



Lecture on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018, 14:15 to 15:45

University of Potsdam, Campus Am Neuen Palais, Building 12, Room 1.12.0.39

## **Violence, War and Peace in the Middle East (20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries): Long Shadows of the Great War**

**by Professor Hans-Lukas Kieser (University of Newcastle, Australia)**

Comprising the core lands of the late Ottoman Empire, today's Middle East is a unique hotspot of war and conflict with global repercussions. This lecture proceeds from the last Ottoman decade to shed light on the historical path from then to present Turkey and its neighbours. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) is the long-lasting still valid "Peace" that closed that cataclysmic decade, however without leading the region to peace and stability. From its very nature, it set the course for further ethno-religious conflicts in and around the new Republic ruled by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). Though progressive in Civil Law, Kemalism was not – as many assumed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – a secular constitutionalism, but the nationalist doctrine of a unitary state and leader-centred civil religion that (temporarily) replaced political Islam. Violent conflicts persist, this lecture contends, where comprehensive social contracts fail to be negotiated and implemented. Also, it argues that attaining such contracts is a unique challenge in a historical geography where the claims of all revealed monotheisms meet, global forces clash and religious mobilisation pays off. Yet, the pragmatics of life call for a decent, well negotiated coexistence beyond entrenched hierarchies and claims of supremacy.



*Hans-Lukas Kieser is a historian and Australian Research Council Future Fellow with the University of Newcastle's Centre for the History of Violence, his research focuses on the demise of the Ottoman Empire, marked by the First World War. Kieser's work is essential to a better understanding of the present day conflicts in the Middle East – which he believes are directly related to unresolved questions of the past. He recently published "Talaat Pasha. Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide" (Princeton University Press, 2018).*

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