

The
POLITICAL ECONOMY
of
OSWALD MOSLEY
(1896 -1980)
by
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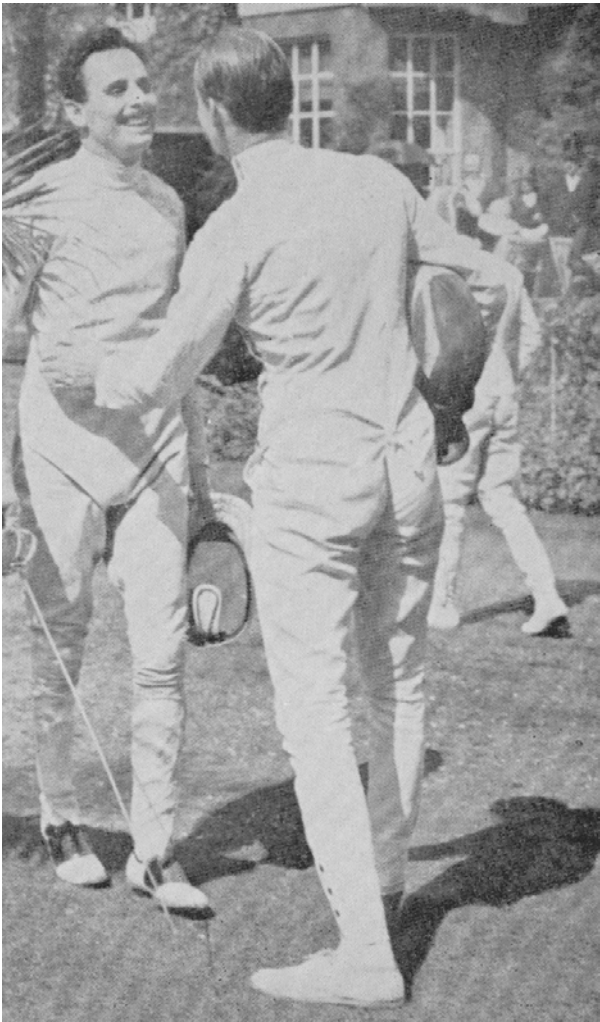


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Prologue

Colin Wilson met Mosley at the end of the 1950s, when Mosley was in his sixties, and found him 'far and away the most intelligent politician he had ever met'.¹ Fenner Brockway remarked that the ovation Mosley received at the 31st *Labour Party Conference* in October 1930 was the greatest he had heard at a party conference.

Mosley was the youngest MP in the *Westminster Parliament* when elected for *Harrow* in 1918 at the age of 22. Both the main candidates supported Lloyd George but Mosley did so as an *Independent*. It was a strange election and it kicked off a strange political career.



At the next *General Election* on 29th October 1924, Mosley challenged the power of the *Chamberlain Family* in his home city of Birmingham as a *Labour Party* candidate in the constituency of *Ladywood*, losing to Neville Chamberlain by seventy-seven votes after being ahead by two on the first count.² Three years later he was elected *Member of Parliament* for *Smethwick* and pulled half a dozen *Labour Candidates* into Parliament on his coat-tails, breaking the *Chamberlain* hold on the city...after almost a century.

He then resigned from the 1929 *Labour Government* and headed for the political wilderness by founding his own party. Mosley's speech in the *Unemployment Debate* in the *House of Commons* on 28th May 1930, four weeks after his resignation was widely regarded as a masterly *Parliamentary* performance. The speech itself can be found in *Hansard*...now available on the internet. Here is the account of the speech by Mosley's biographer, Robert Skidelsky:

'He had referred to the sheet of paper in his hand just twice, to read brief quotations, yet his speech had never faltered, every argument was in sequence, every thought and phrase in place. When he sat down there was a moment of silence. No one had stirred from his seat during the speech...Then the cheering broke out, loud and prolonged, from every section of the House and galleries. For those minutes he was the undisputed leader of his generation. Rarely can a parliamentary speech have been greeted with such unanimous acclaim.'

Mosley's *New Party* failed badly at the *General Election* of 27th October 1931 and was disbanded shortly afterwards. Before long he was back on the podium, addressing audiences all over the country, resurrecting his 1925 *Birmingham Proposals* that the *Labour Party* of MacDonald and Snowden had rejected but which now formed the cornerstone of the programme of the *British Union of Fascists*,³ the *BUF*...later to be called just *British Union (BU)*.

¹ Colin Wilson made this remark in *Twentieth Century* (December 1959)...a comment which probably contributed to Wilson's rapid loss of esteem with the literary establishment.

² The final figures were: N. Chamberlain (Conservative), 13,374; O. Mosley (Labour), 13,297; A.W Bowkett (Liberal), 539.

³ Mosley's economics changed very little between his *Labour Party* years in the 1920s and his leadership of the *British Union of Fascists* in the 1930s. In this essay I avoid the term *Fascism* as much as possible because its meaning and associations have changed considerably during the second half of the twentieth century. One of the more insightful summaries came from George Orwell who wrote at the end of the 1930s that 'many of the qualities we admire in human beings can only function in opposition to some kind of disaster, pain or difficulty...In tying yourself to the ideal of mechanical efficiency, you tie yourself to the ideal of softness. But softness is repulsive; and thus all progress is seen to be a frantic struggle towards an objective which you hope and pray will never be reached.' The early 1930s brand of *English Fascism* arose from the confrontation and attempted fusion of

By the mid thirties the *BUF* was starting to make significant inroads with the English electorate before the political establishment put it out of business. For Mosley personally this political period culminated in May 1940 when he and his second wife,⁴ the former Diana Freeman-Mitford, were interned under Section 18B (1) of the 1936 *Public Order Act* designed to incarcerate *English Fascists* and prohibit any discussion of their *Peace Proposals*.

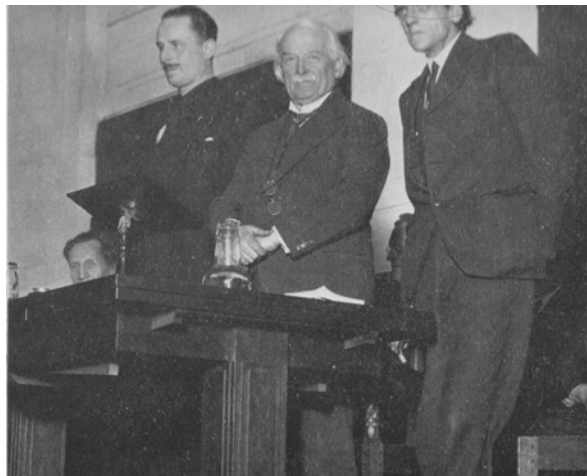
Mosley lived until the age of 84 and was still only 50 when released from five years of wartime internment in 1945. Shortly after his release Mosley embarked upon a second career as a *Patriot*. This time his patriotism was not for England but for Europe. Mosley's second career from 1946 to 1980 spanned 34 years...half as long again as the 22 years of his first career from 1918 to 1940.

End of Politics

Oswald Mosley has probably spoken and written more than any 20th Century British politician except Winston Churchill. But since 1931, apart from his autobiography *My Life* (1968), all of Mosley's books and pamphlets have been published by his own publishing companies.⁵ Since 1935 these have been generally unavailable in bookshops.

Mosley believed that the solution of the economic problem would mean the end of politics. The basic idea is not the one-party state, but the no-party state. 'In such a system', he wrote, 'there is no place for *Parties* and for *Politicians*. We shall ask the people for a mandate to bring to an end the *Party System* and *Parties*. We invite them to enter a new civilisation. *Parties* and the *Party Game* belong to the old civilisation, which has failed.'

The *Marxist* critique was that Mosley's state would enshrine the freedom of *Capitalists* to exploit a working-class deprived of both its industrial and political weapons. Mosley's reply was that the inauguration of an economic system that made possible full employment and uninterrupted growth would remove the causes of class conflict.⁶



According to Mosley's biographer Robert Skidelsky, *Tomorrow We Live* (1938) is the most lucid introduction to Mosley's 1930s ideas. The first coherent presentation of *Mosleyism* was published in *Revolution by Reason* (1925). The failure of the 1926 *Labour Government* to embrace Mosley's economic analysis led eventually to his resignation in 1930⁷ to found the *New Party* which was disbanded after a dismal showing in the 1931 *General Election*. After this failure Mosley published *The Greater Britain* (1932)...an 'amazing achievement' according to Harold Nicholson.

In terms of economic understanding, the programme expounded by Mosley in *The Greater Britain* was far in advance of anything produced by continental fascism. In both Germany and Italy state control over the economy derived not from an economic, but from a political logic, and was geared not to managing demand but to preparing for war. By contrast, Mosley's demand for a strong state was largely built on his economic proposals.

Marxist Economics

Analysts of the economic crisis of the 1920s fell into two schools...those who were fundamentally critical of the system of *Laissez-faire Capitalism* and those who supported it. The supporters did not believe there could be such a

two impulses...the quest for modernization and the revolt against its consequences...at a particular moment when alone that synthesis could have been attempted. The objective disasters of war and economic collapse had once more brought the problem of economic and political organization to the forefront of politics. In an essay on *Leaders and Fellow-travellers of English Fascism* in the 1930s...chapter 17 in his Mosley biography...Robert Skidelsky considers the reasons that the *English Fascist Movement* under Mosley took a different direction to that of its continental cousins under Hitler and Mussolini.

⁴ Mosley's first wife, Cynthia, died suddenly at the age of 35. Cimmie was the second daughter of the Foreign Secretary, Earl Curzon of Kedleston and Mary Leiter, whose father, Levi Ziegler Leiter, was descended from James von Leiter, a Dutch Calvinist who came to America from Amsterdam in 1760 and made a fortune in 'dry goods' and in Chicago real estate. Cynthia Mosley was *Labour MP* for Stoke-on-Trent from 1929 until her death in 1933.

⁵ The main imprints are *Britain Publications*, *Action Press*, *Sanctuary Press*, *Mosley Publications* and *Euphorion Books*.

⁶ In Mosley's view, the traditional class configurations would dissolve into functional categories within a rational industrial system. Problems of profits, wages, conditions, etc., would become technical questions to be settled by experts in the light of national priorities drawn up by all the major interests in the state. Once the machinery had been set up for getting problems decently discussed and effectively tackled, the technocrats could take over.

⁷ Mosley resigned from the *Labour Government* on 21st May 1930 with a brief formal statement but followed it up a week later on 28th May 1930 with perhaps his greatest speech in the *House of Commons* in the unemployment debate...see *Hansard*. The 31st *Labour Party Conference* in Llandudno on 6th October 1930 was the high point for Mosley in conventional English politics. His ovation, wrote Fenner Brockway, was 'the greatest he had heard at a party conference'.

thing as mass unemployment caused by a lack of effective demand, since according to *Say's Law of Markets* an economy always provides demand sufficient to buy its own output, provided it is not interfered with.

