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The European Turn and »Social Europe«

Northern European Social Democracy 1950–1985

This contribution explores the changing character of Social Democracy in the post-war era by focussing on northern Europe up to the mid-1980s.¹ Although Social Democracy at the end of this period to a large extent was synonymous with the welfare state, it adjusted to new economic, political and social realities during these years. This was a process marked by two distinct developments. First, traditional, universal social democratic »cradle to the grave« welfare provisions, aiming at welfare expansion, full employment, fiscal redistribution, corporatist decision-making and Keynesian demand management were gradually replaced by reformed social democratic objectives. These were characterised by equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome, which implied greater emphasis on meritocratic policies such as education and vocational training. They also included active labour market policies ensuring the supply of a skilled and flexible labour force, fiscal policies with increased focus on promoting entrepreneurialism and work, greater conditionality in welfare provisions and monetary policies that put inflation targets above full employment.

Second, and the main focus of this study, this transition was accompanied by a process in which the European Social Democratic parties and politicians adopted a more firmly pro-Europe position.² Although these parties did not monolithically advocate deeper integration, majorities in one party after another came to perceive European integration as a means for projecting social democratic goals in a liberalising world economy, as noted by Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks and Carole J. Wilson.³ Social Democrats increasingly regarded the European Community (EC) as an arena to overcome socio-economic, political and ideological obstacles to carrying out traditional social democratic objectives in the form of regulative and redistributive measures at a national level. At EC/EU level, it was believed, social democratic ideas and policies could be pursued in a form that produced more egalitarian outcomes that would otherwise be the case if left to the market. Consequently, prominent Social Democrats introduced and advocated initiatives designed to facilitate a social Europe agenda, which, by the mid-1980s, crystallised in what came to be labelled a European Social Model (ESM). In the process leading up to the 1991 Maastricht Treaty the EC members negotiated an agreement on social policy, except the UK, annexed to the EC

1 Northern Europe does not only have geographical, but also ideological and political implications. Social Democratic parties have different structures, histories and connotations in different countries, and until the mid-1980s they also can be distinguished from socialist parties. Thus, taking history, ideology and structure into consideration, one possible way of defining northern European Social Democratic parties is to put the parties in Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark and Norway), Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and the British Labour Party in the same category. This definition excludes the socialist parties in southern Europe, i.e. in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece.

2 *David J. Bailey*, *The Political Economy of European Social Democracy. A Critical Realist Approach*, London 2009, pp. 1f.; *Kristian Steinnes*, *Northern European Social Democracy and European Integration, 1960–1972. Moving Towards a New Consensus?*, in: *Daniela Preda/Daniele Pasquinucci* (eds.), *Consensus and European Integration. A Historical Perspective*, Brussels 2012, pp. 107–122; *Liesbet Hooghe/Gary Marks/Carole J. Wilson*, *Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?*, in: *Comparative Political Studies* 35, 2002, pp. 965–989, here: p. 975.

3 *Ibid.*

Treaty – the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, often called the Social Charter. Although social and employment policies remain differentiated across EU today, there is also a view that there is a distinctive ESM which differs from a US market-driven model that has less generous benefits and level of rights for workers.⁴

However, the process of European integration has been ambivalent for centre-left parties, which, whether they were originally responsible for its implementation or not, closely identified themselves in terms of their programmatic identity with the welfare state and public sector services. On the one hand, the European project was perceived to threaten Social Democratic parties' policies and achievements at a national level because it undermined planning and Keynesian responses to intensified international economic competition. The reason was that the techniques of Keynesian demand management were traditionally confined to the national economy. On the other hand, Social Democrats also believed that deepened integration improved the possibilities to pursue social, employment and cohesion policies at a European level by creating and strengthening democratic and authoritative institutions in the European Community.⁵

The coming about of a social Europe agenda and an embryonic European Social Model are complex and interlinked processes which have been explained by pointing to contextual and structural changes that prompted particular responses by Social Democratic parties and politicians. Some argue that centre-left politicians and parties turned to Europe because they found it increasingly difficult to carry out traditional social democratic policies at national level due to emerging social, economic, political and ideological obstacles.⁶ Others claim that, as the significance of the EC/EU political arena increased, the question no longer was whether to develop policies at the European level but rather how social democratic actors could facilitate and implement their agendas at the European level.⁷ However, it has been questioned if and to what extent European integration did offer the means for promoting social democratic objectives in a globalised world economy. Bailey argues that the institutions of the EU are »ill-equipped to produce significant redistributive policy outcomes«, while adding, »that the process of European integration has arguably acted to encourage, or at least consolidate, the move towards the market-conforming policies, institutions and ideologies across Europe.«⁸ Some have pointed to the predominantly neoliberal or non-interventionist nature of much of the EC/EU-level economic and social policies, which made traditional social democratic goals difficult to introduce across the EC, while others have seen emerging social policies as *part* of the process of market-building rather than an outcome of politics *against* markets.⁹

4 See for example *Jean-Claude Barbier*, *The Road to Social Europe. A Contemporary Approach to Political Cultures and Diversity in Europe*, New York 2013, pp. 36–46.

5 *Fritz W. Scharpf*, *Crisis and Choice in European Social Democracy*, Ithaca, NY/London 1997; *Hooghe/Marks/Wilson*, *Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions*, pp. 974–975.

6 *William Paterson/James Sloam*, *Is the Left Alright? The SPD and the Renewal of European Social Democracy*, in: *German Politics* 15, 2006, pp. 233–248.

7 *Michael Holms/Simon Lightfoot*, *The Europeanisation of Left Political Parties. Limits to Adaptation and Consensus*, in: *Capital & Class* 93, 2007, pp. 141–156.

8 *Bailey*, *The Political Economy of European Social Democracy*, pp. 157–162.

9 *Fritz W. Scharpf*, *Governing in Europe. Effective and Democratic?*, Oxford/New York etc. 1999; *Bailey*, *The Political Economy of European Social Democracy*, and *David J. Bailey*, *Explaining the Underdevelopment of ›Social Europe‹. A Critical Realization*, in: *Journal of European Social Policy* 18, 2008, pp. 232–245; *Alan W. Calfruny*, *Social Democracy in One Continent? Alternatives to a Neoliberal Europe*, in: *id./Carl Lankowski*, *Europe's Ambiguous Unity. Conflict and Consensus in the Post-Maastricht Era*, London 1997, pp. 109–128, and *Stephan Leibfried*, *Social Policy. Left to the Judges and the Markets?*, in: *Helen Wallace/William Wallace/Mark A. Pollack*, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, Oxford/New York etc. 2005, pp. 243–275. Cf. *Gøsta Esping-Andersen*, *Politics against Markets. The Social Democratic Road to Power*, Princeton, NJ 1985.

By venturing into the nature, causes and the conditions under which European Social Democratic parties and politicians turned to Europe, this study explores how, why and to what extent the European Community was perceived as an adequate arena in which social democratic policies could be maximised. It examines the development of cross-border European social democratic cooperation, social democratic party structures and these parties' objectives in which the basis for the eventual implementation of a social Europe agenda and a European Social Model are to be found. It includes an exploration of how Social Democrats went about to turn ideas into practice and what these efforts tell us about the European turn. Hence, this contribution examines the ways in which Social Democrats regarded the European Community as a structure in which social policies could be introduced and implemented.

This research agenda is operationalised through a particular focus on the British and Scandinavian labour parties. Neither Britain nor the Scandinavian countries were founding members of the club, but when they decided to approach the Community, they were putting considerable energy into exploring the consequences of membership. It also draws on the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) because of its role across the EC social democratic community and their concrete policy proposals. These parties were, although differently and at different times, instrumental in formulating, initiating and promoting European level policies. The UK and Scandinavia eventually joined the European project, except Norway, although it has become integrated into the EU and the single market by signing about 70 agreements with the EU. Of these, the European Economic Area and the Schengen agreements are the most important.¹⁰ The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) pertains to the group of northern European Social Democrats, but appears to be less protuberant in this context. Thus, I have chosen to put less focus on the SPD than would seem obvious at first sight.

Current studies analysing the European turn and the social Europe agenda are mainly based on secondary sources, often with theoretical and normative ambitions.¹¹ There is an absence of historical analyses based on primary sources, especially those focussing on contacts between European Social Democratic parties and politicians. The leadership of these parties met and discussed the European integration issue in transnational arenas on a regular basis. As a result, the study brings in cooperation and policy-formation in these networks, in which the northern European parties were key actors. The strength of this approach is that it offers insight into considerations and dilemmas encountered by core individuals in a context in which the European issue was prominent.

