Rediscovering uncertainty: early attempts at a pan-European post-war recovery

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It is time to re-open the question of the early post-war division of Europe as a problem. In order to move beyond bipolarity and give a fuller representation of the tentative and open character of the immediate post-war years it is furthermore pertinent to include a broader array of actors. By highlighting the aspirations of Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten, a transnational network of social-democratic refugees from Germany and German-occupied countries in Sweden during the war and some of their endeavours after the war the article explores the relative merits of realist and liberal readings of the outcomes. It is argued that historiography so far has underestimated the nationalistic, anti-German position of French and British socialists at the end of the war, and its wider implications as well as the importance of internal domestic dissensions within the UK and US administrations.

Some 15 years after the end of the Cold War and with the enlargement of the European Union, it would seem timely to review some of the historiographical certainties of the terms of the post-war European recovery. It is all too easy for historians to let the Cold War division process of 1947–48 retroactively overshadow the tentative nature of the apprehensions, projects, and choices of different political actors during the post-war planning period, from the final phase of World War II through the immediate transition to peace conditions.

As an antidote, the following article will argue that it is time to re-open the question of the post-war division of Europe as a problem and to discuss the relevance of then
existing alternatives. More specifically, it will highlight an idealistic, liberal-socialist current among European politicians during the war – Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten (IGDS) and some of their endeavours after the war. This article will examine these endeavours in three instances. First their 1943 manifesto ‘Demokratiska socialisters fredsmål’ (‘Peace Goals of the Workers Movement’) will be contrasted with the resolutions of the first post-war meeting of the European Labour and Socialist parties, their meeting with the official attitudes of the International Socialist Conference held in London March 1945.

Then these endeavours will be viewed through the political actions of one of its prominent members, Gunnar Myrdal, in two different cases: his efforts as Minister of Commerce in the Swedish Government 1945–47 to establish a bridge-building trade policy and in the intense institutional struggle surrounding the creation of the UN’s Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the establishment of the European Recovery Programme (ERP).

The trade policy milieu in the immediate post-war transition period is an important part of the pattern determining the subsequent political reorientations and the institutional settings or the European Recovery Programme were in themselves politically defining the broad terms of the economic integration of Western Europe.

How are these outcomes to be explained? The article proposes an evaluation of the relative strengths of liberal and realist readings of the outcomes of these politicians’ actions in these case studies through the rapidly changing political circumstances of these years. Finally, it will discuss these findings relative to present historiography and its relevance for general questions about the recovery and division of post-war Europe. But first an introduction to the historiographical landscape in which the article is set is needed.

**Historiographical background**

To address the question of the post-war division of Europe as a problem is in fact to relate to two separate – often too separate – but intertwined historiographies: the first one dealing with the reasons behind the beginning of the Cold War, the second dealing with the history of European integration.

The conventional – traditionalist – wisdom among Cold War historians is that the United States rescued Western Europe from Soviet expansion and Communist subversion by fostering multilateral free trade and providing massive aid programmes. A wisdom once more borne out by John Lewis Gaddis bold contention: ‘We Now Know’. Even the Cold War historians that from an ideological point of view are sceptical towards this interpretation tend to put American actors centre stage, sometimes with the interplay between the leaderships in the US and the Soviet Union added. The historiography on European integration has developed along a rather different path. Once the first ideological acrimonies over the causes of the Cold War had abated, Western political scientists shifted their interest to the causes and mechanisms behind Western European – sometimes labelled European – economic recovery and integration. In this debate there has been a rather general agreement that
this process should be seen as a success story, but there have been discordant opinions as to the respective roles of European and American actors in the process.

Two different liberal readings have dominated. Neo-functionalist political scientists such as Ernest B. Haas and Joseph Nye have been describing the process as mainly a European affair, highlighting the role of institutions such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) as pivotal to the integration process, the ECSC being basically an effort at peace and reconciliation between French and German statesmen. The actual force of this approach can be seen in a manual such as Desmond Divan’s ‘Ever Closer Union’, recasting Monnet and Schuman as central architects of European integration, celebrating ‘the boldness and prescience of Schuman’s proposal’. Liberal Cold War historians, however, tend to see the causes of integration as stemming from the outside. In Michael Hogan’s view, it was the American network of businessmen, politicians and civil servants, called ‘the Marshall Planners’, who were the main architects of European regional synthesis, which focused on growth, productivity, and transnational integration. The Schuman Plan was in this reading likewise inspired by these American reformist planners. Hogan argues that European businessmen and politicians, in fact, played an obstructive role, thwarting the Keynesian and social democratic attempts of the American planners to promote more growth-oriented and egalitarian policies.

Against both neo-functionalism and a view putting ‘the Marshall Planners’ in the driving seat, a neo-realist strand of historians have emerged arguing the role of domestic concerns in the compromises achieved all along in the integration process. It stemmed from the vast project ‘Documents on the History of European Integration’ under the direction of Walter Lippens but the dominant historiography was not challenged until one of its participants, Alan Milward, published his work on the early post-war economic recovery in Western Europe. Against the view that the European continent was saved from economic chaos by Marshall Aid, Milward argued the importance of the domestic national recovery efforts in Western Europe immediately after the war. Basically, he showed the impressive initial success of the different national recovery plans in continental Europe, with the exception of Germany, arguing that the crisis of 1947 was a liquidity squeeze rather than a need for material necessities. In doing so, he changed the perception of the European nations from supplicating, grateful recipients of American magnanimity to actors in their own right, active protagonists in the shaping of Western European recovery. This strand has been further developed with studies based on thorough archival research by mainly French economic historians on specific bilateral relations.

Returning to the division of Europe as a problem

At a moment when European economic integration is broadened, in certain aspects resuming the region’s historical patterns of division of labour, it would seem pertinent to go behind the Schuman Plan of 1950 and the Paris conference of 1947 as foundational moments, to return to the era before bipolarity in the discussion about post-war Europe. This means shifting attention from explaining European/Western European integration as a ‘success story’ to reflecting on the costs and reasons behind the political and
economic division of Europe after 1945, looking at the period as a time of splitting rather than unification and as a problem rather than as a success story.9

True enough, the subsequent post-war economic recoveries in the war-torn European countries, both West and East, were impressive.10 But the price paid was high. It entailed severing complementarities between the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and those in the West. Germany had long been the centre of this regional division of labour, but it also meant cutting long-term economic ties that some of these countries had with the Netherlands and Great Britain. To various degrees, the political split of Europe meant forcing the countries into different patterns of economic development, and it increased their dependence on one of the two main world powers. Politically it meant, above all, that the countries in Central and Eastern Europe were held hostage, with very reduced margins for manoeuvring. To a certain extent, this also held true for the countries in the Western Europe in relation to their American protector.

Can the beginning of the bipolarity be re-read?

