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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

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Much as it may infuriate some Americans to say so, a strong case could be made for the proposition that Britain is the most libertarian nation on earth. The tradition of individualism, tolerance, freedom and antipathy towards statism and collectivism goes back further here than in any other country in the world. It is true that socialism dominated the intellectual atmosphere in Britain from about the 1890s (if not earlier) until the 1980s, but the attempt to run Britain on socialist lines which began in 1940 and came to a catastrophic finish in the late 1970s merely demonstrated the futility of trying to impose on a nation a system which is completely at odds with its libertarian traditions. In retrospect, historians will doubtless consider the period 1940-79 as a temporary departure from at least 15 centuries of comparative freedom. While many Americans boast of their nation's freedom, anybody who has studied American history, or spent any time in the United States, must be aware that America was, and is, prone to sudden outbreaks of mass hysteria, violence and intolerance, ranging from the notorious Salem witch trials of 1693 to the current cult of "political correctness" which is ruthlessly eliminating any favourable view of Western civilisation, and honest scholarship, from American universities, as well as the suicidal "war on drugs", health fascism, and numerous other impositions on freedom. Although Britain has not been entirely free of such phenomena, it is nevertheless true that the British generally eschew political and religious fanaticism of any kind, and are probably more tolerant of non-conformity, dissent and individualism than any people on earth.

According to the American historian Professor Stanley G. Payne, this means that "the British Union of Fascists was essentially a contradiction in terms, a sort of political oxymoron".¹ British fascism has attracted a literature which is vastly disproportionate to its impact on the political scene. Every aspect of fascist movements has been studied, from their ideological origins, the nature of their membership and electoral support (such as it was), their political activities, and the violence associated with those activities, to the reasons for their failure to make any lasting impact on the British political scene.

(The only European country where fascism had less impact than in Britain was the Irish Republic. In 1932, General Eoin O'Duffy, formerly head of the Irish national police, established the Army Comrades Association, which soon changed its name to the National Guard, known colloquially as the Blue Shirts because of their uniforms. General O'Duffy boasted of a proposed "march on Dublin" in imitation of Mussolini's march on Rome, but nothing came of it, and the National Guard merged with a conservative Roman Catholic political party and abandoned its fascist ideology. In disgust, in 1935, O'Duffy established the fascist National Corporate Party and sent an Irish battalion to fight for Franco in the Spanish civil war. When O'Duffy retired from active politics in 1937, organised Irish fascism came to an

end. The only other Irish fascist of note was James Murphy, author of a laudatory biography of Adolf Hitler (1934), whom the Führer selected to create the only authorised and unexpurgated English translation of *Mein Kampf*. Virtually the only Irish anti-Semite was Father Denis Fahey, author of a number of pamphlets arguing that a "world Jewish conspiracy" was attacking Christian civilisation, with titles such as *The Rulers of Russia* and *The Mystical Body of Christ and the Reorganisation of Society*. In the early 1980s there was a tiny grouplet — perhaps composed of only one individual — called the National Socialist Irish Workers' Party, whose sole activity seemed to be putting up extremely racist stickers on walls in Dublin. Apart from these individuals, Ireland is the one European nation which has had the good fortune to be entirely free from racism, fascism and anti-Semitism.)

With the two exceptions of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s, and the National Front in the 1970s, which attained the status of minor political parties for a few years, fascism has always been on the "lunatic fringe" of British politics. Nevertheless, they have been the principal target of a series of Draconian laws directed against them, which have seriously curtailed such traditional concepts of individual liberty as freedom of association, the right to self-defence and freedom of expression. The purpose of the present paper is to survey these laws, assess their impact on freedom in general, and to demonstrate how the issues they seek to address might be dealt with more effectively in a libertarian manner. I will avoid a detailed history of British fascism, but will mention the broadest outlines of its development in order to describe the context within which laws against it have been constructed. (An excellent history of British fascism for the entire period from 1918 to 1985 is the book by Thurlow in the bibliography.)

FASCISM VERSUS LIBERTARIANISM

It ought to be pointed out at the beginning, in order to avoid misunderstandings, that libertarianism is irreconcilably opposed, at the most fundamental philosophical level, to all forms of racism, fascism and anti-Semitism. And the feeling is entirely mutual. In their ideological writings, British fascists have repeatedly attacked the principles of individualism, the free market, the limited state and classical liberal values. For example, A. K. Chesterton, a senior member of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the 1930s, who went on to become first chairman of the National Front, 1967-71, wrote in 1935:

No aspect of Fascist philosophy evokes more excited debate than the stress placed upon the paramount importance of the State as custodian of man's political and economic destiny.

We are not surprised that democrats should quarrel with us on this score, since they see in the State only an

agent to keep the masses in order while individualism enjoys free scope and enterprise ...

Fascists reject the principle of the State-ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, but if we accepted that principle our argument for the supremacy of the State above every conflicting individual or sectional interest would have even stronger force, since without it the Socialist fiasco would be inconceivably more catastrophic than the present-day fiasco of Economic Liberalism. In other words, if we were Socialists we should find ourselves, as men of intellectual honesty, in the Communist camp.

The reason why we are not to be found in that camp, apart from our passionate faith in the star of our nationhood, is that we believe private enterprise to be much more efficient than public enterprise, providing that it is made to work within the confines of a planned economy for the benefit of the people as distinct from their exploitation. While we encourage private enterprise, our task is not to keep the masses in order while individualism holds high revelry, but to keep *individualism* in order so that the *masses* may enjoy what they have never had before — economic freedom to call their souls their own.

Since the Industrial Revolution private enterprise has ruled governments: the day is now at hand for governments to avert disaster by ruling private enterprise.²

Such views continued into the post-war era. In 1961, John Tyndall, who was a member of the National Socialist Movement in the 1960s, head of the National Front in the 1970s and today leader of the British National Party, argued that:

The Jew knows that only within a state governed according to his self-proclaimed theories of Liberalism and 'Freedom' will he be permitted to continue, unhampered, the activities by which he has corrupted every nation that had opened his doors to him.³

Tyndall added hostility towards black and Asian people to his anti-Semitism:

As Democracy allows droves of dark-skinned sub-racials into our country, the Jew cleverly takes advantage of their presence to propagate the lie of racial equality, thus gradually encouraging their acceptance into European society, with the ultimate results of inter-marriage and race-degeneration that he knows will follow ... Liberalism or Bolshevism: whichever the people follow — there is only one master — Judah, the all-powerful!⁴

Freedom, he argued, was not unconditional:

What we intend to build is a national community in which that natural Nordic birthright of freedom is not something to be taken for granted by the dregs of society, but something earned by labour, loyalty and service.⁵

Tyndall proposed that:

In place of the modern Jew-inspired illusion of 'freedom' we substitute the honest reality of freedom, i.e. Freedom for those fit to use it and a curb on those who are not. Such a principle forms the basis of the authoritarian state, which we seek to build in Britain.⁶

Defending the right of fascists to express their views, and to organise politically in order to promote them, is not the same as supporting those views.

THE ORIGINS OF BRITISH FASCISM

The first organisation in Britain to openly describe itself as "fascist" was the British Fascisti, which was founded in 1923 by Rotha Lintorn Orman, and re-named the British Fascists the following year. (It is also noteworthy as being perhaps the only openly fascist movement anywhere to be led by a woman.) With its black uniforms and para-military formation, it was directly modelled on Italian fascism. Although in 1924 two of its members, including Arnold Leese, were elected as Britain's first fascist town councillors in Stamford, Lincolnshire, the BF was a small organisation which had little impact or support. Although numerous other fascist grouplets were established in the 1920s and 30s, with names such as the Imperial Fascist League, the British Empire Fascists, the Fascist League, the National Fascisti, the Kensington Fascist Party, the Yorkshire Fascists, the Empire Fascist League, the Social Credit Greenshirts, the British United Fascists, the National Workers' Party, the National Socialist League, the Nordic League and the Right Club, these were almost all tiny, ephemeral and politically insignificant. There were also somewhat anti-Semitic groups and individuals, such as the conspiracy theorist Nesta Webster, author of numerous works such as *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* and *World Revolution*, and promoters of the notorious forgery known as "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion", which was taken seriously by many people for several years after the first world war. These latter were generally political conservatives rather than fascists. It must be remembered that fascism and anti-Semitism were distinct phenomena in the 1920s, and Mussolini's fascism contained no anti-Semitic element until 1938.

The principle figure in inter-war British fascism was, of course, Sir Oswald Mosley, Bt. Mosley began his political career as an advocate of "socialistic imperialism" within the Conservative Party. In 1918 he was elected as the youngest Member of Parliament, but the benches to sit as an Independent in protest against the brutality of the Black and Tan irregulars in Ireland in 1920, before joining the Labour Party in 1924. He rose rapidly in the Labour Party, serving as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Labour government of 1929-31. However, his radical proposals for dealing with the Depression, which involved a vast increase in executive power and a transformation of the economic and monetary system, were rejected by the Labour leadership. As a result, in 1931 he formed the New Party, with the support of a number of prominent individuals. The New Party performed dismally in the 1931 general election, and its meetings were violently disrupted by the political left, who were hostile to Mosley as a result of his "treason" against the Labour Party and his potentially fascist policies. In 1932, Mosley, after visiting Mussolini in Rome and National Socialist leaders in Munich, founded the British Union of Fascists, which enjoyed financial backing from fascist Italy in its early years. As its name implies, Mosley aimed to unite all the existing minuscule fascist groups into a single large organisation. He was only partially successful in doing this. For instance, the Imperial Fascist League, led by Leese, denounced Mosley as a "kosher fascist" because his policy did not, at that time, include anti-Semitism. Never-

theless, numerous anti-Semites, such as William Joyce, joined the BUF and gradually pushed it towards the openly anti-Semitic position it adopted in 1934. Some of these individuals were promoters of a “world Jewish conspiracy” theory, which Mosley personally does not seem to have accepted.

