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The British Conservative Party, the Scandinavian Conservative Parties, and Inter-Party Cooperation in Europe, 1949–78

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ABSTRACT



This article explores the links between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties in Europe between the late-1940s and the late-1970s. Its findings show that these parties were closer to each other than has been assumed. The British and Scandinavian Conservative parties built up significant relationships with each other at the organisational level throughout the 1950s, which led to transfers of political knowledge and information mostly from Britain to Scandinavia. From the 1960s the circulation of knowledge started to flow in both directions, but it was strongest in the Swedish case. The British Conservative Party then bridged the gap between the Scandinavian Conservative parties and the West German CDU/CSU and the Austrian ÖVP in Europe, helping to cement the parties into a new centre-right international known as European Democrat Union. This gave the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties more contacts abroad and reinforced the view that British Conservatism was not an ideological outlier in Europe. But the history of inter-party cooperation shows that the British and Scandinavian Conservatives were mostly at odds with the greater integrationist and federalist ambitions of Christian democrats. Therefore, the article offers us another way of explaining the persistence of Euroscepticism in the British Conservative Party.

KEYWORDS

Conservatism; Britain; Scandinavia; Europe; transnational

Introduction

Historians have researched the transnational history of neoliberal ideas and how they influenced the politics of the Thatcher governments in Britain.¹ But as Kit Kowol has argued about the history of the British Conservative Party, ‘there remains an almost baffling unwillingness to compare Conservatism across national boundaries or to examine the transnational elements of Conservatism’.² The only significant exception is Martina Steber’s work on the relationship between the British Conservative Party and the West German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) parties.³ Steber has detailed at length how these parties entered into a dialogue with each other

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in the 1960s and 1970s, how they developed a cooperative relationship, and how they searched for a common political language. In the end, they managed to overcome their differences in relation to the concept of 'conservatism' by focussing more on the shared concept of 'freedom'.⁴

A similar situation prevails in the historiographies on the Scandinavian countries. Historians have researched how neoliberal ideas influenced the development of social democracy and the application of the 'Nordic model' in the Scandinavian countries.⁵ But little has been done to explore the transnational histories of the Norwegian Conservative Party (Høyre), the Swedish Conservative Party (Högerpartiet/Moderata Samlingspartiet), and the Danish Conservative Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti).⁶ Karl Magnus Johansson wrote about the participation of the Scandinavian Conservative parties in European inter-party networks, particularly in relation to the establishment of the centre-right international known as European Democrat Union (EDU).⁷ But he was mostly interested in the broader history of the relationship between Conservatives and Christian Democrats in the European Parliament.⁸ In terms of the established party histories, only a few historians have cited examples of Scandinavian Conservatives looking abroad for new political ideas and inspiration.⁹ Hallvard Notaker briefly explored some elements of the relationship between the British Conservative Party and the Norwegian Conservative Party. He concluded that 'close-knit' partnerships between the two parties were never 'seriously contemplated' and the relationship between the Norwegian and Swedish Conservative parties was much stronger because they were 'two of a kind, differences notwithstanding'. But Notaker acknowledged the existence of low-level contacts between the British and Norwegian Conservative parties up until the 1970s and he cited Johannes Løvhaug's work, which highlighted British Conservative influences on the ideas of the Minerva circle that later found their way into the party's official programme.¹⁰

Steber's, Johansson's, and Notaker's work has opened up new avenues for research in these areas. But the full history of how, when, and why British and Scandinavian Conservatives cooperated with each other has not yet been written. This is unfortunate because it has the potential to enrich debates about the development of an alternative centre-right internationalism in Europe within the larger framework of European cooperation. This article begins to address the gap in our knowledge by researching the bi-lateral relationships between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties and their early attempts to develop new forms of cooperation in Europe. It does so from the perspective of the recently catalogued papers of the British Conservative Party's Overseas Bureau/International Office, which are held in the British Conservative Party Archive at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. As the British Conservative Party was at the heart of developing the new centre-right internationals, its collections on these matters are extensive.

Of course, the study of British political history has moved beyond party-centric accounts of 'high politics' to explore broader definitions of 'the political' and subjects like political culture, public opinion, cultural differences, and 'popular' politics. One of the reasons for the shift was no doubt the perceived insularity of approaches to researching 'high politics'. But as this article suggests there are ways to re-invigorate the subject, which can not only disrupt that sense of insularity but help us to rethink the claims of British politicians on subjects of vital importance like European integration, international relations, and security policy. The article uses high political and organisational-level sources to ask what contributions these

inter-party relationships made to the development of Conservative politics in Britain and Scandinavia and what contributions the Conservative parties made to the building of a new centre-right international in Europe. These are important questions to ask from a European perspective because outside of the British Conservative Party it was the Scandinavian Conservative parties who were willing to identify with political Conservatism on the continent.

The article does not seek to downplay the importance of Nordic Conservative networks, but its findings show that the British and Scandinavian parties were closer to each other than has usually been assumed and that they were closer to each other than they were with other parties in Europe after the Second World War. Therefore, the article challenges nationally-minded historians to rethink the histories of Conservative parties and the development of their respective political cultures in new ways.¹¹ Although the British Conservative and West German Christian Democrat relationship became the most important one during the 1960s, a natural affinity between the British and Scandinavian Conservatives existed after the Second World War and it continued to exist into the 1970s and 1980s. This finding should hardly surprise us because we already know that there was significant cooperation between the British Labour Party and Scandinavian social democrats, and that they were active in the Socialist International.¹² Moreover, the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties were sceptical of the pace of European integration, which was being set by Christian Democrats. At least in terms of Britain, Denmark, and Norway, the Conservative parties' views on Europe followed similar trajectories and timelines when it came to thinking about the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Community (EEC). Therefore, it is argued here that the existence of these relationships should at least make us think again about some of the limits of a Nordic 'other Europe' and the degree to which Britain should be seen as an 'awkward partner' in Europe throughout this period.¹³

Finally, the article throws new light on the most important aspects of these parties' thinking that made inter-party cooperation possible and it shows how these parties pooled their ideas and resources to help themselves compete against labour, social democrat, and socialist parties at home. Therefore, it uses the history of British and Scandinavian Conservatism to engage with broader debates about the circulation of knowledge in Britain and Scandinavia.¹⁴ Although it is difficult to prove influence in terms of direct transfers from one party to another, we can measure the use and potential value of bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings or conferences as arenas for the exchange of political knowledge and information. This begs the question of how far the British and Scandinavian Conservatives who engaged in these bi-lateral and multilateral networks picked up relevant ideas and debates, which they then adapted for use in their own national political contexts.¹⁵ Johan Strang has argued that the existence of hierarchies and power imbalances must be given consideration when thinking about the direction of travel of knowledge from one geographical location or actor to another.¹⁶ The article shows that the size of these countries and the electoral performances of each of the Conservative parties did much to determine their roles in and influence on European affairs. Yet, the ability to understand foreign languages also shaped the development of these inter-party relationships between the late-1940s and the late-1970s.

Bi-lateral relationships in post-war Europe

In the 1940s there was significant scepticism among high-ranking British Conservatives and officials at Conservative Central Office about the idea of participating in a 'right-wing international' that could rival the Socialist and Liberal Internationals. This was because they considered the Conservatives to be an idiosyncratic party that had no equivalent on the continent, especially when compared to the Christian Democrat parties. Furthermore, they feared combining moderate and extreme parties on the right in Europe and Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, was unwilling to open up a new diplomatic front that could potentially impede a Conservative government's ability to cooperate with non-Conservative governments abroad.¹⁷ In terms of joining international right-wing organisations, the only exception was the British Conservative women who were allowed to form a British Section of the European Union of Women. This action had to be 'cleared beforehand with the then Foreign Secretary' and it was because 'high politics did not seem to be involved' that 'the principle was agreed to'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the party established the Conservative Overseas Bureau in 1949 so that foreign visitors and party delegations could be more properly catered for and bi-lateral contacts could be registered. The Conservative Party also maintained observer status at the Christian Democrat international, the *Nouvelles Équipes Internationales* (NEI).¹⁹ But beyond these modest efforts to accommodate requests from other parties and to monitor the development of Christian Democrat internationalism, the Conservative Party's interest in centre-right internationalism was only just beginning.

The Conservative Party's closest contacts continued to be with Commonwealth parties and groups up until the mid-1950s.²⁰ But in Europe bi-lateral relationships were quickly established at the organisational level with the Scandinavian Conservative parties in the 1950s. This should not surprise us considering the fact that there was a political view among British decision-makers at the time that there was a 'kind of ideational fit between Britain and Scandinavia' because all of these countries were 'northern democracies'. Similar political outlooks between the governments of these countries had helped to shape both European institutions like the Council of Europe and the European Convention of Human rights in ways that were more acceptable to them.²¹ However, as we shall see, the varying experiences of the Second World War would also have a bearing upon the development of each of these inter-party bi-lateral relationships in their early stages. As Glen O'Hara has argued, 'Nazi Germany's invasion and occupation of Norway naturally enraged British public opinion, and was to provide the context for British views of Norway long after the war had ended'. The fact that the Swedes had remained neutral and the Danes had not shown as much resistance until later in the war meant that there was probably a greater cultural and emotional affinity between Britons and Norwegians at this time.²²

Of course, the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties' interest in each other owed much to the fact that unlike other parties on the centre-right in Europe they were comfortable identifying explicitly with political Conservatism and they were suspicious of political Catholicism. At the same time, the Scandinavian parties were drawn to the British Conservative Party because it was a large party with significant resources and far more electorally successful. In a period when the Scandinavian Conservatives were struggling either to rebuild or develop their party organisations and policy programmes to compete

with social democrats at home, it was natural for them to look towards the British Conservative Party for inspiration and practical support.

This explains why the British Conservative Party's relationship with the Norwegian Conservative Party was one-directional and very paternalistic in the 1950s. Norwegian Conservatives looked to the British Conservatives for ideas, publications, organisational expertise, electioneering techniques, and political education. The Norwegian Conservative Party was a struggling party and it had little to offer the British Conservatives, but it gained significant support from the British Conservative Party because it showed enthusiasm for British Conservatism and was judged to be genuinely pro-British. Although minor contacts had existed previously, the nature of the relationship between the two parties started to change when the General Secretary of the Norwegian Conservative Party Leif Helberg observed the British general election of 1950 and arranged for a member of his party Gudvin Låder Ve (who would himself become General Secretary in 1965) to spend two months studying the Conservative Party Organisation in London.²³ The success of the visit resulted in Helberg writing to Anthony Nutting, Chairman of the Conservative Overseas Bureau, and R.D. Milne, its Secretary, to request a visit by a Party official to Norway to lecture Norwegian Conservatives on 'how to construct a perfect organisation'.²⁴ Milne was sympathetic because he argued rather optimistically that 'all right-wing parties on the continent look to the British Conservative Party for a lead' and it was the Scandinavian parties who 'were particularly interested to have closer liaison with us'.²⁵ In response to the request a local Conservative Party organiser named Eric Edwards was dispatched to Norway.²⁶ Edwards reported that the Norwegian Conservatives had a good knowledge of British politics, that the influence of the British Conservative Party in Norway was 'considerable', and that there was a 'desire for close contact with our party'.²⁷

