We Hate Islam
You Sick EVIL Bastards
SCUM of the Earth

Taken at a Birmingham bus shelter on 5 May 2015, and reported to Tell MAMA online at http://tellmamauk.org.

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2015
I am delighted to introduce the second edition of the newsletter of Teesside University’s Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies (CFAPS). In this second issue we have included contributions from two of the Centre’s doctoral students, Alex Carter and Paul Stocker (a third, Lewis Young, is soon to have his viva – best of luck!).

As a regular feature, we also bring together contributions from the numerous researchers associated with the Centre. As you will see, articles cover a broad canvas, ranging from archival commentary through to topical reflections on the contemporary far right, not just in Britain but also further afield. Do read our newsletter from start to finish. I am sure that you will find it really engaging. My thanks go to all the contributors but especially to Paul Stocker who has done such a splendid job in editing this issue.

Professor Nigel Copsey
Despite growing academic interest in the history of British anti-fascism, one important aspect of the story remains neglected. British Jews were active and influential in virtually every branch of Britain’s broad spectrum of anti-fascist forces. Yet academic accounts tend to either skim over this contribution or to focus reductively on just one aspect of it: the confrontational anti-fascism, often with a left-wing flavour, pursued by young, working-class Jews, particularly in London’s East End. While this type of activity was important, it represents just one facet of a much broader range of Jewish reactions to, and interactions with, domestic fascism.

One area that has been especially neglected is the response of the Jewish communal leadership to the emergence of domestic fascist movements in the interwar period, most visibly Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists (BUF). One reason why the work of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the community’s official representative body, has remained so obscure is that, at the time it was conducted, by necessity, largely in secrecy. Subsequently, the relevant documentation was relatively inaccessible to researchers. The Board’s defence archive eventually fell into the hands of the Cynthia Wainwright Trust, which safeguarded the material but was not in a position to act as a research archive. In 2011, in a project that I was involved with, the CST agreed to loan the files to the Wiener Library, which, from the following year, made them available to researchers.

The material, covering the period 1933-1960, pertains primarily to the work of the Board’s Coordinating Committee, established in January 1936 – at the height of the BUF’s viciously anti-Semitic East End campaign – to harmonise the defence efforts of the Jewish leadership. (Two years later its name was changed to the East End campaign – to harmonise the defence efforts of the Jewish leadership. One such figure was the unnamed ‘Captain X’, a political or financial reason, decided to work with the Jewish organisations. Some of these informants were fascists who, for example, to request that it provide no further coverage of the Jewish community was limited in the extent to which it could independently tackle the fascist threat, its leaders sought to exploit their access to decision-making to encourage firmer action from the state. Senior government officials – who regarded fascism, and in particular its anti-Semitism, as the most serious threat to public order – were usually receptive to such lobbying. But the JDC was also not afraid to upset the authorities for any perceived complacency, even, on occasion, accusing sections of the police of being sympathetic towards the fascists.

An instructive episode in this relationship came during the early stages of World War Two, when the government decided to intern British fascists as potential fifth columnists. The Board closely scrutinised this process, using the intelligence it had gathered to help the authorities identify individuals for internment and applying pressure if it felt the government was being unduly lenient. A complaint, for example, was made directly to the Home Secretary that not enough was being done to clamp down on Nazi sympathisers, leading the Board to ‘doubt ... the sincerity of the Government ... to deal with this unmitigated menace’. Another letter to an MP involved in the internment process expressed concern that certain leading fascists remained at liberty, describing this as ‘the most amazing piece of favouritism’.

The archive also documents the extensive contact that the JDC had with various sections of the Jewish community, offering insights into the ways in which relations within Anglo-Jewry were affected by the emergence of the domestic fascist threat. Initially, this was a source of conflict, with the Board attempting to neutralise newly formed Jewish defence bodies, which threatened to challenge its prerogative to represent the community. The most significant of these was the Jewish People’s Council (JPC), which in October 1938 had been the primary organiser of the anti-fascist demonstration that later became known as the Battle of Cable Street. That year, we see the Board make determined efforts to undermine the JPC’s progress: it privately contacted the BBC, for example, to request that it provide no further coverage of the organisation’s activity.

But, over time, as the Board took a firmer line against fascism, and as activist Jewish anti-fascists moderated their own approach, their positions began to converge. In 1938, negotiations began political between the JDC and JPC, leading the following year to an agreement for the latter to disband and merge itself into the former. The JDC’s archive provides the only detailed record of these discussions between two of Britain’s foremost anti-fascist forces. The picture it presents helps overturn the widely held notion that the Board and the JPC were irreconcilable antagonists; and, more broadly, the files demonstrate that, rather than tearing a heterogeneous community further apart, the emergence of a domestic fascist threat actually drew the community closer together in its own defence, rallying behind the leadership of the Board.

This is just one of a number of ways in which the JDC archive not only augments existing accounts, but also challenges established perceptions of domestic and anti-fascism in 20th century Britain. Above all, it helps shed further light on the instrumental but often unacknowledged role that British Jews have played in ensuring the marginalisation and failure of British fascism.

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1 Board of Deputies Defence Committee Papers (DCP) 1583/1.
2 Fascist Parliamentary Candidate (23 November 1936), from JDC minutes, 1 July 1937, DCP 1583/1.
3 Sidney Salomon, ‘Now it can be told’, DCP 1583/7/1/2; Laski to chief constable, 7 October 1936, Brotman to chief constable, 20 October 1936, secretary to Keebles and Scott, 22 January 1937, letter from BUF HQ, 12 March 1937, DCP 1583/1.
4 Treasurer to Samuel Montagu & Co, 25 June 1939, DCP 1608/7/1/1; Laski to Brostem, 25 July 1939, DCP 1608/7/1/3.
5 Salomon, ‘Now it can be told’.
6 For example, National Archives HO 144/21381.
7 See correspondence between Salomon, Piccott, and the police, Nov-Dec 1939, DCP 1608/9/1/3.
8 See various correspondence in DCP 1608/9/1/4, 4.
9 Secretary’s Report, JDC minutes, 25 November 1936, DCP 1608/9/1/1.
10 See JDC minutes from March 1939 onwards (DCP 1608/9/1/2), as well as Memorandum by Mr Jacobs of the JPC DCP 1608/9/1/3; Salomon to Salomon, 3 September 1938, DCP 1608/9/1/4/6a.

The Jewish Defence Archive: A valuable new source on British fascism, anti-fascist and Jewish history

Dr Daniel Tilles

An overview of the JDC’s work is provided by the extensive minutes that were taken at the meetings of its Coordinating Committee and various subcommittees. These also offer a sense of the debates over how best to respond to fascism in Britain that emerged within the Jewish leadership, which was not the homogeneous entity it has often been portrayed to be.

In the JDC’s early days, for example, we see a split between two factions. On one side were more conservative elements who wanted to maintain the Board’s hitherto low-key approach, arguing that explicit opposition to fascism would betray the Jewish leadership’s tradition of political neutrality. It could also, they feared, exacerbate anti-Semitism, by creating precisely the fascist–Jewish conflict that the BUF aimed to provoke. Yet they found themselves increasingly side-lined, as others members, including the Board’s president, Neville Laski, pushed the JDC towards an active and direct anti-fascist policy.