The BUF adopted the black uniform, the Roman salute, the symbol of the fasces, the paramilitary organisation, the ideology of fascism, and the policy of the corporate state and a one-party regime with vastly extended government powers from Mussolini. Mosley believed — wrongly, as it turned out — that the severity of the Depression would lead to general social chaos and a Marxist uprising, against which the fascists would restore order as a means of achieving political power. At the Black House in London, a uniformed private army of Blackshirts lived under military discipline and were armed with truncheons, knuckle-dusters and leaded hosepipes for this purpose. The Blackshirts were driven to meetings in armour-plated vans. The BUF even had a tiny fascist air force. Mosley had been an RAF pilot during the first world war, and the BUF attracted a significant number of private flyers.

The BUF’s strategy in the years 1932-34 was to hold massive public marches and rallies, as well as to gain support from prominent public figures. The Blackshirts were also involved with “direct action” in various fields, examples being their involvement in preventing evictions in the East End of London and their protection of farmers during the “tithing wars”. (This was a conflict over the complicated legacy from feudal times in which farmers on certain lands had to pay large tithes to Church of England, which they found difficult to keep up during the Depression.) The more militant sections of the political left and the trade union movement violently opposed BUF activities, picketing, blockading, heckling and throwing objects at the Blackshirts, who responded with ferocious violence. At a meeting addressed by Mosley at Oxford in 1933, for instance, fascists threw hecklers down a flight of stairs, banged their heads on the stone floor and rammed their fingers up their noses. The Blackshirts, however, claimed that they were acting in legitimate self-defence, and had a collection of weapons at their headquarters which they claimed had been captured from their opponents. These included chair legs wrapped in barbed wire, potatoes studded with razor blades (used for throwing), razor knives, knuckle-dusters, coshes, daggers, stockings filled with broken glass, wooden staves with six-inch nails hammered into them, and other items.

VIOLENCE AT OLYMPIA

In its first two years the BUF gained considerable support from prominent figures in British life. In the first half of 1934, for instance, Lord Rothermere, owner of the *Daily Mail*, actively supported Mosley, writing a series of articles in his newspaper under the heading “Hurrah for the Blackshirts”. However, such respectable support rapidly fell away in the summer of 1934, as a result of the BUF’s move towards anti-Semitism, the “night of the long knives” in Germany, in which the SS murdered several hundred SA members and other opponents on Hitler’s orders, and the violence which occurred at the BUF’s massive rally at Olympia on 7th June, which was attended by some 12,000 people (BUF estimate), including 2,000 Blackshirts. Nevertheless, such figures as Henry Williamson, author of *Tarka the Otter*, and the military historian and tank warfare expert Major-

General J. F. C. Fuller, remained loyal to Mosley. The Olympia rally attracted numerous “Society” figures, some Conservative MPs and numerous well-known writers and “intellectuals”. It also attracted militant opposition from the political left, especially the Communist Party and the Independent Labour Party, as well as from Jewish radicals who feared that Mosley might become a British Hitler. First they demonstrated outside the building, shouting abuse at those attending, while being physically restrained by the police. Inside, when Mosley began to speak, hecklers in the audience loudly interrupted him. At the same time, two anti-fascists climbed onto the girders near the ceiling of the building, and dropped a rain of anti-fascist leaflets over the crowd below. When heckling began, Mosley would stop speaking, spotlights were trained on the hecklers, and a group of Blackshirt stewards would then pounce on the individual and drag him from his seat, inflicting kicks and blows. The hecklers were then thrown out of the doors of the auditorium, and were savagely beaten in the corridors and the foyer, with the police intervening just in time to prevent serious injuries. Numerous people needed medical attention. After Olympia, Mosley lost virtually all his “Establishment” support, including that of Rothermere. Although the Blackshirt stewards had been defending Mosley’s right to freedom of expression, it was argued that they had used unnecessary violence against the hecklers.

In the years 1934-38, Mosley’s strategy changed, with an increasing emphasis on anti-Semitism, and an appeal primarily to the working class, especially the young. Surprising as it may seem, the mainstream Jewish community initially had not looked unfavourably on the BUF, and strongly condemned those Jews who participated in actions against it. This was probably due to the fact that Italian fascism was free from anti-Semitism until anti-Semitic laws were introduced, in imitation of National Socialist Germany, in 1938. For example, in 1934 the *Jewish Chronicle* used classical liberal arguments against those Jews who had been involved in the attempted disruption of the Olympia rally:

Jews who interfere with the full expression of opinion are false to the Jewish teachings of justice and fair play and are traitors to the vital material interests of the Jewish people.⁷

FASCISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE EAST END

Nevertheless, the BUF turned to anti-Semitism as one of its means of building support in the East End of London, where a large Jewish community, mainly of Russian and eastern European origin, had developed since the 1890s. The economic success of this group, and their cultural distinctiveness, had led to a degree of envy among Gentile East Enders, many of whom were suffering from the economic hardship of the Depression. Mosley believed — again wrongly — that he could transmute this envy into massive popular support for the BUF. In part, this change may have been a result of his increasing enthusiasm for National Socialist Germany, rather than Italy, as a model. Mosley knew both Hitler and Mussolini personally (the Führer attended his wedding in Munich in 1936) and borrowed ideas and strategy from both. In 1935, his movement was renamed the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists.

From 1935, the BUF held mass rallies in the East End in which fascist agitators with loudspeakers did their best to whip up crowds. The sort of comments made by such

speakers included the claim that “those who oppose fascism are not of our flesh and blood; you English are blood of our blood, flesh of our flesh; the gloves must be taken off — it is gentiles v Jews, white man v black man.”⁸ Jews were described as “rats and vermin from the gutters of Whitechapel”.⁹ William Joyce said that “Jews are Oriental sub men ... an incredible species of sub-humanity ... a type of sub-human creature”.¹⁰ Slightly less virulent attitudes were expressed in printed form. A pamphlet entitled *The BUF and the Jews* said:

Not so long ago East London was the home of British stock. The cabinet-maker, polisher and tailor were Englishmen. Today the Englishman in East London is the slave of the Jewish master.¹¹

As well as rallies, the BUF held marches of uniformed Blackshirts through the East End, partly as a means of demonstrating their supposed power and dominance of the streets, and partly in order to intimidate Jewish residents and shopkeepers. BUF activities were met with increasingly violent opposition from the political left, mainly the Communist Party and the Independent Labour Party, as well as the Jewish People’s Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, a group of Jewish radicals which defied the instructions of the Board of Deputies of British Jews not to participate in political action against the fascists. As a result, ferocious street battles between the BUF and the left, with the police in the middle, became a feature of East End life, as anti-fascists attempted to disrupt fascist meetings. In addition, young hooligans increasingly assaulted Jews in the streets, while some Jewish radicals attacked fascist paper-sellers. In addition, the breaking of shop windows, the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues and the massive spread of anti-Semitic graffiti greatly inflamed tensions, even if these actions were not carried out by BUF members.

The most notorious of these confrontations was the famous “Battle of Cable Street” of 4th October 1936. It was announced that Mosley himself would lead a massive parade of uniformed Blackshirts through the East End, stopping at four points en route for speeches from the Leader. With feelings running high, the organised working class and the Jewish community were determined to stop him. Borrowing the slogan “They shall not pass” from the Republican defenders of Madrid (who themselves had borrowed it from Marshal Pétain’s defence of Verdun in 1916), a huge crowd numbering some 100,000 assembled in the East End and built barricades, made up of such items as furniture, torn-up paving stones and building supplies, on all the streets which Mosley might have used to reach his destination. These barricades were festooned with banners carrying such slogans as “Mosley shall not pass — bar the road to British fascism” and “Remember Olympia”. The largest of these barricades was on Cable Street, where the anti-fascists broke into a builder’s yard and took out a lorry filled with bricks, which was then turned over on its side. Between 1900 and 3000 Blackshirts lined up outside the Royal Mint, and were inspected by Mosley in his Bentley. A group of Jewish militants, led by Jack Spot, who was armed with a chair-leg filled with lead, charged at Mosley and was involved in fierce fighting with Mosley’s bodyguards until the police overpowered them. Spot instantly became a local hero, and went on to become a notorious East End gangster.