These types of early positive encounters experienced by British Conservatives when visiting the Norwegian Conservatives seem to have encouraged the party's officials to help the Norwegian party when needed, whether in terms of general political inspiration, specific policy ideas, or organisational training. For example, one Norwegian Conservative who was participating in a parliamentary committee that was looking at the British Labour government's nationalisation of the British coal industry requested help from the Conservative Overseas Bureau because the Norwegian government was also investigating the possibility of nationalising a number of industries.²⁸ As a result, the Norwegian contact was sent a series of Conservative Party pamphlets dealing with the issues.²⁹ The future of industry and industrial relations were key topics on which the Norwegian Conservatives looked to the British Conservatives for new knowledge and ideas. Låder Ve also wrote to Milne in 1956 to ask if 'The Industrial Charter' was still available because it 'has been studied with great interest of several of our politicians. Just now, new interest is being attached to this document'.³⁰ Milne supplied him with copies of the charter but also with updated information, including commentaries on the document that had appeared after its publication and the Conservative Party's subsequent election manifestoes.³¹

Lars Roar Langslet was a key figure in the Norwegian Conservative Party and his influence would extend across Scandinavia as an intellectual and a historian. But as the Party's press officer he was given the responsibility of writing a book on Conservative principles for study groups in 1956. Langslet was particularly keen to seek out and include the work of the Conservative Political Centre (CPC) in Britain.³² After being sent

a prospectus of the CPC's publications he replied, 'A lot of them seem to be very interesting and "to the point"', but he argued that it was 'a sad fact that the contact between our national conservative educational organisation and the British one is, apparently at least, so occasional'. Langslet had studied the political thought of T.S. Eliot who had recently published a lecture under the auspices of the CPC. Not only did he request multiple copies of Eliot's 'The Literature of Politics' but he requested copies of nine other pamphlets on British Conservative political thought.³³ Similar orders were repeated by the Norwegian Conservative Party's student societies in Oslo and Trondheim, and, along with Låder Ve, they showed significant interest in the idea of the 'property-owning democracy', a term first coined by the Scottish Conservative MP Noel Skelton in 1923 and popularised again by Anthony Eden in 1946.³⁴

Paul Thyness, another Norwegian Conservative who described himself as the party's 'one man research department', informed Milne how impressed he was by the content of the British Conservative publications; he believed they gave his party valuable information and 'views of high value', which could be exploited by their publicity people.³⁵ When the Norwegian Conservatives failed to make a significant breakthrough at the 1957 general election this intellectual turn continued with Thyness making new requests for publications, including multiple copies of the pamphlet 'Industry and the property-owning Democracy'.³⁶ The Norwegian party also subscribed to the Bow Group's pamphlets and its periodical 'Crossbow'.³⁷ This consumption of British Conservative thought then resulted in a number of study visits to Britain during which inter-party relations were strengthened. Visitors tended to come from the Minerva Group, which Låder Ve described as a 'modest parallel to the Bow Group', the Research Institute for Industrial Economics in Oslo that was strongly associated with the party, and members of the party's Programme Committee.³⁸

The Norwegian Conservatives, inspired by the British Conservative Party's intellectual and publishing outputs, responded with a flurry of intellectual activity of their own in the late-1950s. Låder Ve sent the British Conservative Party a copy of the party's periodical 'Minerva Quarterly' (Kvartalskriftet Minerva). No doubt this was meant to demonstrate the value of the British-Norwegian Conservative relationship by showcasing the recent development of Norwegian Conservatism, but as he had to admit 'the Norwegian language prohibits any advantage of your reading it'.³⁹ Norwegian Conservatives who were members of the Research Institute for Industrial Economics in Oslo looked to the British Conservative Party for support while studying in England. They informed the Bureau that they were interested in themes such as 'governmental regulations of the capital market and of investment, especially with a view to investigating the repercussions of these regulations on personal freedom', 'the importance of economic progress of the mobility of financial capital', and 'the influence of the budgetary policy on the development of prices'.⁴⁰ Thyness, the secretary of the Programme Committee, even signed up as a post-graduate student of political behaviour at Nuffield College, Oxford, and spent time visiting the Conservative Research Department (CRD), Swinton College, and the Annual party Conference.⁴¹ On his return to Norway he requested a complete set of election results for both the 1955 and 1959 general elections, along with 30 copies of the Party's recent manifesto 'The Next Five Years' so he could study it closely.⁴²

The paternalist dimension of the British-Norwegian Conservative relationship was missing in the Swedish case, but there were some similarities in terms of what the

Swedish party requested from the British Conservatives in the 1950s. The earliest significant contact from the Swedish Conservatives was made by Professor Henrik Munktell who visited the British Conservatives in the summer of 1949 to study the Conservative Party and 'The Industrial Charter', but particularly the section on 'The Workers Charter'.⁴³ Munktell expressed his regret to Milne that his report on this work had to 'be written in Swedish' so he did not send him a copy. Yet, he did inform Milne that he was 'sure that our Party will have the greatest use of the information I succeeded in gathering for its drawing up of a programme, and that this information was so comparatively complete is to a great extent your merit'.⁴⁴ Munktell went on to arrange for the Bureau to facilitate a visit from the prominent Swedish Conservative MP Leif Cassel in 1953 because the latter wanted to study questions relating to the 'housing shortage and housing politics'.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the General Secretary of the Swedish Conservatives Folke Björkman was deeply interested in the British Conservative Party; he was on the Conservative Party's publications list and was an avid student of British by-elections. He wrote to Milne to inform him that the Swedish Conservatives were 'specially interested in Mr. Butler's incentive Coronation budget and in the rising expenditure on Social Service'.⁴⁶

Regular correspondence was also established with the organisation 'The Association for Freedom and Progress' (Förbundet Frihet Och Framsteg), which acted as a think-tank for the Swedish party and was heavily involved in the researching and writing of its policy programmes. For example, in September 1951 a representative of the organisation named Ingemar Essén wrote to the Conservative Overseas Bureau to request information on British Conservative responses to the Labour government's New Towns Act of 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. He explained that 'We have now in these days the same problem here in Sweden and there should be a great help for us if you could give us some directions how to find comment to the two acts and to the public discussion that must have been when the acts were published'.⁴⁷ Göran Ramberg, another member of the organisation, wrote to Milne to request updated information from the British Conservatives on their policies because he was the secretary of a new committee that had been put in charge of drafting a programme on economic policy for the Party in 1954. Ramberg explained how the Swedish Conservatives recognised the British Conservative Party as 'a pioneer in this field through your Industrial Charter' and he revealed that there was now 'added interest in your work because your Party has had the opportunity as Government Party to apply your principle in practice'. Ramberg was still working with copies of the 'The Industrial Charter' from 1947 and a pamphlet on 'Co-Partnership' published by the Party in 1946. Therefore, he asked Milne for updated 'programme texts', a list of reference books, and 'preferably, a small memo., indicating what has been done to put the principles laid down in the programmes into practice and, if it applies, how you would like now to modify the principles as laid down'. Ramberg admitted that his request was a demanding one, which is why he explained that he was mostly interested in relations between employers and employees, and, the problem of how 'to make industry 'more democratic'. Similar to the Norwegian Conservatives, what really interested the Swedish Conservatives was 'The Worker's Charter' and the section dealing with 'The Individual Trader', as well as 'the further development of the Profit Sharing and Co-Partnership systems with references to any legislation measures taken to facilitate the introduction of such systems'.⁴⁸

The problem here was that the British Conservative Party had not legislated in these areas while in government. The Director of the Conservative Research Department Michael Fraser explained to Milne that 'it is not possible to give him exactly what he wants' and instead he advised him to send copies of 'The Right Road for Britain' and 'Britain Strong and Free' (the party's manifestoes from the 1950 and 1951 general elections).⁴⁹ Milne felt that a greater effort was needed so he informed Ramberg,

We have been waiting for copies of Ministry of Labour papers (attached to this letter) which will give you some idea of how the principles in our earlier Workers' Charter are now being applied irrespective of party. As you probably know, Sir Walter Monckton, the Minister of Labour, and his very able deputy, Mr. Harold Watkinson, have earned for themselves a very fine reputation as Ministers who have succeeded in taking matters of industrial relations out of party politics. They have completely exploded the idea fostered by our opponents that we took sides in industry ... We do not regard co-partnership and profit sharing as matters on which a government can legislate. We have always declared our sympathetic interest in any such schemes, where these are appropriate to the industry or particular firm.⁵⁰

When Ramberg visited CCO the following summer he was still interested in the same issues, but he returned to Sweden a disappointed man. Although cordial relations were maintained, Milne wrote to Ramberg, 'I was most interested in what you had to say about our "unprincipled political thinking". May I just say that we ourselves would express the idea as "empirical political thinking" or "undogmatic political thinking". In English the word "unprincipled" suggests unscrupulousness. I am sure you would not want to accuse us of that!'.⁵¹ Whether Ramberg really thought the British Conservatives were being unprincipled or if his arguments had been lost in translation is impossible to know, but the example shows that there were always some challenges interpreting political ideas and actions in foreign languages.

With the Swedish general election of 1956 on the political horizon, Björkman expressed his hope for another British Conservative victory in 1955 because he thought it would mean 'a great deal to our endeavours and to our election next year'.⁵² Following the British Conservative election victory, Munktell returned to Britain with 'the authority of our Party to study certain problems of organisation within the Party, where we are planning some reforms'. He asked to be put in contact with the Conservative Party's 'National Agent ... or with other persons who are responsible for the personal propaganda'. In the heat of the Swedish election campaign a Swedish Conservative named Sven Vikbladh also wrote to the CPC to get urgent information on the relationship between trade unions and the law in Britain.⁵³ After the Swedish Conservatives failed to significantly improve their parliamentary position at the 1956 general election they also commissioned one of its members, Sven-Gustav Åstrand, who was part of The Association for Freedom and Progress, to do a major review of the party's organisation and electoral machine. Part of his work demanded that he present a report on the administration and organisation of some European Conservative parties and Milne supplied him with an extremely detailed memorandum on the Conservative Party's organisational structures.⁵⁴ A Swedish Conservative reform group also visited the Bureau as a study party in May 1960.⁵⁵ They were given lectures on topics such as 'The London County Council', 'A British General Election', 'The British Parliament', and 'British Justice'.⁵⁶

When the Bureau reviewed its relationship with the Swedish Conservative Party in 1960 it reported that the relationship during the 1950s had fallen 'Just short of the top level'. Nevertheless, it was a 'steady, if not particularly close, liaison', which had been maintained 'on general "Scandinavian" lines'. Several reasons were highlighted to explain why the relationship was not a closer one. The Bureau stated that in the period after the war there was a 'former pro-German, even pro-Nazi, aura' of the party and that British Conservatives had found the 'reactionary and class background' of Swedish Conservatives challenging. Furthermore, whereas Norway had joined NATO Sweden's distinctive policy of neutrality had meant that the inter-party relationship lacked a spontaneity that had been an important feature of the evolving inter-party relationship with the Norwegian Conservatives. The British Conservatives also claimed that as a result of this they lacked links with the Swedish Conservatives at the Council of Europe in this period.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there was still a considerable transfer of ideas and knowledge from the British Conservative Party to the Swedish Conservatives, and some important personal links were made, particularly at the organisational level, during the 1950s.