The *fact* of mass unemployment was explained by these theorists in terms of interferences by government and unions with the laws of the market.⁸ Provided workers were prepared to accept a lower wage, it would once more become profitable for manufacturers to expand production and thus restore the system to full employment.

Mosley never accepted this view. He saw clearly that cuts in wages destroyed the market which manufacturers had to rely upon to sell their goods. A single firm might solve its problems by reducing its wages bill. But the aggregate wages bill was the purchasing power of the community. If it were reduced the demand of the whole community for the goods and services of industry would fall. Indeed, the trouble in Britain was that demand was already too low and this explained the problem of idle capacity and unemployment that had persisted throughout the 1920s.

Mosley therefore was identified with those who regarded the poverty of the workers as the real cause of *Capitalist* crisis. The first question then is why, having decided to break from orthodox politics, he did not join the revolutionary left. The decision to go *Fascist*, rather than *Communist*, was fateful, for it proved far easier for ex-communists than for ex-fascists to reintegrate themselves into political life later on. The issues between *Mosleyism* and *Marxism* were serious. Three areas of conflict may be identified.⁹

First, Mosley rejected the *Marxist* doctrine that individual and social actions are determined by material conditions. The 1930s writings of Mosley's long-time colleague, John Strachey, presented a picture of a *Capitalist* society riddled with insoluble contradictions, lurching towards a bloody demise. Every mechanistic strain in *Marxist* thought is heavily emphasised in order to show the impossibility of improvement within the *Capitalist* system. Twist and turn as they may, *Capitalist* statesmen, economists and businessmen were doomed by inexorable economic laws.

For Mosley the iron laws of *Marxism* were no more palatable than the economic laws of *Liberalism*. He had not left the *Labour Party*, which said nothing could be done till capitalism recovered,¹⁰ to join a party which said that nothing could be done till capitalism collapsed. The private-enterprise system could be made to work properly provided the men in charge of government were determined to make it work. The *First World War* had proved this.

Secondly Mosley never accepted the moral basis of *Marxism* which underpinned its economic analysis. The radical argument that 'property is theft' was extended by *Marxists* from landed to industrial property. Mosley's argument that property can be justified by duty was rooted in the landed tradition which he extended to industrial ownership. The *Marxist* view, grounded in a burning sense of injustice, led to the egalitarian society. Mosley's, grounded in a burning sense of inefficiency, led to the functional society, one in which each group performed its proper duty. This view was perfectly compatible with meritocracy; indeed Mosley's own thought demanded it. It was not compatible with an egalitarian system.

Thirdly Mosley had the technician's horror of needless destruction. Early in 1931 he had rejected the 'mad *Communist* faith in revolution following economic collapse' aiming to 'wade cheerfully to its objective of the Soviet state through the blood and starvation of a disintegrated society.' Strachey had used the same argument in supporting Mosley's *Revolution by Reason*: '[the Soviets] knew of no way of acquiring economic power except by revolution and the destruction of the entire fabric of the life of the community. And this of course led to almost irreparable damage to its wealth-producing resources'.



⁸ These theoreticians never mention the interference of trusts, banks, corporations and financiers in the economy. The refusal...or the inability...of the financial system to carry out an efficient 'clearing function' for viable projects...those with rates of return and net present worth above the cost of capital...is rarely discussed. Capital, it would seem, unlike labour, never goes on strike.

⁹ This analysis summarises the views of Robert Skidelsky in Chapter 15 of *Oswald Mosley* (pages 299-315).

¹⁰ Mosley reserved his fury for the Labour Government's *Chancellor of the Exchequer* Philip Snowden, a man of complete integrity who believed fervently in free market shibboleths and lived in fear of the damage the *Money Power* would wreak on a *Labour Government*. Mosley called Snowden an 'ardent supporter of [the Governor of the Bank of England] Montagu Norman and the heads of the *Treasury*'. Snowden for his part was no fan of Oswald Mosley. In his autobiography (1936) he wrote of his suspicions of 'a rich man who came into the *Socialist Movement* and at once became more *Socialist* than the *Socialists*'.

Both Lenin and Bukharin acknowledged that the 'victory of the workers' would entail 'an extremely steep decline in the productive forces'. Such a solution to the economic problem deeply offended Mosley's constructive mind...and was moreover completely unnecessary. Mosley was the mechanic who wanted to get the car moving again, not scrap it and replace it by a different model.

High Wage Economies

How then did Mosley think that the *Marxist* laws could be circumvented within the private enterprise system? His basic answer was the changing nature of *Capitalism*. From America he had taken away the fundamental idea that the overriding concern of large-scale industry is security, not profit maximisation. If a small firm is faced with a fall in demand it can lay off workers. But a big firm cannot lay off machinery. Rationalisation¹¹ had enlarged productive capacity, but it had also proportionately increased the cost of not working at that capacity. Mosley wrote that:

'The more effective an industry is rationalised, the smaller is the recession in demand needed to turn profit into loss, and the more rapidly does that loss become unmanageable. The more, therefore, that industry is rationalised, the greater is the need for a stable and established market...'

The process of 'Trustification', which to *Socialists* meant the development of unfettered power to exploit workers and consumers on an increasing scale, Mosley saw as a system of market-sharing which removed the old economic



need to keep wages low. It was a *New Feudalism*¹² with markets instead of land being parcelled out among the barons. What the new system required was not expropriation, but state direction of resources to their most socially useful employment and state control of the operations of the few 'robber barons'.

This was not only an important economic, but also an important sociological perception, for it established not just the desirability but also the *possibility* of a *Managed Capitalism*. This was the decisive break with *Marxism*. *Marxists* said: Those who preach high-wage capitalism are either foolish or dishonest. *Capitalists* cannot live with such a system. This was the economic underpinnings of the class war.

Mosley reply was that, not only can *Modern Capitalism* live with such a system, but it cannot live without it! A buoyant market is as essential to the big firm in its individual capacity as to the economy as a whole. In that fact lies the possibility of the *State* so managing demand as to introduce a high-wage economy with the support of *Capitalism* and also of bringing unions and employers together as joint directors of industry rather than as opponents in the class war. But *only* if a 'stable and established market' could in fact be secured. How could this be done?

The first requirement was to eliminate low-wage competition from abroad. Mosley was by no means the first visiting English politician to have discovered that America combined a high level of technology with a higher standard of life than any other country in the world. But he was the only English politician at

the time to consider seriously the conditions under which American prosperity had been achieved and how far they could be reproduced in England.

The key to American prosperity Mosley found to be the existence of 'so large and so assured a home market'. The 'happy accidents' of geography had given America virtual self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and raw materials. This meant that it hardly needed to trade with the rest of the world. High protective duties 'afforded comparative immunity from the competition of foreign low-paid labour'. Stringent immigration laws 'created a shortage of labour in relation to demand and afforded labour a strong bargaining position on the market.'

Thus an insulated American economic system was able to raise wages 'to heights dizzily above the subsistence level...in defiance of all *Marxian* laws.' It was from this perspective of a successful *Capitalism* that Mosley turned to the problems of an unsuccessful *Capitalism*. In the nineteenth century, he argued, Britain had what amounted to the

¹¹ 1920s rationalisation meant Ford-style production lines; replacing people with mechanisation as in the power looms and shuttles in the Manchester weaving industry; and Taylorism...another American import...to make men's work more efficient.

¹² This theme was taken up again by the Canadian-born economist John Kenneth Galbraith whose economic theories strongly influenced the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. See also Peter Drucker's *The End of Economic Man* (1939), *European Fascism* (1968) and *The Nature of Fascism* (1968).

whole world as its market. *Free Trade* was simply another name for British monopoly. Britain owned the means of production and could therefore extract 'unpaid labour' from all the other countries.

However unfair *Free Trade* could be justified by the conditions of the time. With the growth of populations, progress out of this stage in the infancy of the industrial revolution required specialisation: 'any barrier to the thin trickle of international trade was obviously bad...[and] liable to result in distress and starvation in a world community whose resources barely satisfied the needs of life'.

In the 1930s, by contrast, the problem was one of plenty. Mosley understood this and in an article in the *Sunday Pictorial* on 24th June 1934 he wrote:

'The modern nations can produce any goods they require with present machinery. Variations in production costs between nations in modern conditions are negligible in an age of potential plenty.'

Keynes made the same point, though more moderately, in an article in the *New Statesman* on 8th Jul 1933 when discussing *National Self-Sufficiency* he wrote:

'But I am not persuaded that the economic advantages of the international division of labour today are at all comparable with what they were. Over an increasingly wide range of industrial products, and perhaps of agricultural products also, I become doubtful whether the economic costs of national self-sufficiency is great enough to outweigh the other advantages of gradually bringing the producer and the consumer within the ambit of the same national, economic and financial organisation. Experience accumulates to prove that most modern mass-production processes can be performed in most countries and climates with almost equal efficiency.'¹³

Thus science had enabled the restoration of the largely self-sufficient economy of *Mercantilist Times*. Nor was this just a hypothesis. With the growing emphasis on security, great nations were deliberately constructing autarchic systems.¹⁴ Former British markets had industrialised and were now increasingly producing for themselves the goods that Britain had formerly sent them. In the remaining markets (including the home market) Britain faced intensified competition from cheap, semi-mechanised labour (textiles) and from dumping.

These processes had been greatly accelerated by the economic collapse as each major industrial nation strove to cut itself loose from what had become an ever more suicidal struggle. 'In such circumstances,' Mosley wrote, 'we ask the old parties a simple question':

'How can any international system, whether *Capitalist* or *Socialist*, advance or even maintain the standard of life of our people?...None can deny the truism that to sell we must find customers and, as foreign markets progressively close...the home customer becomes ever more the outlet of industry. But the home customer is simply the British people, on whose purchasing power our industry is ever more dependent. For the most part the purchasing power of the British people depends on the wages and salaries they are paid...[Yet] wages and salaries of the British people are held down far below the level which modern science, and the potential of production, could justify because their labour is subject to...undercutting competition...on both foreign and home markets...The result is the tragic paradox of poverty and unemployment amid potential plenty...Internationalism, in fact, robs the British people of the power to buy the goods that the British people produce.'

Yet it was on the revival of the export trade that the *Old Gangs* pinned their hopes for creating that 'large and assured market' which could alone absorb the product of the modern machine.

