British Conservatism’s relationship with Europe has historically been a troublesome one, and never more so than today, with a strident and influential minority of the Conservative Party having pressed for an exit from the European Union, and support amongst the British public for the radical conservatives of the anti-European United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) having grown steadily over the last decade. However, the relationship has not always been difficult: During the interwar period, Europe – albeit a very different idea of it – held great interest for a network of British right-wing conservatives. In fact, for the Neo-Tories, Europe held inspiration, reassurance, hope and – eventually – their own downfall.

The Neo-Tories were right-wing intellectuals and allied politicians who viewed democracy, liberalism and capitalism as being in a state of degeneration. Their aim was to establish a corporate state in Great Britain through a «revolution from above». Europe held intellectual stimulation for them in the form of radical or «revolutionary» conservative writing from the continent that broke with traditional conservatism. They therefore not only introduced the writings of figureheads of the European right such as Oswald Spengler and Charles Maurras to the British public, but also offered their journals to lesser-known European «Conservative Revolutionaries» from Germany, France, Spain and Italy. This transnational flow of ideas encouraged the Neo-Tories to fight against British liberal political culture and the cultural hegemony of the intellectual Left, and thus allowed them to portray themselves as part of a pan-European counter-movement to the political implications of modernity. It was for this reason that they contributed articles and papers to right-wing European journals and conferences. This network was, however, not only European in its form but also in its content; Europe was a focal point, and historical meditations on its cultural, social and political past were often transformed into an anti-liberal vision of its future.

This European radical conservative exchange of ideas was affected on the British side by the existence of Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany. The existing «state

fascism» in these countries was perceived in a very ambivalent way by the Neo-Tories, who were against a transfer of such a system to Britain but praised Fascism’s «universal aspects», a distinction that became increasingly difficult to defend in the second half of the 1930s, with fascist violence in Abyssinia and an aggressive National Socialist foreign policy. The Neo-Tories vehemently supported the appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany for ideological reasons, so with the failure of appeasement, their hopes for a change in the political system ended. Ideas of an authoritarian, corporate state were seen in Britain as unpatriotic and increasingly judged as treason.

In this article, I will concentrate on the transnational implications of this discourse and on British right-wing concepts of Europe. This will be done in four steps: First, I will portray the Neo-Tories as part of European trends of «revolutionary conservatism» and summarise the related historiography. Secondly, I will analyse how they perceived the writings of particular German «Conservative Revolutionaries»: The European networks of the Neo-Tories included thinkers of the French Action Française, Italian fascist intellectuals and Spanish Franco supporters, but in this article, I will concentrate on the German counterparts of the Neo-Tories, not least because the German-Anglo transfer of ideas was the most productive and important one for the Neo-Tories. Which German writers did they review, translate or publish in their own journals and how did they assess their writings? In which German journals did they publish? What did Europe mean to them, and what historical and political concepts of Europe did they put forward? Thirdly, I will analyse how the perception of German writers changed after 1933 and what the possibilities and limits of right-wing exchange between Germany and England were after Hitler’s rise to power. Finally, I will conclude with some reflections on the forms and content of this transnational flow of ideas. Can we speak of an «international of nationalists»? Where do the limits of an alliance of the Right lie, and where is the connection to the ultimate failure of the Neo-Tories who, despite their strong links to the European Right, remained a numerically small minority back home in Great Britain.

1. Neo-Tories

In British historiography, the failure of right-wing authoritarian political systems and the stability of liberal democracy have classically been equated with and explained by the failure of the British Union of Fascists (BUF). Concentrating on this party and its leader Oswald Mosley, most studies have shown that despite some early successes, Fascism never truly convinced the majority of the British population and it eventually failed thanks to the strength of unbroken British democratic traditions. Alternative but related explanations for the failure of the BUF are the comparative economic stability of Great Britain, the BUF’s organisational and staff weaknesses and bad timing in

terms of general elections, its determined opposition from British institutions, and the stability and continuity of the national government along with the moderate patriotism of and successful construction of «Englishness» by the conservative leader Stanley Baldwin.

This concentration on the BUF is understandable, for the party represents the most obvious equivalent to the German NSDAP or the Italian PNF. The BUF’s charismatic leader Oswald Mosley also incarnates the fascist leader, just as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini did in Germany and Italy. However, in comparison to these two figures, it is logical to view Mosley as a failure, albeit a fascinating one – if not a bit of a joke. This concentration on Mosley and his BUF is, however, problematic, because if we understand Mosley as the epitome of right-wing threats to democracy, his failure can all too easily be dismissed as the epitome of right-wing failures, thereby neglecting other strands of anti-democratic right-wing traditions.

I argue that in the interwar period, the threat to British parliamentary democracy came from a different quarter to that which has so far been assumed, namely from a network of radical British Conservatives, the Neo-Tories. Unlike the traditional right wing of the Conservative Party, this younger generation of right-wing rebels of the late 1920s and the 1930s were not simply interested in defending the status quo of the Empire or a return to the old franchise, but in a far more comprehensive counter attack to the political implications of modernity. Operating on the borders of the literary world and political realm, they produced a flood of radical writings in the form of political journalism, manifestos and theoretical tracts, and tried to influence the Conservative Party through political discussion clubs, pressure groups, book clubs and think tanks. Their aim was the establishment of a corporate state in Great Britain through a «revolution from above».

The Neo-Tories offered a very radical concept of conservatism at the beginning of the 1930s; in 1931, the journalist Douglas Jerrold wrote that a true Conservative is a revolutionist. In the same year, Viscount Lymington, who had just been elected into parliament, declared: «Toryism is not and cannot be democratic in the political sense of
The historian Charles Petrie claimed a year later, «We Tories are the real revolutionaries of the present age. The existing socialized State is not of our seeking, and it must be overthrown by any means that come to hand.» Jerrold, Lymington and Petrie were all conservatives, yet they viewed the official Conservative Party as being in a state of decline. However, they did not just criticise the party system and British democracy, they wanted to overthrow it altogether. Nevertheless, they were not fascists: «We do not wear black shirts», they proclaimed again and again, to distance themselves from a movement they perceived as primitive and vulgar. They realised that the area between traditional conservatism and fascism was in motion, but they identified themselves as «Tories», or rather, «true Tories».