At a distance from the heated atmosphere of the intense scare of the first Cold War period, it should now be easier to look at the anxieties about Soviet expansion at that time with a more even-handed, relaxed attitude. Leffler’s thoroughly conducted study11 gives us this kind of picture. Far from the traditional ideological dichotomization of conflicts into East/West terms, he highlights the importance of the conflicts between the Office of Military Government of the US in Germany (OMGUS) and the French authorities in the dynamics leading to the European split.12 He also illustrates the impact of intra-governmental struggles and purely domestic considerations on American foreign policy. Even on decisions of internationally strategic importance, such as the immediate cessation of Lend-Lease, only scant attention was given to their international implications. Avoiding the question of blame in understanding the post-war division, Leffler gives a level-headed appreciation:

> It is not easy to see how the Americans and Soviets (and British) could have escaped the security dilemma after World War II. But in view of the overwhelming power of the United States and in view of the relative restraint exhibited by the Kremlin outside its immediate periphery, US officials might have displayed more tolerance for risk. The terms laid out by the Truman administration were clearly skewed to sustain America’s preponderant position in an international system.13

Leffler thus gives a convincing portrait of the tentative, open character of the period which is far from the ex post rationalizations in the functionalist literature. But despite the impressiveness of its account of the discussions between different American power centres and between American and European political leaders, the study still suffers from the recurrent problem of American historiography: its parochialism, its tendency to look upon other actors from a distinctly American perspective. The work fails to provide sufficient understanding of other actors in their own right: the understanding of the role of European national arenas and actors given by Milward’s seminal work in my view needs to be pursued further.
Obscured actors

The basic question that Leffler addresses concerns the recurrent tension between fear and trust, between the need for security, and the willingness to cooperate that exists between actors in the international arena. He has given a level-headed answer to the question of why those who favoured securitarian strategies eventually prevailed. But there is an obverse side of the same question: Why did those who favoured an extended pan-European recovery fail?

If the object is to further explore the interplay between psychological and material factors and between the different agenda-setting arenas on both sides of the Atlantic, further attention should be given to those actors who strove for an inclusive, pan-European recovery and a continuation of wartime Allied efforts. In my view, those actors' influence has been unjustly obscured because of the dichotomization in Cold War historiography. President Roosevelt's Senior Advisor on Foreign Affairs, Sumner Welles, the radically outspoken Wendell Willkie, republican candidate for the 1940 elections, or the war-time Vice President, Henry Wallace – all of them vital in the creation of the UN. Neither Hogan nor Leffler gives them more than perfunctory footnotes. What of the comprehensive discussions among New Dealers on ‘organized free trade’ during the war? These witnesses do not fit into the conventional picture of American liberalism, but nevertheless they were of importance in the pre-Cold War discussions. In my view, there is a lack of understanding of the role of early New Deal radicalism in the preparation of post-war plans.

The same is also true of discussions in Europe. There were strong currents – especially in the smaller European nations – that wanted closer pan-European cooperation, both as a safeguard against renewed German aspirations of revenge and as a means to establish Europe as a ‘third force’, balancing the two emerging world powers. In my study on Sweden's post-war planning and policies, I have explored these and their links with parallel discussions in the United States.14 This essay on the democratic socialists in the Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten is thus intended to contribute to an expanded discussion of the actors involved in the shaping of post-war Europe.

Using the IGDS as a laboratory: preliminary questions

Presenting the IGDS as an ideational current has a value on its own; several of its members were later to play prominent roles in European and international politics. All the more since historians dealing with the sources of European integration generally omit them, citing other quite ephemeral gatherings.15 But I would also like to use the subsequent meeting between this social democratic current and the official international social democracy and the subsequent efforts of one of its prominent members, Gunnar Myrdal, to elucidate the question why those who favoured an all-European post-war reconstruction failed. What happened with the post-war manifesto of the democratic socialists and its hopes of building a new socialist international? What happened with the efforts of bilateral bridge-building between Sweden and Poland and between Sweden
and the Soviet Union that one of its members, Gunnar Myrdal, tried to implement as Minister of Commerce in the first two years after the war?

I will also touch upon the creation of the UN Economic Commission for Europe as an instance of an international pan-European effort of reconstruction inspired by ideas present in the manifesto of the IGDS. Who promoted the creation of the ECE? Why was it discarded as the organizer of the European Reconstruction Programme, known as the Marshall Plan? Finally I will return to the historiographical relevance of these case studies.

Presentation of the IGDS: architects in exile

In September 1942, 36 people from 14 different countries met in Stockholm to discuss the peace goals of a proposal elaborated by leading Norwegian social democratic refugees in Stockholm. They met in an atmosphere of semi-clandestinity, since the Swedish authorities had forbidden any political activity that might annoy the representatives of Nazi Germany.

The group, which eventually took the name Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten, had grown from an amalgamation of three different sources: the Norwegian group of exiles in Stockholm, some internationally concerned Swedish social democrats, and a larger group of political and trade union activists from Central and Eastern Europe. The broad extent of their activity – 76 people were to participate in the proceedings of the group – and the fact that they came from Germany as well as from occupied countries and neutral Sweden are clear testimony to the transnational networks of solidarity that existed even under the harshest of conditions. Their work is well documented in a study by Klaus Misgeld, who has had the complete archives of the group at his disposal.16

The German contingent of 21 participants was the largest, consisting of Social Democratic Party functionaries, trade union officials, and journalists. The 15 members from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Austria also consisted of a mixture of political and trade union activists. The Norwegian group was smaller but very influential. Their most prominent member, Martin Tranmael, had long been the chief editor of Arbeiderbladet, the leading paper of the Norwegian Social Democrats. The members from Sweden were crucial since they held important positions in the local organization of the Swedish social democracy and in the central apparatus of the trade union movement.17 Several members of the group were later to occupy important positions in their home countries: ministers, trade union leaders, journalists, and ambassadors. Four of them were later actors of special importance in European post-war history: Gunnar Myrdal, Alva Myrdal, Bruno Kreisky, and Willy Brandt.

The group’s main problem was not how to win the war but how to win the peace. They had regular meetings right up to the end of the war, also working in subgroups on specific topics. The general outline of their program was spelled out in their May Day manifesto of 1943, Peace Goals of the Workers’ Movement, published in the Swedish Trade Union weekly Fackföreningsrörelsen.18

As Misgeld shows, the discussions were inspired by the ideas of the Atlantic Charter, the declaration of Churchill and Roosevelt in 1941 on the Peace Goals of the Allies. But
it went further, rejecting a simple adherence to the Allied position, following the ideas of the British Labour Party Declaration of 1942. On the question of how to win the peace, the manifesto was based on two central ideas: first, Versailles should not be repeated. A lasting peace could not be built on revenge, punishment and retribution. Recovery must come through a common reconstruction, and defeated Germany must be allowed to recover to be able to contribute to the healing of wounds. War criminals should be punished through ‘supranational courts’, but ‘there must be no question of punishing the people as a whole or entire population groups’. Second, for this to be possible, the wartime alliance between Anglo-Saxon and Soviet powers had to be continued as peacetime cooperation. Any nationalist appeal or attempt to play any particular group interest against the other would be fatal to reconstruction in general and the interests of smaller nations in particular. It argued for an ‘international organization of justice’ strong enough to decide on international conflicts, where the ‘great powers should not be allow to dominate at the expense of smaller nations’. To this effect, regional organizations would be necessary: ‘Federative systems in Europe are a precondition to safeguard peace in Europe.’ To further these goals, they also urged the workers’ movement in Europe to build a new Socialist International – it was through transnational cooperation that national conflicts could be eased. The creation in 1947 of the first regional organization of the UN, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, can be seen as largely inspired by these same ideas.