The police knew that violence was likely, and 7,000 policemen, including the entire mounted section of the Metro-

politan Police, and a police autogyro, were present to protect the fascists. On the barricaded streets, mounted police armed with truncheons fought running battles with anti-fascists as they tried to clear a path for the BUF. The demonstrators threw milk bottles, chair legs, bricks and other items at the police, and released thousands of marbles and ball bearings onto the street in order to trip up the police horses and injure their riders. When a police charge cleared one barricade, the mob would simply retreat to the one behind it, and the police, who sustained heavy injuries, were back where they started. After several hours’ unsuccessful fighting against the left, Sir Philip Game, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, decided to give up, and ordered Mosley to divert his march westwards. Although smarting with anger and humiliation, Mosley ordered the Blackshirts to about-face and march west. The cheers from the mob were deafening and the Blackshirts sheepishly obeyed. Mosley’s speech condemned the police for failing to enforce the law and surrendering to mob violence. Game’s annual report stated that he had “little doubt that serious rioting and bloodshed would have occurred had the march been allowed to take place”.¹²

The Battle of Cable Street has entered socialist mythology as the decisive defeat of Mosleyite fascism in the East End. After this battle, so it is said, in which the organised working class inflicted a humiliating defeat on fascism on the streets of London, Mosley never dared show his face in the East End again, and his movement went into terminal decline. There have been songs, plays (including one by Arnold Wesker), publications and a massive mural sponsored by Tower Hamlets Council celebrating the event in these terms. The historical facts, however, tell differently. The fascists were hardly involved in the fighting at all, except where individual Blackshirts approaching the rally were involved in scuffles with left-wing demonstrators. Four fascist meetings were scheduled for that day in the East End, of which three were successfully held. In the week after the battle, pro-fascists youths instigated the so-called “Mile End Road pogrom”, in which a gang of pro-fascist youths smashed the windows of Jewish shops and houses and assaulted any Jew they could lay their hands on. In the weeks following the battle, violence between fascists and the left occurred again. In the following months, the BUF succeeded in hold a series of marches and rallies throughout the East End, many addressed by the Leader himself. In 1937 they stood candidates in the local elections, gaining 14% of the vote in Shoreditch, 19% in Stepney, 22% in Bethnal Green East and 23% in North East Bethnal Green, although winning no seats.¹⁰ Outside London, the BUF’s electoral performance was always dismal, even though the fascists had been active in the North-West, the Midlands, where there were fascist tea-parties in Birmingham, Yorkshire, Lancashire and, to a lesser extent, in other areas of England (they had only a negligible presence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Ronald Creasy claims that he was elected as a BUF councillor on Eye Borough Council in 1938, but I have seen no corroboration of this.¹³ In the words of the historian Richard Thurlow, “Mosley’s dream of a fascist nation was reduced to the reality of a minority anti-Semitic political sub-culture in some areas of the East End of London.”¹⁴

THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT 1936

One result of Cable Street was public, political and police concern about the rise in political violence associated with

the BUF. There had also been public disorder associated with political activity by the unemployed: for example, the “hunger marches” of the National Union of Unemployed Workers and the riots that swept 30 towns in 1931 when the unemployed demonstrated against dole cuts. As a result, Parliament passed the Public Order Act 1936, which became law on 1st January 1937. This law contained a number of provisions which severely restricted political rights which had hitherto been taken for granted. It was made illegal to wear political uniforms in public, except for ceremonial occasions. This applied both to “public space”, such as the streets, and meetings on private premises to which the public were admitted. The Act outlawed para-military organisations which were designed to use force, or which “aroused reasonable apprehension” that force might be used. It banned the presence of offensive weapons at public meetings, and gave the police the power to arrest unruly counter-demonstrators. The local chief officer of police was given the power to impose routes or conditions on political marches if he had grounds to fear disorder. If he had grounds to fear a serious breach of the peace, the chief officer was empowered to request the Home Secretary to impose a blanket ban on all demonstrations in his area for a specific period. The Act also curtailed freedom of expression: “insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace” were declared unlawful in public speeches.

The Public Order Act did not bring about the end of the BUF, although it made it much more difficult to defend its outdoor meetings and demonstrations against left-wing attacks, which became increasingly violent: in 1937, Mosley himself needed hospital treatment when he was hit on the head with a brick while giving a speech in Liverpool. The BUF could have been prosecuted for organising a defensive strategy in advance to ward off such attacks. The outlawing of uniforms may have actually helped the movement’s credibility with the public, by removing the “foreign” element copied from Italian fascism. It was difficult to define “insulting words and behaviour”, and the police were criticised for tolerating virulently anti-Semitic harangues by BUF speakers. Alexander Raven Thompson was deemed not to be insulting when he said in 1937 that he had the utmost contempt for Jews and that they were “the most miserable type of humanity”.¹⁵ However, Inspector Jones was overruled when he reported that Mick Clarke was not insulting when he called the Jews “greasy Scum” and “the lice of the earth”.¹⁶ Those convicted under this section of the Act were fined. Other occasions where no prosecutions occurred were when the speaker had said, “Blackshirts — at the Yids. Let us fight the dirty Yids and not let them get the upper hand”¹⁷ and “Jews are venereal-ridden vagrants who spread disease to every corner of the earth”.¹⁸ The police argued that they had to examine the context within which the speaker used these words: if there was substantial numbers of Jewish people present, then they would prosecute; otherwise they would not act. The 1936 Act has, in fact been used to curtail a wide range of activities, ranging from pro-Irish Republican marches to trade union industrial disputes and demonstrations by the unemployed.

REX VERSUS LEESE

Another significant event in 1936 was the prosecution of Arnold Leese, leader of the tiny Imperial Fascist League and virulent opponent of Mosley. There was no love lost between the rival fascist organisations, and Mosley’s Black-

shirts repeatedly launched ferocious physical attacks on their smaller competitors. In 1933, a group of 50 or 60 Blackshirts wrecked the headquarters of the British Fascists. In the same year, a group of Blackshirts vandalised the London offices of the British United Fascists, and a fight involving 150 members of the BUF and the IFL led to the BUF breaking up an IFL meeting, tearing up its banner and beating up Leese and Brigadier-General Blakeney. Another group of Mosleyites armed with knuckle-dusters assaulted the Social Credit Greenshirts at their Liverpool headquarters in 1936. After Joyce split from Mosley in 1937 to form the National Socialist League, his activities, too, were disrupted by the BUF.

Leese was a veterinary surgeon who was reputedly the world’s leading expert on camel diseases, as well as one of Britain’s most virulent anti-semites. In 1924, as a member of the British Fascists, he became one of Britain’s first two fascist town councillors. In 1928 he split with the BF to form the extremely anti-Semitic, but tiny, Imperial Fascist League. Its banner was the Union Flag with a large swastika in the centre. In 1932 he refused to merge his group with the BUF, and denounced Mosley as a “kosher fascist”, set up by the Jews in order to discredit Leese’s supposedly “authentic” fascism. In 1936, in the case of *Rex v Leese*, Leese was prosecuted for disseminating the “blood libel” in the IFL magazine *The Fascist*. This was the claim that Jews had for centuries kidnapped Gentile children and ritually murdered them, draining all the blood from their bodies. In his autobiography, entitled *Out of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel Doctor*, which contains entertaining stories of his work with camels, mules, dogs and other animals, as well as accounts of his fascist activities, Leese recalled that he was prosecuted for seditious libel, as well as for creating a public mischief:

In due course, I, together with my printer, Mr. Whitehead, who was also a member of my organisation, appeared in the dock at Old Bailey. ... We were found “Guilty” of Public Mischief, but “Not Guilty” of Seditious Libel; and, refusing, on principle, to pay any fine, I was savagely sentenced to six months’ imprisonment. Whitehead was fined £20. The indictment had six counts: four of seditious libel, two of public mischief. ... The two charges of Public Mischief were for making scandalous and libellous statements about Jews to the injury, prejudice and disturbance of the lawful free and customary intercourse between Jew and Gentile and to the endangerment of peaceful relations between them; the second of these words had added to this the words:— “thereby rendering His Majesty’s subjects of Jewish faith liable to suspicion, affront and boycott.” But anyone who writes his political views in a newspaper is sure to “affront” some reader! He is also sure to make his political opponents “liable to suspicion” on the part of his readers: if a writer advocates Trade Unionism, he will at once make Non-Unionists liable to “boycott”! No political writer could adequately defend himself against such charges; that is why they were brought against me. Yet, the Public Prosecutor never uses the count of Public Mischief to deal with Trade Unionists who indulge in unofficial strikes, causing incalculable harm to other citizens.¹⁹

Leese’s imprisonment was the first time a British fascist had been gaoled simply for expressing his opinions in a newspaper. After his release, Leese published a pamphlet entitled

My Irrelevant Defence: Being Meditations Inside Gaol and Out on Jewish Ritual Murder, which repeated the original “blood libel” claims at greater length. However, he was not prosecuted again. In this pamphlet, Leese tried to present himself as a martyr to free speech:

I challenge and defy the Judaeo-Masonic Power, which rules this country, by publishing the present work in 1938, not only in my own defence, but in the public interest to break the attack on Free Speech that is rapidly developing wherever any criticism of the past or present conduct of Jews is concerned, an attack which relies for its success upon the ridiculous charge that a breach of the peace is likely if the truth about them is spoken! ... The maintenance of Free Speech demands that Jewish Ritual Murder shall be a subject for open discussion.²⁰

Had it not been for the publicity Leese gained from this trial, his evil views might have been relegated to oblivion. In practice, however, fascist publishers have kept *My Irrelevant Defence* in print for decades: the copy I have was published by the British Movement in 1980. In 1991, the Dowager Lady Jane Birdwood, who is virtually Britain’s only living active anti-semite, was fined for distributing “blood libel” material.

MOSLEY THE PEACE CAMPAIGNER, 1938-40

It used to be thought that from 1937 the BUF declined rapidly to virtual non-existence by the outbreak of war. In fact, what happened was that there was an unofficial, but highly effective, news blackout on the organisation which the government requested, and received, from newspapers, newsreels and the BBC, which had a monopoly on radio and television (Britain was the first country to have scheduled television broadcasts, from 1936, and commercial television and radio were illegal). No BUF activity was reported in the press or newsreels (both of which were privately-owned) unless violence occurred at it. The BBC prohibited both fascists and communists from speaking on the radio or television. From about 1935 books by Mosley and his supporters, such as the Leader’s *The Greater Britain* (1932), were no longer stocked by regular bookshops. In 1937 the National Association of Wholesale Newsagents refused to carry the BUF’s weekly magazine *Action*, which had previously been sold at newsagents and kiosks throughout the nation, and claimed the largest circulation of any political weekly. This was a devastating blow to the BUF’s attempts to reach the public with its message. In addition, both private owners and local councils increasingly refused to let the BUF hire their premises for meetings. Nevertheless, the BUF did remain highly active until even after outbreak of war in 1939, although its nature changed.

