Kasianov observes the similarities of Soviet and nationalist narratives, as well as their hero figures. One of his most biting comments is a comparison of Vladimir Lenin and Bandera: "Both were short and had physical defects. Both were intolerant not only of enemies but also of allies who deviated from their orthodox perspective (254)." For Kasianov, it was quite natural that the national or ethnocentric view of Ukraine's past took over quite smoothly from the Soviet version, and Decommunization imposed a new narrative just as ruthlessly as the Soviet authorities had imposed Marxism-Leninism earlier. Today both camps, in Kasianov's view, are "intolerant, vindictive, and aggressive" (396). He is similarly dismissive of the "manner of speech" of the "agents of historical politics," which he describes as "cringeworthy," a "language of slogans and screams," a discourse that opposes "critical thinking, reasoning, and analysis," "nauseatingly primitive" and it can "lead to so many absurdities that one cannot help but think about the banality of evil as well as the evil of banality" (397). The book criticizes the various Ukrainian governments for delving into historical politics, "The war over the past can easily become the ideological basis for a real war." On the other hand, his comment in his Conclusion that the concept of *Novorossiya* "quickly went extinct" (395) has already been overtaken by time.

The book is a thorough survey of the changing perspectives of historical politics from the 1990s and the manipulation of history as a discipline by Ukrainian state actors from the government, to the Institute of National Remembrance (particularly under the leadership of Volodymyr Viatrovych prior to 2019), and—not least—the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). It contains a bewildering—and impressive—amount of information and sound judgment. But it is also in some ways an angry cry from the wilderness: Ukraine's most widely respected historian, cut off from all servility and rational analysis by those he once worked alongside, his discipline sacrificed to the whims of political leaders and activists working for political goals.

Ed. David R. Marples. *The War in Ukraine's Donbas: Origins, Contexts, and the Future.*

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The War in Ukraine's Donbas seeks to examine the origins, contexts, and future of the conflict. However, the book was already outdated when it was published: it was somewhat strange to read that in 2022, "The Donbas war faces a deadlock. It is in Russia's interests to push Donbas back to Ukraine. Yet Putin cannot ignore the Donbas population's natural enmity created by Ukraine's massive shelling" (66). The ruins of Mariupol, Severodonetsk, and Bakhmut conquered by the Russian army in 2022–23 are the best illustration of what "massive shelling" really means. At the same time, Donetsk and Luhansk look pretty good and full of life despite this "suffering massive shelling" for eight years (2014–22).

The introductory chapter on the Donbas was contributed by William Risch, a well-known expert on the history of Lʹviv in western Ukraine in the late Soviet period. Lʹviv and Donetsk have always been on the opposite poles of the Ukrainian political and cultural spectrum.

Risch's approach to data collection in his chapter is quite remarkable. Through his friends in Donetsk, he distributed a questionnaire and asked the opinions of nine locals in mid-January 2014. At the same time, he did not use the public opinion survey of April 10–15, 2014. The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) conducted interviews among 3,232 residents of eight oblasts in southeastern Ukraine, carried by a leading Ukrainian weekly, *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* (https://zn.ua/internal/yugo-vostok-vetv-dreva-nashego-_.html). Instead of using this rich and relevant source, Risch reproduces rumors from a *livejournal* blog under the name "Pauluskp" (21–26). Risch focused his chapter on Donetsk only and did not compare it with other cities with pro-Russian rallies (Mykolaiv), the capture of administrative buildings (Kharkiv), the seizure of the SBU main office and its arms (Luhansk), or the bloody clashes in the spring of 2014 (Odesa). Events in these cities heavily influenced the mood and actions of the pro-Russian insurgents in Donetsk. Thus, Risch left the dynamic of pro-Russian insurgency unexplained. (This study was done by Oleksandr Melnyk, who contributed on the treatment of dead Ukrainian servicemen in the rebel controlled territories!)

Risch does not explain the changes in the position of the Donbas political elite in the winter-spring of 2014, either. Instead, he repeats the Russian narrative that "the Ukrainian state seemed to stop functioning," without supporting his point with an analysis of law enforcement actions in the Donbas. At the same time, he lists all the marginal pro-Russian groups in the Donbas. Risch makes the unfounded statement that Donetsk's elite supported decentralization or separation from Ukraine (16). The opposite is true. Throughout the history of post-Soviet Ukraine, Donetsk's elite has made well-organized efforts to take power in Kyiv and frequently succeeded in heading the national government (Yukhym Zviahilskyi, 1993–94; Viktor Yanukovych, 2002–04, 2006–07; and as president in 2010–14). This permanent race for power in Kyiv was crucial for the survival of the post-Soviet economic model of the Donbas and the prosperity of its elite. Unfortunately, Risch says nothing about the economic model established in the post-Soviet Donbas.

