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*“Britain’s Failed Attempt at Fascism:
The British Union of Fascists, Years 1933-1934”*

*By
Katherine L. Collier*

Honors Thesis

In

*Department of History
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Advisor: Professor Chris Bischof

Abstract

This honors thesis examines how and why Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) tried to present itself as a viable political entity to mainstream British society in the years 1933-1934. Though the BUF admired Benito Mussolini's Fascist Italy and Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany, this thesis argues that they sought to create their own distinctly British version of these Fascist movements. The BUF promised that Britain would again thrive, but only under strong fascist leadership which would provide an economic restructuring of government and a cohesive society, free from selfish individualism, decadence, and foreigners. The BUF promised to maintain control over the British Empire and to assert Britain's authority in the world with a reinvigorated military. To convince the public of this British Fascist vision, the BUF used its newspapers, *The Blackshirt* and *The Fascist Week*, which incorporated the popular style of "New Journalism." This article concludes that despite the growing momentum of the BUF, in the wake of the infamously violent Olympia Riot, on June 7 1934, all of the BUF's future efforts to appeal to Britons proved futile, as the public at large branded them un-British.

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I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for Honors in History.

Dr. Chris Bischof, Thesis Director

Dr. Hugh A. West, Thesis Facilitator

Dr. John D. Treadway, Thesis Reader

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Introduction

Mr. Hugh Collier, born in 1924, was a curious boy, intrigued in the political happenings of 1930s Britain. When he was “about eleven or twelve years old,” around 1936, he recalled a time that “Oswald Mosley came to Buckhurst Hill in Essex,” where Hugh grew up as a child. This man, my Grandfather, now 91 years old, wrote me a letter earlier this year detailing his impressions of Sir Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists.

My Grandfather recalled with precision that “At Buckhurst Hill there was a corner of Queens Road and Victoria Road where the Salvation Army used to preach on Sundays, and also it was a place where local politicians and Councillors used to have a podium to give speeches to anyone gathered around them.” On a walk around town, he came across Mosley’s political meeting and “joined the crowd” to see what all the commotion was about. There, he “heard what I can remember to be quite a forceful speech.” My Grandfather recalled thinking that Mosley must have been “staying with some-one in the area” as there were “several notable families nearby” because he understood Mosley to be “quite a well-connected person,” with explicit ties to the upper class. My Grandfather was also struck by Mosley’s appearance “as one of these people, dressed in all black... in line with the black uniform of Mussolini,” and remembered Mosley also gave “a salute like that of Mussolini (similar to the Nazi salute).” As an outside observer, he saw Mussolini as the fascist leader whom “Oswald Mosley was first mostly connected,” but with the mention of the Nazi salute as well, he understood the BUF to be deeply rooted in and connected to *both* fascist dictatorships on the European continent. After a day of observing, my Grandfather returned home and told his mother where he had been. His mother immediately “gave me quite a ticking off,” which he concluded was “probably due to the fact

that my father had been in the first World War and was unfortunately wounded in both legs.”¹ My Grandfather’s immediate connection between his mother’s anger and his father’s military injury, revealed his family’s view of the BUF as militaristic and jingoistic.

This letter serves as an example of the outstanding stereotypical reputation of the BUF today as an elitist, un-British, violent political entity. Sir Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists, however, *did* enjoy a period of popularity in the politically, economically, and socially tumultuous mid-1930s. This period was for Britain one of uncertainty regarding its place in the world. The Depression and the rise of international economic competitors, like the United States, Japan, and Argentina, hurt Britain’s staple commercial industries, such as coal and textiles, which led to a staggering three million unemployed, a large percentage of which were veterans of World War One, decreased consumer consumption, and began “a long trajectory of . . . economic decline” for British industries.² Moreover, the Empire “was plagued with crises and challenges to its authority” from nations like “Ireland, India, and the Middle East” that sought freedom from the imperial motherland and the establishment of home democratic rule.³

Politically, Britain floundered under the lethargic and passive National Government, a coalition formed in Parliament between primarily the Conservative and Labour parties, founded in 1931. The “failure of [these] politicians to create a society which adequately compensated for the horror and trauma of the war produced a mood of frustrated anger” in Britain’s post-World

¹ Letter in the author’s possession, Hugh Collier to Kate Collier (September 14, 2015), 1.

² Mark Hayes, *The Ideology of Fascism and the Far Right in Britain* (Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2014), 204. For a comparative analysis of the drastically different ways Germany and Britain treated their veterans, see Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939*.

³ Paul W. Doerr, *British Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 91.

War I society.⁴ Under the fluctuating leadership of Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin, some felt Britain's government focused solely on foreign relations and the development of internationalist policies throughout the 1920s-1930s with the forever time-consuming, seemingly never-ending series of conferences: the League of Nations, the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the 1925 Locarno agreement, the 1930 London Naval Conference, the 1932-1933 World Disarmament Conference, and the 1933 London Economic Conference.⁵ In addition, The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 gave all men and women over the age of twenty-one the vote, thereby quadrupling the Edwardian electorate.⁶ This proved to be a drastic change to the British electorate, and, as a result, "political parties suddenly faced considerable new practical and organisational challenges in communicating with voters and mobilising support."⁷

Overall, many perceived the Government as a failure because it did not produce any tangible positive effects for domestic Britain and its peoples. For example, the National Government's inability to act upon the public's demand for domestic social reform – to further women's rights and provide solutions for the unemployment and Empire crises – only increased the already negative feelings toward the Government and led many "to seek new political answers."⁸ As a result, the British citizenry were susceptible to the utopian ideologies of the Communist and Fascist regimes prevalent on the European continent.

In studying the BUF, historians have tended to focus on the movement as mostly a passing comment in a broader study of British Fascism, lumping it together with all of Britain's

⁴ Hayes, *The Ideology of Fascism*, 205.

⁵ Doerr, *British Foreign Policy*, 78-108.

⁶ Adrian Bingham, "'An Organ of Uplift?' The Popular Press and Political Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journalism Studies* 14, no. 5 (October 2013), 651.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Hayes, *Ideology of Fascism*, 204.

smaller and weaker attempts to achieve a British Fascist State. D. S. Lewis concentrates on the rise and fall of the BUF from 1933 through 1940, thereby providing a broad account of the BUF's history. Richard Thurlow provides one of the first comprehensive portraits of British Fascism in the 1930s, as it traces Britain's fascist path from the British Fascists of the 1910s through the National Socialists of the 1960s. Thomas Linehan surveys the development of British Fascism between 1918 and 1939 and offers a distinct discussion about British Fascism's relationship with culture and anti-Semitism. Martin Pugh places the rise of British Fascism within its historical context of inter-war Britain and draws attention to the fact that British Fascism enjoyed a longer history in Britain than is usually recognized by other scholars. Mark Hayes provides a critical analysis of fascism as a political force by looking at the Italian and German fascist movements, investigates the British experience within it, and is underpinned by a rallying call to oppose fascism morally and politically. While every source addresses the BUF, almost all never thoroughly explored in its own right, as they focus on the BUF as a sub story in the grander narrative of the history of Fascism in Britain.⁹

This thesis, therefore, intends to explore exclusively the BUF's role in Britain's Fascist history and specifically seeks to answer the question how and why it came to be seen as a viable political entity to mainstream British society for the first year and a half of its creation from 1933 to 1934. The BUF admired Mussolini and Hitler's success in creating a new fascist future for their respective nations complete with political action and economic revival, and sought to create

⁹ The books listed in this discussion on the historiography of British Fascism are some of the most prominent resources in the field on the BUF. However, for further research that focus on specific aspects of the movement, see, for example, Julie Gottlieb, "The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Political Technology in the British Union of Fascists," Gary Love, "'What's the Big Idea?': Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism," and Michael Spurr, "'Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940," and G. C. Webber, "Patterns of Membership and Support for the British Union of Fascists."

their own distinctly British version of these Fascist movements. In their efforts to market Fascism as British to the public, they promised to solve all of Britain's problems: the muddling National Government, deterioration of the Empire, the decline of the agricultural industry, the continued rise of unemployment, the disassembling of the military, the new sense of freedom for women, and the rise of anti-Semitism. In doing so, they envisioned the British Fascist state as the antithesis of the current chaotic decline. Only under the discipline and guidance of British Fascism, the BUF argued, could Britain be restored to its former glory as a superior nation that had once ruled the world. But, this vision of a British Fascist State proved to be impossible to fulfill, as the promises made by the BUF were inherently paradoxical. I conclude my study of the BUF in June 1934 because of the significance of the infamous Olympia Riot held on June 7, 1934. In the wake of this event, at which thousands of fascists, communists, and anti-fascists clashed with spectacular violence in the Olympia exhibition center in London, the BUF movement was officially labeled extremist and un-British. While they attempted to combat this new reputation, the damage had already been done, as the BUF had already lost their credibility as a peaceful, constitutional movement.¹⁰ My project is rooted in a qualitative, close reading of *The Blackshirt* and *The Fascist Week*, from the start of *Blackshirt* in February 1933 through the transition to *Fascist Week* in November 1933 and the transition back to *Blackshirt* in June 1934.

¹⁰ Richard C. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain: A History, 1918-1985* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 101-102.

Background

Sir Oswald Mosley's political career was chaotic. He entered Parliament in 1918 as an M.P. of the Conservative Party and the youngest member at the age of 22.¹¹ Within the Conservative party, he found that his political priorities to fix the problems of "The League of Nations, Ireland, unemployment, and, most importantly, the reconstruction of Britain in the wake of the Great War" were not resolved, so he joined the non-coalition Liberal and Labour parties in 1920.¹² He desired to "transcend the party divide," but his goal to create a "centre party" of Parliament failed, so "Mosley stood as an Independent candidate in 1922 and 1923, before finally joining Labour in 1924."¹³ Within Parliament, Mosley became known not for his politics, but his political style. He was such a compelling orator, filled with passion to the point of anger, that he ultimately became known as one of the greatest parliamentary speakers of the twentieth century.¹⁴ The culmination of his Parliamentary political career came with his radical "Mosley Memorandum," where he argued to the Labour government throughout 1930 for "a planned, state-directed economic policy that prioritised the development of the home market in preference to Britain's traditional reliance on export trade."¹⁵ This memorandum was rejected, however, prompting Mosley to found the New Party on March 1, 1931.

The New Party was Mosley's short-lived experiment to create a rival political party within the British Parliamentary system. But, it saw no success at Parliament because "[i]t was a victim of its own contradictions," as a party that claimed action, but was "pre-mature and ill-

¹¹ Robert Skidelsky, "Mosley, Sir Oswald Ernald, sixth baronet (1896–1980)," in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (accessed February 17, 2016).

¹² Matthew Worley, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Skidelsky, "Mosley."

¹⁵ Worley, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party*, 34.

thought out” with seemingly contradictory policies.¹⁶ The New Party ultimately only served as Mosley’s stepping stone to British Fascism. During 1932, he traveled to Italy and met with Il Duce Benito Mussolini who inspired Mosley’s desire to create his own Fascist State in Britain.¹⁷ The New Party also saw the formation of Nupa, the New Party youth movement, which served as a defense force at political meetings. That summer, Mosley wrote his manifesto *The Greater Britain*, which sought to “prove, by analysis of the present situation and by constructive policy that the necessity for a fundamental change exists” in Britain.¹⁸ The manifesto also captured Mosley’s idealistic economic program to re-structure Britain along Fascist lines.

In order to realize his dreams of a Fascist Britain and unfazed by his continuous failed attempts at government, Mosley founded the British Union of Fascists on October 1, 1932. Though Mosley was the undeniable leader of the BUF, a variety of individuals, who had each found British Fascism from a variety of political, military, and socio-economic backgrounds, supported him. Ian Hope Dundas was Mosley’s chief of staff, Alexander Raven Thomson was “his leading intellectual,” A. K. Chesterton was “his best polemicist,” and William Joyce was “his leading speaker.”¹⁹ Mosley was also supported by his Blackshirts, a self-defense force that grew out of Nupa, of disciplined men and women who wore black uniforms and served as stewards at political meetings to protect fascists from (Communist) violence. The movement’s headquarters was the former Whitelands Teachers Training College in Chelsea, nicknamed the “Black House,” where “the leading officials had offices... and between 50 and 200 Blackshirts were in residence at various times.”²⁰ The movement also enjoyed between 1933 and 1934,

¹⁶ Worley, *Oswald Mosley*, 169.

¹⁷ Hayes, *Ideology of Fascism*, 212.

¹⁸ Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain* (London: Jeffcoats, 1932), 11.

¹⁹ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 98.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

seven months of continued, uncritical support from press baron Lord Rothermere who advertised and promoted BUF activities in his widely read newspapers, *Daily Mail*, *Sunday Dispatch*, *Sunday Pictorial*, and *Evening News*.²¹

In terms of BUF membership, “unfortunately next-to-nothing is known about the size or composition of membership prior to 1934,” although it is estimated that there were around 15,000 to 50,000 involved as either active or non-active members during the BUF’s peak in the first half of 1934.²² These members are thought to have been “primarily composed of professional and upper-middle-class supporters on the one hand and members of the working class (often unemployed) on the other.”²³ The movement’s “main areas of strength... appear to have been Yorkshire, Lancashire, London, East Anglia, the south and the south east with a smattering of interest in the Midlands,” in conjunction with isolated “small pockets of support in Cardiff, Bristol, and Newcastle.”²⁴ The momentum of the BUF grew so rapidly in such a short period of time in terms of not only numbers, but also in its appeal to multiple classes and in such diverse locations, that it seemed poised to continue to expand, a thought that excited some and scared others. But, even given the strong leadership team, the support of a major press newspaper, and a demographically varied membership, the question remains, how did Mosley and the BUF manage to convince the British public that British Fascism was the solution to their political, economic, and societal woes?

