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In recent years there has certainly been no lack of research into the historical roots of the European idea.\(^1\) Intellectual historians in particular have traced its origins from a long-term perspective, identifying a heyday of European thought and pro-European organizations in the first half of the twentieth century, which has attracted a great deal of attention.\(^2\) Geographically most studies have been centred on the two major players of continental Europe, France and Germany.\(^3\)

Christian Bailey’s dissertation about German visions of Europe between 1926 and 1950 contributes to this ongoing wave of research. The aim of his study is to dissolve the classical founding myth of European integration by tracing the ‘lost Europes’, that is, those ideas of a united continent that never succeeded, thus avoiding a teleological perspective and illustrating the diversity of European thought as well as its contingency. In doing so, he approaches the historical process of European unification via an ‘emerging European society’ (p. 5) in the shape of civil society actors, mostly intellectuals, whom Bailey considers central to the construction of political identities. He analyses three different groups and their activities in each case for a period before and after 1945. By concentrating on German-speaking European thinkers, the author examines the country which arguably played the most crucial role in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, without losing sight of how debates on the continent helped to shape German national identity.

\(^1\) See e.g. the publications and conferences of the recently founded international ‘Research Network on the History of the Idea of Europe’, online at <http://www.historyideofeurope.org>, accessed 16 May 2014.


\(^3\) Oliver Burgard, *Das gemeinsame Europa – von der politischen Utopie zum außenpolitischen Programm: Meinungsaustausch und Zusammenarbeit proeuropäischer Verbände in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1924–1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000).
In his Introduction Bailey criticizes the traditional narrative of European integration history as characterized by a narrow focus, understanding integration as simply a series of events, negotiations, and contracts, and thus beginning only after 1945. While Bailey’s definition of integration as ‘a process of encounter, interaction, competition and cooperation between Europeans that occurred as part of everyday experiences’ (p. 10) is certainly correct, this narrative has, in fact, already been broken up, both in theory and empirically, over the last decade. Against this background an introduction to the current state of research and an illustration of the applied method (both of which are missing from the Introduction) would have been especially useful, as one initially wonders what Bailey plans to add to Vanessa Conze’s major study of European ideas in Germany within a similar timeframe.

In the first two chapters, the author analyses images of Europe articulated in the cultural magazine *Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*. While this periodical was only founded in 1947, Bailey identifies two predecessors in the inter-war years, which marked a heyday for cultural journals in general, namely, *Neue Rundschau* and *Europäische Revue*. These magazines had the backing of influential civil society groups that argued strongly for the unification of Europe, but were highly critical of parliamentary democracy. Instead, by arguing that European culture was based in central

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5 Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen*.

Europe they promoted an elitist concept of *Abendland*, thus advocating a ‘Third Force Mitteleuropa’ (p. 36) that was politically, economically, and culturally located between the Western and Eastern models. The European discourse in *Merkur* after the Second World War was rooted in the transnational networks fostered by its predecessors, as the leading protagonists tried further to curtail the supposedly disruptive tendencies within the democratic national states by means of European integration. In the face of the Cold War, anti-liberal models of a united Europe thus reappeared after 1945.

In the following chapters the author’s focus shifts to political groups of intellectuals on the left and right. In chapters three and four he examines the Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund’s (ISK) European policy before and during the Second World War, and subsequently that of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) after 1945. While the ISK was an elitist organization with at most a few hundred members and supporters, Bailey argues that it had a profound influence on Social Democratic exiles during the time of resistance. He shows how the ISK and, correspondingly, Europe’s socialist thinking, gradually shifted from the goal of world revolution to the goal of an integrated Europe with a particular emphasis on central Europe. While this process had already started before 1939, it intensified during the Second World War when leading socialists in exile were forced to watch Nazism’s violent and imperialistic ‘unification’ of Europe, giving them a more radical and internationalist outlook themselves. Despite the fact that the ISK’s hopes were initially disappointed after 1945, socialist ideas of a federated Europe did not disappear, but triggered an independent European policy by local and regional groups, forming the *Bürgermeisterflügel* (mayoral wing) within the SPD. Comparing their ideas and concepts with Kurt Schumacher’s official party policy, Bailey argues that the SPD’s main goal was ‘to reform the political culture of Western Europe into a model Third Way community that pointed the way towards a future beyond American-style capitalism and Soviet collectivism’ (p. 137). Indeed, he shows that Schumacher himself, who is commonly regarded as a left-wing nationalist with a rather narrow view of foreign policy, was a central and active figure in those debates and thus part of the general internationalization and subsequent Europeanization of German Social Democracy after 1945. Going even further, the new SPD’s Third Force policy did not end with Schumacher’s
failure in the face of Cold War realities that limited the European outlook to the western part of the continent, but ‘re-emerged in the Ostpolitik initiatives launched in the 1960s by former exiles and advocates of a Third Force Europe such as Willy Brandt’ (p. 117).

