Socialist Visions of European Unity in Germany: *Ostpolitik* since the 1920s?

Forum: Visions of European Integration Across the Twentieth Century

C H R I S T I A N B A I L E Y

This article reassesses Willy Brandt's Neue Ostpolitik *of the 1970s. It does so by linking Brandt's policy initiative to earlier German Social Democratic plans to integrate Europe that had existed since the 1920s. The analysis suggests that Brandt's attempt to mediate between the West and the East in the 1970s revived earlier SPD policies to integrate Central European societies that had been divided after the world wars. Continuities between Social Democratic thought and practice are therefore highlighted – continuities that are usually overlooked in narratives that have stressed how dramatically German Social Democracy shifted from the interwar to the Cold War eras.*

Willy Brandt's epoch-defining New Eastern Policy (*Neue Ostpolitik*) of the 1970s has been interpreted in a number of ways. Some historians have seen it primarily as a complement to the United States' policy of détente initiated during the same era.[1] Others have suggested that German social democrats took the lead in reconciling former wartime enemies, pushing forward a rapprochement that went beyond the strategic goals set by American diplomats.[2] Still others such as Timothy Garton Ash have described *Ostpolitik* as a response to a wider process of reconciliation between Germans and Poles (and other Eastern Europeans) that was initiated by civil society

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[1] Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute, 1985); Helga Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Stabilität: Außenbeziehungen der Bundesrepublik zwischen Ölkrise und Nato-Doppelbeschluss* (Munich: dtv, 1986); Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[2] Mary Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969–1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Wofram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Alan P. Dobson, *U.S. Economic Statecraft for Survival, 1933–1991: Of Sanctions, Embargoes, and Economic Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2002); William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

actors.[3] In many ways all of these histories are narrated at the level of events and short-term trends: by reading them, we can appreciate the twists and turns that diplomatic negotiations took during the 1960s and 1970s. These histories also help us to observe how politicians responded to new forms of communication between Eastern and Western Europeans facilitated by, for example, the dramatic increase in the use of personal telephones on both sides of the Berlin Wall.[4] What is perhaps missing in these histories, though, is a sense of how ideas – particularly ideas about what it meant to be European – may have influenced diplomatic negotiations and other forms of interaction between would be reconcilers.

This article tries to address this gap by reflecting on whether and how ideas of European unity influenced German approaches to *Ostpolitik* during the 1960s and 1970s. It focuses on socialist ideas of European unity for a number of reasons. The socialist approach to *Ostpolitik* has been judged by many historians to be the most influential policy in terms of shaping how West Germany opened up to the East in the last quarter of the twentieth century.[5] Yet the intellectual history of this policy has been little studied.[6] One reason for this may be that intellectual histories of German social democracy and of socialist internationalism have, for at least a generation, been relatively scarce. This is in stark contrast to the historiography of Christian Democracy and European integration, which has been plentiful and gone through a number of revisionist waves.[7] Even so, pioneering works by Talbot Imlay, Patrick Pasture, Daniel Laqua and Anne-Isabelle Richard have illustrated the value of studying the internationalist practices and outlook of socialist and trade union bodies.[8] Rather than viewing European social democrats as national figures first and socialists second, their research reminds us of how seriously social democrats took their internationalism across the twentieth century. These authors point to how hard non-communist leftists worked at communicating across national borders

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[3] Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

[4] Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 139.

[5] Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2013), 66.

[6] An exception is Wolfgang Schmidt, *Kalter Krieg, Koexistenz und kleine Schritte: Willy Brandt und die Deutschlandpolitik 1948–1963* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2001).

[7] Among the most important texts are Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945*, Vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2004); Lucian Leustean, *The Ecumenical Movement and the Making of the European Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005); Roberto Papini, *The Christian Democratic International* (Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).

[8] Talbot Imlay, '"The Policy of Social Democracy is Self-Consciously Internationalist": The SPD's Internationalism after 1945', *The Journal of Modern History* 86 (2014), 81–123; Daniel Laqua, 'Democratic Politics and the League of Nations: The Labour and Socialist International as a Protagonist of Interwar Internationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 24, 2 (May 2015), 175–92; Patrick Pasture, 'The Interwar Origins of International Labour's European Commitment (1919–1934)', *Contemporary European History*, 10, 2 (July 2001) 221–37; Anne-Isabelle Richard, 'The Limits of Solidarity: Europeanism, Anti-Colonialism and Socialism at the Congress of the Peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa in Puteaux, 1948', *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire*, 21, 4 (2014), 519–37.

and developing policies and perspectives that went beyond narrow national interest. Focusing explicitly on how socialist parties discussed the topic of European unity, Imlay illustrates that while socialist parties may have disagreed on many issues – and even accused each other of being nationalist in outlook – they continued to meet and debate, via 'official meetings, ad hoc encounters, workshops, study groups, special commissions and personal contacts.'[9]

Whereas Imlay's research focuses on the post-1945 period, Richard's and Pasture's works reach back into the interwar period, shining light on how a European consciousness formed out of broader internationalist agendas framed in the wake of the First World War. In part this European consciousness developed because socialists observed that the most pressing problems in the international sphere originated in Europe. But also, as Richard reveals, the anti-communism and paternalism of 'Third Force' European socialists did not necessarily rhyme with the emerging Third World perspective of colonial liberation movements. These latter movements instead looked more favourably on the Soviet Union as the most important anti-imperialist major power.[10] Reading such scholarship it is possible to see how European socialists narrowed their internationalist field of vision and increasingly focused on Europe as a potential political unit. Still, at least in the German case, there is a disconnect between this kind of intellectual and political history and most post-war accounts of social democrats' approaches to European integration. When it comes to discussing West German socialists' attitudes towards European integration, much emphasis has been placed on the first post-war leader, Kurt Schumacher, and his apparent prioritising of national reunification and the nationalisation of German economic assets. It is only with his death that the party is said to have begun the process of modernising and Westernising, and, in other words, adapting itself to the realities of the Cold War, which meant embracing the emerging small Europe.[11] Indeed, it may even make sense to talk of historians identifying a Zero Hour in German social democracy that takes place not in 1945 but in 1959, once the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdmokratische Partei Deutschlands*; SPD) formulated the Godesberg Programme and finally committed itself to the political culture and capitalist economic system of the Cold War-era West.