²¹ Ibid., 100; Martin Pugh, “The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate,” *The Historical Journal*, 41, no. 2 (1998), 530.

²² G. C. Webber, “Patterns of Membership and Support for the British Union of Fascists,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 4 (1984), 578.

²³ Ibid., 594.

²⁴ Ibid., 582.

The answer lies in the BUF's two newspaper outlets, *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week*. As "literacy and leisure time increased" during the interwar years, "reading a newspaper became an almost universal habit and new groups of readers emerged among women and the working class," which meant "fierce competition" between newspapers to attract these readers.²⁵ The BUF capitalized on the popular style of "New Journalism" in the late nineteenth early twentieth centuries, to appeal to a wide range of readers and remain competitive with other political propaganda outlets. Therefore, both *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week* featured

prominent headlines and images (including photography); a relative shift of emphasis from leading articles to timely news; an emphasis on brevity; and an expansion of... the contents beyond the mid-Victorian focus on parliamentary politics, to include all human-interest stories... and strip comics.²⁶

The front pages of the first editions of *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week* made use of these tactics with their eye-catching titles written in dynamic fonts and accompanied by the BUF's symbol, the fasces.²⁷ *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week* also featured photographs of Mosley in action seemingly shouting the headline "On to Fascist Revolution!" and a picture of London's glum streets to express the BUF's "Reflections on Armistice Day," respectively.²⁸ In addition, the respective authors both utilized short, simple paragraphs to comment on such timely issues as the US' supposed support of Mosley's arguments in the conclusion of a recent industrial survey and its relationship with Brazil. [See Images 1 and 2.]

²⁵ Sarah Newman and Matt Houlbrook, "Introduction," *Journalism Studies: Theory and Practice* 14, no. 5 (October 2013), 640.

²⁶ Mark Hampton, "The Political Cartoon as Educationalist Journalism: David Low's Portrayal of Mass Unemployment in Interwar Britain," *Journalism Studies* 14, no. 5 (October 2013), 682.

²⁷ The BUF changed their symbol in 1936 to the "Flash and Circle" to symbolize "action within unity."

²⁸ Sir Oswald Mosley, "On to Fascist Revolution!" *Blackshirt*, February, 1933, 1; "Lucifer," "Reflections on Armistice Day," *Fascist Week*, November 10-16, 1933, 1.

Image 1: The first issue of *Blackshirt*, February 1933.



Image 2: The first issue of *Fascist Week*, November 10-16, 1933.



Furthermore, the BUF sold both newspapers via local Blackshirt members, employing the accompanying new “sales techniques” of “contests, insurance schemes, and door-to-door salesmen.”²⁹ [See Image 3.] With the rise of political sensationalism, many of the BUF’s articles used “hyperbolic and sensational language” to describe “the clashes of key political personalities.”³⁰ This tendency towards sensationalism meant that the BUF’s style of journalism “was frequently crude and simplistic, trying to persuade readers to support [the BUF’s] predefined [Fascist] positions rather than form their own judgment.”³¹ As a result, the BUF enjoyed “a readership of somewhere around 22,000” throughout the 1930s.³²

²⁹ Hampton, “The Political Cartoon as Educationalist Journalism,” 682; “Blackshirt Sales Competition,” *Blackshirt*, June 29, 1934, 1.

³⁰ Bingham, “An Organ Of Uplift?” 654.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 655.

³² Webber, “Patterns of Membership and Support,” 579.

Image 3: *Blackshirt*, June 1, 1934, 5.



These newspapers represented the attempt by the BUF to appeal to not only members of the BUF, but also non-members and the broader British public. *Blackshirt* was the BUF's first such attempt, though it did not enjoy much success attracting non-fascist readers because it was powerfully aggressive and authoritative in its expression of Fascist political and economic policy with little emphasis on social issues. It also frequently utilized large black font, capitalization, and italics to drive home its message. While this newspaper was **“instrumental in arousing and stimulating in Great Britain an interest in Fascism... in the early days”** especially when **“membership was small,”** by the end of 1933, the BUF decided that this **“four-page paper... did not adequately fulfill the growing needs of those interested in”** the BUF.³³ As a result, they launched *Fascist Week* in November 1933. This transition marked the turning point for

³³ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, December 9-15, 1933, 2.

Blackshirt as it became the “**internal organ**” of the BUF, “**devoted principally to accounts of... Branch activities.**”³⁴ *Fascist Week*, on the other hand, was vital in the BUF’s attempt to appeal to the masses. It was intended explicitly for non-members, as the vehicle to explain with detail in a softened tone how Fascist policy was applicable to and could mold British life for the better. This periodical, therefore, focused on not only political considerations, but also economic and social issues, and advertised BUF meetings, events, and classes non-members could attend.

These BUF papers also each contained several recurring noms de plume that accompanied columns throughout this period. Both *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week* feature an Editorial column, political and economic cartoons by John Gilmour, and give space to letters from readers. In addition, the two utilized prominent authors, Mosley’s leading intellectual, Alexander Raven, and the so-called “Lucifer” and “Ajax.” “Lucifer” translated from the original Latin root as “light-bringing” or “the morning star.”³⁵ In this vein, the longer articles he wrote, typically in an aggressive and sarcastic tone on topics ranging from politics, foreign relations, international finance, and the press, exhorted the reader to wake up to the pressing need for British Fascism. “Ajax” in Greek mythology is the Trojan War hero who rescued the body of Achilles after his death.³⁶ As a symbol of strength and bravery, “Ajax” predominately attacked the press, which spread lies about the BUF, to rescue the public from these evil forces.³⁷

Blackshirt and *Fascist Week* also contained repeated columns in its weekly issues. “Shot and Shell” was framed by the significance of its title, which originated from the poem “The

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Lucifer.”

³⁶ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. “Ajax.”

³⁷ Ibid.

Charge of the Light Brigade,” written in 1855 by Alfred Lord Tennyson.³⁸ In the context of the poem, the terms “Shot” and “Shell” symbolized the violent and destructive force of war. The article thus served as explosive, quick-fire storm that attacked Parliamentary proceedings or the press. “Why he Joined!, Two Minute Talks” explained the promises of British Fascism, in regard to women, Communist violence, and unemployment, through a conversational and colloquial style between a new member of the Fascist Union of British Workers (FUBW), “George,” and an unnamed BUF member. “The Fascist Policy Re-Stated” briefly offered the main points of British Fascism under organized headings, such as Housing, Empire, or Aims for World Peace. “Current Cant and Fascist Fact,” by “Lucifer,” used brief quotes or statistics by politicians to poke fun at them and concluded each section with a rallying call for British Fascism to save Britain. “Mammon,” by John Cornhill, was framed by the significance of its title defined as “wealth, profit, possessions, etc., regarded as a false god or an evil influence,” so the reader knew that this section featured a discussion of the degrading influence of decadent and internationalist world economic policies on Britain.³⁹ “Westminster Speak-easy” equated Parliament with the American bars that illegally sold alcohol during the Prohibition era of 1920 and 1933, and snidely made fun of Parliamentary discussions and proceedings. “Wisdom of the Ancients” always accompanied “Westminster Speak-easy” and the title alluded to Francis Bacon’s “De Sapientia Veterum,” published in 1609, a text in which he explained his interpretations of ancient myths.⁴⁰ This section featured quotes from prominent politicians with humorous subheadings to critique these politicians’ statements as self-explanatory, unnecessary, and behind the times. “Pepys in Fascism,” by G. C. M., discussed Fascist policy through the story-telling lens of

³⁸ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

³⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Mammon.”

⁴⁰ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. "Francis Bacon, Viscount Saint Alban, Baron Verulam.”

Samuel Pepys, a naval officer who lived from 1633 to 1703 and recorded tales of his experiences between 1660 and 1669.⁴¹ Both of these references would have been recognizable to the British public as Bacon's essays were his second most popular text and Pepys' account of life at sea was infamous.

Mosley's first attempt to step outside the British political mainstream came with his New Party in 1931, which quickly transformed into the BUF in 1932. Here, the BUF's adoption of the "Fascist" label facilitated the BUF's rapid growth in momentum, in both membership and support from prominent British individuals, and was supplemented by the BUF's capitalization of "New Journalism" in *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week*.

⁴¹ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. "Samuel Pepys."

Section One: the BUF, Fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany

Europe in the interwar period saw the successful birth and development of two fascist continental dictatorships, both of which the BUF admired immensely, though it did not seek to merely copy them in Britain. Interwar Italy was wracked political and economic difficulties. It was divided between the industrialized, educated north and the agricultural, illiterate south, and growing unemployment only intensified this issues.⁴² It did not help that the elderly Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti's government was so badly divided that it was unable to come up with a unified course of action, which resulted in runaway inflation and class antagonisms going unchecked.⁴³ Benito Mussolini rose to power in 1922 and succeeded because he offered the people a "third course which was neither liberal nor Marxist, but nationalistic and authoritarian instead."⁴⁴

The BUF idolized Mussolini's ability to rescue Italy from the weak Italian Government and his successful formation of the Italian Corporate State. They expressed their admiration in a two page feature, where the BUF praised Mussolini's rise, the establishment of the Corporate or Guild State in 1925, the passage of the Law Governing Collective Labour Relations in 1926, the formation of thirteen National Confederations with twelve of these linked under six National Corporations, the development of Labour Courts, the creation of a Ministry of Corporations, the passage of La Carta del Lavoro (The Italian Labour Charter), the creation of the Chamber of Deputies, and, most recently, the creation of the National Council of Corporations in 1930.⁴⁵ Within the Ministry of Corporations, the BUF was most impressed with the National Fascist

⁴² Bruce Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 23, 25.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁵ "The Corporate State," *Blackshirt*, October 28-November 3, 1933, 1.

Trade Union of Doctors, which provided equal representation to male experts in the fields of “medicine, surgery, public health, venereology, and diseases of women” so that “every matter of medical importance considered by the Italian Parliament is critically discussed.”⁴⁶ The BUF specifically stressed the importance of La Carta del Lavoro that ensured “privileges and securities” for Italian workers they had not previously enjoyed, such as “**compensation for dismissal,**” power to the Unions, and maternity leave for women through this legislation’s reform of Private Enterprise, Collective Labour Contracts, Labour Exchanges, and Insurance and Education.⁴⁷ The BUF also admired Mussolini’s Dopo Lavoro, an after-work system that afforded workers a club life, a Child Welfare system, and the Ballila and Avanguardista organizations that guaranteed “the child of the prince marches beside the child of the peasant in the classless fraternity of Fascism.”⁴⁸ Corporate Italy also provided the Italians with slum clearance, the industrialization of agriculture, and new public works initiatives.⁴⁹

The BUF were also amazed with the Italian people who rejected a decadent lifestyle. They did not attend the luxurious pleasures of the city, traveled on foot whenever possible, wore the simple blackshirt uniform at official ceremonies, listened to the most amount of people with the greatest amount of patience and kindness, and lastly attended workmens’ meetings.⁵⁰ Under Mussolini’s active leadership and guidance, the BUF argued, Il “Duce, has given the whole world a striking proof of what faith, struggle, sacrifice and rapid progress can be achieved by a people inspired by a national ideal” because, they understood, all of Italy’s problems had been

⁴⁶ A London Specialist, “Crying Scandal of Illness and Disease,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 8.

⁴⁷ Alexander Raven, “Greater Power to the Trade Unions,” *Fascist Week*, December 15-21, 1933, 7.

⁴⁸ “Visit to Rome,” *Blackshirt*, May 1, 1933, 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.; “Praise for Italy’s Bold Experiment,” *Fascist Week*, November 10-16, 1933, 5.

⁵⁰ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, July 29-August 4, 1933, 2.

resolved, class war had been brought to an end, and there was a distinct increase in Italy's economic production.⁵¹ The BUF ultimately praised Mussolini's ability to establish "on unshakable basis the power of Fascism in Italy" while avoiding any "conflict with Jews, with Church, with sectional interests of any kind."⁵²

With this overt admiration of Mussolini and Fascist Italy, it might seem the BUF merely mimicked it. They stated that just as Mussolini had overthrown "Giolitti and his National Government" who "had their little hour before Fascism," the BUF similarly would overcome "the old trick of [Britain's] National Government" to achieve power.⁵³ The BUF also promised that just as in Italy where lockouts are illegal, "one of the first acts of Fascism in Britain will be to make them illegal here."⁵⁴ Similarly, the BUF stated they gained "information and inspiration" from Mosley's visit to Rome to see the Fascist Exhibition because they were able to "study and to appreciate the constructive results of ten years of Fascism" firsthand.⁵⁵ The BUF's report of this visit also featured a "*Special Rome Pictorial Supplement*," which displayed ten pictures of Mosley's trip.⁵⁶ Although the quality of the pictures has suffered degradation over time, the captions revealed the images were of the "Arrival in Rome of British Representative," the "Birth of Rome Celebrations," Salute given to the B.U.F. flag," the "Italian leader and Sir O. Mosley together at Sports Display," among many others. [See Image 4.] While it seemed that the BUF was merely attempting to copy the Italian Fascist movement, they stated specifically that this visit was not "to surrender our British independence to Italy" and "'get our orders.'" This visit instead, the BUF argued, solidified the BUF's "deep and abiding friendship with the Fascist

⁵¹ "Visit to Rome," *Blackshirt*, 1; "Europe must Lead," *Blackshirt*, July 8-14, 1933, 4.