Part of this new approach was extensive investigative efforts, also documented in the archive. This included the establishment of a network of moles within fascist and other anti-Semitic organisations. Some of these informants were fascists who, for example, to request that it provide no further coverage of the Jewish community was limited in the extent to which it could independently tackle the fascist threat, its leaders sought to exploit their access to decision-making to encourage firmer action from the state. Senior government officials – who regarded fascism, and in particular its anti-Semitism, as the most serious threat to public order – were usually receptive to such lobbying. But the JDC was also not afraid to upset the authorities for any perceived complacency, even, on occasion, accusing sections of the police of being sympathetic towards the fascists.

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‘Dark and Sinister Powers’: Conspiracy Theory and the Interwar British Extreme Right

Paul Stocker

Born in 1934, John Tyndall would emerge as one of Britain’s most prominent postwar extreme right ideologues. Before ascending to the leadership of the National Front and British National Party, Tyndall was a young activist with A.K. Chesterton’s conspiratorial-minded League of Empire Loyalists, an experience that would profoundly influence both his future politics and world-view. In a 1978 interview with historian and biographer of Chesterton, David Baker, Tyndall remarked:

The biggest contribution Chesterton made to my thinking was in the development of an understanding of the conspiracy theory of history. Before reading the writings of Chesterton, or any writings on a similar subject, I had a vague kind of suspicion that all kinds of plotting was going on in the world and events were occurring that were not explained in terms of normal political reporting, newspapers and so on. There seemed to be a hidden factor in world politics that was bringing about, among other things, the destruction of this country. The above passage provides an excellent encapsulation of the importance of ‘the conspiracy theory of history’ not just to Tyndall, but to the extreme right from the early 1960s until the present day. The ‘hidden factor in world politics’ allegedly abetting the destruction of Britain and its Empire has been the subject of much discussion by the extreme right in propaganda and rhetoric. Conspiracy theory, rather than being a mere feature, may in fact be identified as intrinsic to ultranationalist extreme right ideology, compelling the reader to ‘crush the master criminal lurking’. This article will seek to briefly outline the importance of conspiracy theory to the British extreme right, and will conclude by arguing that both scholars of extreme right-wing extremism and conspiracy theory can benefit from further examination into this interdisciplinary issue.

In contemporary parlance, the phrase ‘conspiracy theory’ is seen largely as a pejorative and diagnostic label; purveyors of conspiracy theories are often presumed to be either paranoid, uneducated, mad – or all of the above. Indeed, one of the seminal texts for understanding conspiracy theories in contemporary society is Richard Hofstadter’s “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” published in Harper’s Magazine in 1964 – gives credence to the idea that conspiracy theory is synonymous with psychological defect. However, conspiracy theories (not to be confused with genuine conspiracies, or, the act of plotting, which are a regular if not omnipresent feature of national and international politics) have long been significant social and cultural phenomena. At the most basic level, conspiracy theories argue that a conspiracy ‘explains the occurrence of an event’. These typical features or ‘condition’ of conspiracy theories identified by Denhardt include ‘the conspirators condition’ which argues that plotters are in existence or have existed in the past, with a definable plan; the ‘secrecy condition’ which states that conspirators will have attempted to stamp out public knowledge of the conspiracy by operating covertly, and finally, the ‘goal coalition’ which argues that a definable, attainable goal is wished for by the conspirators. Cubitt argues that conspiracy theory achieves three aims. It attributes the events of history or current affairs to conscious human volition; it sharply distinguishes between the human forces of good and evil; it implies a hidden reality beneath the superficial appearances of the political and social world. Resonances that conspiracy theories hold for extreme right ideology are immediately apparent. Extreme right ideology seeks to expose plotters, to whose schemes they are attributed. These subsystems are those who the extreme right, as ultranationalists, are against: communists, liberals, socialists, conservatives, foreigners, ethnic minorities. Given that these groups are allegedly threatening the nation in its defined and secret ways (perhaps because evidence against them is not forthcoming), the delineation of these groups as ‘plotters’, either current or historical, acts as a logical step. In the case of fascist ideology, taking the prime example of purported Jewish conspirators, a malignant cabal of Jews are deemed to be a threat and decedent force on the body-politic, as well as being the main impediment to a fascist revolution. In the case of the extreme right more generally, the allegation of conspiracy is then attached to these groups, who are seen as anti-egalitarian to the atheists, as an attempt to prove the falsity of their beliefs. The goal of conspirators in the eyes of fascists acts as the antithesis of the goal of fascism: fascists desire the rejuvenation of the nation, whereas the conspirators seek its degradation and destruction.

Extreme right conspiracy theories in Britain can first be witnessed in the immediate aftermath of World War One. The publication of the notorious Russian forgery, The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion by anti-Semitic publishing group The Briterons, contributed to a wave of political anti-Semitism – found in its most extreme form within the ranks of the Imperial Fascial League and British Union of Fascists. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories were often accompanied by anti-Communist conspiracy theory (and often the two were conflated), which alleged that the tentacles of Bolshevism, directly from the beak of the Soviet government, were reaching into every avenue of British society. The most influential conspiracy theorist on the interwar scene, Nesta Webster, wrote a number of books on how Bolshevism was merely a subversive movement seeking the destruction of Church and tradition, guided by Freemasonry and the Bavarian Illuminati. The first self-proclaimed fascist movement in Britain, the British Fascist, drew heavily upon Webster’s work, and were highly conspiratorial in perceiving Soviet Communist influence literally everywhere within the British Empire.

Conspiracy theory was also crucial to the ideology of the British Union of Fascists – Richard Hotzetter’s “The Paranoitic Style in American Politics” published in Harper’s Magazine in 1964 – gives credence to the idea that conspiracy theory is synonymous with psychological defect. However, conspiracy theories (not to be confused with genuine conspiracies, or, the act of plotting, which are a regular if not omnipresent feature of national and international politics) have long been significant social and cultural phenomena. At the most basic level, conspiracy theories argue that a conspiracy ‘explains the occurrence of an event’.

The use of conspiracy theory acted as a simple, populist form of Machiavellism: a struggle between good and evil, which portrayed Jews as aggressors who required comeuppance. In this regard, Jews were by no means an inevitable soapopatog, and the role might have been filled by another ‘bogey man’. However, given the tradition of cultural and political anti-Semitism within Britain – anti-Semitic stereotypes linking Jews with Communism and capitalism – and the fact that they were the most visible ethnic minority, they were an obvious target. Despite the BUF being somewhat more ‘programmatic’ with an emphasis on science and rationalism than many other fascist parties in the UK and indeed abroad, there was nevertheless a large strain of counter-Enlightenment thought to their ideology. Conspiracy theory can therefore be seen as part of this glorification of unreason and an attempt to reject more conventional understandings of history, human nature and society.

This overview has sought to demonstrate the presence and importance of conspiracy theory to extreme right politics in interwar Britain. Conspiracy theory is by no means limited to the interwar period; however, as just a cursory glance at postwar extreme right movements such as the League of Empire Loyalists, National Front and British National Party demonstrates. Without doubt, the relationship between right-wing extremism and conspiracy theory requires further attention. Given that two new and highly informative books on conspiracy theory have been published in late-2014: The Philosophy of Conspiracy Theories by Matthew Denith, and American Conspiracy Theories by Joseph Uschinski and Joseph Parent, it is hoped that scholars of the extreme right in Britain in Europe will utilise the opportunity to engage with the burgeoning field of conspiracy theory studies. In this respect, finally, it is worth noting that the Leverhulme-funded project ‘Conspiracy and Democracy: History, Political Theory and Internet Research’ based at Cambridge University has already undertaken some promising research on conspiracy theories, and promises to continue to do so. The study of fascism is at its best when outward looking and engaging with debates in other fields and disciplines; conspiracy theory provides another important avenue for scholars of fascism to branch out and place fascism within a broader scholarly context.

