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Introduction: transnationalism in the 1950s Europe, ideas, debates and politics

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ABSTRACT

This special issue re-evaluates the 1950s as a period of transnationalism in ideas and political practices, offering innovative insights into political history and political ideas. Without setting the national and transnational spheres against each other, the issue argues that the dialectics between the two was a defining element of Europe in this period. The articles explore transnational cooperation and exchanges among intellectuals, politicians and trade unionists, showing how they were changing in their interaction. The editorial sets out from the research on the postwar configuration of Europe based on the retake of the nation state, combining it with new research of transnational history and putting out some methodological innovations. The editorial also highlights some significant themes across the articles: the central role of translation and localisation, the interaction with local interests and disputes, the Cold War, the acceleration of European integration, the rise of the Third World, the tensions between hope and fear or between nihilism and rebirth of Europe, the centrality of science.

KEYWORDS

1950s; transnationalism; transnational history; Europe; nation state; nationalism

1. National renewals and transnational beginnings

The 1950s in Europe were marked by a quest for the renewal of culture and morality in conjunction with the rebuilding of European politics and European order; both processes took place within a distinct European mindset that emphasised modernisation, science and technological progress. The decade opens several queries for research into European history. On one hand, this is a decade of the renewed making of national identity. Contemporaries and later historians, such as Ignazio Silone¹ and Alan Milward, have identified the first post-war decades, especially the 1950s, as the era of the renewal of the nation state. The state extended its powers to social, economic and private matters to a degree never seen before. Not only economic nationalism and the national welfare state shaped the material conditions of the people, but national culture and national citizenship framed the worldview of the Europeans. Both left-wing and right-wing Europeans came to identify the state as the guarantor of their security and rights. In contrast to the 1950s, our present era starting in the 1970s was marked by interdependence, economic liberalism and internationalisation of

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¹Ignazio Silone, 'The European Mission of Socialism' (1947), in *Documents on the History of European Integration*, ed. W. Lippens and W. Loth, Vol. 3, *The struggle for European union by political parties and pressure groups in Western European countries 1945–1950* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 179–83.

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market and finances, undermining the nation state – today put under pressure by returning nationalist backlashes.² David Edgerton's recent reading of British history confirms the early post-war decades as a 'national moment', contrasting sharply with earlier and later periods.³

On the other hand, we find many who were reclaiming a common European culture after the Second World War. Intellectuals like Julien Benda, Stephen Spender, Karl Jaspers and Francesco Flora denounced the nihilism of war and division and pleaded for a uniting, moral and universalistic-minded culture of Europe.⁴ Postwar intellectuals were terrified by the results of a nationalism that had run out of order. Even so, this did not lead all of them to condemn the idea of nationhood or the nation state. Many continued to assign positive attributes to the concept of nation. Isaiah Berlin, the intellectual historian and one of the sturdiest critiques of totalitarianism, considered nationalism to have delivered grave crimes but also cultural, social and political achievements. He was outspoken about national independence as something to strive for, also for the colonies.⁵ Others rebutted nationalism and had only grim prospects for the future with the continuing reign of the principle of national independence. Bertrand Russell, the philosopher and peace activist, pleaded tirelessly for a world government that ruled according to international law.⁶

In this special issue, we turn to studying transnationalism in 1950s but we do it without losing sight of its national focus and 'the rescue of the nation state', to quote Alan Milward. We concentrate on the entanglements between proliferating national identities, traditions and transnational phenomena. In the editorial, we will firstly demonstrate the 1950s as an era of both national renewal and transnational beginnings. Secondly, we present our transnational approach, before we present the chapters. In the concluding sections we sum up some of the common themes and offer further points of discussion.