The work and reception of Internationale Gruppe

The work of Internationale Gruppe was inspired by the Atlantic Charter, but also by discussions in Norwegian exile circles. Martin Tranmael, who had been the leading ideologue of Norwegian social democracy for more than 20 years, wanted to guard against the outspokenly Atlanticist policy advocated by Trygve Lie and others, tying Norway to the foreign policy of the United Kingdom. Together with Willy Brandt, then a Norwegian journalist just as much a German socialist, Tranmael sent out Fredsmåle for Arbeiderrørelsen (Labour Movement Peace Goals) for broader discussion among exiled social democrats and trade unionists in Stockholm. The publication of their five-page manifesto in the trade union weekly, with an accompanying presentation at a meeting of the local social democratic organization in Stockholm, meant that they were acknowledged at least semi-officially.

It must be seen as an accomplishment, a success in itself, to unite representatives from both Nazi-occupied countries and Germany in the midst of the war on the need for joint reconstruction. But the more the discussions approached the practical modalities the vaguer they had to be, especially on the difficult question of territorial adjustments. Even though the participants understood that such adjustments were unavoidable, they expressed the hope that strengthening pan-European federalist institutions would lessen the importance of national borders.

As for how to dismantle the threat of a resurgent German, according to IGDS, the way forward lay not in exacting devastating economic reparations from the country
but rather in dismantling the economic power structure that Nazism had been built upon. A thoroughly democratized Germany would foster cooperation instead of aggression. This attitude also coincided with Swedish interests as they were perceived in official circles; heavily engaged in trade with Germany during the war, Sweden would have much to lose from economic chaos in Germany.

On the other hand, the manifesto’s express wish to cooperate not only internationally with the Soviet Union but also domestically with communists in the different countries was by no means uncontroversial in Sweden. Here the manifesto rather reflected the larger role played by communists in the resistance against Nazism in the occupied countries.

The main international inspirations for the manifesto were the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and the *Interim Report* of the British Labour Party, adopted at its annual conference in 1942. The experience of the manifesto’s authors, mainly Norwegian and German political refugees, is reflected in its content; the work is mainly political and deals only superficially with questions of world finance and trade.

The manifesto played a prominent role in several of the social democratic speeches at the May rallies in Sweden in 1943. Its first effect was to expose the Swedish labour movement to these international issues. The document was perceived as a signal that things were about to change in the Swedish social democratic movement: away from subdued neutralism towards a more principled attitude of opposition to Nazi Germany.

After the publication of the memorandum, great effort was devoted to developing its themes in more detail and adapting them to the changing fortunes of the war. However, the IGDS did not act as a coherent group but as individuals in these efforts. Each of them tried to connect it with their own national resistance network. Even if they adhered to the same common platform, it was clear that the question of changing borders and resettling refugees could be seen from very different angles depending on whether one came from Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Sudetenland, to take a few examples.

Furthermore, there was another factor undermining the cohesion of the group: the war lasted longer than the refugees had predicted in 1943. The longer the war went on, the stronger the nationalist component in the anti-Nazi resistance in German-occupied territories tended to become. With no visible popular resistance to Hitler in Germany, the representatives of labour parties and resistance movements started to ask themselves: ‘where is that other Germany?’

**Meeting with post-war realities: the Conference of European Socialist Parties in March 1945**

How were the internationalist ideas received by labour movements in the allied countries? The first ‘post-war’ meeting of European social democracy was the Conference of European Socialist Parties held in London on 3–5 March 1945 in conjunction with a Labour Party conference. Six foreign socialist parties were represented directly (Belgium, France, Italy, Holland, Iceland, and Sweden). For the French, it was Vincent Auriol, André Philip, Jules Moch, and Serge Grumbach. In the
British contingent, Hugh Dalton, Philip Noel-Baker, Emmanuel Shinwell, and Harold Laski were the most prominent participants. Furthermore representatives from six parties in exile were present. The Swedish representative was Alva Myrdal, also an active member of the Internationale Gruppe, and it is thanks to her report to the Swedish Social Democratic Party that I have accessed the proceedings of the Conference.\textsuperscript{21}

The proceedings of the conference were based on a Memorandum of the French Socialist Party with appendices on ‘National Economic Policy’, ‘International Political Organization’, and ‘The German Problem’ and ended with nine separate declarations on the whole array of international post-war problems.\textsuperscript{22} The documents from the conference are a rich source on the positions of the British and French parties at that particular time and it is amazing that researchers have overlooked the importance of this first attempt by European social democracy to establish a joint position towards the post-war problems. Here I will only comment on its positions in relation to the tenets of the IGDS manifesto.

The demand for a continued post-war cooperation between the wartime allies was just as central in the Conference’s declaration as it had been to the Internationale Gruppe. Speaking on ‘the Dumbarton Proposals as modified at Yalta’, the declaration of the conference on ‘International Security’ welcomed ‘the agreement ultimately reached which brings together in the search for collective security all the nations currently engaged in the struggles for freedom, and in particular the Soviet Union and the United States whose presence is essential to the building of peace’. The European dimension is specified when the French and British parties ‘hailed with deep satisfaction the Anglo-Soviet Pact of 1942 and the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1944 [...] as integral parts of the world organization of security and prosperity’, demanding the establishment of an Anglo-French Pact as a further step: ‘such a treaty of alliance is the indispensable corollary of the Anglo-Soviet and the Franco-Soviet Pacts, and the necessary foundation for unity between the East and the West of Europe’.\textsuperscript{23}

Likewise the need for an all-European regional organization was affirmed in the conference’s declaration on the ‘International Economic Organization’: having stressed the immediate importance of the Relief and Rehabilitation Administration of the UN (UNRRA), it argues that it is of temporary character and its functions should eventually be taken over by other international bodies: ‘to avoid the dangers of a gigantic international bureaucracy due regard must everywhere be paid to the creation and development of regional and national organizations working within the framework of an international plan’. In the longer term the only way to achieve ‘a stable economic equilibrium’ is by ‘seeking an equitable distribution of raw materials, by ensuring the specialization of each country in those forms of production to which it is by nature and resources most suited, by promoting international interdependence and by adapting the productive system so harmonized to the ever-increasing needs of the peoples’. A credo the members of the Internationale Gruppe certainly could have adhered to.

It was however on the third tenet of the IGDS manifesto – the need to avoid a repetition of the Versailles peace conditions that contrast was stark and absolute. At the conference, this turn towards nationalism was obvious. On ‘the German problem’,
the French delegation submitted a report to the conference, the basic content of which was approved as the conference’s general resolution. The report was clearly directed at a ‘Vansittart’ solution in its attitude towards the Germans: ‘A people which abandons its sovereignty to a man or a clique and which similarly surrenders its liberty in order to permit him or them to commit brigandage and barbarous crimes is responsible towards other peoples for the crimes committed in its name and it cannot evade the natural and juridical consequences of these crimes.’ It went on even more explicitly: ‘To talk to-day of “two Germanys” in order to place our confidence in one of them ... would be a self-deception that no considerations could justify.’

