

Sebastian KWIATKOWSKI 

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Doctoral School of Social Sciences – Academia Rerum Socialium,
Toruń, Poland

Oswald Mosley's *The Greater Britain* as an Example of Fascism *par excellence*

Większa Brytania Oswalda Mosleya jako przykład faszyzmu *par excellence*

• Abstract •

The aim of this article is to analyze Oswald Mosley's manifesto *The Greater Britain* as an example of fascism *par excellence*. The analysis highlights the key constitutive features of fascism, including its totalitarian nature, the synthesis of Gnostic nationalism with non-Marxist socialism and syndicalism, and the role of violence and war within the doctrine's framework. As indicated, violence and war result from the implementation of fascist doctrine in action but are not constitutive features of fascism. Violence, war, and the exclusion of certain groups are outcomes of implementing a broad spectrum of autocratic thought – from authoritarian to totalitarian, and from left-wing to right-wing. Therefore, in contemporary studies on populism and autocracy, it would be overly simplistic to define fascization or post-fascism based solely on exclusion, war, and political violence, without considering the constitutive features of fascism itself.

Keywords: Oswald Mosley; *The Greater Britain*; fascism; totalitarianism

• Abstrakt •

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza manifestu Oswalda Mosleya *Większa Brytania* jako przykładu faszyzmu *par excellence*. W analizie podkreślono kluczowe cechy konstytutywne faszyzmu, w tym jego totalitarny charakter, syntezę nacjonalizmu gnostyckiego z niemarksistowskim socjalizmem i syndykalizmem oraz obecność w ramach doktryny rolę przemocy i wojny. Jak wykazano, przemoc i wojna są wynikiem wdrażania doktryny faszystowskiej w praktyce, ale nie są cechami konstytutywnymi faszyzmu. Przemoc, wojna i wykluczenie określonych grup są rezultatem wdrażania szerokiego wachlarza myśli autokratycznej – od autorytarnej po totalitarną, od lewicowej po prawicową. Dlatego we współczesnych badaniach nad populizmem i autokracją definiowanie faszyzacji lub postfaszyzmu wyłącznie na podstawie kategorii wykluczenia, wojny i przemocy politycznej, bez uwzględnienia cech konstytutywnych samego faszyzmu, byłoby nadmiernym uproszczeniem.

Słowa kluczowe: Oswald Mosley; *Większa Brytania*; faszyzm; totalitaryzm

Introduction

Although nearly 80 years have passed since the end of World War II and, consequently, the global collapse of fascism (both as a doctrine, regime, and movements adhering to fascism), it may seem that fascism has been studied from every possible angle. At this point, we could cite works written by Ernst Nolte (1966), Roger Eatwell (1999), Stanley Payne (1996), Roger Griffin (1991), Robert Paxton (2005) and Emilio Gentile (2011) that are considered classics in studies on fascism.

Despite the referenced works on fascism, the term continues to be used in Russian propaganda against Ukraine (Bäcker, 2022), as well as against Russia itself, both in journalism and political science (Motyl, 2016; Romanyuk, 2022; Rudyi, 2023), and also in the context of Benjamin Netanyahu's government in Israel (Bishara, 2022). Such approaches rely on selectively choosing traits of fascism that are common to autocratic political thought and regimes, drawing on Umberto Eco's (1995) definition of fascism which was emotionally charged and overlooks the core characteristics of the fascist phenomenon.

Fascism, as a contemporary political phenomenon, is indeed marginal, yet both journalists and some scholars attempt to demonstrate its existence and the threat it poses. Examples include attempts to introduce the concept of "fascization" (Stoll, 2021) and post-fascism manifesting in national populism, Identitarianism, and Trumpism (Traverso, 2019). Fascization and post-fascism are said to reveal themselves through the exclusion of selected groups from the broader community, such as society or the nation, marking them as enemies. This is an oversimplification that leads to the infantilization of studies on fascism and other autocratic right-wing currents. The concept of the enemy and the drive to eliminate internal divisions are characteristic not only for right-wing authoritarianism and totalitarianism but also for left-wing versions (Bäcker, 2011). Here, it is worth noting Juan Linz's opinion (1995, p. 319) on the classification of authoritarianisms termed "organic statisms". Linz emphasized that these regimes, while attempting to combine Catholic corporate social doctrine with fascist elements, reflect ambiguity. The creation of categories like "clerical fascism" illustrates not only the ambiguity of autocratic regimes in the 1920s and 1930s but also the biases of the observer.

