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Preliminary results. Please do not quote or distribute*

**The Secret Bureau.
Unknown connections between Swedish business and the non-socialist
political opposition 1962-1984.**

Abstract

The corporatist system in Sweden and the almost state-like functions it gave to organized capital's peak organizations made it difficult for them to publically endorse political activities during the post-war decades. Still, business interests supported the non-socialist political parties financially and from 1962 in a more indirect manner through *Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor* (the Research Bureau for Social Issues). This paper finds that the Research Bureau functioned as an extension of the party secretariats and a seed-bed for young right leaning academics with political ambitions. As the corporatist system started to shake in the 1970s the Research Bureau became an integrated part of the Employers' Association's more open and ambitious attempts to shift public opinion in favor of free market politics and private ownership.

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Introduction

A less researched field within business history is the relationship between business interest organizations and political parties. In doubt of its relevance for development of public policy, economic governance and industrial relations organized capital in general remains under-researched by business historians. This is especially true for Sweden where organized capital has been stronger and with closer ties to non-socialist political parties than in many other countries.² Still, industry influence on politics remains academically neglected. 50 years has passed since Leif Lewin noticed that it offered a research task to analyze the organizational part of business propaganda in Sweden.³

Two explanations are at hand. First, there has been a lack of access to data. Confidentiality surrounding the information operations of business associations continues to be a common challenge for business historians in Sweden and elsewhere.⁴ Second, in Sweden business political activism was often organized outside of the official peak organizations, at least until the late 1970s. This has lead scholars looking *only* at the official organizations to miss the more militant and clearly anti-socialistic part of Swedish business.⁵

Having been granted archival access to a number of organizations set up specifically for influencing politics and public opinion, this paper is part of a doctoral project at the Stockholm School of Economics that will increase our knowledge of Swedish business attempts to shape political outcomes between 1945 and 1985. Specifically, this paper studies the practically unknown *Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor* (the Research Bureau for Social Issues, “the Bureau”), a non-official liaison organization with the political opposition set up by business interests in 1962.

The paper is an empirical contribution. At a later stage, it will be embedded in the overall theoretical framework of the coming dissertation. Available data consists of archival material but the plan is to conduct interviews further on.

Structure of paper

After a short introduction, the paper describes the historical roots of both official and unofficial business interest associations prior to 1960. The following empirical part is divided into two sections based on the Bureau’s organizational life-span. From 1962 to 1977 its primary function was to increase the Right Party’s and the Liberal Party’s capacity for policy development

² Lanzalaco (2008), p. 12; Traxler & Huemer (2007), abstract; Olsen (2014), p. 149.

³ Stenlås (1998), p. 13; Lewin (1967), p. 322; Glete (1991), p. 235.

⁴ Schmitter & Streek (1981), p. 2.

⁵ E.g. Swenson (2002).

primarily by writing reports on current issues, preparing parliamentary motions and supporting the parties in their election campaigns. After 1978 the ties to parties were loosened. The Bureau instead became an integrated part of the Employers' Association's increased efforts to shift the public debate in favor of market economy and private enterprise. Stopping union controlled wage earner funds (*löntagarfonder*) from taking control over Swedish companies became the number one issue. Note that this paper is written from the perspective of *Utredningsbyrån*. It does not aim at covering the debate on wage earner funds in its totality but merely the Bureau's role in that debate.

Research statement and questions

In many respects, we are still ignorant of how, why and with what success rate Swedish business tried to influence politics and public opinion during the post-war period. Earlier research has only to a lesser degree studied the vast network of often semi-hidden information agencies set up business interests partly due to a lack of access or awareness of now available archival sources. The non-official liaison organization with the political opposition named *Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor* that business financed from 1962 has gone unnoticed by previous research. This paper will explain the motives for setting up the Bureau, its operations and its implications for the non-socialist parties until it eventually became a part of business think tank Timbro in 1984.⁶ It will broaden our knowledge of the relation between business and the political parties during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Specifically, the paper will answer the following questions

- What motivated business and the political opposition to set up the Research Bureau for Social Issues?
- How did the Bureau operate?
- What were the implications for the non-socialist parties in having access to the Bureau's material?

Utredningsbyrån in the literature

There is no academic literature on *Utredningsbyrån* but a shorter version of its history was published as a part of Karin Svanborg-Sjövall's book on public sectors deregulations in Sweden. Svanborg-Sjövall, a Timbro affiliate, used both archival material and interviews with employees at the Bureau, thus getting firsthand accounts of its operations. Sture Eskilsson,

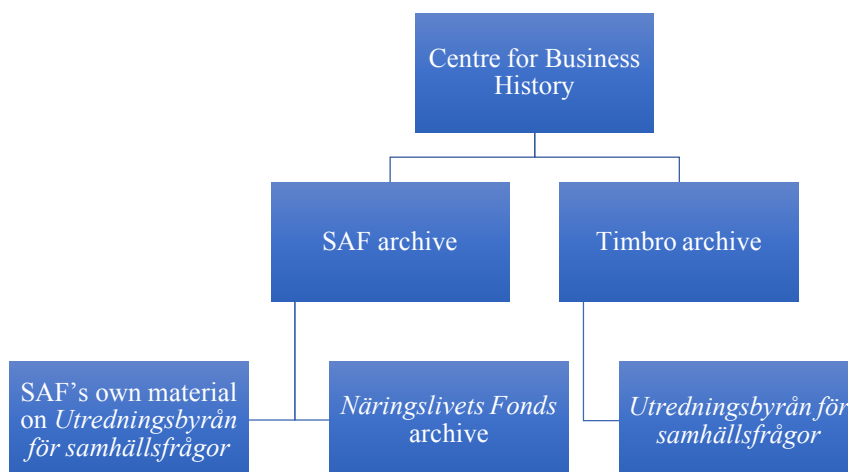
⁶ This paper uses the Cambridge Dictionary American English definition of *think tank*, "an organization whose work is to study specific problems and suggest solutions, often with a particular political view", <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/think-tank#dataset-cacd>, visited 2018-08-06.

chairman of *Utredningsbyrån*'s board 1978-1984, describes without going into detail how the Bureau became a part of the overall more ambitious efforts to influence public opinion by organized business in the late 1970s.⁷

Archival situation

The archives belonging to the *Utredningsbyrån* and its main financier *Näringslivets Fond* (The Enterprise Fund, “the Fund”), and several other organizations set up outside of the official peak organizations for influencing political and public opinion, have until now not been available for research. Data from these organizations consists of minutes from board meetings, annual meetings as well as other type of material such as internal memos, reports and correspondence. All the material is stored at Centre for Business History (*Centrum för Näringslivshistoria*, CfN) in Stockholm.

Graph 1. Archival situation



Material related to *Utredningsbyrån* are found in the SAF-archive (the Swedish Employers' Association), *Näringslivets Fond*'s archive (which formally belongs to the SAF-archive) and in the Timbro-archive.

The Timbro-archive holds the majority of material relating to *Utredningsbyrån*, 65 volumes in total. 53 of these contains the more than 700 *Allmänpolitiska utredningar* (General political investigation or APU for short) that the Bureau produced. I have looked at all of these (but not read them) and sorted them chronologically in an excel sheet and when available noted name of author and other useful information. Although almost all the titles of the APUs are preserved about 40 percent of the actual reports have not been stored in the archive.

⁷ Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 51-58; Eskilsson (2005), p. 210-211.

A note on language

All of the available material is of course in Swedish, leaving the author with the not always so easy task of translating organizational names and words with a specific meaning in Swedish into English. As a rule, organizational names that have already been used by previous research are re-used here and when not available I have made my own translations.

Non-socialist parties in Sweden are referred to as *borgerliga*. However, translating this into “bourgeois parties” gives the wrong connotation in English. Therefore, I use “non-socialist” or “center-right”.

Also, note that the Right Party (Högerpartiet) changed its name to the Moderate Party in 1969. About the same the Conservative Student Association changed its name to *Fria Moderata Studentförbundet*, FMSF.⁸

Organized business and Näringslivets Fond prior to 1960

SAF and Industriförbundet

The Swedish Employers' Association, (*Svenska Arbetsgivareorganisationen*, SAF) was founded in 1902 when employers organized themselves as a response to the growing clout of the labor unions. SAF united employers and provided them with an insurance against labor market unrest and negotiated on wages with the counterpart, the Trade Union Confederation (*Landsorganisationen i Sverige*, LO). The Federation of Swedish Industries (*Sveriges Industriförbund*) was established in 1910 as an interest group with the aim of advancing the interests of Swedish industry.⁹

Although these associations were set up to take care of business common interests and representation they were “too vulnerable and too sensitive to be associated with political party struggles”.¹⁰ *Industriförbundet* had close relations to the state and although there were industrialists that were concerned over the weak position of Swedish industry in the economic and political debate it remained non-politicized. Together with SAF it jointly formed the Industrial Institute for Economic and Social Research (*Industrins Utredningsinstitut*, IUI) in 1939 but it became a research institute in its own right and not a propaganda organ for business.¹¹

⁸ Fria Moderata Studentförbundet, Wikipedia, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fria_Moderata_Studentförbundet, visited 2018-05-29.

⁹ De Geer (1989), p. 32, 36, 197; Ullenhag (2000), p. 371.

¹⁰ Stenlås (2001), p. 269.