In the early 1950s declarations were heard from political leaders in several countries about the need to unite in response to economic decline and political crisis. Internationalism has mostly been dismissed as irrelevant to historical events by supporters of Realpolitik because it has served as conduit of humanitarianism.⁷ However, it had a practical relevance expressed in political initiatives and institutions. These were days of several initiatives with associations pleading for a European federation and founding of European institutions. Representatives from many of these gathered in The Hague in 1948 together with liberal, socialist and Christian-democratic politicians, including several of the future leaders of France, Germany and Great Britain at place. Here we find not only the honorary chair Winston Churchill, but also Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, François Mitterrand, and Konrad Adenauer. All across the political spectrum, interest in establishing a transnational standpoint and cooperation rose. We can see this among socialists, liberals, conservatives, and even among representatives of the ideology that clearly lost the war. Beginning in the early 1950s, fascists of Western Europe turned to a pan-European nationalism as manifested by conferences and periodicals.⁸ Some attempts of Western European cooperation failed and some were more successful. To the successes belong the founding of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1949 and the Paris Treaty in 1951 that paved the way for the European Coal and Steel Community. The European project took off. It was often presented as a 'utopia for peace in the cold war.'⁹ Other forms of European cooperation, such as the Free Trade Association (FTA), were attempted and some had, such as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), had some

²Niall Ferguson et al., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2010).

³David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), xx–xxv.

⁴*L'esprit européen*, ed. Julien Benda (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1946).

⁵Isaiah Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, 2nd ed., ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

⁶Bertrand Russell, *New Hopes for a Changing World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951). Bertrand Russell, *The Impact of Science on Society* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952).

⁷Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, 'Rethinking the History of Internationalism,' in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, eds. G. Sluga and P. Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016), 6–7.

⁸Andrea Mammone, 'Revitalizing and De-territorializing Fascism in the 1950s: the Extreme Right in France and Italy, and the Pan-national Imaginary', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 45, no. 4 (2011): 295–318.

⁹Bo Stråth, *Europe's Utopias of Peace: 1815, 1919, 1951* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 352ff.

success. Interdependence grew steadily, even if it was ‘grounded in weakness, not strength.’¹⁰ Moreover, a new world order that would last for decades now took shape, with one focus on trade and development and another on diplomacy with the United Nations as the jewel in the crown.¹¹ Meanwhile, we can see a quest for new universal standards, illustrated by the declaration of Human Rights, the ‘utopian one world-ism’ of UNESCO¹² and the language of moral responsibility expanding not only in theology and philosophy but in business, politics, natural science and social sciences as well.¹³

Indeed, the rise of political internationalism in 1950s Europe took place together with a reassurance of the importance of the nation state. Political leaders took to European cooperation in order to strengthen their own states. In West Germany there was a consensus of the necessity to tightly integrate Germany as closely as possible with Western Europe. Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands agreed on the Benelux-Union as early as 1944, French and Italian leaders explored a Custom Union, maybe tied to the Benelux countries. All these vectors of integrations would converge towards the gravity centre of the Core Six with the Schuman Plan.

2. Aim and approach

The goal of this special issue is to explore such entanglements with case studies. In order to answer the query about nationalism and internationalism in the 1950s, we will adopt a transnational approach. The challenge of transnational history is to study phenomena, people and ideas whose analysis cannot be limited to the national framework or the sum of distinct nations. By showing how people and cultures are modified by cross-national connections, encounters and transfers, transnationalism stresses hybridity and overlapping identities. Social scientists Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande¹⁴ pleaded early for approaches that went beyond the dominant methodological nationalism. According to Akira Iriye, historians have to challenge methodological approaches centred on nation states and institutions in order not to fall behind the development of transnational phenomena and global concerns and ideas.¹⁵ Conversely, history shows that these developments are not completely new; indeed, the innovation of transnational history is to go beyond the nation state to study eras dominated by the nation state.¹⁶ Theoretical discussion concerns to what extent transnational history is innovative and an alternative to comparative history and to what extent the two approaches integrate. Our procedure is to include both. Comparative history needs transnational dimensions, as comparison just as often reinforces the nation-centred approach as it challenges it. At the same time, comparisons can describe the shared history of nations and their convergence, while the study of transfers can explain those convergences.¹⁷ Shaev employs the comparative approach to analyse the motivations behind transnational activities. Costa employs the transnational approach to explain differences and similarities between the national players under comparison.