I. NATIONAL PLANNING ...

The post-war years turned out to be a golden age for traditional Social Democracy. Centre-left parties emerged from the war as core societal formative forces, with social democracies in northern Europe at the front. In Britain, the Attlee government was elected to power with an ambitious welfare programme and an absolute parliamentary majority. As in Scandinavia, it managed to capture the electorate's radicalised mood and the political shift towards the left, and gave Labour a majority government for the first time. The party's programme and policies appeared as a guiding light and a huge inspiration for other socialist parties, not least in Scandinavia. According to Gøsta Esping-Andersen, the La-

10 Utenfor og innenfor. Norges avtaler med EU (Official report on Norway's relations with the EU), Norges Offentlige Utredninger (NOU), Oslo 2012, pp. 35 and 878–881.

11 Bailey, *The Political Economy of European Social Democracy*; *Hooghe/Marks/Wilson*, *Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions*, pp. 965–989.

bour Party and the Beveridge Report were a signpost, but reforms went even further in Scandinavia.¹²

However, by the 1950s the British government had achieved most of its pledges and appeared to have run out of steam. It lost the 1951 general election and stayed in opposition until 1964.¹³ In Norway and Sweden, welfare-implementing Social Democrats were clearly in charge, and ruled without interruption throughout most of the time until the mid-1960s and well into the 1970s, respectively. The Norwegian Labour Party (DNA) stayed in opposition during the years 1965–1971, 1972–1973 and 1981–1986, and the Swedish Labour Party (SAP) 1976–1982. In Denmark, the Social Democrats (SD) emerged as a leading force, but depended to a greater extent on coalition governments. Like in most other countries, the PvdA shared power with non-socialist parties during the post-war years, yet it stayed in opposition during 1958–1972, except in 1965–1966.

The cornerstones of the contemporary welfare state were set during the 1940s and 1950s. To a large extent, the golden age for traditional Social Democracy coincided with stable and sustained economic growth during the *Trente Glorieuses*. The combination of stable economic growth and the ambitious welfare state programmes along the lines of the Beveridge plan made it possible for traditional Social Democracy to introduce welfare-oriented social reform on a wide scale. Essentially, the British and the Scandinavian labour parties followed the same principles, as did the PvdA. The prevailing emphasis was that benefits should be equal and coverage universal within a comprehensive system of protection which endowed all individuals with a citizen's right to basic security and welfare.¹⁴ The system should provide social services and security. Social services chiefly concerned education, housing and medical care, while social security pertained to the state provision of insurance – against illness, unemployment, accident and the perils of old age. Every European state in the post-war years provided or financed most of these resources, yet some more than others.¹⁵ However, there were inherent incompatibilities in its combined commitment to universalism, entitlements and equality, as pointed out by Esping-Andersen.¹⁶

Although rhetorically invoking internationalism, Social Democratic parties clearly had their constituent basis in the nation state. They formulated electoral strategies that were not solely directed towards the working class, but intended to include the whole people. Even the »powerful appeal of nationalism« was applied, as pointed out by historian Donald

12 Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, p. 157.

13 Due to the British electoral system it won fewer seats than the Conservatives in the 1951 general election and lost office despite getting 48.8% of the popular vote against 48% for the Conservatives.

14 Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, p. 157; Kees van Kersbergen, *The Dutch Labour Party*, in: Robert Ladrech (ed.), *Social Democratic Parties in the European Union*. History, Organization, Politics, London 1999, pp. 155–165.

15 Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, London 2010, p. 73.

16 First, the solidarity that was sought by the welfare states' universalisation of citizenship and promise of equality of status and income were jeopardised by the spiralling cost of battling inequalities between winners and losers produced by market forces. Second, market efficiency also conflicted with worker decommodification in the sense that the implementation of generous cash benefits freed workers to take undesirable jobs out of necessity. Such decommodifying reforms were exploited primarily by workers in the lower strata of the labour market, which diminished worker productivity and stimulated public expenditure at the same time. Finally, a comprehensive introduction of universalism and entitlements required greater need for tax revenues, which implied that the public budget started to lose its potential for substantial redistribution through progressive taxation, since every marginal increase in revenue requirements necessitated a downward extension of the tax scale. This meant that workers and white-collar employees had to bear a disproportionate share of the welfare state burden. Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, pp. 165–166.

Sassoon.¹⁷ By enlarging the concept of the working class to the working people, it was possible to embrace many employed members of the middle classes, without whose support electoral victory would be problematic. According to Anthony Crosland, a mix of Keynesian countercyclical instruments, modern indicative planning and egalitarian welfare state measures would be sufficient to be elected to power and attain the goals of a just society.¹⁸

Economic policies and the bringing about of welfare provisions were largely also confined to the national arena. The national context was the structural pattern that defined Social Democratic parties and their programmatic objectives. Because the nation state was the main framework within which indicative economic planning and redistributive policies were brought about, a centralised state was considered a useful instrument. Social Democracy could successfully use it to the national economy so as to produce more egalitarian social outcomes. Thus, having accepted the liberal state and that the economic power of the bourgeoisie needed no longer be the centrepiece of Social Democracy's struggles, Social Democrats could resort to planning and managing the national economy. Supply-side policies and Keynesian demand management were key instruments for this endeavour.¹⁹

A top priority in Britain and Scandinavia was full employment, low inflation and high economic growth in order to introduce welfare provisions. These policy objectives were to be obtained by planning and managing the economy, yet this undertaking created political dilemmas. Economic growth depended to a large extent on increased export and international trade which was greatly favoured and facilitated by the liberal post-war economic regime brought about by the Bretton Woods, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation agreements, all of which required dismantling of trade barriers and tariffs.²⁰ Liberalisation was perceived to put national priorities and allocations at risk because managing the economy was considered a key tool to redirect investments according to national requirements and priorities. International trade on the other hand was crucial to economic growth and fiscal strength, especially in small and open economies. Thus, dismantling trade barriers created tensions between liberalising the economy in order to promote export-led economic growth and the ability to prioritise domestic policy objectives by managing and planning the economy.²¹

II. ... AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

In the perspective of northern European Social Democrats, European integration only would deepen this dilemma. They considered the Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC) largely as arrangements brought about by conservative and Christian Democratic politicians and parties. Joining an ostensibly liberal free market project was perceived as a challenge to continued planning at a national level. In a 1950 statement by the British Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC), it was emphasised that »no socialist party with the prospect of forming a government could accept a system [the ECSC] by which important fields of national policy were surrendered

17 *Donald Sassoon, One Hundred Years of Socialism. The West European Left in the Twentieth Century, London/New York etc. 1996, p. 132.*

18 *Anthony Crosland, The Future of Socialism, New York 1963.*

19 I have used economic management to denote the use of demand and supply-side politics to influence the level of unemployment, inflation and economic growth.

20 See for example *Lars Fredrik Øksendal, Multilateralism and Domestic Policy in the Early 1950s. Explaining the Case of Norwegian Ambiguity, in: Review of International Political Economy 14, 2007, pp. 602–625.*

21 The Dutch party was also characterised by a statist conception of social and economic planning. *Van Kersbergen, The Dutch Labour Party, pp. 157 and 161.*

to a supranational European representative authority, since such an authority would have a permanent anti-socialist majority.²² As a consequence, the NEC believed, joining would curb Britain's autonomy and its ability to bring about its ambitious welfare programme by managing the economy. The very same concerns existed in the Scandinavian labour parties.

These considerations illustrate the low expectations these parties nurtured in the 1950s about the prospects for socialist policies to evolve inside the European Community. It also explains the lack of enthusiasm and thus an absence of a consistent policy response to European integration in Britain and Scandinavia during this decade. To reluctant British and Scandinavian Social Democrats the post-war liberal regime challenged a vital part of their parties' policies because they believed national economic planning would be inconsistent with forms of international cooperation economically liberal governments would be inclined to accept.²³ The lack of enthusiasm for European integration among these Social Democrats did not change until the British government's reappraisal of its European policies in 1960.²⁴

In contrast to the Scandinavian and British labour parties, the 1950s were essential in defining party attitudes towards the European integration process for the socialist and Social Democratic parties of the six Community member states. The French Socialist Party (SFIO) had been among the protagonists of European integration in the post-war years, and it had played a major part in creating the Community and equipping it with institutions that would bring it into being. It could also claim it was a socialist-led government that negotiated the Treaties of Rome.²⁵ The SPD had advocated a European system designed to weaken the position of the nation states. Although the party voted against concrete integration projects in the early 1950s, it was an integrative force in the sense that it favoured policies involving reduced national sovereignty. In 1957, it supported the setting up of the EEC and the commitment of West Germany as a founding member.²⁶ In much the same way, the Italian and Belgian socialist parties, although approaching the issue in different ways during the early fifties, supported the Rome Treaties and the creation of the Common Market.²⁷ In the Netherlands, the European project was in keeping with national political priorities and the PvdA's planning ambitions. At the end of the 1950s, core Europe Social Democratic and socialist parties explicitly supported European

22 Quoted from: *Kevin Featherstone*, *Socialist Parties and European Integration. A Comparative History*, Manchester 1988, p. 49.