¹¹ Ullenhag (2000); Carlsson & Lundahl (2014).

The Employers' Association's role as one of two major organizations responsible for wage setting and parts of labor market policy, formalized through the 1938 Saltjöbaden agreement, gave it a state like function to fulfil and a kind of official stamp. This dampened the organization's natural orientation towards the center-right camp, at least from the 1930s, and embedded it in a corporatist social model. The periods of heated debate (the 1945–48 row over planned economy and the 1956–1959 dispute on national supplementary pensions), when the employers and other business organizations made common cause with the center-right parties to attack the social democracy, could more be seen as “relapses” on an otherwise steady trajectory towards greater political neutrality.¹²

Unofficial organizations

Yet, board members of both SAF and *Industriförbundet*, who were also managers of the biggest companies, did find other ways to support the non-socialist parties, the business-friendly press and conduct opinion molding activities. The first serious attempt was the so called *Direktörsklubben* in which the CEOs or chairmen of the five (later six) major companies within the engineering industry tried to advance the interests of the Swedish exporting industry during the 1930s and 1940s.¹³ More contemporary research suggests however that neither *Direktörsklubben* nor its operational arm The Association for Information on Industrial Relations (*Föreningen för Undersöknings- och Upplysningsarbete om Industriella Förhållanden*, FUIF) “played any important role in the molding of public opinion, as they were too small and somewhat outside the mainstream of Swedish business political activism”.¹⁴

Campaigns and financing of the press and the parties

Instead, big business leaders used the unofficial organization *Näringslivets Fond* for political activism. The Fund had been founded in 1940 to secure the ownership of the conservative morning paper *Svenska Dagbladet* and it was according to its bye-laws to ‘advance the freedom of enterprise and other important common causes for private business’. Entry and membership fees in the Fund were large enough to require backing from a major Swedish company. Of the 30 trustees in 1944, seven were on the board of *Industriförbundet*, three were on the board of SAF and another six on both these boards. Among these were also both the chairman and vice chairman of *Industriförbundet* and the joint chair of SAF and the Fund, Gustaf Söderlund.¹⁵ Of

¹² Elvander (1966), p. 260

¹³ Söderpalm (1976).

¹⁴ Stenlås (2001), p. 274.

¹⁵ Stenlås (1998), p. 79–80, 87–88. Quote on page 80. Swedish: ”...främja näringslivets frihet och andra för det enskilda näringslivets betydelsefulla gemensamma intressen.”

Sweden's 28 largest joint-stock companies in industry, shipping and trade, 21 were members of the fund in 1960.¹⁶ In the 1940s and 1950s Näringslivets Fond had close ties with Garantistiftelsen 1946, a money collector for the political opposition, and with Libertas which from 1942 channeled money to the business-friendly press.¹⁷

Before 1965 there were no state subsidies to the political parties and business therefore played an important role in keeping the non-socialist parties afloat. Donations were either organized through collections or directly from companies. Earlier research has shown that companies belonging to the Wallenberg group were among the most loyal contributors to the Right Party. In the 1950s about half of the Right Party's total costs were covered by business donations while the Liberal party roughly had about 1/3 of its expenses paid by business.¹⁸ For the latter, business donations were especially sensitive. In 1932 party leader Carl Gustaf Ekman had to resign after having received donations from the scandalized business man Ivar Kreuger, and the issue surfaced again when it turned out that the party had gotten money from industry in the 1948 election campaign.¹⁹

Besides the Fund, business leaders also started *Näringslivets Samarbetsorganisation* (the Enterprise Organization for Cooperation) in 1947 to coordinate the top ten peak business organizations on political issues. The *Samarbetsorganisation* invited government ministers and opposition leaders for discussions.²⁰

Both the Fund and the *Samarbetsorganisation* played important roles in the campaign against a more planned economy and tax increases known as *planhushållningsmotståndet* after World War II, when labor leaders in Sweden presented a Post-war Program aimed at improving economic efficiency and counteracting an anticipated downturn through increased government planning. This could be accomplished partly through socialization. 'To realize this program is to give business a new organization and to reshape society in a socialistic direction', it stated.²¹ As a part of the campaign the Fund translated and paid for the Swedish publication of F.A Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, and as previous research has noted the campaign was run on distinct Hayekian arguments. A more planned economy would ultimately lead to dictatorship.²²

¹⁶ Styrelseprotokoll 1962-11-16, bil 7, A2:5, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

¹⁷ Stenlås (1998).

¹⁸ Gidlund (1983), p. 156–158; Utredning angående näringslivets bidrag till press, politik och upplysningsverksamhet, F1:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. These numbers are rough estimations. I will go through them more thoroughly later on.

¹⁹ Stenlås (1998), p. 32, 224–227.

²⁰ Pestoff (1986), p. 38–39.

²¹ Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (1944), p. 10. Swedish: "... Att förverkliga detta program är att ge näringslivet en ny organisation och att omdana samhället i socialistisk riktning."

²² Lewin (1967), 271–272.

The social democrats remained in power after the 1948 elections even though they and the Communist Party lost ten seats in the lower chamber.²³ Although taxes were raised, much of the Post-war Program was shelved. This could have been due to the business campaigns but also that the planned economy proposals were aimed at mitigating an anticipated downturn after the war which never came. Low interest rates and increased purchasing power proposed by the program seemed to be the wrong medicine in the inflationary economy of the late 1940s.²⁴

The Fund during the 1950s

During the 1950s the social democratic government took several initiatives for discussions with business (most notably at the Prime Minister's representational estate Harpsund). Meanwhile the Fund carried on as a financier of and organizer of business-friendly opinion formatting activities, most often carried out by its operational arm, *Byrån för Ekonomisk Information* (the Bureau for Economic Information).²⁵ Its other major expenditure item was *Studieförbundet Näringsliv och Samhälle* (Centre for Business and Policy Studies, SNS) founded in 1948, which from its start had promoted objective research and dialogue, rather than confrontation, with the labor movement. That might seem a bit odd considering the rest of the Fund's activities. A combination of good personal connections between SNS' founders and parts of the Fund's board in combination with an insight from the latter that a new strategy towards the labor movement was needed seems to have been key.²⁶

In addition to being what today would be called a think-tank the Bureau for Economic Information also became a place for further advancement within the bigger business organizations. One of the employees was Sture Eskilsson. He would later become the main architect behind business resistance to labor movement's proposal of wage earner funds in the late 1970's.²⁷

Byrån för Ekonomisk Information was shut down when its managing director quit in 1963 and parts of its operations were then taken over by SNS.²⁸ But the void would also be filled by a new organization.

²³ Styrelseprotokoll 1947-01-10, Garantistiftelsen 1946, Näringslivets Fond, CfN; Ullenhag (1998), p. 49.

²⁴ Stenlås (1998), p. 349–350; Lewin (1967), p. 340–341.

²⁵ Utredning angående näringslivets bidrag till press, politik och upplysningsverksamhet, F1:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

²⁶ Ullenhag (1998), s. 25–28

²⁷ Eskilsson (2005), p. 39.

²⁸ Styrelseprotokoll 1963-02-20, bil 1, A2:5, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

The A-group

Party leaders for the Right and the Liberals upheld contact with business through *Näringslivets Samarbetsorganisation* but from the late 1950s they explicitly asked *Näringslivets Fond* for more closer contact and investigative support in order to match the resources available to the Social democrats through the government offices.²⁹

The Fund's managing director, Uno Murray, argued that although the organization was non-partisan it still had a "...basic political ambition to counterweight socialistic and collective tendencies and assert the main principles of economic liberalism".³⁰ Ultimately, this would be achieved through the non-socialist parties (here meaning the Right Party and the Liberal Party), who now also explicitly asked for help. Murray was given a mandate by the board to work out the details with the parties.

In 1962, a proposal was made by six young men who knew each other and had gotten political training through the Conservative Student Association to form the organization the Fund had asked for. It was named *A-gruppen* (the A-group, short for the *Arbetsgruppen för politiska och ekonomiska utredningar*, the Working Group for Political and Economic Reports) and had direct channels in to the party structure. Its main undertaking was to satisfy the political parties need for qualified investigations, which grew during the 1960s as the opposition wanted more and better material for parliamentary motions. *Näringslivets Fond* provided the starting capital of 48 400 SEK and Carl-Henrik Winqwist became managing director.³¹

After a year it took the name *Utredningsbyrå C-H Winqwist* (the Research Bureau C-H Winqwist) and the small office, originally consisting of a secretary, Winqwist and part time employee Gustaf Lindencrona, with a background as chairman of the Liberal Students' Association, was set up at Sköldungagatan 2 which also housed SNS and the Fund.³² It was also known as "the Secret Bureau".³³

²⁹ Styrelseprotokoll 1959-10-16, A2:4, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

³⁰ Styrelseprotokoll 1961-12-04, A2:5, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. Swedish: "...en grundläggande politisk målsättning, som går ut på att skapa motvikt mot socialistiska och kollektivistiska tendenser och hävda den ekonomiska liberalismens grundprinciper."

³¹ Styrelseprotokoll 1962-02-16, A2:5, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. The six were Staffan Burenstam Linder, Göran Elgfelt, Jan Gillberg, Birger Hagård, Jacob Palmstierna and Carl-Henrik Winqwist. For a description of the opposition's changing role during the 1960s, see Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 52.

