

Hence, Braithwaite keeps his promise: he puts the veterans, the *Afgantsy*, and their memories at the center of his work, leaving aside a political and economic analysis of the conflict. The book is an excellent, well-sourced English-language chronicle of the war in Afghanistan and most certainly a highly delectable read. It is an indispensable companion for any future work on the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

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E. S. Seniavskaia, *Istoriia voin Rossii XX veka v chelovecheskom izmerenii: problemy voenno-istoricheskoi antropologii i psikhologii. Kurs lektsii*. Moscow: RGGU, 2012. 332 pp.

This work reviewed here is a textbook for tertiary level students, and this genre naturally imposes its own specificities on the presentation of the material. We do not have the right to expect wide discussion or deep immersion in bibliographical sources here; students expect unambiguous definitions and clear disciplinary boundaries. But this book does provide a sound basic introduction to the author's concept of military-historical anthropology.

The author of this book, Elena Seniavskaia, is a renowned Russian historian, professor, and leading researcher at the Institute of Russian History in the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her areas of

expertise include 20th-century Russian military history, social history, the history of everyday life, historical psychology, military psychology, and military sociology. She positions herself as the founder and leader of the emerging field of military-historical anthropology and psychology. In addition, she is laureate of the Russian Federation State Prize for Young Scholars, awarded for outstanding achievement in the field of science and technology, and laureate of the Russia-wide media contest “Patriot of Russia 2008”. Finally, the author is well known in the Russian academic context for a series of scholarly works and textbooks on various themes, including 1941-45. *The Front Generation: An Historical-Psychological Study* (Moscow: IRI, RAN, 1995); *The Human Being at War: Historical-Psychological Essays* (Moscow: IRI RAN, 1997); *The Psychology of War in the 20th Century: The Historical Experience of Russia* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999); *Russia’s Adversaries in the Wars of the 20th Century: Evolution of the “Enemy Image” in the Consciousness of Army and Society* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006).

The structure and content of the book is set out in the form of eight lectures. The first chapter is devoted to military-historical anthropology as a new branch of historical inquiry. It covers the description of war as a social historical-psychological phenomenon; the author’s concept of military anthropology; and the historiography of military anthropology.

The second lecture examines issues surrounding the use of sources for military anthropology, via the example of the Great Patriotic War. Here the author unpacks the concept of the subjectivity of sources and its main forms; sources of private provenance; oral history materials; poetic folklore song; and also literary fiction and military prose.

The third lecture looks at the human being in the extreme conditions of war, as the key theme addressed by military anthropology. It explores such themes as war as a liminal situation; the heroic “breakthrough” and panic in war; combat psychology and soldiers’ fatalism; everyday life at the front; the time and space of war; and the existential experience of frontline soldiers.

The fourth lecture is devoted to “leaving war behind” as a socio-psychological problem for combatants. It covers topics such as

post-traumatic stress disorder, the “Afghan syndrome”, and the “lost generation” of Afghan war veterans.

The fifth lecture discusses the psychology and ideology of war; the image of war as a phenomenon of social consciousness; the typology of enemy images, and of the symbols and myths of war; religiosity and atheism at war; and soldiers’ superstitions.

The sixth lecture describes the Russian army in the wars of the 20th century. It discusses the specificities of the psychology of the rank-and-file soldiers and of commanders; their relations in combat situations; military-professional categories; and the relationships between different branches of the armed forces.

The seventh lecture is devoted to the military anthropological approaches to socio-demographic and gender issues. Topics covered here include the particularities of age-group structure and psychology, and the situation of women in times of war, from the pre-revolutionary setting through the Soviet epoch and the Afghan experience.

The concluding final lecture focuses on the topic of war in historical memory, from the theoretical-methodological aspect to the historical memory of the First and Second World Wars in Russia and in the West. The section ends with a discussion of the actualization of historical memory via jubilee dates.

Thus, in this textbook, which is a continuation of the author’s previous academic books, the author sets out a new direction in scholarship, that of military-historical anthropology as a “new interdisciplinary branch of scholarship, integrating the achievements, subject areas and research tools of military psychology, sociology, pedagogy, history, cultural studies, medicine, and other disciplines that study the human being in conditions of military activity” (Seniavskaia 2012: 9). According to the author, the fundamental novelty of this approach lies in its integrated systematic study of the human being in the context of military history (ibid.: 19).