According to the report, the German people had thus forfeited the right to sovereignty for a considerable time to come. The report concluded that ‘pending the moral redemption of Germany severe measures should be taken and applied inexorably’. Among these was a total and prolonged occupation of German territory, rigorous punishment of all war criminals, and reparations in kind and restitutions.

The plans called for an extensive reparations programme over five or six years. Germany should not only have to repay/restitute all looted property, but there should be extensive reparations by sending machinery, tools, and similar material. Furthermore, there should be large-scale organized forced labour; Germans should be sent to formerly occupied countries to rebuild their economies. Finally, all costs of the occupation armies should be paid by the Germans. 24

In the final resolution, the conference declared the need to establish an occupation regime for Germany for ‘a considerable time’ to come. It even left open whether Germany would ever recover the right to sovereign statehood: ‘This will depend on the future attitude of the Germans themselves.’

The main difference with the Versailles reparations was that, this time, Germany would not be free to pay its way through exports, but through an orderly plan of goods deliveries and forced German labour to the liberated countries. 25 It was obvious that the consequences of the occupation under such terms would be dire. Even though the programme stated that the German people should not starve, it nevertheless made clear that they should not expect to be entitled to a higher living standard than Russians, Poles, Norwegians, or other peoples that had suffered German occupation. And this was an obvious consequence of such a programme. This was not a Versailles solution; it was Versailles with a vengeance.

It was thus only on the point of continued cooperation between the wartime allies that the conference declaration gave Internationale Gruppe some consolation. The 20-year cooperation agreement between Great Britain and the Soviet Union should be a cornerstone of the future Europe, the declaration said. But since this was to be done at the cost of the German people, the declarations and the prevailing mood at the conference proved to be a grave disappointment to Alva Myrdal, the Swedish representative at the conference. She abstained from voting on the conference’s issues, invoking a status as observer due to lack of instructions and clear mandate. Having heard her report in the Internationale Gruppe, one of the Germans complained that the national delegates sounded rather like military press officers. 26
The proceedings of both the Labour Party conference in 1944 and the international discussions at the International Socialist Meeting in March 1945 are strong testimony to the renewed strength of nationalist attitudes in the final months of the war in Europe at the expense of international ideological ties. Themes on solidarity and reconciliation were forced into the background even in socialist conferences. This shift in the discussions in the European labour movement — embarrassing as it may be — gives weight to realist readings of political conditions at the end of the war. Moreover, the dominance of these attitudes within the French and British socialist parties is an essential factor to have in mind in order to understand the further dynamics of the interplay between different actors on the European scene.

The bilateral way of bridge-building

If the avenue of internationalist cooperation between social democrats thus seemed closed, what other ways were there to promote the ideals of Internationale Gruppe? When the Internationale Gruppe manifesto was published in 1943, Gunnar Myrdal had recently been appointed chairman of the Swedish Post-war Economic Planning Commission. Together with his deputy, Richard Sterner, also a member of Internationale Gruppe and head of the Research Division of Landsorganisationen, he had a central position in developing Sweden’s plans for international economic cooperation. In 1945, he became Minister of Commerce, and two of his major initiatives in trade policy were aimed at using Sweden’s trade relations to further greater European economic cooperation.

One of his first decisions in the government was to go to Warsaw in August 1945 to negotiate a four-year bilateral trade agreement between Sweden and Poland. Sweden was to give prompt reconstruction aid to Poland, restoring harbour facilities at Szczecin and railway communications so that Poland could resume coal exports. But beyond that, Swedish industrial exports should be directed towards reconstruction needs and opening Poland’s trade relations with Western Europe in general. Myrdal, who had long-time personal ties with leading Polish politicians, among them Oskar Lange, shared with them a longer-term perspective on the importance of this bilateral treaty — it would further Poland’s economic independence and thus the camp of buffer countries in a Europe dominated by the Soviet and American powers.

The other major initiative was the conclusion of the five-year Trade and Credit Agreement between Sweden and the Soviet Union in 1946. Originally developed by Swedish export industries as a way of securing new profitable markets, the policy of establishing close economic ties with the Soviet Union was also seen as a way of securing the independence of Finland. The whole agreement was based on a sizeable Swedish government credit of 1,000 million Swedish kronor, since it was clear that the Soviet Union needed credits to get its foreign trade under way.

When Myrdal became Minister of Commerce, he set this trade agreement in a larger international framework. As one of his colleagues formulated it: ‘It should inspire the Americans to do likewise, with a generous giant government credit. That would be a way of creating a spirit of cooperation between East and West even after the war.’
These bilateral agreements aroused suspicion in various quarters. Clayton later spoke of ‘bilateralism and restrictionism’ as opposed to multilateral trade arrangements. In the end, they might have been, but at this juncture they were the opposite: a practical way of opening international trade, of increasing economic interdependency. Myrdal argued the case in an article, challenging US reticence to lower tariffs as a way of championing more multilateral trade. At the time, this was well understood and supported, even by the US negotiators at the London Conference on Trade, Clair Wilcox and Harry Hopkins. But among business interests in the US, the wariness of any trade deals with Soviet or Soviet-oriented countries was predominant already in 1946.

This in turn influenced Swedish business circles. With the start of conflicts between the Allied Powers and the onset of Cold War rhetoric, Swedish business interests became more reluctant about this agreement. The liberal and right-wing press, hitherto favourable to the agreement, suddenly saw an opportunity to turn it into a political weapon against social democracy; playing on old anti-Russian feelings among Swedes, they gave vivid descriptions of the disastrous effects the agreement would entail. These shrill tones notwithstanding, Myrdal succeeded in getting the deal through the Parliament with a rather large majority.

These two trade agreement initiatives show the importance of states and state machineries as actors during this first, very open and confused phase of post-war reconstruction. At the same time, the actual development of these bilateral trade relations illustrates the limits of the authority of the Swedish government over business interests. The trade agreement with Poland assumed an annual Swedish surplus of 100 million Swedish kronor, to be covered with government loans. But since Swedish industrial firms practically refused to export anything without generous compensation for nationalizations, the net result was that Poland exported far more goods than it received. It was Poland that supported Swedish reconstruction, not the other way around.

Swedish–Soviet trade similarly failed to live up to expectations: a number of industrial contracts were signed, mainly for industrial equipment, electric generators, and fishing vessels, but these were delivered only reluctantly and belatedly by the Swedish business community. Only half of the credits were ever used, and there was no broader political effect.

The efforts of Gunnar Myrdal to promote the all-European reconstruction called for by the IGDS manifesto via trade agreements with Poland and the Soviet Union cannot be said to have failed. But set in a larger context they did not produce the desired effects of deeper interdependence.

This case argues strongly against an analysis of international relations that is too state-centric. In a situation where Swedish business interests were struggling to recover pre-war markets or reclaim lost assets they became important political actors, influencing and changing the political orientation of the Swedish government. It suggests that the margins of manoeuvring for different states depend significantly on domestic power relations and institutional factors and thus shows the relevance of pluralist/institutionalist readings of this period.
The third avenue – an international all-European organization?

Gunnar Myrdal was also to play an important role on another, international level: in April 1947 he left the Swedish government to become Executive Secretary of the newly established United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In that capacity he had the opportunity of working for an institutionalization of the all-European reconstruction of which he was such a staunch advocate.