British historiography has, somewhat surprisingly, ignored this phenomenon. There has of course always been a huge interest in the British sympathisers of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, in «Hitler’s Englishmen». In addition, research on the BUF and Oswald Mosley has also analysed to what degree «fascist thinking» reached intellectual circles and who the «respectable» allies of the BUF were. Men like Jerrold, Lymington and Petrie appear vaguely in these books on the British Right as «Fellow Travellers of the Right», as more or less strong sympathisers of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. Their ideology is described as a «grey area between fascism and conservatism».

It is possible to cast some light on this grey area by connecting it to wider European trends of «revolutionary conservatism» during the interwar period. The term «Conservative Revolution» has been used (particularly in German historiography) to de-

12 Everyman, 6.10.1933, 3.
The Neo-Tories and Europe

For historiography and the discussion of the term «conservative revolution», see the introduction of this journal. This is precisely what men such as Jerrold, Lymington and Petrie had in mind for Britain and, in order to do this, they sought to revitalise conservatism and free it from what they described as the «liberal degeneration» of the party. Neo-Toryism is therefore a term for a genuine and distinct ideological variety of British intellectual history connected to wider European trends of «revolutionary conservatism». While historical research on fascism has established a comparative perspective on the subject and has also recently investigated fascist concepts of Europe, a European perspective on the radicalised anti-modernist conservatism of the interwar period, of which the German «Conservative Revolution» is the most radical, is still missing.

The Neo-Tories were middle and upper-middle class «men of letters»: journalists, writers, academics and politicians who wrote for the same journals and frequented the same clubs. They were intellectuals in the broadest sense, attempting to influence politics and change society through their writing. Born around 1890–1895, they went first to public school and later to Oxford or Cambridge. They volunteered to fight in the First World War and were, as students who matriculated between 1910 and 1914, amongst those with the highest mortality rate in Great Britain. Being part of the «lost generation», they were disillusioned when they returned from the battlefields; the emancipation of the Dominions, the rise of the Labour Party and the success of the feminist movement were the most obvious signs of the deep political and social change that politicised them.

The Neo-Tories were nearly all men. This is hardly surprising for a conservative network in the interwar period, however the Neo-Tories did not only exclude women from their journals and clubs: Their worldview was in itself deeply anti-feminist and misogynistic. The Neo-Tory perspective on women was summed up by William Sander son: «Her instincts, as well as her emotions are entirely sexual, like the structure of her body. She has a total ineptitude for politics, for she lacks political virtue. Having no...
social instincts she can develop no intellectual capacity for constructive art or organization.»

Neo-Toryism not only describes a strand of political thinking, but also a radical conservative network of the interwar period with various organisational structures such as informal circles, clubs and political alliances. Of particular importance for the intellectual endeavours of the Neo-Tories were the periodicals such as the monthly *English Review*. These periodicals had a comparatively small circulation but their influence went beyond direct circulation: They were read and discussed in the gentlemen’s clubs and by the journalists and editors of every newspaper. At the very core of this network were around forty to fifty authors, journalists and politicians; a wider circle of allies, sympathisers and occasional authors was formed by around two hundred men; and the number of direct recipients of Neo-Toryism, as measured by the circulation of journals such as *The English Review* or memberships of organisations such as The Right Book Club, can be estimated as being between 10,000 and 50,000. This latter group was what neo-Tories called «our class». The political project of Neo-Toryism was therefore directed at just a fraction of the British population. Democratic elections were impossible to win in this manner but this was, in any case, never one of the Neo-Tories’ aims.

The Neo-Tories were not interested in founding a new political party. Firstly, the British first-past-the-post system made such an endeavour difficult. Secondly, the concept of a new political party with the goal of winning at democratic elections was against the Neo-Tories’ anti-democratic convictions. As they rejected the democratic idea of majority rule in principle, so they refused to follow it for their own purposes: «It is not numbers or voices that ultimately count, as Liberals and democrats would have us believe, but only the firmness of purpose and energy of the individual members of a militant body.» At the same time, their elitist self-conception, gentlemanly ideals and intellectual distance clashed with fascist political staging. They strongly opposed fascist rhetoric, the mobilisation of «the street», the paramilitarization of politics with uniforms, parades, torches and drums. Typifying all this is a diary entry of Charles Petrie after he attended a BUF meeting in the Albert Hall together with some fellow Neo-Tories: «We were in a box with Lloyd, Luttman-Johnson, Alan Lennox-Boyd, and Yeats-Brown. It was all very dramatic, with spotlights etc., but Mosley spoke far too long – 1 ½ hours – and then answered questions, all carefully pre-arranged, for another hour. I agreed with about half he said, but the whole thing was very cheap, and went against the grain in me.» The social antagonisms between the Neo-Tories and BUF, and the contrary understanding of politics and violence were irreconcilable. They therefore sought a right-wing alliance with the imperial wing of the Party (the Diehards) and the

25 When the neo-Tory Francis Yeats-Brown wanted to start a new weekly in spring 1939, he estimated that «our class» would consist of 50,000 men.
27 Diaries Charles Petrie, 22.4.1934. Charles Petrie Papers privately held in Lestre, France.
press barons, Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere. The aim was to fight the modernisation and flexibility of the Conservative Party under party leader and prime minister Stanley Baldwin, who stood for a patriotic but peaceful definition of Englishness and was prepared to open the party to new voters.  

Neo-Toryism was a worldview rather than a systematic and theoretical body of doctrine; it did not even have a binding basic political programme. Nevertheless, it is possible to carve out from the diverse writings of the Neo-Tories a coherent body of values, ideas and postulations that allow us to speak of Neo-Toryism as a consistent separate and distinct worldview. At the foundations of all the Neo-Tories’ political thinking stood an anti-Whig interpretation of history. There was hardly any article or political comment without historical reflections; history was the anchor for their criticism of political modernity.