23 See *Edmund Dell*, *The Schuman Plan and the British Abdication of Leadership in Europe*, Oxford 1995, p. 190; *Birgit Nüchel Thomsen* (ed.), *The Odd Man Out? Danmark og den europæiske integration 1948–1992*, Odense 1993; *Lynton J. Robins*, *The Reluctant Party. Labour and the EEC, 1961–1975*, Ormskirk 1979; *Sieglinde Gstöhl*, *Reluctant Europeans. Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland in the Process of Integration*, London 2002; *Stephen George*, *An Awkward Partner. Britain in the European Community*, Oxford/New York etc. 1990.

24 *Michael Newman*, *The British Labour Party*, in: *Richard T. Griffiths* (ed.), *Socialist Parties and the Question of Europe in the 1950's*, Leiden/New York etc. 1993, pp. 162f.; *Robins*, *The Reluctant Party*, p. 14; *Vibeke Sørensen*, *The Danish Social Democrats, 1947–1963*, in: *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*, pp. 178–200; *Helge Pharo*, *The Norwegian Labour Party*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 201–220; *Ulf Olsson*, *The Swedish Social Democrats*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 221–238.

25 *Wilfried Loth*, *The French Socialist Party, 1947–1954*, in: *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*, pp. 25–42, here: p. 25, and *Denis Lefebvre*, *The French Socialist Party, 1954–1957*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 43–56, here: p. 56.

26 *Rudolf Hrbek*, *The German Social Democratic Party, I*, in: *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*, pp. 63–77, here: pp. 63 and 74, and *Jürgen Bellers*, *The German Social Democratic Party, II*, *ibid.*, pp. 78–89.

27 *Ennio di Nolfo*, *The Italian Socialists*, in: *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*, pp. 90–98; *Wendy Asbeek Brusse*, *The Dutch Socialist Party*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 106–134, and *Thierry E. Mommens/Luc Minten*, *The Belgian Socialist Party*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 140–161.

integration, although it had chiefly been brought about by conservative and Christian Democratic parties.

III. ADJUSTING TO NEW REALITIES

At the eve of the 1960s, the first phase in reconstructing post-war Europe had come to an end. Trade quotas had been abolished and the European integration process had been consolidated. Agreements had been reached for a customs union among the six ECSC countries, in which external tariffs would be harmonised and internal trade barriers dismantled according to an agreed timetable. In 1960, the EEC had been in operation for two years, and was progressing faster than expected. In the wake of these developments, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) had been established in the wake of the failed Free Trade Area negotiations. At the same time, although having been a chief proponent of creating EFTA, the British Conservative government led by Harold Macmillan was in the process of redefining its European policies. The successful creation of the EEC meant that Britain risked being marginalised in Europe.²⁸ As a consequence, the British – followed by the Danish, Irish and eventually, in 1962, the Norwegian government – submitted its first bid to join the EEC in 1961. Due to its non-aligned policies, the Swedish government applied for associated membership.

These contextual changes had repercussions for the dynamism in European integration, but also for the policy-formulating process in and among Social Democrats in northern Europe. European integration could no longer be regarded exclusively a continental affair, especially if Britain was to become a member of the EEC. If enlarged, a core question inside transnational social democratic networks was how joining the Community would influence prospects for the parties' objectives and adopted policies. To explore these issues the Socialist International (SI) initiated high-level talks between leading Social Democrats and thus led to the formation of new transnational cooperation patterns in which the role of the British and Scandinavian labour was crucial. The centre-left parties of the Community and EFTA also agreed to intensify their transnational collaboration through the SI to bridge divisions between the two organisations. The SI had actively engaged in the European integration issue since its re-establishment in 1951.²⁹

From the outset, the EEC Social Democratic parties had made substantial efforts to maximise their influence on the Community by formalising and intensifying their cooperation.³⁰ Growing out of the socialist group of the European Parliament (EP), their undertaking had been formalised by the setting up of the »Liaison Bureau of the Socialist Parties of the European Community« (Liaison Bureau) in 1957. Its declared purpose was to strengthen interparty relations and, »in particular, to define joint, freely agreed positions on problems raised by the existence of the European Community«.³¹ From the early 1960s, observer representatives from the SI and the Socialist Group in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe were invited to the Liaison Bureau's Congresses.

The changing European economic and political context also redirected the focus of the Scandinavian Social Democrats towards a wider northern European framework. During the 1950s, little enthusiasm was to be found inside the regional transnational network – the

28 *Kristian Steinnes*, *The European Challenge. Britain's EEC Application in 1961*, in: *Contemporary European History* 7, 1998, pp. 61–79.

29 *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*. See also *International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (IISH)*, *SI, Socialist International Information (SII)*, vol. X, 1960, p. 472.

30 *Griffiths*, *Socialist Parties*.

31 Declaration of the first Congress of the EEC socialist parties in Luxembourg, January 1957, *IISH, SI 45, SII 1977*, p. 111.

Scandinavian Cooperation Committee of the Nordic Labour movement (SAMAK).³² Yet a closer examination of SAMAK's activities and cooperation patterns during the 1950s and 1960s demonstrates significantly less interest and a lower frequency of these meetings in the latter as compared with the former decade.³³ Apparently, from 1960 onwards the Scandinavian labour parties found a wider transnational framework a more appropriate arena than a purely Scandinavian network. The same applied to leading British Labour Party politicians. It brought social democratic party elites across institutional and national borders closer together, which makes it crucial to explore processes taking place in these networks. It also substantiates the suggestion that the changes taking place from 1960 onwards had an impact beyond the evolving intra-Community democratic socialist cooperation.

The overall purpose for restructuring cross-border cooperation from the early 1960s was to maximise social democratic influence in the Community. Also, to British and Scandinavian Social Democrats a core issue was to explore in which ways and to what extent membership of the EEC/EC would influence their programmatic objectives. At its May 1960 Congress, the Liaison Bureau suggested that at the present stage of European integration it was necessary to »work out a common European programme«. It should define the principles that must serve as a guideline to the these parties and to the socialist group in the EP in the formulation of their opinions regarding the compound problems of European integration.³⁴ It should also involve northern European parties in the sense that they increasingly were woven into common transnational networks.

Although the 1962 Liaison Bureau's draft report, a »Common Programme of Action for the Socialist Parties of the European Community«, stated that it deemed it especially »urgent to introduce efficient economic planning on a European-wide scale«, French president de Gaulle effectively put social democratic policy objectives on hold throughout the 1960s.³⁵ Although he could hamper the implementation of Community-wide social democratic policies, the French president could not halt the development of the parties' ideas and objectives. Accordingly, plans to introduce more coordinated and institutionalised socialist policies at the European level evolved inside the networks throughout the decade.

Scandinavian Social Democrats feared that membership, even associate membership, of the EEC meant abandoning economic policies with a strong focus on employment and social security.³⁶ However, their colleagues inside the Community soothed them.³⁷ At a

32 Much like the SI, SAMAK had been re-established after the war as a tool for developing social democratic ideas and policies. It had been a dynamic and effective network with a broad agenda involving European integration issues during the late 1940s and 1950s. Although having been set up prior to the First World War, in 1912, the SAMAK lay prone most of the interwar years. After a couple of wartime talks, it was re-established in 1945 after which the leadership of the parties and trade unions met regularly, normally twice a year.

33 Norwegian Labour Movement's Archive and Library (AAB), DNA, Da 1945, box 5, Da 1946, box 11, Da 1947, box 17, Da 1948, box 21, Da 1949, box 28, Da 1950, box 37, Da 1951, box 47. Danish Labour Movement's Library and Archive (ABA), Socialdemokratiet, SAMAK, Ks 326, Ks 327–328 (1952–1954), Ks 329–330 (1955–1958), Ks 331 (1959–1962). ABA, Per Hækkerup's Papers (PHA), Ks 653. Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library (ARAB), Tage Erlander's Papers (TEA), Swedish Labour Party (SAP) and Olof Palme's Papers (OPA).

34 *Simon Hix*, *Shaping a Vision. A History of the Party of European Socialists 1957–2002*, Brussels 2002, p. 13.

35 Quoted from: *Ibid.*, p. 15.

36 Finance and Economic Policy Sub-Committee, 2 and 27 July 1961, National Museum of Labour History, Manchester (LAM), International Dept., box EEC memoranda etc.