References

5. Ibid.
7. See, most importantly, Nesta Webster, World Revolution: The Plot Against Gottbeg (London: Constable 1921); Secret Societies and Subversive Movements (London Constable, 1924).

10. See, most importantly, Nesta Webster, World Revolution: The Plot Against Gottbeg (London: Constable 1921); Secret Societies and Subversive Movements (London Constable, 1924).
A Pragmatist Root for Fascism? Hulme, James, Papini, and the Florentine School

Dr Henry Mead

The word ‘pluralism’ has connotations of liberal tolerance, particularly from its British and American uses. ‘Fascism’, by contrast, has been described as the philosophical roots of Italian Fascism. For example, by 1911, ‘pluralist’ works by Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, William James, and Giovanni Papini were circulating in Italy. Yet if Sei’s account was correct, then how could the term ‘pluralist’ be a part of a theory that presupposed a ‘top-down’ power structure? Papini in particular advanced a theory of the uomo-dono, the Man-God, who had ‘the firm belief in objective truths, accepting that humanity made real as it pleases, individuals conscious of such power’ – and willing to use it.21 Papini thus followed Nietzsche’s logical path from The Twilight of the Idols to The Genealogy of Morals. As one historian said of Pragmatism, ‘pragmatism was converted by him into a sophisticated opportunism and a modern Machiavellism, a method of attaining contentment in one’s life and of dominating one’s fellow creatures by playing upon their fancies and prejudices as does the religious charlatan or the quack doctor or rhetorician.’22 Political and philosophical usages of the term ‘pluralism’ at this time were related, as contemporary noted.23 In the English tradition of Lord Acton, Fredericks Maitland, and John Neville Figgis, it referred to the decentralization and distribution of power among smaller bodies, including Trade Unions, religious communities, industrial and agrarian communities. It involved a splintering of power away from the state, and the pursuit of an elastic but binding principle of nationalism, which would both permit individual freedom but harness that agency to a national cause. In Italy, this was the spirit behind the Edwardian project of Giulianism as described by A. R. Ogle, Samuel Hobson, Maurice Rees, and G.H. Cole, among others. This network, working within the radical New Age magazine and the Labour Research Department, were bitterly disillusioned with the British Labour Party’s performance in parliament, and from around 1911, sought to conceive an entirely new system of government.

Their update of the medieval ‘GUILD’ ideas in terms of self-governing communes, which could make a plausible national (and possibly spiritual) identity, was transmitted to the continent via the journal Il Devinire sociale and Dischi di Auguri. Many of the Florentine pragmatists, notably with Mussolini, developed similar ideas in an Italian context. A horizontal division of power was a key principle in Italian Fascism, but so were the agents of national glory and spiritual charisma. In practice, the supposedly loosening horizontal lines of power were, in fact, a compromise, a sort of stricter vertical lines of power, and thus the faded remnants of the Guild idea of a far-off future.24 Prezzolini’s ‘L’Arte di Persuadere’, just as a Nietzschean perspectivism left the way open to the ‘will to power’, and the ‘corridor philosophy’ included a doorway to a far-off future. This was a prophetic and celebrated gift to the future of Italy.25

In this case, we must understand that political pluralism and political Fascism could, but did not inevitably, degenerate into absolutism. It may have for Papini, but it did not for James, or for Harold Laski’s English pluralism. We can see this idea in the Anglo-American liberal tradition. It is the understanding of motorways as we might consider, in the 1930s, and in the second of his lectures published as Pragmatism (1907),

In the first of his essays, James had quoted Papini’s first book, whose metaphor for pragmatism James observed, ‘He had cultivated his own vineyard.

It was like a corridor in a hotel, from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers. In one you see a man on his knees praying to regain his faith, in another to a Saint, in another to a Goddess, to a religious charlatan or the quack doctor or rhetorician.’21 Political and philosophical usages of the term ‘pluralism’ at this time were related, as contemporaries noted.22 In the English tradition of Lord Acton, Fredericks Maitland, and John Neville Figgis, it referred to the decentralization and distribution of power among smaller bodies, including Trade Unions, religious communities, industrial and agrarian communities. It involved a splintering of power away from the state, and the pursuit of an elastic but binding principle of nationalism, which would both permit individual freedom but harness that agency to a national cause. In Italy, this was the spirit behind the Edwardian project of Giulianism as described by A. R. Ogle, Samuel Hobson, Maurice Rees, and G.H. Cole, among others. This network, working within the radical New Age magazine and the Labour Research Department, were bitterly disillusioned with the British Labour Party’s performance in parliament, and from around 1911, sought to conceive an entirely new system of government.

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James’s account of the ‘corridor theory’ is taken from Papini’s article ‘Il Devinire sociale’ in Leonard’s April (1905), pp. 45-50 (Facs. 1 [Mar. 1905], pp. 5-4). Papini developed the idea in L’Arte di Predare the idea of the ‘corridor philosophy’ (1913, p. 8-9).

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This article re-thinks approaches to imperial state formation, and simultaneously addresses a possible influence on the rise of Fascism. Firstly, it re-examines the definition of empire, questioning an emphasis upon policy as sole agents of imperial expansion by drawing attention to the often overlooked role of filibusters. Secondly, it re-examines the history of filibustering itself, suggesting that it is not a practice unique only to the Americas or to the nineteenth-century. Lastly, it hints at a possible relationship between filibustering and Fascism.

According to Darwin, 'We live in a world that empires have made'.2 Given that empire is so hugely influential, there are a number of gaps in our understanding of the phenomenon. Colley states that there is an 'insufficiently comprehensive approach to empire'3 whilst Münkler concludes that 'the question of what an empire is ... has remained virtually unexamined'.4 Nonetheless, a number of authors have attempted definitions. Doyle conceives empire as a 'relationship ... in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another'.5 Similarly for Bush, empire implies the 'expansion of states outside their territory'.6 What the above presuppose is that empires are state led; but as Thomson asserts, 'States did not monopolize violence'.7 Indeed, another important agent of empire was the trading or 'concessionary' company; such as the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which possessed an 'impressive military force of forty war ships and ten thousand troops'.

This article suggests that another often overlooked player on the imperial stage was the filibuster. For many today the term filibustering is associated with a long-winded political speech. However, there is an older origin for the term, namely in the Dutch word vrijbuiter (or freebooter), which pertains to 'irregular armies of adventurers' who are frequently 'engaged ... in conducting private initiative armed expeditions from the United States'.8 Although the term 'freebooter' implies an association with piracy and privateering, there are distinctions. Firstly, filibusters are not privateers who 'act under the authority of a state'.9 Any association with piracy is, as it is defined, as 'the commission of those acts of robbery and violence upon the sea ... Yet filibusters are not restricted to maritime-based assaults. A further discrepancy between pirates and filibusters is that the former focused on 'acts of robbery', whereas filibusters did not necessarily prioritize monetary gain.10 As Thomson points out, 'some wanted to bring new territory into the United States ... and some to create an independent state under their own dictatorial rule'.11 William Walker, one of the most successful American filibusters, sought, in the mid-nineteenth century, 'to carve out private fiefdoms by force' in both present-day Mexico and Nicaragua.12