This article seeks to look across this historiographical Zero Hour and explain why an internationalist German SPD developed conceptions of European unity that diverged sharply from the dominant Christian Democratic ideas in the early post-war decades. The answer, it will be suggested, is that socialists' plans for integrating Europe after 1945 showed significant continuities with schemes that socialists had developed in response to the problematic Versailles settlement. As we will see, these interwar schemes remained persuasive in the wake of a second post-war reconstruction that

[9] Imlay, 'Policy of Social Democracy', 85.

[10] Richard, 'Limits of Solidarity', *European Review of History*, 528–30.

[11] Eg Sheri Berman, 'Social Democracy's Past and Potential Future', in James Cronin, George Ross and James Schoch, eds., *What's Left of the Left: Democrats and Social Democrats in Challenging Times* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 38; Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

seemed at least as ripe for revision as the first. The article then goes on to explain how such conceptions of Europe provided an intellectual basis for the *Ostpolitik* embarked upon in the 1960s and 70s. As a result, the article seeks to bring ideas back into the post-war history of party politics and European integration. It thereby addresses some of the challenges for European integration history posed by historians in recent years. As Mark Hewitson has argued, historians of integration have tended to see the pre-Second World War period as a time when ideas for uniting Europe were vibrant, while the actual business of negotiating integration never got off the ground. By contrast, histories of post-1945 integration focus almost exclusively on the diplomacy, while discounting the importance of ideas.[12] This article suggests that there was significant continuity between ideas formulated before and after 1945 and it illustrates ways in which these ideas shaped how diplomacy was practised after 1945.

By focusing on relations between Eastern and Western Europe, the article also redirects our attention towards the complex interrelationship between European integration and the Cold War, which, as Piers Ludlow has shown, has been somewhat overlooked.[13] Ludlow has reminded us that the European institutions that emerged after 1945 were the offspring of the broader US-led Western alliance. This is an insight that could hardly have been overlooked by post-war West Germans who lived in an increasingly integrated Europe but a divided nation. But equally important to remember is that when invoking the ideal of an integrated Europe, post-war political leaders were conjuring up visions of Europe that were older and more expansive than the Cold War incarnation. They were thereby encouraging Europeans to imagine integration as a process that would disrupt the status quo of the Cold War era. By considering socialist visions of Europe before and after 1945 this article can therefore show not only how the Cold War shaped the history of European integration but also how ideological traditions created the possible frames within which political decision-making during the Cold War could be explained and justified.

Socialist Visions of European Unity: Towards a European Third Force

It should be acknowledged at the outset that when German social democrats in the mid-twentieth century imagined Europe as a unified entity, they were rarely precise about its dimensions or borders. As recent histories of the European idea have revealed, they were by no means unique in this regard: Christian Democratic and conservative intellectuals were also hardly programmatic when they referred to a unified Europe.[14] What nevertheless seems clear is that while German socialists did think about and imagine a united Europe throughout the mid-twentieth century,

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[12] Mark Hewitson and Matthew D Auria, eds., *Europe in Crisis: Intellectuals and the European Idea 1917–1957* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 15.

[13] N. Piers Ludlow, 'European Integration: A Cold War Phenomenon', in Odd Arne Westad and Melvyn Leffler, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War,* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 179–97.

[14] See Alan Milward's comments on Walter Lipgens's *Documents on the History of European Integration in his The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1992), 14–5 and Walter Schwimmer, *The European Dream* (London: Continuum, 2004), 74–5.

this Europe rarely, if ever, looked like the small Europe that became the European Economic Community (EEC). Social Democratic opposition to the small Europe was not a result of nationalism but rather a product of the vibrant Europeanist discourse that emerged among socialists in response to the failed post-war reconstruction of 1918. To German Social Democrats who witnessed the division of their nation and the wider European continent between 1945 and 1949, it did not appear that this new post-war reconstruction would be any more durable than the post-Versailles settlement. Instead, the alternative ideas that German socialists developed between 1918 and 1945 appeared to offer a more viable way of integrating the dislocated minority populations of Central Europe and of steering a third way between US-style capitalism and Soviet communism, thereby extricating Europe from the Cold War.[15]

This is not to say that all socialists agreed about how to (re)unite Europe after 1945. Kurt Schumacher's colleagues within the SPD did not unanimously support his resistance to the early steps towards integration such as West Germany joining the Council of Europe or the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).[16] A sizeable minority of figures including Willy Brandt and Hamburg mayor Max Brauer favoured joining the Council of Europe in 1950, even though the Saar and the Western Zones of Germany would only be accorded associate status.[17] This group of Euro-dissenters came to be known as the mayoral wing (*Bürgermeisterflügel*) of the party, and was made up of independent-minded municipal leaders who did not always conform to the party line. The existence of such a *Bürgermeisterflügel* has been cited as evidence that SPD policy on European integration might have been very different had the intransigent Schumacher not led the party. What has received less attention is how prominent members of the Party's Federal Executive active in European federalist politics such as Carlo Schmid and Willi Eichler backed Schumacher's policy. Indeed, it was such figures who not only supported Schumacher's European policy but also outlined the party's position of 'intransigent opposition' to Christian Democratic policies. In light of their support for the leader's position it does not seem to have been simply the case that pro-European socialists lined up on one side of the debate while nationalists remained loyal to the leader. We should rather take seriously the arguments of those socialist Europeanists who agreed with Schumacher's position. They, together with a significant section of the SPD, argued for an alternative integrated Europe that extended further to the east and was not, to paraphrase Schumacher, so capitalistic, cartelistic, conservative or clerical.

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[15] For more details on social democratic policy during the 1950s, see http://library.fes.de/fulltext/bibliothek/chronik/band3/e235g610.html

[16] Juliet Lodge, *The European Policy of the SPD* (Beverly Hills/London: Sage 1976), 6; Christoph Egle, 'The SPD's Preferences on European Integration: Always One Step Behind?' in Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, ed., *Social Democracy and European Integration: The Politics of Preference Formation* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 26.