37 Summary report of meeting of the Contact Committee of the Socialist International, which referred to fear the Scandinavian Cooperation Committee of the Nordic Labour movement (SAMAK), 2 July 1961, IISH, SI, 590.

meeting of the SI »Contact Committee on European Cooperation and Economic Integration« in mid-1961, the SPD's Willy Birkelbach emphasised that even as a full member of the EEC national economic planning would still be possible.³⁸ Because it would be impossible to plan independently at a national level, it would be necessary to »shape a form of supra-national planning, guaranteeing continuing expansion«. What was needed, he suggested, was strengthened social democratic influence in Europe, »not only influence in individual countries«. ³⁹ On the basis of ten years' experience, the EEC Social Democrats emphasised at their 1962 Congress – assuaging their peripheral northern European fellows – that the development of the Community had not obstructed »the achievement of socialist aims: quite to the contrary«. ⁴⁰

On the whole, the changes created by the setting up of the EEC and the subsequent redefinition of British European policy from early 1960 was followed by intensified transnational social democratic networking.⁴¹ Participation in these networks brought individuals directly as well as indirectly into contact with processes of deliberation in parties and labour movements of other countries. They offered an opportunity for socialist leaders and politicians with different functions to discuss the issue of European integration. Information and impressions from these encounters were both implicitly and explicitly channelled into intra-party policy-making processes. Reconfigured social democratic network structures also established a framework in which perceptions of joining the EEC/EC had a potential to evolve, and which are likely to have involved socialisation of leading politicians.⁴²

IV. NORTHERN EUROPEAN INITIATIVES

Following the January 1963 breakdown of the first British membership negotiations, discussions on how to introduce more socialist policies on a European level were less intense. Efforts to enlarge the Community re-emerged in the mid-1960s when the British Labour Party Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced in November 1966 his government's decision to probe whether conditions existed for British EEC/EC membership. Wilson's decision prompted larger parts of the transnational social democratic community to intensify discussions on how to influence EC policies.

38 2 July 1961, IISH, SI, 590; and report from SI: Finance and Economic Policy Sub-Committee, 27 July 1961, LAM, International Dept., box EEC memoranda etc.

39 Finance and Economic Policy Sub-Committee. Report from SI, Meeting of the Contact Committee on European Cooperation and Economic Integration, 2 July 1961, LAM Circular No. 49/61, 27 July 1961, p. 10.

40 Documents of the Fifth Congress of the Socialist Parties of the European Community, 5–6 November 1962, p. 713, IISH, SI, SII Vol. XII.

41 *Kristian Steinnes*, Socialist Party Network in Northern Europe. Moving Towards the EEC Application of 1967, in: *Wolfram Kaiser/Brigitte Leucht/Morten Rasmussen* (eds.), *The History of the European Union. Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity 1950–72*, London 2009, pp. 93–109.

42 *Alastair Iain Johnston*, Treating International Institutions as Social Environments, in: *International Studies Quarterly* 45, 2001, pp. 487–515, here: p. 495; *Frank Schimmelfennig*, Transnational Socialization. Community-Building in an Integrated Europe, in: *Wolfram Kaiser/Peter Starie* (eds.), *Transnational European Union. Towards a Common Political Space*, London 2005, pp. 61–82, here: p. 63; *Robert Axelrod*, Promoting Norms. An Evolutionary Approach to Norms, in: *idem* (ed.), *The Complexity of Cooperation. Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration*, Princeton, NJ 1997, pp. 40–68, here: p. 58; *Jeffrey T. Checkel*, Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change, in: *International Organization* 55, 2001, pp. 553–588, here: pp. 562f.

Initially, Scandinavian Social Democrats responded differently to Wilson's move. In keeping with repeated statements by SD Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag, the Danish government declared that it would resume negotiations with the Community »at the latest at the same time« as the British government.⁴³ The Norwegian party, which was in opposition during 1965–1971, and the Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) recommended the Norwegian centre-right coalition government to express the government's unequivocal intention to »support vigorously the British initiative«.⁴⁴ The Swedish SAP Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, maintained in late 1966 that Sweden was »heavily dependent on foreign trade« and thus interested in participation in an integrated European market »on the widest possible basis«.⁴⁵ Although the non-alignment policy still applied, what is evident from the mid-1967 deliberations in the Swedish government is that it did consider applying for full membership under article 237 of the Rome Treaty.⁴⁶ It thought it easier to change a bid for full EEC membership with an application for associated membership than the other way around.

At this time, neither the Liaison Bureau nor the socialist group of the EP or the SI were directing the process for developing European-level social democratic policies, but the Scandinavians, and the Norwegian Labour Party in particular. One reason conservative and Christian Democratic parties had managed to dominate core Europe policy formulation, DNA spokesmen suggested, was the lack of cooperation and coordination on the part of the labour movement and the Social Democratic parties. Based on this realisation, the recommendation issued by DNA and LO, urging the centre-right coalition government to support the British initiative, also initiated a process to formulate a »social democratic programme for Europe«. A report issued by the party's International Committee bluntly stated that in principle »our position is clear: We want to commit ourselves to take part in the development of an ever closer cooperation among the European countries«.⁴⁷

As a result, the chairman of the DNA, and later Prime Minister, Trygve Bratteli, decided to set up a policy-planning unit to explore these ideas. It was headed by Per Kleppe who was instrumental to the party's European policy-making during these years. He discussed the idea of developing a European social democratic programme with individuals inside the transnational socialist network across Europe.⁴⁸ In keeping with widespread opinions

43 See for example Public Record Office (PRO), Prime Minister's papers (PREM) 13/903 and Krag's speech at Heads of Fin/EFTA's meeting, 5 December 1966.

44 European Cooperation, resolution by the DNA, January 1967, AAB, Finn Moe's papers (FMA), box 0009; DNA biennial reports, 1965–1966, p. 98. See also DNA report 1967–1968, and minutes DNA biennial conferences 27–29 May 1965, 21–23 May 1967.

45 Heads of Fin/EFTA's meeting, 5 December 1966, p. 5, PRO, PREM 13/903.

46 See for example ARAB, TEA, box 038, 29 June 1967 and TEA, box 083, memos 16 and 29 June 1967. Sweden's non-alignment policies prevented its government from applying for full membership at the same time as Britain. Sweden's policy towards core Europe had been defined by Erlander in his so-called »Metal Speech« (*Metalltalet*) in 1961. It was highly significant as it defined the Social Democratic government's policy towards European integration for almost thirty years. Sweden's freedom from alliances, he had pointed out, »must be supplemented by a persistent effort to avoid any commitment, even outside the sphere of military policy, which would make it difficult or impossible for Sweden, in the event of a conflict, to choose a neutral course and which would make the world around us no longer confident that Sweden really wanted to choose such a course«.

47 International Committee, Norwegian Foreign Policy, autumn 1966, AAB, FMA, box 008 (author's translation).

48 Kleppe was appointed Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Finance 1957–1962. He was head of the economic department of the EFTA secretariat during 1963–1967. He served as minister of trade and shipping 1971–1972, Finance Minister 1973–1979 and head of the Secretariat for long-term planning until 1981. During 1981–1988 he was general secretary of EFTA. See also *Per Kleppe, Kleppepakke. Meninger og minner fra et politisk liv*, Oslo 2003.

in the networks, Kleppe saw no contradiction between joining the EC and the parties' ability to carry out their policies.⁴⁹ Developing more social democratic policies, he claimed, summing up the unit's position in February 1969, included promoting societal change by applying adequate political tools. It required increased knowledge of power structures and policy-making processes in the Community and eventually finding »new forms of international cooperation and policies furthering our basic values«. Only by joint action, he emphasised, could western European Social Democrats become an important alternative to liberal and conservative politics.⁵⁰ During the latter part of the 1960s, the DNA put substantial efforts into developing plans on how to achieve their policy objectives in a European Community context, believing a social democratic programme was an important step to introduce more socialist policies on a European level.⁵¹

At the eve of the 1970s, the bringing about of a European programme had developed into a main plank of DNA's European policy.⁵² The party's 1970–73 manifesto explicitly stated that the objective was to »initiate cooperation between Western European Social Democratic parties to prepare a European programme« on which a »Europe characterised by democratic socialist principles« could be built. Norwegian social democratic policy was built on the wish to contribute to the development of a »new Europe that will leave behind nationalistic rivalries and build its future on fellowship and cooperation between nations«. Establishing a social democratic alternative for an enlarged Europe was not naïve »but realistic«, deputy chairman Reulf Steen argued when preparing for the June 1970 parliamentary debate on whether to enter EC membership negotiations.⁵³ The National Executive Committee of the DNA stated their wish for democratic socialist ideas to form the basis »for our future work in Europe [...] Socialist parties are already playing an important role and it is vital to ensure that these forces are strengthened«.⁵⁴

DNA committed itself to pursue EC membership and to developing a programme for Europe.⁵⁵ Besides, during the latter part of the 1960s, the party elite put substantial efforts into bringing about its programmatic objectives across the network of socialist parties and politicians, mainly inside the Socialist International. It demonstrates that a positive perception of joining the EC had evolved and became embedded in the centre-right leadership of the Norwegian Labour Party. The leadership believed that EC membership was in keeping with the party's policy objectives, and that joining the Community also had the capacity to facilitate national and European social policies.