This article aims to contribute to the debate on fascism, focusing on its historical perspective. Specifically, it examines Oswald Mosley's fascist doctrine as articulated in *The Greater Britain* (Mosley, 2019b), presenting it as an archetypal example of fascism. Any potential evolution of fascism would need to consider its

development within the fascist core. Phenomena such as the exclusion of certain groups from the community, as well as the very concept of the enemy, are not exclusive to fascism but are present across the broader spectrum of autocratic political thought.

This paper is structured into five sections. Following the introduction, there is a literature review dedicated to studies on Oswald Mosley's doctrine. Next, the theoretical approach is presented, outlining the understanding of key concepts used in the text as well as the methodological remarks. The subsequent section contains an analysis of Oswald Mosley's *The Greater Britain*. Article ends with conclusions.

Literature review

Until now, Oswald Mosley's doctrine has primarily been analyzed in terms of the British fascist antisemitism (Griffiths, 2005; Holmes, 2016; Tilles, 2015) and street violence (Cullen, 1993; McCloud, 2006; Pugh, 1998; Tilles, 2006; Webber, 1984). Among academic literature, we can find political biographies of the British fascist by Maciej Cezarz (2006) and Robert Skidelsky (1975), as well as Skidelsky's (2016) debate with critiques of his work.

Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) is also discussed by Eatwell (1999, pp. 287–310), who provides a historical overview of interwar British fascist organizations, and by Richard Thurlow (1998a), whose work chronicles the history of British fascism in the 20th century. Other studies on British fascism include works focused on identifying the fascist core or fascist minimum (Love, 2007; Martins, 2021, pp. 72–93), as well as those addressing Mosley's activities during the New Party period and postwar era (Thurlow, 1998b; Worley, 2008, 2010), and the evolution of fascist doctrine and symbolism from 1932 to 1940 (Cullen, 1987; Garau, 2014; Macklin, 2013).

While Mosley's doctrine has been widely discussed, it remains possible to examine his political thought from new perspectives. Italian fascism is often considered the archetypal example of fascism, as it was where the ideology first emerged. However, Italian fascism lacked a substantial intellectual framework, giving it the appearance of an "anti-ideology". In contrast, Mosley's doctrine featured a highly developed intellectual foundation, making British fascism, rather than Italian fascism, a more fitting model of fascism in the realm of political thought.

Theoretical approach and methodological remarks

This text analyzes *The Greater Britain* by Oswald Mosley, with the aim of presenting this manifesto as a prime example of fascist publication *par excellence*. The definition of fascism used here is that of Ernst Nolte (1966, pp. 20–21): Fascism is anti-Marxism which seeks to destroy the enemy by the involvement of a radically opposed and yet related ideology and by the use of almost identical and yet typically modified methods, always, however, within the unyielding framework of national self-assertion and autonomy. Breaking down this definition into components crucial for analysis, the following points emerge: 1) The primary enemy, embodying absolute evil, is communism; 2) Fascism, as an opposing yet related ideology, is totalitarian, similar to communism; 3) Identical yet modified methods – fascism invokes revolution and socialism, but the revolution is national, not class-based, and socialism is non-Marxist; in the drive to destroy the enemy, this is a shared trait across all totalitarianisms, as the presence of an enemy hinders the establishment of the desired order; and 4) National self-determination indicates the nationalist nature of fascism.

The definition of totalitarianism adopted here is that created by Roman Bäcker (2011, pp. 36–37), which includes three features: the presence of a party-state apparatus, the mobilization of the masses under its control, and the existence of a totalitarian political gnosis. The gnostic form of nationalism is rooted in the definition of totalitarian political gnosis, involving the creation of a vision of secular salvation and a mega-anthropos responsible for realizing the desired state. To this end, the enemy must be annihilated, as their existence makes the achievement of secular salvation impossible (Bäcker, 2011, pp. 190–197). Gnostic nationalism here is understood as the drive to form a new nation, as its current functioning hinders its development and threatens its existence. In this context, the mega-anthropos (the fascist party) emerges, striving to radically reshape the nation and realize a national salvation.

