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From  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY

CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST CENTRAL OFFICE,  
32 SMITH SQUARE,  
WESTMINSTER, SW1P 3HH,

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Thorneycroft C.H.

Telephone: 01-222 9000

PT/CAW

5th December, 1980

To: Mr. Ian Gow, M.P.

From: Lord Thorneycroft

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CONSERVATIVE EUROPEAN REFORM GROUP

1. The activities of this group were discussed at a meeting here in the Central Office which included Angus Maude, Edward du Cann and John Stradling Thomas. The view was expressed that this Group would do us a good deal of electoral damage; that we ought to be aware of it and that we should do what we can to cut it down to size.
2. The Group claims that it is in no sense anti-European, nor opposed to our continued membership of the Community. Its objectives however are clearly beyond the possibility of being negotiable, e.g. the complete wind-up of the Common Agricultural Policy. The Group is inspired by Teddy Taylor but includes some 36 Members, some of whom are probably more moderate in their opinions.
3. What its members say does not differ much from what the Labour Party is saying about Europe.
4. As we will fight the Election plainly committed to European Membership and will be depending largely on European markets for providing the new jobs necessary to mop up what may still be substantial numbers of unemployed, this weakness on our flank will be electorally embarrassing.
5. The Whips Office and the Chairman of the 1922 Committee will do what they can. Individual Members may be warned of the danger of the course being pursued.

The innocuous name sounds as though it was almost supportive of the Prime Minister's own line and it is thus important that it should be recognised for what it in fact is, and so far as possible be actively discouraged from the top.

I will of course discuss this with the Prime Minister when next we meet.

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