Filibusters are defined here as private individuals who employ non-sanctioned, extra-territorial violence in foreign territory to carve out powerbases for themselves or to annex this territory for another state's gain, usually their own home-state. What makes filibustering unique is that it is a form of transnational violence unauthorized by a state. From time to time, however, agents of the state might seize foreign territory on their own initiative with official consent. Aaron Burr, the former Vice President of the United States, sought unsuccessfully to establish a territory in Mexico and establish a new state for himself there; admitting that he hoped 'to establish an empire in Mexico and to become its emperor'.13 It was sometimes the case too that a filibuster might set out on an unauthorized military expedition to conquer territory for the 'home nation due to unforeseen circumstances'.14 Although Americans and the Americas certainly dominated, they were not the sole practitioners or agents of operation, as the cases of Italian filibusters Garibaldi and D’Annunzio demonstrate. Another misconception regarding filibustering is that it was an activity restricted to the nineteenth-century. Solomon advocates that ‘Walker’s occupation of Nicaragua represented both the high-point and the endpoint’.15 However, D’Annunzio’s occupation of Fiume occurred after World War One. Nor did filibustering efforts cease in the early twentieth-century. As late as 1981 Wolfgang Droge, the second in command of the Canadian Ku Klux Klan, alongside a small group of American neo-Nazis, led a failed filibustering attempt to invade Dominica. It is no surprise to read in Heart of Darkness, a novel partly based on French filibustering events in North Africa, that: “Kurtz’s proper sphere ought to have been politics ‘on the popular side’ ... ‘how that man could talk. He electrified large meetings ... He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party.”16 Filibusters might have had, consequently, not only a previously unremarked role in the history of empire, but also a small part in the origins of Italian Fascism.

This article, finally, questions the literature surrounding them. One theme dominating much discussion is that such pursuits were unique to the United States and were always focused on the Americas. Chaffin says that ‘without a helicoptor, filibusters sailed for Latin America’. He notes that ‘in the early twentieth-century, filibustering attempt to invade Dominica. It is no surprise to read in Heart of Darkness, a novel partly based on French filibustering events in North Africa, that: “Kurtz’s proper sphere ought to have been politics ‘on the popular side’ ... ‘how that man could talk. He electrified large meetings ... He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party.”16 Filibusters might have had, consequently, not only a previously unremarked role in the history of empire, but also a small part in the origins of Italian Fascism.  

11 Susan Stryker, “‘In the Most beautiful and attractive States women’s History; Loneliness; Filibustering and America’s Quest for Empire’”, American Quarterly 57:4, 2005, p. 156.
12 Thomson, p. 118.
13 Thomson, p. 45.
I am currently engaged in a research project on the importance of the myth of the Fascist New Man in interwar Italy, a subject scarcely investigated in any language. Therefore, the primary objective is to address this important historiographical gap by demonstrating its historical significance between the wars.

Dr Jorge Dagnino

I am currently conducting research at several Italian libraries and archives in order to write a monograph on the subject. Last September, together with Professor Matthew Feldman we convened the ‘New Man’ Symposium at Teesside’s Darlington campus with the participation of leading experts in Fascist studies (see the final review in this newsletter). This symposium will hopefully result in the successful publication of an edited volume for 2016, with the tentative title Prometeus Unplugged: Fascism’s Anthropological Revolution, 1919-45.

The New Man was the very core of Italian Fascism’s revolutionary and totalitarian experiment, one that was certainly associated with the collective regeneration of the nation, but which also had a crucial individual component of comportment and self-betterment that has been all but ignored by scholars of Fascism. Accordingly, my project will examine how Italian Fascism sought to improve the human race through a combination of totalitarian pedagogy provided by the Party, and the total mobilisation of the population and the integral utilisation of human capacities.

In the burgeoning literature on movement-countermovement (M/CM) dynamics, the concept of ‘coupling’ is becoming a central one. Zald and Useem first fleshed out this idea when they described movement-countermovement conflicts as being ‘loosely coupled’, in that the parties involved change over time, and also mobilise and demobilise at different rates. This distinguishes movement-countermovement conflicts of, for example, interstate wars, where mobilisation and counter-mobilisation happen instantaneously. Mayer and Stinton argued that by a ‘coupled’ nature of the relationship between opposing social movements; however, rather than assuming that it is always a ‘loosely coupled’ interaction, they consider it to be a variable: the relationship can be somewhere between ‘tightly’ and ‘loosely coupled’. The more that a movement’s tactics and choice of ‘battlefields’ are influenced by an opposing movement, the more ‘tightly coupled’ the conflict is. This demonstrates the importance of the concept in the way it can shape an M/CM conflict. The idea of ‘coupling’ has been refined further by Maclean and Busker, who argue that scholars approaching the problem of ‘cumulative extremism’ should examine the possibility that movements are asymmetrically coupled (i.e. one movement being more tightly coupled to its opponents than their opponents are to them).

How, while much attention has been paid to the degree to which movements are coupled, and to the form this ‘coupling’ takes, less attention has been paid to the mechanisms shaping this relationship. This may be because M/CM relationships are, by definition, fought over an issue cleavage and it makes a priori sense that each movement’s commitment to a given issue, in relation to whatever other issues that movement considers important, are the defining factor. For example, anti-fascists, whose main objective is to oppose fascists, are necessarily more tightly coupled to the fascist movement than vice versa. Yet there are other issues to consider in what defines this relationship. This article will highlight this gap in the literature by considering how the relationship between social movement organisations and the state affects the ‘coupled’ relationship between opposing social movements; or, is a mechanism which affects the influence of one movement on another’s strategic choices and claims.

The point of departure here is the dynamic created by social movement organisations that are competing over the same social base (or constituency). Combining with fascists and anti-fascists as an example, it can be demonstrated that, rather than just ideologically opposition, competition over support from the white working classes was a major factor in shaping their relationship. It should be noted that, while much has been written on competition between social movements, less has been said about how competition over the same potential resource affects the components affects these components.5-7

From 1967, when the fascist National Front (NF) was first formed, right through to the modernisation of the BNP away from ‘nationalist’ meetings and (anti) ‘punch-ups’ in the 1990s, a street war of varying degrees of intensity, was waged between fascists and anti-fascists in Britain.8 As Walker has noted: 8

The passionate vocabulary of the Left, and the equally passionate speeches of Tyndall and Webster suggested that they were unsuccessful rivals for the support of the same social groups - rather Tyndall nor the Trotskyists had made any real headway within the mass of British Labour Movement, and until they did the violence of which they spoke was unlikely to materialize.9

This is an astute observation, which accurately describes how the levels of intensity of the conflict were, at least in part, contingent on the success of one or the other group in gaining hegemonic dominance over the social group whom they both sought to court. It should also be noted that the shared interest in a social base had a limiting effect on the levels of violence employed, in that those groups were obviously less likely to use violence indiscriminately for fear of alienating their target constituency.

This contrasts significantly with, for example, the war fought between the Nationalists and the Loyalists in Northern Ireland during the troubles, where a paramilitary group leaving a bomb in an opposing community area, as distinct from an opposing paramilitary group’s building, would be much less likely to cause them any loss of resources or recruits.