³² Styrelseprotokoll A-gruppen, 1963-01-30 and 1963-09-02, A3:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

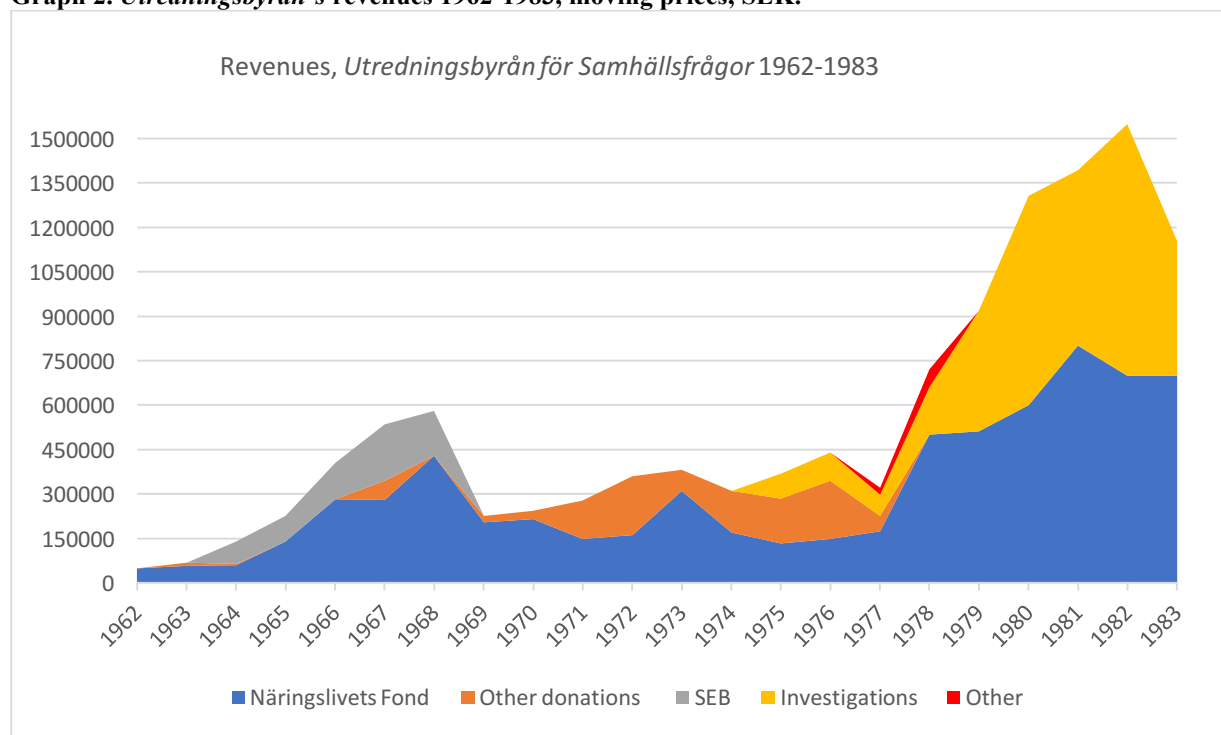
³³ Eskilsson (2005), p. 210.

The Bureau 1962-1976. A think-tank for the political opposition

Administration and management

In addition to the yearly grants provided by *Näringslivets Fond* companies controlled by the Wallenberg family also contributed early on, see Graph 2 below and Appendix 1. The cost of operating the Bureau was roughly split by the Wallenberg group and the Fund over the time period. Marc Wallenberg, son of business titan Marcus Wallenberg, was committed to supporting the Bureau. It was to him and not his father that the Bureau's reports were sent.³⁴ Financial contributions were also made by the shipping family Salén (CEO Sven Hampus Salén sat on the board 1972-1977) and by the Employers' Association towards the latter years of the Bureau's first phase.

Graph 2. *Utredningsbyrån's* revenues 1962-1983, moving prices, SEK.



Sources: See Appendix 1. SEB is the Wallenberg controlled bank *Stockholms Enskilda Bank*. "Other donations" are from other companies, a majority also being Wallenberg controlled.

Marc Wallenberg was never on the board but Sten Gustafsson, who held several important positions within the Wallenberg group, was from 1962 to 1977, see Appendix 2.³⁵ The board

³⁴ APU utsändningslista 1964-1966, D1:1, Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor, Timbro-arkivet, CfN. Also, Carl-Henrik Winqvist was by marriage related to both Wallenberg and Gustaf Lindencrona, see Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 53.

³⁵ VÅD 1977.

was chaired by the managing director of the Employers' Association and also included business men and various conservative and liberal politicians.

The Bureau's own staff was kept at a minimum and the bulk of the work was done by hired investigators. What the staff members had in common was their close connections to either the Liberal or the Right Party. Carl Tham, who replaced Gustaf Lindencrona in 1964, became party secretary for the Liberals 1969–1978. Carl Henrik Winqwist held various positions within the Right Party, including campaign manager in the 1968 election. This guaranteed good connections between the Bureau and the parties. The somewhat insipid name *Utredningsbyrå C-H Winqwist* was changed to *Utredningsbyrå för samhällsfrågor* when Winqwist resigned from his position as managing director for a job abroad in 1973.³⁶ Until then, the Bureau had been run as a private, unregistered firm (which proved to be inconvenient from a tax perspective) and it was now turned into a foundation with byelaws.³⁷

A full-time librarian systematized relevant literature and magazines both from Sweden and abroad. The library was also used by the party secretariats and by the other business organizations.³⁸

Operations

Allmänpolitiska utredningar

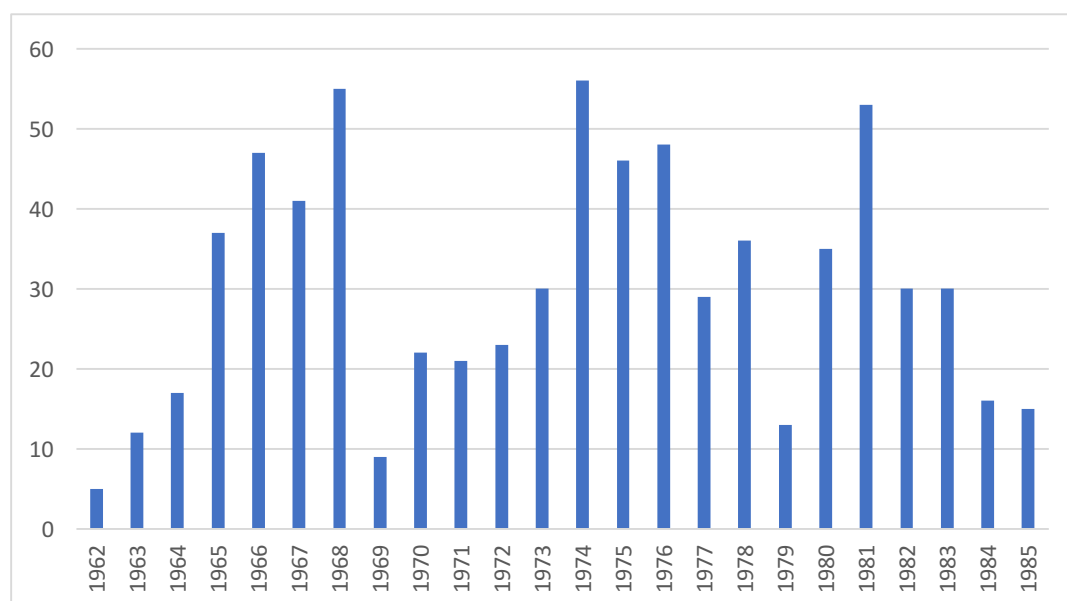
Each of the *Allmänpolitisk utredning*, APU, was given a number. From the start to 1985, 726 APUs were made averaging about 30 per year, see Graph 3.

³⁶ *VÄD* 1977; Eskilsson (2005), p. 91.

³⁷ Styrelseprotokoll A-gruppen, 1963-01-30 and 1974-03-05, A3:2. Näringslivets Fond, CfN. The 1974 bylaws are not very explicit, stating that "The purpose of the foundation is to conduct investigations on social issues" ("*Stiftelsens ändamål är att bedriva utredningsverksamhet i samhällsfrågor*"). For the connections between Winqwist's private finances and the Bureau, see Nils Henrik Schagers letter to Gustaf Lindencrona 1974-10-03 in Korrespondans 1974-1977, E1:1, Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor, Timbro-arkivet, CfN.

³⁸ Utredningsbyrå inför valet 1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1968-70, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

Graph 3. Number of APUs produced per year, 1962-1985.



Source: APU utredningar, B1, *Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor*, Timbro-arkivet, CfN.