Indeed, in recent years a large number of articles and books have been presented on the issue of transnationalism in both history and intellectual history. Not the least, previous research has taken

¹⁰Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2010), 303.

¹¹Richard N. Haas, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order* (New York: Penguin Books, 2018).

¹²Per Wisselgren, ‘From Utopian One-worldism to Geopolitical Intergovernmentalism: UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences as an International Boundary Organization, 1946–1955’, *Serendipities: Journal for the Sociology and History of the Social Sciences* 12, no. 2 (2017): 148–82.

¹³Richard McKeon, ‘The Ethics of International Influence’, *Ethics: A Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy* 70, no. 3 (1960): 187–203.

¹⁴Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa: Gesellschaft und Politik in der Zweiten Modernität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004).

¹⁵Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

¹⁶Pierre-Yves Saunier, ‘Circulations, connexions et espaces transnationaux’, *Genèses* 57, no. 4 (2004): 110–26.

¹⁷Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands* (Paris: PUF, 1999). Stefan Berger, ‘Comparative History’, in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, eds. S. Berger, H. Feldner, and K. Passmore (London: Hodder Arnold 2003), 161–79. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, ‘Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity, History and Theory’, 45, no. 1 (2006): 30–50. *Comparative and Transnational history: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

interest in the contest between nationalism and transnationalism within the intellectual exchange of the interwar period. Clavin and Rijnen and Rensen have related this transnationalism to the European idea of unity¹⁸, while Laqua has shown that transnationalism could also have the nation as its starting point without ambitions of transcending cultural or territorial borders. The transnationalism of socialists,¹⁹ communists²⁰ and fascists²¹ in the 1930s has also been explored.

The 1970s are also a fertile field for history of transnationalism. The beginning of a new international public opinion allowed the proliferation of transnational actors, not only traditional political groups (socialists²², communists²³, fascists²⁴), but NGOs²⁵ and social movements.²⁶ As a recent collection of essays shows, transnationalism is a very variegated field.²⁷

Surprisingly, we have not seen the same interest in this regard for the 1950s. Efforts have been made to capture left-wing political and social movements of the late 1950s, stressing it as ‘the most important trigger moment for the take-off of postwar transnational activism.’²⁸ However, it is still conceived as the beginning of the anti-colonialism of the following decades which continues to be the focus. Holger Nehring offers the best insights into the transnational dimension of the protest movements during the 1950s, stressing circulation of ideas, transfer of practices and transnational imagination.²⁹

This special issue presents six case studies centred around the 1950s decade, with some overlapping with the late 1940s and the early 1960s. The six articles take transnationalism as their focus and they cover entanglements between nations, circulation of people and ideas across borders, international activities and organisations. They focus on what Jessica Reinisch calls ‘agents of internationalism,’ people and institutions thinking and acting internationally.³⁰ History of literature and history of science have already recognised that it is necessary to understand ideas not just in their production, but in their communication, circulation and translation. There is no clear distinction between making an idea and communicating it: each idea is born with a direction, a medium and an expected response.³¹ The circulation of ideas across borders is not automatic and frictionless: it requires agents to carry it out, it involves factors pushing it out and factors enabling its reception, and it involves a transformation during transfer. As Nehring notes, the term ‘transfer’ is insufficient

¹⁸Patricia Clavin, ‘Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism Between the World Wars’, in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars*, ed. D. Laqua (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 1–14. Carlos Reijnen and Marleen Rensen, ‘Introduction: European Encounters. Intellectual Exchange and the Rethinking of Europe (1914–1945)’, in *European Encounters: Intellectual Exchange and the Rethinking of Europe 1914–1945*, eds. C. Reijnen and M. Rensen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), 13–30.

