Summary

The Secret State.

Organizational and Legal Studies in the Making of the Danish Intelligence Service from the First Schleswig War to the Outbreak of World War One

Inspired by Cambridge Professor Christopher Andrew’s book Secret Service. The Making of the British Intelligence Community (1985), my PhD thesis is the offspring of a curiosity about exactly when, how, and why a Danish government formed a secret intelligence service. Our current knowledge on the history of the Danish intelligence service is very limited because its archive was burned on the day of occupation 9 April 1940.

Firstly, the PhD thesis demonstrates that despite secrecy and archive destructions it is possible to study the history of the secret service. Secondly, the PhD thesis demonstrates that Denmark had temporary intelligence services during the Danish German Wars 1848-1851 and 1864, but not a permanent organisation in peacetime. After two wars and scared of being dragged into a third, the Ministry of War reemployed the former intelligence chief in 1866 and started recruiting intelligence networks in peacetime. During the following decades, the modern intelligence community slowly took shape. In 1910 the General Staff was running three secret services called “the foreign intelligence service”, “the domestic intelligence service” and “the preventive intelligence service” (counter espionage) engaging a total of more than 1500 people. At the outbreak of World War One the intelligence service was no longer a small temporary organization but a large intelligence community with skilled personnel, extensive cooperation with other parts of the central administration as well as other intelligence services abroad.

Combining administrative history and legal history it is examined how the intelligence service was organized and managed; how it influenced the course of war; and how it challenged the legal framework of the young Danish democracy. The three main themes examined are “the organization and leadership of the intelligence service”, “spies and criminal law”, and “how Danish constitutional law was challenged by military security measures related to counterintelligence”.