National Self Sufficiency

It was by this process of reasoning that Mosley reached his own solution of a self-contained economic system 'insulated' from low-wage competition. The unit was to be the *British Empire*.¹⁵ Why the empire? Because it was the

¹³ This article produced an exchange of correspondence between Keynes and Mosley. To Mosley's congratulations on his 'fascist' economics, Keynes responded that he wrote as he did 'not to embrace you but to save the country from you.'

¹⁴ Mosley often uses the term autarchy to mean the quality of being self-sufficient. Usually the term is applied to political states or their economic policies. Autarchy exists whenever an entity can survive or continue its activities without external assistance. Autarchy is not necessarily economic. For example, a military autarchy would be a state that could defend itself without help from another country. *Mercantilism* was a policy followed by empires in the 17th and 18th centuries limiting trade outside the empire. In the 20th century, autarchy as a policy goal was sought by Nazi Germany in the 1930s to maximize trade within its economic bloc and minimize trade outside of it. The economic bloc wherein trade was maximized were those that had raw materials vital to Germany's growth. Trade with these countries was negotiated by the *Minister of Economics* Hjalmar Schacht and was based on the exchange of German manufactured produce directly for these materials rather than currency, allowing Schacht to barter without reliance on the strength of the Reichsmark.

¹⁵ There was a strong imperial presence in Mosley's inner circle. Arthur Keith Chesterton, a cousin of G.K. Chesterton and probably the best polemicist for the *British Union of Fascists* (*BUF*), was typical of the type. His roots were in South Africa where he lived half the year. He had served with distinction in the *Kaiser War* in the *Durban Light Infantry*, gaining the *Military*

most obvious unit of life for Mosley's 'Greater Britain', the area carved out by its history and sustained by kinship and sentiment. Mosley hoped to arrange complementary trade arrangements with the *White Dominions* leading in time to a planned imperial economy. His military adviser, General Fuller, advocated an *Imperial Council* to plan and coordinate imperial defence. Both saw economic and military arrangements as a strategic whole in which India was to play a crucial role.



In the late nineteenth century India had been the main market for British textiles. The key to Lancashire's recovery, therefore, was the exclusion of Japanese textiles from the Indian market and the suppression of India's own textile industry developed during the *Kaiser War*. This in turn meant suppressing the Indian nationalist movement and holding India down by force.¹⁶

Within the area secured, it would be the task of government acting with employers and unions deliberately to plan incomes as science increased the power to produce.

Mosley was not content to let *Capitalism* get on with the job of creating a new economy based on the 'philosophy of high wages' because of the American experience between 1929 and 1932 when the *Bankers* were given the job of putting Americans back to work but succumbed to their first serious test.

'The credit which should have been used for industrial development and the financing of reasonable consumption was devoted to the uses of *Wall Street*...The *Federal Reserve Board*...were able only to check credit expansion in a quantitative rather than a qualitative manner...No machinery existed for discrimination between social and antisocial use of credit,¹⁷ only for a general policy of restriction. By restriction of credit, the genuine producer was hit long before the *Wall Street* speculator, who summoned European short-term credits to his aid.

In an effort to check the frenzy of a few irresponsible individuals, the whole great structure of American industry was shaken to foundations which did not rest on the reality of corporate organisation. Had private enterprise been acting in accordance with a reasoned national policy, the trouble might well have been avoided. In the stress of internal competition on a sagging market, and in

Cross at the age of twenty. A journalist by profession...like Rex Tremlett, another South African who edited *Fascist Week* between 1933 and 1934...Chesterton found it hard to settle down to civilian life in England in the 1920s where he edited a group of newspapers in Torquay before working in public relations for the *Shakespeare Memorial Theatre* in Stratford-upon-Avon. Writing in the political journal *Action* on 18th June 1936, A.K. Chesterton described his *Fascism* as 'the passionate revolt of the spirit of man against the lawless stampede of greed and treachery carried out by *Liberalism* throughout the ages'.

¹⁶ This entailed a considerable reversal of Mosley's earlier attitude. In 1925 he had written that Gandhi was 'one of the great world forces, not by the power of his considerable intellect and personality, but because alone amongst statesmen he appears to have conquered in himself the ordinary weaknesses of humanity' and that Pandit Nehru was the 'Parnell of Indian politics, whose cold resolution of purpose blends effectively with the Celtic ardour of the passionate Bengalee'.

¹⁷ In the 1920s R.H. Tawney began the work that would lead to the notion of *Impropriety*...the dark side of *Property*...a concept which the 1947 *Labour Government* adapted to justify a penal level of tax (98%) on *Unearned Income*.

the absence of any State machinery for the maintenance...of wages, the high wages and the hire-purchase system began to crumble...Never was more notable the absence of a coherent national plan...to check forces inimical to the stability of the State, and to encourage the genuine forces of production and exchange in which national welfare must rest.

America made a god of unregulated anarchy in private enterprise. This, she falsely believed, was the only alternative to *Socialism*. Both in her success and in her failure, in her dizzy prosperity and in her cataclysmic depression, there is an instructive lesson. Throughout the boom she achieved, on a basis purely temporary, what organised planning and corporate institutions can set on a permanent footing.'

Birmingham Proposals

As early as 3rd May 1925 when introducing his economic proposals to five thousand people who queued to hear him speak at Birmingham Town Hall, Mosley attacked the 'strange view that *Socialists* could do nothing until *Capitalism* had collapsed'. His *Birmingham Proposals*¹⁸ provided the ideal transition to *Socialism* because they gave the *State* power over the *Capitalist* economy.



MOSLEY BY LOW

Deflation ruthlessly pursued had reduced demand below the level necessary to achieve full employment. Therefore the prime necessity was to expand demand 'to evoke out unused capacity which is at present not commanded either by the rich or the poor'. Redistribution was no answer as its practical results would be of little significance having much less impact on the working classes than an expansion of demand.

Mosley made a distinction between a *Capitalist* and a *Socialist* credit expansion, which would be planned to create a demand upon the staple industries by directing new money into the hands of the poor. Steady employment would follow...provided measures were taken to counter *Capitalist* sabotage.¹⁹

Mosley's fear was that *Speculators* would use the new money to corner commodities, creating an artificial scarcity which would force a price rise and thus cancel out working-class gains. It was to guard against this that he adopted the proposals of Lloyd George's war-time controller of food, for the state purchase of foodstuffs and raw

materials direct from the *Foreign Producer*, thereby eliminating the middle man.

Mosley also addressed the question of imports and import substitution. In *Revolution by Reason* (page 27) he wrote that this process of switching production to the home market...something the Americans would later call '*Production for Use*'...might go very far without danger to the import of necessary foodstuffs and raw materials.

'We import completely manufactured articles to the value of £300,000,000 per annum, most of which could be made at home. Our essential supplies can be purchased by far less exports than are at present sent abroad. The natural revulsion from the crude fallacies of *Protection* has resulted in a fetish worship of the present dimensions of our export trade by minds which have just succeeded in grasping the elementary fact that we must export in order to import certain necessities which cannot be produced at home.'

Mosley was also aware of the tricks of *International Finance* in the face of so direct a challenge to the hegemony of their system. In *Revolution by Reason* (page 22-3) he wrote that since *Socialism* was the 'conscious control and direction of human resources for human needs' it was incompatible with the automatic gold standard or any system 'which makes our vital medium of exchange dependent upon chance discoveries of gold fields or upon the whimsical movements of world demand for an attractively coloured but otherwise useless metal'. If the home recovery programme led to a drain on gold, the pound should be allowed to float.

Although there was nothing in Mosley's *1925 Economic Programme* to repel men of goodwill, by 1930 he was talking of the need for constitutional changes to *The King in Parliament* to carry out the task. By 1936 when Mosley

¹⁸ Mosley read his *Birmingham Proposals* to the *Independent Labour Party's Summer School* at Easton Lodge on 11th August 1925 and had them published as *Revolution by Reason*. A book-length version by John Strachey came out in December 1925.

¹⁹ Mosley was conscious of the risk of inflation. He wrote in *Revolution by Reason* that 'We propose first to expand credit in order to create demand. That new and greater demand must, of course, be met by a new and greater supply of goods, or all the evils of inflation and price rise will result. Here our *Socialist Planning* must enter in. We must see that more goods are forthcoming to meet the new demand.' (page 12).

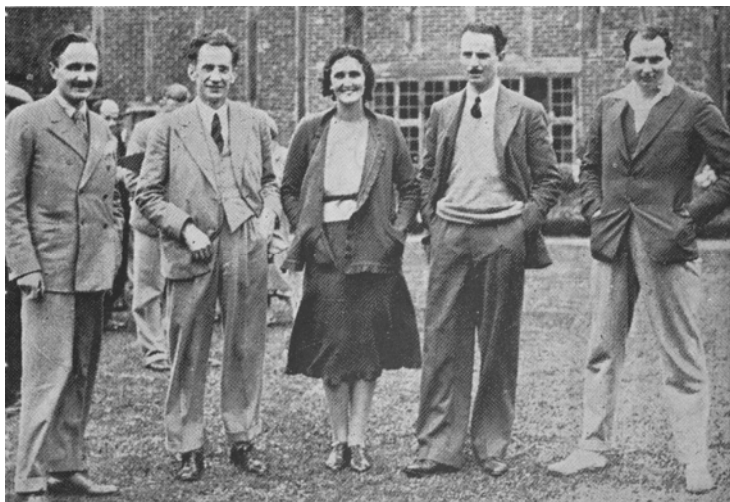
was starting to achieve major electoral gains²⁰ he had added a third leg to the stool.²¹ This was much more controversial and was eventually met by passage of the *1936 Public Order Act* which successfully silenced Mosley.

City of London

To most people it seemed to be courting failure to tell people to dress in black shirts and throw their opponents downstairs in order to get a *Corporate State*. If fists are to be used to cure faults then better they are used to thump the *Treasury* box in the *House of Commons* than the faces of their opponents. Mosley disagreed. *Parliament, Politicians and the Party System* were not up to the job.

Behind every 'fault' there was a vested interest. As long as governments and parties failed to arm themselves with the popular support to challenge the interests, so long would the interests determine policy, despite all the enlightenment pouring out from thinkers, despite the actual needs of the major producers.

The right idea had to have behind it the force of popular passion before it could triumph. Thus Mosley laid down his programme of action. 'The rebirth of a nation comes from the people in a clear and ordered sequence. The People,



their Movement, their Government, their Power. To create their Government...the people have first to create their Movement.'

The chief vested interest which the new radical movement would have to challenge and overcome was not 'capitalism' but the *City of London*. This was the force preventing the construction of a national economic system. The traditional business of the *City* was foreign lending. The only motive of foreign lending was to derive a higher rate of interest on investment than could be got at home.