¹⁹Daniel Laqua, ‘Democratic Politics and the League of Nations: The Labour and Socialist International as a Protagonist of Interwar Internationalism’, *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 2 (2015): 175–92.

²⁰Kasper Braskén, *The International Workers’ Relief, Communism, and Transnational Solidarity, Willi Münzenberg in Weimar Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Brigitte Studer, *The Transnational World of the Cominternians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).

²¹Arnd Bauernkämper, ‘Interwar Fascism in Europe and Beyond: Toward a Transnational Radical Right’, in *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right*, eds. Martin Durham and Margaret Power (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), 40.

²²Cristian Salm, *Transnational Socialist Networks in the 1970s: European Community Development Aid and Southern Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²³Michele Di Donato, *I comunisti italiani e la sinistra europea: il PCI e i rapporti con le socialdemocrazie (1964–1984)* (Roma: Carocci, 2015).

²⁴Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²⁵Kevin O’Sullivan, ‘Humanitarian Encounters: Biafra, NGOs and Imaginings of the Third World in Britain and Ireland, 1967–70’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 2–3 (2014): 299–315. Bertrand Taithe, ‘The Cradle of the New Humanitarian System? International Work and European Volunteers at the Cambodian Border Camps, 1979–1993’, *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 335–58.

²⁶Gonzalo Villanueva, *A Transnational History of the Australian Animal Movement, 1970–2015* (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁷*The Transnational Activist, Transformations and Comparisons from the Anglo-World since the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Stefan Berger and Sean Scalmer (Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁸Maude Anne Bracke and James Mark, ‘Between Decolonization and the Cold War: Transnational Activism and its Limits in Europe, 1950s–90s’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (2015): 403–17.

²⁹Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest movements and the Early Cold War, 1945–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 5.

³⁰Jessica Reinisch, ‘Introduction: Agents of Internationalism,’ *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 202.

³¹James A. Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit’, *Isis* 95, no. 4: 662.

to describe the movement of ideas or practices from one context to another, as it required an active transformation.³² Intellectuals tried to adapt ideas to their culture, political operators tried to replicate models in their political environment. They did not just determine whether an international action happened or an idea circulated, but the form it took. Translation is a more appropriate term.

3. Articles

We are presenting six articles on transnationalism in the 1950s that analyse politicians and intellectuals who met at international events and interacted through international organisations. We have chosen cases that prove that transnationalism was not just for liberals – as too much transnational history has been devoted to³³ –, but included left radicals and conservatives as well. Each article will map one case of trans-nationalisation of ideas, debates or politics as a cross boundary phenomenon in the Europe of the 1950s. Our cases show overlapping geographical areas of transnational cooperation. By using transnational approaches and analysing transnational cases, we uncover how important was the combination of remaking national identity and transnationalism, bringing in innovative insights into the rebuilding of Europe after the Second World War.

Mats Andrén treats the changing transnational discourse on European cultural unity among intellectuals from Germany, Great Britain, Spain and Switzerland, with a focus on how they treated the intersection of national identities and the quest for European federation. They were Europeanists convinced of the necessity to think beyond cultural, political and territorial borders in order to manage the shortcomings of nationalism without finding it possible to delete the nation. The article demonstrates how these critiques of nationalism kept to and developed positive preferences for their national cultures, and how this entanglement was developed within a transnational context.

Jens Norrby examines the Commonwealth journal *The Round Table*, analysing the interactions between its Pakistani and Indian correspondents and English editors during the first decade after the partition. He shows that the addition of the views of these two new Dominions challenged the established genre of the journal and revealed significant rifts in opinion between the Commonwealth members. As such, Norrby's article act as a case study for how reactionary forces engaged in transnational activity but ultimately struggled to maintain imperial ties against the ideal of national self-government in the post-colonial era.

Brian Shaev's article analyses the transnational cooperation of German social democrats and French socialists from the end of the war to the early 1960s. While the top party leaders clashed on geopolitical questions like German reunification and movements toward national independence of the colonies, collaboration and exchange continuously increased in the early European assemblies, paving the road for a socialist contribution to economic integration within a common market.