A summary of its ideological cornerstones must start with two striking observations: On the one hand, the vehemence with which parliamentarian democracy and the liberal-capitalist system were attacked; and on the other, the vagueness with which political alternatives were formulated. Neo-Tories were anti-democratic. Their criticism of democracy were triggered by the Great Depression in 1929, justified by the «historical process» that led to the end of democracies around the world and was also expressed in the fight against democratisation in India. Neo-Toryism as a worldview was first and foremost a challenge to the Conservative Party. From the Neo-Tories’ perspective, the party had compromised itself entirely by not just tolerating the process of political modernity, but by becoming part of it. Therefore, their program of «true» conservatism started with various attempts of a revival of conservatism as an intellectual force against «left-wing dominance», formulated by the English Review group and directed against mainstream conservatism and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in particular. For the Neo-Tories, neither socialism nor nationalism, or a combination of both in «national socialism», offered a way out of the «degenerated» present. They wanted to reorganise British society into an authoritarian, yet decentralised, rural and corporate state, the model for which was derived from English medieval history. The strange radicalism of their ideas reveals itself in their anti-Semitism: The Neo-Tories all agreed on who had profited from «300 years of national decline» but declared legal action against the Jews as futile if it did not go hand in hand with a fight against the liberal, «Jewish» values that had infused British society, stating: «It would be of little use to expel Jews to-day, for we all have become Jews.»

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2. Transnational European Influences

When we today look at pictures of the party meetings of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s, what is most striking is how the party had so freely adopted the «fascist style»: the uniforms, the parades, the salutes, the standard bearers, the party symbol «flash and circle», the rhetoric of the party leaders and their political staging. The overall image is that of an amalgam of imitations of both Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. It is not surprising that contemporary observers were struck or even appalled by the «foreign» character of the BUF. In fact, the whole contemporary political debate on the BUF was centred around the lack of Britishness in British Fascism, a theme that was all too readily identified later by older British historiography as an explanation for the failure of British fascism in general. Only more recently have academics paid attention to the fact that British fascism was only partly a continental import and emphasised the Britishness of British fascism. The historian Dan Stone has in particular stressed the wider British cultural background and anti-liberal traditions on which British fascism was built.

In the case of the Neo-Tories, the answer to the question of cultural background is unambiguous: Their political culture was distinctively British. The dominant form of organisation was the political club: The style, dress codes and self-staging of the Neo-Tories were all in accordance with the traditional gentleman ideals and rhetoric learnt at Oxford and Cambridge. Their writings, manifestos and political visions were also essentially British, derived from British history, based on British sources and developed for British readers. In the 1930s, the Neo-Tories were at pains to distance their political ideas from «foreign» Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. This ostentatious Britishness did not, however, prohibit an intellectual curiosity in European right-wing ideas.

A first milestone in this exchange of ideas was the so-called «war books controversy» of 1929, a transnational debate on the «true» depiction of the First World War, triggered by books on the war experience by international authors such as Erich Maria Remarque, Arnold Zweig, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and Ernest Hemingway that were of huge importance for the poplar remembrance of the war in Great Britain.

34 J. S. K. Watson, Fighting Different Wars: Experience,
The Neo-Tories played their part in this «war books» controversy and for some, the fight against «pacifist war books» was a political rite of passage. The controversy over the remembrance of the First World War was to them not just a matter of literature but one that struck the very core of their identity. It was a fight over the power of interpretation in which the Neo-Tories were on the back foot, as Douglas Jerrold explained in the English Review: «We do not apologize for devoting so much attention to these books. Over 100.000.000 people all over the world have read them. No literary «movement» in our time has had so wide or damaging an influence. It is time to make an end of it.»

The «pacifist» interpretation of the war challenged not only the Neo-Tories' political convictions but also their own war experience and their male self-conception as officers and gentlemen. In their fight against this «lie about the war», they condemned the picture of the soldier as deserter and coward, and the idea that the war was futile: «These books all reflect (intentionally or otherwise) the illusion that the war was avoidable and futile, and most of them reflect the illusion that it was recognised as futile by those who fought it.» The fight against the books of Remarque, Zweig and Blunden was staged in Germany with similar arguments by nationalist circles. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that a summary of German war books in The Bookman in 1931 was based on the opinions of the nationalist German literary scholar Friedrich von der Leyen. Along these lines, Remarque «says too little about the chivalrous self-devotion of those officers who lived and often died for their man». In contrast, Ernst Jünger’s In Stahlgewittern (Storm of Steel) gave «an extraordinarily convincing picture of war with its glaring contrasts, its bestiality and heroism, its brutality and its self-sacrifice, its horror and its frivolity».

This image of German war books was not limited to radical conservative circles in Great Britain. In an interview with the Evening Chronicle, Ernst Jünger himself described Remarque’s All Quiet on the Western Front as an internationalist and pacifist delusion of Germany. It was important to Jünger not only to distance himself from Remarque but also to praise the common English soldier as brave and honourable. In a foreword especially written for the English edition of In Stahlgewittern, he assured his English readers of the following: «Of all the troops who were opposed to the Germans...»

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36 D. Jerrold, The Lie About the War: A Note on Some Contemporary War Books, London 1930, 10. Also see idem, «Current Comments», 13–16. Cf. B. Korte et al., Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Medien-
37 Jerrold, The Lie About the War, 18.
39 C. M. Rickmers, «A German on German War Literature», in: The Bookman 81 (October 1931), 52.
40 Ibid., 53.
41 E. Jünger, «Why I wrote >The Storm of Steel<», in: The Evening Chronicle, 29.11.1929.
in the great battlefields, the English were not only the most formidable but also the manliest and most chivalrous.» Jünger’s self-promotion, his pointing at the British popular sentiment of chivalry, and an English introduction by Ralph H. Mottram that played down the nationalist and militarist character of the book were all factors in the considerable success of Storm of Steel in Great Britain. Another reason was a certain shuddering fascination for the author himself. «One feels that Lieutenant Jünger is a danger to society, but one cannot resist liking and admiring him personally», declared one critic. An advertisement for the book in the Saturday Review in 1929 appealed to this sentiment: «This is not a war book against war but a war book by a sportsman who found war the finest game on earth.»

Eventually, Storm of Steel was more successful in Britain than it had been in Germany prior to 1933: It went through five editions and was mostly reviewed favourably. Jünger was not the only representative of German militarist nationalism (Soldatischer Nationalismus) to be translated. The books of Rudolf G. Binding and Franz Schauwecker were also published in English, but as with Jünger’s book, they were largely perceived in terms of the literary, cultural and historical questions of the memory of the war. The very political dimension of this war literature – which aimed to transform the war experience into Weimar civil society and proclaimed the fight against liberal democracy as a national duty – was mostly overlooked. Beyond the war memory discourse, this kind of literature was therefore very problematic, even for the journals of the Neo-Tories. One example is a 1934 review of Ernst von Salomon’s book Die Geächteten (The Outlaws), which dealt not with the war itself, but with the paramilitary fighting in the first years of the Weimar Republic. Despite general sympathy and acknowledgment for a «certain measure of literary style», the ideology that was behind the book was seen as problematic «for it’s a queer mixture of nihilism and what a critic has called «overheated patriotism» – a thirst for action, generally violent, and a scorn for party politics – the whole in fact, of the stuff out of which so many of the conversions to National-Socialism have been made».