The relationship with the Danish Conservative Party appears to have been more akin to the Norwegian one in terms of the Danish Conservatives being interested in both British Conservative principles and philosophy, and, policy and organisational details, but it was not as well-developed in the 1950s. Mogens Olsen who was a representative of the Danish Conservative Party and part of its 'special information department' did make some early contacts with the British Conservatives in 1949–51 to acquire similar information as had been requested by the other Scandinavian Conservative parties. For example, in March 1949 Olsen wrote to the CPC to request a copy of the party's programme in advance of the next Danish election because the Danish Conservatives were not acquainted with it.⁵⁸ Milne explained to Olsen that the Conservatives made distinctions between the party's 'principles', 'policy', and a 'programme'. Statements regarding the first and copies of important documents that fell into the second category, including 'The Industrial Charter' and 'The Agricultural Charter', were forwarded to the Danish Conservatives with the promise of new publications to come, but when it came to the latter only a copy of Churchill's statement from the 1945 general election was offered because a new manifesto had not yet been written.⁵⁹ Olsen made more requests the following year, including a copy of the booklet 'The Conservative Faith in the Modern World', and he subscribed to the CPC's publication list.⁶⁰ Within a year Olsen was writing to the CPC to state that the Danish Conservatives had studied the publications they had received, particularly those 'debating actual problems', and that they were now interested in receiving 'literature about the ideas and character of conservatism'.⁶¹ The Danish Conservative student organisation also invited Lord Kilmuir and Lord Hailsham to go to Copenhagen to lecture them on different occasions in 1958. Kilmuir's visit appears to have been a tremendous success because the Danish representative Ivar Ammitzbøll wrote to the CCO Speaker's Department to say that the Danish students had 'become more interested in the ideas and the organisation of British Conservatives than before', resulting in requests for copies of the party's programme and Charters, as well as information on the party organisation.⁶²

The British-Danish Conservative relationship was mostly one-directional, but when an experienced local party organiser L. Kaye Perrin visited the Danish Conservative Party in

1957 he did report back some useful information.⁶³ He was impressed with the provision of housing and the standard of school buildings in Copenhagen and other towns, how flats and houses were often designed for old people and families, and how special rent provisions were made for families with two or more children. He was also impressed by the standard of Danish health care, its immunisation programmes against tuberculosis and polio, and the cleanliness of Danish towns. But significantly he drew attention to the high levels of taxation that were being used to fund the welfare state.⁶⁴ Milne was impressed with Perrin's report, which meant he passed it on to the CRD.⁶⁵

Changing attitudes in the 1960s

These initial exchanges of knowledge and information, even if they were modest ones, helped to lay the foundations for the development of meaningful relationships between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties, which gave them a sense of collective identity and security in the decades after the Second World War. But the further development of these relationships owed much to a change in attitude at the highest levels of these parties to the idea of inter-party cooperation in Europe during the 1960s. First and foremost, this change occurred because of several reasons involving issues relating to European integration. First, the British and Scandinavian governments supported the development of EFTA, which was implemented in 1960. Second, the British and Danish governments applied to join the EEC in 1961. Third, the British Conservative Party applied for full membership of NEI and wanted the Scandinavian Conservative parties to follow them into the organisation if they could gain entry in 1963.

However, there was another important reason why Conservatives looked to cooperate more in Europe during the 1960s. British Conservative officials like the Chairman of the party's Overseas Bureau regularly drew attention to the activities of the Socialist International and the potential threat of communism during the Cold War when arguing for more British and Scandinavian Conservative involvement in European inter-party networks. This point should not surprise us because the British Labour Party played a prominent role in the activities of the Socialist International and it had enjoyed a renaissance in the 1940s and 1950s. Although it declined in importance in the 1960s it went on to enjoy another renaissance in the 1970s under the triumvirate leadership of Willy Brandt (German Social Democrats), Olof Palme (Swedish Social Democrats), and Bruno Kreisky (Austrian Social Democrats).⁶⁶ A number of historians have also drawn attention to how the development of Harold Wilson's European policy owed something to the British Labour Party's participation in social democrat and socialist inter-party networks in Europe during this period.⁶⁷ It is also widely known that Wilson's Labour government and intellectuals on the British left referenced the importance of Swedish social democratic policies as a potential model for British policy in this period, particularly in relation to areas such as incomes policy.⁶⁸ But if most of these attempts to 'copy' Scandinavian policies failed to move beyond the rhetoric, it was enough to disturb British Conservatives into thinking more about the importance of transnational exchanges.⁶⁹

Therefore, all of these developments encouraged a change in mentality among British Conservative leaders who sent out official invitations to the leaders of the Scandinavian Conservative parties to visit them in London for the first time.⁷⁰ As a result, the leadership teams of all three Scandinavian parties visited the British

Conservatives in the early–1960s. The first of the parties to visit was the Swedish Conservative Party.⁷¹ British Conservatives believed their Swedish counterparts had ‘purged themselves’ of older influences and they judged that they were key to cultivating Scandinavian support at the Council of Europe (Britain and the Scandinavian countries had been founding members in 1949). The Swedish Conservative leaders’ visit took place after the Swedish general election of 1960, which had seen the party fail to improve on its parliamentary position.⁷² But the Chairman of the Bureau Evelyn Emmet suggested that the Swedish Conservatives would still find it useful to discuss amongst other things issues relating to EFTA and the EEC.⁷³ With the leader of the Swedish Conservatives Jarl Hjalmarson away in the USA it fell to the economist Professor Gunnar Heckscher to reply to Emmet’s invitation. He found the offer to be ‘particularly attractive’ because the party was ‘anxious to learn as much as possible’ to improve its electoral chances. But he also agreed with Emmet that European issues should be prioritised because Britain had applied to become a member of the EEC. Hjalmarson accepted the invitation to visit but before he could do so Heckscher took over the party leadership.⁷⁴ Heckscher wrote to Milne to confirm details of the Swedish Conservative visit:

One problem which is bound to come up and in which it might be useful for both yourselves and in particular for us to clarify our minds is that of the causes of the comparatively low increase in productivity in Britain at present. Our Socialist Prime Minister has already referred to Britain as ‘the sick man of Europe’ in economic affairs, and I am quite sure that arguments of this type will crop up on various occasions, since Labour Parties in different countries maintain very close contact. We should therefore be most grateful to meet with somebody who could furnish us with a counter-analysis.⁷⁵

These types of requests were fairly common between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties in the 1960s and 1970s, which was used as a justification for more inter-party cooperation. Heckscher later wrote to Iain Macleod to say that the visit was a success, that it had given the Swedish Conservatives ‘much food for thought in many respects’, and that it had helped to establish ‘new personal relationships as well as strengthening all the existing ties’.⁷⁶

To what degree these types of comments were merely a sign of diplomatic politeness or reflective of something much more meaningful is admittedly difficult to know with any certainty, but we do know that the British-Swedish Conservative relationship went on to become the most active and policy-driven one between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties in the 1960s. How far the transfer of political ideas and knowledge from the British Conservatives to the Swedish Conservatives in the 1950s influenced the development of Swedish Conservatism is also a difficult question to answer and it cannot be fully answered here. But when the Conservative MP Stephen Hastings attended the Swedish Conservative Party conference in 1962 he reported that it was devoted to debating the ‘property owning democracy’ and ‘social benefits’.⁷⁷ The Swedish Conservatives had sent a party official to London to study how the British Conservative Party ‘pursued its policy concerning property owning democracy’ just one year earlier.⁷⁸ But given the British Conservative Party’s renewed use of this idea since 1946, Hastings argued, ‘I do not think there was much in the subject matter in these debates of general application or particular interest to us’. The

one exception was that he thought the Swedes had 'a system of share distribution through branches of the clearing banks all over the country' that might 'be in advance of anything over here'. With Heckscher in charge Hastings noted that 'there was much reference to economic theory', but he thought that the Swedish Conservatives were struggling to break free from a Swedish obsession with social service. In this respect, Hastings reported some very negative general impressions of Swedish society based on what he had heard at the conference:

There seems little doubt from what I was told that thirty years of social democracy is producing a generation which is no longer quite adult. People are so used to having everything taken care of by benevolent Big Brother that they are beginning to lose the urge to own property for themselves and this understandably worries the Högerpartiet . . . Swedish people no longer save for anything except pleasure or the next status symbol and they accept the most far-reaching and arbitrary reforms without protest. . . Swedish Conservatives have no clear idea how to reverse this process. I think there is a genuine warning for us in the condition of Sweden. We can see the same trends in this country to a lesser degree and they are dangerous. The proposition that responsibility is based upon ownership of property is justified by Sweden's example to a remarkable degree and one is left wondering whether Conservatives can hope to be effective if they simply accept passively the degree of social service imposed on them by previous Socialist governments.⁷⁹

When Hastings's report was discussed at the Overseas Committee meeting its members concluded that 'the conference had rather quietly debated Property-Owning Democracy' and that 'there was an alarming lack of will to re-establish private property, enterprise and responsibility'.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the embracing of the 'property-owning democracy' concept represented a shared goal between the two parties, and social democratic Sweden could at least be used as a justification for British Conservative policies at home.⁸¹

The British Conservatives requested more details about the Swedish Conservative Party's programme in 1963. Therefore, Yngve Holmberg, General Secretary of the Swedish party (and who would himself become party leader in 1965) sent Milne a pamphlet summarising the party's general outlook.⁸² On the surface at least it appeared that the Swedish Conservatives shared many of the same principles as the British Conservative Party under Macmillan's leadership. They rejected 'dogmas or doctrines' in favour of a pragmatic approach to politics, which meant judging individual cases on 'actual conditions'. This meant accepting that society was 'constantly changing and developing', but it was the responsibility of Conservatives to make sure that any such developments were not 'jerky and upsetting'. The home and the family were identified as the cornerstones of the structure of society and in areas of social policy the party's attitude was to be 'summarised in the phrase "Help where help is needed"'. The Swedish Conservatives argued that they rejected a 'Socialistic levelling policy' and that it was 'in the interests the individual himself to look after himself and his own property'. In other words, the party advocated a free economy based on individual enterprise to fund state-led welfare policies. Despite British Conservative concerns, the flagship idea in the Swedish Conservative programme was the 'property-owning democracy', which was presented as a 'new feature in the conservative way of thinking' that had started to 'assert itself more and more' in the 1950s. The idea was to be encouraged based on a reduction in taxation and the promotion of personal savings, which would fuel not only an increase in homeownership but also the purchase of shares and bonds; the latter would offer citizens

'an opportunity to acquire a direct and personal part-ownership of the means of production and thereby a share in the increase in prosperity'. The role of the state in the economy was to stimulate private enterprise, but consumer demand was to 'decide the direction of production'. Finally, in industrial relations and employment policy they argued that 'Unemployment is to be prevented by co-operation between business firms, the labour-market organisations and the community' and that 'Each citizen will be given an opportunity to work and freedom to choose his occupation and place of work'.⁸³ There was little for the two parties to disagree on here, even if the translation of these ideas into practice could result in very different outcomes in the respective countries.