The actual report did not have to be an investigation (although a majority were) of a political topic, but could be e.g. a parliamentary motion for either of the parties. Finished reports were sent to some fifteen leading conservative and liberal politicians.³⁹ Also included were the managing directors of the Employers' Association, and *Näringslivets Fond* and Marc Wallenberg (until his death in 1971). Other leading people within business or business interest organizations were added or withdrawn from the receivers list according to subject.⁴⁰

APUs were usually commissioned by the party secretaries, but could also come from private companies or business organizations. Occasionally investigators (*utredare*) themselves came up with ideas that could be useful to the parties.⁴¹ Often an investigator from the Bureau worked together with party employees or parliamentarians.⁴² Some of the reports were published (without mentioning *Utredningsbyråns* name), such as the Liberal Party's election handbook for the 1966 election.⁴³

The reports remind of academic essays, with clear structure and references. A broad range of topics were covered. Some APUs had a direct connection to election strategies, such as APU 1964:2 *Tjänstemännens politiska tänkande* (evaluation of how to win white collar votes) and APU 1967:22 *Marginalvalkretsanalys* (analysis of municipalities where the Liberal Party had

³⁹ Utredningsbyråns arbetsuppgifter 1970-1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1968-70, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkiven, CfN.

⁴⁰ APU utsändningslista 1964-1966 och APU utsändningslista 1966-1968, D:1, Register, Utredningsbyrån För Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN

⁴¹ Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 54

⁴² Utredningsbyråns verksamhet 1974-1976, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN

⁴³ APU 1966:33 "Argument 66", valhandbok; Folkpartiet (1966).

best potential of winning votes) while other reports studied a current phenomenon, such as APU 1976:1 *Politisk musik*, where leftist and “progressive” musical groups were mapped out.

Keeping track of the political enemy number one, the Social Democratic Party, was important to the Bureau and there are several APUs on this topic, including the party’s finances, election strategies, its “abuse” (*övergrepp*), “absolute power” (*maktfullkomlighet*) and “affairs” (*affärer*).⁴⁴ By far, the most ambitious of these reviews was the project *Den socialdemokratiska maktapparaten* (The social democratic power apparatus) that in a critical way described the party and its affiliated organizations rendering no less than seven APU:s in 1976 and 1977. It was also published as a book by conservative academic Erik Anners.⁴⁵

Party usage

For the years 1965-1967 all produced APUs also comes with information about commissioning party (other years it is more sporadic). Thus, it is possible to see if any of the parties commissioned more or less APUs. As seen in table 1, the Conservatives ordered 33 APUs, the liberals 63 and 28 APUs were made both parties. At least for these years, the liberals used the Bureau’s services more extensively.

Table 1. Total number of *Allmänpolitiska utredningar* 1965-1967, divided by political party

For the Right Party	For the Liberal Party	For both parties
33	63	28

Source: APU utredningar, B1, Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor, Timbroarkivet, CfN.

Election years

During election years the work intensified. The party offices could use the Bureau as a “fact central”, for production of campaign guides and for gathering material that could be used for political initiatives, such as the non-socialist party leaders’ joint declaration in June 1973.⁴⁶ The Bureau monitored closely what the Ministries were working on, and the size of grants that the authorities asked for, an important part of the Government’s annual budget.⁴⁷

The idea was not only to help the parties win elections but also prepare for a change of government. This required both political proposals that had been prepared before election day

⁴⁴ APU 1969:5 Socialdemokratiska partiets ekonomiska resurser (missing); 1972:15 Socialdemokratin inför valet 1973 (B1:31); 1974:7 Socialdemokratiska övergrepp (missing); 1975:3 Socialdemokratisk maktfullkomlighet (missing); 1976:28 Socialdemokratiska affärer (B1:41). APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN

⁴⁵ Anners (1976)

⁴⁶ Utredningsbyråns verksamhet 1974-1976, A1:1 Protokoll, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN

⁴⁷ Utredningsbyrån inför valet 1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1968-70, F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

as well as plans of how to staff the Government offices. Writing parliamentary motions, government bills and terms of references (*utredningsdirektiv*) for state commissions for a non-socialist government became an important task. Issues could be small or big, an example of the latter being the 1966 Conservative Economic-Political Program, chaired by party leader Yngve Holmberg and written by Staffan Burenstam-Linder from the Bureau.⁴⁸

The 1968 election

Among non-socialists there were hopes for a shift of government in 1968 and the work conducted by the Bureau in many ways prepared for this. The social democrats had performed poorly in the elections to the upper chamber in 1966 and opinion polls indicated a close race.⁴⁹ It was also the year during phase one when the Bureau received the largest grants and together with 1974 produced most APUs. Gustaf Lindencrona led a special project called *Finans- och ekonomi* that been approved by the party leaders and which produced government bills and terms of references for state commissions that would be handled by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Interior.⁵⁰

Carl Tham, deputy investigative lead after Winqwist, made or ordered an APU over what commissions were currently undertaken in the Government offices, including key persons in the Ministries. “The work must of course be conducted with great discretion”, he wrote.⁵¹ Among the same stack of papers in the same archive box, there are also lists of all the personnel in the Government Offices. Handwritten next to some of these names are notes on these persons political affiliations and sometimes also a comment on capabilities followed by block letters in parentheses (most likely the initials of the person who provided the information). For example, *planeringschef* (head of planning) Göte Svenson in the Ministry of Interior was a social democrat but “non-doctrinaire and very competent”.⁵² In some cases, there are notes on whether the person intends to resign if there is non-socialist government. Further, there are lists of people affiliated to the non-socialist parties and a list with names sorted under *kanslihuset* (Government offices) and *Utredningar, sakkunniga* (Commissions, special advisors). Clearly someone at the Bureau, most likely Carl Tham, was involved in preparing for a non-socialist

⁴⁸ APU 1966:35 Ett ekonomiskt-politiskt program, B1:11, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN.

⁴⁹ Ahlmark (2011), p. 113.

⁵⁰ Styrelseprotokoll A-gruppen, 1968-09-05, A3:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

⁵¹ Promemoria ang undersökning rörande departementen m.m, B1:23, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN. Swedish: ”Arbetet måste givetvis bedrivas med stor diskretion”.

⁵² Författningar och pm rörande departementstjänstemännens ställning, B1:22, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN. Swedish: ”odoktrinär o mkt duglig”. Unfortunately APU 1968:53 *PM angående personalsituationen inom departementen* is missing.

government in 1968. It never came about, however, as the Social Democrats received over 50 percent of the votes.⁵³ Tham and several others with a background at the Bureau had to wait until 1976 before they would be in government.

Anglo-Saxon inspiration

In October 1962 Carl-Henrik Winqwist made a study trip to the Conservative Party's Research Department, CRD, in London where he met with the managing director.⁵⁴ CRD had been founded in 1922 when the Conservatives were out of power and in need of new ideas. By 1962 it employed some thirty investigators. It produced long term reports for the party, usually by putting together a team of parliamentarians, experts and a CRD-secretary. It also compiled political material in the form of books, pamphlets and election handbooks for party staff and politicians. Clearly, the working methods became an inspiration for *Utredningsbyrån*. Four years later Winqwist and Lindencrona went on an ambitious study trip to Washington DC. There they met with leading politicians or their staff, lobbyists, pollsters and both partisan and non-partisan research institutes. The trip resulted in APU 1967:12 *Finansiering av politisk verksamhet i USA* with several suggestions for Sweden, including home visits, fund-raising dinners and TV-donations.⁵⁵

What did the parties think?

Utredningsbyrån served the Right Party and the Liberal Party. The Centre Party (until 1957 the Farmers League) had been asked to participate but were uninterested.⁵⁶ According to an internal memo the Centre Party was informed about the Bureau and had access to some investigations through the Liberal Party.⁵⁷ Among *Näringslivets Fond's* board members there was a scepticism towards The Centre Party which had been in government with the social democrats 1936-1939 and 1951-1957. When a newly appointed managing director for SNS suggested that it would be better for the Liberal Party to cooperate with the Centre Party rather than the conservatives in 1961 the Fund's board made him to leave.⁵⁸

⁵³ Andrakammarvalet i Sverige 1968, Wikipedia,

https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrakammarvalet_i_Sverige_1968, visited 2018-05-28

⁵⁴ Conservative Party's Research Department (CRD), Styrelseprotokoll A-gruppen, 1963-01-30, A3:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. For more on CRD, see Ramsden (1980)

⁵⁵ PM inför studiebesök i Amerikas Förenta Stater, Styrelseprotokoll A-gruppen, 1966-02-22, A3:2, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. The memo does not state who went to the U.S but the APU is written by Lindencrona, I have therefore assumed that it he and Winqwist went together.

⁵⁶ Svanborg-Sjövall, (2011), p. 53.

⁵⁷ PM angående svar vid eventuell förfrågan rörande Utredningsbyrån C-H Winqwist, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1968-70, F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor. SAF-arkivet, CfN

⁵⁸ Ullenhag (1998), p. 85; Styrelseprotokoll 1963-02-20, A2:5, Näringslivets Fond, CfN.

In general, the parties were satisfied with the Bureau's work since it could "solve a number of problems that the parties had difficulties to manage within the frame of their resources".⁵⁹ On the downsides were that the parties had problems with figuring out long term political issues and lacked enough resources to fully use the Bureau's investigations and information resources.