[17] Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth, eds., *Documents on the History of European Integration: The Struggle for European Union by Political Parties and Pressure Groups in Western European Countries*, Vol. 3 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1988), 543.

As Talbot Imlay's research has shown, the SPD's European policy was the product of regular discussions and interactions between a wide range of European socialists.[18] German Social Democrats had set up foreign representations in Britain, France, Sweden and the Netherlands after 1945 and had established a foreign committee to liaise with COMISCO (the latest version of the non-Communist International) member parties.[19] German Social Democrats were particularly eager to work with British and Scandinavian parties as they offered alternative visions to the Christian Democratic initiatives for integrating Europe that had become dominant in West Germany, Italy and France. Furthermore, these parties also sought to shift the emphasis of Marshall Plan era schemes from simply increasing productivity towards creating full employment and achieving a greater redistribution of wealth.[20] Yet the British Labour government rejected a multilateral approach to European integration, preferring to retain as much national sovereignty as possible.[21] And their position was reinforced by the policies of Swedish Social Democrats who sought to guard their tradition of neutrality and their welfare statist policies and therefore similarly rejected joining the ECSC.[22] Viewed against this background Schumacher's intransigent opposition to the early forms of European integration does not seem to be a symptom of his nationalism so much as a product of the policy discussions he was having with other European socialists.

What remains to be explained is how and why leading socialists changed their positions on European integration during the 1950s and early 1960s. For if historians of the SPD such as Julia Angster are right, many of the most radical interwar intellectuals and politicians became the leaders of the reformist, Westernising wing of the party in the post-war era.[23] Party members and associated trade unionists certainly held a wide variety of opinions about how European integration should be achieved. But in the early post-war period almost all had agreed that any united Europe should function as a Third Force between US capitalism and Soviet communism. This was the policy proposed in former Communist Richard Löwenthal's influential *Jenseits des Kapitalismus* of 1947 and reiterated by rising party leaders such as Waldemar von Knoeringen, who stated that a 'free Europe ... can be neither Russian nor American'.[24] One of the major reasons for advocating a Third Force integrated Europe was that it offered a model for reuniting Germany while also addressing concerns about resurgent German nationalism. Thus, individuals such as Carlo

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[18] See footnote 9.

[19] Julia Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokatie: Die Westernisierung von SPD und DGB* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003), 245.

[20] Vibeke Sørensen, *Denmark's Social Democratic Government and the Marshall Plan, 1947–1950* (Copenhagen: Museum Tuscalanum Press, 2001), 59–60, 75–84; Willi Eichler, 'Die dritte Phase', *Geist und Tat*, 2, 7 (July 1947), 3–6.

[21] Frank Niess, *Die Europäische Idee: Aus dem Geist des Widerstands* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001), 226.

[22] Karl Magnus Johansson and Göran von Sydow, 'Swedish Social Democracy and European Integration: Enduring Divisions', in Dimitrakopoulos, *Social Democracy and European Integration*, 160–1.

[23] Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie*.

[24] Quoted in Imlay, 'The SPD's Internationalism after 1945', 98.

Schmid, a leading Social Democratic member of the Council of Europe, advocated a 'collective security' arrangement in Europe that cut across Cold War boundaries in 1948 and argued against the creation of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952. Furthermore, even after Schumacher's death, prominent Social Democrats first opposed the integration of West Germany into NATO with an anti-militarist 'German manifesto' of January 1955 and then devised the 'Germany Plan' in 1959 for an All-German confederation.[25]

Citing such evidence of an abiding socialist commitment to a greater and non-aligned Europe does not, of course, mean denying the shifts that occurred in socialist thinking about Europe across the first two post-war decades. SPD members did eventually support the Rome Treaties in 1957, and they made an explicit commitment to the Western Alliance in 1960.[26] Nevertheless, their continuing interest in creating a neutral greater Europe does require a historical explanation, particularly as historiography has painted it as at odds with the Cold War era realities of the 1950s.[27] And this commitment to a greater Europe also invites further reflection because by the early 1960s SPD leaders were the architects of a new *Ostpolitik* often credited as a progenitor of the European détente of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Socialist Visions of Europe from the Interwar to the Post-War Periods: The Centrality of Central Europe

In order to understand the SPD's post-war foreign policy, it is helpful to revisit those socialist plans for integrating Europe that were formulated during the interwar period. Many of the most influential post-war plans for uniting Europe were developed by leading SPD members who had been members of splinter groups that had broken away from the interwar party and positioned themselves between social democracy and communism. Among the most important of these groups were the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP), whose 25,000 members in the early 1930s included future SPD leader Willy Brandt, the International Socialist Militant League (*Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund*; ISK) and Begin Anew (*Neu Beginnen*), which was led by former Communist Willi Muenzenberg. Of the post-war leaders with this background, Willi Eichler, the primary author of the pivotal Godesberg Programme, Erwin Schoettle, deputy President of the Bundestag from 1961–69, and Willy Brandt, Chancellor from 1969–74, were among the most influential. Such figures had already turned to European federalism during the late 1930s and 1940s as a way of navigating a middle path between the options of Soviet-style international revolution and Labourist domestic reform. Federalism offered them the prospect of building democracy from the bottom up, charting a seemingly more viable route to

[25] Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West. Volume 2: 1933–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 151–3, 169–71, 178–81.
[26] Christian Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow: German Visions of Europe, 1926–1950* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 136.
[27] For details, see Imlay, 'The SPD's Internationalism after 1945', 81–6.

genuine social democracy than the more top down representative democracy that was practised in the Weimar Republic but stifled by a conservative civil service and judiciary.[28]