Emmet chose to visit the Swedish Conservative Party conference in 1964 and reported that of all the foreign centre-right party guests, representing Denmark, Norway, Finland and Germany, she was given the most prominence. Emmet found a 'Party in good heart' and she judged Heckscher to be 'a very strong and forcible character' who was 'obviously extremely popular and admired by his followers'. She noted that in his speech, Heckscher 'made the most complimentary reference to the British Conservative Party which had, he said, set an example of how progressive such a Party can be'.⁸⁴ In August 1964 Heckscher also telegraphed the British Conservatives: 'Most grateful if you kindly send urgently materials on British housing policy after 1959 since your example frequently quoted Swedish Election Campaign'. The CRD happily obliged and a similar episode occurred one month later but in the opposite direction.⁸⁵ When it was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* that Harold Wilson planned to use Sweden as an example 'of what Socialism can achieve', Milne wrote to Carl-Henrik Winquist, the head of the Swedish Conservative Research Department, to ask for comments.⁸⁶ Winquist replied to Milne, 'It is obvious that Sweden as an example of the socialistic welfare state will play a rather important role in the labour propaganda'. He told him that it would 'be a great pleasure for us to help you with all facts and arguments you may need concerning the real conditions'.⁸⁷ When Milne received detailed comments from Winquist he forwarded them to the CRD who were interested to read them.⁸⁸ British Conservatives who visited the Swedish Conservatives in the late-1960s would continue to draw attention to what they saw as a 'Socialist dream of Utopia' in the country, but they believed that a large number of Swedes were unhappy living in it because of the loss of liberty and high levels of taxation. Nevertheless, they warned Conservative Party officials that Conservatives in the Scandinavian countries could not define their Conservatism as clearly as British Conservatives could do because of the existence of proportional representation and the need for coalition-building.⁸⁹

When the British Conservative Party lost the 1964 general election even more importance was attached to the idea of maintaining and expanding upon the party's existing relationships with centre-right parties in Europe. In opposition, the new Conservative Party leader Edward Heath ordered an immediate and wide-ranging policy review.⁹⁰ Therefore, it was natural that he was interested in exploring the possibility of looking to other centre-right parties for new policy ideas and inspiration. Correspondence between members of the CRD shows what its officials thought about the reliability and capability of some of the centre-right parties that were then in the party's orbit. John MacGregor wrote to the Director of the CRD Brendan Sewill in August 1966:

You may remember that at the Research Department meeting with Mr. Heath the other day, he was anxious to take up the proposition that we should see in what ways the equivalent

European Parties with whom we are in contact could help us in throwing light on the answers in their countries to mutual problems of policy. I was asked to take this in hand . . . indeed on pensions, Local Government and housing I got the assistance of the Swedish Research Department, whose Director [Carl-Henrik Winquist] is a good friend of mine, and there are very good and long papers in the files there now) . . . I ought to add that our continental links are strongest with the CDU in Germany, and the Swedish Conservative Party. Both are efficient and are therefore likely to produce a response. Among others the Danes and the Norwegians might produce something, although the answers in these countries are unlikely to be so useful to us.⁹¹

Heath's request was followed up by Charles Bellairs of the CRD, but his co-workers largely ignored the initiative.⁹² As Milne explained, what Heath and Bellairs wanted was in any case 'within the purview of the new inter-party set-up we are in the middle of clinching'.⁹³ Indeed, the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties were now in negotiations with the West German CDU and CSU to explore the founding of a new centre-right international and it was hoped that the new organisation would provide platforms for the sharing of ideas and policies. But perhaps the reason why the CRD's officials had not responded with the same level of enthusiasm was also because they understood that if such requests were made, the CRD, with its larger resources, would have to 'be ready to entertain similar requests from them'.⁹⁴ This could have resulted in the CRD being bombarded with requests as opposed to the sort of ad-hoc support it had been providing for other parties in the past. Nevertheless, we can see that during these years the CRD regarded both the Swedish Conservatives and the CDU as the major players when it came to policy research and the exchange of information, whereas the strong relationships with the Norwegian and Danish Conservatives were seen as unlikely to deliver useful information of this kind either because they were smaller and less effective parties or because their policies were seen to be less applicable to British society. The British-Swedish Conservative relationship in the latter half of the 1960s was certainly a closer one than it had been in the 1950s. This was driven by the fact that both parties had the resources to engage in similar wide-ranging policy reviews, which gave the two parties a level of symmetry at times. For example, the British Conservatives were so impressed by the scope of the Swedish party's policy review named 'Towards the Year 2000' that they wanted to acquire copies of the results for study by Conservative researchers under the direction of the Conservative MP Angus Maude.⁹⁵

Therefore, European integration had acted as a spur for these parties to embrace higher levels of political cooperation in the 1960s. The British Conservative Party when it was in opposition under Heath showed more interest in the Swedish Conservative Party's politics and in the nature of Swedish society more generally. But it is telling that British Conservatives continued to believe that they were far more advanced in areas of political organisation and more often than not they thought the same about ideas and policies. British Conservative interest in foreign parties was primarily strategic and its representatives were more likely to look to Sweden for evidence of what not to do in Britain. Of course, one could argue the same for the Scandinavian Conservatives, but it would be wrong to dismiss the influence of the British Conservative Party as just one of many foreign influences on the Scandinavian Conservative parties. Considering how suspicious they were of Christian Democrat parties on the continent, how electorally weak they were at

home, and how limited their geographical reach was in terms of centre-right inter-party networks, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this relationship was a more important one for them. Of course, it is extremely difficult to measure the influence of ideas and organisational training in this way and perhaps more work needs to be done in this area from a Scandinavian perspective using Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish archives in order to grasp the full context, but it is discernible from reports from British Conservatives visiting Scandinavian party conferences across this period that an enthusiasm for British Conservatism remained and that in some cases the institutional structures, like the format of party conferences and the existence of research departments or overseas offices, came to closely resemble the British Conservative model, albeit on a smaller scale. In other words, this early phase might have helped to shape Scandinavian Conservative party cultures in ways that we are not able to appreciate because the historiographies on these parties have focussed primarily on their roles in national politics. More broadly, what we can say is that what these parties shared in terms of general principles and interests far outweighed any specific policy differences they had in the 1960s.

Bridging the gap between conservatives and Christian democrats in Europe

The further development of the relationships between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties coincided with their desire to increase their contacts with Christian Democrats in Europe during the 1960s. This was considered to be strategically important for facilitating British, Danish, and Norwegian entry into the EEC. Furthermore, it would make it easier to devise special commercial arrangements for EFTA partners like Sweden who would not be able to join fully but who would need better trade access to an enlarged EEC.⁹⁶ This is one of the reasons why the British Conservative Party applied for full membership of NEI in 1963 and why British Conservatives wanted to use any leverage they thought they had to facilitate Scandinavian Conservative entry into the world of Christian Democrat internationalism, especially after a Swedish application for observer status had been rejected one year earlier. It was hoped that if all of the Conservative parties could acquire membership, they would stand a better chance of reforming the organisation to better suit their politics and influence European integration.

Yet, as one British Conservative had noted, on the Scandinavian side there still existed 'an "anti-Vatican" complex', meaning a suspicion of political Catholicism and the Christian Democrat parties in Europe, which had to be overcome.⁹⁷ Emmet saw it as her responsibility to persuade the Scandinavian Conservatives to fully commit to an alliance with Christian Democrats and this explains why she pushed for the holding of an Anglo-Northern conference in Denmark in 1963. At the conference, she gained the support of the Scandinavian Conservatives and reported that she had 'pointed out the danger of splitting Europe from a party point of view between Nordic races and the others'.⁹⁸ This should have come as no surprise because the Danish Conservative Poul Møller had offered some encouragement when he had told her some months earlier that the 'Scandinavians would follow' the British Conservative 'lead' if the party 'adopted an activist role in NEI'.⁹⁹ The British Conservatives were now acting as a bridge between the Scandinavians who they

had built up close relations with since the 1940s and the West German CDU/CSU who were the most important partner for the British Conservatives in terms of trying to build a new centre-right international in Europe during the 1960s and 1970s.

The British role was important because the Swedish Conservatives were refusing to visit the CDU's party conferences. Emmet believed Swedish anti-German feeling was a real problem and she thought that this was why the Scandinavians preferred a larger umbrella organisation with the British Conservatives under it. She believed that the Scandinavians now felt isolated in Europe, that they valued the new opportunities that EFTA had opened to them, and that they were in a mood for further cooperation, which was an opportunity not to be missed.¹⁰⁰ At the Anglo-Northern conference, the British and Scandinavian Conservatives agreed to a number of statements that included promises to explore closer intra-European cooperation, an increase in the informal and private exchanges of views at Strasbourg, the potential for a reorganisation of NEI to facilitate cooperation 'between kindred parties in both the Northern and the Southern countries of Free Europe without regard for sectarianism or indeed religious differences', and to encourage the NEI to 'persevere with the separation-off of Christian-Democrat activities among Central/East-European exile groups, Latin-Americans, Africans etc' because, they argued, 'meetings of a world-wide summit body would normally be more effective and economical on a smaller and selective basis, whilst being fully representative of the West-European and other regions'.¹⁰¹

The problem was that between 1965 and 1967 the British Conservative idea of carrying the Scandinavians with them into a reformed NEI or a new organisation that could house most centre-right parties in Europe proved to be unrealistic. After a particularly disappointing meeting of the NEI in 1965, Emmet wrote:

One might ask why we have been cold-shouldered. Mainly it is our own fault. For years we have remained in splendid isolation like icebergs at Strasbourg, consorting only with the Scandinavian countries, who, though admirable people, are right out of the stream of European politics, and are likely to remain so, unless we can help them along. When asked by the Christian-Democrat parties why we took this line, I found it impossible to think of a sensible answer. It is even more strange if we want to get closer to Europe.¹⁰²

Although Emmet admitted that the NEI had been 'a poor thing' over the years, she recognised its importance as the only party-political forum where 'Centre Party politicians could meet to discuss common problems'. Emmet saw it as an essential 'information centre' and argued that 'if we are to go into Europe there must not only be contact at Government level amongst Ministers, but also close contact and friendship at Party Leadership level', particularly when the British Conservative Party was in opposition at home.¹⁰³ It was Poul Møller who then lobbied Emmet and the British Conservatives for a 'better organisation of "Conservative" parties' working together in Europe to balance the Socialists' activities' because as Emmet explained they were 'very conscious in that part of the world of the close contact Wilson and co. have with their Socialist colleagues'. Emmet's frustrations with NEI were also starting to turn towards an acceptance that an alternative had to be found, especially as she continued to insist that if the party was to go into Europe it had to 'work at the understructure'.¹⁰⁴ Soon afterwards, Møller suggested to her that they give up on NEI or the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD) as it

was now called and look to form an alternative organisation with the German, Austrian, and Swiss Christian Democrats, but both Emmet and Heath were hesitant at first.¹⁰⁵

The turning-point came when Emmet and other British Conservatives attended the EUCD conference in December 1965 where once again they were treated as 'outsiders'. Emmet reported that the EUCD had 'a vision of world influence, if not domination', that the Christian Democrat movement anticipated 'directing the course of Europe', and that it discussed potential 'collaboration with the Labour and Liberal International Organisations'. As a result, Emmet concluded, 'It is humiliating to realise that in this milieu we are of no account, but it must be faced as fact. The situation needs to be taken in hand at the highest level, and as soon as possible ... I have come away from this Conference extremely depressed at our standing in Europe'.¹⁰⁶

Plans were then made for the first major alternative inter-party conference between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties and principally the German CDU/CSU and the Austrian ÖVP, which took place in Karlsruhe in April 1967. It is interesting to note that, according to Milne, the 'German hosts present were not too forthcoming towards the somewhat hypersensitive Scandinavians'.¹⁰⁷ British Conservatives argued that one of the main results on the first major consultation was to get the Germans to listen to the Scandinavians which was needed in order to foster a greater sense of unity and prepare the ground for future conferences. After the Karlsruhe meeting Heath finally gave up on the idea of the British and Scandinavian parties joining EUCD in the face of what seemed like a determined opposition from some Christian Democrat parties particularly the Italians: 'My conclusion therefore is that we should cease to concern ourselves for the time being with getting into EUCD; and that we should concentrate on the new Karlsruhe initiative in particular with a view to providing leadership at the highest level so that we gradually establish our position and make our impact in inter-party European contacts in this way'.¹⁰⁸ The Conservative Party Chairman, Edward du Cann, agreed with Heath, writing, 'I think we are on to something useful and important here. There seemed to be so many emerging political problems in Europe, many deriving from the new potential respectability of Communist Russia, which are of common interest to us all and a continuing advance diagnosis is urgently necessary if the Left Wing parties are not to prosper'.¹⁰⁹

Although Heath had lost the 1966 general election and the Wilson government failed with Britain's second application to join the EEC in 1967, it was during these years when wider centre-right party cooperation started to succeed for both the British and the Scandinavian parties in Europe. The most important Christian Democrat partners, the German CDU and CSU, were part of a 'grand coalition' at home before entering opposition themselves in 1969, but this was also a period when there was some Scandinavian Conservative electoral success. The Norwegian Conservatives were part of a governing coalition during 1965–71 and the same was true of the Danish Conservatives in 1968–71. The British Conservatives would also return to power in 1970 and Heath would succeed in taking Britain into the European Communities (EC) in 1973. However, the Swedish Conservatives would have to wait until 1976 to be part of government (the first non-socialist government in Sweden since 1936).