Extreme nationalism and militarism stood in the way of a broader transnational flow of ideas on the political right, particularly after the National Socialists' rise to power.

46 The Saturday Review, 8.6.1929.
Prior to 1933, however, other German writers who broke with traditional conservatism were of great interest to the Neo-Tories. The earliest and most prominent was Oswald Spengler. Recent research has focused on the transnational history of Spengler’s work and has shown that he was indeed a «European phenomenon» of the interwar period. Spengler was also a very prominent, albeit very controversial, author in Britain. What is particularly interesting is that Spengler’s theory of civilization decline had the potential to speak to contemporary anxieties in Britain, yet the main reaction was one of resistance. This was partly because there were other domestic theories of decline available, and also because «British reactions were, on the whole, more muted, and we might label them «curiosity» and «scepticism». In Britain, Spengler became famous but never popular.»

Early references to the originals of Der Untergang des Abendlandes (The Decline of the West – the English translations by Major C. F. Atkinson were published by George Allen and Unwin in 1926 and 1928) in conservative journals – were characterised by fascination and praise. In The Saturday Review, the book’s significance was compared to Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations and Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, and it was suggested that the «author may be regarded in the sphere of history as a parallel phenomenon to Dr. Einstein in the realm of physics and mathematics».

The alleged revolutionary significance of The Decline of the West was characteristic of the Neo-Tories’ perception of Spengler. However, the general approval of the importance of the book went along with a sense of slight indignation against the author. «Dr. Oswald Spengler has an unfortunate manner. He writes like an angry professor lecturing a class of idiot boys», began Herbert Agar in his review of The Decline of the West and Man and Technics in the English Review, though he conceded the following a few lines further down: «In spite of his rudeness, however, Dr. Spengler has a thesis that the modern world dare not to ignore.» This was a typical assessment and, despite a general positive approach in the journals of the Neo-Tories (i.e. The English Review, the Saturday Review, The Criterion, The Bookman, the National Review and Everyman), their criticism of Spengler’s writing was consistent: «Dr. Spengler knows a great deal, but he does not how to write a book.» Douglas Jerrold stated that The Decline of the West was «badly planned and badly expressed. It invents a new and confusing vocabulary which is in no sense justified by an author who has the language of Goethe at his disposal». The intricate character of «Spenglerism» was explained with the nationality of the
author: «Let it be premised that the work is thoroughly German in both the best and the worst senses of the word.»

Greater obstacles than Spengler's style of writing were, however, some aspects of his understanding of history. For the Neo-Tories, historical argumentation was of paramount importance. In fact, history stood at the foundations of all their political thinking. There was hardly any article or political comment without historical reflections; history was the anchor for their criticism of political modernity. Mostly, it served as a distorting mirror to make modernity appear alienated and degenerated. The Neo-Tories were not interested in open and unbiased historiography, but in the establishment of certain interpretations of the past to change the present. For them, the key event was the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89, which they interpreted as the catalyst of national decline, for it was the time «when the Whigs inaugurated the era of individualism which flowered into the Industrial Revolution and ultimately into a universal franchise that now seeks to mitigate the organic ills of industry by the opiates of Socialism».

In the political utopia of the Neo-Tories, 1688/89 was virtually a watershed that separated «Merry England» from modern liberal degeneration. Yet, history was still seen as a unity and therefore it was possible to build a modern society on the traditions of medieval England. Spengler's concept of isolated cultural cycles contradicted this. The independent catholic historian Christopher Dawson, whose vision of society and state was fundamentally based on the assumption of a spiritual connection to the Middle Ages over time and space, was therefore naturally opposed to Spengler's idea of historical cycles. His criticism was that the Christianity of the Middle Ages and that of modern times were, for Spengler, two entirely different religions with common terminology and practices but no other vital links. «And this is the reductio ad absurdum of his whole theory, for it involves the conclusion that the culture of the West would have followed an identical course except for empty forms and names, if it had never become Christian, and had never received the inheritance of the Hellenic and Roman culture traditions.»

Whilst Spengler's morphology defined each culture as a closed entity, Dawson's interpretation of history was based on a «principle of spiritual fecundity», with older cultures passing on their «genes» to younger ones.

T. S. Eliot and his influential conservative journal The Criterion, for which he regularly recruited well-known European writers such as Thomas Mann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Ernst Robert Curtius and José Ortega y Gasset, took a similar affirmative-critical line against Spengler. The journal's agenda of a conservative revival against the «spiritual anarchy of democracy» was based on the European tradition, and therefore contrasted with Spengler's fatalism and determinism. In fact, the whole objective of The Criterion
was, in its content as well as in its agenda, an attempt to reconstitute the European idea against its modern decline through a pan-European intellectual aristocracy.63

Spengler’s pessimistic determinism was a general problem, and as a consequence, *The Decline of the West* was interpreted as a warning, rather than a verdict: «Taken as a warning, the Spenglerian thesis has great value. It tells us that we have reached the decisive moment in Western history.»64 In striking similarity with German «Conservative Revolutionaries» such as Hans Freyer, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Max Hildebert Boehm, Edgar Jung, Hans Zehrer and others who opposed Spengler’s fatalism and determinism with idealistic activism,65 the Neo-Tories followed Spengler in his diagnosis of crisis and degeneration, but not in his proposed course of action of heroic yet passive endurance.

