Robert Gerwarth: *1918 and the End of Empires*. When the First World War formally ended in November 1918, Europe’s maps were re-drawn more radically than at any time in modern history. Centuries-old empires vanished from the map and were replaced by new states, most of which had not previously existed as independent states. This was perhaps a little surprising given that World War I was primarily a war of empires, fought for the survival or extension of empires, rather than simply a war among nation-states. It was also part of a continuous cycle of violence. It began with the Italian invasion of Tripolitania in 1911 and did not abate until 1923, when the Treaty of Lausanne defined the territory of the new Turkish Republic and ended Greek territorial ambitions in Asia Minor with the largest forced population exchange in history until then. The impact of the war was felt by hundreds of millions living across the imperial world, as it brought conscription, occupation, inflation, and economic dislocation, while also in many instances kindling new opportunities, ideas, plans, and hopes. The paper will explore these and also point to some of the war’s most explosive legacies, some of which are still with us today.


Annette Becker: Between 1914 and 1918, for the first time in history, the whole world waged war – a war that devoured men, resources and energy; that split loyalties, reignited old fervors and generated new horrors. The world would come to mourn the deaths of ten million combatants, probably two to four million civilians and the loss of an innocence never to be regained. For all those who explore the fronts, military, domestic, of occupation, of prisoners, of hospitals, the “sacred traces” of the Great War are always infinite. The paper examines the difficult interaction between war, occupations, mass extermination, death, in 1918 and after: mourning, memory, impossible peace to regain, refugees, sense of sacrifice, pacifism, and how they contributed – if at all – to the making of a global European identity.

*Annette Becker* is Professor of Contemporary History at Paris – Ouest Nanterre La Défense and a senior member of the Institut Universitaire de France. She has written extensively on the two World Wars with an emphasis on military occupations and genocidal policies. She has also devoted research to humanitarian politics, trauma and memories, particularly among intellectuals and artists, including Maurice Halbwachs, Marc Bloch and Guillaume Apollinaire. Among her works are: *Les Messagers du désastre* (2018); *La Grande Guerre d’Apollinaire. Un poète combattant* (2015); *Voir la Grande Guerre. Un autre récit, 1914–2014* [with Pierre Bergounioux] (2014); *Le génocide des Arméniens. Un siècle de recherche (1915–2015)* (2015); *Maurice Halbwachs. Un intellectuel en guerres mondiales, 1914–1945* [with Pierre Nora] (2003).
Before taking office as President of Iceland in 2016, he was Professor of History at the University of Iceland. His field of specialization is modern Icelandic history, with emphasis on the Anglo-Icelandic Cod Wars, the Icelandic Presidency, the Cold War and the 2008 Financial Crisis.

Anna Agnarsdóttir is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Iceland. Her main research interests are European and Icelandic history 1500–1830, including relations between Iceland and the wider world (in particular, Britain and France), and the history of trade and exploration.

Guðmundur Hálfdanarson: *Insanity or Natural Right: Changing Attitudes to Icelandic Sovereignty during the Great War.* In 1906, the Danish intellectual Georg Brandes wrote two scathing articles in the Danish newspaper *Politiken*, mocking Iceland’s requests for increased autonomy. It was total insanity for a miniscule and poor nation to dream of independence, he contended, and most of his contemporaries agreed. At the end of the Great War, things had changed, as the Danish government readily accepted Iceland’s demands for sovereignty as the nation’s natural right. The lecture will discuss the reasons for this change in attitudes in just over a decade.

Guðmundur Hálfdanarson is the Jón Sigurðsson Professor of History and the Dean of the School of Humanities at the University of Iceland. He is the author of a number of works on political, cultural and social history, with emphasis on nationalism, the nation-state, sovereignty, and the Icelandic independence struggle.

Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir: *Democratic Citizenship after the First World War.* Historians have pinpointed the First World War as an important turning point in the development of democratic citizenship. Thus, by the 1920s, legislators in many countries had taken decisive steps towards extending citizenship to women. In New Zealand, Australia, all five Nordic countries, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, in many countries of the former Russian Empire, as well as in Southern Rhodesia and Kenya, women had been granted the right to vote for parliamentary elections. Yet, this dramatic extension of the suffrage did not mean that it had become universal. Several voting restrictions remained intact, based on age, economic standing, ethnicity, education and participation in the war effort. Looking at these voting restrictions, the paper explores the way in which different states decided who should, and should not, be admitted into the electorate.

Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir is Associate Professor of History at the University of Iceland and country editor of the *Scandinavian Journal of History*. She has published works on nationalism, democracy and the politics of the Left. She is currently working on a book on women and gender in twentieth-century Iceland. Since January 2017, she is directing, together with Assistant Professor Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir, the research project “In the Wake of Suffrage. Icelandic Women as Cultural and Political Agents, 1915–2015,” funded by the Icelandic Research Council.

Valur Ingimundarson: *Contested Legacies of 2018: The Politics of Secession and Statehood since the Great War.* The lecture discusses how secession cases evolved from geopolitical and legal perspectives since the end of the First World War. The focus is on attempts to confer legitimacy to political divorce proceedings, which, in many cases, are contested. Apart from state sovereignty rights, attention will also be given to self-determination rights; historical territorial claims; the nature of armed conflicts; the interests of Great Powers or supranational alliances; government practices within states; and the relationship between majority and minority populations. Finally, the conditions for a successful political breakaway will be explored.

Valur Ingimundarson is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Iceland. He has written scholarly works on international history and geopolitics with emphasis on the following themes: U.S.-Icelandic relations and Icelandic foreign, security, and Arctic policies; U.S.-European/German relations during and after the Cold War; Arctic geopolitics and governance; transnational politics of memory and justice in Europe; and post-war politics in the former Yugoslavia.
**Ragnhildur Helgadóttir: The Concept of Sovereignty in Icelandic Law.** The concept of “sovereignty” entered Icelandic discourse and politics in the first decade of the 20th century and became more clearly defined in the years leading up to 1918. Since then, it has often been a key factor in Icelandic politics, most recently regarding European cooperation. The presentation explores the development of this concept in Icelandic law in the first two decades of the 20th century and the influence that the political discussion at that time may still have in Icelandic law.

*Ragnhildur Helgadóttir* is Professor of Law and Dean at Reykjavik University. She has published widely on constitutional law, including from comparative and historical perspectives; human rights; and administrative and social security law.

**Gunnar Þór Bjarnason: In the Wake of War: Iceland's Sovereignty 1918**

The Great War had both economic and political effects on Iceland. It loosened the bonds that tied the country to Denmark and forced the government in Reykjavík to intervene in foreign trade and make trade agreements with other countries, notably the United Kingdom. In 1918, it resulted in an accord between the governments in Copenhagen and Reykjavík that recognized Iceland as a sovereign state. The presentation will focus on how this came about.

*Gunnar Þór Bjarnason* is a historian with a long teaching career. He has written books on the withdrawal of the American defense force from Iceland in 2006 and the Icelandic national movement in the early 20th century. In 2016 his book on Iceland and the World War I won the Icelandic Literary Award for non-fiction books.

**Sveinn M. Jóhannesson: The Health of the State? The First World War and American State Formation.** One of the most important legacies of the First World War for the United States lies in the realm of state formation. By the end of the war, the United States had become the world’s most powerful state. The unprecedented wartime expansion of the federal government’s power – and America’s rapid global ascendency – have long been appreciated. But there remains a tendency to see the end of war as a repudiation of central state expansion, marking a return to nineteenth-century “normalcy.” While this perspective is well-supported, the paper suggests that the war produced a range of durable state innovations – from science-industrial-government relations to emergency administration and political surveillance – that would continue to shape the practices of federal governance far beyond the war.

*Sveinn M. Jóhannesson* is Past & Present Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, at the School of Advanced Study, at the University of London. Sveinn completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 2018. His work has been published in the *Journal of American History*. Sveinn is currently working on a monograph on “the Scientific-Military State” in 19th century United States.