The establishment of the ECE in 1947 and its immediate role in connection with the Marshall Plan will be the third case where the strength of radical liberalism will be tested. Why was the ECE created? And once created, why was it discarded as central organizing institution for the reconstruction aid?

The first two years after the war were dominated by national efforts at reconstruction in the newly liberated countries and the development of the occupation regime in Germany. As Milward has shown, the national recoveries in Britain and on the European continent were impressive by most standards, Germany excepted. But the British and French nationalism displayed in 1945 contained its own contradictions. The national recoveries created their own problems; it was soon clear that any further national recovery was predicated upon the resumption of regional economic ties. The arterial system of the European economy had to be reconstituted.

It is in hindsight clear that there was a glaring conflict between the nationalist agendas pursued by the French and British authorities and the concerns of OMGUS. The Ruhr industrial area was the heart of the regional economy in north-western Europe, and without the proper resumption of its heartbeat, the economic situation in Germany would be untenable, from both a social and political viewpoint.

The continued departmentalization of Germany and the forced restitution programme of coal and other necessities may have helped the recoveries in France, Belgium, and Netherlands, but it was a dead end that shifted the economic burden primarily to the American occupation authority, OMGUS, and behind it the US Congress. This dilemma is eloquently described by John Gimbel. The ‘German problem’ at this juncture is too often seen through a Cold War lens, it should be recalled that it was not Soviet obstruction but the French refusal to unify the German administration that provoked General Clay’s decision to interrupt reparations deliveries from the Ruhr area in May 1946.

The question of coal resources in a way signified the general incompatibility between the different aspirations for recovery. The winter of 1946–47 was a time of severe crisis, not only in starving Germany. In particular, there was an energy crisis: there was a scarcity of coal everywhere.

Immediately after the war, several emergency institutions had been set up by the Allied authorities. UNRRA organized relief aid to the masses of refugees. The European Coal Organization delivered rationed coal from the Ruhr district but also from British and American sources. ECITO, the European Commission on Inland Transports, and EECE, the Economic Emergency Committee for Europe, dealt with the day-to-day problems of provisions.
The general economic crisis made it evident that these organizations had to be replaced by an organization with far greater capacities, not simply coordination between the military authorities of the Allies but a truly international organization on a broad regional basis. The proposal originally came from Poland’s Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Jan Stanczyk, at the UN General Assembly in February 1946 and was unanimously adopted on principle. It was a long way, however, from principle to practicalities; it took all of 1946 to produce a resolution with specific provisions on practicalities. Only in March 1947 was the formal decision made by the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to establish the Economic Commission for Europe as a ‘semi-autonomous and permanent’ organization, an assembly for free discussions ‘empowered to make recommendations on economic matters’. Thus it was not only a continuation of the coordination of transportation, coal deliveries, and economic assistance of the emergency institutions on a permanent level, but the ECE was also to have highly specialized economic expertise providing analyses and giving recommendations on economic matters. With its projected 187 officers in Geneva, it represented the first establishment of an international civil service on a regional level, based on the UN Charter.

Proponents and reticence in the setup

The history of the first years of the ECE is well documented by Vaclav Kostelecký, the former personal assistant to its Executive Secretary. For a discussion about the interplay between different actors in this period, it is of interest to note the active role the representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Norway played on different occasions in the creation of the ECE, small and medium-sized nations, for whom broader multilateral cooperation would widen their scope of manoeuvring.

The attitudes of the representatives from the UK and the US were clearly divided. On the British side, the UN representatives Henry McNeill (ECOSOC) and David Owen (Executive Assistant to the UN General Secretary, Trygve Lie), seconded by Richard Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade), pushed the agenda for the ECE, while the Foreign Office under Aneurin Bevin was mostly sceptical, fearing that a multilateral organization might diminish the leverage the UK could wield as a trading nation.

On the American side, opinion was divided between the economic and political experts at the State Department, according to Kostelecký. New Deal liberals like Isador Lubin, Paul Porter, and Walt Rostow were all in favour and ‘exercised strong leadership in setting on foot the ECE’. The political wing of the State Department, on the other hand, feared ‘obstruction from the Russians’, and their wariness grew in the early months of 1947.

The Soviet diplomats were very hesitant from the beginning, wary in general of a permanent regional organization that might turn against them. Another fear that Molotov voiced in talks with Oskar Lange, the Polish delegate to the UN, was that the Soviet Union would have to provide statistical information and eventually accept UN economic observers. In the end, however, Lange succeeded in securing a neutral position from Molotov.
Significantly, the final elaboration of the tasks and competences of the ECE was left to the representatives of ‘the Big Four’ in the ECOSOC, and although the Soviet representative had some misgivings about the vast powers left to the ECE in terms of investigating and addressing practical cross-border problems and giving recommendations even concerning Germany, they accepted being overruled. When the ECE was formally established on 28 March 1947 as the first UN regional organization, it may very well have been, as Kostelecký states, the very last possible moment for such a decision to be made.42

The leadership question

Crucial to the importance of the established Commission was the choice of its leadership. Gunnar Myrdal, at the time Sweden’s Minister of Commerce, was chosen as the first Executive Secretary of the ECE. In his person we have an obvious personal link with the Internationale Gruppe.

It might have been surprising that this position was offered to an economist from neutral Sweden, but it again testifies to the relative importance of the transnational networks existing among liberals at the time. Myrdal had close contacts in the United Kingdom, Norway, and Poland as well as in the United States. The Assistant General Secretary David Owen – whose role was crucial in the selection – had been in Sweden during the war and even participated in meetings held by Internationale Gruppe. Trygve Lie knew Myrdal through his contacts with Arne Skaug and Ragnar Frisch and other Norwegian economists. And among the Polish representatives were several of his friends both from his refugee years in Stockholm and in connection with the trade negotiations between Sweden and Poland after the war. Since Myrdal had been scientific head of a large research project on race relations in the US during the early war years,43 he was equally well known in liberal circles on the other side of the Atlantic. Far from being accidental, his nomination attests to the strength of the general liberally minded current of which the Internationale Gruppe was but one expression and the importance of personal networks of actors in the international arena.

When the ECE opened its first session in May 1947, 17 European nations were present. It was broader than any previous post-war meeting in Europe.44 The importance attached to the session was marked by the list of participants: Henry McNeill (Minister of State in the Foreign Office), Will Clayton (Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs in the State Department), and Paul Porter (US Special Representative in Europe). From the USSR came Valerian Zorin, from Czechoslovakia, Jan Masaryk, and from France, André Philip. In view of the deadlock of the Moscow Meeting of Foreign Ministers in April, the session was keenly anticipated by the general public; the British weekly The Economist hoped it would be ‘a useful businesslike forum in which Europeans from East and West could participate’.45

The proceedings took place in a rather tense atmosphere with many heated discussions, mostly resolved behind the scenes in meetings between Myrdal and the Heads of Delegations. The commission had to settle the balance of competence between the ECE and the member states, its relation to the Allied Control Authority in Germany, voting rules, and so on.
I will not dwell on these issues here, but it is worth noting that in all these discussions there was a generally genuine effort to make the ECE work. As the US representative Clayton said, ‘Reconstruction could only be achieved through teamwork.’ Summing up the two weeks of discussion, Poland’s representative, Jacek Rudzinski, regarded it as ‘the major achievement of the first session that it had been possible to build a bridge between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union over the chasm which had appeared at Moscow. The Russians had come [...] and pledged to continue cooperation.’