In Sweden, SAP's aspirations and aims somewhat reflected those of the DNA. An often-recurring argument against membership of the EC, the long-serving Swedish Minister of

49 Per Kleppe, speech, 21 April 1970, AAB, Per Kleppe's papers (PKA), box 44.

50 Policies for the 1970's, 10 February 1969, AAB, PKA, box 25 (own translation, KS).

51 Statement DNA, European Cooperation, January 1967, AAB, FMA, box 0009; and International Committee, European Cooperation, 18 January 1967, FMA, box 0008.

52 See EEC questions to DNA's leadership, by Helge Hveem at the Norwegian International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), 26 November 1970, AAB, PKA, box 45.

53 Minute joint meeting International Committee, DNA members of the Foreign Committee and Parliamentary Labour Party's EEC committee, 12 June 1970, AAB, PKA, box 44.

54 IISH, SI, SII, p. 71; Meeting International Committee, 19 January 1967, AAB, FMA, box 008.

55 Hans Otto Frøland argues that changes that appeared in DNA's attitude and actions during the 1960s largely were tactical. He suggests that transnational contacts largely were channels for outlets rather than tools for importing new ideas. *Hans Otto Frøland*, DNA og Vest-Europa 1945–1995. Kontakter, samarbeid og utsyn, in: *Knut Heidar/Lars Svåsand* (eds.), *Partier uten grenser?*, Oslo 1997, pp. 169–201, here: pp. 199f.; *Hans Otto Frøland*, The Second Norwegian EEC Application, 1967. Was There a Policy at all?, in: *Wilfried Loth* (ed.), *Crises and Compromises. The European Project 1963–1969*, Baden-Baden/Brussels 2001, pp. 437–458, here: pp. 448f.

Trade Gunnar Lange told »Aktuelt« in 1968, had revolved around the fact that conservative forces dominated it. It was, he suggested, »too pessimistic and unimaginative an opinion about the ability on the Left in the EEC member states to assert itself«.⁵⁶ In general terms he pointed to prospects for increased socialist influence in an enlarged Community, and the need for a strategy to bring about such objectives.⁵⁷ However, in keeping with policy formulation since the early 1960s, the Swedish Labour Party election manifesto for 1970, the »Kramforsmanifest«, stated that Sweden's relations with the EC should not deflect the SAP from carrying out social democratic policies, including a commercial policy favouring economic growth in developing countries.⁵⁸

As demonstrated, the Swedish government and Prime Minister Olof Palme did not rule out applying for full membership, provided Sweden's non-alignment policy could be maintained.⁵⁹ Yet it was unclear whether this was compatible with becoming full members of the Community. »So far, we have been unable to get a clear answer from the EEC on this point«, SAP's former international secretary Kaj Björk emphasised in a speech to the Council of Europe in 1970.⁶⁰ According to the DNA, Sweden's position vis-à-vis core Europe and the EC countries' perception of Sweden had changed substantially compared with the early 1960s. To many people, these changes and Olof Palme's bold expressions and activities across Europe had rather come as a surprise.⁶¹

On the eve of the 1960s, leading labour party politicians in Norway, Sweden and even Britain doubted that it would be possible to carry out social democratic policies as members of the EEC. By the end of the decade, however, the well-connected centre-right leadership of these parties, which had built up extensive networks, thought membership was consistent with their programmatic objectives, as did Danish and Finnish Social Democrats.⁶² Consequently, they initiated work on a European social democratic programme. DNA's initiatives, carried out in the context of the SI, resulted from 1969 onwards in concerted efforts to pick up the 1960 Liaison Bureau's initial plans for a social democratic programme for Europe.

At the end of the decade, the objective of facilitating socialist policies on a European level was becoming widespread inside the SI network.⁶³ At its June 1969 Congress in Eastbourne, an important topic on the SI's agenda was how Social Democrats could strengthen their policies in an enlarged European Community. Thus, from the early 1970s moderate socialist objectives for the Community at the northern European periphery had largely fallen into line with those of the socialist parties of the EC.⁶⁴ Henceforth, a common purpose underpinned northern European and EC Social Democrats alike to bring

56 Aktuelt, 30 October 1968, quoted from: IISH, SI, SII, 1968, p. 268. Gunnar Lange served as minister of trade during the years 1955–1970.

57 Having scrutinised Swedish archives, the idea of a socialist programme for Europe appears to have been of a more general character in Sweden than in the case of DNA.

58 The Swedish EEC policy is stable, 1970, ARAB, TEA, box 038.

59 Report by Thorvald Stoltenberg, Norwegian LO, 8 May 1970, AAB, DNA, box 479. See also the Swedish government's foreign policy statement to Riksdagen (parliament) on 29 April 1970, and 1970/Nordic cooperation, speech by Palme in Bonn on 12 March 1970, 8 May 1970, AAB, DNA, box 479; and 1970/Nordic cooperation, talks Stoltenberg – Palme, 13 April 1970, p. 2, DNA.

60 Speech by Kaj Björk, 28 January 1970, and memorandum, Kaj Björk, 6 February 1970, ARAB, TEA, box 086.

61 Speech Per Kleppe, Oslo Arbeidersamfunn, 21 April 1970, p. 4, AAB, PKA, box 44.

62 Report, Social Democratic Nordic Congress on European Integration, Helsinki, 18–19 December 1970, p. 5, ARAB, SAMAK.

63 See for example article by Bruno Pittermann, chairman of the SI, in: IISH, SII, 1969, p. 4.

64 Steinnes, Northern European Social Democracy and European Integration.

about a social Europe agenda, although the increasingly influential left-wing leadership of the British Labour Party would reverse its commitment during the latter part of the 1970s.

V. RESTRUCTURING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ACTIVITIES?

In the European Community, the overall objective of the Liaison Bureau as well as for the socialist group in the European Parliament was to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of their policies. Yet although the call for more left-wing policies in the EC rose on the agenda throughout the 1960s, social democratic and socialist organisational structures remained unchanged. Parties still worked mainly on a national basis. In the early 1970s, the SI, the Liaison Bureau and the Socialist Group of the EP all argued that their policy objectives could not be achieved without creating a supranational structure for party-political cooperation.⁶⁵ This was in keeping with ideas put forward by the transnational socialist network since the mid-1960s, notably the PvdA. The Dutch party had from the outset been strongly in favour of European integration. Since the first Congress of the EEC socialist parties in 1957, PvdA representatives had consistently advocated closer cooperation between the Social Democratic parties outside the EP.⁶⁶

The pro-European policy line had largely been carried out by a group of leading party politicians who participated in transnational arenas – the ECSC Assembly, the SI and in the Council of Europe – and who also had played a prominent role in the Dutch parliament on the European issue. For a party with ambitions of introducing social, monetary and economic planning on a European level, the EEC Treaty was underdeveloped, PvdA spokesmen argued in the »Staten-Generaal«, because common European policies for economic planning, for managing the economic cycle and for a central monetary policy were absent. Wendy A. Brusse quotes Gerhard Nederhorst who claimed that to the PvdA the Rome Treaty was »not a leap in the dark but ›the departure point for a journey into the future, in which everything [was] possible«.⁶⁷ The ensuing years were to prove Nederhorst's point.

In 1966, the Bureau of the PvdA proposed to the November 1966 Congress of the EC socialist parties that more powers had to be given to the EP because an empowered EP was essential for developing European parties in a democratic framework. It also suggested that on important matters decisions should be taken jointly by the Liaison Bureau and the socialist group of the EP and subsequent resolutions »mise en œuvre par les partis nationaux«. Moreover, socialist commissioners should act in accordance with opinions adopted by the Liaison Bureau and the EP socialist group. Overall, the PvdA suggested a more coherent approach by the Social Democratic parties in order to democratise the Community and also introduce more social policies at Community level.⁶⁸

65 Council Conference of the SI, May 1971, SII 1971, pp. 109–110, IISH, SI 23; Congress of the EC socialist parties, 28–30 June 1971, SII 1971, pp. 132–33, IISH, SI 23; European Parliament (socialist group) 1971–82, A Socialist Programme for Europe, 15 November 1971, pp. 1–12, IISH, SI 593 and Walter Behrendt, meeting Bureau SI, 15 November 1971, ARAB, SAP, E5, box 055; European Parliament (socialist group), 15 November 1971, pp. 1–12, IISH, SI 593.

66 Wendy A. Brusse/Richard T. Griffiths, Testimony of an Eyewitness. Marinus van der Goes van Naters, in: *Griffiths, Socialist Parties*, pp. 135–139; Wendy A. Brusse, *The Dutch Socialist Party*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 106–134.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 132f.

