author's professional training, which dictates as close to emic representation of all positions encountered in the field as possible when translating their experiences to outside audiences. Written for external audiences, the book would have benefited from further detail on Ukraine's overall efforts (or lack of those) to support the IDPs in the early years of the war, on why the Ukrainian army needed so much volunteer assistance and other relevant details that would help readers to better contextualize the ethnographic material presented in the book.

An ethnographically rich intellectual exercise in making sense of the war's grey zones, this book is a welcome contribution to the study of the Russo-Ukrainian unfinished war. As it offers a solid conceptual framework and vocabulary to examine and analyze how the wars affect ordinary people, the book will be of interest to students and scholars of Ukraine, as well as those interested in learning more about the war's toll on Ukrainians.

Stefan Hedlund. *Ukraine, Russia, and the West: When Value Promotion Met Hard Power.*

London: Routledge, 2023. vii, 284 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$160.00, hard bound; \$44.95, paper.

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Stefan Hedlund's monograph sets an ambitious task of investigating how Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine "could arrive as such a shocking surprise" to the west (ix). Hedlund argues that in the preceding decades Russia and the west "had simply not been