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Foto: Margaret van Kleffens (left) chats with Eleanor Roosevelt while her husband watches. London, 29 January 1946. Photo: AP

# Diplomacy in Practice in the 1940s and 1950s

Seminar with **Susanna Erlandsson**, Uppsala University. Historians of IR often overlook the political roles played by diplomats' spouses and other non-appointed diplomatic actors in the daily practices of those relations. This seminar zooms in on everyday diplomatic work, arguing that in order to understand how Western diplomacy helped shape post-war international relations, we need to understand the processes that governed it. In the mid-twentieth century, the heterosexual diplomatic couple functioned as an organizational unit as well as a symbol in daily diplomatic work. The presented project uses a micro study of a diplomatic couple as a tool to unravel the

mechanisms of daily Western diplomacy in the 1940s and 50s. Focus on a couple's daily activities brings the diplomatic function of more people into view: staff, friends, family. Tracing the everyday movements of a Dutch top diplomat and his wife in the transnational community of diplomats of wartime UK and postwar US, the study highlights the norms and expectations that determined their work. It shows how gendered and personalized practices of everyday diplomacy had political consequences.

**FREE ADMISSION** ▶ **Time and place:** 23 October kl. 13.00, A900, Department of Economic History and International Relations.

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