This paper aims to validate the following claims: 1) Fascism should be understood as a totalitarian rather than an authoritarian ideology; 2) The essence of fascism is a gnostic nationalism combined with non-Marxist socialism and syndicalism; and 3) Violence, war, and the exclusion of certain groups are present in fascist doctrine, but they are outcomes of its application, not constitutive features. Violence and exclusion also occur in other autocracies; thus, reducing fascism to aggressive warfare, elimination of opponents, and violence leads to oversimplifications and infantilization of fascism studies and, more broadly, studies on autocracy. Those statements will provide an answer to the following question: What role do violence

and exclusion play in the doctrine of fascism: are they constitutive elements of it, or do they result from the application of its doctrinal principles?

Summarizing the statements above, fascism as a political phenomenon can be defined based on the following considerations: if the analyzed political thought forms a synthesis of gnostic nationalism with non-Marxist socialism and syndicalism, it is fascist thought. Consequently, because it is fascist, it is totalitarian. Since the entity in question advocates and promotes fascist thought, it identifies communists as its primary enemy, but also includes liberals and other selected groups or minorities as adversaries. However, merely holding a hostile attitude toward certain groups (like minorities) or supporters and activists of a particular party (for example, liberal or communist parties) does not, in itself, make someone a fascist.

This is a qualitative study employing qualitative content analysis as the research method and source text content analysis as the technique. The selection of Oswald Mosley's *The Greater Britain* for analysis is based on the following reasons. First and foremost, the publication's release coincided with the formation of the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in the fall of 1932 (Cesarz, 2006, p. 87). This marks the beginning of a new period in the political biography of the British fascist, further developed in publications like *Fascism: 100 Questions Asked & Answered* (Mosley, 2019a) and *Tomorrow We Live* (Mosley, 2019c). The core of Oswald Mosley's doctrine remained consistent, articulating a very precise set of fascist principles (Eatwell, 1999, p. 297). Compared to Italian fascism and German national socialism, British fascism had a more extensive intellectual framework. Another reason for choosing this publication for analysis is its lack of reference to the Jewish question (Cesarz, 2006, p. 196), as well as the fact that *The Greater Britain* was published before the first major street clashes with communists and Jews, which began in earnest with the Olympia Hall meeting in London in June 1934 (Pugh, 1998). During the "fascist era" in the interwar period, there was not a singular form of fascism; rather, there were ideological currents and regimes that were somewhat aligned with fascism, with some selectively drawing inspiration from the fascist political system (Payne, 1996, pp. 14–17, 145). As Nolte stated (1966, p. 20), anti-parliamentarianism or antisemitism alone are not sufficient criteria for defining something as fascist; fascism emerged as a response to communism and had specific criteria. Right-wing autocratic political thought would have existed even without the phenomenon of fascism, making the terms 'post-fascism' or 'fascization' rather simplistic. Therefore, a reductionist approach should not be applied in studies on fascism and other autocracies.

The Greater Britain as fascism par excellence

Maciej Cesarz (2006, p. 169) noted that Mosley's worldview had an esoteric quality. The slogans "action" and "nation", combined in his narrative, were intended to first unify and then rebirth the nation. A gnostic worldview is characteristic of totalitarian political thought, which crafts a narrative about the inevitable fall of the old world, believed to be overtaken by evil. The goal is for the forces of good to prevail through the acquisition of truth – gnosis. This perspective empowers individuals with a gnostic worldview to become fighters, ascetic in nature and devoid of personal needs, driven to achieve secular salvation (Bäcker, 2011, pp. 191–192).

In *The Greater Britain*, Mosley emphasized the need for action and sacrifice, addressing "those who join us" (fascists). The BUF leader called for a readiness to sacrifice everything, though not for a trivial cause. Sacrificing one's life was to serve the creation of a modern movement for a new era, which would take on a distinctly British character. Mosley expressed a desire to rewrite the most remarkable pages in British history by capturing the spirit of the times. Fascists could make no promises to their friends or state, but he emphasized that the future would not be secured without struggle and enduring severe trials. Mosley stated that every fascist would face misunderstanding, violence, persecution, hostility, and danger during their activities. The only promise BUF's leader could offer was faith that they fought to ensure "this great country may live on" (Mosley, 2019b, p. 137). He saw the fascist movement as an order that possessed and was destined to reveal truth to the people. Once a person became a fascist, they connected with extraordinary forces, gaining mystical knowledge and spiritual strength.