After the 1973 elections Nils Henrik Schager, who had taken over as investigate lead (*utredningsledare*) and contact person for the Moderates after Winqwist, stated in a memo that there were those who wanted to reconsider the Bureau's future and its costs. One idea was to incorporate the Bureau with the parties' secretariats. Schager saw three advantages with keeping the Bureau as a separate entity. First, it fostered non-socialist cooperation and information exchange between the parties. Second, as the parties were busy with the weekly political development the Bureau could undertake the long-term investigations. Third,

The Bureau can receive economic support for the political work that cannot go directly to the parties for different reasons. The significance of this aspect seems to be accentuated in the future.⁶⁰

Since 1965 the political parties were guaranteed state subsidies and over time financial support from business to parties diminished, at least officially.⁶¹ Through the Bureau, business could continue to finance the non-socialist parties in an indirect way. As mentioned, the liberals had a complicated history with regards to business donations, and during the 1970s the party's rhetoric was getting less business-friendly. It had publically declared that it did not accept financial contributions from corporate bodies (*juridiska personer*) and in 1976 it stated that in order to participate in the 1976 government the moderates must stop accepting donations from business.⁶²

In 1977, when a non-socialist coalition government had been in power for a year the Moderate Party secretary Lars Tobisson concluded that the Bureau had been an important seed-bed for young non-socialist politicians and a valuable counter weight against the resources available to the social democrats. Even though the conservatives were in power it only controlled 1/3 of the

⁵⁹ Utredningsbyråns arbetsuppgifter 1971-1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1971-1974, F21:M3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN. Swedish: "för att lösa en rad problem som partierna inom ramen för sina resurser har svårt att klara".

⁶⁰ Promemoria angående utredningsbyråns framtida verksamhet, B2:1, Övriga handlingar, Utredningsbyrån För Samhällsfrågor, Timbro-arkivet, CfN. Swedish: "Till byrån kan kanaliseras ekonomiskt stöd som av skilda skäl inte kan gå direkt till partierna. Betydelsen av denna aspekt tycks komma att accentueras i framtiden"

⁶¹ Gidlund (1983), p. 11–13.

⁶² Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 56–57.

Ministries and one day they might be back in opposition. Therefore, the Moderate Party wanted the Bureau to remain.⁶³

Staff

Investigators were mainly recruited from the political youth associations and student organizations although academics without any political background could be hired.⁶⁴ An explicit purpose was to

...test the investigators' capacity and inclination for further political efforts; during the last years, over 200 academics have been engaged by the Bureau and many of these have later been recruited for other political tasks.⁶⁵

This definitely proved to be the case. When the non-socialist government came into power in 1976 three cabinet ministers and three under-secretaries of state had held a permanent position at the Bureau (Ola Ullsten, Ingemar Mundebo, Staffan Burenstam-Linder, Carl Tham, Bert Levin, Anders Arwedsson). Two under-secretaries of state had been hired as investigators (Sten Westerberg, Rolf Skillner).⁶⁶ From 1962 to 1977 the Bureau employed fifteen people as staff at one time or another. Nine of these became cabinet ministers or under-secretaries of state in the non-socialist governments that held power between 1976 and 1982.⁶⁷

⁶³ Synpunkter på Utredningsbyråns framtid, Mapp: 8, F21 M:4 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

⁶⁴ Utredningsbyråns arbetsuppgifter 1971-1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1971-1974, F21:M3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

⁶⁵ Utredningsbyrån inför valet 1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1968-70, F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN. Swedish: "...pröva utredarnas kapacitet och fallenhet för fortsatta politiska insatser; under de gångna åren har över 200 akademiker varit engagerade av byrån, och många av dessa har senare kunnat rekryteras för andra uppgifter i politiken."

⁶⁶ Utredningsbyråns arbetsuppgifter 1971-1973, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1971-1974, F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN; For lists of politicians in the 1976 government, see *Regeringen Fälldin I*, Wikipedia, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeringen_Fälldin_I, visited 2018-05-28; Note that Sten Westerberg is the author's father. In 1965 he wrote three parliamentary motions (APU 1965:13-15) for the Liberal Party and one investigation on traffic policy (APU 1965:24) at the Bureau.

⁶⁷ The nine were: Carl Tham, Bert Levin, Hadar Cars, Daniel Tarschys, Anders Arwedsson, Ola Ullsten, Gabriel Romanus, Ingemar Mundebo, Staffan Burenstam-Linder. The remaining six were: Carl-Henrik Winqvist, Gustaf Lindencrona, Anders Wijkman, Nils Henrik Schager, Einar Frydén, Carl-Johan Westholm. For lists of cabinet ministers and under-secretaries of state see Wikipedia *Regeringen Fälldin I*, Wikipedia, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeringen_Fälldin_I, *Regeringen Ullsten*, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeringen_Ullsten, *Regeringen Fälldin II*, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeringen_Fälldin_II, *Regeringen Fälldin III*, https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regeringen_Fälldin_III, visited 2018-05-28. Carl Tham is an interesting case, as he is the only Swede to have served in both a non-socialist (1978-1980) and social democratic cabinet (1994-1998), see Nationalencyklopedin, *Carl Tham*. <http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/lang/carl-tham>, visited 2018-05-28

The Bureau 1978-1984. A think-tank for organized business

The Bureau in a new setting

For SAF, the politicization of the organization during the 1970s had several causes. Labor market regulations, which historically had been left to the social partners to decide on, were now increasingly being taken over by the state which also raised taxes, including payroll taxes. SAF's members, especially the smaller companies, started to question the organization's legitimacy and capacity to defend the interests of its joint owners. Under the leadership of the new chairman, Curt Nicolin, the response was to decentralize the wage negotiations, question the own participation in the political decision-making process and unite behind the struggle against wage earner funds. A long-term effort to create, not just mirror, public opinion began.⁶⁸

Utredningsbyrån's main financier, *Näringslivets Fond*, was by the 1970s an organization in decline. The threat of socialization, which had been its *raison d'être*, had toned down during the 1950s and 1960s, it had no operational arm and it was rapidly losing members. Its chairman Bertil Kugelberg, thought the Fund could be shut down. But Sture Eskilsson, head of the Employers' Association's Information department had another idea. A revitalized Fund could be an important part in "the struggle for market economy, against socialism", in addition to SAF.⁶⁹ He also considered some of the powerful big business leaders within SAF to be defeatists in whether it was possible to "stop the development toward a union run socialist state".⁷⁰

Eskilsson had been working with information at SAF since the 1960s and became increasingly concerned over the radicalized political climate. When a memo from the SAF board leaked to the press in 1971 he became publically known. The memo pointed to three strategic areas where SAF needed to increase its communicative efforts for the coming three years: the qualified theoretical debate, the internal debate within business, and school information. For Eskilsson influencing political decisions always started with influencing the public opinion first rather than lobbying the government directly.⁷¹

Timbro and Utredningsbyrån

Late in 1975, the Fund and SAF jointly tasked Eskilsson and Carl-Johan Westholm from the Bureau to make an

⁶⁸ De Geer (1989), p. 352–355.

⁶⁹ Eskilsson (2005), p. 207. Swedish: "kampen för marknadsekonomi, mot socialism"

⁷⁰ Eskilsson (2005), p. 178. Swedish: "...bryta utvecklingen mot en fackligt styrd socialiststat"

⁷¹ Eskilsson (2005), p. 79, 114, 123–125, 218.

analysis of the most suitable structure for those institutions alongside the major business organizations involved with investigations and opinion molding for values associated with a free market economy.⁷²

The result was the report *Näringslivet och den politiska opinionsbildningen* (Business and the political formation of opinion) presented two years later.

The report stated that “political formation of opinion is a vital interest for business”.⁷³ As a too close identification between business and political parties could be disturbing for both, business was in need of its own information activities. Eskilsson and Westholm described a Sweden where the opinion formation through the political parties and their youth organizations, media, universities and schools, the church and the culture workers was ever more dependent on state subsidies. In the long term, it could prove to be detrimental to free competition, private enterprise and the political power balance. Business therefore had a

responsibility to ensure that opinion for freedom and democracy, against regulations and corporatism, is upheld and strengthened. If business does not guarantee economic resources in this struggle there will be no financial counter weight against the labor movement’s activities and the generally state backed formation of opinion.⁷⁴

Further, the report argued that it was difficult for business representatives not to be perceived as one-sided proponents of their own cause on important issues such as union claims for political power (probably the most important economic and political issue in Western Europe, according to the authors).

Two suggestions were made. First, the establishment of an independent, pro-market publisher modelled on the Institute for Economic Affairs in the UK. Second, *Utredningsbyrå* would continue with its investigations aimed at political decision makers but it would also get a broader assignment to affect the formation of opinion among other parts of society.

⁷² Protokoll 1975-12-05, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN. Swedish: ”analys av den lämpligaste strukturen för de institutioner som vid sidan av de stora näringslivsorganisationerna bedriver utrednings- och opinionsbildande verksamhet till förmån för de värden som är förknippade med en fri marknadsekonomi”. See also Protokoll 1977-11-29.

⁷³ *Näringslivet och den politiska opinionsbildningen*, F1:3, Utredningar, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN. Swedish: ”Den politiska opinionsbildningen är alltså ett vitalt näringslivsintresse”. Note that the version in the archives does not seem to be the final version as some parts are missing.

⁷⁴ Swedish: ”...ett ansvar att se till att opinionsläget för frihet och demokrati, mot regleringar och korporatism, upprätthålls och stärks. Om icke näringslivet garanterar ekonomiska resurser i denna strävan, kommer ingen finansiell motvikt att finnas mot fackföreningsrörelsens aktiviteter och den allmänt statsunderstödda opinionsbildningen.”