Matthew Broad employs the analytical tools of transnationalism to review the history of trade unionism in European integration and challenge the thesis of national fragmentation of European trade union centres. He shows that the failure of the unions from larger countries (Britain, France, West Germany) to agree on a common stance on the different paths of European integration (FTA, EEC, EFTA), others channels of cooperation, for example between British and Scandinavians, contributed to understanding and cooperation. The representation of the national and international realms as antagonistic can obscure the importance national trade unions attributed to international activities and how they exploited them to acquire information and influence.

Jacopo Perazzoli deals with the modernisation of the German Social Democratic Party, the British Labour Party and the Italian Socialist Party in the 1950s. The three parties engaged in ideological and programmatic renewal, with an analysis centred around technological innovation and increased productivity. Recognising the buoyancy of postwar capitalism and not its crisis, they envisioned an active role of the state to promote growth, redistribute wealth and protect the weakest. Their policies

³²Nehring, *Politics of Security*, 299.

³³Reinisch, Introduction, 197.

depended on their programmes, which in turn depended on their analysis and ideology, which was enriched by taking part in international debates and exchanging opinions. Even Italian socialists, expelled from mainstream social democracy, benefited from contacts with other socialists.

Ettore Costa describes the attitude of social democrats and communists from West Germany, Britain and Italy towards science and technology, particularly nuclear power and space technology. While differing on strategy and principles, communists and social democrats shared a bold vision of the future based on scientific rationality. The potential of science had to be combined with collective responsibility to benefit humankind. Costa's article is a case study of different versions of transnationalism: horizontal exchanges between equal parties, mutual dependence from international sources, antagonistic learning between opponents.

4. Significant themes

The agents of internationalism were bound by their context: availability of money, time and expertise influence all the transnational activities in this issue. Communication between Jaspers, Madariaga, Rougemont and Spender was made possible by international organisations such as the Congress of Cultural Freedom, with links to the CIA. Did it simply enable this transnationalism or did it influence it? *Round Table* tried to establish links between Britain and the countries of the new Commonwealth, but its success depended on the availability of local talent. However, these experts were not disinterested, they tried to push the interests of their nation. It is important to focus on what goal these agents of internationalism pursued in engaging in international activity or localising a transnational idea. They were never 'entirely free from bias.'³⁴ They could pursue an international activity or a transnational idea because of its inherent value, but they could also exploit them opportunistically to gain a tactical advantage. Transnationalism could play into local conflicts and strengthen one faction against the other. This helps the deconstruction of methodological nationalism, as it dispels the notion of nation-state and national culture as monolithic. Transnationalism required the existence of a plurality of identities and interests.

Coordinating actors of different nations and enjoying the culture of another nation required the knowledge of foreign languages. The culture of 1950s Europe cannot be understood without intellectuals and politicians speaking other languages or reading translated books. Translation is a key part of transnationalism. According to Umberto Eco, translating is not a mechanical passive process, it involves the double activity of understanding and negotiating: translators must be cognisant of different cultures, identify the deep meaning of the text and find the most appropriate solution for the new context.³⁵ Indeed, Eco argued that 'the language of Europe is translation.' This is not just a recognition of the historical process of how European culture has been built by regular exchanges between different cultures; it is a normative statement on the need to use transnational exchange to build a better understanding of different worldviews and keep each culture as equally worthy.³⁶ Translation and localisation are key concepts to understand international activities and transnational ideas. Direct contacts built the network between Jaspers, Madariaga, Rougemont and Spender, but translated book and journals in different languages brought their works to the European stage.

The historical environment of all these episodes of transnationalism is the Cold War. Not all exchanges were about the bipolar conflict, but the Cold War influenced most things at local and global level.³⁷ Westad argues that nationalism, tradition and identity proved enduring and they were the first obstacles to universalistic projects and transnational movements. The dialectics of universalism and national rootedness is a constituent element of the Cold War and so is the development of a transnational dimension: not only did internationalism develop despite the Cold War, but often

³⁴See Jens article.