68 Vers un Parti Européen Progressiste, European Union Archives, Florence (EUA), Groupe Socialiste, Parlement européen (GSEP) 51, PE/GS/21/1970.

Inspired by the PvdA proposals, a number of initiatives were taken towards the end of the decade with a view to create a European socialist party. In May 1969, a broader group of EC Social Democrats, including British Labour Party representatives, meeting under the chairmanship of PvdA's Henk Vredeling, urged the formation of a European socialist party.⁶⁹ Vredeling and his associates formed a European Political Action Group to work for the creation of a European socialist or progressive party.⁷⁰ Besides, the president of the Liaison Bureau, Lucien Radoux, and the chairman of the socialist group of the EP, Francis Vals, proposed to reform the Liaison Bureau to give it a more appropriate structure.⁷¹ At the time, also social democratic Commissioners Sicco Mansholt (PvdA) and the Italian Socialist Party's (PSI) Lionello Levi-Sandri were deeply concerned with organised socialist influence at EC level and put forward proposals for the formation of a European Socialist Party.⁷² Although pressure was building up, some members of the Liaison Bureau had reservations about creating a European party.⁷³

Vredeling argued that efforts to set up a Social Democratic party on a European level were paralysed due to at least three shortages.⁷⁴ First, the organisation of the Liaison Bureau was inadequate, and had no apparatus at its disposal. The secretary of the Bureau also formed the secretariat for the socialist group at the EP, which not only demonstrated the shortage of organisational resources but also lack of interest in European affairs in national parties. Second, the Liaison Bureau did not do much, except issuing a declaration »now and then«, which was read by a very limited group of people. Congresses were convened, but lacked power to adopt binding decisions. Even unanimous congress decisions had to be discussed and approved by the national parties. Finally, no common socialist programme existed.⁷⁵ Due to these flaws, Vredeling concluded that most that had been achieved at the EC socialist parties' congresses was, a »coup d'épée dans l'eau, rien de plus«.⁷⁶

In 1970, a Liaison Bureau report emphasised that if a politically and economically unified Community was to be created, then »one certain way of ensuring that representative democratic control is continued at the new supranational level, as at the old level, is by the creation of supranational political parties to work through a greatly strengthened and directly elected European Parliament«.⁷⁷ A later study underlined this by stating that only when a directly elected supranational body was put in place there would be »real need for the socialist parties to cooperate on an international level rather than within the limited confines of a nation state«.⁷⁸ As long as Social Democrats worked on a national basis, the current situation would not change. National political parties would only have limited influence in Community affairs, especially if the EC was enlarged. In a supranational Community there would be competition among groups to affect decision-making both

69 Socialist Co-operation, April 1970, p. 19, IISH, SI 595. See also Harold Wilson at the 1969 SI Eastbourne Congress, Harold Wilson, 17 June, 16–20 June 1969, IISH, SI, SII 1969.

70 Socialist Co-operation, April 1970, pp. 19–21, IISH, SI 595.

71 EUA, GSEP 50, PE/GS/125/69.

72 Socialist Co-operation, April 1970, p. 19, IISH, SI 595.

73 Procès-verbal de la réunion du Bureau de liaison, 14.11.1969, EUA, PS/CE/68/69.

74 *Henk Vredeling, Vers un parti progressiste Européen*, EUA, GSEP 51, PE/GS/21/1970. It was originally published in the Dutch monthly journal »Socialisme en Democratie«, 1970, No. 3.

75 Social Democrats had been working on a joint programme for agriculture, but it had never been adopted by the national parties of the EC nor figured on their agendas.

76 EUA, GSEP 51, PE/GS/21/1970.

77 Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community (CSPEC), *Socialist Cooperation in the European Community – Towards the Creation of a Supranational Political Party*, April 1970, p. 1, IISH, SI 595.

78 Report issued by the Liaison Bureau, April 1971, p. 28, IISH, SI 594.

at national and Community levels. Supranational political parties were expected to draw the national parties' attention and actions more firmly to Community affairs and thus strengthen integrative processes.

Social Democrats in the EC agreed that the ideas and practical objectives shared by their parties could »best be carried into effect through the most comprehensive form of European Integration«. They decided to reform the Liaison Bureau with a view to create a more adequate structure, and in 1974 it was turned into the »Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community« (CSPEC).⁷⁹ It explicitly stated that its objectives could not be achieved without a European socialist party. The CSPEC was founded on the basis of a document approved by the 1973 Congress in Bonn: »Towards a Social Europe«. It was designed to integrate the Danish and British parties into the transnational party-family structure of the EC by focussing on policies rather than the launch of an ambitious reform package and organisational structures. As a result, it focused on social policies which had the potential to unite the whole spectrum of Social Democratic parties.

The 22-page document contained a number of issues, all of which pointed towards the establishment of a social Europe. Its main objective was the development of a social dimension of the EC by ensuring that economic integration and growth would be characterised by a corresponding improvement in quality of life. It highlighted the right to work through safeguarding full employment and equality of opportunity, and a Community industrial policy. It drew the attention to the aim of achieving a more human environment, through common health and safety standards. Moreover, it focused on social security in Europe through the standardisation of social benefits. It dealt with democratisation of the European economy through the common provisions for workers participation and also with income distribution and asset utilisation through a Community revenue policy.⁸⁰

Yet turning the Liaison Bureau into the CSPEC did not make it a supranational party. Even its first president, Wilhelm Dröscher of the German SPD, conceived of it as an instrument for »supporting co-operation« between parties because the »development of a ›European Socialist Party‹ is not a realistic possibility in the near future«. ⁸¹ To be considered a European party, it required the capacity for independent political action to influence decision-making at Community level. This would on the one hand involve an ability to gain office at the supranational level by means of commonly agreed lists of candidates, coordinated election campaigns and free and fair direct elections to the EP, and, on the other hand, the adoption of a common policy platform on issues relevant for the Community. The common policy platform would have to be decided at some congress by the member parties, which in the case of the EC could be the congresses of the socialist parties of the Community. Moreover, national party delegation should not have a veto power on deciding upon a common policy platform, but a system of majority voting must have evolved.⁸²

However, the statutes of the CSPEC specified that its decisions were not binding for the parties unless approved by the parties concerned. The question of binding decisions had been discussed in the socialist network for some time. While preparing for the ninth con-

79 Approved on 5 April 1974.

80 *Hix*, *Shaping a Vision*, p. 21.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 24; *Geoffrey Pridham/Pippa Pridham*, *Transnational Parties in the European Community II. The Development of European Party Federations*, in: *Stanley Henig* (ed.), *Political Parties in the European Community*, London 1979.

82 A supranational party would also require a permanent party organisation to support its members elected to Community institutions, to carry out research of supranational challenges, to keep the national parties informed about its supranational activities, and to provide liaison between the national parties. It would also require adequate finance of its own.

gress of the EC socialist parties in April 1973, PvdA's Harry van den Bergh argued that it should take binding decisions for all participants. The PvdA believed, he emphasised, that »parties which supported resolutions that were adopted should feel bound by those resolutions«. ⁸³ Otherwise they would have no practical effect. Also examinations carried out on behalf of the SI concluded that binding decisions were desirable, but difficult to obtain. ⁸⁴

VI. A COMMON ELECTION MANIFESTO

The debates on drawing up a European programme would be put to test by the introduction of direct elections to the EP. At a rhetorical level, a social Europe idea was very much alive. »We believe that the time now has come for the European socialists to work closer together in order to create a common programme for action within an expanded Community«, Ivar Nørgaard, the Danish minister responsible for European affairs, concluded at the June 1972 SI Congress in Vienna, »so that we are prepared« to push forward a Europe »built upon democratic rights for everybody and human equality and social justice.« ⁸⁵

However, until direct elections to the European Parliament became a prominent issue in 1973, no real efforts had been undertaken to put together a social democratic programme for Europe. Yet, in 1974, when it was decided that direct elections to the EP should take place in or after 1978 (finally set for 7 to 10 June 1979), the conference of party leaders decided to prepare a common election manifesto. ⁸⁶ If successful, it would for the first time turn plans for a joint European programme into practice. Eventually, in the spring of 1977 a draft was presented. After having been examined by the SI Bureau, it was soon forwarded to the affiliated parties. ⁸⁷ The idea was to incorporate amendments and then agree on a final version which was to be adopted at the CSPEC congress.

Although the June 1978 conference of party leaders stated that the objective was to make the June 1979 EP elections »a triumph for our common ideas and ambitions«, the programme was never finalised. This was due to the reluctance of several member parties, notably the British and Danish labour parties and the French Socialist Party (PS). ⁸⁸ In that situation the Bureau decided that the draft programme should form basis for discussions and provide future guidelines for the member parties, and that a condensed version should be produced for the purpose of the election campaign. Although some parties adopted the draft manifesto in an amended form in the national party programmes for the elections, notably the PvdA and to some extent the SPD, the CSPEC member parties campaigned on the basis of separate national programmes.