Shifting his focus more to the political right, Bailey concentrates on another group of intellectual exiles in chapter five, namely, the organization Das Demokratische Deutschland, whose members, mostly originating from southern German regions, fled to Switzerland at the beginning of the Second World War. Starting active political work only late in the war, they became heavily engaged in transnational civil society networks like the Swiss Europa-Union. Building on a ‘conception of Europe as Abendland that was neither Eastern nor Western but rooted in a shared central European history and a political culture that was distinct from interwar parliamentary democracy’ (p. 156), they emphasized that a united Europe was needed for the reconstruction of Germany. Their ultimate goal was a power shift in the direction of the European regions, with a special emphasis on southern Germany. While these concepts lost impact in the Cold War era, they did not disappear entirely as some of the leaders of Das Demokratische Deutschland had impressive post-war careers in both of the major German parties. Politicians such as Heinrich Ritzel, who was active in the early European integration process, and Wilhelm Hoegner, who became Bavaria’s minister president in 1945, continued to pursue a ‘Europe of the Regions avant la lettre’ (p. 188) until the late 1950s. As Bailey argues, this federalist Third Force option backed by civil society groups that consisted of Christian Democrats as well as Social Democrats played a crucial role in securing the cross-party consensus behind European integration in the early Federal Republic.

On the whole, Bailey shows that the continuities of a Third Force vision of Europe were based on a specific conception of Mitteleuropa in Germany that enabled common patterns of interpretation on the political left and right. In many cases, these ideas were profoundly anti-democratic before 1945 and were directed equally against Western mass politics and Eastern Communism after the Second World War. While in terms of realpolitik this Third Force Europe was marginalized because of the Cold War climate and the integration of Western Europe, it was nevertheless an important facet of post-war German political culture and contributed to the quick acceptance of European patterns of thought. Going even further Bailey points out
that in the long term it functioned as a trigger for new approaches in
the field of German eastern policy in the 1950s and 1960s.

While this is certainly an interesting finding, it is problematic that,
as one of the book’s main theses, it focuses on a time that is not includ-
ed in the period of research and thus does not form part of the analy-
sis itself. Also, it must be noted that Bailey includes a selective sample
of (West) German visions of Europe in his study while excluding oth-
ers. This remark may seem pointless, as the author never claims com-
pleteness; however, especially in the light of current research, it is
regrettable that Bailey largely neglects the National Socialist concepts
of Europe, or discusses them only as a foil for other conceptions.7
Indeed, it could be asked whether Hitler’s version of a ‘New Europe’
and corresponding nationalist ideas of a united continent were not the
most powerful German vision of Europe before 1945. Additionally,
some small factual inaccuracies affect an otherwise precise contextu-
alization. For example, the author claims that French politician
Aristide Briand’s plan for a European union in 1929–30 was inspired
by the Austrian nobleman Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan-
European Movement. In fact, when it came to details Briand was scep-
tical about Coudenhove-Kalergi’s integration approach. Briand never
operated as an active member of the Pan-European Union, although
he had been selected as its honorary president. Besides, Briand’s plan
was not ‘primarily concerned with economics’ (p. 29) as Bailey asserts,
but envisaged the simultaneous political and economic unification of
the continent, which was one of the main reasons for the dissent it
aroused in most European governments.8

7 Examples of the intensive research on National Socialist concepts are Ber-
nard Bruneteau, ‘L’Europe nouvelle’ de Hitler: Une illusion des intellectuels de la
France de Vichy (Monaco, 2003); Birgit Kletzin, Europa aus Rasse und Raum: Die
nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung (Münster, 2000); and Mark
Mazower, Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe (New York, 2008), esp.
553–76.

8 See Friedrich Kießling, ‘Der Briand-Plan von 1929/30: Europa als Or-
Jahrhundert’, Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2008), online at <http://
critical evaluation of the relationship between Briand and Coudenhove-
Kalergi, see Verena Schöberl, ‘Es gibt ein großes und herrliches Land, das sich
selbst nicht kennt . . . es heißt Europa’: Die Diskussion um die Paneuropaidee in
Despite those minor points of critique, Bailey has contributed an important book. Its main strengths lie in confirming the persistence of inter-war, often anti-liberal, ideas of Europe in the early German Federal Republic and in the striking similarities of European thought between left-wing and right-wing groups. Thus it becomes clear how, in a polarized political environment such as that of post-war Germany, Europe and support for European integration could become a commonplace in public debate. Moreover, he is able to show that German visions of Europe in those years did indeed oscillate ‘between yesterday and tomorrow’. They were located within an area of friction between reminiscences of the past and hopes for the future, with Europe forming an abstract objective rather than a fixed geographical or political reality. The fact that the book is well written and has a very detailed index will make it even more useful to anyone interested in the intellectual history of the European idea and of German political culture in the first half of the twentieth century.

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