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Economic history

Swedish Economic Intelligence: The East Economic Bureau during the Cold War

Based on recently opened and previously classified archives, this paper investigates the development and actions of the EEB (the East Economic Bureau) during the Cold War. The EEB was a secret Business-State cooperation, formally founded in 1959, working with economic intelligence activities in the emerging planned economies. The foundation of the EEB relied on positive experiences from previous Business-State cooperation. Already during the final years of WW II, the Defense Staff and business co-worked with estimating the economic capacity of the belligerent countries. After the War, and especially in the early 1950s, the information gathering shifted towards the CMEA-area. Several organizational followed up to the late 1960. Yet, the EEB could act more or less in full secrecy up to the early 1970s. In fact, parts of the structure remained until 1989. The paper therefore explores –from the perspective of small state theory - the organizational development of the EEB, its organizational precursors, networks, information gathering as well as the selective dissemination of classified judgments/reports from the 1940s up to the 1970s. Economic intelligence is here considered being a method for e.g. estimating the production capacity of a country, a region or an industry branch, which necessitates a broader knowledge than otherwise present in the Defense quarters.