**The crucial decision: Geneva or Paris?**

Barely established, the ECE and the role it was to play would become the focus of world politics in May–June 1947. The reason was obvious: the announcement of the European Reconstruction Programme, or Marshall Plan, in a speech in June by the US Secretary of State George Marshall. It meant that the United States promised to provide large-scale economic assistance to the countries of Europe. This initiative had been discussed all through May in the State Department; the actors in Europe were very familiar with it as well.

This, of course, raised a most important question: who was going to administer the aid on the European side? That question persisted for two months and resulted in a fierce battle for influence. It was also a very clear example of the struggle between national interests and integrationists, of national bureaucracies against international institutions. For Gunnar Myrdal, the case was clear: the advanced expertise of the 187-strong staff being built up in Geneva and the broad European representation made ECE the obvious choice for the level-headed and fair distribution of American aid.

At the end of May, Myrdal flew to Paris and London to discuss the transfer of the emergency organizations, known as E-organizations, to the ECE as well as the general role of the ECE in European reconstruction. Myrdal had active support from the economic wing of the British government, not only from his long-time friends Sir Richard Stafford Cripps, the President of the Board of Trade, and Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, but also in the discussions with Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council. They all supported the strong multilateral approach Myrdal was pleading for. His contacts with the representative of the Foreign Office, Henry McNeill, were less favourable. The Foreign Office in general resented Myrdal’s insistence on an independent recruitment policy, on having a Soviet deputy as well as a British one, and on selecting the names himself. McNeill warned Myrdal that ‘it would be a very bad beginning if he placated the Russians at the expense of an American misunderstanding.’

This controversy about recruitment had an important underpinning of principles: while Myrdal wanted the Secretariat of the ECE to be ‘a body of International Civil Servants,’ the Foreign Office wanted the national states, and in particular the British one, to have a determinant voice in the recruitment, and wanted the British officials in the ECE to act on national instructions.
The case for universalism, using the UN institution which was already being set up for channelling ERP aid, was obviously quite strong, and it also had critical support in the UK. But in the end national interests, as perceived by realists, proved to be stronger, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Following Kostelecký, it would seem that the real decision was made in the discussions in the US State Department between George Kennan and Henry Clayton, representing the political and economic wings of the department. Henry Clayton, Under Secretary of State and at that time regarded as the nation’s foremost statesman, had participated in the first session of the ECE in Geneva. Initially he had proposed ‘a co-coordinated European recovery program assisted and primed by the United States ... [the] initial approach should be Europe-wide in order to avoid undesirable psychological repercussions in Western Europe and to attract if possible the Soviet Union and the satellites’. The ECE was proposed ‘as the most appropriate agency for handling such a program’.51

But after the failure of the meeting of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, there was a growing climate of suspicion, particularly expressed by George Kennan. He professed to be surprised by the Soviet participation in the ECE: ‘In any case the Russians are there and we have to reckon with them ... But they may try to worm themselves into the administration of it, and they will drag their feet so that the thing will never work at all unless it works to their benefit.’52

The growing importance of power politics was also reflected in Clayton’s memorandum of 19 May, one of the two principal documents preparing Marshall’s speech, where he stated that the three-year grant should be ‘based on a European plan which the principal European countries, headed by the UK, France and Italy should work out .... We must avoid getting into another UNRRA. The United States must run the show’.53

This declaration is clear-cut power politics: both in its insistence on the overall control of the US and in its intention to use the main national states of Western Europe as the tool for exercising such control. But what about the rest of Europe? On this issue Clayton was also explicit in a memorandum several days later:

While Western Europe is essential to Eastern Europe, the reverse is not true. Coal and grains from Eastern Europe are important to Western Europe, but these products will be exported westwards in any event because of the necessity of obtaining vital foreign exchange for necessary products from the West creates a suction which the USSR is incapable of counteracting, and there can only be absolute and final Soviet domination of Eastern Europe by force of arms. It was concluded that a European economic federation is feasible even without the participation of Eastern European countries.54

In the finalized form of these considerations, the actual speech of George Marshall, no explicit reference to the ECE was made. All references to pan-European participation were arguably only to soothe the demands of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. And relying the content of the speech to Ernest Bevin in advance, Dean Acheson, Marshall’s close aid in the State Department, made it clear
that they expected a British initiative as a response. The day before Marshall’s speech, a memorandum by one of the Board of Trade officials (David Waley) spelled it out: ‘We are now told that Europe, preferably under UK leadership must, between now and November, work out such a plan.’ As for the role of the ECE, the Board of Trade official stated: ‘There is much to be said in favour of the ECE undertaking such a job ... If we were to set up a new body to do the work which excludes Eastern Europe, this would be a new and decisive step to splitting Europe into two antagonistic economic blocs.’

Nevertheless, this was the proposal by the Economic Relations Section at the Foreign Office. It argued from a strongly realist position:

Nobody seems to think that a ‘plan’ for Europe is really a serious proposition or anything more than eyewash deigned to extract dollars from a reluctant Congress. If this is so, the danger of Russia obstructing a plan falls to the ground. It might even be desirable that Russia should obstruct and so incur the blame for failure to produce a serious plan.55

The record of the Foreign Office meeting ended with considerations about the fact that the ECE was too newly established to be able to tackle such a heavy task as the reconstruction planning – ‘to ask it to prepare a ‘plan’ for Europe here and now would be like asking it to run before it can walk’ – but in my view it was rather a lack of control than lack of expertise that was the real argument. In her study on the Sweden’s early post-war foreign policy and the creation of the ECE Cay Sevôn56 details the correspondence between the French Foreign Minister Bidault and Ernest Bevin stressing the need to have a common and settled proposition well before the incoming Second Assembly of the ECE due in July.57 The decision of the Foreign Office to issue a joint invitation together with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a separate conference in Paris on 30 June had all the consequences both Clayton and Waley had anticipated: ‘a decisive step to splitting Europe into two antagonistic economic blocs’.

Long before the delegates arrived in Paris, the future of Europe was decided.58 The division of Europe was sealed and the ECE relegated to the sidelines of European integration as a purely technical and scientific organization. The way in which this was to be accomplished was no more than a technicality.

How does this case study of the ECE stand in regard to the ideas of the Internationale Gruppe?

In a way, the announcement of the Marshall Plan was a vindication of the ideas of the Internationale Gruppe: revenge and harsh punishment are not the way to build a stable peace. The economic crisis in the beginning of 1947 had forced France and Britain to abandon the policy of revenge against Germany that they had adopted in early 1945. It was all too obvious that Germany must be given a helping hand to recover if the European economy was to prosper.
But if this first of the two tenets of the *Internationale Gruppe* was thus accepted, it was enacted on terms totally contradictory to the other convictions the group held:

- Where the *Internationale Gruppe* – and also French and British socialists in 1945 – saw the continued long-term strategic cooperation between the wartime allies (including the Soviet Union) as the way to contain the danger of German militarism, the Western allies now opted for a solution ‘less but more secure’: the division of Germany, placing its industrially vital western part under close military control.
- Instead of using the ECE as the international level of integration, as a way of overcoming difficult national conflicts, the management of the CEEC by the UK and France meant a strengthening of the power of the national states in the process, especially that of the US, the UK, and France.
- Instead of inaugurating pan-European integration, giving balancing power to small and medium-sized nations, the division marked by the outcome of the Paris conference built a bipolar system based on exclusion and dominance by the two Great Powers.