⁵² "Fascism and the Jews," *Blackshirt*, April 1, 1933, 1.

⁵³ "Brutal Unemployment Swindle," *Blackshirt*, March, 1933, 1.

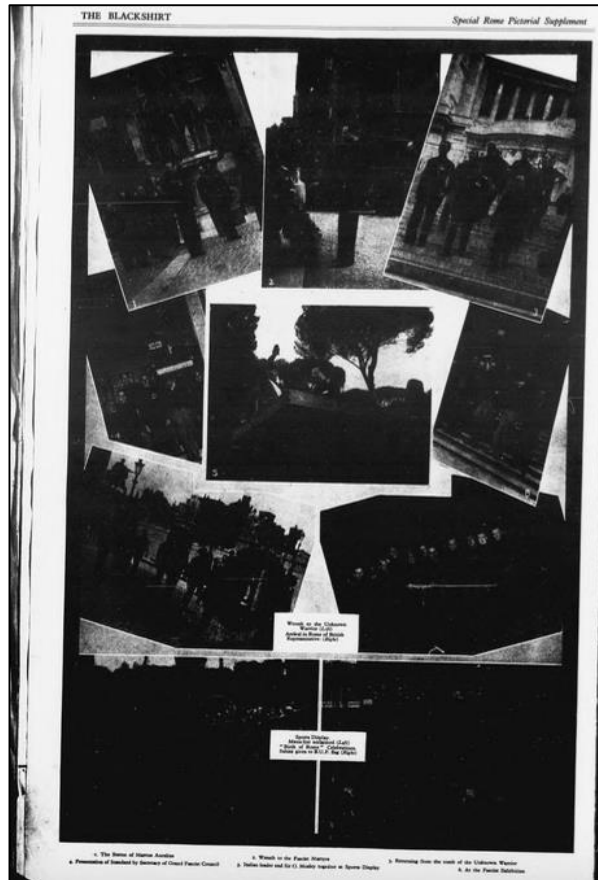
⁵⁴ "Lucifer," "Had for Mugs!" *Blackshirt*, September 30-October 6, 1933, 4.

⁵⁵ "Visit to Rome," *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁵⁶ "Special Rome Pictorial Supplement," *Blackshirt*, May 1, 1933. n.p.

movement of Italy” which “is based on the solid rock of friendship between men who hold in common a vast conception and a great ideal.”⁵⁷ The BUF insisted that British Fascism was British despite its relationship with Mussolini and Fascist Italy, which they maintained was formed purely on the basis of friendship.

Image 4: *Special Rome Pictorial Supplement, Blackshirt*, May 1, 1933, np.



Interwar Germany was, similarly, a political and economic wreck. The Great Depression hit Germany hard and millions went unemployed. Also fresh on the German public’s mind was Germany’s humiliating defeat in World War I and the subsequent resentment over the Treaty of Versailles.⁵⁸ And to top it off, the Weimar Republic government suffered under the successive

⁵⁷ “Visit to Rome,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁵⁸ Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini*, 40-42.

inactive “National Governments, headed by relatively able men, such as Erzberger, Rathenau, Stresemann, Brüning, and von Schleicher.”⁵⁹ These conditions facilitated Adolf Hitler’s legal rise to power and he was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933. The BUF was particularly impressed by the way in which Hitler and the Nazi party persevered despite negative press. Early in 1933, Hitler “was accused... of being the helpless prisoner of the Nationalists” and called “a fool... a weakling, and a coward who shrank from action.”⁶⁰ The BUF commended Hitler for knowing “how to wait and... how to strike,” thereby making the press look “foolish” when he successfully established a Fascist Germany legally through constitutional means.⁶¹ The BUF saw this perseverance as “an instructive lesson for Fascism” in Britain.⁶² The BUF currently faced the criticisms of the Old Gang Press, which did not “believe in the reality of Fascism or in its seizure of power” until “the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour,” and they believed Germany’s ability to prove the Press wrong foreshadowed how the BUF would do the same.⁶³

The BUF also justified and defended Nazi anti-Semitic policies and actions. The BUF acknowledged that in the early days of Nazi Germany there was “relatively mild persecution of a few thousand Jews” and an “increase in violence, struggle, and political ferocity,” but the BUF justified this violence because Germany had been through a series of traumatic National Governments and a near collapse of the State before reaching its salvation in Fascism.⁶⁴ Moreover, the Jews should be persecuted, the BUF argued, because they had “atrociously murdered in ambush and even in the home,” hundreds of “the bravest and finest young men in

⁵⁹ “Brutal Unemployment Swindle,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁶⁰ “Hitler Dumfounds the Little Critics,” *Blackshirt*, July 1-7, 1933, 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Sir Oswald Mosley, “Hitler, the New Man of Germany,” *Blackshirt*, March, 1933, 2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ “Lucifer,” “Squeaks from the Democrats,” *Blackshirt*, May 16, 1933, 2; “Fascism and the Jews,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

Germany.”⁶⁵ The BUF also pointed out that Nazi Germany was not taking “revenge” on the Jews because of their race or religion, but because the Jews were “conspicuously associated at one extreme with the Communist and Socialist movements, and at the other extreme with International Finance,” aka the “two main enemies of the Fascist movement,” so it made sense that “[i]n that struggle, Jews have probably been killed or injured.”⁶⁶ For example, the BUF’s Jewish Correspondent in Germany reported that the reason two Breslau Jews disappeared was because “THEY WERE COMMUNISTS,” not because they were Jews.⁶⁷

To see for themselves the current situation in Nazi Germany, the BUF sent Alexander Raven whose report appealed to the greater British public because it suggested Germany’s treatment of the Jews was as humane as possible, given the current violence.⁶⁸ In comparison with his last trip to Germany six years ago, Raven stated that the nation was the same with “even the Jewish shops and large department stores such as Tietz and Wertheim... trading as usual.” The only noticeable difference, he stated, was “the number of black, white, and red flags, and great swastika banners, with which the streets were decorated, and the few, very few, brown shirts to be seen here and there.” Raven also visited the “sensational... ‘Konzentrationslager’” – concentration camps. He described these camps as “very clean and tidy” with “very fit and well” men who in no way showed signs of “bruising or ill-treatment” and worked to build “a new open air swimming bath” and “were housed in army huts.” Raven particularly admired the “rough and ready humanity of the Nazi leaders” who “made the decision... on the spot to release one of the heftiest and most violent Communist fighters,” so the prisoner could return home and support his large family. Raven concluded that Nazi Germany was “neither the Germany of post-war

⁶⁵ “Fascism and the Jews,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Jewish Correspondent, “Save us from our Friends,” *Blackshirt*, April 17, 1933, 3.

⁶⁸ Alexander Raven, “The Human Side of Hitlerism,” *Blackshirt*, July 15-22, 1933, 1.

humiliation, nor the Germany of pre-war aggression, but instead a “more human Germany” which made him “feel at home.”⁶⁹ Therefore, there was no need, the BUF argued, for Ellen Wilkinson’s “World Committee for Victims of German Fascism,” to protect from persecution those Jews like Albert Einstein, whose genius was even negated by the BUF because his “two theories of Relativity” were so obviously and “dangerously near the border line between sense and nonsense.”⁷⁰

A common thread in the BUF’s admiration of both continental Fascist nations was the BUF’s praise for the two dictators’ ability to produce promote peace, an important goal for Britain even at the height of its imperial power.⁷¹ They praised Mussolini for his alternative to the fumbling League of Nations called “Four Power Pact,” which would remove power from the unworthy minority countries represented in the League of Nations, and give equal power to solely Italy, Germany, Britain, and France.⁷² Similarly, they admired Hitler’s calm and cold determination to preserve European peace at all costs to ensure that “the destruction of European civilisation and the triumph of Communist anarchy” would never occur.⁷³ Even after Germany’s withdrawal from both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations in early October 1933, the BUF trusted that “Germany regarded herself as still bound by the pledge she gave to reduce her armaments to the prescribed level” because “Dr. Goebbels, who obviously speaks with authority” reported that was the case.⁷⁴ The BUF was, overall, in pure admiration of the

⁶⁹ Ibid, 4.

⁷⁰ “Iconoclast,” “The Truth about Einstein,” *Blackshirt*, October 14-20, 1933, 2.

⁷¹ On the role of “Pax Britannica” in Britain’s history, see Barry Gough, *Pax Britannica: Ruling the Waves and Keeping the Peace before Armageddon* and Rebecca Berens Matzke, *Deterrence through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy under Pax Britannica*.

⁷² “Who are the War-Mongers Now?” *Blackshirt*, June 1, 1933, 1.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Iconoclast,” “The Truth about Einstein,” *Blackshirt*, 2.

“Fascist leadership in two great countries,” Mussolini, the “skilled architect of European peace” in Fascist Italy, and Hitler who “checks the rising war storm of the world” in Nazi Germany.⁷⁵

Not only were the Fascist dictators in favor of peace, but they also, the BUF argued, ensured the will of the people was executed swiftly and effectively. While “the Socialist and the Capitalist Press” of Britain continued to denounce Mussolini and Hitler for “dictating their own will against the wishes” of their respective nations, the BUF knew this to be untrue.⁷⁶ They argued that “the forty-two millions of the Italian people” did not “cower in terror before Mussolini,” just like the “sixty-two millions of the German people” did not “tremble beneath the tyrannous yoke of Hitler.” The notion that the opposite were true “is a self-evident absurdity,” according to the BUF.⁷⁷ In Germany, the results of the most recent election poll “where 39,638,789” voted in favor of the Nazi Government after “a nine months’ trial,” the BUF argued, only reinforced their stance that Hitler was the people’s choice.⁷⁸ The BUF also admired Hitler for, supposedly, not taking a salary from his job as Chancellor, and instead setting “up a special committee to distribute it periodically among the widows of policemen and other women whose husbands were killed by Communists.”⁷⁹ The BUF insisted that these men “are not dictators, but leaders” of “enthusiastic and determined masses of men and women bound together by a voluntary discipline to secure the regeneration of their country.”⁸⁰ They were simply “men

⁷⁵ “Who are the War-Mongers Now?” *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁷⁶ “Leadership and Dictatorship,” *Blackshirt*, September 23-29, 1933, 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ “Hitler’s Poll,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 4.

⁷⁹ “Germany under the Socialists,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 5.

⁸⁰ “Leadership and Dictatorship,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

who go ahead and do the job” where their “authority rests on their ability to lead and to inspire others with their determination.”⁸¹

So that the British people may have the opportunity to see the nations that the BUF admired so deeply, the BUF offered “Tours to Fascist Countries,” where Blackshirts and those interested in the movement could “visit Germany and Italy under the auspices of the Union.”⁸² The advertisement specified the trip would be fifteen days so the BUF members could “see something of the Hitler movement at first hand, as well as to see in Italy the actual working of a Corporate State.”⁸³ To facilitate these trips, the BUF advertised evening “Classes in Italian and German,” so that Blackshirts could obtain a “high degree of efficiency, both in speaking, understanding, reading and writing.”⁸⁴ These BUF members would then “form a nucleus of members who, whenever necessity arises can act as liaison officers between the foreign and the British Fascist organisations, or act as interpreters, correspondents, etc.”⁸⁵ In addition, the BUF also hosted visitors from these two Fascist nations.⁸⁶ These reciprocal trips were not for the BUF about merely copying the continental fascist movements, but rather about forming “business and personal friendship[s]” with these nations so that they may communicate and learn from one another as equals.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² “Tours to Fascist Countries,” *Blackshirt*, April 1, 1933, 4.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ “Classes in Italian and German,” *Blackshirt*, October 21-27, 1933, 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, August 19-25, 1933, 2.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Section Two: The Promises of a British Fascist State

While these Fascist dictators and nations influenced Mosley, he understood the need to market British Fascism as distinctly British if he and the BUF were going to be seen as a viable option by the British public. He promised on the front page of the very first issue of *Blackshirt* that the BUF sought “to solve our British problems,” of a muddling National Government, the disintegration of the British Empire, the decline of the agricultural industry, the increasing rise in unemployment, the forced disarmament of the British Royal Air Force and Navy, and the societal questions about the newly enfranchised women and the Jews, “by British methods” and in good “British form.”⁸⁸ The new British Fascist state would enable Britain to again become a powerful nation, respected by all others, as it once was during the peak of Britain’s prosperity and the “noblest period of our history – the Tudor and early Stuart epoch.”⁸⁹ Britain would flourish under fascist leadership, which would provide an economic restructuring of government and a cohesive society, free from selfish individualism, decadence, and economic threat. The Empire would again become the jewel of the British nation and remain subservient to British needs and Britain would protect its people and the Empire with a newly restored and reinvigorated military. This vision of the British Fascist State occasionally took the name the Corporate State. While this would appear to be a direct copy of Mussolini’s Italian Corporate State, Mosley assured the people that it was “British to the core,” for he was the first to advance the concept in his Speech of Resignation, the “Mosley Memorandum,” from Parliament in

⁸⁸ Sir Oswald Mosley, “On to Fascist Revolution,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁸⁹ Alexander Raven, “Aristocracy of Worth,” *Fascist Week*, February 2-8, 1934, 4.

