Dear Colleagues and Students,

You are kindly invited to the seminar titled as “The Social Life of Occupied Istanbul, 1918-1923” organised by the Department of History.

Date: 17 May 2023, Wednesday

Time: 16.30

Avenue: A 130 Seminar Room

Title: The Social Life of Occupied Istanbul, 1918-1923

Speaker: Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal (Assistant Director at the British Institute)

Abstract:

The unique confluence of individuals, states, and interests in occupied Istanbul produced one of the most-well documented periods in its history. Between 1918 and 1923, the city was host to overlapping authorities, including officials representing the British, French, Italian, Tsarist and Bolshevik Russian, and Ottoman and Ankara governments, as well as the newly established League of Nations. Cross referencing associated archives provides otherwise difficult to ascertain sources for the study of social history, in particular the personal testimony of individuals usually excluded from the historical record, such as refugees, sex workers, and rank-and-file soldiers. In the lecture I explore how these materials illuminate the ways in which everyday life in the city was impacted by the Allies' semi-colonial rule and political conditions in Ottoman and neighbouring territories. The resulting findings differ significantly from cliched ideas of the armistice-era city emerging from Turkish literary works and the nationalist historiographies of the period, raising questions about how the occupation was and was not remembered in the Republican era.

Bio:

Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal is the Assistant Director at the British Institute at Ankara and a historian of late Ottoman and early Republican Istanbul. He received his PhD in History from the University of Cambridge in 2015. His thesis, later published as Britain’s Levantine Empire, 1914-1923 (Oxford University Press, 2021), compares British military occupations in Alexandria, Thessaloniki and Istanbul during the First World War and its Aftermath. MacArthur-Seal later joined the British Institute At Ankara as a post-doctoral fellow from 2014-2017, working on a research project examining the history of UK-Turkey relations in the first half of the twentieth century, now published as an edited volume, From Enemies to Allies: Turkey and Britain, 1918-1960 (Routledge, 2022). From 2017-2019, he was Research Assistant Professor at Hong Kong Baptist University, teaching Middle Eastern history and researching the opium trade between Turkey and East Asia in the interwar period. He has published further articles and chapters on nightlife, entertainment, prostitution, and policing in occupied Istanbul, and acted as co-curator to the 2023 Istanbul Research Institute exhibition "Occupied City, 1918-1923: Politics and Daily Life in Istanbul."