The author’s approach is underpinned by three methodological sources: the *Annales* school of history; philosophical hermeneutics and existentialism; and the Russian historiography on military psychology and military history. The existing Western socio-histor-

ical fields of military anthropology, military ethnography, war studies, and so on¹ are not examined by the author beyond citing individual works in order to demonstrate the lack of developed works on the theme. The main corpus of academic materials referenced here date to the 1960s-80s, and no 21st-century works on the theme are cited. In this respect the author's claim to be pioneering a new discipline is unfounded; in fact, this area of studies has long been developing successfully in global scholarly space. There are numerous recent works that deal precisely with such themes as the human dimension of war, the life experience of the soldier or officer immersed both in the events of war and in his everyday experience, both in informal interaction with his fellow servicemen at the front, and in correspondence with loved ones at the home front. Contemporary military sociology and history has turned its face to "the little man" at war and his experiences,² and also, in the German context of the Second World War, to the double role of aggressor and victim. The classical question of how soldiers succeed in overcoming on an

¹ See for example the following works from the 2000s: Raymond C. Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origin of War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Keith F. Otterbein, *The Anthropology of War* (Chicago: Waveland Press, 2009); Mark Rose, *The Archaeology of War: Human Conflict since the Dawn of Civilization* (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2005); Alisse Waterston (ed.), *An Anthropology of War: Views from the Frontline* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Paul Richards (ed.), *No Peace No War: Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005); George R. Lucas Jr., *Anthropologists in Arms: The Ethics of Military Anthropology* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2009); Robert A. Rubinstein and Kerry Fosher (eds), *Practicing Military Anthropology: Beyond Expectations and Traditional Boundaries* (Bloomfield, CT: 2012); David H. Price, *Weaponizing Anthropology: Social Science in Service of the Militarized State* (Petrolia, CA: CounterPunch, 2011).

² See Jason Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front: Masculinity, Sexuality, and German Soldiers in the First World War* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: Protokolle vom Kämpfen, Töten und Sterben* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2011); David Funkel, *The Good Soldiers* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009); Jennifer Keene, *World War I: the American Soldier Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Nikolaus Buschmann and Horst Carl (eds), *Die Erfahrung des Krieges: Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Perspektiven von der Französischen Revolution bis zum zweiten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2001); and Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1998).

everyday basis the life-threatening situation of war,³ its risks and uncertainties, finds an answer in the description of the everyday dimension of war. This includes both specific work related to war, and also leisure activities aimed at taking a break from war. And like all work, war work has its own ethic. In the case of the war work ethic, its drive is to motivate, to justify, to reward with meaning. In this way, the discursive polarization of front and Motherland in a tense dynamic of convergence-divergence comprises the basic framework that lends meaning to war labor, that demands its intensity, and that legitimizes the sacrifices it entails.

The abovementioned hermetic nature of this study in turn has led here to self-limitation when it comes to the selection of methodological tools. The author's quest for the human dimension of war leads her to focus on personal documents in the form of letters to and from the front, so-called "frontline correspondence". A whole tradition has formed around the analysis of this particular genre of sources, yet the related literature is rarely cited here and the author does not take it into account in her analysis.⁴ If we turn to another

³ Tino Käßner and Antje Käßner, *Wofür wir kämpfen: Wie der Krieg in Afghanistan unser Leben veränderte* (München: Irisana, 2011); Birgit Schneider, *From Soldiers to Citizens: The Civil Reintegration of Demobilized Soldiers of the German Wehrmacht and the Imperial Japanese Army after Unconditional Surrender in 1945* (Washington: Washington State University, 2010); Tobias Pietz, *Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Soldiers in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina: An Assessment of External Assistance* (Hamburg: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, 2004); Benjamin Bieber, *Wie Kriege enden: Die Reintegration von Soldaten in Nachkriegsgesellschaften* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2002).

⁴ Examples of this literature include: G. I. Zlokazov, "Soldatskie pis'ma s fronta v kanun Oktiabria", *Svobodnaia mysl'*, no. 10 (1996): 37–46; N. A. Lokteva, "O chem rasskazyvaiut pis'ma s frontov Pervoi mirovoi (Po dokumantam Gosarkhiva Samarskoi oblasti)", *Ekho vekov*, no. 1 (2005): 31–35; B. I. Zhuchkov and V. A. Kondrat'ev, "Pis'ma sovetskikh liudei perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny kak istoricheskii istochnik", *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 4 (1961): 55–69; V. A. Somov, "Pis'ma uchastnikov Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg.", *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8 (2003): 131–35; L. N. Pushkarev, "Chelovek na voine (istochniki po izucheniiu mentaliteta frontovikov v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny)", *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (2000): 109–21; T. A. Bulygina, "Pis'ma s fronta kak istochnik istorii povsednevnosti v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny", in *Stavropol'e: Pravda voennykh let. Velikaia Otechestvennaia v dokumentakh i issledovaniakh* (Stavropol': 2005), 530–40; A. I. Balandin, "Sbor dokumental'nykh pamiatnikov Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny", in *Voprosy sobiraniia, ucheta,*