1930.⁹⁰ The BUF ultimately promised salvation for Britain because the nation was “worth working for, and if needs be dying for.”⁹¹

Politics and Economics

The BUF understood British politics and economics as they were, to be useless. Parliament was full of talk with no action, where Members of Parliament only advocated for policies that would benefit their party, not the nation as a whole. The people’s wishes were seemingly overlooked as the government focused on international policies and conferences instead of Britain’s domestic economic issues, like the continued cut of wages and salaries, the strike, the lockout, unemployment, and even a lack of public health reform. The BUF sought to implement a vision for society to remedy this chaotic situation.

The seed for this vision came from Mosley’s manifesto *The Greater Britain*, where he detailed the workings of British Fascist State. He specified that the British monarchy would remain intact under British Fascism and that the BUF sought to peacefully gain power through constitutional means. It would then establish the British Fascist State, which would be organized into corporations run by the producers of the economy, whom he identified as both workers and employers. In terms of Parliament, the British Fascist State would replace the House of Commons with locally elected Fascist executive M.P.’s and replace the House of Lords with a Second Chamber of Specialists, where the National Council of corporations would reside. Essentially, the traditional framework of Parliament remained the same, except it was re-organized along economic lines to promote individuals with leadership skills and expertise in their field, not social status. Within the National Council, the occupational franchise would allow

⁹⁰ “The Call to Youth,” *Blackshirt*, June 1, 1933, 2; “An ‘Insulated’ Britain,” *Blackshirt*, July 8-14, 1933, 1.

⁹¹ “Pat of the Hills,” “Out on the Open Road,” *Fascist Week*, November 10-16, 1933, 8.

each man and woman to vote within his or her appropriate economic corporation, thereby eliminating party warfare. The individuals elected would work together harmoniously, and in the process eliminate class warfare and the need for trade unions. He also explained the role of these individuals using the analogy of the human body; just as cells work for the greater good of the human body, so too would individuals work for the greater good of the State.⁹²

This 1932 text is important as it introduced the type of vague, almost utopian rhetoric and promises used throughout *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week*. The BUF's expression in their newspapers of what the British Fascist State could do for the British people within these newspapers was malleable. The front page of the first issue of *Blackshirt* written by Mosley himself in February 1933 promised the public that British Fascism was the superior alternative to the current muddling National Government and violent Communist threat. To combat worries that the BUF's rise to power would be violent, similar to the rise of the continental Fascist regimes, Mosley reassured the public that the BUF would come to power peacefully through a constitutional movement.⁹³ After the BUF achieved power, they would install an authoritative, rationalized Government free from party politics based on the occupational franchise. It would be given the power to act and protect free speech through the use of the Fascist Defense Force.⁹⁴ Here, Mosley and the newspaper's dipped into British Fascist policy slowly but surely, appealing to the people with promises for how British Fascism would solve their problems, as a hook to reel the reader in.

⁹² Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 26-36.

⁹³ Sir Oswald Mosley, "On to Fascist Revolution!" *Blackshirt*, 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

One of the biggest topics of discussion in the BUF newspapers in 1933 was the National Government's policies of wage and salary cutting as Britain's way out of the Depression.⁹⁵ As these policies left many Britons angry at their inability to find a job, let alone work that paid a decent salary so they could enjoy a better standard of living, the BUF promised they would do away with the "decaying and decadent" government.⁹⁶ In its place, the BUF proposed a vision of the British Fascist State in which "industry will be divided into self-governing areas, each under an industrial corporation, on which will be represented employers', workers', and consumers' interests."⁹⁷ This organization of government would "systematically... increase wages, salaries, and the standard of life over the whole area of industry" in order to increase Britain's power to produce, so the people have a greater ability to consume, while also eliminating "the barbarous weapons of class war, the strike and the lock-out."⁹⁸ As the BUF realized the workers needed economic protection, they sought to appeal to them with a British Fascist State organized along economic lines. How it would actually protect the worker in a successful and plausible manner was another question, and remained vague throughout the BUF's discussion of their vision for a Fascist Britain.

To illustrate the ability of the British Fascist State to solve real world economic problems, the BUF seized upon a coal strike in South Wales in mid-1933. The 1920s had been an era of strikes, including the well-known General Strike of 1926. The Trades Union Congress undertook this strike in support of the nation's coal miners who were in a bitter dispute with the mine

⁹⁵ "Wage Cutting is Suicidal," *Blackshirt*, February, 1933, 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ "The Battle against Wage and Salary Cuts," *Blackshirt*, 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

owners over wages.⁹⁹ Similarly, this 1933 strike was over the same disagreement. While the BUF acknowledged, “the affair [of 1933] is now settled by negotiation” at the time this edition was released in late August, this did not stop them from violently criticizing the strike on the grounds “that it should never have been allowed to occur!”¹⁰⁰ The BUF pointed out the discrepancy in the flow of communication between the workers and the head of the firm: the former claimed they requested “direct negotiation” and the latter claimed “he was never approached.” The BUF promised in heavy black type “**the Industrial Corporations**” would open up the lines of communication between workers and employers and even create “**an organisation which will PREVENT any disputes from reaching such dimensions as to interfere with the progress of industry.**”¹⁰¹ Here, the idea of British Fascist State suddenly took on another “organization,” which would be able to forever solve the issues of the strike and the lockout. What made this proposal distinctly British was the BUF’s decision to employ arbitration techniques whereby the Britons involved would be able to discuss and reach a conclusion amongst each other instead of the BUF dictating policy, which was what was happening in the continental Fascist regimes. Ultimately, the BUF argued, until the corporate organization was applied in Britain, Britain would be punctured with strikes and lockouts.

The BUF also criticized the National Government for seemingly solely concerning themselves with compromise and the talk of old men at international conferences. They ridiculed the “Parliamentary farce” of the “pathetic and ridiculous” National Government standing “united for national surrender” via its participation in “the flabby international” conferences of one after

⁹⁹ Martin Pugh, *"Hurrah for the Blackshirts!": Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (London: Jonathon Cape, 2005), 92.

¹⁰⁰ “Fascism and the Anthracite Strike,” *Blackshirt*, August 26-September 1, 1933, 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

another.¹⁰² In particular, hot topics of the latter half of 1933 were two such international conferences: the World Economic Conference and Labour Party's Hastings Conference. The BUF took issue with both. In critique of the World Economic Conference held in June at The Geological Society of London, the BUF attacked these new globally driven policies to raise prices with inflation without raising wages and salaries, which, they argued, would only spur further British unemployment.¹⁰³ As a counterpoint, the BUF promised the people that they would also somehow provide "a more plentiful supply of credit" that would go to the "right quarter, namely, productive industry" and would eliminate speculation "by a rigorous control of Stock Exchange Operations."¹⁰⁴ This vague promise illustrated the BUF's inability to propose practical solutions and their tendency to fall back on sensationalist rhetoric to play on Britons' anxieties about economic competition from abroad. A British Fascist State would not only raise salaries and wages, but also take on a larger financial role to protect Britain from any and all internationalist threats.

To illustrate their decisive opinions on the World Economic Conference, the BUF produced a cartoon titled "Public View Day at the Worrrld Economic Conference," by John Gilmour.¹⁰⁵ [See Image 5.] Because this conference was held at the Geological Society, it became an easy target for the BUF to mock, and so this cartoon depicted the "Royal Geological Society, Exhibition of Political Fossils." It featured literally fossilized versions of the National Government's most prominent politicians (and the BUF's favorites to poke fun at), including Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, Secretary of State for War, Viscount Hailsham, President of

¹⁰² "Brutal Unemployment Swindle," *Blackshirt*, 1; "Only Organised Nations Can Kill Depression," *Blackshirt*, March 18, 1933, 2.

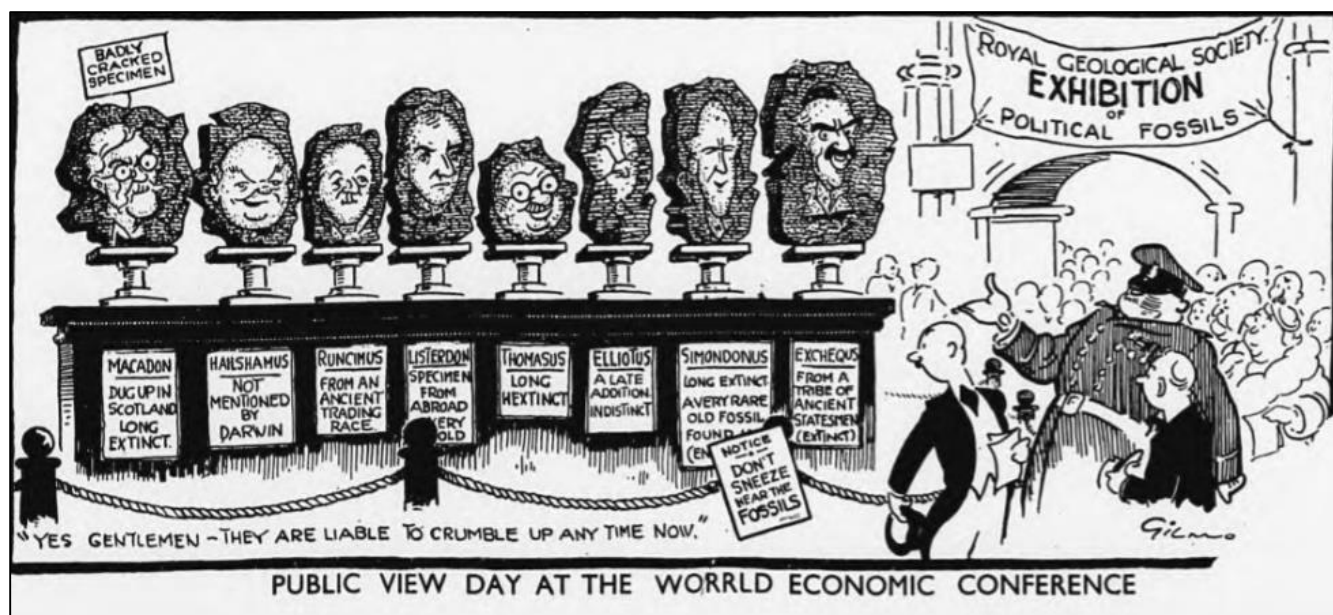
¹⁰³ Sir Oswald Mosley, "Prices Up Wages Down," *Blackshirt*, July 1-7, 1933, 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ John Gilmour, "Public View Day at the Worrrld Economic Conference," *Blackshirt*, July 8-14, 1933, 3.

the Board of Agriculture, Viscount Runciman of Doxford, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Viscount Simon. Text under each of these fossils added some dry, quite British humorous barbs: “Macadon, Dug Up in Scotland Long Extinct, Hailshamus, Not Mentioned by Darwin, Runcimus, From an Ancient Trading Race,” and “Simondonus, Long Extinct. A Very Rare Old Fossil Found.” Macdonald’s fossil also had an additional sign that read “Badly Cracked Specimen,” a play on the double meaning of the word “cracked.” Beneath the banner on the far right of the image, was a policeman who explained to two onlookers “Yes gentlemen – they are liable to crumble any time now,” illuminating the BUF’s prediction and hope for the imminent fall from power of the National Government. By representing Britain’s current “Old Gang” as crumbling, fossilized, extinct individuals, this cartoon attempted to position the BUF as a youthful movement.¹⁰⁶

Image 5: *Blackshirt*, July 8-14, 1933, 3.



¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

The BUF also attacked the Labour Party's Hastings Conference, which aimed to figure out and implement policies to actively eliminate the "endless talk, obstruction and delay" in Parliament.¹⁰⁷ Despite the Labour Party's goal, the BUF reported the Hastings Conference, which they mockingly nicknamed "the mothers' meeting," ironically only produced "futile discussion and compromise" and zero "effective action." In fact, the BUF claimed that the only "new" proposal brought forward by the Labour Party at this conference was actually "a stale imitation" of the New Party's "Emergency Powers Act under which a Government can proceed by Orders." The BUF made it clear that the Labour party had in fact stolen Mosley's original plan out of their inability to come up with a creative new solution to Britain's current Parliamentary situation. The BUF then promised that only British Fascism could remedy the situation. Under the British Fascist State, Parliament would be elected "on an occupational franchise, under which men and women would vote within their own industries with a full knowledge of the personnel and subjects with which they were dealing," thereby abolishing party politics. As a result, "the function of M.P.'s would be to act as leaders in their own localities" who would "advance constructive criticism based on practical experience" to Parliament.¹⁰⁸ Here, the BUF proposed a policy that promised arbitration and mediation, which, they argued, was the only solution to Britain's problems in their efforts to appeal to the British public. In addition, curiously, the rhetoric of *The Greater Britain*, which referred to the government as the "National Council" and "Second Chamber of Specialists" under the British Fascist State, has disappeared in this article and been replaced by the term "Parliament." The BUF's rejection of the original 1932 terminology was an effort to work within the traditional British political framework to

¹⁰⁷ "Labour Runs Away Again," *Blackshirt*, October 14-20, 1933, 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

appeal to a citizenry clearly unprepared for the level of radicalness that the BUF had originally demanded.