These splinter group members had also already been active in international organisations during the interwar period. Indeed, perhaps more than the rather marginal role that mainstream SPD members could play in the reconvened Second International after 1918, socialist dissidents were very active in the new Two and a Half International, which was founded in Vienna in February 1921.[29] This organisation gave voice to the revolutionary perspective of Central European socialists who had participated in successful republican revolutions in the eight months after October 1918 in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, 'German–Austria', Hungary, Poland and West Ukraine. In a number of cases, these socialists witnessed what promised to be a genuinely socialist revolution being violently overturned and replaced by a post–Versailles system that created significant (not least German) minorities and inflamed nationalist rivalries. But they also observed the sectarianism practised by the Soviets, who compelled Communist members of the Third International to subscribe to their Twenty One Conditions. These stipulations, among other things, forbade Communists from working with other socialists and insisted upon national parties practising 'democratic centralism'.[30] As a result, members of the Two and a Half International envisaged creating an alternative Central European federation. This entity would not take orders from the Bolsheviks but would also not accept the post–Versailles status quo as Western parties had done. Within this framework Austrian socialists proposed a 'joining' (*Anschluss*) of Austria and Germany as a necessary step for the completion of the German revolution and a precursor to wider change in the region.[31]

Such proposals nevertheless foundered at the international level once this grouping of Central European socialists joined a more all-embracing Labour and Socialist International in 1923, within which the mainstream German Social Democratic Party was the dominant member. Even so, more centrist German voices also sought to revise the post-war settlement through regional and ultimately European integration. By the mid-1920s it was actually the SPD and not the dissident groups which was the most pro-integration: indeed, the SPD was the only party in Weimar to commit

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[28] See, for instance, Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund, *Sozialistische Wiedergeburt. Gedanken und Vorschläge zur Erneuerung der sozialistischen Arbeit* (London: International Publishing Company, 1934); *Die Sozialistische Republik. Das Programm des Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampf-Bund* (London: International Publishing Company, 1937) and *Russland und die Komintern. Gedanken für einen internationalen sozialistischen Neuaufbau* (London: Renaissance, 1942) as examples of how one splinter group's thinking moved from advocating revolution to arguing for federalism.

[29] Rolf Steininger, *Deutschland und die Sozialistische Internationale nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Die deutsche Frage, die Internationale und das Problem der Wiederaufnahme des SPD auf den internationalen sozialistischen Konferenzen bis 1951 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Labour Party* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1979), 7–9.

[30] Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union entered World Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 33–6.

[31] Norbert Leser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus: der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna: Europa, 1985), 172.

itself to a United States of Europe with its Heidelberg Programme of 1925. This programme explained that winning power within a democracy was merely a necessary first step towards achieving the 'socialisation of the means of production', while also suggesting that such a socialisation only had long-term chances of survival if it was implemented across national borders.[32] When seeking to understand the federalist sentiment evident in this document we should remember that the programme was formulated by Rudolf Hilferding and Karl Kautsky, intellectuals with Austrian and Czech heritage who were sensitive to the issue of integrating Germans and other ethnic groups in a post-Habsburg Central European region. They argued for a policy that was similar to that proposed by an Austrian grouping known as the Austro-Marxists, which advocated the 'self-determination of peoples and the rights of minorities' within a European community governed through federated local and workers' self-administration.[33]

A wide spectrum of socialist theorists therefore envisaged a future European federation being formed in the 1920s. Advocates of integration debated whether this European federation would begin in Central Europe – for instance with the *Anschluss* of Germany and Austria – or whether German-French rapprochement should be the first stage in a new European entity.[34] Yet, once the National Socialist regime became intent on 'reclaiming' territories in Central Europe, German socialists were increasingly committed to offering rival plans to reconfigure a Central European area apparently rendered dysfunctional by the post-First World War settlement. As socialists began a journey of exile in 1933 that took them to Czechoslovakia and then France, Britain, Switzerland, Sweden or the United States, they offered increasingly radical plans for European reconstruction. SPD leaders in exile were among the more cautious, being mindful of the risks involved in causing waves while living as refugees. These leaders were not alone, however, but instead often competed for influence with members of the splinter groups that formed in the wake of splits between Social Democrats and Communists in the Weimar Republic. Splinter group intellectuals such as *Neu Beginnen* members Alexander Schifrin and Richard Löwenthal could afford to be bolder in the visions they outlined than mainstream SPD leaders. Schifrin, writing from Swiss exile in 1938, suggested that the 'way to the reorganisation of Europe went via the German revolution'. Furthermore, he declared, '*Mitteleuropa* would become the most important position for European socialism', with Germany occupying a 'key position', possessing a 'European mission as the mediator between East and West'.[35]

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[32] Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie*, 51, 55–6.

[33] See XVI. Programm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, beschlossen auf dem Parteitag in Heidelberg 1925 in Dieter Dowe and Kurtz Klotzbach, eds., *Programmatische Dokumente der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* (Berlin: Dietz, 1984), 224; Niess, *Europäische Idee*, 23.

[34] See, for example, Paul Kampffmeyer, 'Deutsche und Europäische Konföderation', *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 32 (1926), 444–9; Luwig Quessel, 'Europa und der Anschluss Österreichs an Deutschland', *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 34 (1928), 658–62.

[35] Boris Schilmar, *Der Europadiskurs im deutschen Exil 1933–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004), 63–4.

Such statements were greeted by some contemporaries (and historians) as offering just another version of a revanchist 'Greater Germany' (*Grossdeutschland*) ideology.[36] This reaction was perhaps legitimised by the fact that much of the theoretical work on European reconstruction engaged in by German socialists was developed with colleagues from parallel Austrian groups. Indeed, one of *Neu Beginnen's* major elaborations of policy, *The World War That is Coming*, was written in 1939 with Joseph Buttinger, Josef Podlipnig and Karl Czernetz, leaders of the *International Office of Austrian Socialists*, the representative group of the Austrian socialists in exile in London and New York. This assortment of Austrian and German splinter group socialists all spoke in favour of a Central European federation growing out of the *Anschluss*, instead of advocating an independent Austria as their Communist rivals did.[37] Similarly, Willy Brandt and his colleagues in the SAP, writing from exile in Sweden, suggested that Germany must offer to integrate its Eastern neighbours within a federation, in order to solve the minorities' problem. This would, they explained, also help to create an international planned economy that could be a viable alternative to the National Socialist neo-imperial system of preferences adopted in the region.[38] Socialist exiles who had settled in the other great exile centre of London, such as ISK leader Willi Eichler, similarly devised plans in common with the Austrian colleagues they met at the Austrian Labour Club in London, alongside other leftists from Belgium, Italy and Poland.[39] The symposia such groups put together led to renewed plans for a central European (*mitteleuropäisch*) community, although by now, these proposals usually entailed breaking up Germany into southern, western and eastern federations.[40] SPD leaders in London such as Erich Ollenhauer also argued that Austrians, Sudeten Germans and Czechs should themselves decide how to redraw their borders within the framework of a federal Europe, although they were careful to renounce all post-Weimar annexations.[41]