Mosley described fascism as a realistic creed that rejects and scorns "windy rhetoric" and "mere formula". Fascism is "the steel creed of an iron age, cutting through the verbiage of illusion to the achievement of a new reality", combining the dynamic implementation of change with the maintenance of authority, discipline, and order, which are essential for accomplishing great things (Mosley, 2019b, p. 11). Fascist action, expressed in British fascism through the slogan "action", aimed to shape the nation in accordance with fascist doctrine. Mosley viewed the socio-political organization of Britain as outdated and incapable of meeting the demands of the modern world. As a result, Britain was unprepared to compete with other nations on the international stage.

The nationalist component in Mosley's fascist doctrine also sought to reorganize internal relations within the British Empire to create an autarkic empire. According to Mosley, Britain, with its vast colonial holdings, had the potential to achieve self-sufficiency by producing all essential goods and requiring dominions

to adopt a plan focused on building autarky, while still allowing them autonomy in their domestic policy (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 93–96). Mosley also expressed a need for rapid modernization and military expansion to deter potential aggressors. The slogan “Britain First” was to guide foreign policy, advocating for intervention only when British interests were directly threatened. Britain was not to serve as a global policeman. Peace in Europe, on the other hand, was to be ensured by a “brotherhood of fascisms”, leading to reforms of the League of Nations. Mosley believed that fascist cooperation would facilitate disarmament, and without such an agreement, Britain would not disarm first (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 105–109).

A defining feature of Italian fascism was the belief that the state creates the nation, rather than the nation creating the state (G. Gentile, 2019, pp. 82–84; Mussolini, 2019, p. 30). Fascist nationalism aimed at elevating the quality of the collective it targeted, but the primary reference point of fascist doctrine was the state. Fascist statolatry was meant to mold the nation according to fascist ideals and then direct it toward achieving fascist political goals. This concept is echoed in *The Greater Britain* by Oswald Mosley. Mosley hoped that through action, a nation could be created – initially to enable fascists to gain power in Britain, and subsequently to build an autarkic empire, embodying fascist statolatry in the British context.

Philip M. Coupland (1998, p. 255) noted that *The Greater Britain* includes motifs characteristic of the myth developed by Georges Sorel, which significantly influenced the creation of the fascist political myth. Although Sorel’s name rarely appears in Mosley’s work or other British fascist writings, Mosley indicated that a new order would not arise through polite discussions or committees. In Mosley’s reflections, we find themes characteristic of the fascist political myth rooted in Sorel’s ideas (Wielomski, 2021). Sorel described myths as the collective imagination of people within a social movement, who believe that action will lead them to victory through struggle. He argued that myths offer insight into the actions, feelings, and ideas of a mass preparing for a decisive, ultimate confrontation. Myths are not descriptions of things but motivations for action, and therefore cannot be falsified (Sorel, 2004, pp. 41–42, 49–50).

Mosley perceived fascism as a vitalist, post-liberal creed that acknowledged the need to create a modern and expansive state apparatus. Mosley was also drawn to the ultranationalism, emphasis on leadership, and promotion of militarism inherent in fascist doctrine (Worley, 2011, p. 79). This perception of fascism appeared to Mosley as a rational alternative in a world shaped by the ideas of Oswald Spengler (Thurlow, 1998b, pp. 245–246). In *The Greater Britain*, Mosley emphasized loyalty to the king but also presented a revolutionary approach to governance. The British fascist sketched a plan for the radical and swift reorganization of legislative and executive

power to meet the needs of a modern fascist state. At the same time, he maintained that fascists would take power by securing a parliamentary majority through elections (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 25–26). Mosley rejected the idea of seizing power through a coup or violent revolution. According to Eatwell (1999, p. 304), Mosley likely avoided illegal actions for three reasons: a lack of romantic attachment to violence in fascist ideology, a desire to maintain ties with some members of the establishment, and the belief that BUF was infiltrated by agents, thus wanting to avoid the party's de-legalization. However, Mosley viewed revolution as non-destructive, reserving the destructive label for communists (Mosley, 2019b, p. 24).

