

Small States of Europe under the Challenges of Empire, Internationalism and Transnationalism

Date: 3 June 2015 10-17

Aarhus University

Venue: 1461/516

The seminar explores the strategies that the small nations of Europe developed in the course of the twentieth century to promote their interest in a state system that, as conventional scholarship argues, was dominated by great powers. Such strategies often involved subtle manipulation of the international public as a way of exerting “soft power”. During much of the period, empires played an important role in international affairs and therefore small nations engaged with the imperial civilizing mission - either propagating or opposing it, depending on the situation. In addition small nations were proactive in the newly founded international organizations of the age, notably the League of Nations, the UN and the EC/EU. On first sight this seems a logical survival mechanism, but looking closer at these cases we begin to see complex patterns of interactions between internationalist ideals and national interests. This seminar aims to put small nations on the research agenda of the study of international relations that has predominantly focused on the great powers. In order to understand the nature of the modern state system it is imperative to consider the changing roles and strategies of the small nations. Studying this interplay between national and international national politics represents great theoretical and methodological challenges that this seminar aims to address.

Programme

10.00-10.15: Welcome and introduction to the seminar theme

First session 10.15-12: Small states, empire and internationalism in the interwar period

- Vincent Kuitenbrouwer (University of Amsterdam): *Small State, Big Empire, Soft Power: Dutch Global Radio-Broadcasting in the Interwar Years*
- Karen Gram Skjoldager (University of Aarhus): *Denmark in the League of Nations, 1919-1939.*

12-1PM: Lunch

1-2.30: Second session: Small states and post-1945 internationalism

- Liz Buettner (University of Amsterdam): *Portugal não é um país pequeno* ('Portugal is not a small country'): *A 'Pluricontinental' and 'Multiracial' Nation Confronts Decolonization*"
- Henrik Knudsen (University of Aarhus): *Pursuing common cultural ideals: Niels Bohr, international scientific collaboration and the neutral small state*

2.30-3: Coffee and cake

3-4.30 Third Session: Small states in contemporary international politics

- Brian Girvin (University of Glasgow), The Devolution process in Scotland
- Thorsten Borring Olesen (University of Aarhus), "The europeanization of Denmark and the 'denmarkization' of Europe.

4.30. 5.00: Closing remarks and wine reception