'That interest', Mosley wrote, 'can only be drawn annually from foreign nations in the shape of gold, services or goods. As few

of them have either gold or services to offer, the annual interest on foreign loans is derived almost entirely from the import of foreign goods. Consequently the business of finance depends on foreign imports, because without such imports it cannot draw usury from abroad.

Therefore, the interest of finance conflicts directly with the interest of the producer...For it should further be noted that the entry of foreign goods representing interest on foreign loans is not balanced by any corresponding exports of

²⁰ In the election on 6th March 1937 in East London *British Union* candidates polled an average 18 percent of the vote. In *Bethnal Green North-East* the *BU* took 23 percent with 3000 votes apiece for their two candidates compared with 7700 apiece for the *Labour Party* candidates. The *BU* vote came principally from the *Liberals* and the *anti-Socialists* and not from *Labour*.

²¹ The 'un-Englishness' of the *British Fascist Union* gave rise to legitimate concern and lost the *BFU* much *Middle-Class* support...but probably gained *Working-Class* support. There were a number of issues...and much mischievous myth-making has grown up around them. Three controversial issues were violence, uniforms and anti-Semitism. The violence at *BFU* meetings was a direct result of *Communist Party* policy with the *BFU* as victims. With regard to the *BFU* uniforms...at one level no different to those of the *Salvation Army* or the *Boy Scouts*...these also threatened the police monopoly. Anti-Semitism in the *BFU* took several forms. Officially as a party the *BFU* in East London developed a policy that was anti-Jewish rather than anti-Semitic. There were sound reasons for doing so: (1) young Jewish boys were duped by *Communist Party* agitators into disrupting *BFU* meetings; (2) The East End had an immigrant problem that happened to be Jewish. Mosley returned to this immigrant theme in the 1950s, with Enoch Powell, in seeking to make immigration a political issue...black immigration from the Caribbean rather than Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe being the subject; and (3) Jewish international financial interests used ordinary *Jews* to pursue their own agenda of discrediting the Mosley message. At the personal level, the *BFU* attracted individual members with strong anti-Semitic prejudices...as did the *Conservative Party*. However many of these, such as William Joyce and A.C. Chesterton, had studied *The Jewish Question* and were convinced that there was a case to answer, namely that: (a) Jewish International Financiers were conspiring to perpetuate the corrupt and usurious financial system; and (b) Jewish leaders were conspiring to persuade the *British Government* and the *British People* to make war with Germany. Robert Skidelsky's biography, *Oswald Mosley*, contains two good essays on these subjects...Chapter 20: *Who was then the Englishman* and Chapter 21: *The Campaign in East London*. Mosley adopted the European cause when he returned to active politics, after his wartime internment, as leader of the *Union Movement* to campaign for a *United States of Europe*. This was not just a post-war version of the old *British Union*. Mosley renounced the old nationalist support which had sustained the pre-war movement...much of it going to the late A.K. Chesterton's *League of Empire Loyalists* (1954)...and encouraged anti-semitism to die away by refusing to recognize a Jewish question so anti-Semites sought other pastures for their prejudice.

British goods. They are tribute from one country to another in respect of a past transaction without any countervailing payment.'

This is the key passage. In economic thought *Finance* is simply the handmaiden of *Production* and *Trade*. For Mosley it was the master. The whole system of *International Trade* is kept going in order to maintain the 'almost unlimited mobility of finance' and to guarantee the profits of the *City of London*.

At one time, he was prepared to concede, such a system may have served the interests of the producer in opening up markets. But under existing conditions its effect was destructive of the interests of home producer and worker alike by preventing the substitution of home production for imports and by exposing the British staples to competition from sweated labour equipped by finance to undercut British goods - especially textiles - in third markets.

This was not the sole consequence. *Finance* vastly increased the system's tendency to instability. *Speculation* was life to the *Financier* but death to the *Producer*. The inherent instability of the system gave tremendous opportunities to the 'quick jumping financier' to gamble in commodities, stock markets and exchanges - to gamble, in other words, with the prosperity of whole industries and nations. This was permitted solely because the *British Government* and the British economic system were *Debt Collectors* for private interests in the *City of London*.'

Finance could 'break' any government whether it was the *Labour Government* of 1931 or the *Blum Government* in France simply by cracking the whip of a financial logic to which all parties in the state subscribed. In a graphic simile Mosley likened the 'giant rogues of international finance' to the 'robber barons' of the *Middle Ages* whose power centralised *Monarchy* that *Parliaments* had been developed to combat. Against the twentieth century robber-barons the people must organise 'collectively their own police force to deal with the enemy and the exploiter.'

Why was the existing political system unable to master the force of predatory international finance? Like many radicals Mosley diagnosed the feebleness of *Parliamentary Government* as a major cause of the trouble. At no time was the orthodox view that party government was strong government more widely challenged than in the 1930s.

'What is the historical function of *Parliament* in this country? It is to prevent the *Government* from governing. It has never had any other purpose...Bit by bit it broke the feudal *Monarchy*; it broke the *Church*; and finally it even broke the *Country Gentleman*. Then, having broken everything that could govern the country, it left us at the mercy of our private commercial *Capitalists* and *Landowners*. Since then we have been governed from outside *Parliament*, first by our own employers, and of late by the *Financiers* of all nations and races.'

The words were Bernard Shaw's (1933), but the message was the same as that preached by Mosley: the abdication of government to the vested interests through the fear of entrusting to the people's representatives the necessary power and knowledge to overcome the predatory forces of *Financial Capitalism*.

Labour Party

Inevitably Mosley directed the question of why the existing political parties were unable to master the force of predatory finance at the *Labour Party*, the 'people's party' formed for that express purpose. Mosley tried to explain the problem of *Labour's* weakness in face of its opponents on a number of levels.

Socialists were handicapped by obsolete ideas. Grippled by a vision of the *International Socialist Commonwealth* - the legacy of their nineteenth century past as well as of Britain's own free-trade tradition transposed into the language of idealism - they shrank from any hint of national organisation that might hinder or hurt anyone else.²²

'The international system...relies on the financier to supply credit for the international transit and sale of goods and capital...The supply of these facilities by the great finance houses makes utterly dependent upon them...any Government which supports that system of trade...Thus the *Labour Party* had been reduced to seeking 'to secure benefits for the British working-class by kind permission of international financiers, within an international system which makes these benefits impossible.'

But it would be wrong to suggest that Mosley saw these inadequate ideas as the prime reason for *Labour's* failure. It was the will to act that was lacking; and the lack of a will to act was in the last resort a feature of character rather than ideas.

For Mosley, the politician was the archetypal imposter. *Parliamentarians* he saw as talkers and not doers. Even if they entered public life with a genuine urge to do something, this was rapidly drained away and reduced to charlatantry by the requirements of party politics and the corroding atmosphere of the *House of Commons*.

'Many a good revolutionary has arrived at Westminster roaring like a lion, only a few months later to be cooing as the tame dove of his opponent. The bar, the smoking room, the lobby, the dinner tables of his constituents' enemies, and the 'atmosphere of the best club in the country', very quickly rob a

²² 'Prate of world brotherhood from the *Socialist* opens up the way to world exploitation by the *Financier*,' Mosley observed.

people's champion of his vitality and fighting power. Revolutionary movements lose their revolutionary ardour as a result long before they ever reach power, and the warrior of the platform becomes the lapdogs of the lobbies.'

When Parliament reassembled on 8th September 1931, Mosley delivered two powerful speeches as a party leader squeezed onto the *Opposition Front Bench*. In political terms these helped the *National Government* because of their savage attacks against the *Labour Party*.²³

'I believe it is vastly more important to deal, and deal quickly, with the industrial situation, than it is to deal with the budget...The continual decline and collapse of the industries of this country makes completely illusory any attempt to balance the budget. You may balance the budget on the present basis of revenue, but there is no one in the *House* who can say with confidence that this basis of revenue will be long maintained...That is why the one thing I want to urge upon the *House* is the immediate adoption of some constructive industrial policy. I do not care who does it. I do not so much care what the policy is, as long as someone gets busy...I put forward my suggestions for an industrial policy over 18 months ago. I also put forward an analysis of the position leading to the present crisis which has since proved correct...'

Dealing with official *Socialist* explanation of the crisis, Mosley turned upon the *Labour Party* with a controlled fury:

'In face of this decrease of our industrial position it is really idle to talk about the recent crisis as a *Bankers' ramp*...If the *Labour Party* had said that it was the banking policy of the last ten years, a policy which they supported, that was responsible for this situation, a policy which their *Chancellor of the Exchequer* supported and which they supported him in supporting, then they would be getting at the root facts of the present situation. Over and over again, in party conferences and meetings and in this *House*, some of us challenged the policy of the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*. Over and over again the solid ranks of *Labour* closed up behind him, supported the policy of deflation [and] supported the policy which led to the wage reductions in 1921 and 1926... the doubling of the burden of the *National Debt*...the doubling of the interest of every debenture holder, rentier and bond-holder...[and] placed upon British industry and trade a burden which no other industries in the world had to carry. The *Labour Party* again and again...supported the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*. They did not walk out of the *Bankers' palace* till it fell about their ears. They were as fatuous in supporting the *Bankers' policy* for the last two years as they are now in denouncing the *Bankers' ramp*.'

Mosley then outlined his own suggestion for dealing with the financial crisis:

'Suppose we adopted the view that it is far more important to have industrial recovery than to balance our budget...We should then adopt the method of balancing our budget advocated by Mr. Keynes and other economists which is simply to continue to borrow - I know that it shocks honourable members - to continue to borrow to provide for the *Unemployment Insurance Fund*, or I would prefer to say, borrow to provide constructive works to give employment in place of it, to suspend the *Sinking Fund* and to raise the remainder by a revenue tariff or, as I should say, a protective tariff.'

If this policy produced a run on the pound, Britain should boldly mobilise its foreign assets - should have threatened to do so in fact already rather than gone crawling cap in hand to the bankers:

'We could have said to *Wall Street* or to any other stock exchange, 'We have £400,000,000 of dollar securities and unless we get the loan we want, they go on to *Wall Street* tomorrow morning and you will get the biggest bear raid in your market that you have known for the last two years.' And you would have got your loan. If you want a policy of vigour and virility to face world finance, there it is.

Mosley had finally said publicly what he had been arguing about with his *Labour Party* colleagues for several years. There was a problem with the idea of a *Labour Party* as a party of rebellion...a movement of the weak against the strong. The reasons were complex and were to do with the structure and psychology of the *Labour Party* itself. The chances of a successful rebellion within the *Labour Party* are never as high as in the *Conservative Party*.