Despite the absence of a romantic attachment to violence, the revolutionary nature of fascism in the ideological realm is evident. Giovanni Gentile (2019, pp. 77–78) wrote that syndicalist ideas played an essential educational role in Italy. Syndicalism was intended not only to prepare for armed revolution but also to foster a sense of national sanctity and the desire for its reconstruction through non-parliamentary means and ideas unrepresented by parliamentary parties. This conviction found a place in Mosley's fascism. As previously mentioned, British fascism was, in Mosley's view, a new tool capable of rapid modernization of the state and society. Fascism was also meant to fulfill an educational role – through *action* arises *nation*.

The revolutionary aspect of fascist doctrine was not expressed in an attempt to seize power through illegal, violent means but rather in a drive to radically reconstruct the political system. The intended outcome was a totalitarian model of a corporatist party-state apparatus similar to the fascist system in Italy, which would be compulsory and subordinate to a monolithic decision-making center (Bäcker, 2011, p. 40). In British fascist ideology, the vision of a corporatist state was not merely an economic system but an organic method of organizing socio-political life, applicable to British society as a whole – an essential step in forming British fascism (Love, 2007, p. 450). Mosley's proposed corporatist state model, involving a swift and radical reorganization of the political system and the introduction of state capitalism directed at building an autarkic empire, was totalitarian (Mosley 2019b, pp. 16–17, 27–31, 39–92). It established a party-state apparatus aimed at mobilizing the masses to fulfill the objectives of fascist doctrine.

A key component of this doctrine was anti-communism. The mutual hostility between fascism and communism is not surprising. In Britain, competition between the fascist and communist movements often led to street clashes (Cullen, 1993). In *The Greater Britain*, Oswald Mosley did not devote much space to his rivalry with the communists. He stated that fascists are revolutionaries, whereas communists are bent on destruction. Fascists are willing to adopt mechanisms and elements of the existing system if they prove ultimately advantageous. In contrast, communists aim

solely at destruction, disregarding whether what they destroy is good or bad (Mosley, 2019b, p. 24). According to Mosley, the fascist corporate state was the only mean capable of halting the disintegration of the state and society. If British society realized that parliamentary parties were unable to resolve the crisis and found no fascist alternative, they would turn to the “remedy of communism”, which would have disastrous consequences (Mosley, 2019b, p. 31). Only fascism could halt the slow descent into anarchy, which would ultimately result in the triumph of communism (Mosley, 2019b, p. 66). Fascism and communism were the only forces organized enough to seize power during a crisis. Should communism triumph, Britain’s history would effectively end. Only fascism could destroy the enemy – communism – and rebuild the state and nation. In times of crisis, new ideas would not be accepted peacefully but through violence. This struggle was not only for control over Britain but over the world, and in the end, either fascism or communism would prevail (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 129–130).

In international politics, Mosley’s anti-communism manifested in hostility toward the Soviet Union. He identified communism as a common enemy for Europe’s powers, arguing that cooperation between Europe’s fascist governments was essential to save the world from the catastrophe of communism (Mosley, 2019b, p. 106). This anti-communist alliance was to be supported by a previously mentioned European brotherhood of fascisms.

Mosley’s stance toward communists could be described as an anti-Marxist doctrine that adopted similar methods to those of the communists to eliminate the enemy. Communists were depicted as absolute evil, leading to destruction and anarchy, with the Soviet Union as their central hub. Mosley drew a clear division between “us” (the fascists) and “them” (the communists), with the solution to this division being the destruction of the opponent.

Oswald Mosley held a hostile view toward parliamentary parties, though not to the same degree as his view of communism. Mosley, a British fascist, referred to these parties as the “Old Gang”. As a World War I veteran, he used this label to identify Britain’s “enemies” and discredit the old parties and elites for depriving him and other war veterans of prospects (Love, 2007, p. 452). Mosley observed that the Conservative Party was attached to stability, while the Labour Party focused on progress. As a result, Conservatives abandoned progress, and Labour forsook stability. He argued that stability and progress were interconnected and must be combined to avoid endless debates (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 13–14). In *The Greater Britain*, Mosley depicted parliamentary parties as entities consciously contributing to Britain’s decline.