Another major concern of the British people was the insufficiency of Britain's post-World War I public health system.¹⁰⁹ Many veterans, along with the general population, suffered from diseases, like tuberculosis or poliomyelitis, and infections due to unsanitary living and working conditions. The BUF blamed the National Government's "inadequate representation allocated to medicine in Parliament" because the lack of "specialists" had directly caused "the crying scandals of illness and disease, rampant in Great Britain to-day."¹¹⁰ To combat this, the BUF promised to save the British people literally from disease and illness. A Fascist Britain would give "all branches of medicine and science... the necessary authority and position to enable them to assume a position of great importance in the government of the Greater Britain." In doing so, the BUF appealed to those who were sick or to those with family members or friends who were suffering from illness by ensuring that a Fascist Britain would include medical experts at the heart of its government. The BUF understood that Britain was war-weary, and focused on the growth of medicinal resources rather than militarism. They even mocked the militarism of the original *Iliad* by quoting Alexander Pope's *Iliad*, "*A wise physician skilled our wounds to heal/ Is more than armies to the common weal*," suggesting that it was not the military, but doctors that Britain valued and needed. This reference to Alexander Pope's satirical translation of Homer's *Iliad*, famous in the late 1700s, would be well known to much of the public as this version of the *Iliad* is written in layman's terms.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ For a detailed discussion of the insufficiency of Britain's post-World War I public health system, see Cohen, *The War Come Home*.

¹¹⁰ A London Specialist, "Crying Scandal of Illness and Disease," *Fascist Week*, 8.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.

Overall, the BUF promised the public “Britain’s awakening.”¹¹² This awakening would consist of a “Fascist revolution” with “the power of action for Fascism” and “the building of the corporate State.”¹¹³ Not only did the BUF seek to reorganize Parliament to focus on Britain’s domestic economic issues, but by the end of 1934, it also promised to raise salaries and wages, prevent strikes and lockouts, regulate the Stock Exchange, and provide political power for doctors. The British Fascist State would be the ultimate remedy to Britain’s current chaos.

Empire

Britain’s Empire was in a state of continued deterioration. During the interwar period, Ireland achieved independence in 1921, the Indian independence movement heated up, Palestine experienced civil unrest, and Nigeria and other African colonies saw protests against British authority that shaded into independence movements. Much of the public felt there was a real threat of loss of the entirety of the Empire at this moment. The BUF, therefore, promised Britain that the British Fascist State would hold on to the Empire at any cost, as it had served as a source of pride and superiority for the nation. The continued occupation of the Empire was justified on the grounds that the British race was inherently superior, Britain had earned the right to rule through the violent exploration undergone to secure these colonies, historically Britain had provided the Empire with the tools to modernize, and that Britain protected it from a return to primitivism. The British Fascist State under a policy of economic nationalism imagined the Empire as an economic resource that would forever be subservient to Britain’s economic needs; it would provide foodstuffs and raw materials and purchase Britain’s manufactured goods. This

¹¹² “Brutal Unemployment Swindle,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; “Only Organised Nations Can Kill Depression,” *Blackshirt*, 2.

policy would also guarantee the farmer and the unemployed a better life and peace for Britain and its Empire.

The BUF believed that the “virile race” of Britons was superior because in making “modern Britain, the globe has given... its best... in a varied but brilliant blending,” of the Romans, Nordics, Teuton, and Norman.¹¹⁴ This made the British “a composite product of the greatest races of the earth,” complete with men of a “versatile genius” who had “enabled us to found the greatest Empire in the world.”¹¹⁵ The BUF paid homage to such Imperial founders and agents as Drake, Raleigh, Hawkings, Clives, Warren Hastings, Cook, and Wolfe, men who “sweated and bled and starved and thirsted, and [ventured] across the seas and through the storms and through the agony of great battles” to build “New Britains out of swamps and forests and deserts and great wildernesses.”¹¹⁶ In the BUF’s eyes, the Empire was simply Britain’s racial inheritance. The BUF, in particular, was especially passionate about the relationship between Britain and its most prominent colony, India. When the BUF learned of the White Paper of 1933, which outlined the National Government’s future plans to transfer “the maintenance of law and order” to “Indian politicians,” they reacted with pure horror.¹¹⁷ The BUF objected to it on the grounds that Britain had

a right to be in India...because modern India owes everything to British rule. Irrigation, railways, schools, universities, hospitals, impartial justice, every amenity which makes modern life possible for any section of the inhabitants of India was conferred by the energy of British Government.¹¹⁸

Moreover, the BUF stated Britain had a “duty to stay there” and govern because, without it, India would succumb to “unthinkable atrocities... ending in a relapse into barbarism.” Accompanying

¹¹⁴ “Britain for the British,” *Blackshirt*, September 30-October 6, 1933, 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁶ “Pink Dreams in a Yellow Jacket,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 7.

¹¹⁷ Special Correspondent, “The Indian Infamy,” *Blackshirt*, April 1, 1933, 4.

¹¹⁸ Oswald Mosley, “India a Victim of Muddle,” *Fascist Week*, February 2-8, 1934, 5.

this article was an image that illustrated the “Havoc” already “wrought in Cawnpore, showing the residence of a Hindu wrecked and looted by Mohammedans.” [See Image 6.] By using an image of rioting in Cawnpore, the BUF called upon Britons’ memory of India’s allegedly barbaric and immoral Rebellion of 1857 against the rule of the British East India Company, where Indians were said to have brutally murdered women and children.¹¹⁹ The BUF warned “with the publication of the Indian White Paper, the worst fears of the blackest pessimist,” had been realized because “If the British were to surrender India, such riots would be more frequent” and it would mean the complete abdication of Britain’s paternalistic right to rule to this lesser nation.¹²⁰

Image 6: *Fascist Week*, February 2-8, 1934, 5.



¹¹⁹ Ibid.. For a discussion on the way Britons remembered and assigned meaning to its imperial history, see Partha Chaterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of Global Practice of Power*.

¹²⁰ Ibid; Special Correspondent, “The Indian Infamy,” *Blackshirt*, April 1, 1933, 4.

Given this imminent threat of relinquishment of the Empire, many asked what would happen to its “definite destiny in the history of the world” as the greatest imperial power ever, trumping even the empires of the Romans or Ottomans.¹²¹ More important, many wondered what Britain was without it. The BUF appealed to those with this superior, paternalistic mentality, with the promise of “Economic Nationalism.”¹²² While this might have the connotation of economic isolationism, this was not the case under British Fascism. The BUF argued “Economic isolation means that a country cuts itself off from the rest of the world and sits down in a passive surrender to await the blows of fate without any attempt at the economic organization of its own affairs.” For the BUF, “Economic nationalism... is a policy of self-help and of reorganisation of our own industrial system” wherein Britain would “build a home market capable of absorbing the bulk of the great production which modern machinery makes possible for advanced countries” and create “a State as nearly as possible self-contained.”¹²³

While many Britons were definitely in favor of this policy to restrict the foreigner and protect the British, they also asked where the British Empire fit into the equation, as they saw imperial commodities “as a valuable and profitable enterprise.”¹²⁴ The BUF resolved this ideological paradox by extending this self-containment policy to the Empire as a whole.¹²⁵ The formation of “The New Empire Union” would “represent a Federation of the Fascist movements of the Empire” in Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Canada, and was the basis of a self-

¹²¹ R.C.H. “Letter,” *Blackshirt*, May 1, 1933, 4.

¹²² “Fascism and Peace,” *Blackshirt*, April 17, 1933, 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Erika Rappaport, “Imperial Possessions, Cultural Histories, and the Material Turn: Response,” *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 2 (2008), 294.

¹²⁵ “The New Empire Union,” *Blackshirt*, July 8-14, 1933, 1; Oswald Mosley, “Self-Contained Empire and the Export Trade,” *Fascist Week*, December 15-22, 1933, 5.

contained Britain and Empire combined.¹²⁶ In this role, “[h]owever much the Dominions develop their own industries,” they would remain “primarily producers of foodstuffs and of raw material,” while British industries would remain “primarily producers of manufactured goods.”¹²⁷ Therefore, within the British Fascist policy of a self-contained Empire, “a natural balance of exchange” would exist, resulting in the creation of “the greatest economic unit of the world.”¹²⁸ Because the Colonies, like India, “owe everything to Britain,” the BUF saw that “it is only right” the Dominions would inherently be open and supportive of this “extensive mutual welfare planning of Empire.” Plus, the BUF claimed, this system had obvious benefits for the Empire as it “would prevent, under ordered and systematic planning, the present exploitation of backward...slave labour” of the native peoples of the Colonies.¹²⁹

The BUF’s vision of a self-contained Britain and Empire also directly benefitted both the domestic and imperial agricultural industries. The British farmer was continuously under threat of economic ruin by cheaper foreign goods; specifically, Argentina’s sale of its beef at a cheaper price than that of British beef drastically hurt the British farmer’s profits as the British public, currently suffering under the Depression, bought the cheaper foreign beef instead of “the good quality [expensive] English beef.”¹³⁰ In the BUF’s appeal to the rural public, they sought to locate British national identity within the figure of the farmer, as they argued, “Agriculture is the basis of national life” because it was “the great industry, which in the past has been the basis of

¹²⁶ “The New Empire Union,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

¹²⁷ Oswald Mosley, “Self-Contained Empire and the Export Trade,” *Fascist Week*, 5; “The Fascist Empire,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

¹²⁸ “The Fascist Empire,” *Blackshirt*, August 26-September 1, 1933, 1.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “Muddle of Milk Marketing Scheme,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 3.

our national strength.”¹³¹ To illustrate their great respect for the inherent Britishness of agriculture and appeal to the average British farmer, the BUF captioned an image of a British farmer with his bull “Typically British.”¹³² [See Image 7.]

Image 7: *Blackshirt*, July 6, 1934, 3.



The BUF, therefore, promised a “clear-cut” policy to “exclude the foreigner” and favor first “British beef” and, under the workings of the self-contained Empire, second “Empire beef” as the “the Empire farmer” was also cheated by Britain’s current reliance on foreign foodstuffs.¹³³ The BUF also explicitly promised to accomplish this feat to completely exclude

¹³¹ “Fascist Policy Re-Stated Agriculture,” *Blackshirt*, October 21-27, 1933, 3. On the cultural importance of the countryside to British national identity, see Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* and Raymond Williams, *The City and the Country*. For the BUF’s take on the importance of the countryside, see, for example, “Lucifer,” “A Land Fit for Britons to Live In,” *Fascist Week*, December 22-28, 1933, 5, “Pat of the Hills,” “Out on the Open Road,” *Fascist Week*, November 10-16, 1933, 8, and “Pat of the Hills,” “Start Real Tramping Now,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 8.

¹³² “Typically British,” *Blackshirt*, July 6, 1934, 3.

¹³³ Oswald Mosley, “Fascist Agricultural Campaign,” *Blackshirt*, October 7-13, 1933, 3; “The Fascist Empire,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

foreign foodstuffs within three years.¹³⁴ Under the BUF's Three Year Plan, "the Corporate organisation between Government and farmer" would ensure that with each year, there would be an increase in domestic production accompanied by a proportional reduction in foreign imports.¹³⁵ The BUF would also create "a new Agricultural Bank," which would "be ready at once" to provide "the new credits necessary" to ensure the British farmers' success.¹³⁶ To ensure the Empire's success, the Dominion farmer would be able to send any "additional foodstuffs and also additional raw materials," which would "be required by the greater demand of the higher purchasing power" of the British public.¹³⁷

Likewise, a self-contained Britain and Empire would directly benefit Britain's unemployed. Currently, economic competition abroad had weaseled its way into Britain itself.¹³⁸ The BUF exploited this fear that "A grave alien problem exists in this country" when they pointed out that while "over two million Britons are unemployed, thousands of aliens are enjoying a good living" within Britain.¹³⁹ These aliens were "undesirable" for British jobs because "the English language is scarcely spoken," their "outlook... completely foreign," [...] "their standards different, and they are prepared to work for wages altogether below the British standard of life." For this reason, the BUF labeled all aliens a threat, "not only to the British unemployed, but to every Englishman in a job at present." The BUF intensified this economic and cultural fear and promised that under British Fascism, "[w]hile Britons are

¹³⁴ "Fascist Policy Re-Stated Agriculture," *Blackshirt*, 3.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Ivor Back, "British Food for British Mouths," *Blackshirt*, November 10-16, 1933, 3; "Fascist Policy Re-Stated Agriculture," *Blackshirt*, 3.

¹³⁷ "Fascist Policy Re-Stated Agriculture," *Blackshirt*, 3.

¹³⁸ For an examination of how overseas migrants affected society and culture in South Shields near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, see Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939*.