For the Neo-Tories, Spengler’s book served as broader background and evidence for their own theories of decline and degeneration of Britain and the British Empire.66 Their hope that this diagnosis would lead to a fundamental political change was not realised; and in the 1930s, every theory of regime change in the name of Oswald Spengler was overshadowed by the seizure of power of the National Socialists in 1933. In 1935, Douglas Jerrold concluded: «When Spengler’s brilliant synthesis of world history first appeared I was optimistic enough to suggest that the effective answer to his thesis of the «decline of the West» was that no civilization could consciously decline; to know the risks was to avoid them. The absolute refusal of almost all the ablest teachers, writers and statesmen to study Spengler’s work has shaken my optimism. [...] We have to trust, and may, perhaps, not unreasonably expect, that the tendency of our population to decline will be arrested, as it has been in Germany, by a new social and political orientation which will create a new hope in our people.»67

Spengler’s appeal for the Neo-Tories was his alarmist notion of supranational degeneration and crisis of the West. Another German «Conservative Revolutionary» who found his way into the pages of the Neo-Tories’ journals was Wilhelm Stapel. Charles Petrie quoted from Stapel’s journal *Deutsches Volksstum*68 in *The English Review*; and in 1931 and 1934, Stapel wrote two articles for the British journal that were translated by Brian Lunn.69 To the editor of *The English Review*, Douglas Jerrold, Stapel was an «eminent German publicist» who theoretically proved the failure of the «democratic experiment».70 In his comment on Stapel’s article «The Coming Conservative Revolution»
from 1931, Jerrold stated: «The theory which he puts forward in this article is one of the cardinal principles animating that «stirring of the mind» of contemporary Europe which may be suitably called the Counter-Revolution and which is slowly rising to the intellectual leadership of our times.»71 Jerrold saw himself and his fellow Neo-Tories as forming part of this intellectual counter-revolution. He printed the articles of authors such as Stapel to prove the importance and scope of this European phenomenon to his English readers. Both Stapel and Jerrold insisted on the existence and validity of universal Christian values and the European tradition against materialism and pluralism. This was the ideological bedrock of their transnational understanding, which inevitably had limits when it came to more concrete political objectives: Stapel’s vision of a European empire under German rule was hardly something the Neo-Tories could support.

Of special interest particularly to the Catholic Neo-Tories were the writings of the political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt. They were in fact the first to introduce Schmitt to the English-speaking world by translating and commenting on his essay, «Roman Catholicism and Political Form» (Römischer Katholizismus und Politische Form) from 1923. According to Douglas Jerrold, this essay was «a statement, concise and closely reasoned, of the care for preserving Western civilization from the attacks of economic materialism».72 Jerrold recommended the first (unauthorised) English translation of the short book published by Sheed & Ward in London in 1931. It appeared in the series Essays in Order by the «Catholic Book-a-Month Club» and was given the slightly misleading English title, The Necessity of Politics: An Essay on the Representative Idea in the Church and Modern Europe.73

In a lengthy introduction to the essay, Christopher Dawson tried to pin Schmitt’s theories down and explain his approach to the British public.74 He felt that this was necessary because legal and political theories such as Schmitt’s were unfamiliar to English readers. According to Dawson, the British attitude to legal questions has been a predominantly practical one because of the British common law with the consequence that the perspective of the scientific jurist has had hardly any significance. This very British attitude came, however, with a «certain loss of balance in our intellectual life».75 At the same time, Dawson suggested that religion had always been a private matter to the British people, with no relation between the private religious beliefs of the individual and the public life of society. Carl Schmitt’s theory stood against this: «But to a Catholic and a jurist like Professor Schmitt, the public and representative character of Catholicism is a proof of its truth and its universality. For religion is not to be identified with a particular element in life. It is the ordering of life as a whole – the moulding of social and historical reality into a living spiritual unity.»76

71 Ibid., 140.
72 Jerrold, «Current Comments», 768.
76 Ibid., 10.
Carl Schmitt’s short essay can be seen as part of a broader European intellectual movement trying to comprehend and define the relationship between Catholicism and modernity between the two world wars. Schmitt’s contribution was, however, a very peculiar one; a secular apotheosis of Roman Catholicism which addresses the aesthetic, legal and political dimensions of the church, yet not the religious one. This made it a very peculiar export of ideas and some of this special character of Schmitt’s book seems to be «lost in translation»: The English version of Schmitt’s essay was indeed inaccurate; it may well be that Dawson did not have a very clear understanding of Schmitt’s thesis. More important, however, was that Dawson used Schmitt’s essay as intellectual support of his own vision of Catholicism as a spiritual community extending over time and space against the disorders of modernity and for his idea of a European unity based on Christianity «for the Catholic Church is the living heart of the Christian tradition as Christianity is the spiritual basis of the European tradition».

Like other English intellectuals of the interwar period who converted to Catholicism, Dawson tried to understand Catholicism not just in religious terms, but also as a framework for «an ordered and coherent view of the world to replace the increasing intellectual and ideological confusion evident outside the walls».

English Catholic intellectuals searching for alternatives to the liberal order often claimed that it was the Catholic tradition that was the true European tradition of which England once was a part. The idealisation of «Merry England» and the vision of a corporate Catholic state in the 1930s brought many Catholic thinkers the accusations of having fascist sympathies. «The dominant picture which emerged of Catholic intellectualism in this period was that it was supportive of Fascism». To understand, however, the political convictions of these intellectuals and their own programmatic writings, the term «fascism» is not particularly helpful because it obliterates some important differences. It makes more sense to understand them as part of the wider European trends of «revolutionary conservatism» in the interwar period, and thereby, as an ideological strand in which Europe played a decisive role as an anti-liberal vision for the future extracted from the past. For them, Europe meant Christian Western civilization first and foremost, and it became a battle cry in their fight against pluralism and modernity. In that respect, Europe was indeed «the anti-modern Utopia of the conservative revolution» not just in Germany or Austria, but also in Great Britain.
Typical of this English-European Catholic radical conservatism were the writings of Douglas Jerrold, which brought him in contact with Karl Anton Rohan’s exclusive supranational organisation «Der Europäische Kulturbund» and the attached journal Europäische Revue. In an article of 1932, he wrote: «The attacks on family, state and church are well under way in all of Europe and must be defeated.» For the «seed of the counterrevolution» to thrive, Jerrold saw it necessary to fight the liberal order with its own modern technical opportunities in an interconnected Europe: «What we need is a constant stream of propaganda». This «stream of propaganda» for an anti-liberal vision of Europe was at its peak in 1932 and the Neo-Tories were part of it. In November 932, they mainly comprised the British delegation to the big international conference on Europe organised by the Italian Royal Academy and the Alessandro Volta Foundation.