Mosley also viewed financial elites as enemies. He accused them of destabilizing British industry (Mosley, 2019b, p. 22) and pointed out that big business was the beneficiary of government policy (Mosley, 2019b, pp. 57–58). Political parties, in turn, willingly acted in the interest of business, sacrificing the interests of the state (Mosley, 2019b, p. 86). Finance was regarded as an enemy consciously undermining the British economy with the support of parliamentary parties. When addressing the issue of finance, it is also worth noting the “Jewish question”. In *The Greater Britain*, Mosley did not mention Jews. Some researchers, however, suggest that he concealed his antisemitism, and that the narrative promoted by Mosley and the British Union of Fascists (BUF) later fostered the development of an antisemitic narrative (Thurlow, 1998a, pp. 73–74; Tilles, 2015). The “Jewish question” surfaced after autumn 1934, with Mosley referencing the role of Jews in subsequent publications (Mosley, 2019a, 2019c). Significantly, he did not equate Jews with financiers. Mosley attacked Jews for other reasons than those related to finance. When discussing Jews and the financial world, he avoided using “Jew” and “financier” synonymously. Jews were viewed as harmful, but not as the absolute evil that communists represented. Jews were seen as adversaries for establishing a “state within a state” and engaging Britain in actions contrary to its national interests. It would be an overstatement to claim that Mosley hid his antisemitism; however, it is accurate to say that antisemitism was a tendency in his political thought. Fascist statolatry and gnostic nationalism aimed to form a new nation aligned with fascist doctrine. Jews, with different goals, were then perceived as an enemy who did not assimilate and harmed the state’s interest. This perception emerged after *The Greater Britain* was published, indicating that antisemitism is not a defining characteristic of fascism itself, though it can develop within a fascist narrative or program as a consequence of adopting fascist doctrine.

In Mosley’s view, fascism was the only means capable of halting the triumph of a “world of evil” and had the power to regenerate Britain. He identified communism as the primary enemy at the end of a path of decadence, attributed to political parties and big capital. Although fascism was anti-Marxist and communism was seen as absolute evil, Mosley acknowledged that fascism and communism shared certain similarities. This arose from his belief that only communist and fascist movements had the capacity to end decadence. The way decadence would end depended on ideological convictions: for anti-Marxist fascism, a communist victory would bring ultimate collapse. At the same time, Mosley noted similarities in their actions – he recognized the revolutionary nature of both fascism and communism. Yet, for the fascist worldview, he ascribed a salvific quality to fascist revolution, while seeing the communist revolution as destructive, rooted in his perception of communism as a doctrine aiming for total destruction.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to present *The Greater Britain* manifesto as a prime example of fascism. It demonstrated the totalitarian nature of British fascism. Mosley sought to create a totalitarian model of a corporate party-state apparatus modeled after the fascist regime in Italy. This structure would exercise control over the economy (through state capitalism) and play an educational role that would influence every socio-political aspect. The manifesto also included characteristics of totalitarian political gnosis. Gnostic nationalism was intended to create a vision of secular salvation – Greater Britain as an autarkic empire embodying fascist statolatry. To achieve this, a structure was created, akin to an order carrying the idea of national renewal, whose members were expected to be capable of any sacrifice. Gnostic nationalism, along with non-Marxist socialism and syndicalism, formed the pillars of fascist doctrine. Fascism selectively adopted elements of each of these doctrines to create an autonomous phenomenon. Beyond the role of gnostic nationalism, fascists attributed to syndicalism the ability to educate the nation through syndicates, and to socialism the means of state intervention in the economy and its control, justified by the need for collective cooperation in the interest of the community (the nation), rejecting the particular interests of capitalists.