During 1977, *Näringslivets Fond's* board discussed the report and its suggestions “to give business the possibility to affect the formation of opinion that dictate the content of politics”.⁷⁵ A task-force (*beredningsgrupp*) was jointly appointed by the Fund and SAF to provide a basis for decisions. Following the report’s recommendations, the business infrastructure for opinion formation was remodified. Instead of partly relying on company donations for both the Fund and the Bureau, SAF would provide a yearly grant of 2 million SEK to the Fund which in turn would finance *Utredningsbyrån* and appoint its board members. The political parties still had a need for the bureau’s investigative capacity, but it’s main task would now be to “cover parts of the Swedish debate which lacked satisfying coverage”. Further it was decided to start a publisher which would promote business interests and its basic values. The publisher and the Bureau should remain separate entities but cooperate closely.⁷⁶

As seen in Graph 4 the new publishing house was given the name Timbro and was in turn divided into Ratio, which published more advanced literature, and Opinion which published magazines and periodicals. As for the Bureau, it continued with its investigations and also supplied Ratio and Opinion with material. Its chairman became Sture Eskilsson and on the board was also Einar Frydén, Carl-Johan Westholm and Carl Bildt. It roughly tripled its yearly grants from the Fund to about 500 000 SEK.⁷⁷ Timbro and the Bureau moved down the road to Valhallavägen 66, a house owned by the PR-firm Kreab which produced a major part of SAF’s information material. There was an intimate relationship between these three organizations, e.g. sharing of office functions and a library.⁷⁸

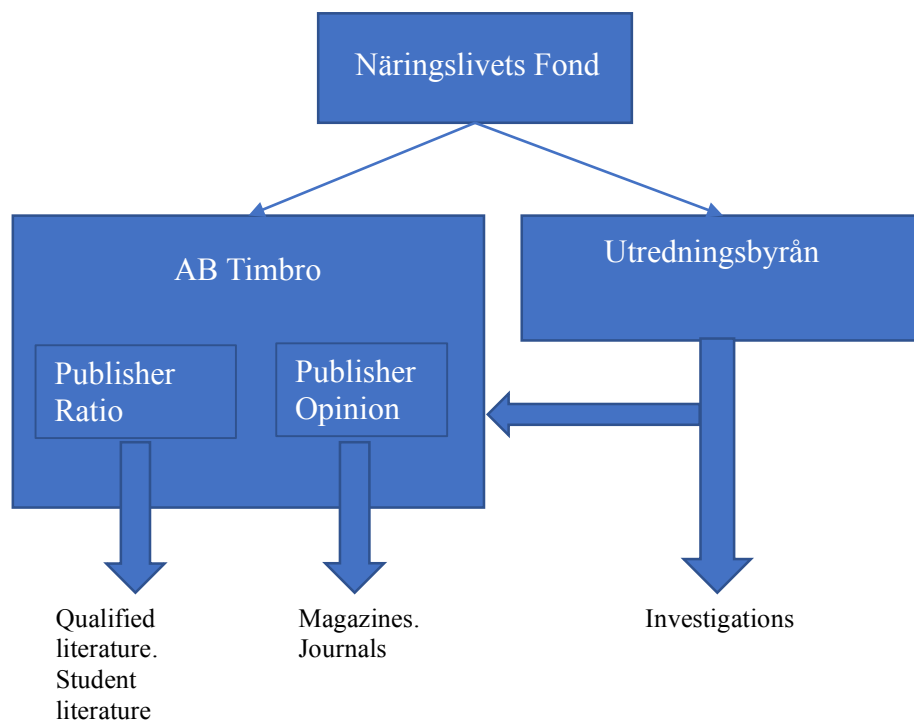
⁷⁵ Protokoll 1977-03-22, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN Swedish: ”...ge näringslivet möjlighet att påverka den opinionsbildning som bestämmer politikens innehåll”

⁷⁶ Protokoll 1977-11-29, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN Swedish: ”...täcka avsnitt av den svenska debatten som saknar tillfredställande belysning.” It is somewhat of a historical irony that the 2 million SEK were originally money that the social democratic government had provided in order for SAF to inform on *medbestämmandelagen* (union participation in decision making regulated by law), see further Eskilsson (2005), p. 208.

⁷⁷ Protokoll 1978-03-14, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv. Carl Bildt later became Prime Minister of Sweden. At this time, he was working as under-secretary of state for the Moderate Party, see Nationalencyklopedin, *Carl Bildt*. <http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/lång/carl-bildt>, visited 2018-05-28.

⁷⁸ Eskilsson (2005), p. 134, 210; Styrelseprotokoll 1979-05-02, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningbyrån för samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN. The Bureau also kept a few rooms at the old address, Sköldungagatan 2. I will come back to the foundation, history and operations of Timbro in a coming paper.

Graph 4. Näringslivets Fond, Timbro and Utredningsbyrån 1978.



Source: Protokoll 1978-03-14, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN.

Operations

About a year after the Fund's takeover the managing director Frydén stated in memo that the Bureau's operations strived for a "social development characterized by democracy, pluralism, free enterprise and decentralized market economy". In addition to the allowance from the Fund financing was received from revenues from the investigations (see Graph 2).⁷⁹ The political parties stopped asking for reports and instead the clientele to a large extent shifted to other business organizations, mainly SAF. There are no real explanations for this in the data but several explanations are plausible. First, the center-right parties were now in government thus lessening the need for outside expertise. Second, SAF wanted its own information agencies, as stated in the Eskilsson-Westholm report. Third, as Ilja Viktorov notes, SAF's unwillingness to compromise on the wage earner funds put the organization at odds with the Liberal Party secretary Carl Tham. In 1978, he led a group that presented a proposal that, at least from SAF's perspective, had similarities with the labor movement proposal. Eventually the liberals decided against wage earner funds, but the party leadership were still critical of the SAF-campaigns.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ PM "Utredningsbyråns struktur och verksamhet" 1979-05-02, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningbyrån för samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN. Swedish: "...strävan att främja en samhällsutveckling präglad av demokrati, pluralism, fritt företagande och decentraliserad marknadsekonomi."

⁸⁰ Viktorov (2006), p. 226; Stråth (1998), p. 198; Eskilsson (2005), p. 260.

Also, staffing practices were changed from having a large number of investigators to hiring people part-time. In 1980, seven people were employed by the Bureau.⁸¹ Still, one of the Bureau's main tasks was to let the politically interested youth compile reports and give them a positive experience of business. Although some of them were recruited from the Liberal and Centre parties youth sections a majority were conservative and/or members of the Conservative Student Association.⁸² Given that the Fund continued to supply *Fria Moderata Studentförbundet* with funds and that the organization was Eskilsson's "most important surface for political contacts" from the late 1960's this is no surprise.⁸³ Although there were still Liberal politicians on the Bureau's send list contacts with the party were sparse. Attempts were however made by Rolf Englund, managing director from 1980, to re-establish the contact with both the Liberals and the Centre Party.⁸⁴

Allmänpolitiska utredningar

The APU send list grew bigger. By 1980 it contained 60 names belonging mainly to people who were involved with organized business, the Moderate Party, the Liberal Party and like-minded journalists.⁸⁵ Although contents of the APUs continued to vary (including a series on free trade, the referendum on nuclear energy, taxes and debates on liberalism), a large part of the APUs can be divided into four categories: the debate and consequences of wage earner funds, economic policy in the UK and the US, the activity of the Swedish extreme left and Soviet espionage in Sweden.

Wage earner funds

The single most important issue during the Bureau's second phase was the resistance against wage earner funds. But when the Bureau first took an interest in the matter with APU 1973:28 *Löntagarna och företagens kapitaltillväxt* (Wage earners and capital growth in companies), the approach was more neutral. In the introduction, the unnamed author noted that the issue's significance was likely to increase in the coming years, and that the Trade Union Federation

⁸¹ Protokoll 1980-09-25, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN

⁸² Styrelsehandlingar mars 1981 Tankar om Utredningsbyråns verksamhet, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN; Av FMSF föreslagna utredare, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1975-1977, 1980-1981, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningbyrån för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

⁸³ Eskilsson (2005), p. 96. Swedish: "min viktigaste politiska kontaktyta".

⁸⁴ Brev till Sture Eskilsson från Rolf Englund 1980-10-03, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1975-1977, 1980-1981, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningbyrån för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

⁸⁵ Utsändningslista för litteratur och tidskriftsartiklar 1980-09-03, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1975-1977, 1980-1981, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningbyrån för Samhällsfrågor 1968-1981, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

was working on several models for wage earner owned companies. The report also studied experiences from other countries, especially West Germany.⁸⁶

It is not clear who commissioned the report but it must have been the Liberal Party secretary Carl Tham. The party had already in 1950's and 1960's proposed individual profit sharing in companies and by the early 1970s the party took an interest in the discussions on collective capital accumulation taking place in West Germany.⁸⁷ As a part of the political negotiations with the government at Haga Castle in 1974, the Liberals managed to get the social democrats to appoint a state commission named *Utredningen om löntagarna och företagens kapitaltillväxt* (The commission on wage earners and business capital growth). Carl Tham and social democrat Carl Lidbom jointly wrote the terms of reference.⁸⁸ Note that the name of the commission and the original APU are exactly the same which makes sense as it was the liberal representative in commission, Rolf Wirtén, that came up with the name.⁸⁹

In 1975, when LO chief economist Rudolf Meidner presented the original LO-proposal on wage earner funds, the Bureau had four reports on the matter. Three of them covered how the proposal had been discussed in the media but APU 1975:43 *Löntagarfonder ett sätt att socialisera* (Wage earner funds a way to socialize) had a critical approach and the year after the Bureau produced APU 1976:44 *Vi kan ännu välja. Fakta om Meidnerplanen* (We still have time to choose. Facts on the Meidner plan). The Bureau's initial approach was thus quite quickly changed into a more critical one.