*The struggle over the ECE from a theoretical point of view*

Proponents of a liberal theoretical perspective on international relations can draw some strong arguments from this, the third case study about the establishment of the ECE. The mere fact that the ECE was established in the midst of growing dissension between the Allied Powers gives evidence for the strength of ideas about international cooperation, even when they are not unequivocally supported by states. The constitution process also gives ample arguments against a crude realist position regarding states as the only relevant actors on the scene, with these states acting according to presumably clear national interests. Here we see the pervasiveness of individual actors in the international organizations, the importance of transnational networks and the relatively open battles in the administrations of individual nations in defining the character of specific national interests.

On the other hand, when it comes to moments when national interests are clearly perceived to be in conflict, and when the power of distributing considerable material resources is involved, the realist interpretation of priorities gains credence. Both in the US and the UK, it was arguments of control that justified a course that led to the division of Europe. Even if the initiative of the Marshall Plan and the invitation to the Paris conference were formulated as inclusive pan-European proposals, the actors themselves only saw this as necessary lip service to allay the fears of public opinion. The practical steps of the policy were devised so as to ensure political control of the process.

The institutional struggle leading to the establishment of the Conference of the European Economic Cooperation (CEE, later OEEC) rather than the ECE as a coordinating body must of course be seen from a broader perspective. It was a choice
of methods: channelling US economic aid through an agency dominated by a nation-state rather than through a universalist UN body. It was confirmation of the political choices made. In that sense, it is a rebuttal of the contention made by Hogan that ‘it was the strategy of integration as much as the strategy of containment ... that prevented the sort of all-European settlement envisioned by the junior officers who had been the first to champion the cause of a European unity’.\textsuperscript{59} It was not integration in general, but a specific kind of integration under the supervision and financial control of American agencies that was the central issue. That was why the officers at the ECE were discarded as valid instruments even though they, like Gunnar Myrdal, had been among the most conspicuous advocates of the ‘New Deal synthesis’ that Hogan describes.

**Historiographical relevance of the case studies**

There are three separate points on which the exploration of the adversities met by the democratic socialists of Internationale Gruppe requires a questioning of received opinions. First of all the importance of the narrow anti-German nationalisms in France and Britain in explaining the postwar economic crisis 1946–47 is very much underestimated. The declarations at the Conference of European Socialist Parties in March 1945 are a stark testimony to a groundswell of Vansittart-minded nationalist attitudes of the British and French parties. It is an episode strangely omitted by historians on nationalism,\textsuperscript{60} European social democracy,\textsuperscript{61} and European integration.\textsuperscript{62} The eagerness of neo-functionalists to celebrate the successes of European integration has led them to underestimate the amount of nationalist resentment in the aftermath of the war. This resentment was a particularly dominant motive of the French side.\textsuperscript{63} With this in mind it is clearly inaccurate historically to claim that the French Socialist Prime Minister Gouin’s adoption of a ‘hard line policy’ against Germany in 1946 was somehow due ‘Communist and Christian Democrat members of the Cabinet favouring an unsparing anti-German policy’.\textsuperscript{64} French foreign policy 1945–47 was anti-German much more than it was anti-Soviet. The enforcement of the dire terms of reparations and restitution on defeated Germany was in fact a Versailles with a vengeance and should arguably be viewed as one of the prime causes of the chaos in 1947. More than a liquidity squeeze or a coal shortage, the crisis was a direct result of the deliberate policy of punishment actively pursued by the French and British governments.

This argument also has a bearing on Milward’s conclusions. Accepting Milward’s argument about the importance of the national recoveries in 1945–46, this essay however signals the lack of a coherent European vision of these endeavours: Europe could never have transcended these problems without some kind of regional funding, a Marshall Plan of sorts. Secondly the role of private business leaderships as strategic actors in the struggle for regaining markets are poorly investigated. The case study of Sweden’s bridge-building trade agreements shows that bilateralism could be the opposite of the restrictive nationalism it is often labelled to be, that it indeed could be
seen as another way of creating an open, multilateral free-trade system – or ‘organized free trade’, as some New Deal economists used to say. But it also highlights the weaknesses of state-centric perceptions of international relations even at that time: the amount to which a government holds sway over business interests is variable indeed.

Finally, I think it is time to relegate the political representatives of the Soviet Union to the sidelines as peripheral actors in the institutional struggles in which post-war economic order was created. The discussion about how the ECE was bypassed and the Eastern European countries were excluded from the Paris conference in 1947 does not depart in any vital way from the account given by Leffler but underscores the lopsided nature of American ‘multilateralism’ and attitudes towards the universalism of the UN system. The important role played by Bidault and Bevin in preparing the framing of the conference is in my view a testimony of the necessity to include a wider array of actors in explaining the dynamics producing the institutional system carrying the European Recovery Programme. Although I sympathize with Geir Lundestad’s post-revisionist approach in general, his account of events even in later works is still dominated by a bipolar actor analysis. The role played by France in explaining the background to the Cold War really deserves more than perfunctory lines and the creation of the ECE must certainly be seen as part of the post-war history of Europe.

Seen in a more multifaceted way the Marshall Plan was indeed a solution, a triangular deal between a financial donor (US), an occupied territory, devastated but potentially strong (Germany), and two minor US allies needing recovery aid and security assurances (France and Britain). The price was to be paid by those who had suffered the most, the countries in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union. Basically, that was why a multilateral all-European administration by the ECE had to be discarded.

**Accepting uncertainty**

More than these factual arguments, I would argue in favour of the value of exploring the diversity of actors, their relative successes in influencing agenda-setting at different junctions. Having abandoned received certainties, we can again accept uncertainty as a basic feature of the period. Then it will be all the more important to explore the power of the different agenda-setting arenas, which entailed different representations of national interests. It also meant tension between fear and trust among all the actors involved.

At the end of World War II fundamental factors were skewed against the common trust that a pan-European recovery was premised upon, with revengeful and nationalist animosities running high in France and Britain, with a Soviet Russia deeply distrustful, exhausted and economically devastated, and with an ascendant United States redefining its national security parameters while at the same time having a rather superficial understanding of the sacrifices endured by its allies. These factors made way for a fundamental asymmetry of perceptions on both sides of the Atlantic, where the Americans stressed the material and financial aid given while the countries that had endured the Nazi war machine stressed the sacrifices made.
Within that framework, there was much fertile ground in the different national arenas for political actors to exploit, allowing them to exaggerate fear of the Other (be it Germans or Russians) for domestic power political purposes. Preachers of more inclusive post-war cooperation like Henry Wallace (after the war acting as Minister of Commerce), Harold Laski (in the National Board of the British Labour Party), Gunnar Myrdal (in the ECE), Oskar Lange (as Polish Minister of Finance), or Willy Brandt (in his early social democratic career) were clearly doomed to be marginalized.