The one hope of the weak lies in their numbers; but numbers are useless without discipline. That is why when the crunch comes the *Party* tends to close its ranks and follow its leaders, why appeals to 'solidarity' nearly always succeed. The perpetual problem of the *Labour Party* is to make the weak strong. But its perpetual, ever-present fear is of being broken by the strength of the forces opposing it.

Ideologically, the need for strengthening the solidarity of the weak expressed itself in commitment to a collective creed, a creed that at once embodied the experiences and psychic needs of an oppressed class and projected them

²³ Mosley never actually resigned from the *Labour Party* although he had planned a series of resignations by supporters of his *New Party* at the rate of one a day for a week culminating in his own resignation. But the *Labour Party* got in first and on 10th March 1931 he was expelled for 'gross disloyalty' and his *New Party* declared a proscribed organization.

onto a higher level. *Socialism* was functional to the politics of class independence: the ideological cement of class solidarity. Failure to carry out socialism could be forgiven, for leaders must take account of the 'facts of the situation'. But renunciation of *Socialist* belief or *Socialist* rhetoric was unforgivable, for this heralded the dissolution of class solidarity.

Here we have an important explanation of why it proved so difficult for the *Labour Party* to 'connect' with the radical *Keynesianism* represented by Mosley, and at the same time so easy for it to forgive the 'betrayals' perpetuated on it by MacDonald, Snowden, etc. The *Labour Party* had not yet perfected the mental gymnastic that would later on enable it to accept the *Mixed Economy* and continue to proclaim its faith in the *Common Ownership of Production, Distribution and Exchange*.

Organisationally, the need to make the weak strong can be seen in the emphasis placed on *Institutions* at the expense of *Individuals*. As the *New Statesman* remarked on 5th September 1931: 'Persons with no inside knowledge of the *Labour Movement* find it hard to understand how little the influence of any individual counts against the sentiment of collective solidarity.' Collective solidarity in the parliamentary party was buttressed by the phalanx of elderly trade union officials for whom safe parliamentary seats in industrial areas were equivalent to union pensions for a lifetime of hard service. It was this solid group which held the fort against the 'unreliable' intellectuals, just as the union bloc votes did at party conference.



The most that the *Labour Party* would tolerate was 'loyal grousing', preferably directed at the leadership's failure to achieve *Socialism* faster. But as soon as the grousing threatened to become disloyal the ranks would close, the big guns would be aimed at the rebels, and loyalty would be insisted on, on threat of expulsion.

The way the *Labour Party* was constructed ensured that only the top leadership could take the initiative. This placed a very high premium on good leadership from above. Bold leadership of the kind that takes advantage of favourable opportunities and turns possibilities into achievements was the one thing that the *Labour Party* found it virtually impossible to produce. Greatness of spirit cannot breathe in the mediocre atmosphere of *Social Democracy*.

'I recollect', John Strachey wrote, 'the spectacle of Mosley sitting silent and alone, brooding with an indescribable bitterness, as the elderly, portly *Trade Union Officials* and nervous *Pacifist Intellectuals* filed out of a party meeting at which they had demonstrated their undiminished confidence in Mr Ramsay McDonald.' The attitude of these officials to Mosley has been well described by W.J. Brown:

'Come to think of it - who is Mosley, anyway? He isn't really one of us! True, we have drunk his wine and smoked his cigars, and been flattered by an invitation to his house. But there you are! He doesn't really 'belong'. In any case, what's he getting at? Is it unemployment he's really concerned with, or is he playing a subtle game for his own advancement? Got too good a conceit of himself! - he has! Properly considered, a bounder. Why, even the Tories couldn't stand him.'

By the end of the 1920s Mosley had concluded that the *Labour Party* would never chose him as their leader and were incapable of introducing the economic and monetary reforms necessary to improve the lot of the *Working Classes*.

British Union

The *English Intelligentsia* which came to political awareness in the 1930s tended to be pro-communist. *Marxism* in the form approved by the *Communist Parties* was a cultural establishment with vast influence. The reasons are complex...and yet to be explained. It was not true on the continent where *Fascism* had a wider intellectual appeal.²⁴

Whatever the reason, these developments left *Liberalism* as the only significant ideology and the only intellectual barrier to *Marxism*...although there were powerful non-intellectual barriers such as tradition, deference, etc. Once *Liberalism* was weakened by its association in the 1930s with the ugly face of *Capitalism*, *Marxism* seemed to young radicals to be the only available alternative. They largely accepted the *Marxist* identification of *State*, *Capitalism* and *Fascism* and failed to consider the possibility that state power, properly used, might be *Capitalism*'s most dangerous enemy. It was not, indeed, till 1945 that the traditional identification of the *State* with *Reaction* was to be broken.

²⁴ Perhaps the key factor was the weakness in England of non-liberal intellectual traditions. The successful oligarchic struggle against the *Monarchy* had destroyed any independent theory of the *State*. The completeness of England's *Industrial Revolution* had destroyed *The Land* as a political force. *Catholicism* was always weak. The triumph of the *Factory System* had greatly shrunk the *Artisan* class. There were no *Nationalist* grievances.

Douglas Jerrold, founder and editor of the *English Review* wrote about Mosley with sympathy and discernment:

‘He is very un-English in his dislike of forms and red-tape and of the slow progress nowhere in particular which fills up the lives of Kensington and Belgravia...Mosley is a great orator; among my generation, only John Strachey can even run him close, and the intellectual content of Strachey’s effervescence is too thin even for the Albert Hall on a Sunday afternoon. Mosley is also, which most people deny, an important man...He has no great chance of attaining a responsible position in the public life of Europe. He is, however, telling the truth as he sees it, and he is one of the few people in England who are even trying to do so...He has sacrificed the certainty of office for the certainty of a life in the political wilderness...to call [him] a careerist is itself impertinence of the most vulgar order.’

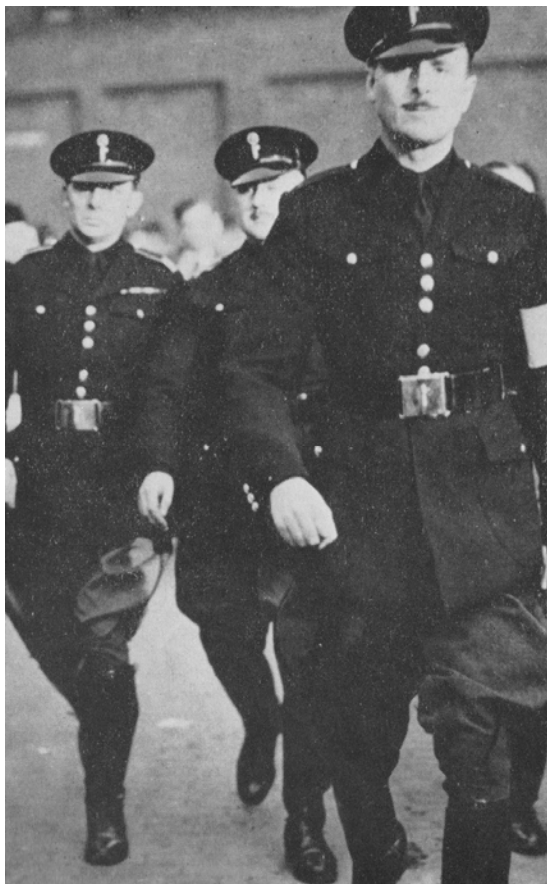
Interestingly, Jerrold reported that Mosley ‘does not believe he will succeed in his own chosen fashion. He does believe that it is somebody’s duty to keep alive in times of tolerable prosperity an active distrust of the political machines, so that when adversity comes, the people may not find themselves without hope.’

Jerrold was linked to an important conservative literary movement in the early years of the last century, whose aesthetic and social credo was expressed by T.E. Hulme, Hugh Kingsmill and T.S. Eliot. These writers looked to *Fascism* to defend civilised values against *Democracy* in literature and politics.

Unlike *High Anglicanism*, *Catholicism* developed a social and economic theory requiring action on the political plane; and many *Catholics* saw in *Fascism* the movement that corresponded closest to their social ideals. The *BUF* journal *Blackshirt* of 17th May 1935 reported that twelve percent of leading *British Union of Fascist* officials were *Catholics*, a substantially higher proportion than the Catholic percentage in the country.

In the late 1930s, the Catholic newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Tablet*, were among the few journals that reported Mosley and *British Union* sympathetically, the *Herald* of 10th June 1938 writing that ‘its policy is the nearest approach to the social theory of the encyclicals that we have yet been offered by any prominent political party’.

The Catholic solution to the social problem, proclaimed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and eloquently expounded in England by Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton, entailed the widest possible distribution of property.²⁵



Rejecting class warfare, it favoured a corporative system modelled on the ancient guilds. *Catholics*, as the eminent theologian Father C.C. Martindale from the *Society of Jesus* explained in *Action* in November 1938, found it difficult to accept *Fascism*’s claims to total allegiance from the citizen; but *Catholics* and other *Christians* found these claims, unpalatable as they were, preferable to the equally totalitarian claims of atheistic, materialistic *Marxism*.

Opposition to the *Red Peril* made ‘many clergy and ministers in Britain...among the most ardent advocates of *Fascism*’ according to the ‘Fascist padre’, the Reverend E.C. Opie. The Reverend E.B. Nye was another cleric who harped on the Bolshevik theme in his many contributions to Mosley’s journals.’

Two writers who did transfer Hulme’s aesthetic theories to the political plane were Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound. Bereft of religious faith, they went further than the *Catholic* thinkers. Wyndham Lewis saw *Fascism* as a defence against democracy; Ezra Pound as a defence against usury which ‘thickened the line’ of modern literature and modern life.’

Wyndham Lewis initially praised Hitler and contributed to the *British Union Quarterly*. He only abandoned his support for *Fascism* when he perceived that it had certain characteristics in common with what he called *Democracy*.

Pound divided his admiration between Mussolini, Mosley and Thomas Jefferson. His articles were a prominent feature

²⁵ *Chestertonian Economics* was the working title of *Small is Beautiful: economics as if people mattered* by E.F. Schumacher. See *The Schumacher Enigma Revisited* by Peter Etherden (2005) for discussion of the *Distributism* of the Chester-Bellos. ...available online at <http://cesc.net/adobeweb/scholars/schumacher/enigmarevisited.pdf>.

of *Action* in the late 1930s. In 1939 he wrote, '*Usury* is the cancer of the world which only the *Knife of Fascism* can cut out of the life of the nation.'