Fascism was anti-communist, perceiving communism as an absolute evil that needed to be destroyed. However, a defining feature of fascism cannot solely be its use of violence or its negative stance toward other political phenomena without consideration of its other characteristics. The drive to destroy an enemy stems from embracing fundamentally opposed values (e.g., nationalism in fascism, internationalism in communism). In the case of Mosley's fascism, it is more likely that fascism would not manifest in expansionism, but rather, a British fascist regime would adopt a deterrence strategy. In the realm of domestic policy, the drive to annihilate the existing political system was not necessarily primary – Mosley believed that the parliamentary system was incapable of achieving fascist goals, and thus needed replacement. Violence and revolution in fascism are characteristics that arise from doctrinal assumptions, which are foundational to this political ideology. On the other hand, listing fascism as anti-parliamentarian, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-communist, anti-Semitic, and so on may lead to classification difficulties with political phenomena that are not fascism but also exhibit “anti” characteristics. In such cases, classification may depend less on concrete criteria and more on the author's attitude toward the phenomenon – there is a greater likelihood of labeling something as fascist if the author holds a skeptical view of the phenomenon in question.

In the case of British fascism, scholars acknowledge that communists often initiated street clashes, and even communist militias were the first to start street violence. The fascists' response to violence was exceptionally brutal and disproportionate (Love, 2007, pp. 458; Pugh, 1998; Tilles, 2006, pp. 342–343). Additionally, the BUF was banned by the British government without a justified reason, and its activists, including Mosley, were interned (Cesarz, 2006, pp. 94–95). If the concept of fascism and related terms were reduced solely to the exclusion of a group, the destruction of an enemy, and violence, in such a situation, the British communists and Churchill's government could be considered fascist, which sounds absurd and also dangerous for the field of study – as such a conclusion, based on these criteria, would lead to conceptual chaos.

References:

- Bäcker, R. (2011). *Nietradycyjna teoria polityki*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Bäcker, R. (2022). Mity polityczne Kremla roku 2022. *Mysł Polityczna*, 4, 7–26.
- Bishara, M. (2022, December 21). *Netanyahu, the Godfather of Modern Israeli Fascism*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/21/netanyahu-is-the-god-father-of-modern-israeli-fascism>.
- Cesarz, M. (2006). *Od „Większej Brytanii” do zjednoczonej Europy: Faszystowska doktryna Oswalda Mosleya*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Coupland, Ph.M. (1998). The Blackshirted Utopians. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33(2), 255–272. DOI: 10.1177/002200949803300205.
- Cullen, S. (1987). The Development of the Ideas and Policy of the British Union of Fascists, 1932–40. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22(1), 115–136. DOI: 10.1177/002200948702200107.
- Cullen, S.M. (1993). Political Violence: The Case of the British Union of Fascists. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28(2), 245–267. DOI: 10.1177/002200949302800203.
- Eatwell, R. (1999). *Faszyzm. Historia*. Transl. T. Oljasz. Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy REBIS.
- Eco, U. (1995). Ur-fascism. *The New York Review of Books*, 22(12–15), 1–9.
- Garau, S. (2014). The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism in the Face of German National Socialism, and Its Impact on the British Union of Fascists. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 15(1), 45–63. DOI: 10.1080/21567689.2013.849586.
- Gentile, E. (2011). *Początki ideologii faszystowskiej (1918–1925)*. Transl. and Ed. T. Wituch. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Gentile, G. (2019). The Philosophic Basis of Fascism. In: B. Mussolini, O. Mosley, A. Rocco, & G. Gentile, *Essays on Fascism* (pp. 71–84). London: Sanctuary Press Ltd.
- Griffin, R. (1991). *The Nature of Fascism*. New York–London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Griffiths, R. (2005). A Note on Mosley, the 'Jewish War' and Conscientious Objection. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(4), 675–688. DOI: 10.1177/0022009405056124.
- Holmes, C. (2016). Anti-Semitism and the BUF. In: K. Lunn & R.C. Thurlow (Eds.), *British Fascism: Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-War Britain* (pp. 114–134). London–New York: Routledge.
- Linz, J. (1995). Totalitaryzm i autorytaryzm. In: J. Szczupaczyński (Ed.). *Władza i społeczeństwo: Antologia tekstów z zakresu socjologii polityki* (pp. 303–326). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.
- Love, G. (2007). 'What's the Big Idea?': Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42(3), 447–468. DOI: 10.1177/0022009407078334.
- Macklin, G. (2013). 'Onward Blackshirts!' Music and the British Union of Fascists. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 47(4–5), 430–457. DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2013.845447.
- Martins, C.M. (2021). *From Hitler to Codreanu: The Ideology of Fascist Leaders*. London–New York: Routledge.
- McCloud, N. (2006). Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists: A Brief Historiographical Inquiry. *History Compass*, 4(4), 687–697. DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2006.00334.x.
- Mosley, O. (2019a). *Fascism: 100 Questions Asked and Answered*. London: Sanctuary Press Ltd.
- Mosley, O. (2019b). *The Greater Britain*. London: Sanctuary Press Ltd.
- Mosley, O. (2019c). Tomorrow We Live. In: O. Mosley, *My Answer* (pp. 65–155). London: Sanctuary Press Ltd.
- Motył, A.J. (2016). Putin's Russia as a Fascist Political System. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 49(1), 25–36. DOI: 10.1016/j.postcomstud.2016.01.002.
- Mussolini, B. (2019). The Doctrine of Fascism. In: B. Mussolini, O. Mosley, A. Rocco, & G. Gentile, *Essays on Fascism* (pp. 25–32). London: Sanctuary Press Ltd.
- Nolte, E. (1966). *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism*. Transl. L. Vennewitz. New York–Toronto: The New American Library.
- Paxton, R.O. (2005). *Anatomia faszyzmu*. Transl. P. Bandel. Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy REBIS.
- Payne, S.G. (1996). *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Pugh, M. (1998). The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate. *The Historical Journal*, 41(2), 529–542. DOI: 10.1017/S0018246X98007857.
- Romanyuk, O. (2022). Ruscism as a New Version of Totalitarianism. *The Journal of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Issues of Political Science*, 41, 7–14. DOI: 10.26565/2220-8089-2022-41-01.
- Rudyi, N. (2023). Ruscism as a Variant of the Fascist Form of State-Legal Regime. *Social & Legal Studies*, 6(2), 55–60. DOI: 10.32518/sals2.2023.55.
- Skidelsky, R. (1975). *Oswald Mosley*. London: Redwood Burn Limited.
- Skidelsky, R. (2016). Reflections on Mosley and British Fascism. In: K. Lunn & R.C. Thurlow (Eds.), *British Fascism: Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-War Britain* (pp. 78–99). London–New York: Routledge.