³⁵Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: esperienze di traduzione* (Milano: Mondolibri, 2013).

³⁶Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 344–51.

³⁷Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), 2.

because of the Cold War.³⁸ Bipolar tension encouraged the universalist thrust of the two blocs and cooperation within the blocs. ‘The Cold War structured the competition between the two blocs and encouraged the circulation of knowledge while blurring the frontiers between the two socioeconomic models and weakening both of them in the process.’³⁹

While violence and military activities continued and increased in other Continents, the 1950s saw the shaky beginning of detente in Europe. Despite setback and international crises – such as Berlin’s – the process culminated in the Helsinki Accords in 1975. The nature of competition began shifting from military readiness to economic success, consumption, productivity and technological progress. ‘Peaceful competition’ sums up these different strands and defines the decade itself.⁴⁰ This competition also involved ideas. It was a competition between alternative futures, both embodying Enlightenment values – ‘reason, science, progress, development, and civilization as a system.’⁴¹ The competition revolved around which system better suited them: a society built of market-bound, individual freedom or a society based on centralised rational planning.

At first the concept only involved Europe, ravaged by war and misery. The early postwar years stand out for their dismay and demise, gloom about the future and nihilism of values. With the destruction of warfare and the bipolar confrontation came fear about the decline of individual nations and Europe in general. The shadow of the two great powers shaped both intellectual milieu and political debates. However, fear did not stand alone, it was always paired with hope, just like decline opened the possibility of renewal. This was not just shallow optimism, but confidence in human responsibility. The future was central in European imagination because it was open to human intervention: ‘What Europe has brought forth, European spirit itself must overcome.’⁴² As Spender declared just after the war, Europe had a choice between nationalism and cooperation, between peace and war. Social democrats and communists always returned to the essential moral choice behind every technical decision. Since the recent past was strictly tied with nationalism, the future had a transnational and European dimension. Politicians and intellectuals looked at ways out of barbarism to peace and civilisation, as in the historical cases presented here: Jaspers, Madariaga, Rougemont and Spender adopted the new European perspective and French socialists and German social democrats redeployed their European commitment. The renewal was not abstract and individualistic, but it had a generational aspect. The experience of violence and misery of the interwar period touched high-minded intellectuals and simple workers alike. The promise was not just to avoid the suffering of the past, but also to educate a new generation not to repeat the crimes and failings of yesteryear.

This was also the decade in which the term ‘Third World’ came to the forefront. Western policymakers and intellectuals still saw the rise of the rest of the world through Eurocentric lenses, in the sense that Western-style modernisation appeared as the solution to humanity’s ills. Europeans had the duty to offer the underdeveloped nations a way to evolve to the European level.⁴³ British socialists and conservatives felt committed to helping the Commonwealth. Even non-European players such as Pakistani and Indians were involved in European transnational network, because they saw it as a source of knowledge, resources and even legitimacy. Even rejecting Eurocentrism, the central battlefield of the Cold War was still Europe.⁴⁴ However, the attempt to preserve imperial connections and turn them into a new form of consensual cooperation based on equal dignity clashed with the national aspiration of the decolonised states. Framing these operations as transnationalism only served to taint international cooperation and universalism with colonialism. Indeed, the Algerian

³⁸Sandrine Kott, ‘Cold War Internationalism’, in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. G. Sluga and P. Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016), 340–2.

³⁹Kott, ‘Cold War Internationalism’, 361.

⁴⁰Charles P. Maier, ‘The World Economy and the Cold War in the Middle of the Twentieth Century’, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 1, *Origins*, eds. M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44–5.

⁴¹Westad, *The Cold War*, 20.

⁴²See Mats Andrén’s article.

⁴³Kott, ‘Cold War Internationalism,’ 352–5.