¹³⁹ "Britain for the British," *Blackshirt*, September 30-October 6, 1933, 1.

unemployed, not a single alien should be admitted into this country. More than this: while Britons are unemployed, the aliens who hold jobs should not be permitted to retain them.” The BUF acknowledged that this was a “hard case,” but stated if they had “to choose between hard cases for Britons or hard cases for foreigners, we simply choose the latter” because “Fascist policy, without hesitation or equivocation” was in favor of Britons over the foreigner. They harshly concluded, that aliens inside Britain were “a cancer in the body politic which requires a surgical operation” because they were unfit for the British way of life and stole the Britons’ right to work.¹⁴⁰

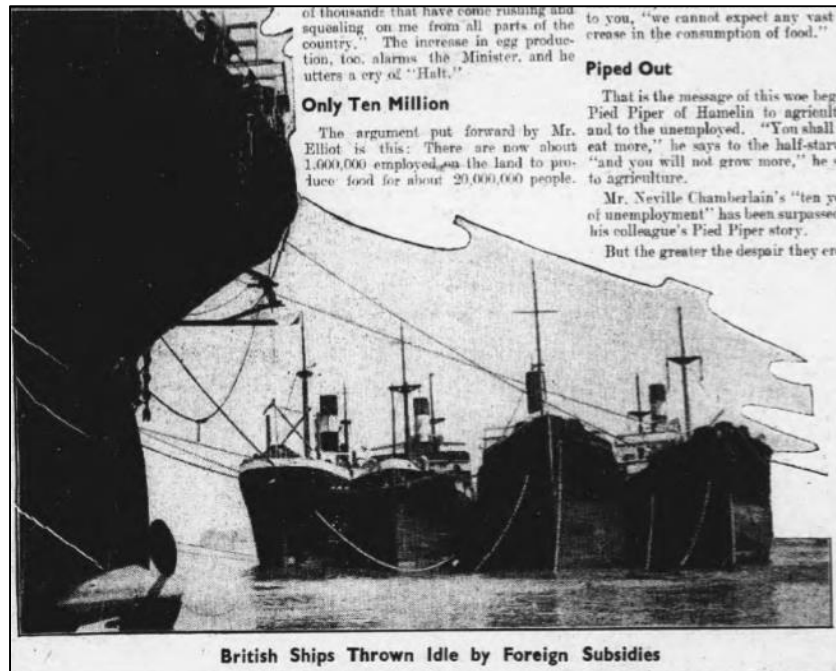
Specifically, the BUF identified Britain’s Shipping industry as riddled with “[u]nemployment, low wages, falling freights, decline and decay everywhere” that resulted in British “seamen... rotting on the stones while the vessels they might man, are rusting away in every harbor,” having been “Thrown Idle by Foreign Subsidies.”¹⁴¹ [See Image 8.] The BUF blamed the “Five thousand Belgian West Africans, Lascars and Chinese” who “inhabit the dock areas” and stole “the available employment” from British men. The BUF promised to solve this problem by creating a “Shipping Corporation” whose “guiding principle would be Britain First—and accordingly, British Cargoes and British Seamen for British Ships.” The BUF also promised an “arrangement with the Colonies and Dependencies” so that “in all Empire trade outside the tropics we should have British ships manned by white crews, and coloured subjects of the Empire would be used in the tropics alone,” to reinforce their goal for a superior Britain and a submissive Empire working together.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ “British Ships Thrown Idle by Foreign Subsidies,” *Fascist Week*, December 1-7, 1933, 3.

¹⁴² Ibid; “Fascism, Agriculture and Shipping,” *Fascist Week*, May 11-17, 1934, 3.

Image 8: *Fascist Week*, December 1-7, 1933, 3.



To market this policy to the masses, the BUF came up with the slogan "Britain First." This demonstrated how the BUF understood that "Britain is more important to British people than outside considerations."¹⁴³ The BUF placed this slogan at the top center of every first page of every issue of *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week* from 1933 onwards to serve as a constant reminder to the people where the BUF's priorities lay. By scapegoating these "aliens" as the cause of Britain's unemployment problem, it took the blame off the Englishman because it was not his fault he was unemployed, it was these imposters. It also gave the BUF the means to demonstrate that their economic nationalist policies worked solely for the benefit of Britain and the Empire.

In further justification of the concept of the self-contained Britain and Empire, the BUF cited the "most powerful mind of the old economists" and world renowned, John Maynard

¹⁴³ "Editorial," *Blackshirt*, September 2-8, 1933, 4.

Keynes.¹⁴⁴ An article boldly titled “J. M. Keynes’ Conversion to Fascist Economics” stated that Keynes had fallen to complete “capitulation to Fascist economics” as evidenced in his article, “National Self-Sufficiency.”¹⁴⁵ Here, the BUF reported, Keynes went “all out for the self-contained, or insulated, State, which was first advocated by Sir O. Mosley... and is the basis of economic policy of the British Union of Fascists.” The BUF, via Keynes’ analysis of the present economic situation, also pointed out another benefit of a self-contained, harmonious Britain and Empire: peace. At present, Keynes argued that “international methods are liable to lead to war in the future, as they have done so often in the past,” and he instead advocated for “a greater measure of national self-sufficiency and economic isolation between countries than existed in 1914” as this will “serve the cause of peace rather than otherwise.”¹⁴⁶ This new economic theory directly echoed the BUF’s argument for nationalist, rather than internationalist, economic policies as they pertained to the Empire and worldwide peace.

The BUF imagined Britain and Empire as a self-contained economic unit. The Empire would forever be subservient to the nation as a supplier of foodstuffs and raw materials, and as a buyer of British manufactured goods. This favorable balance of trade would benefit all, not only economically, but also in the BUF’s maintenance of global peace.

Military

A strong Britain under the British Fascist State, the BUF argued, would not only be strong economically and socially, but it would also be able to protect Britain and her Empire militarily. The BUF criticized the National Government, as Britain was actively engaged in a

¹⁴⁴ Oswald Mosley, “The Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace,” *Fascist Week*, December 29-January 4, 1933, 5.

¹⁴⁵ “J. M. Keynes’ Conversion to Fascist Economics,” *Blackshirt*, July 22-28, 1933, 1.

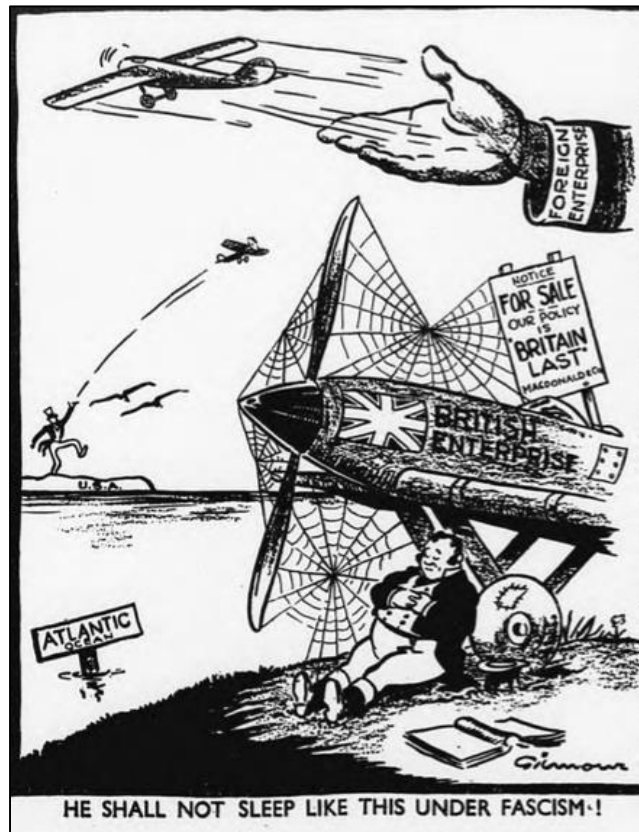
¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

process of disarmament of its prized Royal Air Force and Navy under the protocols of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference of 1932. The British public cherished its military strength and some found this policy to be foolish, unwise, and, ultimately, dangerous as it made Britain weak in the face of other nations. Two in particular, the US and Japan, clearly advocated policies to maintain, if not build up, their respective militaries. To illustrate the National Government's disrespect for its Air Force, the BUF produced a cartoon by John Gilmour called "He Shall Not Sleep Like This Under Fascism."¹⁴⁷ [See Image 9.] This cartoon featured a generic British politician asleep underneath "British Enterprise," symbolized as a British airplane, gathering cobwebs from disuse. The BUF drove this point home with the sign perched on top of the decaying airplane that read "Notice, For Sale, Our Policy is 'Britain Last'" by "MacDonald & Co.," which indicated the BUF's opinion that the National Government under MacDonald puts "Britain Last" when faced with the "Foreign Enterprise" of the US across the "Atlantic Ocean." By creatively marketing the current policy of the National Government as "Britain Last," it reminded the public that British Fascism promised "Britain First" instead.¹⁴⁸ To appeal to these scared Britons afraid of foreign air threats, the BUF promised that the British Fascist State would rearm Britain's Royal Air Force and Navy as the means to ensure Britain's safety. The BUF also specified that the purpose of this policy was not to make war, but to maintain peace in Britain and the Empire, gesturing to Britain's traditional belief that a strong Britain was needed to enforce worldwide peace, at least within the British Empire.

¹⁴⁷ John Gilmour, "He Shall Note Sleep Like This Under Fascism," *Blackshirt*, August 26-September 1, 1933, 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Image 9: *Blackshirt*, August 26-September 1, 1933, 3.



Once, they claimed, the British Royal Air Force was feared by all and beloved by Britain as a source of national pride as it “was not only the most efficient, but also the largest and strongest in the world.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, the BUF condemned the National Government’s policies to “steadily cut down our air strength” and reduce the nation’s Air Force to “fifth place among Air Forces of the world.” This policy was determined by the BUF to be “**not only a national disgrace; but it is also a national danger**” because Britain was prone to military invasion and ridicule from other nations.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ John A. Lincoln, “Britain First in the Air: Freedom of the Air Essential,” *Blackshirt*, June 24-July 1, 1933, 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

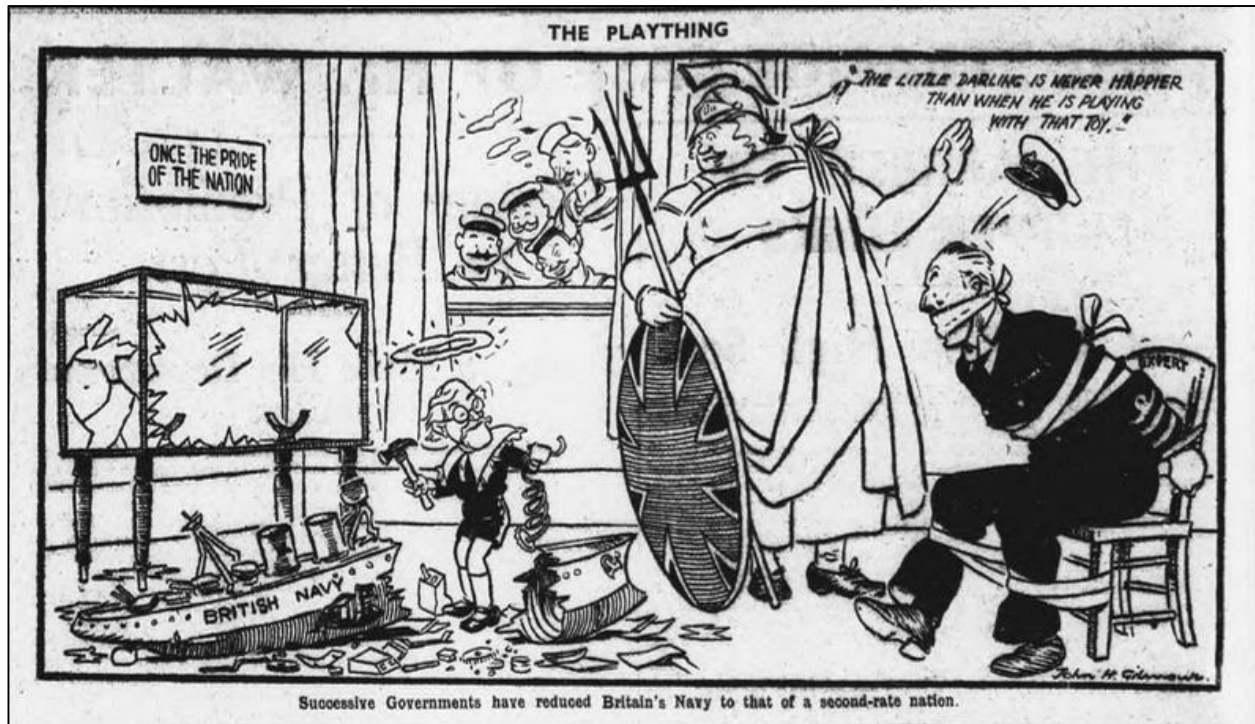
Similarly, the BUF claimed, the British Royal Navy was once feared and revered by both domestic and foreign populations because it had earned international military prestige and given Britain access to “practically every British Dominion, Colony or Dependency.”¹⁵¹ The BUF creatively illustrated the destruction of the British Navy to the public in a cartoon titled “The Plaything,” by John Gilmour.¹⁵² [See Image 10.] This cartoon depicted a broken, empty glass case with the tanker labeled “British Navy,” “once the pride of the nation” in pieces on the floor. Standing above the broken Navy was Gilmour’s representation of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald with a halo over his head holding a hammer. The symbolism was clear: the childlike National Government had brutally destroyed the once prominent and well-respected British Royal Navy. The illustration also depicted a man in a toga holding a shield of the British flag, representing the Empire, indulging MacDonald’s destruction of the Navy. “The Little Darling” he said “is never happier than when he is playing with that toy.” This symbolized the Empire’s willingness to accept the destruction of the traditionally powerful Navy by the little boy of government, because it ultimately meant the Empire’s freedom. Meanwhile the “expert” British seaman, bound to a chair and mouth gagged, was unable to prevent this destruction. Taking in the relationship between the three key figures of the image, it was clear that MacDonald, symbolizing the National Government as a whole, was more willing to abide by the Empire’s internationalist wishes over Britain’s domestic ones. The cartoon also depicted a stereotypical Russian, American, Frenchman, and Japanese man, looking on at the chaotic scene with smiles on their faces, happy at a weakened Britain. With no Royal Navy, the Empire could be free and these nations represented would have the ability to seize British markets. As the caption

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁵² John Gilmour, “The Plaything,” *Fascist Week*, November 24-30, 1933, 4.

explicitly told us, “Successive Governments have reduced Britain’s navy to that of a second-rate nation.”¹⁵³

Image 10: *Fascist Week*, November 24-30, 1933, 4.