Although these traditions are dubbed right-wing or reactionary, Pound's polemics against *International Finance* and his support for the monetary reformers Silvio Gesell, Major Douglas and A.R. Orage...also a theorist of *Guild Socialism*...bridged the conventional antithesis between right- and left-wing thought.

Mosley and a substantial proportion of his following had come to *Fascism* from the left in politics. The most famous example of intellectual sympathy from the left is George Bernard Shaw. Here is what Shaw said about Mosley in his *Fabian Lecture*, '*In Praise of Guy Fawkes*' (1933):

'Sir Oswald Mosley is a very interesting man to read just now: one of the few people who is writing and thinking about real things, and not about figments and phrases. You will hear something more of Sir Oswald Mosley before you are through with him. I know you dislike him, because he looks like a man who has some physical courage and is going to do something and that is a terrible thing. You instinctively hate him, because you do not know where he will land you: and he evidently means to uproot some of you. Instead of talking round and round political subjects and obscuring them with bunk verbiage without ever touching them, and without understanding them, all the time assuming states of things which ceased to exist from twenty to six hundred and fifty years ago, he keeps hard down on the actual facts of the situation.'

Shaw's encomiums for Mosley, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin have been consistently misinterpreted as 'an eagerness to shock *British Liberals*'. Shaw saw *Fascism* and *Communism* alike as twin expressions of the *Collectivist Creed* he had preached ever since the 1880s.²⁶ The failure of democratic politicians had long convinced him that this creed could be implemented only by heroic realists. His *Collectivism* and his doctrine of the *Superman* thus combined to make him look with favour on the social experiments initiated by Hitler and Mussolini.



Mosley had been heavily influenced by Shaw who reciprocated the esteem and supported virtually the whole of the *BUF's* programme,²⁷ down to the occupational franchise. Shaw was no sentimentalist, and in his play *On the Rocks*

²⁶ Shaw annoyed his fellow socialists in 1937 when he remarked that his friend, Oswald Mosley, was a much better *Socialist* than most of them. When a lady asked him to lead the fight against *Fascism*, Shaw replied, 'Why do *Socialists* fight each other and let the *Reactionaries* in?'

²⁷ An *Enabling Act* would give Government power to inaugurate the new economic system by freeing it from detailed parliamentary obstruction. *Parliament* would have the right to dismiss the government by vote of censure...but only in the first parliament. The permanent system would be different. In place of a parliament elected on a geographical basis, there would be a parliament elected on an occupational franchise - doctors would vote as doctors, miners as miners, farmers as farmers etc. Its function would be purely advisory - to 'assist on the technical problems of a technical age'. On a separate franchise, the people would vote for or against the government of the day at least every five years...a 'recall' device used by a number of American states to hold state governments to account. If the government was defeated, the monarch would send for new ministers able to receive the support of the country at a fresh vote, thus restoring to him his traditional prerogative. The *House of Lords* would

accepted the need for brutality and ruthlessness to bring about necessary changes. But, like many who recognised Mosley's ability and seriousness, he did not think that Mosley's *Fascism* would succeed in England.

John Scanlon started writing a regular industrial feature for *Action* in 1936 under the pen name of John Emery. A former miner and shipyard worker, a close friend of Jimmy Maxton²⁸ and a prominent *Independent Labour Party* (ILP) journalist, he had written a brilliantly mordant book, *The Decline and Fall of the Labour Party*, in 1932. On 16th October 1936 Scanlon wrote that Maxton 'should join with Sir Oswald Mosley in a great national campaign having but one object...to rouse the *British Workers* against their war-mongering leaders.'

Another who came over from *Labour* was Hugh Ross Williamson, writer, playwright and editor of the *Bookman* from 1930-4. In his book *Who Is for Liberty?* written when he was still *Labour* candidate for East Dorset in 1938, Ross Williamson rejected the *Marxist* identification of *Fascism* and *Capitalism*. 'Marx predicted a final struggle of disintegrating capitalism: what, in fact, happened was the emergence of *Fascism*. Therefore *Fascism* must be the final struggle of disintegrating *Capitalism*. That is the argument. There is no other.' Ross Williamson concluded that *Fascism* was a 'form of *anti-capitalist Socialism*' and that 'the real genius of *Capitalism* in its struggle for survival is that it has set its two opponents at each other's throats.'

Foreign Policy

Many believe that Mosley was prepared to let Hitler take over Britain. This is quite untrue. What is true, however, is that Mosley was not interested in victory over Germany. He considered a British or even a *British Empire* victory to be impossible. The best that might be hoped for would be an American-Russian victory, which in his opinion would be as destructive of Britain's world position as a defeat by Germany. Mosley's aim was to preserve Britain as an independent great power.²⁹ To fight Germany, where no British interest was involved, would be to create a *Communist* danger to threaten every British interest.³⁰

Nobody has a monopoly of wisdom. Denying the use of halls, closing down open-air meetings, forbidding processions, refusing to distribute or review writings or report speeches, denying the facility to write articles or broadcast. These are effective ways of excluding original and distinctive voices from the political dialogue. This is what happened to Mosley after introduction of *The Public Order Act*³¹ in November 1936...the final measure in a programme to provide the *British State* with a complete armoury of weapons for stopping the propagation of unpopular views following a general strengthening of executive powers to cope with dissent during the 1930s.³² It

become a second advisory chamber representing the proved ability and experience of the nation. This would be the principal political forum for the discussion of non-technical subjects such as foreign policy, religion etc. The *Press* would remain free, but subject to the 'revolutionary principle that it shall tell the truth'. This principle was to be enforced by the right of government to sue newspapers through the courts. The political proposals were clearly designed to give the government complete freedom from parliamentary control. At the same time, Mosley proposed to set up a parallel self-governing industrial structure. A *National Council of Corporations* would preside over corporations formed from the employers, trade unions and consumer interests of the various economic sectors...an outgrowth of the *New Party's Commodity and Import Boards*. Within the guide lines of a national plan, each corporation would work out its own policy for wages, prices, conditions of employment, investment and terms of competition. Government would intervene to settle deadlocks and strikes abolished.

²⁸ Mosley joined the *Independent Labour Party* in 1924 and from the beginning established excellent relations with the Clydeside leaders, Jimmy Maxton and John Wheatley.

²⁹ A 1939-1941 'Chamberlain' Peace Government adopting Mosley's foreign policy and strategic thinking would have avoided the disastrous outcome...for Europe and the *British Empire*...of the 1940-1945 *Churchill War Government*.

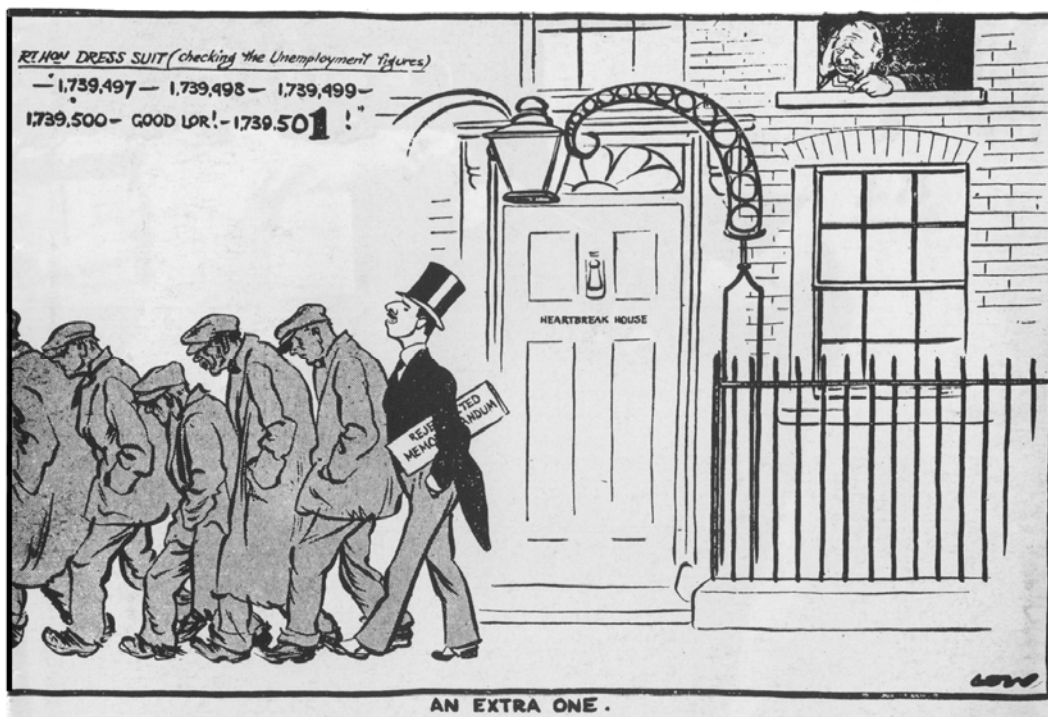
³⁰ This remark is taken from page 29 of *My Answer* (1946) which set the tone of much of Mosley's post-WWII polemics: as well as a future to be gained, there was a past to be justified, defended or explained away, a past which Mosley recognized as constituting a new and major barrier between him and the British people. *My Answer* was followed in 1947 by *The Alternative* which Skidelsky refers to in *Primary Sources* (page 545) as 'the most philosophical of Mosley's books reflecting his war-time reading'. During his five years of forced inactivity Mosley developed a love for Goethe's *Faust* and for the Ancient Greeks.

³¹ The intention of the act was to crush Mosley's movement. Public order was not the issue as an adequate legal framework existed with the common law cases of *Beatty versus Gilbanks* (1882) and *Wise versus Darling* (1902). The problem was that Mosley would have won any attempt under *Common Law* to deny him the right to campaign in East London. In his biography of Mosley (page 419) Robert Skidelsky sets out Mosley's case: (1) that his movement was advancing a serious policy on national and local issues; (2) that his processions were intended to publicise that policy; (3) that in some hundreds of meetings in the East End there had been only one conviction (up to mid 1937) for using insulting language; (4) that the seriousness of his intentions was established by his decision on 16 July 1936 to contest municipal elections; (5) that the size of his friendly meetings and the results of these elections showed that he had sizeable support; (6) that, far from being spontaneous, the opposition to him was largely organised; and (7) that this organisation was carried out by his direct political competitor, the *Communist Party*. Little of this came out in the *Commons* debate on 10th November 1936 on the *Public Order Bill*...see *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*.