⁴⁴Federico Romero, ‘Cold War Historiography at the Crossroads’, *Cold War History* 14, no. 4 (2014): 697.

war provided fodder to the new metanarrative that turned anti-colonialism into anti-imperialism, the dominant rhetorical register of the 1968 movement, opposition to the Vietnam War and Third Worldism.⁴⁵ This shows that the transnationalism presented in this editorial should be understood as a specific European phenomenon.

Science and technology were central to the Cold War Era.⁴⁶ They did not just shape the military and economic potential of the two blocs, but they informed the worldview of the participants. Concern about the dehumanising effect of technology and the alienation of modern society was common among intellectuals such as Jaspers and Madariaga as well as politicians such as Willy Brandt and Aneurin Bevan. Europeans in the 1950s lived in the shadow of the atomic bomb and this changed their attitude towards life. Yet this was also the period in which science lengthened life expectancy and provided cheap food and consumer goods. Science held immense potential, so intellectuals and politicians wanted to use it for humanity's welfare. Even here, the key issue was personal and collective responsibility. For liberals and social democrats, technological progress and rise in productivity dispelled the view that liberal capitalism was in crisis, still a common notion in the early 1950s.

Finally, it must be emphasised that talking about the nation state we do not just mean the nation as an invisible community binding people across time and space and a culture shaping the worldview of its citizens; we mean the state apparatus. It might have been shaken by war and under pressure from every social group, but it wielded immense power over things and people. Socialists and communists, reactionaries and liberals, scientists and artists, Europeans and non-Europeans, leaders and ordinary people feared this power being used for bad, but also wanted it to be used for good – their good. However, the issue of state power remains abstract without addressing its uses and how these uses were decided. Without referring to the transnational debates of the 1950s, we cannot understand the science policies of the West German, British and Italian state of the 1960s – as Perazzoli shows –, the policy on monopolies of the Core six – as Shaev shows –, the European and trade policies of the Wilson government in the 1960s – as Broad shows –, nor the policies on Kashmir of India and Pakistan – as Norrby shows.

5. Concluding discussion

Clearly, the 'Milwardian logic' is significant for the practising of transnational politics. As several articles demonstrate, the efforts to improve society was tightly linked to both the strengthening of the state and transnational cooperation. The very efforts to further national interest worked in the direction of integration. Even if conflicts occurred, cooperation tended to continue, as Brian Shaev stresses in his study on exchanges between the French and German social democratic parties. Demonstrating the intrinsic character of transnational relations – including tactics, opportunities, threats, hurt egos, positioning, trade-offs, national interests, internationalism, and even a bit of idealism – Shaev concludes that relations developed in 'a two track quality': conflict in one area did not necessarily prevent cooperation in another. Thus, transnationalism never was easy but the strength of this fundamental logic was considerable.

We need to take into consideration that transnationalism of the 1950s was multi-dimensional and not all dimensions were at stake at the same time. Ettore Costa underlines that transnationalism can be both vertical and horizontal. In its verticality, transnationalism took ideas and visions from an international pool and applied them to national contexts. Motives for doing this might have been different, for instance to follow international standards or trends in order not to be left behind, but also to resolve internal problems, to satisfy needs within the specific country etc. Several of the articles demonstrate how this kind of transnationalism had consequences for the political

⁴⁵Brian Shaev, 'The Algerian War, European Integration, and the Decolonization of French Socialism', *French Historical Studies* 41, no.1 (February 2018): 83.

⁴⁶Odd Arne Westad, 'The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 1, *Origins*, eds. M. P. Leffler and O. A. Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11–13.

ideologies, and how many debates within and between socialist and social democratic parties were about the need to adjust socialism to scientific and technological development. This in turn fed transnational debates. Horizontal transnationality concerns the interchanges of ideas in such international debates that takes place at conferences, meetings, in letters or pamphlets. In the political debates, the very ideas that concerned European cooperation and integration took a prominent place, and so did science and technology.

