

In the wake of Russia's full-scale aggression, the war in Ukraine has become a regular topic of academic discourse. However, the high hopes for rethinking, decentering, diversifying, and opening up various previously hermetic disciplinary fields that were prevalent in 2022–2023 have not resulted in deep, far-reaching change. One reason for this is the “ban on comparisons,” which isolates the Ukrainian case from comparable cases in the post-socialist space and thus largely prevents productive transgressions of disciplinary and area studies borders. Along with the mythological rather than concrete historical, economic, and cultural view of Ukraine's heroic resistance, this hinders our understanding of the war's structural premises, driving forces, and traumas, as well as our search for possible peace perspectives and the conflict's bifurcation points.

This comparative stance lies at the core of the kick-off workshop, which marks the official start of the nascent research network, WARP (War and Peace in Post-Socialist Space). WARP builds on the joint project “(Un)Disciplined—Pluralizing Ukrainian Studies, Understanding the War in Ukraine” (UNDIPUS) also funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, and will be consolidated during a one-year transfer phase (2026–2027).

What theoretical and thematic links exist between the various disciplines and area studies that deal with different armed conflicts after socialism? In what ways are post-socialist wars-influenced by post-socialist transformation? Are there any *longue durée* structures underlying the different types of post-socialist armed conflicts (e.g., secession and proxy wars vs. full-scale aggression) and their social, economic, and cultural effects, and how are these types comparable? How do culture and public discourse contribute to warmongering or, conversely, to reconciling conflicting parties in different post-socialist countries? How does the reception of “others” wars influence one's “own” internal cleavages and identity politics within the entangled post-socialist space? By addressing these and other related questions, the workshop aims to move beyond the solipsistic focus of area studies on “their” wars. Instead, the goal is to create a broad, heterogeneous, and differentiated panoramic picture that prioritizes interconnections and dynamic relationships over isolation and uniqueness claims, thus presenting post-socialist Eastern Europe as a polycentric yet coherent whole.

The workshop is a collaboration between the WARP research network and the ZfL.

Organizers:

Dr. Alexander Chertenko (JLU)

oleksandr.chertenko@slavistik.uni-giessen.de

Dr. Matthias Schwartz (ZfL)

schwartz@zfl-berlin.org

Kick-Off Workshop

AFFECTS & EFFECTS:
COMPARING
POST-SOCIALIST WARS

Leibniz-Zentrum für
Literatur- und
Kulturforschung (ZfL)
Ilse-Zimmermann-Saal
Pariser Str. 1, 10719 Berlin

May 8–9, 2026

With funding from the:



DAY 1 / May 8, 2026

8.30 – 9.00 Registration

9.00 – 9.30 Opening Remarks

9.30 – 11.15 Panel 1: **Post-Socialist Geopolitics**

Chair: [Maria Mayerchyk](#) (Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences)

[Tatyana Malyarenko](#) (Mechnikov University of Odesa): **From Identity to Geopolitics: Two Generations of Post-Soviet Conflicts**

[Alexandr Osipian](#) (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, Leipzig): **Buffer States and Movable Borderland: The Russia-Ukraine War in Comparative Perspective**

[Alexander Dmitriev](#) (Charles University, Prague): **The Shift Toward “Repeating”: Exploiting the “Great Victory” in Russian Post-Soviet Historiography**

11.15 – 11.45 Coffee Break

11.45 – 13.30 Panel 2: **Post-Socialist Wars’ Geopoetics**

Chair: [Matthias Schwartz](#) (ZfL)

[Clemens Günther](#) (Freie Universität Berlin): **Defamiliarizing War: Perspectives on Tajikistan’s Civil War**

[Ilya Kukulín](#) (Princeton University): **Who Speaks against State Violence? Literary Genres and Moral Agency in Russophone Literatures during and after the Chechen Wars**

[Oleksandr Zaborko](#) (University of Regensburg): **Modeling Post-Socialist War: Scenario, Survival, and Comparison in Contemporary Video Games**

13.30 – 16.00 Lunch at Namaste (Pariser Str. 56, 10719 Berlin)

16.00 – 17.15 Panel 3: **Memory of/as Trauma**

Chair: [Tamara Hundorova](#) (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)

[Ewa Wróblewska-Trochimiuk](#) (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw): **Between Rambo and Homo Sacer: Visual Representations of War Veterans in Croatia, Serbia, and Ukraine**

[Anna Ivanova](#) (Justus Liebig University Giessen / International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture): **Mobilizing for War or Enabling Peace? The Potential of Ukrainian Wartime Memory Politics**

17.15 – 17.45 Coffee Break

17.45 – 19.00 Panel 4: **Conceptualizing Others’ Conflicts**

Chair: [Nina Weller](#) (ZfL)

[Manuel Ghilarducci](#) (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) / [Natallia Pazniak](#) (Justus Liebig University Giessen / International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture): **Becoming Ukrainian? Accounts of Russia’s Full-Scale Aggression in Belarusian Poetry from Ukraine**

[Alessandro Achilli](#) (University of Cagliari): **Understanding Belarus and the 2020 Belarusian Protests in Ukrainian Culture Before and After Russia’s Full-Scale Invasion**

After 19.30 Dinner at Schöneberger Weltlaterne (Motzstr. 61, 10777 Berlin)

DAY 2 / May 9, 2026

10.00 – 11.45 Panel 5 **Continuity of Wars**

Chair: [Ilya Kukulín](#) (Princeton University)

[Danijela Lugarić Vukas](#) (University of Zagreb): **Affects without Closure: Documentary Literature and the Temporal Effects of the (Post-)Yugoslav Wars**

[Kseniya Robbe](#) (University of Groningen): **The Slow Violence of (In)Dependence: Remembering the Abkhazian War and the 1990s in Contemporary Literature and Film**

[Ivane Mchedeladze](#) (University of Tbilisi): **Memory and Postmemory of War in Georgian Literature of the Post-Soviet Time**

11.45 – 13.15 Lunch at FEAST Berlin (Meierottostr. 1, 10719 Berlin)

13.15 – 14.30 Panel 6 **Violence and the Post-Socialist Condition**

Chair: [Dina Berdichevsky](#) (ZfL)

[Alexander Chertenko](#) (Justus Liebig University Giessen): **Pregnant with War: Constructing Post-Soviet Space in Political Comics Before and After 2014**

[Roman Dubasevych](#) (University of Greifswald): **“For some reasons, all boys look for trouble”: Post-Socialist Masculinity and the Transmission of War in *Luxembourg, Luxembourg* (2022) by Antonio Lukich**

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee Break

15.00 – 16.45 Panel 7 **Solidarity and Disparity**

Chair: [Olga Plakhotnik](#) (University of Greifswald)

[Anna Osypchuk](#) (Kyiv-Mohyla Academy): **Social Cohesion and Demand for Justice in Post-Socialist (Post-)Conflict Societies: Notes from Ukraine**

[Vera Skvirskaja](#) (University of Copenhagen): **Affects and Effects: Collaboration with the Enemy in (Post-)Soviet Perspective**

[Oksana Myshlovska](#) (University of Bern): **Vilification and the Limits of Negotiated Peace: Linguistic Delegitimization and the Proscription Regimes during the Early Period of the Donbas War**

16.45 – 17.15 Coffee Break

17.15 – 18.45 Final Discussion: **Quo vadis?**

Moderators: [Alexander Chertenko](#) & [Matthias Schwartz](#)

After 19.00 Dinner at Saperavi (Uhlandstr. 171-172, 10719 Berlin)