In the meantime, British Conservatives continued to report back from party conferences in the late-1960s that Scandinavian Conservatives were looking towards the British Conservative Party for a lead. In the case of the Danish Conservatives this was even more

apparent because British Conservative observers of the Danish party conferences reported that not only had the Danes based their conference on the British model but in terms of political ideas and outlooks on life they came closest to their own. This could be contrasted with British reports that documented how the Danish Conservatives were considerably 'ruffled' by the German CDU turning up uninvited to their party conference in 1968, which showed that despite progress now being made towards the establishment of a centre-right international in Europe, British Conservative leadership was key to bridging the gap between the Scandinavian Conservatives and the German CDU and CSU.¹¹⁰ In fact, the British Conservatives remained the only consistent presence at Scandinavian party conferences beyond the Scandinavian parties themselves in this period, even if the CDU had started to attend some of the conferences by the end of the 1960s.

There was much work to be done to bridge these political divides. At one point, the former Conservative leader and Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home personally intervened to try to create more opportunities for British Conservatives and European Christian Democrats to get to know each other and their respective parties. This was done in the hope that the British Conservatives could still attract Christian Democrats beyond the CDU and CSU to take part in the new inter-party conference and hopefully commit to the new centre-right international project. Douglas-Home asked party officials if a more traditional form of diplomacy might be worth trying, explaining,

Our relations with Christian democrats at Strasbourg have improved to a point where I am wondering if it would help for us to arrange an informal meeting with them here in England. Specifically I have in mind a weekend, possibly at Swinton [College], with each of the main Christian Democrat parties of Europe sending two members of their Parliament. ...Afterwards I should think our own members would each be willing to take one of the Christian Democrats home with him for the remainder of the weekend.¹¹¹

But, Milne, who had made continuous efforts to win over Christian Democrat parties for decades, was not entirely happy with Douglas-Home's suggestion, mostly because it was focussed on winning over troublesome Christian Democrats. Milne asked, 'Why Christian-Democrats only? If other-Conservatives are excluded, serious offence might be given—which could adversely affect our efforts. Such exclusion would be unlikely to ensure a fuller muster of CDs'.¹¹² Milne was referring here to the Scandinavian Conservatives who had enjoyed excellent relationships with him and the party for 20 years.

It was also in this period when the Scandinavian Conservative parties experienced 'identity' problems in terms of becoming increasingly uncomfortable with their party names both domestically and in Europe. As we know, the Swedish Conservatives went so far as to change their name to Moderata Samlingspartiet, meaning 'Moderate Coalition', in 1969. They communicated to the British Conservatives that this was precisely because the old name was too much of a 'drawback' in Europe, which no doubt related to difficulties of cooperating with Christian Democrats and Liberals, as well as leaving themselves open to criticism from the left at home for being right-wing 'reactionaries'.¹¹³ British Conservatives also reported that during this period Kåre Willoch's Norwegian Conservatives started to stress 'moral problems' and reformulated their party aims to emphasise 'a humane community', a society 'built on the Christian cultural basis', and 'common rights'.¹¹⁴ This, of course, was prompted by the challenge of the Christian People's Party (Kristelig

Folkeparti) in Norway, but these changes helped to ease their transition to cooperating with Christian Democrats in Europe. British Conservative reports from Denmark also confirmed that the Danish Conservatives were trying to play up the 'peoples' party' element of their name, but no matter how hard they tried they could not shake-off the Conservative element without dropping it completely.¹¹⁵ The name 'Conservative' had held back inter-party cooperation in the previous decades and it would continue to do so, or at least it would be used as justification for some Christian Democrat parties to dismiss plans for a rival organisation to that of the EUCD. With some of the Scandinavian parties actively playing down their Conservatism, it was perhaps natural that less emphasis would be put on the new organisation being a Conservative and Christian Democrat one.

In fact, at the third inter-party conference in 1969, Conservative officials reported: 'Previous conferences ... had been styled Conservative/Christian democratic. Centre-Right (apparently, acceptably to the others) was posited as having applicability also to the party-political spectrum of other world-regions in due course, with a view to eventual inter-regional consultation – in contrast to existing Europe-centred internationals.' This indicated that there was now a determination to put party labels to one side and to negotiate the terms of a new centre-right international in Europe that could appease both sides, but also one that could be adaptable in the future and cater for parties beyond Europe. In the same report, Conservative officials acknowledged that 'From the Party's standpoint, this year's spring Conference was the successful culmination—albeit in some ways still of modest proportions—of almost twenty years of patient cultivation, in which this Party had been careful to encourage the others to set the pace'. Indeed, the British Conservatives were key to these developments but equally they had been slow to give up on the NEI/EUCD and work towards a new solution that could accommodate the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties. Although the CDU and CSU were just as important to any new initiative materialising, the British Conservatives were right to think at this time that they remained 'the best-documented among and about our colleagues, and are looked-to for both high-level advice and routine information on this point'. Furthermore, unlike his predecessors, Heath had taken a serious interest in both European integration and centre-right internationalism at the party level. His willingness to take the time to address representatives from the other parties at the inter-party consultation meetings was thought to have made a difference in terms of elevating the importance of the initiative. In fact, Conservative officials argued that it was now 'vitaly necessary for the future that our representation should be at the highest level, otherwise our foreign friends will not think it worth coming so far'.¹¹⁶

Although British Conservatives still hoped that the inter-party conference could lead to a broader organisation capable of housing a greater number of centre-right parties in Europe, they remained the most important ally for the Scandinavian Conservatives as the new organisation was being negotiated. A British Conservative report from the inter-party conference in Vienna in 1971 noted that 'We find ourselves helping the Scandinavians and the others to mix'.¹¹⁷ Milne argued that this type of inter-personal social work was essential because it had helped to create a culture that was vital for sustaining any future organisation. Milne wrote of the Vienna conference, 'It was symptomatic of the intrinsic and practical interest taken by all concerned in the proceedings that the Norwegian

Chairman (Mr. Willoch), who had not himself attended before, promptly volunteered to have the 1972 Conference there. There can be no doubt that a spirit of personal friendship and mutual respect has been engendered by these Conferences among key figures from a number of countries and parties'.¹¹⁸

A British Conservative memorandum produced ahead of the inter-party conference in Oslo in 1972 continued to draw attention to ideological and practical differences between centre-right parties in Europe, but at the same time there was an acknowledgement that the declining importance of Christianity in European politics was also aiding their collaborative efforts:

While Europe is still predominantly Christian, politics have spread beyond religious boundaries, and Europe contains a variety of beliefs. There is however, a definite division between those who start from a Mass and egalitarian point of view, and those who believe the development and freedom of the individual within the limits of good neighbourliness. Both however desiring the happiness of the Communities. Our Group, which has now been going for some six year, has become the focal point for those Parties which can broadly be described as Centre and Centre-Right.¹¹⁹

British Conservatives strongly believed that the Scandinavian Conservative parties were firmly in their own camp, embracing a politics centred on the freedom of the individual, as opposed to starting from a more egalitarian point of view. For British Conservatives, it was the Italian and Benelux Christian Democrats who existed outside of the camp, and, to some degree, the French parties. Indeed, the rather passive attitudes of Scandinavian Conservatives towards the size and operation of their countries' welfare states were probably downplayed by all concerned so long as general principles and party rhetoric appeared to match to a large degree. General principles and areas of agreement could be used more actively to progress the drive towards the new centre-right internationalism.

EEC membership was a major concern for the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties throughout this period. Swedish membership of the EEC was not a serious possibility, but as Heath's use of the Swedish Conservative Research Department showed the relationship would remain a close one. In fact, private correspondence shows that the Heath government was sharing British government green papers with the Danish and Finnish parties and it is likely that they were doing the same with the Swedish and Norwegian Conservatives.¹²⁰ Furthermore, as the British Conservative representative at the Norwegian Conservative Party conference in 1972, Patrick Wall impressed on the Scandinavian Conservatives that 'it would be disastrous for NATO and Europe if Britain joined the EEC and her allies in Norway and Denmark did not' because 'Europe needs the stability shown by the Northern nations'.¹²¹ Likewise, Wall had reported one year earlier from the Danish party conference that 'there is a feeling of Nordic unity which is worried about Denmark joining the E.E.C. particularly if Norway decides against membership'.¹²² This explains why the CPC visited the Norwegian Conservative Party before their referendum to encourage the spread of pro-EEC feeling.¹²³ But as is well-known only the Danish people voted to join the EC in 1972.

Therefore, for the first time in 1973, the parties were split between the British and Danish Conservatives who were now inside the EC and the European Parliament, and, the Norwegian and Swedish Conservatives who were on the outside looking in. This fact

disrupted the perceived importance of the British and Scandinavian Conservative relationships in Europe because it occurred at an important time for European integration when there was a gradual move towards systematic transnational groupings in the European Parliament. When European leaders announced in December 1974 that the first direct elections to the European Parliament would be held in 1978, Christian Democrats intensified their efforts to form a new European political party that would also form a political group in the European Parliament.¹²⁴ As Christian democrats were already working together at the inter-party level through the EUCD, it was natural for them to form and launch the European Peoples' Party (EPP) in 1976. The problem for the British Conservative Party was that despite its close relationship with the German CDU and CSU it did not share the same ambitions for European integration, while the other Christian democrat parties in Europe had little interest in allying themselves with Conservative parties both for this reason and for domestic political reasons.¹²⁵ Therefore, the British Conservatives faced almost complete isolation in the European Parliament.

The British Conservatives had believed that they would be best served, at least initially, by not joining any group in the European Parliament. But the Danish Conservatives found themselves in an even weaker position because they understood that they would have very few MEPs and their politics were not in line with those of the prospective EPP. Therefore, the Danish Conservatives took the initiative and formally requested the forming of a Conservative group with the British Conservatives in the European Parliament.¹²⁶ Officials at CCO debated the merits of doing so considering the 'rather marked disparity of forces'. But Nigel Forman wrote to Michael Fraser advising the party to accept the Danish Conservative offer because of the following reasons:

- (1) It would enable us to form a multinational Group and so live up to the spirit of the European Parliament and distinguish ourselves from the Gaullists who are uninationals.
- (2) We are very close to the Danish Conservatives on the full range of policy issues.
- (3) The Danes expect a favourable response and want to join us.
- (4) We would have more chance of moderating the wilder Christian Democratic views on institutional questions if we were in alliance with the Danes.
- (5) It would make it easier to accommodate Norwegian Conservatives, if and when Norway succeeded in gaining full membership at some future date.
- (6) If we do not agree to have the Danes in our Group, they would probably be obliged to join the Christian Democratic Group where their more pragmatic point of view would not count for much ...¹²⁷

Here we can see just how comfortable the two parties were with each other, how loyalty was indeed a factor, and that such an alliance could at least provide weak evidence of a commitment to the spirit of European integration. Fraser was not immediately convinced that such an alliance or group was the best idea because he feared upsetting the CDU and CSU or the French who were under the impression that the British Conservatives were 'going it alone for the time being'. Fraser also raised another concern: 'The only other problem arising is the problem of the word "Conservative" which we discussed at such considerable length during the CDU/CSU meetings'.¹²⁸ But even if the problem of political language had to be negotiated with the CDU and CSU before a new centre-right

international could be established, it did not prevent the forging of a British and Danish Conservatives group in the European Parliament. In reality, it was never going to compromise the CDU's and CSU's political ambitions or their membership of the EPP.