Social Democrats who had engaged in European networks were disappointed and did regret the lack of a common approach. However, the manifesto readily acknowledged that the socialist parties had inherited different experiences over the years, and that they operated in countries where the »level of economic development, intensity of social struggle, cultural traditions, awareness of social problems and the interplay of internal political alliances

83 CSPEC 1972–82, meeting of the Bureau of the Socialist Parties of the EC, 2 February 1973, IISH, SI 595.

84 Socialist Co-operation, April 1970, pp. 32–33, IISH, SI 595.

85 Ivar Nørgaard, 12th Congress, Vienna, 26–29 June 1972, 28 June 1972, IISH, SI 263.

86 Confederation of Socialist Parties of the EC 1972–82, June 1978, IISH, SI 595. See also *Geoffrey Pridham/Pippa Pridham*, *Transnational Party Co-operation and European Integration. The Process Towards Direct Elections*, London 1981, p. 145.

87 EUA, GSEP 60, PE/GS/85/1976, 9 July 1976, p. 2; IISH, SI 45, SII 1977, p. 111; IISH, SI 1026, *Socialist Affairs 1977*, p. 5.

88 Confederation of Socialist Parties of the EC 1972–82, June 1978, p. 2, IISH, SI 595.

profoundly differ«. ⁸⁹ Although the 30-page document focused more on economic and social questions than did the European People's Party (EPP) and the European Liberal Democrats (ELD) manifestos, it was like national manifestos full of formulae designed to paper over cracks. Nor was it helped by translations of words that had different overtones in different languages.

VII. BLUEPRINT FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE?

The manifesto emphasised that socialist parties aimed at building a »peaceful Europe with higher standards of freedom, justice and solidarity, a Europe more socially just and with a more human face, a Europe of citizens and workers«. It should free »man from dependence and want of any kind«, and it was to be brought about by a change in the economic and social structures of the member countries. The Community should be characterised by full employment and fairer distribution of income and wealth. Full employment was considered »one of the basic aims of Socialism« and »a fundamental human right«. Thus, the Community and the member states must »ensure full employment by consciously shaping the inevitable process of economic change rather than merely reacting to short-term economic trends«. ⁹⁰

Working conditions should be underpinned by economic democracy. Lest workers and their representatives were »involved in economic and social planning«, the manifesto stated, »and unless a truly democratic economic system [was] achieved«, living and working conditions could not be humanised in the foreseeable future. Also, planning and democratisation should not be limited to the public sector, »democratic control over the whole economy must be improved«. ⁹¹ Ultimately, socialist policies aimed at creating »comprehensive social welfare systems in all member-countries and the gradual harmonisation of systems«. Improved educational opportunities should »ensure equality of opportunity, efficiency and the best possible fulfilment of man«. Reference was also made to an environmental policy and to more just external relations. ⁹² Since each of the countries was too small to succeed in all this, only the EC offered »the appropriate framework«. National action alone was not enough to solve the problems of the time. ⁹³

Put into a broader perspective, there was an obvious link between the transnational work during the 1960s to draw up a social democratic programme for Europe and the June 1977 draft election manifesto. An idea that had been promoted for many years had now for the first time brought tangible results in the form of a concrete, ambitious document agreed by Social Democratic parties and politicians across the EC. Although the policy objectives established in the draft manifesto chiefly were a broad compromise, it did promise more than the lowest common denominator. This might explain why some national parties found it so hard to accept. Even so, it increased European Social Democrats' awareness of and their common understanding of social Europe.

VIII. THE VREDELING PROPOSAL

Without ultimately producing EC policies, efforts to redesign party structures and draw up a European programme envisaging a social Europe would largely be in vain. In the end

⁸⁹ Eurosociologist Strategy, Socialist Affairs, September/October 1977, pp. 111–113, IISH, SI 45.

⁹⁰ Article on the CSPEC, in letter to Bernt Carlsson, SI, 19 August 1977, pp. 5–7, IISH, SI 1026.

⁹¹ Letter to Bernt Carlsson, SI, 19 August 1977, pp. 8f., IISH, SI 1026.

⁹² Eurosociologist Strategy, Socialist Affairs, September/October 1977, pp. 112f., IISH, SI 45.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 112, and letter to Bernt Carlsson, SI, 19 August 1977, pp. 5–11, IISH, SI 1026.

of the 1970s, one of the first concrete steps to bring about social regulations on a European level appeared with the so-called Vredeling proposal, named after PvdA's Henk Vredeling. As demonstrated, Vredeling had an established track record as a proponent for transnational social democratic policies. In 1977, he became Dutch Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Vice-President of the Commission, a position he held until 1981.⁹⁴ His portfolio included matters relating to employment, discrimination and social affairs such as welfare. The proposal of 1979–80, concerning information and consultation of employees of undertakings with complex structures (firms with 100 or more employees), especially transnational ones, was the first major proposal for EC-level worker participation legislation. From a legal point of view it was based on Article 100 of the EEC Treaty (functioning of the common market) taken in conjunction with Article 117, in which the Community undertook to achieve social progress.

Proposals to strengthen the rights of employees to information and consultation had been discussed inside the social democratic network for some time. In 1976, a group of socialists had visited Hoogovens, a large steel producer outside Amsterdam with 23,000 employees, to investigate the system of worker participation that was used there. It was a relevant example because workers' councils were required for firms with more than 100 employees in the Netherlands.⁹⁵ Vredeling argued that the operation of the common market – the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour and the right of establishment – meant that there was a need for participation of employees at the European level in the form of information and consultation.⁹⁶ If adopted, it would not reform workers' rights in the Community, but it was regarded as a signpost towards the »self-evident« right workers should have to be informed and consulted in good time of proposed decisions, and that their views should be heard if proposed decisions would have implications for their position.⁹⁷ Yet it was controversial when it was proposed, and aroused heated debates, tension and continuous heavy lobbying, both in national capitals and at the European level in Brussels and Strasbourg. To be adopted, it required unanimous agreement in the Council, and in the end it was abandoned due to British opposition.⁹⁸

Further initiatives were taken during the 1980s, but suffered the same fate until the Social Charter introduced the possibility that the signatory states could adopt legislation in the information and consultation of works by a qualified majority vote. After the adoption of the Social Charter, initiatives were again taken to adopt legislation concerning information and consultation. In 1994, after 14 years of negotiations since the initial 1980 Vredeling proposal, a compromise was reached and the European Works Council Directive was adopted. It required firms with 1,000 or more employees and 150 or more employees in two or more member states to inform their workforce of the decision-making process. In 1998, the Commission proposed further legislation, now under the codecision procedure, that would create a general requirement for workers consultation within companies across the EU. Despite British and Irish opposition and protracted debates in the Council and EP, arbitration in the Conciliation Committee, and amendment put forward by the Commission and the EP, a Workers' Consultation Directive eventually was adopted in 2002.⁹⁹

94 In 1956, Hendrik (Henk) Vredeling was first elected to the Dutch House of Representatives for the PvdA. From 1958 to 1973 he was Member of the European Parliament. From 1973 to 1977 he served as Dutch Defence Minister and from 1977 to 1981 he served at the European Commission.

95 Report by Fionnuala Richardson on visit to Hoogovens, Ymuiden, Netherlands, 29 November 1976, EUA, GSEP 62, PE/GS/62/77.

96 Roger Blanpain/Françoise Blanquet/Fernand Herman et al., *The Vredeling Proposal. Information and Consultation of Employees in Multinational Enterprises*, Deventer/Boston 1983, pp. 5f.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

98 See *Bailey*, *Explaining the Underdevelopment of 'Social Europe'*, pp. 240.

99 *Ibid.*, pp. 240–242.

In spite of difficult and protracted processes, the 1977 election manifesto and the EC-level worker participation legislation demonstrate that European Social Democracy was able to obtain limited results. Yet they also demonstrate the difficulties with which these parties reached agreements, and the challenges policy proposals faced in subsequent Community politics. Negotiations were drawn out processes in which pieces of legislation were heavily influenced by lobbying and compromises. The internal evolution of transnational social democratic policies and the proposal and adoption of worker participation legislation were but small steps on a road towards a social Europe. Despite the aims and declared ambitions of moderate socialist party elites regarding the potential for increased influence of Community matters through coordinated activity at the supranational level, no comprehensive measures to compensate for contextual and structural challenges that affected their ability to carrying out social service and security at the national level were proposed. Nor was the Community with its modest economic resources designed to produce significant redistributive policy outcomes.