That both fascist and militant anti-fascist groups were interested chiefly in the working classes is hard to dispute; it would be foolish to argue that Trotskyite groups were interested in mobilising any other social strata in the class war, and Taylor and Husbands have both convincingly shown that the NF’s main support came from the working classes (or ‘working class communities’).4

However, it is not just the use of violence (i.e. the strategies) by the opposition movements that were affected by this competition over the working classes. As Meyer and Staggenborg suggest, both strategy and choices of ‘battlefields’ are influenced by the coupled nature of the M/CM. Here we can see that competition over the social base did indeed dictate, to a certain extent, the arenas of action (or ‘battlefields’) in which the opposing forces met; namely ‘area[s] of working class culture’ such as music scenes and football terraces.10

Dave Renton has written widely on the cultural war between the far-left and far-right over parts of the British music scene from the 1970’s onward.11

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The birth and decline of bands like the Sex Pistols created a space which was partly filled by a revived skinhead subculture, which the NF attempted to tap into.
The other main area of working class culture that the opposing movements attempted to dominate was the football scene. Carnality in the 1990s the overtly neo-Nazi group Combat 18 perceived their football scene as their political space. They focused on the football grounds and fed off the fact that football was a mass participation sport. This made it easier to recruit, and it was easier to spread their messages. They targeted the football grounds in order to try to spread their neo-Nazi ideology. They considered the football grounds as a place for them to spread their ideology and try to recruit new members.

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3. It is wrong to label SD ‘fascist’ or ‘neo-fascist’ since it is a risky strategy to counter its politics. Any discussion over labels will only become political instrumentalised. The term will only be devalued, leading into the wrong direction/association and making it difficult to engage in any constructive counter-argument. SD voters might feel offended at being called ‘fascists’. If the ‘fascist’ label cannot be substantiated, support for SD will grow even more (and boost their ‘guilt-by-association’ argument that the academic establishment is part of the ‘mainstream media’ conspiracy against the ‘will of the electorate’).

4. Fascism has become a catch-all term with no conceptual and explanatory clarity. It is far too broad (ab-/used in all political camps for greatly varying purposes), too serious (SD is after all ‘only’ a populist party proposing narrow-minded policies) or too derogative (‘fascist’ has typically used as a term of abuse) to capture the success of a populist right-wing party like SD and does not fit a purpose in addressing its politics on the ground. The analysis of ideology has to be put on hold.

5. With one exception, none of the Swedish academics, journalists and debaters has seriously engaged with the scholarly discourse on ‘fascism outside Sweden’. It remains to be analysed properly why the usage of the term ‘neo-fascism’ to characterise SD during the political debates of 2014 caused such a stir. It was possibly the confusion of rhetorical arenas where the term was applied that upset the academic community most, and which ultimately caused it to claim an absolute prerogative of interpretation. Only the future will tell.

The National Socialist Underground: Ongoing Questions

Revelations about the terror group Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground-NSU) in November 2011 marked one of the biggest terrorism-related shocks in Germany since the Red Army Faction (RAF) in the 1970s and the far-right violence of the 1990s. It opened up questions about how a neo-Nazi group could orchestrate a number of assassinations and bomb attacks in Germany, over more than a decade, without being discovered by the police or intelligence agencies. Indeed, a number of investigations anticipating the NSU trial in Munich uncovered a huge failure of state and federal institutions. This article provides an overview of recent developments in this ongoing case, focusing upon reports published by Germany’s investigation committees.

Wist most scholars argue that right-wing extremism in Eastern Germany was a phenomenon associated with reunification and subsequent economic struggles, it is increasingly clear that in the anti-fascist GDR a small, but educated, violent and well-organized neo-Nazi scene existed. After German reunification in 1990, a large neo-Nazi subculture emerged in the region.

While two members of the NSU, Beate Zschäpe and Uwe Böhnhardt, had a typical background for teenage far-right extremists (poor education, working class upbringing, and in Zschäpe’s case, serious family problems), Uwe Middelbeck came from an academic background. Nevertheless he became a neo-Nazi, not after the reunification, but in the GDR. These three were to form the murderous nucleus of the NSU.

Although engaging in criminal activity such as making bombs in a rented garage before they went underground, they were not arrested due to a huge police mistake. While underground, the group assassinated nine immigrants and one police officer. After their death, the German press and public was shocked by the events.

In 2006, the police was informed of possible neo-Nazi activities. However, they did not believe the NSU to be a terror group. In 2008, the police changed their mind. They arrested the NSU members and tried them for their crimes.

The report detailed how the police failed to catch the NSU, who became an all-too-familiar part of everyday life. The NSU were able to commit their crimes without being discovered by the police or intelligence agencies. Indeed, a number of investigations were carried out, but the NSU were able to escape justice.

The report also highlighted possible warnings from the NSU, which were ignored. The police did not have enough evidence to establish the NSU as a terror group.

The NSU trial in Munich is ongoing, and the NSU members are serving life sentences. The trial has attracted national and international attention.

The NSU trial has shed light on the failure of the German police and intelligence agencies, who were unable to prevent the NSU from committing their crimes. The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of the media in covering the NSU’s activities.

The NSU trial has also highlighted the importance of early warnings and the need for better cooperation between the police and intelligence agencies.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of far-right political parties in Germany, and the need for greater scrutiny of their activities.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of criminal activity in far-right extremism, and the need for better understanding of the factors that drive people to become involved in criminal activity.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of ideology in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the ideological underpinnings of far-right movements.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of individual responsibility in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the experiences and motivations of individuals involved in far-right extremism.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of international cooperation in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the role of international networks in far-right extremism.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of national and international law in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the legal frameworks that govern far-right activity.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of the media in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the role of the media in shaping public perceptions of far-right activity.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of government and political leaders in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the role of government and political leaders in shaping public perceptions of far-right activity.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of history in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the role of history in shaping public perceptions of far-right activity.

The NSU trial has also raised questions about the role of international organizations in far-right extremism, and the need for greater understanding of the role of international organizations in shaping public perceptions of far-right activity.

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On 13 October 2013, the leader of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, exited the group, citing the ‘dangers of far right extremism’ as key to his departure. This was his reason for his exit or not, this episode engages two, key conceptual and empirical questions when studying the EDL: 1) to what extent is the EDL far right?; and if so, 2) How does this sustained period of activism add to our understanding of right-wing extremism?

In this article, I will focus on the second of these two questions. Firstly, it will be argued that empirical studies of the EDL’s support base transform our understanding of the group. Secondly, I will discuss the more delicate point of how internal dynamics are important in helping us cement our understanding of the message and trajectory of a group like the EDL. Finally, it will be suggested that only through the lens of activism can academics and policymakers arrive at a more concrete understanding of far right movements such as the EDL, which have formerly been described as both ‘complex’ and ‘amorphous’.2 Who, Why and What: The EDL’s Support Base

Studies of the EDL’s support base help to transform our understanding of the group. In the first of three surveys conducted after the group’s formation, Jamie Bartlett and Mark Littler at Demos argue that we need to revise our common, existing assumptions regarding the EDL. Conducting an online poll of EDL supporters are surprisingly more integrated – both in socially marginalised, ‘young thug’ stereotype.3 Instead, Bartlett and Littler discovered that on the whole EDL supporters are older (28% of supporters are over 30), more educated (30% are educated to college and university level) and more qualified (15% hold professional qualifications) than had been commonly assumed.4

Similarly, this was also corroborated by later studies. In turning to Matthew Goodwin’s recent Chatham House paper, ‘The Roots of Extremism’, and his co-authored article from 2014, we find evidence to suggest that the makeup of EDL goes beyond the young, politically apathetic, and anti-Muslim stereotype. In fact they tend to be ‘citizens aged between 45-59’;5 they are ‘part of the mainstream’;6 they are ‘more educated’;7 they ‘tend to be middle-class’;8 and they are ‘middle-class’;9 they are more committed to an ‘alternative Britain’;10 they are more likely to place anti-migrant hostility and the economy above their concerns about Islam.11 Whether this term was the real reason for his exit or not, this episode engages two, key conceptual and empirical questions when studying the EDL: 1) to what extent is the EDL far right?; and if so, 2) How does this sustained period of activism add to our understanding of right-wing extremism?