The BUF reported, with Britain’s Air Force in fifth place among nations and its Navy reduced to the size of a second rate nation, it was no surprise that Britain faced new military threats. While Britain and other nations “reduce their navies” and “abstain from interference in South America,” the US, on the other hand “increase hers” and “supported by... the Monroe Doctrine, plays about as much as she likes” in South America.¹⁵⁴ The BUF condescendingly described the Monroe Doctrine as an “international impertinence,” illustrating that the BUF saw the US not only as a military threat, but also as a threat to Britain’s national ego. While Britain once enjoyed a massive fleet and Empire, the nation had lost or was losing both while the US

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ “This War Debt Business,” *Blackshirt*, May 16, 1933, 2.

ranked as the number one world power instead of Britain.¹⁵⁵ In the “Shot and Shell” series, the BUF posed a snide rhetorical question to the public: was “it not interesting to note that President Roosevelt, the President of the United States, in his newly passed National Recovery Bill, provides for the building of warships, aeroplanes, fresh armaments and the mechanisation of the American army?”¹⁵⁶ This rhetorical question revealed the BUF’s frustration with the National Government, as Britain was made weaker by following the rules of the League of Nations Disarmament Conference, while the US was allowed to break them because no nation was willing to stand up to this economic superpower.

The BUF also warned that “Japanese competition will grow worse as the years go on” as it gained further economic power.¹⁵⁷ While Japan’s “inroads are almost entirely in the field of manufactured goods,” the BUF argued the threat lay in Japan’s imminent acquisition of Manchukuo, which was “enormously wealthy in minerals.” This, they claimed, would make Japan a formidable threat to Britain’s heavy industry. The BUF argued this takeover was on the horizon as “Japan’s military strength,” ironically “built up on British and American steel,” was ready to ensure that Japan could “take what she wants in the East, in territory and markets,” leaving the Britain with nothing.¹⁵⁸

To protect Britain from harm, the BUF argued the only solution lay with the British Fascist State because it promised to rebuild the British Air Force. The BUF presented their call for increased armaments in their “Special R.A.F. Pageant Number,” with an incredible front-page illustration of three RAF airplanes flying over the text of the article in honor of the BUF’s

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “The Weapons of Peace,” *Blackshirt*, July 15-22, 1933, 3.

¹⁵⁷ Mammon, “English Bankers Finance Foreign Competition,” *Fascist Week*, November 24-30, 1933, 2.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

respect for this institution.¹⁵⁹ The BUF argued that since “fascism and aviation are natural responses of human enterprise and intelligence,” they must “exist because they meet the needs of the present”[...]“modern civilisation” and “offer security for the future.”¹⁶⁰ Under the British Fascist State, the Air Force would be able to maintain order and peace in the Empire “by the bombing of rebel villages from the air,” thereby saving British lives and killing only “rebel tribesmen.”¹⁶¹

When Lieut.-Commander the Hon. J. M. Kenworthy, R.N. reported that he feared the BUF’s call for increased armaments, the BUF responded critically and harshly. They asked, **“Has this gallant sea-dog mistaken his true vocation, or does he imagine that he is the commander of H.M.S. Pinafore, and that the British navy itself a comic opera product?”**¹⁶²

The mention of the H.M.S. Pinafore provided a lighter note as this was a reference to the famous musical, comic opera from the 1870s, which poked fun at the love between members of different social classes, patriotism, party politics, and the Navy. In doing so, this reference served as a direct, recognizable insult to this Lieutenant Commander as it specifically suggested he, and the naval establishment more broadly, was not taking its work seriously enough under the National Government. Furthermore, the BUF went so far as to threaten him, stating he did “indeed have much to fear from Fascism” because British Fascism would not tolerate this disregard for the nation in favor of internationalist disarmament policies that supported “the alien populations of Timbuctoo or Jugo-Slavia or the Never Lands” because the BUF represented only British

¹⁵⁹ “Britain First in the Air: Fascist Aviation makes for Peace,” *Blackshirt*, June 24-July 1, 1933, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Lincoln, “Britain First in the Air: Freedom of the Air Essential,” *Blackshirt*, 1.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3. On Britain’s increased use of air policing to administer surveillance on the Empire’s peoples, particularly in the Middle East, see Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia*.

¹⁶² “This Freedom,” *Blackshirt*, September 2-8, 1933, 1.

interests.¹⁶³ This reference to *Peter Pan*, a widely popular play pre-World War I, served as a point of comedic relief for the reader to laugh at how bizarre it was that a Naval officer advocated for internationalist policies over patriotic and nationalist Fascist ones. The article concluded with a pointed, sarcastic insult where the BUF stated that, with his internationalist logic, the Lieutenant was “hopelessly at sea” and the BUF “wish him a safe and speedy voyage back to port.”¹⁶⁴

The BUF presented a vision of Britain that would be safe from harm. The British Fascist State would reinvigorate the Air Force and Navy to protect Britain from military threats, like the US and Japan, and restore Britain’s military prestige it had previously held. The Air Force in particular, as it was a new, scientific advancement in the field of military technology, became the BUF’s priority, and they promised specifically to build it up in order to protect Britain’s future.

Women

For women, the BUF promised a very paradoxical role under British Fascism, as their goal was to both re-domesticate and liberate them. This paradoxical agenda actually had deep roots in British history. On the one hand, the BUF reinforced the “separate spheres” ideology of the Victorian era by promoting women to be doting housewives and mothers in the private sphere, while their husbands worked as the provider in the public sphere.¹⁶⁵ But, on the other hand, women were awarded full and active participation in Blackshirt membership.

The BUF saw Britain’s current social hierarchy as inappropriate because women went out and worked, while men stayed home unable to find a job. As presented in a “Two Minute Talk,”

¹⁶³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Cathy Ross, “Separate Spheres or Shared Dominions?” *Transformation* 23 no. 4 (2006), 228.

the BUF saw the current situation where “*the married woman is at work to keep her unemployed husband*” as “*topsy-turvy*” because the BUF believed a woman’s “*natural destiny*” and “*birthright is to be a wife and mother, not a breadwinner.*”¹⁶⁶ If Britain did not adopt pro-natalist policies immediately and if British women continued “*to ignore her destiny,*” the BUF forecasted “*deep complications,*” such as a “*declining birth rate,*” which would result in “*fewer children*” and ultimately “*the Suicide of a Race.*” Surprisingly, the BUF promised as a solution a policy of “*equal work, equal pay, which means that where a woman works side by side with men, she is entitled to the same rate of pay.*” But, while this might seem counterintuitive, the BUF argued that seeing as “*women are only employed because they are cheaper than men,*” if the British Fascist State equalized their pay, then there would be “*the greater employment of men*” who would “*be encouraged to marry*” so “*the need of the woman to ‘go out to work’ would be removed*” and she would be free to return to the domestic sphere.¹⁶⁷ The BUF, however, also argued they did not want “*drive women out of industry and the professions,*” but, instead, eliminate “*the present competition between the sexes,*” so “*the good wages of men*” could “*make it possible for women who so desire to marry and to keep a decent home.*”¹⁶⁸ While the BUF definitely advocated for the return of British women to the domestic sphere, it seemed paradoxical that they advocated for a policy of equal pay as the best way to achieve that goal.

The BUF also used the metaphor of the family to appeal to British housewives and mothers, as a means to convey that the BUF would rule Britain with a similar style of governance. As advocated by “*an Ordinary Woman,*” the BUF would rule Britain with the same organization and discipline that the average Englishwoman ruled her own children in her

¹⁶⁶ “*Women and Fascism,*” *Blackshirt*, August 19-25, 1933, 3.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ “*Current Cant and Fascist Fact,*” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 1.

home.¹⁶⁹ She wrote that “[a]ny mother knows that you cannot solve the problem of the ‘difficult’ child in the home by pretending that he does not exist or that he is not ‘difficult,’” which was “just what all the old parties have always done in formulating their systems of government.” British Fascism appealed to her because it proposed policies of action and faced “the facts of the present as they really” were in order to create “a sane and well-balanced community,” exactly as a British mother organized her family.¹⁷⁰ With many families without a father in the interwar period as a result of men lost in World War I, it was an appealing idea to the distraught mother that the British Fascist State would be “only a sublimated expression of the Family” where “man, woman, and their children are the nucleus.”¹⁷¹

The BUF also attempted to appeal to all women on the basis that they would be able to solve all women’s problems. According to the BUF, “working women of every calibre- nurses, typists, laundry maids, and the sterner side of feminine society” were attracted to them because the BUF understood that the “questions, such as health, housing and education” belong to the housewives and mothers affected by the answers to these questions, not to the world of male “theoretical experts with a total lack of practical experience.”¹⁷² In the British Fascist State, women would “no longer have to neglect their home and children through force of circumstance which they cannot control” and the issues that women cared about would be resolved.¹⁷³ For example, “health services” would “be improved on modern scientific lines,”[...]“housing will be

¹⁶⁹ An Ordinary Woman, “Why Fascism Appeals to Me,” *Blackshirt*, April 1, 1933, 2.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Elizabeth Winch, “Women and Fascism,” *Fascist Week*, December 29-January 4, 1933, 3.

¹⁷² “Equal Pay for Equal Work,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 3; “Fascism for Women,” *Blackshirt*, May 1, 1933, 2.

¹⁷³ Mary England, “Personal Column,” *Blackshirt*, October 14-20, 1933, 3.

improved and rents will be controlled so that they will be within our means,” and “children will be educated to enable them to be a credit to us and their country.”¹⁷⁴

The BUF also rejected the general enfranchisement of the people because, they argued, it did not fulfill the general will of the people, and, instead, proposed the occupational franchise would solve that problem. The BUF insisted that under democracy “the greater and greater extensions of the franchise, each designed to make it more and more possible that government should approximate to the will of the governed” had failed because each extension had “resulted in government getting further and further away from the general desire of the governed.”¹⁷⁵ To provide what, they believed, democracy could not, the BUF promised that in a fascist state **“those problems affecting women will be decided by women who know, by practical experience what are women’s rights, and women’s troubles.”**¹⁷⁶ As Winch argued, the BUF recognized that since “marriage makes demands of a highly technical nature upon women” it is a profession, just like any man’s occupation, to be represented within the British corporate system.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the average British woman “will be well represented inasmuch that she and her sisters” are “the greatest body of consumers,” in their domestic role and on these “matters of purely feminine concern her elected feminine representatives will have complete power.” Winch also argued that the BUF understood there “were many fruitful fields of employment for women” that “remain dormant or unexploited.” For example, “the need for women architects is urgent- for who is there better qualified to design house, the domestic arrangement of which is largely a woman’s concern, than another woman.” Similarly, Winch also argued “the same thing applies

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ “Fascism, the Basic Idea,” *Blackshirt*, June 1, 1933, 4.

¹⁷⁶ “Equal Pay for Equal Work,” *Fascist Week*, 3.

¹⁷⁷ Elizabeth Winch, “Women and Fascism,” *Fascist Week*, 3.

to medicine” and that “Fascism will see to it that adequate training facilities are available for such women” who wanted to go into the field of medicine.¹⁷⁸

Moreover, the BUF also offered women opportunities to become active Blackshirt members.¹⁷⁹ The BUF understood that in Britain “women members go a long way to help the cause” because it was “a woman’s influence that has converted so many of its male members.” So, it created the “Women’s Headquarters of the British Union of Fascists.” The women members of the BUF wore black shirts and black skirts to match the men’s uniform and possessed equal standing. In addition, they were taught ju-jitsu as they, like the male Blackshirts, acted as “stewards for political meetings” to counter violent anti-Fascist women. Women were also “trained for public speaking” in the Speakers’ Class where they gave speeches as if they were speaking to an anti-Fascist group, complete with heckling and a question section at the end. And the BUF appealed to women in other ways by offering “an ambulance class, a canvassers’ class, a study circle, [and] a gymnasium in which they can get healthy exercise” amongst many other activities “to keep them interested- and to train them the Fascist way.” Alongside this article is a photograph showing twenty to thirty women Fascists “marching through London during a recent demonstration” to display to possible women recruits that female members of the BUF played an active role.¹⁸⁰ [See Image 11.] Mary Richardson, a prominent “ex-suffragette and a leading protagonist for women’s emancipation,” even elected to join the BUF because she understood that “women will play a large part in establishing Fascism in this country.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ “Equal Pay for Equal Work,” *Fascist Week*, 3.

¹⁸⁰ *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 3.

¹⁸¹ “Ex Suffragette joins the B.U.F.” *Fascist Week*, December 12-18, 1933, 8.

Image 11: *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 3.