At this conference in Rome, known as Convegno Volta, Christopher Dawson, Charles Petrie and Viscount Lymington all spoke on the topic of Europe and stressed the significance of the Italian «fascist experience» for their vision of a European counter-movement to democracy and capitalism. However, it wasn’t the concrete fascist political system they saw suitable for export, but what they called «the universal aspects of fascism». To Charles Petrie it seemed «incontrovertible [...] that the principles upon which it [fascism] is based are capable of universal application». And Lymington declared: «The new Europe will have to have a common spiritual basis in the principles of a Royalist Fascismo differing in methods for each country.»

The Neo-Tories’ perception of Italian Fascism was a selective one: They rejected radical nationalism and racism, political violence and the revolutionary dynamic of the fascismo movimento, but embraced the traditional authoritarian elements, or what they called the «reinvocation of the ancient Roman spirit». Fascist Italy was therefore the vanguard of a return to Christian Western civilisation, an abstract role model for an authoritarian corporate state derived from the Middle Ages, and therefore not alien to England at all: «Those who may be alarmed at the apparently revolutionary nature of this system would do well to recollect that it was the basis of society in the Middle Ages, and that it would certainly have recommended itself to the Tories of an earlier day.»

Petrie’s agenda was that of a «real Toryism» which essentially meant the cutting back of liberal democracy and the introduction of a corporate system based on the British monarchy. However, the ideological scope between mainstream conservatism and fascism that Petrie and other Neo-Tories sought to occupy was becoming narrower and...
The Convegno Volta of 1932 was mainly a huge propaganda success for the Italian fascist regime. After 1933 and Hitler's rise to power, delicate intellectual distinctions between the «universal aspects of fascism» and the reality of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism became increasingly academic. This also affected the conservative European networks such as the Kulturbund. In the 1920s, the participants of this transnational network were prominent members of the European scientific, cultural, and economic elites. However, a number of liberals amongst its members could not hide the fact that in the early 1930s, the Kulturbund went towards the far right under its leader Karl Anton Rohan, and supported Mussolini and eventually Hitler along the lines of a «consolidation» of fascism and conservatism.90

3. The Transnational Right after 1933

The British Neo-Tories kept writing for the Europäische Revue but their contributions were increasingly used for pro-Nazi propaganda. After the German government announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations in October 1933, the journal started a «European survey» to collect European reactions to the latest development in German foreign policy and its desire to change the post-First World War international order. This «survey» was hardly an impartial one, and the contributors were clearly picked for propaganda reasons. The three British contributions came from the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (despite declaring himself a communist, Shaw enthusiastically approved of the German withdrawal from the League of Nations) and from the two Neo-Tories Charles Petrie and Francis Yeats-Brown. Both of them supported the German demand of equality of status, and interpreted the latest developments as a step towards a European understanding and a permanent peace settlement.91 The Neo-Tory Rolf Gardiner went even further and attributed the leadership of a supranational order in central Europe to Germany by referring to the myth of a German Empire as a reconciliation of all internal antagonisms and as a completion of German history: «Die große deutsche Bewegung wird nur zur Führung in Europa gelangen, wenn sie über den nationalen Gedanken hinauszudenken vermag, so wie im Mittelalter das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation mehrere Völkerschaften umfaßte. [...] Erst dann, wenn sich die neuerwachenden wahlverwandten Länder Deutschland in einem großen Reichsgedanken frei anschließen wird Deutschland wirklich das Herz Europas.»92

Gardiner’s endorsement of a German dominance in Europe is extreme, but all Neo-Tories supported appeasement on the basis of a change of the European order, as

92  R. Gardiner, «Deutschland in den Augen eines Eng...
will be shown below. What is worth noting here is that after 1933, the European right-wing traffic of ideas revolved around Germany. From a British point of view, this was particularly true for the perception of German right-wing ideas: whilst the British appreciation of thinkers such as Carl Schmitt was very selective and was limited to Catholic intellectual circles in the 1920s, the British interest in German «Conservative Revolutionaries» increased hugely with the National Socialist’s rise to power in 1933. There was now a widespread desire not only to understand Hitler and his «New Germany» but also the intellectual roots of National Socialism. In this context, special importance was given to Arthur Moeller van den Bruck’s *Das Dritte Reich* (*The Third Reich*) of 1923, which was termed «the Nazi Bible».

The only Neo-Tory who read the German original was Rolf Gardiner. The English translation of the book from 1934 was by Emily Overend Lorimer, a strenuous admonisher of German right-wing ideology who, in her books and articles, also advised the British public to take very seriously Hitler’s ideas as laid out in *Mein Kampf*. Her approach to introducing «the Third Empire» to the British public was therefore one of cautionary enlightenment and critique.

Reviews of the book in British conservative journals were, however, often characterised by a sympathetic undercurrent. Edward Crankshaw wrote in *The Bookman*, that Moeller’s book was «a brave work, desperately sincere and moving, and one must agree with much that is said». Crankshaw then went on to explain the rise of National Socialism with the situation after the First World War and the Versailles Treaty in particular: «In face of Germany to-day, in face of its patent barbarism, we tend to forget that we are largely responsible for it. It could never have happened but for the tactlessness and political ineptness of the German nation; but it was England and France who imposed the intolerable strain which led to the debacle. Now that Hitlerism is an accomplished fact, together with a great nation’s reversion to barbarism, we forget this, and Van den Bruck refreshes our memory.» Criticism of the Versailles Treaty, the belief that Germany had been treated unfairly and a sense of guilt towards the German people were all widespread in the British public in the 1920s, especially in the wake of John Maynard Keynes’s influential 1919 book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. The conservative version of this strand of thinking in the 1930s was often combined with a general Germanophilia and sympathy for the «German Revolution» of 1933.
It is in this context that German «Conservative Revolutionaries» such as Spengler, Moeller van den Bruck and Schmitt played an important role as they represented the «idealistic» element of the «German Revolution» whilst Hitler and other leading Nazis typified the more mundane element of it. A typical example for this account is Harry Powys Greenwood's books *The German Revolution* and *Hitler’s First Year of 1934*,\(^{102}\) for which the English journalist and correspondent of *The Times* met and interviewed Carl Schmitt, amongst others, in the second half of 1933.\(^{103}\) In a review of *The German Revolution*, *The Times* was sympathetic of Greenwood's approach to attach importance to the underlying cultural and philosophical currents of Hitler's rise to power, saying: «[H]is book is a corrective to the criticism according to which National Socialism is wholly evil and lacking in any good motive or purpose».\(^{104}\) In fact, Greenwood went very far with his «corrective», and he justified anti-Semitic discrimination and persecution in early Nazi-Germany\(^{105}\) and later supported appeasement for ideological reasons.