In summary, then, EDL activism adds to and extends our knowledge base of the group in two important ways. The first is by transforming our perceptions of the group as being solely populated by young, socially-isolated thugs. In fact, the majority of EDL supporters are surprisingly more integrated - both in terms of their social standing and political views – than many common stereotypes care to point out. The second is that, by understanding the mediating effects of activism on group behaviour and trajectory we can appreciate the two-tier nature of far right social movements, as well as the limiting effects that activists place upon group prospects. This will be important when elites and civil society try to tailor responses to similar groups in the future, such as Pegida in Germany.12

1 BBC News (8/10/2013), ‘EDL Leader Tommy Robinson quits group’ online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24447935 [accessed 22/01/2015]
3 Ibid. p. 5.
4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

William Allchorn

Understanding EDL Activism
I have studied the Holocaust for well over forty years, and been involved in websites devoted to the Holocaust now for some fifteen years, such as H.E.A.R.T, where I am the UK director. It is fair to say, that through the wonders of the internet, the spreading of knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust – which is without doubt the worst crime in modern history – is without precedent. But the internet has bred another, less virtuous strain, which is the growth of Holocaust Denial.

There are a number of so-called ‘debating sites’ which really do not debate the Holocaust, but are there simply as platforms for individuals who want to put over a rather warped view of the Holocaust, attack the Jewish race, and say negative things to those who do not share their take on this particular phase of human history. Just two of many sites are CODOH and its mirror site of RODOH. CODOH stands for the ‘Committee of Open Debate on the Holocaust; while RODOH stands for the ‘Real Open Debate on the Holocaust’. Let us have a quick look at some of the current crop of hot topics currently being ‘debated’:

- CODOH – ‘Talking with Believers’; ‘Compensation for Holocaust Victims’; ‘More Auschwitz Miracles’; ‘Whoopers’; ‘Mengele Denied Performing Ghastly Experiments’; ‘US Prosecutor at Nuremberg, Robert Jackson, was a Zionist’;


I ask the readers of this article, and maybe even the visitors to these two websites: does any of the above look like serious debating material worth spending any significant amount of time on? Any casual visitor to these two websites will be struck by the fact that the hard-line Holocaust Deniers, who seek to debate with visitors to their site, will see that genuine debate is the last thing they really want to do. They seem to be beyond reason. Nothing will change their viewpoint, which is that the Holocaust never really happened, that Jews ensnared by the Nazis regime were not killed in the gas chambers but were simply shipped to the East. They claim that there are no bodies at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka – these were just transit camps. They argue that the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau were there just to burn those that succumbed to sickness, who were merely working there as slave labourers. They also claim that the Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis were partisans and thus legitimate targets in a world at war.

Holocaust Denial is growing, and as the last living witnesses pass away, we must be careful to ensure that, over time, what happened in Europe during those dreadful times is not forgotten or distorted. For the hard-liners, and those that seek controversy wherever none exists, there is no point in debating with them; it is a fruitless waste of time and energy. They will never change their warped view of history, and they will never admit they are intellectually bankrupt. Nor will they admit to their rabid anti-Semitism. Am I wrong about the Jews who lost their lives during the Nazi reign of terror.

Throughout the Second World War, the Allies learned through the Polish Underground and other sources that something terrible was being done to the Jews in Europe under the Nazi sphere of influence. Some of this was made public through publications like the Black Book of Polish Jewry, and in publications like the Polish Fortnightly Review. These covered subjects like the Belzec Death Camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Warsaw Ghetto and atrocities carried out by the Germans on both the Jews and the Polish population, over a number of years, between 1939 and 1945. As the tide of war changed in the Allies’ favour, the liberation of concentration camps in Poland (Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau initially), then in the Reich itself, illuminated in stark visual terms the dark shadows of terror and misery that the Nazis had heaped upon the parts of Europe they conquered. What followed subsequently were thousands of testimonies by survivors, photographs, films, war crimes trials, statements under oath by leading Nazis themselves, like Rudolf Hoess, the Commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and all the wretcher of material that proved the Holocaust happened, such as the records of the families that were destroyed, or torn apart forever. Only a fool would pretend none of this existed, and what happened was a lie, a fantasy, or some Zionist plot. These people are deluded and dangerous. So it is not for the hard-line Holocaust Denier that I write this piece – they will never see reason. They simply do not accept the truth, and they never will. I have always been of the opinion that to argue with these people gives some credence to their views, credence they do not deserve. My stance on this has not changed. But if they are not challenged, then the danger is that, in time, their views will gain legitimacy. We owe it to the less well informed, the uneducated, who may visit these websites, or who are otherwise wooed by Holocaust Denier groups, to learn for themselves what really happened during those dark years. This is possible by visiting memorial websites such as H.E.A.R.T, ARC (www.deathcamps.org) and many others. They can also visit institutions like the ‘ Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters’ House in Israel; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; The Wiener Library and Beth Shalom in the United Kingdom; the death camps and concentration camps in Poland and in Germany and Austria; as well as the former euthanasia institutes, where the disabled and mentally were murdered. All of these places have been turned into memorials for the untold victims of Naziism, fact which cannot be truthfully denied.

Lastly, I dedicate this article to the late Jewish historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who passed away in February 2015. He was a true scholar and a gentleman. He offered me helpful advice and guidance. He kindly granted me permission to use some of his maps in my various projects. He did a great deal to inspire many of us to tell the real story of the Holocaust in order to educate younger generations. He will be sadly missed.
In this transcript of a Skype interview on January 9, 2015, Matthew Feldman, a professor of political science at Temple University, talks to Professor Feldman about the terrorist attacks in France.

Professor Matthew Feldman

Matthew Feldman: It is still early days and our hearts go out all the way to the victims. In the coming weeks and months there will be time for a proper inquiry and to understand and to be moved by the victims. But that doesn’t mean that the attack on Charlie Hebdo was entirely random. Clearly this was a targeted attack against a magazine with the voices of those individuals who are standing for the exact and same thing as saying these individuals have legitimate, or widely accepted, grievances.

Interview with Anna Pivovarchuk for Fair Observer
10 January 2015

Pivovarchuk: You mentioned the Muslim community and how it has been caught up in all of this, but what can they do to counteract the influence of extremist? 
Feldman: I think there are two things. One is about the Muslim community and the other is about the wider European community. First, we need to encourage Muslims—our friends, our colleagues across Europe—to be able to denounce the kinds of insidious terrorism and extremism that exist in small pockets of Europe. That is something we have plenty of evidence of individuals in the Muslim faith of either turning in voices of the community, showing that there is no incompatibility between the values of Europe and the EU and the values of Islam. I think that needs to be continued and supported.

Pivovarchuk: You have mentioned the barbaric murder of Lee Rigby. But I think we need to do all of us Muslims and non-Muslims alike to challenges this ridiculous view that Muslims somehow don’t reject terrorism, prevent violence and avoid movement of voices by pressing multiculturism. As we saw in Norway in 2011, where there was very little blaming of Norwegian Christians for the horrific actions of Anders Behring Breivik, we can also say in the same way that we are not going to blame Muslims at large in Europe. But at the same time I will embrance it to strike back at terrorism from wherever source it comes from.