It is necessary to disabuse the irenic and teleological assumptions that often come in discussions of international transfers: not all transfers brought greater convergence, not all exchanges brought greater cooperation, not all meetings brought greater friendship.⁴⁷ The triangular dialogue between British, Indians and Pakistani did not strengthen Commonwealth solidarity, but exacerbated national differences. Talbot Imlay's long-term analysis has shown how the transnational socialist network was weakened from within, as the practice of contacts did not bring familiarity, but mistrust.⁴⁸ While ideology pushed socialist leaders to seek international cooperation, the unhappy experience with their comrades often convinced them. Transnationalism came with risks: associating with foreign ideas and people did not just expose national players to accusations from nationalists, it bound them to factors beyond their immediate control. French socialists' involvement in the Algerian war was an embarrassment for German social democrats. Transnationalism created the kind of uncertainty and lack of control that politicians tend to avoid. However, the articles of this special issue add nuance to Imlay's periodisation of the early 1960s as the 'expiration date' of socialism internationalism: exchange of ideas and cooperation were still strong and the nationalisation of socialism coexisted with continuing internationalism. Indeed, Perazzoli shows that the socialist network was expanding at this date, restoring its links with the heretical Italian socialists. As Shaev demonstrates, compartmentalisation meant that tension in one area of transnationalism did not necessarily percolate into another. Matthew Broad demonstrates that disagreements between French and British trade unions did not prevent the successful cooperation of British and Scandinavian trade unionists. Likewise, the articles describe episodes of antagonistic learning. Circulation of ideas could take place between adversaries, such as social democrats and communists or Pakistani and Indians. Learning from your enemy was a matter of survival: one had to acquire their knowledge or perish. In these cases, active localisation was strongest: taking only the useful parts and rejecting the rest. Ideas could also be taken to be rejected or to become the negative against which to define themselves.

Examining interactions between political parties and exchanges of political ideas in the 1950s we can allude to Willibald Steinmetz and Michael Freeden's approach to the complexities in conceptual history and the distinction between semasiological and onomasiological approaches. The first takes off from words to examine how concepts are represented by different users, while the second looks for phenomena and with which concepts the users are facing them.⁴⁹ One of our result is that the transnationalism of the period indicates both semasiological and onomasiological dimensions. Firstly, concepts like progress, science and Europe were of significant use in the cases of transnationalism that the article are scrutinising. Secondly, transnationalism concerned shared reactions to phenomena and event. The period faced the nuclear armament and the advantages of nuclear energy, the Hungarian revolt, the beginning of 'the economic miracle', the expansion of the welfare state and the decolonialisation.

Moreover, it can be stressed repeatedly that the transnationalism of the 1950s was not only facing contemporary challenges and threats. It was dictated both by remembrance and visions of the future. The Great Depression, the Second World War and the first detonations of atomic bombs threw shadows over Europe all through the 1950s, while hopes and visions of radically improved societal conditions and welfare opened up the windows for a bright future.

⁴⁷Reinisch, 'Introduction', 197.

⁴⁸Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 14.

⁴⁹Willibald Steinmetz and Michael Freeden, 'Conceptual History: Challenges, Conundrums, Complexities', in *Conceptual History in the European Space*, eds. W. Steinmetz, M. Freeden, and J. Fernández-Sebastián (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 1–46.

All in all, this special issue explores the entanglements of national identity, tradition or profile and transnational phenomena. It reads its cases through the lens of the political and intellectual context of the 1950s. It pays special attention to translation and localisation of ideas, debates or politics going across borders and the role of the agents of transfer. The articles pay respect to comparative differences across borders and discuss the transnational dimension of each case. In sum, the issue at stake is the duality of national identity and transnationalism.

History's purpose might not be to substitute a history of the nation-state with a history without or against the nation-state, but to find a way to study how nation-states and flows of all sorts are entangled components of the modern age.⁵⁰

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⁵⁰Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Learning by Doing: Notes about the Making of the Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History', *Journal of Modern European History* 6, no. 2 (2008): 170.

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