Interestingly, though, in that same month the Conservative MP Tom Normanton had reported back from the CDU party conference in Hamburg that after speaking with the Norwegian Conservative Party Kåre Willoch for over an hour he had 'become completely convinced that it is considered by him to be of the greatest importance to develop the closest possible links with British Conservatives'. Willoch told Normanton that 'he would welcome any arrangements for meetings and he would in no way feel embarrassed domestically were this strong link to be established'. But Normanton suggested that the same was not true in the Danish context, despite the need for the Danish Conservatives to cooperate in the European parliament.¹²⁹

The inter-party conferences proved to be a useful arena for the Scandinavian parties to promote their own views on European integration, which were noted by British Conservatives. Michael Niblock of the CRD reported that at the inter-party conference in 1973, 'The need for decentralized authority was made with particular force by the Scandinavian participants, who tended to believe that the attractiveness of European integration in their countries would depend to a large degree on the extent to which it was combined with a determined effort to decentralize authority within the member-countries wherever possible'. This was generally in-tune with British Conservative views on European integration at the time. Furthermore, Niblock found that he could identify as a Conservative far more with the Scandinavian Conservatives than he could with European Christian democrats. He wrote of the conference, 'one was left with the impression that the Conservative Parties represented at the meeting were a good deal more confident about their ability to appeal to their electorates in Britain and Scandinavia than were the Christian Democratic Parties'.¹³⁰

At the inter-party conference in 1974, British Conservatives reported that their own party had lost the 1974 election because of the 'negative catch-all appeal of the Liberal Party'. They saw similarities with what was happening politically in the Nordic countries and to the detriment of the political chances of their party-political allies, arguing that it was 'a phenomenon which has manifested itself in more extreme forms in the recent achievements of the various neo-Poujadist parties in Finland, Denmark and Norway'.¹³¹ There was a sense of solidarity on display here and this was clear from encounters elsewhere. After the disappointment of the Norwegian referendum result, the British Conservatives made a significant effort to stay close to the Norwegian Conservative Party, inviting them to participate in a bi-lateral conference in Edinburgh. This had to be delayed until 1974 for domestic political reasons in Norway, but when the meeting did take place the Norwegian Conservatives were keen to share their knowledge of their own failed referendum campaign so that the British Conservatives would not suffer a similar result in 1975. Other topics that came up for discussion were fishing rights and the development of North-Sea oil. The Norwegian Conservatives were also understandably keen to persuade the British Conservatives to allow them to be 'observers' of the new British-Danish European Conservative Group's study days.¹³²

Therefore, the years 1967–74 saw the maintenance of strong Anglo-Northern Conservative relationships and these parties continued to identify with each other in

Europe. The British Conservatives did much to bridge the gap between the Scandinavian parties and those Christian Democrats who were willing to participate in the inter-party conferences like the German CDU and CSU and the Austrian ÖVP. The culmination of this work was the conference held at Eichholz in October 1974 when the British Conservative and CDU programmes were compared directly in order to further explore the scope for a new centre-right international. Most of the Scandinavian parties were present, but only Swedish contributions were recorded in the minutes of the discussions. Unsurprisingly, the key conclusion was 'Certain doubts were raised as to the possibility of producing a common programme'. It was felt that 'common bases could develop from the discussion and comparison of problems'.¹³³ But it remained the case that the parties were struggling to formalise what would become the EDU. Moreover, British Conservative and German Christian Democrat efforts in this area had not helped to improve the position of the British and Danish parties in the European Parliament. These comparative discussions would continue and so would the inter-party conferences in the latter-half of the 1970s as both the British and the Scandinavian parties, and, the CDU and CSU were determined to establish a new centre-right international in Europe.

European democrat union

The enlargement of the EC, the launch of the EPP, and the announcement of direct elections to the European Parliament made British Conservatives more determined to complete the EDU project in order to improve the party's position in Europe. As the relationships with the Scandinavian parties were strong and reliable there was no need for British Conservatives to prioritise them when the Conservative Party was focussed on the twin issues of the EDU and looking for allies in the European Parliament in the late-1970s. As Baroness Elles, Chairman of the Conservative International Office, explained to the new leader of the British Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher, in March 1976, the Scandinavian parties wished to hold a new meeting with the British Conservatives but it 'would only be possible once our position has been made clear in relation to the formation of a European Democrat Union or similar link, because, however helpful and cooperative these parties are, they are not totally relevant to our position in the European Parliament'.¹³⁴ Elles and others in the British Conservative Party had hoped the plans for the EPP would fail and that British Conservatives could form an alliance in the European Parliament with the German CDU/CSU and members of the French parties, but the launch of the EPP was a success.

This is not to suggest that British-Scandinavian Conservative relations were abandoned completely in this period. When the Third Cod War broke out between Britain and Iceland in 1976 British Conservatives visited Scandinavian Conservative conferences and were able to use these inter-party networks to appreciate the fact that most Scandinavian Conservatives supported Iceland in the dispute.¹³⁵ The strong Norwegian Conservative performance at the general election of 1977 also gave all of the parties a boost of political confidence and, interestingly, representatives of the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties, as well as those of the CDU, were in the Norwegian television studio with the Norwegian party leaders on election night as the results came in, which served to strengthen political unity, friendship, and goodwill.¹³⁶ With regards to the Swedish

Conservatives, British Conservatives also recognised a lot of what they believed in politically in the Swedish programme in the late-1970s, even if, as Carl Bildt highlighted, the key areas of common interest were economic and industrial policies.¹³⁷ In contrast to both the Norwegian and Swedish Conservatives, the Danish Conservatives suffered from an electoral collapse and political division in this period, which took some time to resolve after Poul Schlüter was made leader of the party in 1974. There had been considerable division over the issue of whether the Danish Conservatives should chase the 'Left Center voter as well as the Right Center Voter', but British Conservatives never doubted that the Danish Conservatives would stay on a genuinely Conservative path. Apparently, Schlüter had also informed the British Conservatives that he had wanted to make as much political capital out of the planned inter-party conference in Copenhagen in 1976 as he could, and in order to do so he had specifically requested the presence of Margaret Thatcher.¹³⁸

In terms of the founding of the EDU, the Swedish Conservatives were concerned that momentum was being lost and British Conservatives had to reassure them that the initiative would bear fruit eventually. The Swedish Conservatives also expressed their own and Norwegian concerns to the British Conservatives about the role that Franz Josef Strauss, Chairman of the CSU, might play in the EDU.¹³⁹ Strauss was usually seen as a reactionary figure, he had been a vocal critic of 'Ostpolitik', he had recently, albeit temporarily, cancelled the alliance between the CSU and the CDU, and he was a political rival of Helmut Kohl. These factors probably mattered to the Scandinavians, but more importantly the parties feared the EDU could be seen as a reactionary conservative organisation rather than a liberal-Conservative or centrist one if Strauss was given a prominent role in the enterprise because he was known to favour 'a political vocabulary centred on stark oppositions and clear-cut dichotomies'.¹⁴⁰

In some ways, a moment of crisis during the final stages of the forming of the EDU illustrated the continuing difficulty of trying to maintain the project as a joint Conservative-Christian Democrat one. The Austrian ÖVP had agreed to host all of the participants in the project at Schloss Klessheim, Salzburg, to discuss and finalise the Charter and Statutes of the EDU. But as one CDU official explained to Elles in July 1976, 'urgent and worrying' problems had emerged at the last minute: 'I was told by the Austrian People's Party that they do not intend to invite the Scandinavian Parties, thus hoping that more Christian-democratic parties will be present in Klessheim'. The CDU official thought that the Austrians wanted to invite more European Christian Democrats instead because they believed it would 'create a better atmosphere' and that they harboured hopes of joining the European People's Party.¹⁴¹ But as the CDU official noted, if the Austrians followed through with their plans it would be a major set-back for the EDU because it would not even be present on the agenda at the meeting. There was little chance, having come so far in terms of developing the EDU project together, that either the British Conservatives or the CDU and CSU would have accepted the Austrian plan. As founding members, the Scandinavian Conservative parties could not be dismissed at this stage. In fact, Strauss would 'not give up' on 'the idea of EDU' and he singled out the importance of assembling the British Conservatives, the Swedish Conservatives, and the French 'Majorité Présidentielle' because he believed that once these parties were members other reluctant parties 'would change their minds'.¹⁴² Therefore, decades of transnational networking between the British and Scandinavian Conservatives, British Conservative leadership and lobbying on behalf of the Scandinavian

parties, and the more recent diplomatic work with both the CDU and CSU had resulted in meaningful commitments between these parties that could not easily be broken.

But as Karl Magnus Johansson showed through his use of the Swedish Conservative Party archive, the Swedish Conservatives (along with their Nordic counterparts) were excluded from the private meeting in Kitzbühel on 20 March 1978, which agreed to the final terms of the EDU. The Swedish Conservatives had been one of the four parties in the original working group along with the British Conservative Party, the German CDU and CSU, and the Austrian ÖVP, which had up until that stage prepared the ground for the EDU. As some minor changes were made to the terms it 'caused considerable acrimony among the Swedes'. The Secretary-General of the Swedish Conservatives Lars F. Tobisson proposed either to refuse to attend the inauguration of EDU and thereby refuse to sign the declaration or to only agree to become an observer.¹⁴³ After a delay relating to the launch of the European Peoples' Party (and much to British and Scandinavian frustrations), the EDU was founded at a meeting at Klessheim on 24 April 1978. In the end, the leader of the Swedish Conservatives Gösta Bohman did not attend the inauguration, but whether this was really a protest about the Swedish Conservatives being excluded from the final preparatory meeting for EDU or if it was related to domestic politics because the leader of the Swedish Social Democrats Olof Palme labelled the organisation 'The Black International' is not entirely clear.¹⁴⁴ In the end, Tobisson attended and signed on behalf of the Swedish Conservatives probably because the hard work had already been done and they understood that the British Conservatives were more than capable of representing the Scandinavians at the final stage of the process towards EDU. The diplomatic snub may even have been orchestrated by the other parties to allay any Austrian concerns about the number of Conservative parties in EDU.