Matthew Feldman: The first thing that needs to be said is that individuals like those who were involved in the terrorist attacks in Europe do raise some troubling questions in terms of counterterrorism. The second part of your question I believe is equally important, which is the implication for civil liberties. I think that as we saw in the wake of the horrific murder of Lee Rigby. But I think what we need is a considered debate on the place of democracy and the values of the EU. This is simply nonsense and it is important of us to show and listen and to amplify the voices of those individuals who are standing for the exact and precise freedoms as we are.

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Matthew Feldman: This is a very important point to say that citizens of goodwill in Europe is to amplify their voices. They are raising important questions about the place of democracy and the values of the EU. This is simply nonsense and it is important of us to show and listen and to amplify the voices of those individuals who are standing for the exact and precise freedoms as we are.

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Now the move to the Internet has changed the ways in which terrorism and extremism and, therefore, pose less likelihood of the same kinds of values could undertake self-directed acts of “lone wolf” terrorism. The doctrine of “leaderless resistance” was principally used by anarchists, well into the beginning of the 20th century. And then for a good half century we didn’t see hardly any acts until the end of the 20th century in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. Nevertheless, there may be a question of how individuals fit into the wider community, either as migrants, or second-generation immigrants or as people who feel isolated within their community through poverty or other social forms of exclusion. I believe that the attacks in France, but also in Belgium, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and beyond, underscore the need to have sophisticated, pan-ideological views of terrorism and some of its radicalizations.

I will give you one example: one scholar found that the greatest shared motivation for terrorists was the sense of humiliation and social failure. That might very well be something, but we must know more, we need to know more about the precedents or mental illness, we need to know more perhaps about the way in which victims have suffered racism or suffered from violent attacks, and might, therefore, be radicalised. So I think that it is a very difficult social problem to look into it with one single explanation for why people are radicalised, but I think more than anything that it underscores the need for European governments, security services and others to put their heads together to understand what some of these drivers can be. Not in the interests of maintaining groundswells of Europeans, but to understand how we can protect individuals in Europe and how we can understand the threats posed by various types of terrorism that clearly pose not an existential but an important and troubling danger in the heart of contemporary Europe today.

Feldman: Yes, there is a risk. But there was a risk before these appalling acts in France. Pathetic propaganda from groups will always try to make capital out of it and they will always try to make threats. I think it must be underscored that Europe and the democratic systems in the West are not at an existential threat of terrorism.

The only existential threat that can be posed to Europe are the actions and words of those people who are seeking to delegitimise the very liberal, religiously neutral, curating civil liberties. That is not to say there is not a threat of terrorism but I think we need to think of terrorism in terms of groups or individuals. I think they are the threat posed by various types of terrorism that clearly pose not an existential but an important and troubling danger in the heart of contemporary Europe today.

Feldman: The 21st century may be a century of “ lone wolf” terrorism like the end of the 19th century. It must be stressed that “ lone wolf” terrorism is a tactic. In the 19th century it was principally used by anarchists, well into the beginning of the 20th century. And for a good half century we didn’t see hardly any similar acts until the end of the 20th century in the United States, when neo-Nazi and other far-right ideologues started talking “ lone wolf” terrorism. The doctrine of “leaderless resistance” was really popularised by an American neo-Nazi in the late 1980s and 1990s, and it was based on the fact that it was much easier to penetrate a hierarchically structured terrorist organisation, which has a leader at the top, operatives in the middle and people as foot soldiers at the bottom. His view that individuals sharing the same kinds of values could undertake self-directed acts of terrorism and extremism and, therefore, pose less likelihood of being captured - a system more difficult for security services to break into.

Now the move to the Internet has changed the ways in which individuals who are inclined to undertake acts of “ lone wolf” terrorism can be interdicted through their activities online. However, we see individuals like Breivik, who was both radicalised online and who used the Internet as a kind of “do it yourself” terrorist kit, that there are very troubling exceptions to this. Breivik’s manifesto is proof of the way in which an individual can learn the trade of terrorism online and can go through the so-called “terrorist cycle” all the stages short of an attack. So I think that concerning one and of the things we have seen only in the last six or seven years is that individual extremists and radicalizers of the different doctrines have sought to appropriate this tactic from neo-Nazis and the far-right for what they call individual jihad. This is something which we see on the pages of the absolutely disgusting and obnoxious magazine put out by al-Qaeda and Anwar al-Awlaki. Only over the last decade has this become an issue that ideologically inspired and jihadi Islamists have advocated for so-called lone wolf pack or leaderless jihadi.

What we find is that this is something which is on the rise and is something that is not limited to a single ideology. So the best answer I can give you at this troubling time is that the rise of “ lone wolf” terrorism must be understood better and must be studied – the psychology of the lone wolf terrorists, the terrorist cycle and operational capacity, but also how these individuals can be neutralised, how they can be found through their online activity or through their communities of support. So I am concerned but I believe we need to know more.

Pivorovitch: It was reported that the head of preachers in Islamic State, Sheikh Abu Saad Anwar, has said the following today: “We started our operations with France today, and tomorrow (in the near future) it will be in Britain and America and other countries. Our response to the coalition will be decisive.” How much is Europe, and the US, at risk?

Feldman: It depends on who you ask. Some individuals from the more reactionary side of politics believe there is a type or a profile of second or third generation migrants to Europe. I am not so convinced, especially when we look at the broader picture of home-grown terrorists who are common to both the West and also far-right extremists and others. That suggests there can be a number of motives, sometimes conflicting and sometimes overlapping.

One that is often mentioned, the so-called “ lone wolf” terrorist, concerns the question of who are these people, what are their motivations, what are the social causes, what are the reasons why they join and are looking at, and I am not yet convinced that there is any systematic, quantitative evidence on these matters. It does seem as though there’s a profile that terrorists tend to be male, they overwhelmingly tend to be between the ages of 15 and 55. However, I am hesitant about saying that there is a profile of terrorists – certainly not in skin colour and certainly not in background. Nevertheless, there may be a question of how individuals fit into the wider community, either as migrants, or second-generation immigrants or as people who feel isolated within their community through poverty or other social forms of exclusion. I believe that the attacks in France, but also in Belgium, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and beyond, underscore the need to have sophisticated, pan-ideological views of terrorism and some of its radicalizations.

While it is important to be circumspect when raising the significance of the data employed in our analysis – our results nevertheless raise several interesting possibilities. We argue that media reportage, and in particular, levels of coverage and framing of attacker motivation, may play a significant role in shaping how anti-Muslim groups perceive attacks, and thus, may help determine the nature and severity of their reprisals.

Such an argument is consistent with our findings, with the widely reported attacks in Canada showing a spike not repeated in the days following the Copenhagen attacks (which were less widely covered) or the Sydney attacks (where the attack was not as unambiguously identified as ‘Islamist violence’).

If this view is accepted then our findings merit serious discussion, particularly with respect to the current policy response to extremist violence and hate-crime. A potential link between the nature of media coverage and the strength of violent reaction raises questions about the role of the media as mediators of rhetorical extremism, touching upon the role of responsible journalism and the limits of free speech in an open and democratic society.

We offer no clear answer to these questions; rather, our report highlights the need for Britain to engage in an involved social and political conversation that embraces not just a condemnation of anti-Muslim violence, but a discussion about its roots, the nature of our responsibilities towards minority communities, and the role played by the media in shaping our expectations and behaviours. Clearly there are no easy or straightforward solutions, and we should be wary of those who offer magic bullets. Despite this, the need for answers has never been more pressing, and it remains in everybody’s interests to seek them.