³² Had Mosley really been the traitor depicted by war-time propaganda, he could simply have sat back and looked to an accumulation of British mistakes to give Germany its inevitable reward, from which he could have hoped to benefit. But this was not, and never was, his aim. 'The defeat and destruction of *British Empire* is the greatest disaster which *British Union* can conceive,' declared Mosley on 2nd May 1940 just three weeks before his arrest and internment on 23rd May 1940 under the *Defence Regulation 18B (1A)* that authorised the *Home Secretary* to detain any members of an organisation which in his view was either subject to foreign influence or control or whose leaders 'have or have had associations with' leaders of enemy governments or 'sympathise with' the 'system of government' of enemy powers. The measure was deliberately framed to catch

had the most tragic consequences for Great Britain...at least in the short term...holding back the adventure of civilisation by a century.

Mosley's central assumption was that defence was stronger than attack...for both Britain and Germany. Britain could not cut off German supplies with Eastern Europe and Russia open; Germany could not cut off British supplies in the face of British naval and air power; Britain and France could not force a military decision in the west; and a British government could repel any attempt at invasion with consummate ease. The real danger to Britain lay in dissipating her resources in foreign adventures like mad expeditions to Finland and Norway, garrisons in the Middle East, and use of scarce foreign currencies to buy up countries that were destined to fall into Germany's orbit.³³



In public Mosley urged a swift peace '...with 'Britain undefeated and the *British Empire* intact'. He regarded the war as completely unnecessary... 'a political war against the political system of a foreign country which our politicians do not like'. It was also unnecessary because Britain and Germany had nothing to fight about and that, if properly conducted by both sides, neither could win.

However, Mosley had no confidence in the *Old Gangs'* ability to run a war. They had neglected rearmament and fallen into Lloyd George's 'Polish trap'. Why should their war direction be any more successful? Mosley was not far wrong. Anglo-French planning had little contact with reality and lost what little it had when the British and French proposed to add Russia to their list of enemies to 'save' Finland...a piece of insanity only prevented by the refusal of the Scandinavians to allow the hastily assembled expeditionary force to pass through their countries.

Mosley was always prepared to fight Germany and Italy under certain circumstances. Those circumstances were a direct attack on Britain or the *British Empire*. In Mosley's view appeasement was a sensible policy but did not go far enough. Had it been based on a consistently realistic estimate of Britain's possibilities and a conception of a genuine alternative, then peace could have been preserved. His policy was more pacific than that eventually followed by the *British Government* because his definition of British interests differed from theirs.

any member of a *Fascist* organisation that the *Government* wanted to put inside. The assumption of *Regulation 18B* was that anyone who belonged to a *Fascist* organisation would automatically become a security risk in the event of a German invasion...although it is doubtful whether the *Government* actually believed this. It would be truer to say that the internment of Mosley was psychologically necessary as a belligerent response to a run of setbacks in the conduct of the war and to eliminate the dangerous opposition Mosley posed to the forthcoming propaganda campaign to persuade people...at home and throughout the *British Empire*...to accept as war aims Germany's unconditional surrender: aims that could only be achieved by the deliberate transformation of the eruption of armed conflict in Europe into a global conflagration.

³³ According to Skidelsky 'the remarkable unity in Mosley's foreign policy and strategic thinking only really emerges when one reads the articles on strategy he contributed to *Action* in the first six months of the war'...citing the eight issues of *Action* dated 5 Oct, 9 Nov, 16 Nov, 23 Nov 1939 and 25 Jan, 18 Apr, 9 May, 16 May 1940.

Mosley's definition of British interests rested on his conception of a self-contained empire and not as upholder of the European balance of power...the traditional definition. *Historians* accuse *Diplomats* as well as *Generals* of fighting the last war.

Mosley's repudiation of the traditional balance of power stemmed from the *Kaiser War*. In the air and in the trenches he had seen his best friends killed...the flower of young Europe slaughtered. What advantage of maintaining the European balance could possibly justify such a fearful devastation?

Mosley's strong isolationist attitude to European politics dates from the early 1920s. He made it clear that, should the *League of Nations*³⁴ fail, Britain alone could not take on the burden of keeping law and order in the world. These were orthodox views at the time. Bonar Law had said much the same; Austen Chamberlain had remarked that the Polish corridor was not worth the life of a single British Grenadier; and Winston Churchill had refused 'to accept as an axiom that our fate was involved in that of France.'³⁵ Nor was the appeasement of Germany in the cause of a durable peace the dirty word in radical circles that it was to become in the 1930s.

By the early 1930s, Mosley's twin aims of preventing war and building a 'land fit for heroes' had crystallised into the concept of a *British Imperial System*, politically isolated and economically 'insulated' from the rest of the world. This policy was clearly stated in the 1932 edition of *The Greater Britain*, written before Hitler had come to power and before Mussolini had started expanding in Africa.

'The measure of national reconstruction already described', Mosley wrote, 'involves automatically a change in our foreign policy. We should be less prone to anxious interference in everybody else's affairs, and more concentrated on the resources of our own country and *Empire*.' Britain would keep out of the 'tangled skein of European politics and animosities'. Already there was a clear statement of the connection between self-sufficiency and peace:

'It would be possible to end the anachronistic struggle for markets of an unorganised capitalism, leading again, as it has often done in the past, to the entanglement of governments in the commercial rivalries of their nationals. In place of that explosive chaos, rational discussion of the world economic problems could supervene. Nations which, in their internal organisation, were largely self-contained would find it a comparatively smaller problem to settle the allocation of the relatively small remaining area of raw materials which were subject to international competition, and the comparatively small remaining area of international markets...'

Wars, Mosley was arguing, were caused by commercial and financial rivalries. Get rid of the rivalries and you would have got rid of the most important single cause of modern wars. In the decay of the *Liberal* system, Keynes took much the same view.³⁶ But how was isolation – the key to radical hopes for building a better Britain – to be reconciled with British security which had involved maintaining the European balance of power? This problem had not arisen in the 1920s. It became acute with the resurgence of Germany in the 1930s. Mosley offered a dual policy: a settlement with Germany and rearmament.

In considering the possibility of a settlement with Germany, Mosley started from the proposition that Germany's goals were limited and not of a kind to conflict with the interests of Britain, properly conceived. This derived from his general argument that *Fascism* would remove the causes of war. It followed that there was little connection between the aims of the Kaiser's Germany and those of Hitler's Germany.

'The former regime was *Financial-Democratic Imperialism* and the latter is *National-Socialist*; therein lies a difference which the old-world politician cannot or will not comprehend; but from that difference follows every modern possibility of European peace. The *Imperialism* of the Kaiser, operating from the basis of an export-capitalist system, expressed itself naturally in terms of a vast *Colonial Empire* and concomitant navies which clashed at every turn with the *British Empire*. The Judaic-financial system of pre-war German economics could only think in terms of progressively expanding export markets because it could not envisage even the attempt to build an autarchic system...The whole psychology of *Nazi Germany*...is precisely the opposite...

³⁴ As a fresh young MP elected to represent Harrow in 1918 at the age of 22, Mosley worked closely with Lord Robert Cecil between 1919 and 1924 to champion the *League of Nations* as an alternative to the balance of power. Apart from making numerous speeches on behalf of the *League of Nations Union*, Mosley's one prominent public intervention in its affairs was at its 1923 AGM when he proposed an amendment condemning the Government for not using the *League* machinery over the Ruhr. The Chairman Gilbert Murray objected to any reference to the Government on the grounds that the *League* was a 'non-party' organization.

³⁵ Although in 1940 Churchill was to propose to the *French Government* that the British and French should form a unified state.

³⁶ In the *New Statesman* of 15th July 1933 Keynes wrote: 'I sympathise with those who would minimize rather than maximize economic entanglements between nations. I am inclined to the belief that, after the transition is completed, a greater increase of national self-sufficiency and economic isolation between countries than existed before 1914 may tend to serve the cause of peace rather than otherwise.' The problem, as the 1930s were to show, arose from the 'transition'.

Her national objective lies in the union of the Germanic peoples of Europe in a consolidated rather than diffused economic system which permits her with security to pursue her racial ideals. In fact, in the profound difference of national objective between the *British Empire* and the *New Germany* rests the main hope of peace between them.³⁷

From this analysis followed Mosley's 'world alternative'. Germany should be given its freehand in eastern Europe, even if this meant war with Russia. Italy should be guaranteed its outlets in north and north-east Africa. Japan could have north China. The eastward expansion of Germany was France's best guarantee of security as well. And Britain would get on with the job of creating its 'land fit for heroes' and developing its empire. Such a settlement would remove the major causes of war. An effective *League of Nations* could be re-created on the basis of a *Four Power Pact* between Britain, France, Germany and Italy.

Was Mosley's conception of German aims realistic? Even accepting that a *Nazi Land-Empire* in eastern Europe with its 'racial ideals' would have been far from the idyllic picture of leader nations³⁸ taking in hand the progress of backward peoples, was Mosley's argument that the project was in essence limited to that soundly based?

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler specifically renounces 'an intoxicating Alexandrine campaign of conquest' and argues that the future of the German people lies 'in the diligent and persistent work of the German plough, to which the sword has only given the soil'. The goal of German foreign policy as enunciated in *Mein Kampf* is the acquisition of living-space or *Lebensraum* at the expense of Russia where Germans could be resettled on the land. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler also argues that in carrying out Germany's eastern plans an alliance with England was indispensable.

The real reason that these facts were not at the forefront of discussions of German intentions in the 1930s was, according to Mosley, because the German programme of creating a 'consolidated' economic system was unacceptable to the 'old parties' because it challenged their conception of *Internationalism*. Here is Mosley:

'Certain countries have at once extirpated the control of *International Finance* and the hopes of *International Socialism*. No reason exists in British interest to quarrel with these countries and every reason for world peace forbids the quarrel. Yet the field of *International Finance* and its twin, *International Socialism*, thrusts the manhood of Britain towards mortal quarrel with these countries. Germany and Italy, despite a present poverty of natural resources have, at least, broken the control of *International Finance*, and Germany in particular has offended this world power by summary dealing with the Jewish *Masters of Usury*. So every force of the *Money Power* throughout the world has been mobilised to crush them, and that power does not stop short of payment for its vendetta in British blood.' (*Tomorrow We Live* - page 67)

In other words, western hostility to German aims was at root ideological. The western powers went to war for a principle: *Internationalism*, which was in turn a 'superstructure', in the *Marxist* sense, of financial interests hoping to preserve or re-establish the *Export-Capitalist Economy*.

Even though he believed that the character of German aims made it irrelevant, Mosley felt bound to take the balance of power argument seriously. He had to meet the objection that he might be wrong, that after Hitler had consolidated his position in the east, won his war against Russia, used his conquests to create a military machine of awesome dimensions he would turn round and say to Britain and France: Do this or else!