Why focus on the plans of these exiles, particularly when many were members of splinter groups rather than the mainstream SPD? While we should not exaggerate the

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[36] Rainer Behring, *Demokratische Aussenpolitik für Deutschland. Die aussenpolitischen Vorstellungen deutscher Sozialdemokraten im Exil 1933–1945* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1999), 428; Ludwig Eiber, *Die Sozialdemokratie in der Emigration. Die "Union deutscher sozialistischer Organisationen in Grossbritannien" 1941–1946 und ihre Mitglieder. Protokolle, Erklärungen, Materialien* (Bonn: Dietz, 1998), 133.

[37] Helene Maimann, *Politik im Wartesaal: Österreichische Exilpolitik in Grossbritannien 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1975), 49–50, 121.

[38] Schilmar, *Europadiskurs*, 141–3, 210–31; Max Herb [Eugen Brehm], 'Bemerkungen zur Aussenpolitik', *Freie Sozialistische Tribüne/Sozialistische Warte*, 13, 40–1 (October, 1938), 954–77.

[39] Mary Saran, *Never Give Up: Memoirs* (London: Wolff, 1976), 89. See also Mark Minion, 'The Labour Party and Europe during the 1940s: The Strange Case of the Socialist Vanguard Group', 18 at http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/cibs/european-institute-papers/papers2/498.PDF; Diane de Bellefroid, 'The Commission pour l'Etude des Problèmes d'Après-Guerre (CEPAG) 1941–1944', Martin Conway and José Gotovitch, eds., *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain, 1940–1945* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001).

[40] AdsD, IJB/ISK Bestand, Folder 41, 'Richtlinien eines freien Deutschen für ein Deutschland der Zukunft' [July 1941?].

[41] 'Protokoll der SPD-Konferenz, "Der kommende Friede und das kommende Deutschland" am 10/11 Mai 1941', in Eiber, *Sozialdemokratie in der Emigration*, 502–3.

importance of individuals who were relatively powerless as émigrés and often regarded with suspicion when they returned to post-war Germany, their theoretical works provide important context for how German social democratic visions of Europe developed after 1945. Of the around 6,000 German socialists who left Germany in the 1930s around half returned, going on, in turn, to provide around half of the party leadership of the SPD (and SED in East Germany).[42] Indeed, one of the reasons why so many former splinter group leaders were integrated into the party leadership was that Kurt Schumacher needed their support in order to establish his dominance in the immediate post-war years vis-à-vis a rival Berlin group. Furthermore, while socialists who had remained in Nazi Germany had been forced into lives of solitude and silence, those exiles who had the freedom to write theoretical tracts while abroad could provide the basis for policy discussions in the early post-war period. And so it is no surprise that Willi Eichler went on to be a major theorist for the party in the 1950s, working alongside other exiles such as Werner Hansen, a leading trade unionist and party member, Waldemar von Knoeringen, a party leader in Bavaria, and, of course, Willy Brandt.

Focusing on the experiences and writings of these exiles helps us to understand why socialist policy did not always seem to align with the realities of the emerging Cold War in the 1950s. Socialist exiles had planned for a post-war order with fellow socialists from Austria and other parts of Central Europe in response to changes in the region forced through by Nazi invasions. Such individuals had little reason to believe that the obviously provisional settlement reached in 1945, which left Germany divided, would be more enduring than the post-Versailles order or the Nazi reorganisation of the region. While the 1950s may have gone down in historiography as a period of relative stability in Western Europe, this did not necessarily seem to be the case to contemporaries.[43] Moreover, while the Stalinist grip on Eastern Europe seemed firm, we should remember that during the period of de-Stalinisation after 1953, and at least until the Red Army's intervention in Hungary in 1956, Western Europeans could hope for a new European *modus vivendi* as more Soviet bloc countries appeared to move towards a Titoist neutrality. Such hopes may also have been revived in 1957 when Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki outlined a plan for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe before the United Nations.[44] Furthermore, the solidity of the Western alliance did not seem so assured in light of the collapse of the European Defence Community (EDC) earlier in the decade and the neutralist

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[42] Hartmut Mehringer, 'Impulse sozialdemokratischer Remigranten auf die Modernisierung der SPD', in Claus-Dieter Krohn and Patrik von zur Muehlen, eds., *Rückkehr und Aufbau nach 1945. Deutsche Remigranten im öffentlichen Leben Nachkriegsdeutschlands* (Marburg: Metropolis, 1997), 92–3.

[43] On this, see Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika. Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), 15–8.

[44] Alexander Gallus, *Die Neutralisten. Verfechter eines vereinten Deutschland zwischen Ost und West 1945– 1990,* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2001), 73–4; Christian Bailey, 'The Continuities of West German History: Conceptions of Europe, Democracy and the West in Interwar and Postwar Germany', in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36 (2010), 586; August Leugers-Scherzberg, 'Von den Stalin-Note bis zum Deutschlandplan', in Dominik Geppert and Udo Wengst, eds., *Neutralität – Chance oder Chimäre? Konzepte des Dritten Weges für Deutschland und die Welt 1945–1990* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 55.

sentiment consistently expressed by Scandinavian and Austrian socialists during the 1950s – socialists with whom the West Germans maintained good contacts throughout the decade.[45]

This is, of course, only one side of the story. Socialists did witness the incremental progress of Western European economic integration across the 1950s from the starting point of the Marshall Plan, via the ECSC, to the EEC. And they observed how Christian Democrats had managed to negotiate German rearmament within the framework of the NATO Western defence alliance in 1955. With regard to economic policy, Social Democrats were themselves conflicted between advancing statist plans for German reconstruction and outlining their own version of transnational integration.[46] A draft of the SPD's economic program in 1945 had made clear the party's commitment to state-led economic reform, declaring: 'the state is the decisive economic agent in the present and the shape of the economy is fundamentally dependent on the administrative capacities of the state'.[47] Such a commitment to statist reorganisation of the German economy thus made it difficult for social democrats to outline creative alternatives to Christian Democratic proposals for integration.