To appeal to women, the BUF advertised in their newspapers distinctive, though contradictory, policies to both return women to the home and offer them independence. In doing so, they attracted all types of women, from mothers to suffragettes.

Anti-Semitism

Some Britons in the interwar period held deeply dormant anti-Semitic feelings, as pre-World War I the nation saw the rise of “ethnocentric and conspiracy arguments... fuelled by events such as the Marconi Scandal (1912), in which Jewish business leaders were seen to profit unfairly from government contracts.”¹⁸² But the BUF, at this time, did not overtly commit to anti-Semitic policies. They maintained that Anti-Semitism was “*a symptom, not of Fascism, but*

¹⁸² Gary Love, “What’s the Big Idea?’: Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 3 (2007), 459.

of Germany,” and instead pursued “the traditional British policy of racial and religious tolerance.”¹⁸³

To protect this image, the BUF justified their attack on Jews on the basis that they were Communists. Since Communists were the number one enemy of British Fascism, this gave the BUF the right to persecute them as they were a “minority” political party that stood against the greater good of the future British Fascist State and “the interests of the country.”¹⁸⁴ While, the BUF provided a safe space for “British Jews [who] are good Britons,” as long as they remained “good,” by whatever definition that implied, the BUF did warn British Jews that they not let themselves “become the tools of the Communist Party in its attacks on Fascism” because the BUF labeled “[a]ll Jews who attack our members... as Communists” and they were not afraid to combat these individuals.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, when “two Jews were standing over our man... kicking and punching him,” the BUF went as far as to threaten the Jews that “if such disgusting attacks continue, then few Englishmen would blame our men for replying in a practical form to the arguments of the attackers.”¹⁸⁶ Similarly, when two Jewish men and a Jewish woman staged a violent attack on a BUF member that resulted in his broken jaw, the BUF aggressively stated that “when Fascism comes to power in this country,” it “will deal faithfully and justly with such vermin,” regardless of the fact that the BUF “shall be accused of atrocities on in-offensive minorities.”¹⁸⁷ The BUF objected, not to the “Jews as Jews” by way of their race or religion, but

¹⁸³ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, May 16, 1933, 2; “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, September 16-22, 1933, 2.

¹⁸⁴ “Jews and War,” *Fascist Week*, November 17-23, 1933, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Jewish Correspondent, “Save us from our Friends,” *Blackshirt*, 3; “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, May 16, 1933, 2; “Jews and Fascism,” *Blackshirt*, August 12-18, 1933, 3.

¹⁸⁶ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, July 22-28, 1933, 2.

¹⁸⁷ “Editorial,” *Blackshirt*, September 16-22, 1933, 2.

their actions as a part of the Communist minority, which fought against the general welfare of the State.¹⁸⁸

During this period, the BUF did not want to alienate any section of the British public and so it disguised its later blatant anti-Semitic policies under the guise of anti-Communism. In doing so, they could defend themselves from critique and present themselves as in accordance with Britain's tradition of religious tolerance.

¹⁸⁸ J. A. Temple, "Ruminations of an Inquisitive Man," *Fascist Week*, December 1-7, 1933, 7.

Section Three: The End of it All, the Olympia Riot of June 1934

So if the BUF presented a convincing picture of the British Fascist State as distinctly British in both *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Week*, why, then, did their movement fail? The increasing violence that came to be directly associated with the movement provided the answer. As described by my Grandfather, a meeting typically featured a BUF speaker up on a stage of sorts giving a speech to a large crowd.¹⁸⁹ Luckily, at this meeting my Grandfather did not witness any sort of violence (or at least that he was willing to reveal,) but this was an anomaly for the BUF by 1936. Typically, Communists and anti-fascists attended these outdoor meetings and heckled the speaker so aggressively that he or she usually had to stop and wait for them to calm down. When these protesters became too rowdy, the BUF took action and used the Blackshirts to defend the speaker from harm and restore order to the meeting. The most prominent example of this violence occurred at the Olympia Riot, June 7 1934.

This infamous rally was held at the indoor Olympia exhibition center in West Kensington, London. The Grand Hall was packed with 15,000 Britons, including two thousand Blackshirts, half of whom served as “stewards.”¹⁹⁰ [See Image 12.] The BUF organized an extraordinary show of pageantry complete with “sophisticated sound equipment, military bands... an orchestra, colourful flags and banners (both the Union Jack and the fascist insignia), [and] precisely choreographed columns of men and women in Blackshirt uniform.”¹⁹¹ Each local branch of the

¹⁸⁹ Letter in the author’s possession, Hugh Collier to Kate Collier (September 14, 2015), 1.

¹⁹⁰ Pugh, “The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate,” 101.

¹⁹¹ Julie Gottlieb, “The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Political Technology in the British union of Fascists,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 1 (January 2006), 45.

BUF attending carried their branch colors, which were placed on the back of the platform, so that when Mosley gave his speech, he had a colorful background.¹⁹²

Image 12: *Blackshirt*, June 15, 1934, 3.



The BUF were aware that Communists and anti-fascists were in attendance and knew of their plans to disrupt the meeting.¹⁹³ It came as no surprise, therefore, when hecklers continuously interrupted Mosley's speech an extremely British tactic that any politician worth their salt was supposed to be able to handle peacefully with a bit of wit. Instead, the Blackshirts promptly and unceremoniously ejected these individuals from the crowd. Technically, they had a right to do so according to British law as long as they did not use "excessive force".¹⁹⁴ Intense fighting, however, broke out between the two groups, including the use of weapons like knuckledusters and razors, allegedly only by the Communists and anti-fascists, and many were

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 102.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid; Pugh, "The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate," 541.

injured in the process.¹⁹⁵ The police, as per British law in the 1930s, “had no right to intervene at indoor gatherings unless invited by the organizers or unless a breach of the peace was taking place,” and, therefore, there was no official state entity to prevent the occurrence of violence indoors.¹⁹⁶ The BUF’s decision not to involve the police was significant because it meant they saw themselves as the sole arbitrators of justice and true upholders of law and order. However, the 762 police on station outside the meeting became a necessary force as they were able to intervene to prevent some of this violence against Blackshirts as Communists and anti-fascists on the streets attacked them when they entered and left the meeting.¹⁹⁷

In the wake of this event, many acknowledged that the Communist and anti-fascists’ use of weapons was alarming. But the vast majority of Britons felt that the BUF “deliberately over-reacted” and the “indelible impression left on most uncommitted observers was one of Blackshirt violence which frightened and dismayed” much of the citizenry.¹⁹⁸ The BUF attempted to combat this now popular image of the movement as violent and thin-skinned in *Blackshirt*, but to no avail. For example, in a great effort to portray themselves as the victims of Red, hooligan, Communist violence, the BUF published an image of Mosley looking distraught over the miscellaneous dangerous weapons, which they claimed, were used exclusively by the Communists. And, in the following issue, the BUF further justified the necessity of their violence with an image of a youthful, male Blackshirt laying injured in hospital. [See Images 13 and 14.]

¹⁹⁵ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 102.

¹⁹⁶ Pugh, “The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate,” 541; Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 102.

¹⁹⁷ Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 101.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 102.

Image 13: *Blackshirt*, June 15, 1934, 1.



(*Evening News* Picture).
THE LEADER examining some of the "souvenirs" collected from the "Reds" at Olympia. They include a small hatchet, shortened in the handle; a thick woollen sock filled with broken pieces of plate-glass; several iron bolts about 15 inches in length; a horse's curry comb, with a strap fitted to allow for its use as a knuckle-duster; the lid of a tin with serrated edge, fitted with a wire for the same purpose; a steel bar wrapped with insulating tape to be used as a "cosh"; a shoemaker's awl; several razors; and an assortment of smaller "coshes."

Image 14: *Blackshirt*, June 22, 1934, 1.



One of the Blackshirts who was seriously injured by Red hooligans at Olympia. Over a dozen Fascists were savagely attacked at the meetings, and several are still in hospital.

Despite their best efforts to combat this now violent reputation in the press, the damage had been done, and the BUF movement was officially branded “un-English” for the violence displayed, which broke with the British tradition of vigorous, spirited debate and verbal sparring.¹⁹⁹ Disenchanted, the British public also slowly came to realize that the appeal of British Fascism was simply a “pantomime;” there was no cohesive, practical, distinctly British policy behind the movement.²⁰⁰ This violence only solidified for the public that British Fascism was internationalist at heart, as evidenced in the newspapers’ admiration, defense, and justification of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The British public became convinced that Mosley’s vision of a utopian British Fascist State was simply a copy of Mussolini’s Italian Corporate State. Furthermore, the BUF’s now violent reputation led the people to fear that the rise of British Fascism would utilize the violent strategies of Nazi Germany, which Britain saw later that month

¹⁹⁹ Michael Spurr, “‘Living the Blackshirt Life:’ Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists,” *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 3 (2003), 307.

²⁰⁰ Gottlieb, “The Marketing of Megalomania,” 47.

in the Night of the Long Knives, where the Nazi regime carried out a series of political executions against its enemies by the German secret police. Mosley's overarching claim that Britain's salvation lay in the hands of his leadership and his vision of a British Fascist State was ruled an empty promise, and when Lord Rothermere was forced to withdraw his overt support for the movement from his newspapers in July 1934, the BUF's fate was sealed. Membership dropped dramatically, and by 1935, the BUF had a total membership of only around 5,000 individuals.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Webber, "Patterns of Membership and Support," 577.

Conclusion

My decision to use the BUF newspapers as my primary source has posed certain limitations and challenges to my research. By their inherent nature, newspapers are not great sources for reliable information on what actually happened and what people actually thought. Understanding the propagandistic nature of these sources was then a factor I had to weigh during the production of this thesis. Furthermore, there are no bibliographic citations for the information the BUF claimed was fact in their articles, which resulted in a dead end for any further research or fact checking that I would have liked to have done. Initially, I had thought that I would be able to fact check what the BUF said was happening with what other newspaper outlets like *The London Times* or *The Daily Mail* reported, but this proved impossible as I was unable to gain access to these resources in the US. However, I was able to reconcile these two limitations by focusing the topic of my thesis on the very fact that these newspapers were the BUF's propaganda outlets and I wanted to investigate the claims they made during this period.

To supplement my research I think that a "history of reception" or a social history of the BUF's on-the-ground work would form a nice complement to my research in order to get a sense of what the BUF was actually doing and how they were doing it. But, by not actually knowing what the BUF was up to, it allowed me to more closely focus on and understand the type of rhetoric the BUF put out to the public during the time period. Additionally, there are still a variety of topics that remain for historians to explore in their own research. The BUF was still a fully functional, albeit very small, movement in Britain until 1940, as the reality of World War II set in. An interesting line of research would be to continue the topic of this thesis and specifically explore how the BUF reconciled their attempt to maintain a non-violent British reputation with the rise of Hitler and his extremist policies, culminating in Nazi Germany's Blitzkrieg of Poland

on September 1, 1939. Did the BUF support, condone, appropriate what was happening in Central Europe? Other topics which merit future research that I, unfortunately, did not have time to include in this thesis are the BUF's attitudes toward International Finance and banking, their public brand as a masculine youth movement, their policies for education and housing reform, their complicated relationship with Christianity, their opinions on cultural decadence, night life, and sex, and their misrepresentation in the Capitalist, Communist, and Socialist Press.

Despite these challenges and remaining opportunities for further research, this thesis has revealed new intricacies that explain why the BUF, a right wing, extremist, highly atypical British political party, gained traction and thrived in the early years of its creation. While Mosley drew his inspiration from powerful leaders of continental movements that had drastically and successfully changed their nations, namely Mussolini and Hitler, he transformed these continental fascist policies to solve British problems by British methods. The BUF used a variety of tactics in their propaganda newspapers from dynamic pictures, to cartoons, to metaphors and conveyed most of their messages in aggressive or vague rhetoric to convince the public British Fascism was the best choice to regain their previously held superior status. Ultimately, they played on Britain's fears that they would become a second rate nation if they continued under the chaos of the National Government, never regained their economic status, lost their Empire, continued to reduce their military, and continued to partake in cultural decadence. The BUF in response to these fears, simply proposed grand promises to protect all Britons from harm and to close Britain's borders to foreigners and their goods. They promised to always put "Britain First."

What proves to be foreboding for today's society, are the eerie parallels between the BUF's political style and that of 2016 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, whose fortune seems to be on the rise at the time of this writing. Trump uses vague, simple, short and to

the point rhetoric, which harkens back to the rhetoric of Mosley's impassioned speeches. Trump conveys his simple messages with catchy slogans like "Make America Great Again" and, the more recent, "America First," the latter of which is directly parallel to Mosley's slogan. Trump highlights the failures of the current Obama administration and invokes a "crisis" mentality in his audience, a tactic Mosley used in his aggressive criticism of the National Government. Trump embraces America's increasing xenophobia to gain popularity with voters, a tactic Mosley used later in 1939 as he adopted a more overt anti-Semitic attitude, which produced a spike in membership and in his popularity. Ultimately, Trump frames himself as the savior candidate to voters, a parallel promise to the one Mosley made when he repeatedly stated that to save Britain, the only solution was British Fascism.

The BUF, of course, enjoyed only short-lived acceptance as a legitimate political movement, but it would seem as if Trump could win the Republican nomination and potentially even become the President of the United States this coming November. But, who is to say if Trump's rise to victory will not be thwarted sometime this summer, say June 7, 2016?

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