

The end of February 2024 marks ten years since the beginning of the war in Ukraine—heralded by an (almost) non-violent annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and culminating in an all-out war launched by Russia in February 2022. During this period, the war, which brought about massive destruction of human lives, ecosystems, and infrastructure, as well as large-scale displacement, not only became part and parcel of the global agenda in politics, journalism, and academic research, but also turned into a crucial factor in cultural production and identity formation.

We approach the decade-long war in Ukraine as arguably the most salient case of resolving post-socialist (and also postcolonial/postimperial) disputes with military means. Here, we introduce the concept of “post-socialist wars,” understood as military conflicts in various areas belonging to the socialist camp before 1989-1991, from Yugoslav wars to armed tensions in the Caucasus, or, typologically, from warmongering and swiftly frozen conflicts to protracted genocidal wars. By putting the Ukrainian case in a broader comparative perspective, we aim to figure out: (i) what enabled armed conflicts in the post-socialist space as legitimate tools for achieving (geo)political goals; (ii) how warfare (co-)produced certain social and cultural practices that transformed implicated actors and polities; (iii) which social, cultural, and economic factors possibly prefigured the emergence and perpetuation of warfare; finally, (iv) how the post-socialist wars were framed—in warring countries and in third states; by victims and by aggressors—and how those framings, in turn, reshaped identities of the involved sides?

The conference is a collaborative effort between the Justus Liebig University Giessen and the Charles University in Prague. It is part of the joint project “UNDIPUS—(Un)Disciplined: Pluralizing Ukrainian Studies—Understanding the War in Ukraine” (2022-26), funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (subproject “After Masculinity: Female Perspectives on the War in Eastern Ukraine”).

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**Interdisciplinary conference
Re-Thinking Post-Socialist War(s):
Comparative Dimensions of the War in Ukraine
2014-2024**

**GCSC
(International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture)
Otto Behaghel Str. 12
35394 Giessen**

March 8-10, 2024



DAY 1 (8.3. 2024)

8:30 – 9:00 – registration

9:00 – 9:30 – opening remarks

9.30 – 12:30 Panel 1 CHALLENGES OF POSTSOCIALIST WARS

Chair: Vitaly Chernetsky (U of Kansas)

Monika Wingender (Giessen):

Language(s) and War in Ukraine: Problems, Challenges, and Perspectives in Dealing with the Soviet Legacy

Miranda Jakiša (Vienna):

University at War: The Impact of Conflict on Disciplines

Chair: Mark R. Beissinger (Princeton U)

Valeria Korablyova (Prague):

From Hope to Fear and Back: The Geopolitics of Emotion after 1989

Alessandro Achilli (Cagliari):

“We Respond to Our People”: Writers and the Nation in Ukraine since the Full-Scale Invasion and Beyond

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch at the Mensa (Otto Behaghel Str. 27, 35394 Giessen)

14.00 – 15.20 Panels 2A & 2B

2A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WAR(S)

Chair: Thomas Bohn (Justus Liebig U Giessen)

Semion Goldin (Jerusalem):

Russian Army and Jewish Population During WWI: Some Lessons for Ukraine

Aliaksei Bratachkin (Hagen):

The War in Ukraine and the Discursive Legacy of WWII Memory in Belarus: Radicalization of Changes?

2B. WAR IN CULTURE & MEMORY I

Chair: Matthias Schwartz (ZfL Berlin)

Tania Arcimovich (Giessen):

“War of Gardeners”, or, How Ukrainian Artists Discourse on Violence

Svitlana Pidoprygora (Basel):

Violence of War via Comics: The Perspective of the Ukrainian Comic Magazine *INKER*

15.20 – 15.40 – Coffee break

15.40 – 17.00 Panels 3A & 3B

3A. UNRAVELLING THE POST-COMMUNIST SPACE I

Chair: Monika Wingender (Justus Liebig U Giessen)

Ewa Wróblewska-Trochimiuk (Warsaw):

What Happened to *homo sovieticus*? Reshaping Ukrainian Society in Social Media

Vincent Bohlinger (Providence, Rhode Island):

A Critical Nostalgia for the Soviet Past in Post-Maidan Ukrainian Documentary

3B. WAR IN CULTURE & MEMORY II

Chair: Alessandro Achilli (U of Cagliari)

Valentyna Kharkhun (Nizhyn/Alexandria):

Warring Memory: Representing Russo-Ukrainian

War in Ukraine’s Museums

Iryna Tarku (Giessen):

Narrative Constructions of Memory and Identity in Donbas War Prose

17.00 – 17.30 – Coffee break

17.30 – 19.00 – KEYNOTE LECTURE

Marc R. Beissinger (Princeton):

Imperial Decline and Post-Socialist Wars: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine in Comparative Perspective

Moderation: Valeria Korablyova

19.30 – 22:00 – Dinner at “Die Kate” (Bismarckstr. 32, 35390 Giessen)

DAY 2 (9.3. 2024)

9.00 – 12.00 Panels 4A & 4B

4A. UNRAVELLING THE POST-COMMUNIST SPACE II

Chair: Valeria Korablyova (Charles U, Prague)

Isaac McKean Scarborough (Leiden):

The Ongoing (Violent) Collapse of the USSR

Aleksandar Životić (Belgrade):