To this Mosley countered with the second part of his policy: *Massive Rearmament*. The whole political idea of an isolated empire was linked to the current strategic doctrine that defence was stronger than attack. Throughout the 1930s he repeated one simple argument...that a properly rearmed Britain would be able to maintain its independence even against a Nazi-dominated Europe. The strategic doctrine underlying this was that Britain's defensive position was overwhelmingly strong. In *The British Peace - How to Get it*, Mosley wrote in 1939:

'We are not dependent on these entangling alliances, because, under modern Government, we are more than capable of defending ourselves and, if necessary, of defending ourselves alone, with the sole aid of modern defence technique...we must combine, as never before, our natural gift for air power with our traditional naval power in defence of the arteries of *Empire*. Also from British land we must extract the last ounce of food by the system of steady but intensive agricultural production at home...'

European Movement

Both *Socialism* and *Imperialism* had developed in the late nineteenth century in response to the incipient breakdown of *Laissez-faire Capitalism*. *Marxist Socialists* wanted to create the market which modern industry required by redistributing wealth; *Imperialists* wanted to create it by excluding foreign imports from a protected area. *Liberals* of all kinds basically believed that the *Free Market* would automatically equate supply and demand, whatever deviations from it they were prepared to accept in practice.

³⁷ *The World Alternative* in *Fascist Quarterly*, July 1936 pp 383-4.

³⁸ The doctrine of 'leader nations' originated with Karl Haushofer who wrote that 'nations must be either hammer or anvil'.

Mosley had joined the debate from the left-wing side in politics in the 1920s. In his *Revolution by Reason* (1925) he had demanded the nationalisation of the *Banking System* to expand credit and direct 'new money' to the 'necessitous area of poverty' - a mixture of Keynes and Hobson. In 1930 he had urged direct government investment to stimulate demand. Both proposals involved a high degree of *National Planning*. Both were directed to the problem of inadequate demand arising from within the domestic economy.

But already by 1925 Mosley was aware of deflationary pressures originating from outside the domestic economy. The proposal of a floating exchange-rate and the suggestion that Britain should buy less from abroad were both designed to shield the 'reflated' national economy from deflationary pressure exerted through the balance of payments. A visit to America convinced Mosley that a controlled *Private-Enterprise System* could provide high and increasing wages provided that the economy was largely self-contained. The depression which hit Britain from outside in 1930 reinforced this line of thought.



By 1930 Mosley was talking of 'insulating' Britain from the 'chaos of world markets'. Since Britain could not be self-sufficient like America, insulation had to be broadened, and Mosley went on to speak of 'a conscious control and direction of the united economic resources of our *Commonwealth* for the benefit of the *Commonwealth* as a whole'. Here he established contact with the tradition of Joseph Chamberlain and the *Economic Imperialists* on the right in politics, and broke decisively with *Marxism*.

He chose the *British Empire* as the unit of economic community because it was 'there'...which the *Marxist World State* plainly was not...and because *Social Imperialism* seemed an ideology capable of mobilising the *Radical Right* and the *Working Class* behind a united recovery effort. The reconciling institutions of the *Corporate State*, foreshadowed in Mosley's proposals for a *National Economic Council* in 1925 and the *New Party's Commodity Boards*, were to be entrusted with the task of 'deliberately raising demand as science increased the power to produce'. There was to be a planned and a complementary exchange of goods between Britain and the self-governing dominions. The colonial empire (India and Africa) was to be kept as an exclusive preserve for endangered British exports like Lancashire cotton, on the eighteenth century mercantilist model.

The attempts by Germany, Italy and Japan to acquire their own empires by direct and brutal methods united the chauvinist right and the moral left, as Mosley had hoped, but against *Fascist Economics*. Mosley's argument that self-contained empires would abolish the causes of war ignored the problem of transition. The instinctive opposition of conservative forces to any changes in the world *status quo* could have been overcome only had the alternative systems been rooted in a 'universalist' conception...and been inaugurated by methods which did not affront the conscience of the *non-Fascist* world and thus unite chauvinism and morality behind a defence of the existing order.

In other words, Hitler's attempt to adapt Europe to the new reality of its 'dwarfing' by the rising superpowers of America and Russia could have succeeded only had it been attempted by political methods and informed by a

genuine *European Idealism* rather than *German Imperialism*. The heroic and barbaric values embodied in the *Nazi* enterprise overshadowed the rational and humane ends to which Mosley's *English Fascism* was directed.

The military triumph of the moral conceptions of the *Allies*, which dealt a death-blow not only to the putative *Fascist Empires* but also (though this was not so clearly recognised at the time) to the existing *European Colonial Empires*,



eliminated *Social Imperialism* from history, clearing the way for the *Anglo-American* attempt to restore the essentials of a single-world trading community. It also cleared the way for Mosley to bring together his 'rational' economics with his passionate longing for European reconciliation, born in the trenches of 1914-18, into a new system which would transcend the barbarities of *Fascist Imperialism*.

European union represented for Mosley the fusion of *Socialism* and *Mercantilism* in a new voluntarist setting and represented the political expression of a common heritage and a common fate awakened in the 'comradship of the

trenches' when even the common soldier felt a part momentarily of a new European aristocracy born under fire. It became for Mosley a final faith because it eliminated in his view two radical defects of his earlier plans. The first was the element of *Imperialism*. The *New Europe*³⁹ was to be created by consent.⁴⁰

On 16th October 1948 Mosley proposed as a first step towards creating 'Europe a Nation' the election of a European assembly by universal suffrage in which 'every European shall be able to vote for any other European'.⁴¹ A *European Nation* created by consent would establish a moral and legal basis for itself and overcome the *Marxist* and *Liberal* objections to empires. Established and ruled by the sword, these empires would perish by the sword as subject peoples revolted against foreign domination and as one forcible division of the world gave way to another.

The second defect of Mosley's 1930s plans was that his longing for European reconciliation had been left out. They provided no institutions to maintain European peace. Indeed Mosley's plans, by assuming a number of European empires with their own colonial sphere, perpetuated the division of Europe.

Mosley's first political action in 1945 after his release from prison was to form a publishing company which in 1946 produced *My Answer*, a reprint of *Tomorrow We Live*, with a long introduction defending his opposition to the war with Germany and Italy. In October 1947 came *The Alternative*, the statement of his post-war faith. Like *The Greater Britain*, the intention was to launch a political movement.



On 8th February 1948 Mosley returned to active politics as leader of the *Union Movement* and started campaigning for a *United States of Europe*. He continued to do so for the next three decades until his death in 1980.

³⁹ Mosley eventually rejected the idea of a Europe 'from the Atlantic to the Urals', defining Europe instead as the non-Communist lands but throwing in a pledge to return the 'lost lands' to their peoples 'following a Soviet withdrawal'.

⁴⁰ There was a voluntary element in Joseph Chamberlain's imperial scheme in the bargaining between Britain and the dominions. Various versions of the Chamberlain scheme also addressed the 'first among equals' problem with such devices as an *Imperial Parliament*. In the plot of Nevil Shute's 1965 novel, *In the Wet*, set in 1995, the Queen appoints a Governor-General for Great Britain over the heads of the British *Labour Government* whose *Union Barons* were intent on abolishing the *Monarchy*. This aligned constitutional arrangements in the UK with those in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Mosley, like most pro-Europeans since the *Kaiser War*, deployed instead the device of a new supranational state...the *United States of Europe*.

⁴¹ In the final *Mosley Plan*, a *European Government* would be subject to dismissal by a *European Parliament*: there would be liberty of opposition and the preservation of basic human rights.

In April 1948 Mosley held a joint press conference in London with Oswald Pirow, a former South African cabinet minister and the 1940 founder of the pro-Nazi *New Order*.

The *Mosley-Pirow Plan*⁴² divided Africa into black and white areas and rested on three propositions: colour was not the test of civilisation; equal rights could not be withheld from a civilised person solely on account of colour; and equal rights between black majorities and white minorities in the same state 'must inevitably lead to...the disappearance of Western civilisation'.

Mosley's *Greater Europe* was to include Africa as a source of raw materials and the soil for European colonisation in a Splengertian renewal. Africa would be the forcing-ground of European unity.

Africa's development would be carried out by a joint-stock company of European nations. A common task and mutual interest would promote union and reintegrate Germany and Italy into the European family. Mosley had a *Faustian* vision of heroic technicians opening up the *Dark Continent*, reclaiming marshes and deserts, and cutting tunnels, canals, railways and highways.

In 1953 Mosley began promoting a different scheme. A united Europe



should give its black subjects equal rights in a Europe-African political system, the greater numbers in Europe ensuring a permanent white majority. Under this plan Africa would be divided into black and white states with a two-tier franchise (as in Europe): one for their own countries, another for Europe-Africa as a whole. He continued to campaign for this plan for the next 25 years.

Epilogue

Mosley was still only fifty when released from five years of wartime internment in 1945. Mosley's *New Patriotism* was not for England but for Europe. During his internment Mosley had de-anglicised his patriotism. European unity was to be a condition of European independence grounded in a new *European Patriotism*. 'Europe a Nation' was the common culture that would make possible voluntary political and economic union to secure higher standards of living while preserving European independence in a world of superpowers.

Mosley's second career from 1946 to 1980 spanned 34 years...half as long again as the 22 years of his first career from 1918 to 1940. Surprisingly little has appeared in the public domain about Mosley's second career. The new Mosley had shifted his basic unit of autarchy or self-sufficiency from the United Kingdom in his *Labour Party* years and the *British Empire* of his *Fascist* years to a *Greater Europe*.

After Mosley's death in 1980 the *Mosley Family* sought the return of Oswald Mosley's papers. They were only partially successful. The *British Government* returned some of the papers but retained an undisclosed number of files 'on public security grounds'. The files still under lock and key are likely to cover two areas in which Mosley was in close contact with current political operations where many of the players might still be active in public office.

The first would be files about Mosley's *Euro-African Union* with its patchwork of black and white states in a scaled-up *Swiss Cantonal* constitution in which citizens have dual nationality in their canton and the union.

The second would be files concerning his struggle with the *Usury-Exports* based *International Financial System* of the *City of London* and its replacement with an *Autarchic System*⁴³ where international monetary transactions would dwindle to a trickle and the economy's money needs would be met from earnings as wages and salaries.



⁴² To Mosley this was quite different to apartheid. 'Hysterical propaganda has made the term apartheid cover both concepts, although they are entirely opposed', he was to write later in his autobiography, *My Life* (1968).

⁴³ The *Schacht Plan* introduced into Hitler's *Third Reich* in the decade from 1934 to 1943 was a contemporary model for what Mosley had in mind.