

Book Review: *Nordic Experiences in Pan-Nationalisms*

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RUTH HEMSTED AND PETER STADIUS (eds.): *Nordic Experiences in Pan-Nationalisms*. Routledge, London 2023. Pp. 300. ISBN 978-1-0324-4444-4.

This is the latest edited collection to come out of what have been some of the most dynamic and internationally visible research environments in Nordic historical studies over the last decade. Together with her co-editors, Ruth Hemstad (University of Oslo) has since 2018 delivered no fewer than five edited volumes on topics related to nineteenth-century nationalism in Scandinavia, particularly focusing on the Scandinavist/Scandinavianist movement. Peter Stadius, likewise, both in his personal capacity as a scholar and as the Director of University of Helsinki's Centre for Nordic Studies, has had a significant impact on the way Nordic historical and political studies have developed in recent years. What further testifies to the scholarly dynamism behind this book is the well-balanced mix of senior and junior scholars amongst the authors, hinting that there is potentially more we can expect in the future.

The framing of this book is essentially comparative, looking to place Scandinavianism/Nordism in the larger context of European macronational movements. The contents, however, are still very much centred on Scandinavia/the Nordic region, with only the last, fourth part focusing primarily on similar phenomena in other parts of Europe. This is not a reason for criticism, but it does indicate that the task of opening up the discussion is not exhausted with this volume. Hopefully the endeavours of the authors will continue to help to re-energize macronationalism studies also elsewhere in Europe and beyond.

The book begins with two introductions, one by the two editors and another by Joep Leerssen, certainly one of the most important active scholars in national identity studies. Both make an argument for normalisation of the study of pan-nationalist movements, a hitherto unfairly neglected area in historical research. I wholeheartedly agree that a fresh look at them is far overdue, not least given the majorly important role that federalism, transnationalism and other supranational forms of politics play in today's world. Already for that reason, the historical development of such "non-national" phenomena should be taken much more seriously by the scholarly community. Far from being mere failures and curiosities, the nineteenth and twentieth-century attempts to reach beyond the nation state – or to rethink it

entirely – are some of the most unfairly dismissed strands in modern European and international intellectual history.

The first section of the book is dedicated to the political history of nineteenth-century Scandinavianism, with two chapters by respectively Morten Nordhagen Ottosen and Rasmus Glenthøj explaining the political context of its different stages of development, and one by Evgenii Egorov looking at the threat images that it conjured up in Russia on the other side of the Baltic Sea. The second section includes two chapters dedicated to the Scandinavianist movement's transnational connections to Russian revolutionaries, and influences it derived from other contemporary political movements, such as the Italian unification movement and the Polish independence movement. The third section moves on to discuss some of the internal developments of Scandinavianism both over time and in terms of little-known additional avenues that it found for itself, such as, for example, in diaspora communities. The fourth section, as already mentioned, looks at other contemporary pan-Movements, including pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism and pan-national Britishness in the UK. It also contains Ainur Elmgren's valuable chapter on pan-Turanism, a very much understudied pan-movement that broke the mental boundaries of Europe itself by creating a unique Europe-Asian axis for its imagined community of nations.

All in all, it is an excellent book and a very welcome addition to the fast-growing corpus of literature about nineteenth and early twentieth-century political and intellectual history in the Nordic region. Even those students of Scandinavia whose primary interest lies in the post-World War II welfare states, or in the various political choices and challenges faced by the Nordics today, would do well to engage with the longer-term political developments in the region. There is no other way to begin to come close to understanding what it really is that makes Scandinavia exceptional.