In the years 1938-40, Mosley changed his strategy again. After the loss of “respectable” support in 1934 and the ferocious opposition to his East End anti-Semitic campaign, Mosley latched on to the growing fear of war which gripped the nation in 1938-39. As early as 1935, when Italy invaded Abyssinia and the British government induced the League of Nations to impose sanctions against it, the BUF had campaigned against the government under the slogan “Mind Britain’s business”. This, of course, was largely a repayment to Mussolini for the funds he had provided the BUF in its early years. With the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936, although Mosley naturally supported the Nationalists, he

nevertheless forbade his followers from fighting for Franco. Some Blackshirts ignored this order. One of them, Peter Keen, fought for Franco and was awarded a medal. He later fought with the Finns against the Soviet Union during the Winter War of 1939-40. Back in Britain, Keen joined the intelligence section of the Airborne Division. He wore the ribbon of his Franco decoration on his tunic. His commanding officer admonished him for doing this, but Keen quoted the section of the King’s Regulations that said that all decorations must be worn, and that officers must “interpret regulations reasonably and intelligently”.²¹

From the Sudetenland crisis of 1938 onwards, Mosley focused his attention on opposing war with Germany. He successfully recruited a new type of middle-aged, middle class supporter who shared his sentiments, and thus his organisation experienced a revival at the end of the 1930s. On 16th July 1939, the BUF held the largest indoor demonstration the world had ever seen when between 11,000 (police estimate) and 20,000 (BUF estimate) people gathered at Earl’s Court to hear Mosley speak on the theme “Stop the mad drift to war” and “Britons fight for Britons only”. There was no opposition whatsoever to this meeting, but neither was there any mention of it in the press or newsreels in the following weeks.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939, most of the smaller fascist and pro-Nazi groups immediately closed down, fearing government action against them. Mosley, however, increased his political activities. He campaigned for the signing of an immediate peace, but instructed his members who were in the armed forces to obey the orders of their superiors. The BUF held a number of well-attended rallies against the war in 1939-40, and contested three Parliamentary by-elections, albeit with poor results. These activities were entirely lawful, and were not interfered with in any way, although the security services kept a careful watch on them, as they had throughout the 1930s.

In May 1940, two significant events led the government to the decision to act against Mosley and his movement. First, the German invasion of the Low Countries and France brought Hitler’s forces ever closer to Britain, and there was a major scare about “fifth columnists” in Norway and the Netherlands who had supposedly helped the German invaders by committing acts of sabotage behind the front line. As a result, the government feared that the BUF might play a similar role if Britain were to be invaded. Second, a rather mysterious event occurred with the case of Tyler Kent, a cypher clerk at the US embassy in London. Kent had intercepted private communications between Winston Churchill, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States. Without going too much into the complex details of the case, suffice it to say that these documents were kept by Kent and some of them found their way to the German ambassador in Rome, and to Captain Archibald Maule Ramsay, Conservative MP for Peebles, the only openly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi Member of Parliament, who was head of the Right Club. Various theories have suggested that Kent was working for Germany, for American isolationists, or for the Soviet Union. He was arrested in London on 20th May, the US State Department waived diplomatic immunity, and Kent was tried *in camera* at the Old Bailey and sentenced to prison in Britain.²²

The significance of the Kent affair for British fascism is that it was the trigger for an unprecedented arrest and detention

of many figures in Britain suspected of fascist, pro-German and anti-Semitic sympathies. Even before the outbreak of war, on 24th August 1939, Parliament passed the Emergency Powers Act, which empowered it to make regulations by Orders in Council for the defence of the realm. This was a vast extension of executive power over the individual. On 1st September, still before Britain declared war on Germany, the government promulgated Defence Regulation 18b, allowing the authorities to detain those whom they had cause to believe were capable of prejudicial acts against the state. During the first world war, 32,000 aliens had been interned, and 20,000 others repatriated. During the second world war, thousands of German, Austrian, Czechoslovak and Italian nationals, the large majority of them refugees from fascism, and many of them Jewish, were interned under 18b. On 22nd May, 1940, a new regulation, DR 18b (1a), allowed for internment without trial of members of organisations which were subject to foreign influence or control, or whose leaders had or had had associations with leaders of enemy governments, or who sympathised with the system of government of enemy powers.

Under this regulation, in May 1940, 1847 individuals were rounded up, including Mosley and his wife, Lady Diana Mosley, along with about 800 leading members of the BUF, as well as such figures as Captain Ramsay, Admiral Sir Barry Domville, former director of Naval Intelligence and head of the pro-German Link organisation, Arnold Leese, and numerous others. None of them were charged with any criminal offence, but they were imprisoned under harsh conditions in prisons and internment camps. This was a major breach of the right of the individual not to face imprisonment without charge or trial, which had been recognised under Magna Carta and confirmed with the Habeas Corpus Act. It had never been illegal to be a fascist, nor to campaign for an end to the war. In July 1940, under Defence Regulation 18b (1aa), the BUF itself was outlawed. Indeed, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, the British Communist Party was actively campaigning against the war, but the government did not act against it, except to ban its newspapers the *Daily Worker* and *The Week*. The CPGB was certainly far more under foreign control than the BUF: it took its orders as to the official party line directly from the Comintern in Moscow. As the threat of invasion receded, the 18b detainees were increasingly released. Mosley was discharged in 1943, in the face of widespread left-wing demonstrations, and Ramsay was released in 1944. He returned to the House of Commons, and attempted to revive a statute from 1290 in which Edward I had expelled the Jews from England.

WILLIAM JOYCE — LORD HAW-HAW

Another case in which the law was used in a dubious way against a prominent fascist was that of William Joyce. Joyce was born in New York City of Irish parents, and was never a British subject. Nevertheless, he joined the British Fascists in the 1920s, and went on to join Mosley's BUF in 1932, where he rapidly gained a reputation as a dynamic speaker with a gift for repartee. Once he was heckled by a middle-aged woman who shouted out, "You bastard!" Joyce shouted back, "Hello, mother!" A virulent anti-semite, he was influential in moving the BUF to an anti-Semitic position in 1934. In 1937, after a dispute with Mosley, he left the BUF and formed his own tiny National Socialist League. In August 1939, with war imminent, he and his wife moved

to Germany, where he was taken on by the Propaganda Ministry and began his famous broadcasts to Britain, which gained him the nick-name "Lord Haw-Haw". These broadcasts urged the British people to surrender, and were well-known for their jeering, sarcastic and threatening tone. Far from breaking British morale, they merely increased the resentment of the British people against Joyce. In 1940 he became a German citizen, and wrote a pioneering Europhile book entitled *Twilight Over England*,²³ which unfavourably compared the evils of Jewish-dominated capitalist Britain with the wonders of National Socialist Germany. This book was distributed among British PoWs in Germany. In 1944 he was given a medal, signed by Hitler, for his services to the war effort. In 1945 he was captured by the British and tried for treason for his wartime broadcasts. Although he had never been a British subject, he had nevertheless applied for a British passport in the 1930s, claiming British nationality. On this highly questionable point, the Crown prosecution was able to secure a sentence of guilty. Joyce was hanged in the Tower of London in 1946.

Another pioneering British Europhile was John Amery, a member of the distinguished political family. After fighting for the Nationalists in the Spanish civil war, Franco sent him to France in 1939 to build support for his new government. He continued to live in France after the German invasion of 1940. In 1942 he moved to Germany and began broadcasting to Britain, calling for an immediate peace. In 1943 he proposed the formation of a military unit to be composed of British subjects fighting as a foreign division of the German armed forces on the Eastern Front. He wrote a recruiting pamphlet, *England and Europe*,²⁴ which was distributed to British PoWs in Germany. He succeeded in recruiting some seventy men to the unit, which became known as the British Free Corps and became part of the Waffen-SS. The BFC saw action against Soviet forces in the latter stages of the war. In 1944 Amery moved to Milan and became an advisor to Mussolini. At the end of the war he was captured, and tried in Britain for treason. He was convicted and hanged in 1945 by the famous hangman Albert Pierrepoint. As the noose was tightened around his neck, Amery said, "I've often wanted to meet you, Pierrepoint — although not under these circumstances."²⁵ The treatment meted out to Joyce and Amery should be compared with that of such pro-Soviet traitors as Anthony Blunt, who merely lost his knighthood as a result of his treason.

THE RETURN OF THE SWASTIKA

The end of the war in 1945 did not signal the end of British fascism. In the post-1945 period, a number of small groups such as the League of Ex-Servicemen and the British People's Party emerged. In the three years after the end of hostilities, Mosley worked to combine these groups into a single Union Movement, which was formed in 1948. At this time, Mosley was campaigning against immigrants from eastern Europe, and played down his traditional anti-Semitism. A headline in his newspaper *Union* read, "Life blood flows out, sewage flows in".²⁶ He also called for a united European state under the slogan "Europe a nation". In the immediate post-war period, the fascist revival was faced with far more formidable obstacles than it had faced in the 1930s. Before the second world war, the general public had looked on Mosleyite fascism with some amusement; afterwards, it looked upon it with intense hatred, as a result of people's wartime experiences, the German bombing of Brit-

ish cities, and the full revelation of Nazi crimes at the end of the war. In addition, a group of Jews who had had military experience during the war formed the 43 Group, and violently attacked manifestations of fascist activity. As Maurice Beckman has described in his account of this organisation, the 43 Group physically attacked meetings and marches, assaulted newspaper sellers and infiltrated fascist organisations, causing devastating damage from within.²⁷ As a result, Mosley went into exile, while the Union Movement focussed on hostility to West Indian and Asian immigrants.