A quite interesting contribution has made by Alina Cherviatsova: "Hybrid War and Hybrid Law: Minsk Agreements in the Context of International Law and Ukrainian Legislation." Her chapter lacks comparative perspective, however, despite of the fact that Cherviatsova examines international law. At the very beginning of her chapter, Cherviatsova makes the doubtful statement: "A war as such is a challenge for international law" (29). However, the law of war is a component of international law that regulates the conditions for initiating war (*jus ad bellum*) and the conduct of hostilities (*jus in bello*). Laws of war define sovereignty and nationhood, states and territories, occupation, and other critical terms of law. Among other issues, modern laws of war address declarations of war, acceptance of surrender, treatment of prisoners of war, military necessity, distinction and proportionality, and the prohibition of certain weapons that may cause unnecessary suffering. Another disputable statement made by Cherviatsova is: "the Minsk Agreements that aimed to end the conflict in Ukraine's Donbas by providing a legal response are a type of hybrid law: the accords do not constitute a binding international treaty, and they are not a part of Ukrainian national legislation" (30). In recent history, there have been numerous instances of a state intervening in the civil wars of another state. Examining the Russo-Ukrainian conflict over the Donbas within a broad comparative context can help our understanding. If we will go beyond Europe to the Global South, we discover that in many ways, the war in the Donbas is not a unique phenomenon in the recent history of military conflicts. The lack of comparative perspective is rather typical for the majority of studies on the war in the Donbas. This is no surprise, because almost all authors are experts in eastern Europe. Since 1945, there has only been one war in Europe: the war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Accordingly, it would have been more productive to invite contributors researching more globally on warfare, violence, international law, and conflict resolution, in order to examine the war in Ukraine in comparison with conflicts in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Kimitaka Matsuzato compares the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) with the old de facto states that have emerged in the post-Soviet space in the 1990s and the role played by Vladislav

Surkov's political technologists. In the chapter based on his fieldwork in Donetsk in August 2017, Matsuzato examines the origins and early developments of the DPR from a grass-roots perspective, paying attention to pro-Russian activists and their rivalry after seizing power in Donetsk in summer 2014. Matsuzato does not explain why the Party of Regions failed so quickly in its main stronghold: Donetsk, while in the old de facto states the local elite managed to keep hold of power. Matsuzato also omitted the issue of what happened to economic assets—the key issue in post-Soviet politics—of the leadership of the Party of Regions.

Contributions by Oksana Mikheieva and Sergey Sukhankin are dedicated to the paramilitaries and/or proxy forces engaged from both sides of the war. Mikheieva examines a variety of factors that influenced the motivated pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian combatants. Sukhankin's chapter on Russian private military contractors appears particularly promising for further research in light of the Wagner Group engagement in the 2023 campaign and Evgenii Prigozhin's mutiny on June 24, 2023. These two excellent contributions (although Sukhankin's chapter is not well proofread and has many typos) illustrate the volume's lack of an examination of broader issues, such as the assigned military objectives of the Donbas campaign, whether or not they were accomplished, an operational level analysis, and a discussion of the balance between conventional forces and irregular warfare.

Alla Hurska examines the disputes between Ukraine and Russia over the Sea of Azov, focusing on its status and navigation rights. She demonstrates that after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia assumed de facto control over access to/from the Sea of Azov, thus essentially transforming the sea into an "internal lake." Hurska points out the geostrategic significance of the Azov Sea ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk, which secured virtually a quarter of Ukraine's maritime exports prior to 2014. She argues that Russia could economically strangle a sizable portion of southeast Ukraine and trigger additional instability there through illegal control over the Kerch Strait. The Russian invasion has aimed at total naval blockade of Ukraine, raised the issue of global food insecurity, and proved Hurska's point.