Like Greenwood, the journalist William Horsfall Carter sought to understand the cultural and ideological background of the rise of National Socialism. In an article in *The Fortnightly Review* of 1933, he therefore differentiated between the more «vulgar and demagogical» party mass movement of Hitler and the more «elitist and organic» youth movement linked to Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Hans Zehrer and Ferdinand Fried. He saw these writers as representatives of the «healthy instinct» of the German nation that was opposed to the existing Weimar Republic. In this interpretation, «Hitlerism» was only the «spearhead» of this broader philosophical and cultural German idea of a National Socialism of which W. Horsfall Carter was full of praise.\(^{106}\) This perception of the «German Revolution» prevailed in 1933 and 1934. With the increasing militancy of German foreign policy and the ideological divide of Europe in the second half of the 1930s, British sympathy for Nazi Germany went hand in hand with the support of German revisionism and British appeasement. The motives behind this ranged from liberal pacifism to conservative anti-communism, and quite frequently anti-Semitism, too.\(^{107}\)

This general concentration on European foreign policy and Germany's challenge of the European order made it difficult for the Neo-Tories at home, as their plans for an authoritarian state in Great Britain were increasingly discredited as being «foreign» or unpatriotic. As a result, the catholic Neo-Tories in particular branched off the intellectual exchange with Germany and turned towards Spain to support Franco in the Spanish Civil War.\(^{108}\) The Neo-Tories, who for ideological reasons supported the British

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\(^{104}\) *The Times*, 8.1.1935.

\(^{105}\) Stone, Responses, 89–90.


\(^{107}\) Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 271–294; Später, Vansittart, 55–121.

government’s appeasement policy, were still seeking an intellectual exchange with Germany. Neo-Tories such as Anthony Ludovici, William Sanderson, Arnold Wilson, Arthur Bryant, Francis Yeats-Brown, Rolf Gardiner and Viscount Lymington travelled there and wrote about it favourably in their books and journals.\(^{109}\) Arnold Wilson and Winston Churchill’s son-in-law Duncan Sandys, both conservative Members of Parliament, used the *Europäische Revue* for their agenda of appeasement and apologetic explanations of English «misunderstandings» of National Socialism.\(^{110}\) Another platform for this kind of cultural propaganda was the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), to whose journal Wilson and Gardiner contributed sympathetic articles.\(^{111}\)

One German writer who played an important role in these British-German right-wing exchanges at the end of the 1930s was the author of the bestselling anti-Semitic blood-and-soil novel *Volk ohne Raum (People Without Space)*, Hans Grimm. As a young man, Grimm had lived in London and throughout his career England remained a decisive benchmark in his political writing as well as in his novels.\(^{112}\) In the 1930s, he gave several talks at English universities and in October 1937, the Nazi-friendly Anglo-German Fellowship gave a dinner in honour of him; at the event, he spoke on «How I see the Englishman».\(^{113}\)

Grimm’s English was very good and he exchanged letters with many Neo-Tories such as Arthur Bryant, Edmund Blunden, Viscount Lymington, Charles Petrie, William Sanderson, Rolf Gardiner and Brian Lunn.\(^{114}\) Of particular importance was his communication with Lymington, Sanderson and Gardiner, all members of the radical and secret right-wing organisation The English Mistery, and its follow-up, The English Array.\(^{115}\) They all shared Grimm’s vision of an Anglo-German rapprochement as the «Nordic master races» of Europe and of the world. William Sanderson wrote to Grimm

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\(^{113}\) The Times, 21.10.1937. The Secretary of the Anglo-German Fellowship, T. P. Convell-Evans, thanked Grimm «for your excellent address on Wednesday evening. The members were deeply impressed, and everybody was so delighted with it.» T. P. Convell-Evans to Hans Grimm, 22.10.1937, DLA Marbach, Bestand A: Grimm/England.

\(^{114}\) DLA Marbach, Bestand A: Grimm/England.

\(^{115}\) Sanderson was founder of the English Mistery of which in 1936 the English Array split-off under the leadership of Viscount Lymington because «Sandersons’ leadership has become far too pedantic and intellectual and his circle never got very
in 1938: «The only possible future for England and Germany is an alliance, in which we group together Scandinavia, Denmark and Holland, and just lay down the law for the rest of the world. Even then we shall have all we can do to save ourselves from an attack from the East.»

The main political objective of this Anglo-German contact was the fight against British public criticism of the Munich Agreement of Autumn 1938. Behind this criticism, Grimm saw the «war mongers and German-haters» and «sinister figures in the foreign Office». Grimm's British contacts agreed. Their support for an Anglo-German understanding went along with attacks against «Socialist intellectuals» and, quite often too, «the Jewish press». The belief that the British press was controlled by Jews was widespread in right-wing circles of the 1930s and led to conspiracy theories as expressed in Gardiner's letter to Grimm in December 1938: «The forces of darkness, expressed in chaotic thought, vulgar emotion, widespread unreliability and incompetence, and in deliberate misinformation of our Jew-controlled press, cinema, wireless and advertising, have seldom corrupted the soul of England at once more surreptitiously and more blatantly.»

To fight this Jewish influence, Lymington founded the journal *New Pioneer* in autumn 1938. It became an organ of anti-Semitic, anti-socialist and anti-capitalist support of appeasement, combining a sympathetic approach to the November pogroms in Germany with the demand for a ban of Jewish immigration to Britain in the wake of the anti-Semitic violence. In light of this political attitude, it is hardly surprising that Gardiner and Lymington did not find it difficult to persuade Hans Grimm to contribute three articles to the journal. Even on the eve of the Second World War, Lymington celebrated Grimm as a man of German-British friendship: «His passionate plea for Germany's «place in the sun» has never prejudiced his admiration for the British character and the achievements of England on the Seven Seas. His insight into the fatal failure of Englishmen and Germans not to talk at cross-purposes is combined with a deep conviction that the British and the Germans, together with other «Northern Peoples» have a common responsibility for the maintenance of civilisation.»