Fascism remained on the lunatic fringe throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, although there was considerable political activity directed at halting black and Asian immigration which was not specifically fascist in its nature. I will avoid a detailed account of these political developments, which have been thoroughly discussed in numerous books. In 1962, the National Socialist Movement, a group which openly copied the uniforms, paraphernalia and ideology of Hitler's movement, was set up. Until then, post-war British fascism had sought to minimise its National Socialist influences, such as the horror of Nazism which virtually all British people felt. The NSM openly boasted of its Nazism. It quickly became the target of violent opposition from two militant Jewish organisations, Yellow Star and the 62 Group, as well as left-wing and trade union organisations. On 1st July, the NSM held its inaugural rally in Trafalgar Square under a huge banner reading "Free Britain from Jewish control!". The meeting ended in a riot after speeches by Colin Jordan and John Tyndall, when demonstrators stormed the platform and fought with NSM members. Later, both Jordan and Tyndall were arrested, prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned for several weeks under the 1936 Act for "insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace". Jordan had said: "More and more people every day are opening their eyes and coming to see Hitler was right. They are coming to see that our real enemies, the people we should have fought, were not Hitler and National Socialists of Germany but world Jewry and its associates in this country."²⁸ Tyndall had said: "In our democratic society, the Jew is like a poisonous maggot feeding off a body in an advanced state of decay."²⁹ Although it was their opponents who had initiated the violence, the Nazis were nevertheless the ones punished.

Later the same year, four members of the NSM — Jordan, Tyndall, Roland Kerr Ritchie and Denis Pirie, were the targets of another prosecution under the 1936 Act. Undercover policemen had taken photographs of Tyndall and Kerr Ritchie training 18 uniformed members of the NSM's paramilitary organisation Spearhead and, on a different occasion, observed Jordan leading the group in military manoeuvres. Police raids seized records, knives, pistols, black helmets, uniforms, Nazi flags, portraits of Nazi leaders, walkie-talkie sets and five cans of sodium chlorate weed-killer suitable for making explosives. On one of the cans the word "weed-killer" had been crossed out and replaced with "Jew-Killer". Martin Webster, another NSM member joked, "How could we explain that away? We hadn't even got a window box."²⁹ On this evidence, Tyndall, Jordan, Kerr Ritchie and Pirie were convicted under the 1936 Act of causing reasonable apprehension that they were training for the use or display of force in promoting political objectives, and imprisoned. The concept of "causing reasonable apprehension" meant that they were convicted for a state of "apprehension" that purely lay in somebody's mind.

In 1965 Jordan was prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned under the Public Order Act for distributing a leaflet entitled "The Coloured Invasion", which contained highly selected and unflattering "facts" which constituted a virulent attack on black and Asian people. Although the judge did not contest the facts contained in the leaflet, he said that they should have been balanced with other information.

The same year saw the passage of the Race Relations Act 1965, which introduced the concept of race into British law for the first time. This not only prohibited racial discrimination in such areas as housing, employment, and set up a Race Relations Board, but also prohibited the dissemination of material liable to cause racial hatred, whether in printed or verbal form. This was a major curtailment of the right to freedom of expression, as it meant that people could be put into prison simply for expressing their opinions in pamphlets or magazines. In 1967, some members of a group called the Racial Preservation Society were prosecuted under the Act for the dissemination of such material, but were acquitted by the jury. In fact, the first successful prosecution under the 1965 Act was against some "Black Power" militants who were convicted of distributing material containing racial abuse against white people. The law was made considerably stronger with the Race Relations Act 1976, and again under the Public Order Act 1986.

One result of the 1965 Act was that racists had to tone down the more extreme statements in their material, and to present their case in a more restrained and therefore plausible manner. This may have actually helped the National Front to gain more electoral support than any previous fascist movement in the 1970s. At the same time, there was a powerful unofficial block on the expression of racist, fascist and anti-Semitic opinions. For example, the independently-produced film *It Happened Here* (GB, 1964), directed by Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo, demonstrates the directors' view of what would have happened in Britain if the Nazis had conquered this country during the second world war. The story concerns a nurse of no particular political opinions who is induced to join the fascist organisation (closely based on the BUF, with similar uniforms and insignia) which is collaborating with the German occupiers. Gradually, step by step, she becomes more and more enmeshed in the fascist regime, and end up participating in the mass murder of Polish workers in a hospital. The film is an exceptionally convincing depiction of fascism and life under German occupation which puts most Hollywood and Continental films about the second world war very much in the shade. To increase the film's realism, Brownlow and Mollo recruited genuine fascists and anti-Semites to act as leaders of the fascist organisation. In one scene, the nurse is questioning these fascists about their ideas. They reply with a series of anti-Semitic statements and arguments which are all the more shocking because they are delivered in a matter-of-fact tone by what seem to be completely ordinary people, far removed from the leering, maniac Nazis of Hollywood legend. As a result of pressure from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, this sequence was cut from the distributed version of the film, against the wishes of the directors. (In 1996, I saw the complete version of the film, accompanied by a talk by Mr Brownlow at the National Film Theatre.) The text of the cut sequence appears as an appendix to Mr Brownlow's book *How It Happened Here*, an entertaining account of the making and distribution of the film.

THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL FRONT

In 1967, several racist organisations — the League of Empire Loyalists, the Racial Preservation Society and the British National Party (not to be confused with the political party of that name today) combined to form a new political party, the National Front. As its name indicates, it was intended to combine all racist and fascist groups in the nation into a single organisation. Its goal was to achieve political power via the ballot box, and it claimed to accept Parliamentary democracy and the right of its opponents to express their views even after it achieved power. It even had a democratic internal constitution, in contrast to the *Führerprinzip* of Mosley's BUF, which led to continuous feuding and power-plays within the NF. Its main policy was the expulsion of all black and Asian people from Britain, and the use of the state to control "international finance". Its leaders had learned that overt anti-Semitism and advocacy of dictatorship had never gained electoral support in Britain, so the emphasis was on hostility towards ethnic minorities. In contrast with Mosley's post-war position of "Europe a nation", the NF was firmly a British nationalist organisation. The National Front's first chairman was A. K. Chesterton, an experienced journalist who had been the head propagandist of the BUF, known for his extremely anti-Semitic views, before splitting with Mosley in 1938. (He was the cousin of the writer G. K. Chesterton, with whom he is often confused.) After the second world war, Chesterton had been head of the League of Empire Loyalists, a Tory fringe group which carried out pranks in order to disrupt the annual Conservative Party conference. He was the author of an exposition of "world Jewish conspiracy" theory, *The New Unhappy Lords*, in which, unfortunately, the author does not give his sources, for reasons he explains as follows:

The strength and the weakness of this book is that it is not annotated. Its weakness is that the author, having checked his facts to the best of his ability, does not cite his authorities, partly because some of the information has come to him under confidential cover from highly placed persons in different parts of the world who would face ruin if their identity were divulged, and partly because, the facts having been checked as far as that was possible, the sources have not been filed and listed. Its strength, on the other hand, is that the reader is presented with a continuous narrative which enables him to follow the workings of the conspiracy without having his attention distracted by the abundance of foot-notes which otherwise would have been necessary.³⁰

On this basis, we are expected to believe that

Whether or not One World is the secret final objective of Zionism, World Jewry is the most powerful single force on earth and it follows that all the major policies which have been ruthlessly pursued through the last several decades must have had the stamp of Jewish approval. Indeed, common sense applied to such facts as have come to light must lead to the conclusion that the policies, directed against the most cherished Gentile values, were incubated by adroit Jewish brains and fulfilled, or carried to the verge of fulfilment, by the dynamism of the Jewish spirit.³¹

I have no doubts whether Brian Micklethwait would be over-impressed by this volume.

In its early years, the NF was determined to maintain a "respectable" image, and kept open National Socialists out of the organisation. It would be inaccurate to call the NF at that time a completely fascist organisation. While many of its members were certainly fascists, others might have been more accurately described as traditionalist authoritarian conservatives with added theories of white racial superiority. In 1968, Enoch Powell's famous anti-immigration speech (contrary to popular opinion, he never used the phrase "rivers of blood") produced an outburst of support from sections of the working class, including strikes of Smithfield meat market porters and London dockers in which the NF assisted. The NF was able to capitalise of this support, and grow into a national political party, if a small one, by the 1970 general election, in which it stood 10 candidates, who received between 1.8% and 5.6% of the vote.

From the start, the Front experienced both continuous internal splits and violent opposition from the political left. A stolen lorry was crashed into its headquarters. Meetings were physically attacked. At the 1969 annual general meeting, demonstrators broke into the building's power room and severed the mains cables with an axe, plunging the hall into darkness. Martin Webster, national activities organiser, was beaten up several times. The Front themselves used aggressive methods to put their case forward. In 1968, for instance, several members invaded a London Weekend Television show. In 1969, NF members attacked a public meeting where two Labour government ministers, Denis Healey and Arthur Bottomley, were speaking. They threw flour bags, chanted and started a brawl in which Bottomley was kicked in the groin. In 1975, the National Referendum Campaign, which was campaigning for British withdrawal from the EEC, refused to allow the NF (and Marxist groups) to affiliate with it. Some 200 NF supporters attacked the next NRC meeting, there were scuffles, attempts by the NF to storm the platform, and the police had to be called to restore order.