It is, however, particularly interesting that the most 'Westernising', pro-European and Keynesian (rather than orthodox Marxist) figures, such as Eichler and reformist trade unionist Hansen, had been the radical dissidents of the interwar years. One reason why such figures could apparently travel such an ideological distance is that they had always been rather sceptical of centralised state power. As alternatives to nation states, national parliaments and national parties they had, before 1945, advocated radical alternatives such as a *Räterepublik*, an 'economic democracy' (within which producers would form their own councils and parliaments) and European federation.[48] Thus, they were perhaps the ideal candidates to conceive socialist alternatives to an apparently successful post-war capitalism that had blended private enterprise with supranational regulation through the ECSC/EEC.

These figures did increasingly embrace a parliamentary West German state and they turned their attention to intra-Western European economic and diplomatic matters across the 1950s and 1960s. They were, however, keen to develop a humane form of managed capitalism across Western Europe that could serve as a magnet to attract those Eastern European countries seeking to move away from Soviet influence. When discussing economics and the role of the state, the reformist authors of the Godesberg Programme of 1959 outlined a policy that aimed not only to counter the Christian Democrats' managed capitalism model but also to entice East Germans and other Eastern Europeans who resented forced nationalisations in their countries.

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[45] Ami Vatury, 'The SPD Exiles and the Scandinavian Social Democrats, 1933–1956', in José Brunner, ed., *Mütterliche Macht und väterliche Autorität: Elternbilder im deutschen Diskurs (Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte 2008)* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 390.

[46] Thanks to Harold James for pointing out this tension to me.

[47] Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie*, 221.

[48] See AdsD, ISK/IJB Bestand, Folder 41, 'Richtlinien eines freien Deutschen für ein Deutschland der Zukunft' [July 1941?].

While acknowledging the central role of the state as economic actor, these authors stressed how the state should promote 'the freedom of communities' and the 'self-administration of citizens', implying that it should not act in too *dirigiste* a fashion. Furthermore, while noticeably omitting any mention of the EEC in the manifesto, Eichler and his colleagues talked of 'economic development requiring the cooperation of European states' but stressed that 'supranational communities should not encourage closing off [trade] with the wider world'. Instead a 'global trade that was open to all' was advocated. Similarly, alongside envisaging a reunited Germany that was free of all foreign troops (including American troops) the authors stressed that the Federal Republic should belong to a 'European Zone of détente and limited armaments'.[49]

Brandt and the Beginnings (or Return?) of *Ostpolitik*

By the end of the 1950s, then, West German Social Democrats had only ambivalently embraced the Cold War West and the small Europe of the Six. Only a few years later – in 1963 – they formally developed an *Ostpolitik*, which sought to achieve a wider European *modus vivendi*, albeit by accepting the status quo and demonstrating the effectiveness of Western democracy and capitalism. This status quo is usually taken to mean the status quo of Germany being divided into two. But it was also a status quo with regard to West Germany belonging to a Western European community that had been constructed not by socialists but by Christian Democrats. Nevertheless, Christian Democratic politicians had themselves started to erode this status quo, brokering trade deals with Eastern Bloc countries in the late 1950s.[50] Changes came from elsewhere too: by the end of the 1950s French leader Charles de Gaulle had taken steps to decouple European integration from the broader US-led Western alliance. He developed an independent French nuclear deterrent in 1960 and by March 1966 had taken France out of NATO's military structure.[51] The other most important shift during the decade was Britain's, Denmark's, Ireland's and Norway's applications to join the EEC between 1961 and 1967. All of these developments invited reappraisals of what an integrated Europe should be at the moment when Brandt and the Social Democrats came to power for the first time as junior members of the Grand Coalition in 1966. As we will see in this section, assuming power at this pivotal moment, Brandt was therefore not only able to conceive of new ways to reunite the German nation. He also sought to take the first steps towards reaching the kind of settlement in Central Europe that had proved elusive since the end of the First World War.

[49] 'Grundsatzprogramm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands', Nov. 1959, 15–7, 27–8, accessible at: https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Grundsatzprogramme/godesberger_programm.pdf .

[50] Robert Spaulding, *Osthandel und Ostpolitik: German Foreign Trade Policies in Eastern Europe from Bismarck to Adenauer* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997), 3.

[51] Geir Lundestad, *"Empire" by integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61–79.

As Brandt joined the Grand Coalition in West Germany and went on to lead the first SPD majority governing coalition in 1969, he welcomed the opportunity to shift West Germany's approach to European integration. When Britain applied to join the EEC for the second time in 1967 (alongside Denmark and Ireland), the country was undergoing a process of socialist modernisation led by the Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. Brandt imagined that socialist Britain would help fellow socialists on the continent to create a more social Europe and thereby change the character of an EEC that had largely been built by Christian Democratic policy makers. Similarly, he imagined that progressives in Scandinavian countries would not only support the creation of a more leftist EEC but, because of their commitment to neutrality, would also promote a new relationship with Eastern Bloc countries.[52] Brandt's hopes for a more expansive and more social democratic Europe were initially frustrated when France's leader provoked the 'empty chair crisis' in 1965–66 and checked the other members' attempts to make the EEC a more supranational entity.[53] A further blow was struck when de Gaulle again rejected Britain's application the following year. Brandt and colleagues in the SPD such as Hans Apel, Parliamentary Secretary for European Questions in the Foreign Office, nevertheless continued to work towards European enlargement, taking a leading role in negotiating Britain's, Ireland's and Denmark's successful accession in 1973. Apel explained Social Democrats' eagerness to expand the European Community in an article in leading social democratic journal, *The New Society* (*Die Neue Gesellschaft*), from 1972:

The social state, socially responsible capital, an economic democracy are ever more difficult to achieve in one nation. . . . [Yet] The differing strength of democratic socialists in the EEC countries, (the divisions between trade unions in Italy and France is just one sign of our difficulties) make it more difficult for us to rapidly make our conceptions of economic democracy . . . a reality in the EEC. . . . For democratic socialists, the entry of the Scandinavians and Great Britain into the EEC [therefore] gives them great hope that they can strengthen their position.[54]

While Apel was thus optimistic that the strength of socialism in Britain and Scandinavia would help to shift the EEC's policy towards a more genuinely socialist position, he did worry that these nations would not 'be ready to think in supranational categories' and thus seek to deliver their policies on a European scale.[55] However, Brandt argued that opening up the EEC to new members could soften some of the ideological orthodoxies that the Western European alliance had held on to during the first two decades of the Cold War. While addressing the Norwegian parliament in 1970 on the topic of expanding the European Community, Brandt talked about how the EC would benefit from the 'new impulse' that would come from a largely social democratic ruled Scandinavia as the EC sought to establish a relationship with

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[52] Nicole Leuchtweis, 'Deutsche Europapolitik zwischen Aufbruchstimmung und Weltwirtschaftskrise: Willy Brandt und Helmut Schmidt', in Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet et al, *Deutsche Europapolitik. Von Adenauer bis Merkel*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: VS, 2010), 85–96.

[53] Richard Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944–2007: The Geopolitical Imperative* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 136–8.

[54] Hans Apel, 'Deutschland in Europa', *Die neue Gesellschaft* (Apr. 1972), 279–85.

[55] Ibid., 284.

countries in the Eastern Bloc.[56] This relationship would look beyond immediate political differences and be based on 'shared cultural roots and an awareness of shared responsibility for the inhabitants of this continent'. Explaining that the Western European political community should not be 'a sealed-off market or the frozen product of Cold War thinking', he rather imagined a 'peaceful and united Europe that could maintain its uniqueness and vitality and stand alongside the superpowers as a political, economic, social and technological entity'.[57]

Because of the ultimate success of the Western model and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, it may be difficult to recapture the uncertainty about the future felt by Western European leaders in the early 1970s. But, as a war torn and increasingly indebted United States government sought to disengage from Europe and to dismantle the post-war Bretton Woods economic system, Western European leaders such as Brandt re-evaluated policies that had worked in the early post-war decades. As Brandt's (Free Democratic) Foreign Minister, Walter Scheel, explained, a cash-strapped United States had begun to see Western European nations as economic competitors, rather than simply as relatively poor relations in need of constant economic support.[58] Western European leaders themselves began to wonder if pre-existing trade arrangements would continue to deliver prosperity and assure social peace once the post-war boom halted across Western Europe. The oil crisis of 1973, which prompted power cuts and car free days on Western European motorways, similarly invited a reappraisal of a post-war settlement that had previously delivered unprecedented prosperity in Western Europe.[59] At least partially as a result of this, Brandt not only worked on developing trade missions with more Eastern Bloc countries, he also sought to conclude deals between the EEC and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the former's counterpart in Eastern Europe.[60] Most of Brandt's colleagues in the West German government were, however, more eager to conclude trade deals with individual Eastern Bloc countries than to deal with a CMEA that could tighten Soviet control over other socialist bloc nations.[61]

One context driving forward this repositioning of West German policy was certainly the long-standing issue of German reunification, which was close to Brandt's heart, given his history as mayor of West Berlin. Clearly, an opening to the East seemed a viable path for eventually overcoming the division of Germany. But another context

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[56] For more on this see Robin Allers, *Besondere Beziehungen: Deutschland, Norwegen und Europa in der Ära Brandt* (Bonn: Dietz, 2009).

[57] Presse- und Informationsdienst der Bundesregierung, *Die Europäische Gemeinschaft. Von der Haager Gipfelkonferenz bis zur Unterzeichnung des Beitrittsvertrages*, (Bonn: Grossdruckerei Gerstung, 1972), 89–96.

[58] Quoted in Apel, 'Deutschland in Europa,' 283.

[59] See, for instance, Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Jorgen Randers and William Behrens III, *The Limits of Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).

[60] Nicole Leuchtweis, 'Deutsche Europapolitik zwischen Aufbruchstimmung und Weltwirtschaftskrise', Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet et al, *Deutsche Europapolitik. Von Adenauer bis Merkel*, 70–1; John Kinnas, *The Politics of Association in Europe*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Ardent Media, 1979), 73.

[61] Wolfgang Mueller, 'Recognition in Return for Détente: Brezhnev, the EEC, and the Moscow Treaty with West Germany, 1970–1973', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 13, 4 (2011), 79–100.

that has been somewhat overlooked is the influence of Austrian socialists on Brandt and the German Social Democrats. Perhaps the most important relationship in this regard was between Brandt and Bruno Kreisky, Austria's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1959–1966 and Chancellor from 1970–1983. Kreisky had become close friends with Brandt while both were in Swedish exile during the Second World War.[62] The two had been active within a form of socialist international in exile, the 'Working Group of International Socialists', which put together some of the most influential socialist plans for post-war reconstruction. As was typical of wartime documents composed by socialists in exile, these documents had laid out the role that a Third Force Europe could play. While the authors had envisaged that this entity would work with both the United States and the Soviet Union in the post-war world, it would, they hoped, maintain its distance from both and also seek to pursue a different policy to the imperialist powers of Britain and France.[63]

Kreisky largely held fast to this policy of neutrality throughout his tenure in office. While practising neutrality was unavoidable for any post-war Austrian leader, Kreisky made a virtue of this necessity, advocating a policy of 'active neutralism' that could build bridges between Central Europeans living on either side of the Iron Curtain. Indeed, Kreisky pioneered a form of *Ostpolitik* or 'Good Neighbour Policy' in the 1960s and then worked closely with Brandt and fellow Social Democrat, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, to cultivate discussions with Eastern European counterparts.[64] (Because of their experiences together in Sweden during the war, the three men were known as either 'the Little International' or the 'Nordic mafia' depending on the speaker's sympathies.[65]) At significant moments, such as when planning for the Conference on European Security and Cooperation (or Helsinki process), Brandt's colleagues, Kreisky and Palme, as leaders of neutral countries, were able to take the initiative more than Brandt, hosting meetings and serving as go-betweens for nations on either side of the Cold War divide.[66] Brandt nevertheless welcomed Soviet proposals for a European Conference on Security as early as 1969 and continued to work with his Austrian and Swedish colleagues throughout the early 1970s.[67]

[62] Franz Vranitzky and Wolfgang Petritsch, 'Willy Brandt und Bruno Kreisky: Die Unvollendeten', *Die Zeit*, 14 Nov. 2013.