Within LO the common view at this time was that Swedish social order was unfair. At union congresses issues of big business domination, skewed distribution of wealth and lack of worker participation in company decisions were criticized repeatedly. These was also a growing questioning of "excess profits" (*övervinster*) created by the solidary wage policy.⁹⁰ Since the 1950s LO and SAF had negotiated on wages according to the Rhen-Meidner model which intended to reduce overall demand in wage increases, keep inflation in check and even out wage differences between different groups of wage earners. Solidary wages meant that less productive industries had to pay the same wage increases as the exporting industry. As a consequence, companies with low profitability would shut down. The upside for employers was

⁸⁶ APU 1973:28. B1:11, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN.

Note that in the APU-index it is named *Ågardemokratisk politik i utlandet särskilt Västtyskland* (Politics for democratic ownership abroad specially in West Germany) but that its title actually is *Löntagarna och företagens kapitaltillväxt*.

⁸⁷ Viktorov (2006), p. 82.

⁸⁸ Tobisson (2016), p. 32–33.

⁸⁹ Stråth (1998), p. 159

⁹⁰ Viktorov (2006), p. 109–110.

that it reduced internal competition for manpower and transferred labor to high productivity companies. But since the high productive companies kept wages down their profits rose.⁹¹

Meidner's 1975 proposal aimed to correct this but it also went further ultimately aiming at "successively transferring companies' capital growth to the ownership of the wage earner collective".⁹² Companies with more than 50 or 100 employees should pay 10-20 % of their profits to wage earner controlled funds in the form of stocks eventually giving the funds control of the companies. Understandably, the issue became a hot political topic. The Social Democratic Party continuously pushed for the proposal but in less and less radical versions and in 1983 when the party was back in government the wage earner funds were made into law. The final proposal was however a much watered down of Meidner's original plan, including limits on how much stock the funds were allowed to owe and a seven-year time limit for capital accumulation.⁹³

Both SAF and Industriförbundet were represented in the state commission and during the first years of the debate they were open for some sort of compromise. This changed by 1978 as a new leadership within SAF sought to unite big and small business as well the non-socialist opinion around an issue of great symbolic value. A number of extensive anti-fund campaigns were launched over the coming years, ending with a demonstration in Stockholm on 4th October 1983 that gathered some 75 000 people. By then the state commission had also collapsed without reaching any agreement.⁹⁴

Critical reports

In the early 1980s the Bureau got busy producing critical reports about the wage earner funds with 8 in 1980, 15 in 1981, 13 in 1982 and 11 in 1983.⁹⁵ In 1981 a seminar was arranged on the topic of the wage earner funds and the stock market.⁹⁶ A memo to *Näringslivets Fond's* annual meeting in 1982 stated that

Within two of the business categories – Timbro and the Research bureau – operations have since the end of 1981 in all essence concentrated on the issue of

⁹¹ Ruin (1986), p. 264–77; Östberg (2008), p. 118–119; Swenson (2002); Nycander (2008), p. 87, 139.

⁹² Viktorov (2006), p. 96. Quote from the original proposal. Swedish "...succesivt föra över företagens kapitaltillväxt i löntagarkollektivets ägo".

⁹³ Viktorov (2006), p. 108, 297.

⁹⁴ Stråth (1998), p. 173. Viktorov (2006), p 300–301.

⁹⁵ Author's compilation.

⁹⁶ Årsberättelse 1981, Mapp: 1982-1983. F21 M:4, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

wage earner funds in light of the 1982 parliamentary elections decisive importance for this issue's final solution.⁹⁷

As a part of the campaign against wage earner funds, Rolf Englund and Krister Anderson from the Bureau organized a committee called *TCO:are mot Fondsocialism* (TCO-members against Fund socialism) in order to rally the professional, white collar employees against the proposal. Together they wrote four APUs on TCO and the issue of wage earner funds in 1980. Their main idea was that the ordinary TCO-member was opposed to collective union funds and remained critical of how union leadership had handled the issue. The committee's aim was to get TCO to postpone a decision on the wage earner funds until after the 1982 election by showing that the white-collar workers were divided on the issue and to argue against the TCO leadership. Activities included a press conference where the committee was presented, writing motions and letters to member magazines, ads, reports and a demand for a membership vote on the issue.⁹⁸ "If we just get the member revolt going, we have fulfilled our task. Then things get going by themselves. A spark can light a prairie fire", an internal Bureau memo stated.⁹⁹

A renewed interest in the UK and the US

As mentioned both Timbro and *Utredningsbyrån* had British antecedents and the Anglo-Saxon inspiration clearly left marks in the production of APUs. To mention some of them: APU 1980:29 *Några artiklar om monetarism* (Some articles on monetarism), 1980:32 *USAs presidentval i svensk media* (The US presidential elections in Swedish media), 1981:3 *Den nya konservatismen i USA* (The new conservatism in the US), 1981:9-10 *President Reagans budgetförslag* (President Reagan's budget proposals), *Premiärminister Thatchers budgetförslag* (Prime minister Thatcher's budget proposals), 1981:34 *Reaganomics*, 1981:35 *Supply-siders*, 1983:10 *Mrs. Thatchers England ekonomi*, 1983:10 *Mrs. Thatchers England politik*, 1984:10 *Privatisering i England* (Privatization in England). There was also APU

⁹⁷ Verksamheten inom AB Timbro och utredningsbyrån inför Huvudmannamöte med Näringslivets Fond, Årsmöte 1982-05-05, A2:7, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fond, CfN. Swedish: "Inom två av verksamhetsgrenarna – Timbro och Utredningsbyrån – har verksamheten sedan slutet av 1981 i allt väsentligt inriktats mot löntagarfondsfrågan i perspektiv av att riksdagsvalet 1982 kommer att vara av avgörande betydelse för denna frågas slutgiltiga lösning"

⁹⁸ Odöpt PM, Protokoll 1980-09-25, A2:6, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv, CfN; APU 1980:12, 1980:14, 1980:21, 1980:24. TCO is short for *Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation* (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees).

⁹⁹ TCO-are mot fondsocialism 1980-07-14, B1:47, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN. Swedish: "Får vi bara igång medlemsrevolten har vi fyllt vår uppgift. Sedan rullar det på. En Gnista kan tända en präriebrand"

1981:12 *Böcker om frihet* (Books on freedom) which reviewed the most important literature on “liberal/neo-conservative/libertarian content” and APU 1981:14 on Hayek.¹⁰⁰

Contacts were upheld with other neo-liberal think tanks in the Anglo-Saxon world. Englund stated that “we have in our house good connections with thought producers in the US and England. These ideas should be brought home to Sweden...”.¹⁰¹ Material was received from Centre for Policy Studies and Institute of Economic Affairs in the UK as well as the Brookings Institution and Heritage Foundation in the US.¹⁰² In 1983 a seminar was arranged with Adam Ridley, special adviser to the British finance minister.¹⁰³

Also, both Eskilsson and Westholm were by the late 1970s members of the Mont Pelerin Society and part of the organizing committee that arranged a regional Mont Pelerin meeting in Stockholm in 1981.¹⁰⁴ It was an “elite intellectual organization devoted to the development of an economics and worldview critical of the welfare state and economic planning”, founded by Austrian economist F.A Hayek in 1947.¹⁰⁵ According to a recent anthology on 20th century liberalism in Europe, Mont Pelerin Society had by the 1970’s turned into a “global intellectual network with immense political influence” as “market-driven approaches re-shaped national societies as well as the world economy.”¹⁰⁶

Keeping an eye at the left and to the east

Joakim von Braun, an expert on security and industrial espionage with a background from Swedish military intelligence, was hired by the Bureau as an investigator in 1980 producing several APUs on the activities of the Swedish left and Russian infiltration.¹⁰⁷ Based on his work, Timbro published the book *Industrispionage* which described Soviet led industrial espionage in Sweden.¹⁰⁸ On at least one occasion he also made a report that was not recorded as an APU

¹⁰⁰ Rolf Englund 1980-04-08, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1975-1977, 1980-1981, F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN. Swedish: "...liberalt/neo-konservativt/liberteriiskt"; B1, APU Utredningar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN.

¹⁰¹ Tänkepapper, mapp 1982-1983, F21 M:4, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN. Swedish: "Vi har i vårt hus goda förbindelser med tankeproducenter i USA och England. Dessa idéer bör tas hem till Sverige...".

¹⁰² Styrelsehandlingar mars 1981 Tankar om Utredningsbyråns verksamhet, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN.

¹⁰³ Protokoll 1983-02-21, A:1, Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor, Timbros arkiv, CfN.

¹⁰⁴ Brev till Näringslivets Fond från Arvid Fredborg 1981-04-29, A1:2, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fond, Timbro-arkivet, CfN; Eskilsson (2005), p. 379–380.