In the early 1970s, despite increasingly violent opposition, the Front grew rapidly, and gained increasing support at local and Parliamentary elections, although it never won any seats. Its best electoral result was at the West Bromwich by-election in 1973, where Martin Webster achieved 16% of the vote, the only time an NF candidate saved his deposit. From 1972, when the ex-Nazi, Tyndall, became chairman, it increasingly moved away from the "respectable" image of the late 1960s towards greater militancy. Its newspapers, which were widely distributed, kept up a constant stream of agitation about how members of ethnic minorities were supposedly responsible for crime, disease and social collapse. In his privately owned magazine *Spearhead*, Tyndall wrote:

So long as Jews are to fore in promoting Communism and World Government, fuel is going to be given to those who maintain that there is a Jewish conspiracy for world power as outlined in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.³²

In another article, he wrote:

The day that our followers lose their ability to hate will be the day that they lose their power and their will to achieve anything worthwhile at all.³³

In the same magazine, Webster wrote:

It is only a matter of time before even the most stupid and cowardly of our white fellow citizens realize that

they are at war ... the uniforms in that war will be the colour of your skin.³⁴

THE NATIONAL FRONT AND STREET VIOLENCE

The Front's activities reached many sections of society. For instance, in 1974 the NF was heavily involved in a strike at the Imperial Typewriters factory, where white workers went on strike against the employment of Asian workers. NF members participated in the picket lines, in which violence was used against Asian workers trying to enter the factory gates. Tony Reed-Herbert, a leading NF member, argued that "the industrial action by Britons at Imperial is a racial struggle ... the struggle of a united British people fighting to preserve their freedom and identity against the forces of communism and international capitalism which seek to destroy the British nation and which use as their tool the immigrant minorities placed by them in our midst."³⁵ The Imperial management announced that they were "amazed and disturbed by the amount of confidential company information known to the NF".³⁶ One can only speculate how the political left reconciled their opposition to the NF with their support for workers' struggles in this instance.

NF members would even stand outside schools, handing leaflets to white children:

Are you tired of younger students being bullied or subjected to the alien cult of mugging? ... Are you tired of lessons where the teacher has to go at a snail's pace to allow immigrant kids who don't speak English a chance to keep up? ... Are you tired of having to endure social studies or history lessons where the teacher continually tries to run down Britain, while at the same time Black kids have "Black Studies" to give them more self-respect and Black pride?³⁷

The growth of the NF led to a violent campaign by the left which if anything was more ferocious than that against Mosley in the 1930s. In 1974, the NF held a demonstration through London which culminated at a rally in Conway Hall, in Red Lion Square in London. A large mob of leftists attempted to block the path of the Front as they arrived in the square, and a savage riot broke out as mounted police attempted to disperse the crowd and the Marxists fought back. Kevin Gateley, a student member of the International Marxist Group, was killed in the fighting.

In 1975 a split occurred within the NF, and the National Party was formed by the more moderate, or "populist" elements. This organisation succeeded in winning two council seats in Blackburn before collapsing without trace. The NF itself began to win more votes in local elections — in 1977, its candidates in Leicester won over 43,000 votes, 20% of the total. In the Greater London Council election of the same year, the NF won 119,000 votes and beat the Liberals in 33 out of 92 constituencies. Its Remembrance Day demonstration at the Cenotaph in November 1977 attracted 7000 supporters, in the largest fascist assembly in Britain since the 1930s.

With the moderate element gone, the NF became even more extreme — and more successful, too. It began a strategy of deliberately holding mass demonstrations through areas with high ethnic minority concentration, with the intention of intimidating the black and Asian population, inflaming hostility towards them on the part of the whites, and establishing the Front as dominating the streets. These demonstrations were

attacked by left-wing and ethnic minority counter-demonstrators, mobilised (from 1977 onwards) by the Anti-Nazi League. In 1976 about 1,000 NF supporters marched through the immigrant centre of Bradford, leading to a riot by left-wingers and black youths, who attacked and stoned the police who were protecting the Front, overthrew two police cars, and fought a running battle with mounted police. The most violent confrontation occurred in Lewisham in 1977, when over 1,000 Front supporters marched through a multi-racial area where they had gained strong support in the GLC election. Thousands of anti-NF demonstrators charged at the NF column, broke through the police lines and fought with members of the NF in the bloodiest street battle Britain had experienced since the 1930s. According to the NF's own account of this event, "Bricks, bottles, iron railings, etc were thrown at the march but the attempt to halt the march failed. Over 300 opponents were arrested but not a single N.F. member, and again the party was back in the public's eye."³⁸ Left-wing accounts, however, claim that the NF were forced to retreat under police protection, and that Lewisham was the "Cable Street of the 1970s", marking the beginning of the end for the Front.

The left claimed that their initiation of violence against the Front was justified because the NF's activities and propaganda was leading to racial assaults and murders by whites of blacks and Asians. Although there were several such murders, only one was known to be carried out by a member of the NF. In Glasgow in 1975, James Hogie, an NF member, shot a West Indian man dead in cold blood, claiming that it was part of his campaign to "boost emigration, start extermination". He told the police, "Niggers mean nothing to me. It was like killing a dog."³⁹ Increasingly in the mid-to-late 1970s, the NF recruited thousands of skinheads, football hooligans, Hell's Angels and some punk rockers, and the organisation became increasingly associated with these often violent sub-cultures. By 1978 it was a very different organisation from the "respectable political party" envisioned by Chesterton.

As a result of this repeated violence at NF events, chief officers of police increasingly used their powers under the Public Order Act to ask the Home Secretary for bans on marches where the NF had scheduled a demonstration, and the Home Secretary was increasingly willing to do so. One effect of this was to give the NF a veto on the right to demonstrate of those the NF opposed. If a left-wing or anti-racist demonstration was scheduled to be held in some area, the NF would announce its own march on the same day and in the same place, knowing that a ban on all marches would be likely to follow.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE NATIONAL FRONT

From 1977-79, several factors led to the rapid decline in the NF's level of support. In 1977, the National Union of Journalists instructed its members not to report on NF events or policies, except in the context of violence, and not to allow any statements by NF spokesmen to be quoted in the press or on television. This led to a nearly-complete news blackout on the Front. Also in 1977 the Anti-Nazi League was formed, and fought a massive and intense national campaign against the Front under the slogan "The National Front is a Nazi front". They created groups such as Gays Against Fascism, Vegetarians Against the Nazis, and even Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice. The ANL organised massive anti-racist "carnivals" in places such as Hoxton Market, an NF

base, and organised rock concerts through Rock Against Racism. Their continuous pressure devastated the NF. Certain celebrities who had expressed support for racist or anti-immigration policies, such as Elton John, David Bowie and Rod Stewart, were induced to recant their views. Enemies of the NF also infiltrated the organisation and inflicted damage on it from within. It became impossible for the Front to obtain the use of any premises for public meetings. In 1978, Margaret Thatcher, Leader of the Opposition, complained in a television interview that many white Britons felt that they were being “swamped” by immigrants, and that this was leading to growing support for the NF. She said that the Conservatives would address these issues if elected. Overnight, the NF lost many supporters to the Tories, even though Mrs Thatcher was accused of “pandering to the NF”.

In the 1979 general election, the NF fielded 303 candidates, the largest number ever. The NF received virtually no media coverage of their campaign. Further violence occurred during the election campaign. In Southall, Middlesex, Blair Peach, a New Zealand teacher and member of the Socialist Workers’ Party, was killed by the police while leading a large crowd of Asians in an attack on an NF election meeting. As it turned out, the election was a catastrophe for the Front. Their candidates received an average of 1.3% of the vote. As a result, the organisation rapidly collapsed into warring factions, and was back on the lunatic fringe within a matter of months. What had appeared in the years 1973-77 to be a rising force in politics had turned into a damp squib. British fascism had suffered what was probably its decisive defeat.

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

Nevertheless, the law began to be used far more ruthlessly against the fascist remnant after 1979 than it had been before. In 1968 the National Socialist Movement had changed its name to the British Movement, and had been taken over by Michael McLaughlin. With the collapse of the NF after 1979, the BM gained some of its membership. It was the target of repeated prosecutions which led to its collapse. For instance, in 1981 McLaughlin was jailed under the Race Relations Act 1976 for distributing stickers showing a black man embracing a white woman, with the words “Race-mixing destroys our people”. He claimed that the Rastafarians whom he met in prison agreed with him. Joe Pearce, editor of *Bulldog*, the newspaper of the Young National Front, was twice imprisoned, in 1982 and 1985, for “publishing material liable to incite racial hatred” in the paper. During one of his sentences he was beaten senseless by black inmates. (Recently he has repudiated racism, become a Roman Catholic and written a biography of G. K. Chesterton, published by Hodder & Stoughton, which seeks to clear the author of the charge of anti-Semitism.)