type of source—narrative interviews—we discover that the author is apparently unfamiliar with contemporary narrative sociology and narratology, even though these are actively used by Russian oral history scholars.⁵ Consequently, the author turns to a survey questionnaire drafted by Konstantin Simonov(!), and uses it as the foundation for her own empirical studies—evidently on the assumption that the nature of war in the perception of its participants is a static phenomenon that changes little over time.

The book's section on historical memory provides yet another example of the consequences of remaining outside the well-trodden paths of global historical-anthropological analysis. Again, the body of literature presented here is peculiarly distorted. Here the author introduces her own set of concepts: documentary memory, interpretive memory, narrative memory, and actualized memory of mass consciousness (Seniavskaia 2012: 252). The author writes as though the famous works by Jan and Aleida Assmann, Maurice Halbwachs, Geoffrey Hartman, Pierre Nora and many others had never been written. As though it were possible to imagine a “narrative memory” outside interpretation, mass consciousness outside internalized ideologemes, or historical perceptions of the past that do not contain already interpreted historical events.

Since the author broadly weaves psychological resources into the direction being developed here, obviously, she ought not to have passed by the studies in memory produced by Markowitsch, Tulving, and others;⁶ or the research of Russian scholar V. Nurkova,⁷ all of whom have argued on the basis of experimental data that the

khraneniia i ispol'zovaniia dokumental'nykh pamiatnikov istorii i kul'tury. Ch. 1 (Moscow: 1982), 126–57; “Frontovye pis'ma uchastnikov Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny kak istoricheskii istochnik tema dissertatsii i avtoreferata po VAK 07.00.99, kandidat istoricheskikh nauk Ivanov, Anton Yur'evich, Avtoreferat Dissertatsiia Artikel 373048 God: 2009.

⁵ We shall cite only names here: I. Trotsuk, V. Semenova, Ye. Yarskaia-Smirnova, Ye. Zdravomyslova, A. Temkina, Ye. Trubina, and others.

⁶ H. J. Markowitsch, “Die Erinnerung von Zeitzeugen aus der Sicht der Gedächtnisforschung”, *BIO. Zeitschrift fuer Biographieforschung und Oral History*, 1 (2000): 30–50; E. Tulving, “Episodic and Semantic Memory”, in *Organization of Memory*, eds. E. Tulving and W. Donaldson (New York: Academic Press, 1972), 381–402.

⁷ V. Nurkova, *Svershennoe prodolzhaetsia: Psikhologiia avtobiograficheskoi pamiati lichnosti* (Moscow: Izd-vo Universiteta RAO, 2000).

existence of non-pre-interpreted historical perceptions, narratives and memories of the past is impossible. Consequently, the understanding of historical memory proposed by the author seems rather disjointed.

Finally, there is one important figure of silence in this work, and it concerns precisely the topic that stands at the center of Seniavskaia's work: the war in the memory of Russians. Why does it remain so important for Russian collective identity? Why is it that state ideology continues to draw upon and renew this resource, despite the fact that veterans, as the social group carrying the experience of World War Two, are now passing away? An answer to this question has in part been given by sociologists. The issue lies in the so-called culture of war and in negative identity. Thus, the famous Russian sociologist, based on the experience of many years (1996-2003) of conducting representative public opinion surveys, Lev Gudkov, director of VTsIOM, concluded that the Great Patriotic War and Victory in that war represented the most important and positive event in contemporary Russian history, a conclusion that led him to propose his thesis on "war as culture".⁸ It is precisely the symbol of the war that forms the semantic field on which the major ideological conflicts are played out in contemporary Russia. The hyper-exploitation of the past Victory leads to the constant making-present of the war experience, to the unending search for new methods of commemoration, so as to further extend the life of this event, which remains the most important for Russians. Indeed, there is a sense in which we might read this very textbook, with its drive to lend a human dimension to a heavily institutionalized past event, as an example of precisely this kind of approach to historical time.

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⁸ L. Gudkov, "Pamiat" o voine i massovaia identichnost' rossiian", *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, nos 2-3 (40-41) (2005), <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/gu5.html> (accessed 7 July 2015).