¹⁰⁵ Phillips-Fein (2009), p. 43–45.

¹⁰⁶ Schulz-Forberg & Olsen (2014), p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Protokoll 1980-05-07, A1:1, Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fond, Timbro-arkivet, CfN. Svanborg-Sjövall (2011), p. 51.

¹⁰⁸ Johansson (2012), p. 120; Eskilsson (2005), p. 116. As an anecdote, it is worth mentioning the speculations on whether or not Swedish journalist Jan Guillou was employed by the Bureau. Former Pirate Party leader Rick Falkvinge has published what he claims to be information from the Swedish tax authorities from 1981 that show

but instead for Sture Eskilsson's personal use. As he was putting together about a report on the program content of Swedish Radio and TV he also supplied an appendix to Eskilsson that

according to mine and Rolf Englund's opinion, should be for your personal use. It contains valuable information about some 150 employees at Swedish Radio as well as freelancers.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, the appendix is missing from the archives so it is difficult to know what the "valuable information" was given but von Braun's background it probably concerned these journalists' connections to the Swedish left. In 1983 von Braun was working on a report on communist infiltration in TCO.¹¹⁰ It is not clear if it was ever finished but no APU was ever registered on this topic.

Merging with Timbro

From the first of January 1984, the Bureau and its staff merged with Timbro as Eskilsson deemed it unnecessary to have two separate organizations with so much in common and the same financier.¹¹¹ The last APUs were written in 1985.

payments from the Bureau to Guillou, see *På återbesök hos Informationsbyrån, del resten av 12*, <https://falkvinge.net/2010/09/09/pa-aterbesok-hos-informationsbyran-del-resten-av-12>. Although there are no traces of Guillou in *Utredningsbyråns* archive at CfN it would not be impossible to imagine that Guillou, with his close connections to Soviet intelligence, was hired as a source in one of von Braun's projects. For Guillou's background, see Nationalencyklopedin, *Jan Guillou*. <http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/lang/jan-guillou>. Both addresses visited 2018-05-28.

¹⁰⁹ Brev till Sture Eskilsson från Joakim von Braun 1980-02-04, Mapp: Handlingar till sammanträden 1975-1977, 1980-1981, F21 M:3, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrå för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN. Quote is from Brev till Sture Eskilsson från Joakim von Braun 1980-04-24. Swedish: "...som enligt min och Rolf Englunds mening, bör vara för ditt personliga bruk. Den upptar användbara upplysningar om c:a 150 anställda på SR, samt personer som medverkar som frilansare". In this letter Braun also writes that he is likely to receive information confirming where Swedish communists will organize permanent strike support committees something which could "be good to have in the back pocket for future use" ("...skulle kanske vara bra att ha i bakfickan för framtida bruk")

¹¹⁰ 1983 Färdiga utredningar, Mapp 1982-1983, F21 M:4, Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyråns för Samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet, CfN.

¹¹¹ Eskilsson (2005), p. 211.

Conclusions

This paper has aimed at answering three research questions. First, what motivated business and the political opposition to set up the Research Bureau for Social Issues? Second, how did the Bureau operate? Third, what were the implications for the non-socialist parties in having access to the Bureau's material?

Mutual benefits for business and parties

By the early 1960s Sweden had had thirty years of social democratic governments and both the Liberal and the Right Party were in need of resources for policy development.¹¹²

Through *Näringslivets Fond*, which since the debate on planned economy in the 1940s had been the more propagandistic but unofficial part of organized business, the new think tank *Utredningsbyrån C-H Winqvist* was set up at the Fund's premises in Stockholm. It was modeled on the Conservative Research Department in London. Financing also came from the Wallenberg group. For both business and parties this was a way transferring resources in a more indirect and thus less sensitive way than giving direct donations. Although business stood for the money there are no signs that business used the Bureau to directly implement an own political agenda. Rather, it was the parties that gave requests to the Bureau. In effect, it became an extension of the party secretariats.

In the 1960s SAF was, as it had been since the 1930s, careful not to be considered politicized and it would take another decade before the organization start to act politically in its own name. By having the managing director of the Employers' Association as chairman of the board for the secret Bureau, SAF found a middle way. Close relations could be upheld with the non-socialist parties without having to officially alter the non-partisan stance.

Free-lance investigators, almost always connected to either the Liberals or the Right, wrote about 30 reports per year that were sent to top politicians and leading people in business. The reports were either a deep dive into a political issue or ready-made political texts, such as parliamentary motions. Special efforts were devoted to election years when the Bureau helped the parties in the election campaigns and also prepared for a government takeover by producing government bills and making lists of potential employees in a Government Office run by the center-right. When a non-socialist government finally came into power in 1976 many of the

¹¹² The Swedish social democrats came into power in 1932 and with the exception of government led by the Farmers' League for a few months in 1936 and a war-time coalition government they remained in office until 1976, see Nationalencyklopedin, *Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti*. <http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/lång/sveriges-socialdemokratiska-arbetareparti>, visited 2018-05-28.

leading politicians had been involved with the Bureau. It did prove to be a good seed-bed for young right leaning academics in the 1960s and 1970s.

Free market defenders

In the late 1970s, SAF took complete financial responsibility for the Bureau through *Näringslivets Fond* and incorporated it into a new and more resource intense infrastructure for opinion formatting. Close ties were established with the newly formed publishing house Timbro and its subsidiaries Opinion and Ratio.

Just as in the 1940s, organized business responded to a more radical labor movement, by pushing for Hayekian and neo-liberal ideas promoting market economy as the bulwark against socialism. Inspiration was sought from Anglo-Saxon think-tanks, with which the Bureau upheld good relations. The leading PR-men within SAF did not really trust the political parties to be up to the task of defending its interests and therefore business needed its own information agencies in the struggle for “freedom and democracy” against “regulations and corporatism”. After 1978 the center-right parties decoupled from the Bureau which instead started to focus on current issues in the political debate and on supplying SAF with material. The most important issue for the Bureau became, in line with the other major business organizations, the critique against wage earner funds. Also, the Bureau took a big interest in the activities of the Swedish far left and Soviet espionage. In 1984 the Bureau merged with Timbro.

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A2:5 Styrelseprotokoll

A2:6 Styrelseprotokoll

A3:2 Övriga protokoll

F1:2 Utredningar

F1:3 Utredningar

Garantistiftelsen 1946, Protokoll med bilagor

Timbros arkiv

A:1 Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar,

B1 APU utredningar

B2:1 Övriga handlingar

D:1 Register

E1:1 Korrespondans

SAFs arkiv

F21 M:3 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor

F21 M:4 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor

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Appendix 1. Revenues, Utredningsbyrån för Samhällsfrågor 1962-1983

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Näringslivets Fond	48400	57500	60000	140000	281000	280000	430000	205000	215000	148600	160000	311000	170000	133500	148000	175000	500000	510000	600000	800000	700000	700000
Private donations		10000	4500			65000		21800	27500	128000	200000	70000	140000	151000	196000	50000						
SEB			75000	85000	125000	190000	150000															
Investigations														84000	95000	72000	160000	408000	707000	593000	849000	452000
Other																23000	60000					
Total	48400	67500	139500	225000	406000	535000	580000	226800	242500	276600	360000	381000	310000	368500	439000	320000	720000	918000	1307000	1393000	1549000	1152000
SAF													50000	50000								
ASEA												50000	50000									
Sw Match Co.													20000	20000	20000							
Kema Nord										20000			20000	20000								
Salén														50000								
NBD														11000								
Astra			4500																			

Sources: A3:2 Övriga protokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv; A2: 5 Styrelseprotokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv

A:1 Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Timbro-arkivet; F21 M:4 Handlingar rörande Utredningsbyrån för samhällsfrågor, SAF-arkivet

The upper part of the table shows major grant giving institutions. The lower part shows individual companies (private donations) for available years.

ASEA, Swedish Match, Astra, Kema Nord and SEB were companies within the Wallenberg group (Glete, 1994) NBD is Näringslivets Byggnadsdelegation.

Appendix 2. Board members, Utredningsbyrån 1962-1983

Name and affiliation	Years
Kugelberg Bertil, (chairman), SAF (managing director).	1962-1966
Gustafsson Sten, business	1962-1977
Haeggström Göran Z, business	1962-1977
Giesecke Curt Steffan (chairman), SAF (managing director).	1966-1977
Salén Sven H, business	1972-1977
Tham Carl, Liberal Party	1974-1976
Tarschys Daniel, Liberal Party	1974-1976
Burenstam Linder Staffan, Moderate Party	1974-1977
Westholm Carl-Johan, SAF	1976-1983
Tobisson Lars, Moderate Party	1978-1978
Einar Frydén, Utredningsbyrån	1978-1980
Eskilsson Sture (chairman), SAF	1978-1983
Bildt Carl, Moderate Party	1978-1983
Svegfors Mats, Moderate Party	1980-1983
Englund Rolf, Utredningsbyrån	1980-1983
Gerholm Tor Ragnar, professor	1980-1983

Sources: Sources: A3:2 Övriga protokoll, Näringslivets Fonds arkiv; A:1 Protokoll och styrelsehandlingar, Timbro-arkivet. Note that at times other people were present at the board meetings. The names above are confirmed board members. For information on Gustafsson and Salén, see VÄD 1977.