After the NF’s disaster in 1979, the organisation split into warring factions. Tyndall, its chairman, left the NF and in 1982 formed the British National Party. On a much smaller scale, and with far less electoral support than the NF in the 1970s, the BNP continued to campaign on the same issues in the 1980s. It did, however, succeed in winning a seat on Tower Hamlets council in 1993-4. Meanwhile, the NF split into two organisations both claiming to be the official NF. In 1986, Tyndall was imprisoned for articles he had written in his magazine *Spearhead*, advocating the forced repatriation of black and Asian people. At the same time, John Morse, editor of the BNP paper *British Nationalist*, was im-

prisoned for the same offence. They were both imprisoned under the greatly strengthened Public Order Act 1986, which considerably extended the definition of “material liable to cause racial hatred” and imposed heavy restrictions on the holding of meetings where racism would be liable to be promoted. In practice, as Tyndall and Morse discovered, any published statement that a white man is better than a black or an Asian is now illegal, and will render the person making it liable to imprisonment. While in prison, Tyndall wrote his magnum opus, *The Eleventh Hour*, a combined political manifesto and autobiography which is probably the most substantial statement of the British fascist position since the writings of Sir Oswald Mosley.⁴⁰

Indeed, a two-year prison sentence can be imposed merely for possession of material where there is likelihood that racial hatred may be stirred up. I have seen numerous such cases in the press, without keeping the cuttings. Andrew Benjamin, who is Jewish, was — as I recall — imprisoned for selling Nazi regalia to skinheads in a context in which, so it was claimed, racial hatred might be stirred up. A National Front candidate was fined for stating in an election leaflet that “coloured immigration is destroying Britain and the British way of life”. The Dowager Lady Jane Birdwood, a veteran anti-semite, was fined twice for material she distributed, claiming that Jews dominated all aspects of life in Britain. A group of members of the Ku Klux Klan were caught at a bus stop with racist posters, and were imprisoned. More recently, three members of Combat 18 were imprisoned for possessing material which called for “the execution of all Jews who had been responsible for damage to the white race, and the imprisonment of all others in concentration camps until we find a solution to the problem of the eternal Jew.” They had not actually distributed this material, but were imprisoned simply for possession of it, where there is an “intent or likelihood” of inciting racial hatred. Appalling though Combat 18 certainly is, the fact that people can be imprisoned merely for possession of such evil statements demonstrates just how far Britain has moved away from the right of freedom of expression so eloquently advanced by such figures as Milton and Mill. These are just a few of the cases of which I have seen reports. For more, it would be necessary to search the back files of daily newspapers and *Searchlight*, the anti-fascist magazine, which of course gloats whenever such imprisonments occur.

It is important to note that while these laws are enforced rigorously against white racists, the law is used very sparingly against members of ethnic minorities. For example, when hundreds of thousands of fundamentalist Muslims were demonstrating against Salman Rushdie, the late Dr Siddiqi repeatedly incited them to find Mr Rushdie and murder him for having written a novel disapproved of by the Ayatollah Khomeini. No prosecution was brought against him for this. Similarly, an extremist Muslim group which advocates the killing of Jews has not been prosecuted. There is one law for white extremists and another for Asian extremists. Neither has the organisation Class War been prosecuted for its incitement to violence against such groups as police officers and “the rich”.

In addition, other methods have been used to restrict the freedom of expression of the BNP and other fascist organisations. For instance, the BNP’s bookshop in Welling, Kent, which is alleged to be used as the party’s headquarters, has been the target of both violent left-wing demonstrations and attacks from Greenwich Council, which has recently revoked

planning permission for the building on purely political grounds. In 1993, 57 BNP members assembling at Brick Lane market, East London, for a paper sale were arrested by the police, despite the fact that they had been selling their papers there for years. They had not broken any law, but were arrested purely as a “politically correct” gesture.

Another informal pressure is the dismissal of people from their jobs when their membership of the BNP is revealed. For instance, the headmaster of a multi-racial comprehensive school in East London was dismissed when his BNP membership was revealed. A BNP member who worked at the careers office at Caledonian University in Glasgow was sacked under similar circumstances. There is a campaign by the Anti-Nazi League to have John Morse sacked from his job as a bus driver in Winchester. In no case is there any suggestion that they have displayed hostility towards members of ethnic minorities in their professional capacities.

Now there is pressure for the outlawing of “Holocaust denial”, the claim that millions of Jews were not exterminated by the Nazis during the second world war. This pressure comes from a European Union agreement to impose such legislation in 1996. In 1996, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, negotiated an opt-out from this agreement, but the Labour Party conference voted unanimously to impose such a law. Mike Gapes, a Labour MP, has introduced a Holocaust Denial Bill, which came to an end with the recent Parliament, and Tony Blair, Leader of the Opposition, has said that he is giving active consideration to how such a law may be imposed. If, as seems almost certain, the Labour Party wins the forthcoming general election, then it is not unlikely that such a law may be introduced.

A Home Office spokesman said:

If you want to make Holocaust revisionism a specific offence, that would play into the hands of extremists who would attract far more sympathy and attention in the wider community through having their freedom of speech suppressed.⁴¹

Lord Merlyn-Rees, the former Labour Home Secretary, said: “It is wrong to deny the Holocaust. It is done for anti-Semitic reasons and it should be a criminal offence.”⁴² Janice Lopatkin, of the Holocaust Education Trust, said, “There is a gap in the legislation because courts do not regard Holocaust-denial material as insulting to Jews.”⁴³ A Labour Party spokesman said

We already accept there are limits to absolute freedom of speech, and Holocaust denial is often used as a means of spreading anti-Semitic propaganda.⁴⁴

Such a law would, of course, be a massive erosion of freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry. In Britain there has never been any law making it illegal to express an opinion on an historical subject. It is very difficult to see how a person’s opinion about what did or did not happen in Poland in the 1940s can have any bearing whatsoever on race relations in Britain in the 1990s. Libertarians will certainly be in the forefront in campaigning against any such legislation imposed by the coming Labour government.

A LIBERTARIAN APPROACH TO RACISM AND FASCISM

Every libertarian will be revolted by some of the sorts of opinions and activities which have been described above.

Nevertheless, one must put aside one’s opinions about the fascists and focus on the libertarian solution to the problems associated with them.

In the first place, one must demand freedom of expression. The United States has the good fortune to have the First Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees the right of the individual to freedom of speech and of the press. The American Civil Liberties Union, while completely opposed to racism and fascism, vigorously upholds the rights of racists and fascists, such as the Ku Klux Klan, as well as every other point of view, to express their views and to organise. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld the First Amendment, which is virtually the only Constitutional right which has been consistently defended in the US. In 1978, when a group of National Socialists wanted to parade in swastika-bedecked uniforms through Skokie, Illinois, a predominantly Holocaust survivors, the ACLU campaigned for the right of the Nazis to march against attempts by the local government to prevent it. The Supreme Court upheld this right of the Nazis, and the march took place.

By contrast, the National Council for Civil Liberties (known as Liberty) in the UK does not defend the rights of racists; indeed, it constantly demands harsher legal measures against them. For instance, when the police illegally raided the home of a woman member of the National Front without a warrant, causing damage, the NCCL refused to help her. Similarly, a trans-sexual who held racist views and who wanted a sex change was refused representation by the same organisation. The NCCL used to be run partly by the Communist Party, which may explain their antipathy towards racists and fascists.

In the UK, unfortunately, the law restricts freedom of expression in a wide range of areas, and not just in the area of race. Hard-core pornography is banned; publications telling people how to make illegal drugs have been banned, homosexual-related material has been seized; films and videos are censored by a statutory body; books revealing information about the Royal Family have been banned by court order; prosecutions have occurred under the Official Secrets Act; Britain’s absurdly strict libel laws constitute a form of censorship; and newspapers and videos have been prosecuted under the blasphemy laws. And there are constant pressures for increases in the degree of restriction in these and other areas. The abolition of all these laws would restore freedom of expression.

In any case, the spread of the Internet is making any attempt at government censorship increasingly futile. Anybody can anonymously post data onto the Net, and anyone else can download it. It is a well-known fact that racists and fascists are already expressing their opinions in cyberspace. Some of the material I have seen would certainly be illegal under British law, but there is nothing stopping anyone from downloading it. This means, therefore, that the only way to deal with racism and the advocacy of racial hatred is to challenge it by refuting its claims and arguments. Libertarians will doubtless be in the forefront of doing this on the Internet.

The question of demonstrations is somewhat different. Here we have an example of the “tragedy of the commons”. Because the streets are “publicly owned”, and every organisation has the right to demonstrate on “public property”, except where restricted under the Public Order Act or similar laws, fascists cannot lawfully be denied the right to march

through areas inhabited largely by members of ethnic minorities. Massive violence inevitably occurs when they are faced with counter-demonstrators, and the taxpayer is faced with huge expenses through the presence of the police forces required to protect the fascists from violence. By privatising the streets, the problem could be solved. Owners of streets in ethnic minority areas may themselves be members of ethnic minorities, and may have a rule that racist or other types of demonstration are banned on those streets. In other areas, the road owners may impose conditions such as demanding payment before racists — or others — are permitted to march. There may be areas where provocative demonstrations are tolerated without conditions — such as the middle of Dartmoor.

Perhaps the most controversial question is whether such groups should be permitted to organise para-military organisations, such as the BUF's I Squad, and the NSM's Spearhead group. This is currently illegal. Again, from the libertarian point of view, the situation should depend on private property rights. In a fully libertarian society, people in private housing estates, privately-owned streets and so on would be entitled to refuse to allow the formation of such groups on their premises. One could envisage that all the racists in the nation could form their own housing estate, where only white people sharing that point of view could be permitted, and para-military organisations could be formed. Indeed, in Idaho, there already is such a set-up, run by a group called the Aryan Nations, who undergo military training with assault rifles and other items of equipment.

The fact that racism, fascism and anti-Semitism are evil is not a justification for denying those who promote these views the right to express them. The numerous dangers which exist in suppressing the promotion of a particular point of view outweigh their gains. With the spread of the Internet, it will become difficult to control the free flow of ideas, so it will become increasingly necessary for opponents of racism, fascism and anti-Semitism to challenge these views in the free market in ideas. That will be a more effective way of defeating them than attempts at banning through legislation.