[63] Schilmar, *Europadiskurs im Exil*, 274.

[64] Günter Bischof, 'The Era of European Integration', Charles Ingrao and Franz Szabo, eds., *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 365–6.

[65] David Wilsford, ed., *Political Leaders of Contemporary Western Europe: A Biographical Dictionary*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), 45.

[66] Thomas Fischer, 'Bridging the Gap between East and West: The N+N as Catalysts of the CSCE Process, 1972–1983', Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, the Cold War, 1965–1985* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), 144–8.

[67] See Brandt's speech to the German 'Gesellschaft für Auslandskunde' in May 1969, accessible at: http://www.cvce.eu/de/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/f28057ae-f00f-4677-8327-d97d19023b80/29bff3e6-4a61-4cac-95d5-57b9d5674355/Resources#62934d19-b975-4012-b9b1-4fbbb2a3d620_de&overlay

Stressing Brandt's closeness to those socialist leaders of neutral countries with whom he had written theoretical tracts during wartime exile is not meant to imply that Brandt was simply waiting to implement the kind of federalist reorganisation of *Mitteleuropa* that he had conceived thirty years earlier. (Although contemporaries did draw links between post-war and interwar German policies towards Eastern Europe: indeed, Brandt's Parliamentary State Secretary, Egon Bahr, had to answer hostile accusations made in the French press that Brandt was reviving German policy from the Rapallo era.[68]) As much historiography has stressed, Brandt did change his foreign policy outlook after 1945, becoming a more committed Atlanticist, particularly during the early 1960s. Nevertheless, what we can learn from studying the intellectual lineages and personal connections that motivated Brandt's *Ostpolitik* is that Brandt was not simply engaged in empty diplomatic gestures when he advocated a new form of dialogue with East Central European regimes behind the Iron Curtain. Instead Brandt engaged with Communist Party leaders in the region, believing that they were largely unideological technocrats and that many of their citizens (not least those Czechoslovaks who had chosen Dubcek in 1968) hankered after a reformed, more open form of socialism.[69] But what is equally important is that, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Brandt had tried to change the nature of the Western European political community and give it a more genuinely socialist content. As a result Brandt was not simply trying to win Central European countries behind the Iron Curtain over to a Western way of life when he practised *Ostpolitik*, he was also promoting a Western European political culture that he was seeking to change as it expanded and adapted to the end of the post-war boom.

Conclusion

This article initially focused on German Social Democratic proposals for integrating the Central European region in the wake of two problematic post-war settlements. In so doing it aimed to highlight intellectual precursors to Willy Brandt's *Neue Ostpolitik* of the 1970s. Brandt's initiative was certainly an attempt to hasten German reunification and to reconcile with former wartime enemies such as Poland. But the policy also showed continuities with his longer-standing goal of moving Europe away from what he regarded as the extremes of Soviet communism and unfettered capitalism and towards a genuinely social democracy. As Brandt's willingness to work on *Ostpolitik* with leftists (and neutralists) from Austria and Sweden suggests, he thereby revived the agenda he first announced while in Swedish exile. He also engaged with alternative European intellectual traditions to those Christian Democratic approaches that had been predominant in the early post-war decades.

[68] Katharina Focke, 'Nous ne ferons pas cavalier seul avec l'Europe de l'Est', *30 Jours d'Europe*, 11–2.

[69] Robert Brier, 'The Helsinki Final Act, The Second Stage of *Ostpolitik*, and Human Rights in Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland', in Rasmus Mariager, Karl Molin and Kjersti Brathagen, eds., *Human Rights in Europe During the Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 84.

Accordingly, the argument presented has suggested some new ways in which we can consider the longer-term intellectual history of *Ostpolitik*.

Uncovering this longer-term intellectual history illustrates how *Ostpolitik* not only resonated with a desire among Germans to minimise Cold War conflict and reunify Germany. It also suggests that Brandt's policy spoke to a longer-standing German interest in a Central European region where German minorities had recently lived and German commercial and cultural bodies had been profitable and influential before 1945. As the article has argued, the political organisation of former Habsburg lands had been a consistent problem after 1918 – and not only for Germans who wished to reunite dispersed German populations within a *Grossdeutschland*. Socialists had also long pointed to the economic dislocations and political rivalries caused by the splintering of the region into nation states, which overshadowed deeper cultural unities between the populations of this region.

By focusing on Brandt's policy not simply as a piece of diplomacy but also as the product of longer-standing intellectual exchanges about the nature of Europe, this article has therefore sought to highlight continuities in German Social Democratic thought and practice that can become lost in more events driven narratives. Furthermore, by foregrounding socialist ideas of Europe, the article has aimed to enrich our understanding of the impact of ideas and ideologies within the Cold War. Rather than see ideas playing an uncomplicated role as tools in the conflict between East and West, communism and capitalism, the approach taken here can help us to appreciate how ideas performed a different kind of role in framing day-to-day events and debates within each Bloc. We have seen that ideas about Europe which were formed in earlier periods persisted into the Cold War era, even if they no longer always seemed to fit within the framework that rather suddenly emerged after the end of the Second World War. As a result, ideas formed within intellectual traditions such as socialism maintained the potential to be dynamic and unpredictable agents in the history of the Cold War – as the case of Willy Brandt's *Neue Ostpolitik* seems to show.