The falling of the twin towers in 2001 was doubtless the defining political moment of the early 21st century. With the destruction of the most visible symbol of American economic power, Al-Qaeda shattered the post-millenarian utopianism that has been the hallmark of the first 21st century and set in motion a chain of events that would continue to shape social and political life over the decades that followed.

With this in mind, it is far to say that we all live in the shadow of 9/11, with its direct effects – for example, through increased surveillance, overseas wars, and reduced civil liberties – exerting an influence over many aspects of our daily lives. However, for some parts of the community this influence is more secretly felt, with the less obvious indirect ramifications of 9/11 – particularly around social cohesion and community living – leaving a minor legacy. Particularly amongst British Muslims, the post-9/11 era has been characterised by a growth in anxiety and suspicion.

At its best, this has taken the form of well-meaning politicians lecturing the Muslim community about its responsibility to root out extremism (as was the case following the Charlie Hebdo attacks last year). At worst, it has found expression in the violence perpetrated by right-wing groups.

Academics have been quick to offer explanations for this later behaviour, with the University of Nottingham’s Matthew Goodwin suggesting that ‘meritocracy’ is responsible for “extremist violence”. By contrast, the willingness of the Islamic community to denounce the atrocities committed by members of their own community, coupled with the increasing numbers of attacks, effectively neutralises, how they can be found through their online activity or through their communities of support. So I am concerned but I believe we need to know more.

Feldman: It depends on who you ask. Some individuals from the more reactionary side of politics believe there is a type or a profile of second or third generation migrants to Europe. I am not so convinced, especially when we look at the broader picture of home-grown terrorists who are common to both the West and also far-right extremists and others. That suggests there can be a number of motives, sometimes conflicting and sometimes overlapping.

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Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January 2015

The Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies organised Teesside University’s Holocaust Memorial Day event on 27 January 2015. The day marked the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp – the setting for the extermination of over 1 million prisoners - the vast majority of which were Jews.

The event began with a fascinating talk by Professor Aristotle Kallis – a leading historian of fascism and genocide. Kallis looked at one of the lesser well-known death camps, Treblinka, responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews, predomi-
nantly through gassing, between 1941 and 1942. He specifically looked at Nazi attempts to eradicate not only the prisoners, but their memory as well. In that sense, the Nazi regime can be seen as the earliest Holocaust deniers, seeking to murder Jews in both a literal sense and to obliterate Jews symbolically from history and memory. In the afternoon, Professor Matthew Feldman also pre-
sented a highly informative discussion of ‘Holocaust Blockbuster Films’, which assessed representations of the Holocaust in film, the underlying question being ‘How to portray the unportrayable?’

The day also witnessed student-led initiatives. Teesside Univer-
sity graduate Robin Pepper’s documentary, entitled ‘Iby Knill: An Auschwitz Promise’ provided an informative and touching interview with Auschwitz survivor Iby Knill. Similarly, there was a screening of the 2006 BBC documentary ‘Forgiving Dr Mengele’ (directed by Teesside University’s Mark Handscombe) which fol-
lowed Holocaust survivor Eva Kor, victim of medical experiments whilst interned at Auschwitz-Birkenau as a child by the infamous Nazi doctor, Josef Mengele. Teesside University students also present-
ed a self-made documentary which followed their trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 2015. It was evident that the trip had a profound effect on the students who attended and the discussion following the documentary was absorbing.

The importance of remembering the attempted extermination of European Jewry is obvious. Yet it becomes more prescient with each passing year, given that Holocaust survivors are sadly less and less able to keep the memory alive. In 2015, approximately 300 survivors attended the memorial service at Auschwitz-Birk-
ena in Poland - a remarkable feat when one considers that these are elderly people scattered across all four corners of the globe. However, it is in contrast to the 60th Anniversary event in 2005 which saw around 1,500 attend. Thus, Holocaust Memorial Day events such as these will continue to be important not just in remembering the horrors of the Second World War and genocide, but keeping the memory of these survivors alive when they are not around to tell their story.

The Fascist ‘New Man’ Symposium

The Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies organised Teesside University’s Holocaust Memorial Day event on 27 January 2015. The day marked the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp – the setting for the extermination of over 1 million prisoners - the vast majority of which were Jews.

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The Fascist ‘New Man’ Symposium

The fascist goal of creating a ‘new man’, as part of an anthropological revolution, has been widely acknowledged by scholars of fascism but never adequately fleshed out. This CFAPS symposium, led by Dr Jorge Dagnino, CFAPS Research Associate and Assistant Professor at the Universidad de los Andes, and CFAPS di-director Professor Matthew Feldman, attempted to fill this scholarly void by hosting a two-day workshop.

Held at Teesside University’s Darlington Campus between 26-
27 September 2014, the symposium brought together eleven scholars of fascism specialising in different countries across Europe and South America. Historians were invited to present individual cases assessing the constructions of a fascist ‘new man’ before 1946. These ranged from regimes in Italy (Luca la Rovere) and Germany (Gregory Maertz and Rebecca Wennberg), abortive interwar fascist movements such as the British Union of Fascists (Jeanette Baxter), non-fascist authoritarian regimes such as Getúlio Vargas’ Estado Novo in Brazil (Aristotle Kallis), and the trend Europe-wide (Martin Conway).

In addition to the excellent presentations, much debate over the nature of the fascist ‘new man’ arose. Most generally, can and should the concept of the ‘fascist new man’ be understood as an isolated, conceptual construction by interwar fascist movements, or are we conflating two separate things? That is, are there a wider, contemporaneous constellation of ideas about a ‘new man’ present in European culture and fascist ideology? Given that different case-studies from varying geographical areas were presented, one question which received attention was: were ‘new fascist men’ specific and adaptive to their domestic context, or can a more generic fascist new man be seen? Furthermore, given that the discussion revolved around new fascist men, how much importance should be afforded to the role (or changing notions of) masculinity in the first half of the twentieth century? By extension, should study of the fascist ‘new man’ be extended to include ‘new women’ and/or ‘new families’ in the fascist quest for an ‘anthropo-
logical revolution’? Whilst this is only a snapshot of a continuing debate, all presentations and discussions can be listened to online (http://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2014/09/new-man-sym-
posium/). In addition, papers presented at the conference will be forming the majority of an edited collection on the fascist new man intended for 2016.
Print publications

N. Copsey and John Richardson (eds.), Cultures of Post-War British Fascism (Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-7.
M. Feldman, ‘Ezra Pound’s political faith from first to second generation; or, “It is 1956 Fascism.”’, in Erik Tonning, Matthew Feldman and David Addyman (eds.) Ezra Pound, Volume II: War Crimes, Genocide and Justice: The United States of Paranoia: A Conspiracy Theory; Visions of Annihilation; The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941-1945
M. Feldman, Profile interview on far-right extremism in Europe for Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland), Mar. 2015.
M. Feldman, Interview on the rise in European anti-Semitism, BBC Newcastle, Feb. 2015.
M. Feldman, Eight regional/ Northeast radio and TV interviews for Holocaust Memorial Day, Jan. 2015.
M. Feldman, Interview on Islamophobia in Europe, de Volkkrant [Holland], Jan. 2015.

Online interviews and texts

Presentations and public engagement

Nigel Copsey, Discussant, NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Second Lecture on Fascism, De Baal, Amsterdam, 9 April 2015.
D. Tilles, ‘“We have only one common enemy, and that is the Jew”: British fascist antisemitism and Jewish resistance in the European context, 1932-39’, guest lecture for Jagiellonian University Centres for Holocaust Studies and European Studies, Galicia Jewish Museum, Krakow, Poland, April 2015.
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