It is most unlikely that organised racism and fascism will re-emerge as a significant political force in Britain. Fascism, like communism, emerged in the aftermath of the first world war, a very different historical period from our own. A large part of its support was based on fear of communism, and with communism no longer a significant factor, fascism has lost one of its most important bases of support. The desire to live under a one-party dictatorship with the suppression of individual liberty has never been a strong one among British voters. Neither fascism nor communism has ever had significant popular appeal among the electorate.

BRITAIN THE LEAST RACIST COUNTRY

Britain has always been probably the least "racist" of any Western country which has undergone large-scale non-white immigration, and what racism there was in the 1950s, 60s and 70s has largely disappeared. An interesting film called *Welcome to Britain* (US/GB, 1944) was produced for the benefit of American GIs stationed in the UK during the second world war, as a guide to life in wartime Britain. In one sequence, a little old lady on a train is speaking in a very friendly manner to a black American soldier. A Southern American general then points out that British people are ex-

tremely courteous to black Americans, and strongly disapprove of the off-hand or derogatory way in which many white American soldiers, especially Southerners, treat their black comrades-in-arms. Long before the first "race relations" laws, the British were opposed to overt displays of racism, and welcoming to guests of different ethnic origins to themselves. Any attempt to appeal to racism as a way of gaining popular support from the British people was always doomed to failure. Indeed, visitors from Continental countries frequently express surprise at the excellent relations that exist between people of different ethnic groups in Britain.

Britain has, in fact, gained economically by the immigration it has experienced. There is no doubt that Asian shopkeepers, who are willing to stay open late, and restaurateurs have made life in Britain rather more convenient. The Afro-Caribbean population have provided Britain with numerous sports heroes, comedians, musicians and other celebrities. It is true that problems do exist with, for instance, the high proportion of street crimes committed by young Afro-Caribbean males, and the political activities of Muslim fundamentalists, for example in their desire to kill Salman Rushdie and to impose an Islamic regime on Britain. In addition, some individuals who are accepted as political refugees grossly abuse the hospitality of this country. I remember a few years ago, one African refugee arrived here, claiming to be an intellectual dissident persecuted in his own country for expressing deeply held philosophical convictions of which the government disapproved. He was, of course, given free money, free employment training and free health care at the British taxpayers' expense. He was then convicted of rape, and when asked if he had anything to say, replied that rape was not considered to be a serious crime in his own country. A couple of years ago, some Algerian terrorists who sent letter bombs to victims in France were discovered to be resident in Britain, living off the taxpayer in a similar way.

For this sort of reason, I am opposed to unrestricted immigration into the UK. Evidence from other Western countries indicates that very large-scale immigration by populations who are sharply dissimilar from the host population leads to more problems than it solves. In the United States, for instance, Mexican and other Latin American immigrants have become virtually a nation within a nation, largely speaking only Spanish, and identifying with their native land, not with the US. It is the same with Oriental immigrants to the US. Their values are collectivist and statist, not libertarian. In France, where almost a third of the population are now Muslims, there is a great deal of friction with the host population, and the dramatic rise of the National Front. In Germany, Austria, Belgium and other Western countries, a roughly similar situation has arisen.

The pure theory of libertarianism would indicate that there should be no immigration controls whatsoever. That would be fine if the rest of the world were composed of entrepreneurs, inventors and creative artists with a deep appreciation for Britain and its way of life and a willingness to live in accordance with British values. Unfortunately, the reality is that most of the world is not like that. Although the way should certainly be open to allow in outstanding individuals who have something to offer, and who are prepared to live according to British values, this does not mean that everybody on this planet has a right to live permanently in the UK. For this reason, existing immigration controls must be retained. That is one way to ensure that the evils of racism and fascism die a natural death.

NOTES

1. Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-45*, University College London Press, London, 1995, p. 304.
2. A. K. Chesterton, *Creed of a Fascist Revolutionary*, first published 1935, Truth at Last, Marietta, Georgia, nd, pp. 12-13. Italics in original.
3. Quoted in Martin Walker, *The National Front*, Fontana/Collins, np, 1977, p. 70.
4. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 70.
5. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 70.
6. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 70.
7. Quoted in David Rosenberg, *Facing up to Anti-Semitism*, Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project/Jewish Socialists' Group, London, 1985, p. 47.
8. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 27.
9. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 27.
10. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 27.
11. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 25.
12. Quoted in Walker, *op cit*, p. 21.
13. R. N. Creasey in Leonard Wise, et al, *Mosley's Blackshirts*, Sanctuary Press, London, 1986, p. 10.
14. Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, p. 116.
15. *Ibid*, p. 116.
16. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 115.
17. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 115.
18. Quoted in Rosenberg, *op cit*, p. 63.
19. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 63.
20. Quoted in Edmund Warburton, "The Press Photographer", in Leonard Wise, et al, *Mosley's Blackshirts*, p. 52.
21. Arnold Leese, *Out of Step*, np, np, nd, pp. 53-54.
22. *Idem*, *My Irrelevant Defence*, first published 1938, BP Publications, Shotton, Clwyd, 1980, pp. v-vi. (BP Publications was the publishing arm of the British Movement.)
23. For further details, see John H. Snow, *The Case of Tyler Kent*, Long House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1940, 1962 edition. I also saw a more recent book which claimed to disclose the contents of the Churchill-Roosevelt communications which Kent intercepted, and explain his motivations, but failed to note its author or title.
24. See William Joyce, *Twilight Over England*, first published 1940, Imperial War Museum, London, 1991, with biographical details of Joyce, wartime cartoons about him and selections from his broadcasts.
25. See John Amery, *England and Europe*, first published 1943, Truth at Last, Marietta, Georgia, 1994.
26. Quoted in E. R. Fields, Introduction to Amery, *England and Europe*, p. 2.
27. Quoted in Thurlow, *op cit*, p. 245.
28. Maurice Beckman, *The 43 Group*, Centerprise, London, 1992.
29. Quoted in Walker, *op cit*, p. 39.
30. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 39.
31. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 73.
32. A. K. Chesterton, *The New Unhappy Lords*, Candour Publishing, London, 1965, 1969 edition, pp. 10-11.
33. *Ibid*, p. 216.
34. Quoted in Walker, *op cit*, p. 192.
35. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 184.
36. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 193.
37. Quoted in Walker, *op cit*, p. 155.
38. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 155.
39. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 166.
40. NF Publicity Department, *An Introduction to the National Front*, National Front, Worthing, Sussex, nd, p. 7.
41. John Tyndall, *The Eleventh Hour*, Albion Press, London, 1988.
42. Quoted in P. Pataya, *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1996 (first published 1993), p. 76.
43. Quoted in *Sunday Times*, 29th September 1996, p. 24.
44. Quoted in *ibid*, p. 24.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The following is by no means a complete bibliography on the subject of British fascism, but it contains some of the more important volumes which I have actually read.

Phillip Rees (editor), *Fascism in Britain*, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1979

An indispensable and remarkably complete bibliography of publications and articles on British fascism down to the date of publication. This is the first port of call for anyone who wants to investigate the subject with any thoroughness.

Richard Griffith, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1980

An interesting study of British enthusiasts for National Socialist Germany, 1933-39.

Christopher Husbards, *Racial Exclusionism and the City*, Macmillan, London, 1983.

A study of the urban support of the NF in the 1970s.

Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game and Beyond the Pale*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1983.

A two-volume biography of Sir Oswald Mosley, written by his son, who rejected his father's political views.

Leonard Wise, et al, *Mosley's Blackshirts*, Sanctuary Press, London, 1986

An interesting collection of first-hand accounts by twelve members of Mosley's BUF from different walks of life. There can be little doubt that the man inspired genuine idealism.

Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987

A thorough history of British fascism from 1918 to 1985. Indispensable.

John Tyndall, *The Eleventh Hour*, Albion Press, London, 1988

The autobiography and political manifesto of the leader of the British National Party, written while he was in prison for expressing his opinions in a magazine. Although it contains numerous factual inaccuracies, this is an interesting inside view of life in the National Socialist Movement, National Front and BNP.

Ray Hill with Andrew Bell, *The Other Face of Terror*, Grafton/Collins, London, 1988

Ray Hill was a leading member of several British fascist groups in the 1970s and 80s before being successfully "turned" by the magazine *Searchlight*, which employed him to wreak destruction on these organisations. This is his account, although its accuracy has been challenged.

Maurice Beckman, *The 43 Group*, Centerprise, London, 1992

An account of the militant Jewish group which combatted the revival of fascism in the immediate post-war period, using the most ruthless methods.

P. Pataya (editor), *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1993

A collection of essays on historical examples of racist violence. Incidents of racial violence have not necessarily corresponded with the activity of racist and fascist groups.

Roger Griffin (editor), *Fascism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995

A compilation of writings by and about fascists around the world. A useful guide to the ideology of British fascism in international perspective.

Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-45*, University College London Press, London, 1995

A monumental one-volume study of international fascism. The definitive work in its field.

Roger Eatwell, *Fascism*, Verso, London 1995

A comparative study of fascism in Italy, Germany, France and Britain. The fact that fascism has almost always remained on the lunatic fringe in Britain is contrasted with its relative success on the Continent.

Mike Cronin (editor), *The Failure of British Fascism*, Macmillan, London, 1996

A collection of papers by academics examining the reasons why fascist movements in Britain have always failed, from the British Fascists of the 1920s to the British National Party in the 1990s.