A few weeks later, Germany invaded Poland. This ended not only any last minute attempts to prevent the war, but also the remaining Anglo-German connections the Neo-Tories had. They had vehemently supported the appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany for ideological reasons; therefore, with the failure of appeasement, so their
hopes for a change of the political system ended. Ideas of an authoritarian, corporate state were seen as unpatriotic and eventually judged as treason. The Neo-Tories’ propaganda activities for Franco, Mussolini and Hitler made the genuine British character of their political visions appear increasingly unconvincing. The failure of appeasement was therefore also the end of Neo-Toryism.

4. Conclusion
A transnational history of radical conservatism in Europe shows that German «Conservative Revolutionaries» influenced radical British conservatives in four different ways. The first was the transnational war book controversy of 1929/30: Ernst Jünger and other representatives of military nationalism (Soldatischer Nationalismus) stood on the same side in the fight against pacifist war books and the «lie about the war»; however, the extreme nationalism and militarism of some of these authors set limits to this perception of German ideas. The second way was via the pan-European conservative revolution: Oswald Spengler, Wilhelm Stapel and Carl Schmitt were of interest because of their anti-liberal interpretation of history and their potential for identifying with a shared intellectual movement of radical conservatism. This gave encouragement to the Neo-Tories against the British liberal political culture and the cultural hegemony of the intellectual left. At the same time, the Neo-Tories were part of European intellectual networks such as the Kulturbund, and they developed their own political concepts of the continent in which Europe evolved into an anti-modern utopia. The third way that the radical British conservatives were influenced by the German «Conservative Revolutionaries» was by their understanding of Germany after 1933: The writings of men such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Carl Schmitt, Hans Zehrer and Ferdinand Fried served as examples of understanding the intellectual roots of the rise of National Socialism, and were portrayed as the «idealistic» element of the «German Revolution». And finally, the Germanophilia and appeasement of 1936–1939/40 can be attributed with influencing the radical British conservatives: Hans Grimm and his connections to the Neo-Tories was an example of the ideologically motivated attempts of a rapprochement between Germany and Great Britain of the second half of the 1930s.

The history of Neo-Toryism demonstrates that British democracy did not survive the interwar period because of a deep-rooted conviction of the superiority of the democratic-parliamentary system. On the right wing of the Conservative Party, not only the programmatic idea of necessity existed, but also the pragmatic intent of the possibility of an anti-democratic change through a «revolution from above» – or at least through an authoritarian adjustment of the political system. Neo-Toryism offered an alternative to the parliamentary democracy derived from English history and was therefore very attractive to the many young, disillusioned conservatives. Because it was «socially acceptable» in its rejection of force and agitation, it could, unlike the BUF, link up with England’s political culture. At the same time, Neo-Toryism was European; it

121 Dietz, Neo-Tories, 105–120.

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was the British version of a pan-European wave of revolutionary conservatism. The Neo-Tories portrayed themselves as the British expression of a broader anti-democratic discontent and of a European anti-liberal movement against political modernity.

The Neo-Tories’ interconnection with Europe took place in informal intellectual circles, rather than in institutions. The most important platform for this exchange of ideas was in periodicals, particularly, monthlies such as The English Review, The Criterion and the Europäische Revue; indeed, the most direct way of importing ideas was by publishing translated articles in these periodicals. Regarding the British-German exchange of ideas, the traffic of radical conservatism was rather one-way: For example, Wilhelm Stapel published articles in Douglas Jerrold’s The English Review, but Douglas Jerrold did not publish articles in Wilhelm Stapel’s Deutsches Volkstum. The most widespread form of reception of German thinkers took place in the form of book reviews. Organised international conferences such as the Convegno Volta or the meetings of the Kulturbund were scarce. Instead, the Neo-Tories preferred making personal contact, and in the 1930s they travelled Germany, Italy and Spain and reported back to Britain with «first-hand knowledge». In this way, they became – some voluntarily and some involuntarily – part of pro-Hitler, pro-Mussolini and pro-Franco propaganda, particularly when they were granted a personal audience with one of these leaders.122

For British conservative intellectuals, the European exchange held stimulation and assurance in an intellectual climate that was mainly stimulated by the left and in which most conservatives were traditionally anti-intellectual.123 Against these oppositions, the loose links to Europe did not help, and in the end, Neo-Toryism never achieved the intellectual reorientation and radicalisation of the conservative camp. The flexibility of British mainstream Conservatism, the opening-up to new voters, and the patriotic but peaceful definition of «Englishness» by party leader and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, were successful. In addition, the creation of new loyal voters by means of mass-circulation press and radio was a more appropriate answer to the new realities of the new British consumer culture and mass democracy than the elitist intellectual club-culture of the Neo-Tories.124

By the end of the 1930s, the Neo-Tories had failed: British intellectual life (in particular the universities) and highbrow culture remained predominantly left-wing; a popular and liberal British Conservatism proved to be a success; and Europe had not become the anti-liberal bulwark of Christian Western civilization they were hoping for.

122 Personal audiences with Mussolini served not only in the case of German visitors as a catalyst for the perception of Italian fascism. Cf. W. Schieder, Mythos Mussolini: Deutsche in Audienz beim Duce, Munich 2013.


but a deeply divided continent on the brink of war. In fact, the inherent contradictions of an alliance of the European Right, of an «international of nationalists», had particularly awkward consequences for the Neo-Tories, who were interested in anti-liberal conservative thinking and in European intellectuals searching for an alternative to capitalism and parliamentary democracy. They were not interested in simply copying German National Socialism or Italian Fascism. However, this distinction became increasingly unconvincing, and the beginning of the Second World War marked the end of a transnational conservative right with British participation. British patriotism was now congruent with defending freedom and liberal democracy.

**ABSTRACT**

**The Neo-Tories and Europe: A Transnational History of British Radical Conservatism in the 1930s**

This article analyses the British Neo-Tories of the 1930s as part of a pan-European counter-movement against political modernity. This network of right-wing intellectuals and allied Conservative politicians saw democracy, liberalism and capitalism in a state of degeneration and aimed at the establishment of a corporate state in Great Britain through a «revolution from above». The article concentrates on the importance on the transnational implications of this discourse and in particular of the exchange with their German intellectual counterparts. It emphasises how this exchange of ideas was affected by National Socialism on the British side and explores what the possibilities and limits of right-wing exchange between Germany and England were after Hitler’s rise to power. The article argues that for the Neo-Tories, the European exchange of ideas was a source of inspiration, reassurance and hope; however, it also eventually meant their downfall, as the beginning of the Second World War marked the end of British participation in transnational radical conservatism.

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