IX. THE BRITISH CASE

A distinctive difference between the late 1960s and the 1976–77 drafting of the election manifesto and the 1980 Vredeling proposal were the attitudes of British Labour Party. The British case illustrates the challenges of European integration to political parties. Having been a vital part of the transnational social democratic network during the latter part of the 1960s, agreeing on the wish for a socialist programme for Europe, it abstained from the work on the common election manifesto, basing itself on a conference decision that rejected direct elections to the EP. As a result, the compromise achieved on the election manifesto by the EC socialist parties did not include the British Labour Party. It also opposed the Vredeling proposal although, or perhaps because, the left dominated the party leadership. It was in favour of social policies but regarded the EC a conservative, non-interventionist free market club. Even after the Blair government had come to power in 1997, and had accepted the incorporation of the Social Charter at the Amsterdam summit, the Labour Party still opposed the proposed 1998 Workers' Consultation Directive.

When Britain entered the EC in 1973, the question was raised whether the Labour Party should join the EP. Declining the invitation to join the EP, the Eurosceptic left argued, was an opportunity to demonstrate to the people in Britain that the party did not only talk against membership but also acted accordingly. The centre-right faction argued the party should participate in the EP to influence events, as there would be, as Labour MP Geoffrey Rhodes emphasised, »an invasion of democratic elements from the Northern European countries« and the parties should take advantage of those changes.¹⁰⁰ In a letter to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), Douglas Houghton, the Chairman of the Socialist Group of the EP stressed: »I need not tell you how pleased we would be [if the PLP] finds it possible to take up the places in the European Parliament which await it.«¹⁰¹ Ultimately, however, the eurosceptic faction prevailed and the PLP decided to suspend participation until renegotiation of the terms and the 1975 vote of the British people on whether the UK should remain in the EC.

The Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky suggested in 1973 that »social democracy as a political force was on the upsurge in Europe«. Although Austria was not a member of the EC, he did regret the British Labour Party's decision to »boycott« the EP which meant

100 Meeting, 8 November 1972, and PLP, special meeting, 13 December 1972, LAM, PLP.

101 Letter from the Chairman of the Socialist Group of the European Parliament to the Chairman of the British Labour Party, 12 October 1972, LAM, PLP.

that the Social Democrats would not be the strongest group, but came only second. Developments were under way, he argued, that »needed to be influenced by the British labour movement«. ¹⁰² Britain's accession to the EC, therefore, took place on the broad understanding within the transnational network that concerted efforts had a potential to put a stronger socialist imprint on the Community. But it was clearly hampered until the British Labour Party joined the EP Socialist group and fully participated the proceedings of the EP and CSPEC.

The change in the British Labour Party during the 1970s illustrates the power of national parties and party-political factions. It also demonstrates the long-winded character of the European turn among and across European Social Democratic parties. In the British case, the left-wing Eurosceptic faction gained influence in the party at the expense of the well-networked, pro-Europe centre-right. In Scandinavia, the left leaning labour politicians, who like their British counterparts largely opposed EC membership on the basis of similar ideological left-leaning ideas, did not influence the parties in the same manner. One explanation might be found in the structures of the national party systems. In the Scandinavian multiparty system, the socialists on the left split from the labour parties and formed new and smaller left-wing parties. As a result, pressure from the left decreased in the broader Social Democratic parties. Second, effects of previous networking could either be consolidated or reversed due to continuity or change of individual preferences and composition of the party leadership. As the foremost example of a well-connected party leadership turning to Europe during the 1960s, the Norwegian party demonstrates how its pro-EC commitment was consolidated throughout the 1970s, whereas changes in the British Labour Party leadership demonstrate the limits of socialisation and trust brought about by transnational networks.

X. THE NATURE, CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF THE EUROPEAN TURN

This contribution demonstrates that the European turn was rooted in a complex mix of increased market interdependence, reforming social democratic ideology and a consolidating supranational structure. Among Social Democrats it was not deemed a viable solution to create a supranational European structure and a common market while confining social issues to the national sphere only. National social policies were to be affected, because they would be increasingly framed by the EEC/EC political agenda and the evolution of common rules. Greater market interdependence also diminished the scope for national economic manoeuvring. It also promoted competition between different national regulatory rules which eventually would put pressure on domestic social systems. ¹⁰³ Apparently, northern European labour party elites acknowledged at an early stage the challenges of the process of European integration, and set out accordingly to explore how to deal with them.

European socialist parties and politicians not only adopted a more firmly pro-Europe position up until the mid-1980s, but also developed greater consensus in terms of their programmatic objectives and their perceptions of the institutional appropriateness of the EC. On the eve of 1970s, the centre-right leadership of the British and Scandinavian labour parties largely sided with EC Social Democrats. Although the EEC/EC had been consolidated and Qualified Majority Voting had been postponed by the 1966 Luxembourg compromise, changes in northern European parties cannot be explained by pointing to

¹⁰² Conference of party leaders 1973–74, Paris, 13–14 January 1973, IISH, SI 347.

¹⁰³ *Paul Teague*, Monetary Union and Social Europe, in: *Journal of European Social Policy* 8, 1998, pp. 117–137, p. 129.

developments in the European Community only. Altered perceptions of the EC are likely to have been modified in transnational arenas due to intensified cross-border networking. Although the less well-connected Eurosceptic Left of the British Labour Party gained influence of the party leadership during the 1970s, and at the end of the decade adopted a policy of leaving the EC, these policies were eventually reversed under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair during the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, rather than being a new direction, the left-wing turn of the British Labour Party during the 1970s largely was a deviation from a longer-term trend.

A crucial dilemma for reluctant northern European social democratic politicians was whether international trade and membership of the Community would undermine national economic management. The early post-war introduction of a comprehensive welfare state required sustained export-led growth. In the longer run, the increased market interdependence and eventual blurring of national market boundaries in Europe made »traditional Keynesian demand policies a virtual non-starter«, as noted by Paul Teague. Any member state »embarking upon an autonomous reflationary programme would very quickly hit a balance of payments constraint as imports flooded in from other EU countries«. ¹⁰⁴ Greater market interdependence thus impinged on the scope for national adjustments.

For example, in 1964 the Labour government led by Harold Wilson came to power with an ambitious economic planning programme. It set up a new Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) that subsequently was instructed with preparing a National Plan. ¹⁰⁵ However, the government's strategy soon foundered, and the National Plan and the DEA was abandoned in 1966 and 1969 respectively. It indicated that it had become increasingly difficult to bring about national economic planning independently of what was taking place regionally and internationally. Subsequently, it redirected the British Labour Party elite's attention to prospects of an enlarged EC.

The challenge to national economic management also hit the first socialist president and government of the Fifth Republic in France. In 1981, François Mitterrand and the left-wing government introduced an economic policy intended to boost economic demand and thus economic activity according to Keynesian principles. ¹⁰⁶ Yet after two years in office, the government had to make a substantial U-turn in economic policies with the adoption of the so-called *tournant de la rigueur* – the austerity turn. As in the case of the Wilson government, the French found it virtually impossible to bring about national economic policies independently of what was taking place regionally in the EC. Both examples demonstrate that the autonomy and viability of national economic policies in Europe were effectively influenced by market integration and international structures.

A transformed Social Democracy appeared to be better adapted to introducing its policies on a European level. Equality of opportunity, greater conditionality in welfare provisions, more emphasis on education and vocational training and active labour market policies, were policy objectives that could be realistically introduced in an emerging supranational framework. The Community was ill-equipped to produce traditional universal »cradle to the grave« welfare provisions characterised by redistribution and equality of

104 Ibid., p. 129.

105 The National Plan was issued on 16 September 1965. It set the annual rate of growth at 3.8%. The decision to fight devaluation forced the government to deflate and effectively scuppered the plan, which was abandoned in the crisis of July 1966. See also the 1964 Labour Party election manifesto.

106 The policies included nationalisation, a 10% increase of the minimum wage, a 39 hour work week, five weeks holiday per year, the creation of the solidarity tax on wealth, an increase in social benefits, and the extension of workers' rights to consultation and information about their employers.

outcome, but appeared adequate to facilitate policies aiming at equality of opportunity. The latter required legal and institutional structures in which meritocratic, employment and coherence policies could be implemented, while the small size of the EC budget made the scope for fiscal redistribution slim. Adequate institutional structures and programmatic objectives thus appeared to have the potential to produce a more just society than if left to a free market. Yet European Social Democrats did not just quietly acquiesce to European integration. Rather, they put substantial efforts into deepening European integration and engaged in restructuring their transnational network in order to make the Community an adequate arena for social policies.

To sum up, the process in which the European Social Democratic parties and politicians adopted a more firmly pro-Europe position cannot be explained by pointing to contextual and structural pushes only. The process was also marked by a positive understanding of the process of European integration per se and an anticipated opportunity to pursue social policies at a European level by creating and strengthening democratic and authoritative institutions in the European Community. To pro-integrative Social Democrats, it was in this nexus a social Europe agenda and an embryonic European Social Model were to be found.