Finally, for all of the good work Heath had done throughout the 1960s and early-1970s to encourage more inter-party cooperation in Europe, it was Thatcher who was determined to realise the EDU project. She had outlined her ambitions at the CDU party conference in Hannover in 1976. There, she argued that the Christian Democratic, Conservative, and Centre parties in Europe had much in common, particularly the need to maintain 'free economies' and to combat 'threats to our way of life'. In her words, the establishment of the EDU was 'a task of historic importance'. More significantly, perhaps, in words that foreshadowed her views on European integration when she was Prime Minister in the 1980s, she argued that it was 'not aiming at a single monolithic party, but at an alliance of autonomous parties co-operating for a common purpose'. Furthermore, she was careful to clarify that the EDU was not designed to be modelled on the Socialist International. 'We do not need to copy their barren doctrines or ideological arguments', she said, 'But we must match them in organisational strength if we are serious in our purpose, and determined to achieve our victory'.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

The British Conservative Party was never as disconnected from the politics of other Conservative parties in post war Europe as has usually been assumed. British Conservative ideas and expertise were exported in ways that historians have not generally been aware of. In the case of the Scandinavian Conservative parties, it would perhaps be no exaggeration to argue that the British Conservative Party, with its much larger

resources and strong electoral record, was a beacon of hope, which could be used as a reference point by Scandinavian Conservatives when trying to think about how to respond to the electoral dominance of Scandinavian social democrat parties. British Conservative ideas, organisational knowledge, and electoral campaigning techniques, which had played a role in helping the party to return to government in 1951, were drawn upon by the Scandinavian Conservatives. But of particular importance were the ideas inherent in the 'Industrial Charter' and the British Conservative concept of the 'property-owning democracy'. Although initial scepticism on the British Conservative side towards inter-party networking meant that forms of collaboration were restricted to informal, ad-hoc, and organisational-level exchanges in the 1950s, there was an important flow of knowledge and information from the British Conservatives to their Scandinavian counterparts, and important relationships between party organisers and secretaries were established, which would prove to be useful in the long-term when all of these parties shifted their attention towards European cooperation in the 1960s. Information mostly flowed in one direction throughout these years not only because of the disparity between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties in terms of size, resources, and electoral record, but also because British Conservatives could not read Scandinavian languages.

The result of this patient transnational work by Conservative organisers was that the parties came to identify with each other in Europe in ways that distinguished their political traditions collectively from those of Christian democracy and French Gaullism. The development of EFTA and the British government's subsequent decision to apply for EEC membership meant that both the British and the Scandinavian Conservative parties woke up to the need to increase political cooperation in Europe during the 1960s, which resulted in high-level visits from the Scandinavian Conservative parties to the British Conservative Party. Under Heath's leadership, the CRD cooperated with foreign research departments but particularly with those of the Swedish Conservatives and the German CDU. These exchanges of information and personnel, along with the British, Danish, and Norwegian desire to be part of the European integration process, helped to create the conditions for cooperation with other centre-right parties in the 1960s and 1970s. But British Conservatives continued to claim that their organisational abilities were far superior to those of their Scandinavian counterparts and more often than not their confidence in their own party's principles and policies was reinforced by these types of foreign encounters. In the years leading up to the founding of the EDU, as an alternative centre-right international to that of the EUCD or even the EPP, British Conservatives worked hard to build party alliances in Europe but there seems to have been few transfers of foreign ideas into the British Conservative Party.

Without the building up of good relations between the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties, the challenge of being rejected by many Christian democrat parties, and the threat of socialist internationalism, it is unlikely that there would have been a need to work towards the development of an alternative centre-right international in Europe like the EDU (or indeed its global counterpart known as the International Democrat Union that was founded in 1983). The British and Scandinavian Conservative parties would have also struggled even more than they did in Europe if they had not been able to identify collectively as part of a Conservative political

tradition. The ability to at least stay in the swim of European politics, to not be fully isolated, and to not be completely dominated by Christian democrats, depended on the claim that they were not alone. This sense of collective identity also meant that the British Conservatives had a slightly stronger bargaining position when they entered into positive talks with the West German CDU/CSU in the 1960s and tried to build political bridges between Conservatives and Christian Democrats. These efforts resulted in the EDU, which meant the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties were integrated into a wider centre-right inter-party network for the first time. As a result, these inter-party relationships could be strengthened and built upon in the years ahead. But they also lent themselves to keeping open important channels to parties (and countries) who were not in the EC, which was the case with the Norwegian and Swedish parties in this period.

These new centre-right international forums helped to integrate the British and Scandinavian Conservative parties into Europe and gave British and Scandinavian Conservatives more global contacts than they would have otherwise had access to. Perhaps more significantly these relationships and international forums helped to keep open alternative views of Europe, which did not sit well with the main thrust of the European project that was mostly being negotiated elsewhere. This article has shown how there was significant British Conservative interest in building inter-party networks throughout this period but arguably it was always limited to the channelling of a particularly Anglo-Nordic vision of European cooperation. This was mostly at odds with the greater integrationist and federalist ambitions of most Christian democrats, but perhaps it offers us another way of explaining the persistence of Euroscepticism in the British Conservative Party.

Notes

1. See Jackson, 'The think-tank archipelago', 43–61; Stedman Jones, *Masters of the universe*; and, Davies, Jackson and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, eds. *The Neoliberal Age*.
2. Kowol, 'Renaissance on the Right', 296. The problem had been identified as far back as the 1990s, see Green, *The crisis of Conservatism*, 319. Otherwise, historians are still reliant on books written in the 1980s, which had limited access to sources. See Layton-Henry, ed. *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*; and, Girvin, ed. *The Transformation of Contemporary Conservatism*.
3. See Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*. The book has now been translated into English, see Steber *The Guardian of Concepts*. Also, see Steber, 'Talking in Europe', 296–297. Another specific exception is Whisker, 'The Conservative Party', 125–150. For a comparative history of ideas, see the essays in Berthezène and Vinel, eds. *Postwar Conservatism*.
4. See Steber, *Die Hüter der Begriffe*, chapter 5, or Steber, *The Guardian of Concepts*, chapter 4.
5. For example, see Andersson, *The Library and the Workshop*; Olsen, *The Sovereign Consumer*; Innset, *Markedsvendingen*; and, Kärnylä, *Democracy and the Economy*.
6. For a discussion of the general lack of research on the Scandinavian Conservative/centre-right parties, see Christensen, *The State of the Right*, 5. For a basic account of Nordic Conservative party traditions published in German, see Veen, ed. *Christlich-demokratische und conservative Parteien*.
7. Johansson, 'The alliance of European Christian Democracy and Conservatism', 131–149.
8. Johansson, *Transnational Party Alliances*; Also, on later years, see Notaker, 'Access and Allies', 21–39.

9. On the Norwegian Conservative Party, see Sejersted, *Høyres historie* 3, 32–36 & 172–177. On the Swedish Conservatives, see Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi*, particularly 326–339 & 248–252. There is no obvious work to cite on the Danish Conservatives.
10. Notaker, 'Moderate affection', 279–280. See Løvhaug, *Politikk som idékamp*.
11. See the discussion in Östling, Olsen, and Larsson Heidenblad, 'Introduction', 1–18.
12. See Costa, *The Labour Party*; and, Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism*.
13. See Strang, 'The other Europe', 500–518. The 'awkward partner' thesis has been rigorously critiqued, but see George, *An Awkward Partner*.
14. Östling, Olsen, and Larsson Heidenblad, 'Introduction', 5.
15. On these types of approaches, see Strang, 'The Rhetoric of Nordic Cooperation', 103–131.
16. Strang, 'Scandinavia', 245–256.
17. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Conservative Party Archive: Conservative Central Office—Subject Files. CPA CCO 4/5/140, Ursula Branston to the General Director, 7 November 1952.
18. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Conservative Party Archive: Party Chairman's Office. CPA CCO 20/15/1. The General Director to the Chairman, 'Conservative Overseas Bureau Short Progress Report, 1949–55', 30 November 1955.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Deighton, 'Our Scandinavian Allies', 231–234.
22. O'Hara, 'Applied socialism of a fairly moderate kind', 4–5.
23. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Conservative Party Archive: Conservative Overseas Bureau/International Office. CPA COB 5/6/25/1. R.D. Milne to the General Director, 8 March 1950.
24. COB 5/6/25/1. Leif Helberg to R.D. Milne, 18 January 1952.
25. COB 5/6/25/1. R.D. Milne to the General Director, 22 January 1952.
26. COB 5/6/25/1. R.D. Milne to the General Director, 5 February 1952.
27. COB 5/6/25/1. Eric Edwards, report on a visit to Norway, 27 March 1952.
28. COB 5/6/25/1. John Arne Hansen to R.D. Milne, 19 May 1951.
29. COB 5/6/25/1. John Arne Hansen to R.D. Milne, 16 July 1951.
30. COB 5/6/25/1. Gudvin Låder Ve to R.D. Milne, 8 March 1956.
31. COB 5/6/25/1. R.D. Milne to Gudvin Låder Ve, 15 March 1956. On the British Conservative Party's 'charters' and policies, see Ramsden, "'A Party for Owners'", 49–63.
32. COB 5/6/25/1. Lars Roar Langslet to R.D. Milne, 11 July 1956. On the activities of the CPC, see Norton, 'The Role of the Conservative Political Centre', 183–199.
33. COB 5/6/25/1. Lars Roar Langslet to R.D. Milne, 24 July 1956.
34. COB 5/6/25/1. Gudvin Låder Ve to R.D. Milne, 7 November 1956. On the use of 'property-owning democracy' in the British context, see Francis, "'A Crusade to Enfranchise the Many'", 275–297.
35. COB 5/6/25/1. Paul Thyness to R.D. Milne, 5 December 1956; and, COB 32/1 Norway, 1949–59, Paul Thyness to R.D. Milne, 18 October 1958.
36. COB 5/6/25/1. Paul Thyness to R.D. Milne, 14 January 1958.
37. COB 5/6/25/1. Paul Thyness to R.D. Milne, 12 February 1958. On the history of the Bow Group and its publications, see Barr, *The Bow Group*.
38. For example, see COB 5/6/25/1. Gudvin Låder Ve to R.D. Milne, 21 March 1958; Holger Ursin to R.D. Milne, 22 May 1958; and, Holger Ursin to R.D. Milne, 6 September 1958.
39. COB 5/6/25/1. Gudvin Låder Ve to R.D. Milne, 21 March 1958.
40. See COB 5/6/25/1. Various documents including Holger Ursin to R.D. Milne, 22 May 1958; A letter of reference from Næringsøkonomisk Forskningsinstitutt for Axel Dammann, 12 June 1958; and Holger Ursin to R.D. Milne, 9 September 1958.
41. COB 5/6/25/1. Holger Ursin to R.D. Milne, 6 September 1958; and, Paul Thyness to R.D. Milne, 18 October 1958. On the history of CRD, see Ramsden, *The Making of Conservative Party Policy*. On the Party's Swinton College, see Black, 'Tories and Hunters', 187–214.
42. COB 5/6/25/1. Paul Thyness to F.R. Fletcher, 23 October 1959. For histories of the British Conservative Party in this period, see Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden*; and, Ramsden, *The Winds of Change*.