Geopolitical Consequences of the Collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia: Similarities and Differences of the Wars in Yugoslavia and Ukraine

Péter Hevő (Budapest):

The End of the Visegrád Cooperation? The V4 and the War in Ukraine

Jochen Kleinschmidt (Dresden):

From Realpolitik to Surrealpolitik? Russia’s War in Ukraine and the Discursive Antinomies of the Berlin Republic

4B. WAR AND GENDER

Chair: Olga Plakhotnik (U of Greifswald)

Tamara Martsenyuk (Kyiv/Lüneburg):

Gender, Men, and Masculinities on Euromaidan Protests and War in Ukraine

Roman Dubasevych (Greifswald):

From *patsan* to Veteran: Masculinity and War in Ukraine

Beata Waligórska-Olejniczak (Poznań):

Turning Trauma into Art of Life: New Ukrainian Cinema in Time of War

Andreas Langenohl (Giessen):

Queering Warfare: LGBTQI+ Presences On and Off Military Scenes

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch at the Mensa (Otto Behaghel Str. 27, 35394 Giessen)

13.30 – 15.30 Panels 5A & 5B

5A. DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

Chair: Andreas Langenohl (Justus Liebig U Giessen)

Oksana Myshlovska (Bern):

Contesting the Post-February 2014

“Legitimate Political Order”: The Evolution of Contention and Conflict Escalation in Ukraine (February-April 2014)

Andrei Vazyanau (Vilnius):

Disintegration via Infrastructure: A Case of Public Transport Activists from Donetsk Region

Anna Ivanova (Giessen):

Destruction and Production of (Urban) Space in Wartime Kharkiv: Discourses, Practices, Objects

5B. CONTESTED REGIONS: POLISH-UKRAINIAN ENTANGLEMENTS

Chair: Dirk Uffelmann (Justus Liebig U Giessen)

Alina Strzempa (Regensburg):

Unravelling War and Peace in Contested Regions: A Comparison of Upper Silesia and the Donbas from a Literary Perspective

Alexander Chertenko (Giessen):

Voices from Periphery: Mapping Ukraine after 2014 in Polish Books of Interviews (Andrukhovych & Savchenko)

Matthias Schwartz (Berlin):

Kresy as a War Zone: Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian Borderlands in Popular TV Series from Poland

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.30 KEYNOTE LECTURE

Vitaly Chernetsky (Kansas City):

Comparatist Approaches to Ukrainian War Trauma and Its Cultural Challenges

Moderation: Alexander Chertenko

17.30 – 18.45 Dinner buffet

18.45 – 20.45 Film screening and discussion: 20 DAYS IN MARIUPOL

(directed by Mstyslav Chernov, UA 2023)

Moderation: Alexander Chertenko & Valeria Korablyova

21.00 – 23.00 Twilight get-together at “Bolero”

(Ostanlage 45, 35390 Giessen)

DAY 3 (10.3. 2024)

9:00 – 10:20 Panels 6A & 6B

6A. NON-EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Chair: Jochen Kleinschmidt (TU of Dresden)

Namita Kumari (Delhi):

Narratives about the Ukraine War in India: A Study of National Newspapers

Alexei Surin (Tel Aviv):

Narratives and Poetics of the War in Ukraine in Russian-Israeli Poetry

6B. WAR & TECHNOLOGY, WAR & MEDIA

Chair: Andrei Vazyanau (European Humanities University, Vilnius)

Roman Horbyk (Basel):

From Participative Warfare to Participatory Attrition: Technology and the Russo-Ukrainian War

Oleksandr Zabirko (Regensburg):

Microraiion as Battleground: Post-Socialist Landscapes in Video Game Warfare

10.20 – 10.40 Coffee break

10.40 – 12.00 Panels 7A & 7B

7A. POST-WAR TEMPORALITIES I

Chair: Tatjana Petzer (U of Graz)

Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl (Graz):

Imagining Generations in Times of War

Mariya Donska (Graz):

“Koly vse tse skinchyt’sia”: Post-War Futures in Contemporary Ukrainian Poetry

7B. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND WAR I

Chair: Dmitry Dubrovsky (Charles U, Prague)

Irina Rebrova (Berlin):

The Future of the Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Russia

Alexander Cherkasov (Prague):

The Chain of Wars, the Chain of Crimes, the Chain of Impunity: Russian Wars in Chechnya, Syria, and Ukraine

12.00 – 13.40 Lunch at „Rosmarin“ (Alter Steinbacher Weg 25, 35394 Giessen)

13.40 – 15.00. Panels 8A & 8B

8A. POST-WAR TEMPORALITIES II

Chair: Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl (U of Graz)

Iryna Orlova (Graz):

Temporalities of Displacement

Tatjana Petzer (Graz):

Transforming the Post-War(s) Environment

8B. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND WAR II

Chair: Peter Haslinger (Herder Institute Marburg / Justus Liebig U Giessen)

Dmitry Dubrovsky (Prague):

The Notion of the “Genocide of the Soviet People” in Putin’s Propaganda

Martin Laryś (Prague):

Between Liberation and Genocide: Current Discourse on Ukrainians in Russia

15.00 – 15.15 Coffee break

15.15 – 16.15 Final discussion