

Economic Changes Through War and Conflict

Call for Papers: Annual Workshop in Economic History and Ideas
25 May 2026, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Funding Deadline: 25 January 2026 – Proposal Deadline: 28 February 2026

Over the past years, war has forcefully returned to the Global North as a political and historical force. The 2020s mark the decline of the longstanding end-of-history belief in the spread of democratic peace and the steady peripheralization of war. As war reenters the everyday lives of Western liberal democracies, a shattered pretense of global peace gives way to diverse conversations about how armed conflict shapes the dynamics of the economy. Military and defense spending has been growing globally since 2022 and is only set to increase over the coming years. Waging and preparing for war fundamentally transform economic life, from energy crises and disrupted supply chains to new public spending regimes, infrastructure expansions and an ever-evolving military-industrial complex.

This year, the Economic History and Ideas Working Group's Workshop aims to unpack this impact in various historical contexts, digging deep into the consequences of conflict from the early modern to the contemporary period. Whether it is Randolph Bourne's assertion of "war as the health of the state" or Antonio Gramsci's famous characterization as "interregnum of morbid symptoms", war has long been recognized as a combination of destructive and creative processes that fundamentally alter socio-economic life. From a historical perspective, the economic footprint of war has always created significant change within affected societies across realms such as labor, budget, finance, gender dynamics, and many others.

We invite papers that deal with historical research on the broad topic of how war and conflict shape or interact with socio-economic systems. A non-exhaustive list of potential topics includes:

- *Material transformations of war* (public resources, changing state-economy relations, property regimes, production and (de)mobilization, markets and informal economies, labor management and forced labor, financial systems)
- *War's socio-economic changes* (changing gender roles, households and family structures, racial and class distinctions, economics of the public sphere, space, and displacement)
- *Economics of wartime culture* (Information and technology diffusion, material dimensions of education, mobilization, religion, and everyday culture)
- *Intellectual history* (history of wartime economic thought on topics including finance, trade, production, logistics; changing fora and norms of economic knowledge production, revolutionary thought)
- *War's environmental economics* (impacts on soils, resource extraction, pollution)

How to Apply

We particularly encourage applications from members of underrepresented groups, regions, and institutions, as well as scholars who have yet to present their work at a conference. Participants will be asked to share a short paper (2,000-3,000 words) in advance of the workshop and deliver a 15-minute in-person presentation. To apply to the workshop, please send an **abstract of up to 500 words** and a **one-page CV** by email to EconomicHistoryWG@eui.eu. Full abstracts for all applications are due by **28 February**. If you do not have access to institutional support and would like to be considered for travel funding, please send an additional short note with the prospective title of your presentation, institutional affiliation (if applicable), and origin of travel by **25 January**.

About the Workshop

The workshop is the second annual meeting organized by the Working Group “Economic History and Ideas” at the European University Institute. You can learn more about our work on our [website](#) and subscribe to our [newsletter](#) for the latest updates on upcoming events.