Nevertheless, they were there. The currents of thought they represented are important not only for understanding the broader background to post-war recovery planning in Western Europe but also for reflecting on the possibilities and limits of trust-building policies in general.

So far, historiography has been dominated by a debate between Western liberals and realists, very often from an American perspective. What is proposed here is not another Grand Narrative, but the value of exploring a much broader array of actors and perspectives and examining other perspectives than those hitherto dominant.

Evaluating different attempts at bridge-building in this period touches upon a larger, recurrent problem in international politics: the tension between securitarian attitudes and trust-building, between creating vicious or virtuous circles in conflicts. In that sense, it is still of theoretical interest to rediscover the uncertainty of the post-war discussions before bipolarization. In exploring a broader array of actors and perspectives, we might prepare ourselves for a better understanding of the dynamics involved in shaping fear and trust in an increasingly multipolar world.

Notes

[1] Gaddis, *We Now Know*. In somewhat different tonalities this discourse is present also in actual debates. See the interventions of Trachtenberg, Bischoff, Bledsoe, Bonds, and Borhi in the Winter 2005 issue of *Journal of Cold War Studies* and its Special Forum on ‘The Marshall Plan and the Origins of the Cold War’. Started as an attempt by Michael Cox and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe to question Gaddis’ new traditionalist certitudes it ended in the question whether the US should not have pursued a more aggressive interventionist policy towards the countries in Eastern and Central Europe. A neo-traditional turn, indeed!

[2] This would be my main objection towards the exceptional study of Loth, *The Division of the World*.


[9] In a way this has been done with the recent debate in *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2005), but there the focus was rather on the question whether Eastern Europe might have escaped the grip of Stalin.
As is shown by Angus Maddison, the general level of economic growth in both halves of Europe was significantly higher than that of the United States 1950–1970. Maddison, The World Economy.

Leffler, A Preponderance of Power.


Leffler, A Preponderance of Power, 99. For an even more affirmative statement on the question, see Loth, Was war der Kalte Krieg.

Appelqvist, Bruten Brygga.

They get only one line in Lipgens’ otherwise impressive documentation. Dinan’s mentioning Alitero Spinellis conference in Geneva in June 1944 with 13 other resistance representatives issuing a federalist manifesto as an example is of course interesting but his omission of the IGDS is clearly disproportionate. Dinan, Ever Closer Union, 12.

Misgeld, Die Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten.

A full list of its members with short biographies is presented in Misgeld, Sozialdemokratie, 181–186. ‘Demokratiska socialisters fredsmaal’.


This conference, of major importance to understand the attitudes within the British and French labour movements at the end of the war, has received exceedingly scant attention by scholars. In my own archival research on Sweden’s post-war planning. I found the proceedings through the participation of Alva Myrdal as a delegate to the conference. It is also mentioned in Misgeld, Sozialdemokratie und Aussenpolitik; and by some other German authors (Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth) in their three-volume Documents on the History of European Integration (1988) but I am unaware of any attempt to discern any wider implications of this conference.


‘Declaration on Anglo-French Pact’.

‘Declaration on the German Problem’, Appendix to report by Alva Myrdal to the Executive Committee.

On this point, the resolution referred to the Labour Party Resolution on ‘International Postwar Settlement’ adopted at its annual conference in May–June 1944, specifically mentioning ‘the grave damage to British exports and employment’ caused by these exports.

See Misgeld, Die Internationale Gruppe Demokratischer Sozialisten, 120.

In his study on the foreign policy of the Swedish Social Democracy, Klaus Misgeld cites the opinion of Hakon Lie, leader of the Norwegian Social Democracy about this conference: ‘reminder of the short-sightedness dominating in the spring of 1945’ (Misgeld, Sozialdemokratie und Aussenpolitik, 45).

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, the central pillar of the Swedish labour movement.

The equivalent of $240 million at the time.

Sweden’s chief negotiator Rolf Sohlman quoted in Hägglöf, Fredens vägar.

On this issue, it is interesting to note the different attitudes within the US Administration. See Appelqvist, *Bruten Brygga*, 384–399 for more detail.


For a more detailed discussion of these relations and general background, see Appelqvist, *Bruten Brygga*, 367–399.

The business interests belong to the category of 'obscured actors' during this period. With the notable exception of Sylvie Lefe`vre's excellent study (Lefe`vre, *Les relations économiques*).

Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*.

The systematic policy of 'reparations' by the French occupational authorities and the vast benefits derived are amply detailed in Lefe`vre, *Les relations économiques*.


Kostelecký, *UN Economic Commission for Europe*.

Ibid., 25.

Ibid., 28.

Ibid., 36.

Resulting in his landmark study on US racial relations, *An American Dilemma*, in 1944.

Other than national representatives, a number of non-governmental organizations, especially trade unions, were also present, as were other relevant UN bodies.


A very clear account of them is given by Kostelecký, *UN Economic Commission for Europe*, 57–82.

Ibid., 61.


As quoted from a memorandum presented by GM to the Heads of Delegation in the ECE May 10, 1947. STO-23.1.10.

Memorandum sent 9 May to Kennan through Clayton’s aides. See Kostelecký, *UN Economic Commission for Europe*, 89.


Sevón, *Visionen om Europa*.

The French attitude must of course also be seen in a larger framework: in conjunction with its on-going struggle to get more American aid, vital part of the French Modernization Plan. See Bossuat, *Les aides américaines*.

Sevón details the diplomatic correspondence around the three-state conference 30 June–2 July 1947 (Sevón, *Visionen om Europa*, 168–175).


Anderson, *States and Nationalism in Europe*.

In his *Two Red Flags*, 24–27, David Chaîls cites the domestic radicalism and the disappointment with the Soviet Union’s policy in Eastern Europe in 1945, but there is not a line on the party’s German policy. In his *Britain since 1945*, 40, the occupation of Germany is described solely as a financial burden, necessitating cooperation with the American zone.
In his comment on this conference Wilfried Loth only notes the difference between 'the French socialists who wished to see Germany integrated in the future community of states and those who advocated strict control of the German people, as did the Dutch, Norwegian, Polish and British delegates'. This seems to be a severe understating of the general harshness of the terms even proffered by the French. Loth, 'The Socialist International', 442.

Even Dinan acknowledges that ‘For all his remonstrations about integration and reconciliation, even Monnet was not unaffected by the rampant Germanophobia that swept France at the time. After all, Monnet had predicated his plan for French economic modernization upon a punitive policy towards Germany’ (Dinan, Ever Closer Union, 19).

As Alan P. Taylor noted in his The Second World War, there was a marked disparity between the US losses (300,000 soldiers in total) and those of its allies. The Soviet Union lost 20 times as many soldiers, 6 million. Taking the civilian losses into account the disparities are even more glaring: the Soviet Union lost 20 million, Poland more than 6 million, and Yugoslavia one and a half. Even France’s losses were twice those suffered by its American ally.

References


‘Demokratiska socialisters fredsma˚l’ (Peace goals of democratic socialists), Fackföreningsrörelsen 23–30/4, 1943.