43. COB 2/1/1/1. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 19 July 1949.
44. COB 5/6/28/1. Professor Henrik Munktell to R.D. Milne, 30 July 1949.
45. COB 5/6/28/1. Professor Henrik Munktell to R.D. Milne, 1 June 1953.
46. COB 5/6/28/1. Folke Björkman to R.D. Milne, 27 April 1953. On Butler's record as Chancellor of the Exchequer, see Howard, *RAB*, 178–220.
47. COB 5/6/28/1. Ingemar Essén to R.D. Milne, 7 September 1951.
48. COB 5/6/28/1. Göran Ramberg to R.D. Milne, c. October 1954.
49. COB 5/6/28/1. Michael Fraser to R.D. Milne, 19 October 1954. On the British Conservative Party's electoral messages and policies around these elections, see Freeman, 'Reconsidering "Set the People Free"', 522–7.
50. COB 5/6/28/1. R.D. Milne to Göran Ramberg, 2 November 1954.
51. COB 5/6/28/1. R.D. Milne to Göran Ramberg, 8 September 1955.
52. COB 5/6/28/1. Folke Björkman to R.D. Milne, 14 May 1955.
53. COB 5/6/28/1. Edward Eden to R.D. Milne, 7 September 1956.
54. COB 5/6/28/1. Sven-Gustav Åstrand to R.D. Milne, 27 May 1957; and, Sven-Gustav Åstrand to R.D. Milne, 19 June 1957.
55. COB 2/1/1/1. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 22 May 1950.
56. COB 5/6/28/1. Programme detailing the Swedish Conservative Visit, dated 28 July/12 August 1950.
57. COB 5/6/28/2. R.D. Milne to Miss Yonge, 3 March 1960. See the attached confidential memorandum on entitled 'Liaison with the Swedish Conservative Party'.
58. COB 5/6/4/1. Mogens Olsen to the CPC, 27 March 1949.
59. COB 5/6/4/1. R.D. Milne to Mogens Olsen, 9 June 1949.
60. COB 5/6/4/1. Mogens Olsen to the CPC, 25 March 1950; and, R.D. Milne to Mrs Lambert, 31 May 1950.
61. COB 5/6/4/1. Mogens Olsen to the CPC, 14 July 1951; and, R.D. Milne to Mogens Olsen, 26 July 1951. A selection of publications were forwarded later that year, see COB 5/6/4/1. Mogens Olsen to the CPC, 19 December 1951.
62. COB 5/6/4/1. Ivar Ammitzbøll to S.B.H. Oliver, 3 December 1958.
63. COB 5/6/4/1. R.D. Milne to Ole Bjørn Kraft, 18 February 1957; and, L. Kaye Perrin to R.D. Milne, 30 May 1957.
64. COB 5/6/4/1. L. Kaye Perrin to R.D. Milne, 30 May 1957.
65. COB 5/6/4/1. R.D. Milne to L. Kaye Perrin, 31 May 1957.
66. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism*, 465–466.
67. See Steinnes, *The British Labour Party, Transnational Influences and European Community Membership*; and, Broad, *Harold Wilson, Denmark, and the Making of Labour European Policy*.
68. See Wickham-Jones, 'The debate about wages', 83–105; and, Wickham-Jones, 'Missed Opportunities: British social democracy and the Rehn model', 277–297.
69. On 'copying' policy, see O'Hara, 'Applied Socialism of a fairly moderate kind', 1–25; and, O'Hara, *Governing Post-War Britain*, chapter 3.
70. On the Macmillan government and Britain's role in Europe, see Steinnes, 'The European Challenge', 61–79.
71. For details of Danish and Norwegian party leaders' visits, see COB 5/6/4/3. R.D. Milne to Evelyn Emmet, 24 January 1963; COB 5/6/4/3. Evelyn Emmet to Poul Sørensen, 19 February 1963; COB 5/6/25/2. Kåre Willoch to R.D. Milne, 28 October 1964; and, COB 5/6/25/2. Kåre Willoch to R.D. Milne, 27 November 1964.
72. COB 5/6/28/2. Jarl Hjalmarson to Evelyn Emmet, 28 March 1960.
73. COB 5/6/28/2. Evelyn Emmet to Jarl Hjalmarson, 11 January 1961.
74. COB 5/6/28/2. Gunnar Heckscher to Evelyn Emmet, 11 September 1961.
75. COB 5/6/28/2. Gunnar Heckscher to R.D. Milne, 21 October 1961.
76. COB 5/6/28/2. Gunnar Heckscher to Iain Macleod, 17 November 1961.

77. COB 5/6/29/1. Stephen Hastings to Evelyn Emmet, 20 June 1962.
78. COB 5/6/28/2. Gunnar Svård to R.D. Milne, 28 June 1961.
79. COB 5/6/29/1. Stephen Hastings to Emmet, 20 June 1962.
80. COB 2/1/1/2. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 19 July 1962.
81. COB 5/6/29/1. Stephen Hastings to Evelyn Emmet, 20 June 1962.
82. COB 5/6/29/1. Yngve Holmberg to R.D. Milne, 13 June 1963. The pamphlet was titled 'The Conservative Party in Sweden' and it was published by the party's Information Department in 1963.
83. COB 5/6/29/1. 'The Conservative Party in Sweden'.
84. COB 2/1/2/1/2. Report by Evelyn Emmet, 17 June 1964.
85. COB 5/6/29/1. Jessica Wilcox to Mr. Hanson, 25 August 1964.
86. COB 5/6/29/1. News clipping, 'Sweden's Conservative Socialists' by Thomas Harris, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1964; and, R.D. Milne to Carl-Henrik Winqwist, 1 September 1964.
87. COB 5/6/29/1. Carl-Henrik Winqwist to R.D. Milne, 4 September 1964.
88. COB 5/6/29/1. Carl-Henrik Winqwist to R.D. Milne, 11 September 1964; R.D. Milne to Carl-Henrik Winqwist, 15 September 1964; and, Brendon Sewill to R.D. Milne, 16 September 1964.
89. CCO 20/15/4. Patrick Wall's report on the Swedish Conservative Party conference, June 1967.
90. Ramsden, *The Winds of Change*, 253–260.
91. COB 7/6/1/3. John MacGregor to Brendan Sewill, 1 August 1966. MacGregor also admitted to often doing work for Winqwist, see COB 7/6/1/3. John MacGregor to Mr. Douglas, 2 November 1966.
92. COB 7/6/1/3. John MacGregor to Robert Milne, 17 October 1966.
93. COB 7/6/1/3. Robert Milne to John MacGregor, 28 October 1966.
94. COB 7/6/1/3. Robert Milner to John MacGregor, 28 October 1966.
95. COB 2/1/1/3. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 21 November 1967. For details of Maude's policy group, see Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Archive of Sir Edward Heath, MS. Heath E/3/2/32/1. The group was asked by Heath to examine economic and social trends into the 1980s.
96. For a recent account of EFTA, see Broad and Griffiths, *Britain, the Division of Western Europe and the Creation of EFTA*.
97. COB 2/1/1/2. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 8 November 1962.
98. COB 5/6/4/4. Evelyn Emmet's report on visiting the Danish Conservative Party conference, 16–18 November 1963.
99. COB 2/1/1/2, Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Overseas Committee, 31 January 1963.
100. COB 5/6/4/4. Evelyn Emmet's report on visiting the Danish Conservative Party conference, 16–18 November 1963.
101. COB 5/6/4/4. R.D. Milne's summary/minutes of 'Joint Meeting of UK and Scandinavian Conservatives, 18 November, 1963.
102. COB 2/1/2/2/1. Evelyn Emmet's report on the NEI meeting in Brussels, 28 June 1965.
103. *Ibid.*
104. COB 2/1/2/2/1. Emmet's report on the Danish Conservative Party conference, 6–7 November 1965.
105. COB 2/1/1/3. Minutes of the Conservative Overseas Bureau Committee, 16 November 1965.
106. COB 2/1/2/2/1. Evelyn Emmet's report on the EUCD Conference, 9–12 December 1965.
107. CCO 20/15/3. R.D. Milne, 'Confidential Memorandum, 1st European Conservative/Christian-Democrat Conference, Karlsruhe, 27–28th April, 1967', 2 May 1967.
108. CCO 20/15/4. Edward Heath to Edward du Cann, cc Evelyn Emmet and R.D. Milne, 12 May 1967.
109. MS. Heath E/3/3/26/1. Edward du Cann to Edward Heath, 15 May 1967.
110. CCO 20/15/4. Bryant Godman Irvine's report on his visit to the Danish Conservative Party conference, 11–12 November 1967.

111. COB 7/6/1/4. Alec Douglas-Home to Eldon Griffiths, 14 May 1968.
112. COB 7/6/1/4. Robert Milne's comments on Eldon Griffiths and Alec Douglas-Home's proposals, 27 May 1968.
113. CCO 20/15/6. Evelyn Emmet's report on the Danish Conservative Party conference of 23–24 November 1968.
114. COB 5/6/25/3. Lord Mountevans's report on the Norwegian Conservative Party conference of 26–28 March 1971.
115. COB 5/6/4/5. Lord Chelwood to Baroness Elles, 7 October 1974.
116. COB 7/6/1/4. Report on the Inter-Party conference in Maidenhead, 16–18 May 1969.
117. COB 7/6/1/4. Outline Notes for the European Inter-Party conference in Vienna, 21–23 May 1971.
118. COB 7/6/1/4. R.D. Milne's report on Inter-Party conference in Vienna, 21–23 May 1971.
119. COB 7/6/2/1. Anonymous document prepared ahead of the Inter-Party meeting in Oslo, Jan–April 1972.
120. COB 5/6/6/3. Nigel Forman to Baroness Elles, 17 October 1973.
121. CCO 20/15/12. Patrick Wall's report the Norwegian Conservative Party conference, 22 March 1972.
122. CCO 20/15/9. Patrick Wall's report on the Danish Conservative Party conference, 16 November 1971.
123. COB 5/6/25/3. Details of the Conservative Political Centre's visit to Oslo, March 1972.
124. Jansen and Van Hecke, *At Europe's Service*, 37.
125. Johansson, *Transnational Party Alliances*, 71.
126. COB 7/6/2/1. Erik Ninn-Hansen to Edward Heath, 26 October 1972.
127. COB 7/6/2/1. Nigel Forman to Michael Fraser, 7 November 1972.
128. COB 7/6/2/1. Michael Fraser to Forman, c.c. Douglas Hurd, 9 November 1972.
129. COB 5/6/18/1. Tom Normanton's report on the CDU conference of 17–19 November 1973.
130. COB 7/6/2/1. Michael Niblock's report on the Inter-Party Conference of 19–20 May 1973.
131. COB 7/6/2/1. Robert Turner's report on the Inter-Party Conference of 1974, 29 May 1974.
132. COB 7/6/2/1. Record of a meeting held with the Norwegian Conservative Party on 21–23 June 1974.
133. CCO 4/10/76. English translation of the CDU's report on the Conference at Eichholtz, 21–23 October 1974.
134. Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge. The Papers of Baroness Thatcher, THCR 2/6/1/193. Baroness Elles to Margaret Thatcher, 29 March 1976.
135. COB 5/6/25/3. Lord Elton to Miss Villiers, 16 July 1976. Attached report on attending the Norwegian Conservative Party conference.
136. COB 5/6/25/3. Barney Hayhoe's report on the Norwegian general election of September 1977.
137. COB 5/6/29/3. Carl Bildt to Christopher Patten, 3 October 1977.
138. COB 5/6/4/5. Jim Spicer to Sir John Peel, including a report on the Danish Conservative Party conference of 27–28 September.
139. IDU 29/4. Various documents including Lars F. Tobisson to Baroness Elles, 21 January 1977; Baroness Elles to Lars F. Tobisson, 26 January 1977; and, Lars F. Tobisson to Baroness Elles, 28 February 1977.
140. Steber, 'Talking in Europe', 303.
141. COB 7/6/2/3. H.H. Wolzamer to Baroness Elles, 30 July 1976. The Conservative Overseas Bureau had been reorganised as the Conservative Party's International Office in 1973.
142. *Ibid.*
143. Johansson, 'The alliance of European Christian Democracy and Conservatism', 140.
144. *Ibid.*
145. Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 544/76. Margaret Thatcher, Speech to Christian Democratic Union Conference, Hanover, Germany, 25 May 1976. Margaret Thatcher Foundation Website. Accessed 2 February 2023. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103034>

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