- Sorel, G. (2004). *Reflections on Violence*. Transl. T.E. Hulme & J. Roth. Mineola–New York: Dover Publications INC.
- Stoll, K. (2021). Beyond Conceptions of Fascism and Fascist Conceptions: On the Category of Fascization. *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 10, 2716. DOI: 10.11649/slh.2716.
- Thurlow, R.C. (1998a). *Fascism in Britain: From Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts to the National Front*. London–New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers.
- Thurlow, R.C. (1998b). The Guardian of the 'Sacred Flame': The Failed Political Resurrection of Sir Oswald Mosley after 1945. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33(2), 241–254. DOI: 10.1177/002200949803300204.
- Tilles, D. (2006). Bullies or Victims? A Study of British Union of Fascists Violence. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 7(3), 327–346. DOI: 10.1080/14690760600819499.
- Tilles, D. (2015). Oswald Mosley, Antisemite. *History Today*, 65(2), 47–53.
- Traverso, E. (2019). *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right*. London–New York: Verso Books.
- Webber, G.C. (1984). Patterns of Membership and Support for the British Union of Fascists. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19(4), 575–606. DOI: 10.1177/002200948401900401.
- Wielomski, A. (2021). Georges Sorel i narodziny faszystowskiego mitu politycznego. *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, 27(1), 63–72. DOI: 10.18778/1641-4233.27.06.
- Worley, M. (2008). A Call to Action: New Party Candidates and the 1931 General Election. *Parliamentary History*, 27(2), 236–255. DOI: 10.1111/j.1750-0206.2008.00038.x.
- Worley, M. (2010). *Oswald Mosley and the New Party*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9780230276529.
- Worley, M. (2011). Why Fascism? Sir Oswald Mosley and the Conception of the British Union of Fascists. *History*, 96(321), 68–83. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-229X.2010.00507.x.