A good amount of the contributions examine the humanitarian dimension of the war in the Donbas. Nataliia Stepaniuk analyzes the establishment of volunteer networks and their engagement in the Donbas war. Her chapter relies on ninety-five interviews conducted in the spring-summer of 2015, as well as participant observation in Odesa, Kharkiv, and Dnipro. Stepaniuk argues that mushrooming volunteer initiatives were a reaction to limited statehood experienced by Ukrainian military personnel in areas where the state is not capable of protecting the social and legal rights of combatants. Ernest Gyidel studies internally displaced persons (IDPs) who left the Donbas and Crimea in 2014–15. The war in the Donbas has driven out up to two million people, a third of the region's population: 311,651 of them were registered in Russia by January 1, 2016, while 1,705,363 were registered in Ukraine by August 2016, including 20,600 persons from Crimea. Most of the IDPs settled in the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts under Ukrainian control. According to Gyidel, many of the IDPs have returned to the occupied areas of Donbas because of social difficulties they experienced in Ukraine. Gyidel argues that "the Ukrainian state has not anticipated the problem of IDPs . . . and in a sense still treats them as a second class citizens" (112). They receive insufficient financial aid that barely covers basic living expenses; they lack affordable housing and have no right to vote in local elections. According to Gyidel, the negative attitude towards Donbas IDPs is rooted in the negative stereotypes about that region instrumentalized by Ukrainian politicians since 2004. Gyidel argues that "Ukrainian society often has treated them [IDPs] with a mixture of hate, suspicion, and indifference" (121).

Oleksandr Melnyk examines the treatment of wartime casualties. His focus is on the volunteer initiative "Evacuation-200" authorized by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Search groups returned about 800 bodies of fallen Ukrainian servicemen and some civilians from the war zone and areas under insurgent control. The work of search groups made inevitable their members' conversation with insurgents and their local civilian supporters. Melnyk argues that shared commemorative cultures—common to residents of Donbas, Ukraine, and

Russia—"contributed to the preservation of areas of ethical consensus that have enabled limited cooperation" (126) between the fighting sides.

Serhiy Kudelia's chapter discusses four proposals for durable peace in the Donbas: territorial power-sharing, the conversion of rebels into legitimate political parties, amnesty for all participants in the armed conflict, and a transitional period of several years until political institutions are fully re-established. This very approach now looks misleading, however, reflecting the intermediary efforts of Germany and France. As Russia's invasion of February 24, 2022 reveals, resolution of the conflict was never a real goal, since Russia's only goal has been turning Ukraine into Russia's satellite.

As it is, the chapters do not agree with each other conceptually, for instance, on the definition of "hybrid warfare." Since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the term "hybrid warfare" has been emptied of meaning, due to its wide and inconsistent use by politicians, journalists, and self-declared experts. Instead of turning to the academic literature on the topic, some contributors to the volume follow clichés from the mass media. A reader can find discussion on the hybrid warfare definition where one would not expect it: in a chapter devoted to the Minsk agreements in the context of international law by Alina Cherviatsova. What she describes as "hybrid warfare" (29) is, actually, proxy war. Sergey Sukhankin, in his well-grounded analysis of the Russian/Soviet school of military theory, sees the "marks of 'hybridity' reflected in simultaneous application of military and non-military means, with clear priority allocated to the latter element" (186). The chapter devoted to the Sea of Azov by Alla Hurska provides the most detailed analysis of hybrid warfare since the times of Peloponnesian War in ancient Greece (431–404 BCE), (160–64). Thus, "hybrid warfare" is not something new invented by the evil genius of the Russian general staff: most of the wars in human history—probably except those staged by Hollywood—have features of "hybrid warfare."

The War in Ukraine's Donbas is a collection of case studies of different quality. Some of the contributions lack generalization and the volume as a whole leaves many blank spots in our understanding of the origins, context, and future of the conflict. The most serious problem is the lack of a comparative perspective, comparing elements of the Donbas war with conflicts in other parts of the world. Such a comparative approach has become absolutely necessary in light of the globalization of the Russo-Ukrainian war since February 2022, which has been considered by many experts and politicians as the end of the post-1945 world order and the beginning of a global disorder. Finally, it would have been helpful if the volume had contained at least one map and the text of the Minsk accords.

Frances Jackson. *Faith, Truth, Fidelity: Věrnost in Post-Munich Czech Poetry.*

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In this impressive, erudite, and elegantly written monograph, Frances Jackson analyzes Czech poetry from the period 1938–1942, that is, from the Munich Agreement through the