



Strachan, J. (2019) 'Wordsworth among the fascists', *Essays in Criticism*, 69 (1), pp. 37-50.

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/escrit/cgy029>

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Wordsworth among the Fascists

JOHN STRACHAN

Fascists like poetry too. We know this, not least from George Steiner's famous expression of bewilderment in *Language and Silence* (1970) that 'a man can read Goethe and Rilke in the evening... and go to his day's work at Auschwitz in the morning'.¹ It is less well-known that the fascists of Great Britain also liked poetry. A contributor to the *Blackshirt*, one of the British Union of Fascists' house newspapers, wrote in a reader's letter published on St Valentine's Day in 1939, that he had been 'perusing [his] *Oxford Book of English Verse*'. The correspondent, one D. M. Evans, was pleased to find the volume politically agreeable: 'in doing so, I have found a number of works that seem to breathe the very spirit of fascism'.² Now plainly the greats of English literature were innocent of their supposedly fascist tendencies, but this only enhanced their contribution to the cause for, to quote our correspondent once again, 'the knowledge that the authors were all *unconscious* of that spirit adds to their value'.³ So what was most estimable to the Mosleyite in his well-thumbed book of poetry? The answer is straightforward: 'proving the essentially British character of our creed': 'After all', argues the correspondent, 'we should be the first to honour such names as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Gray, Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, Shelley and Keats'.⁴ How fortunate Britain was to have such noble examples from the past, especially in a Britain which was currently enfeebled, and in the thrall of finance and Jewry. 'The more we are reminded of those names', Evans concludes, 'the greater the contrast between them and Rothschild, Cohen, Simon and Gluckstein'.⁵

Britishness: there is no higher word of praise in the fascist vocabulary. In his *Tomorrow We Live* (1938) Sir Oswald Mosley declared that ‘British Union in whole character is a British principle suited to Britain alone’,⁶ and fascistic literary criticism is similarly preoccupied with Britishness. Evans, in his fascist book club, offers a celebration of Britishness in culture (an unquestionably good thing) which is underpinned by an appeal to the canon of British poets. Like so many fascists, his definition of what one *is* (British) is grounded in an attack on what one *is not*, that foreign otherness which is the Semitic: these are themes which resound through British fascist thought about poetry, and about Romanticism, and particularly about William Wordsworth -- ‘William Wordsworth: National Socialist’, as an ingenious contributor to *Action* put it.⁷ Wordsworth, the great radical, even Jacobin, poet of the 1790s had numerous admirers among the fascists and fellow travellers of the inter-war years. When William Joyce, ‘Lord Haw Haw’, later executed for his treasonous broadcasts from Nazi Germany, was at school in Galway, his ideals of ‘poetry were Romantic and high-minded’, featuring notably ‘Wordsworth and Tennyson’.⁸

And, as the example of Evans shows, Joyce was not alone in his enthusiasm. The *Action* contributor shares the *Blackshirt*’s conviction as to the nationalistic spirit of the canon of English literature, but he goes much further in his Wordsworthophilia, seeing something particularly British and valuable about the sage of Rydal:

All the greatest poets have been Nationalist - Shakespeare, Kipling, Wordsworth and others. But out of these Wordsworth alone stands forth as the ardent protagonist of National Socialism ... How he would have turned with enthusiasm to Mosley and British Union and helped with us to build a higher civilisation.⁹

The reader may doubt whether tub-thumping demagoguery of the Mosleyite kind would have appealed remotely to the imaginary Wordsworth of the 1930s, especially

given that, in the 1790s, the real one expressed such misgivings about Robespierre. But the fascist is convinced: 'Wordsworth lives within the heart of British Union', he declares, 'to us from the grave comes his stern warning and command: "ENGLAND, the time is come when thou shouldst wean / Thy heart from its emasculating food"''.¹⁰ Wordsworth, in this account, firmly rooted as he is in nationalism and national culture, stands pre-eminent in his congeniality to the fascist mind. 'How he would have turned with fury, and with lashing tongue', the article maintains, on modern politicians' 'approval of alien ideas and influences'.¹¹

The *Action* contributor's approving quotation from Wordsworth's sonnet 'England, the time is come when thou shouldst wean' not only develops the author's central notion of Wordsworth as a crucial part of an authentic national culture, but also invokes the memory of a poet calmly facing up to immediate foreign threat, something with an obvious resonance for the modern patriotic Englishman. Wordsworth's poem, written in October 1803 as he meditated 'on the expected invasion',¹² is one of a series of fourteen-line calls to arms against the French incursion which seemed so likely at that moment in time, a 'poem dedicated to *National Independence* and Liberty'. The invasion envisaged by the British fascist in the 1930s does not arrive armed on a boat: it has already arrived, in the person of 'the Jew' and in 'the flowering of the Semitic culture in Britain'.¹³ Wordsworth's sonnet was written 'in a moment of particular national crisis',¹⁴ as Simon Bainbridge remarks in *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict* (2003), and his verse is here invoked at another moment of crisis. Wordsworth's appeal to manliness - the 'wean[ing]', the putting aside of the femininity symbolised in the breast - and the repudiation of the 'emasculating' is reconceptualised: the poet is the epitome of the 'virile and national

sprit that made this country great'.¹⁵ Wordsworth, were he living at this hour, 'would have turned with enthusiasm to Mosley and British Union'.

'Oswald Mosley', according to the fascist environmentalist Jorian Jenks in *Spring Comes Again* (1939) was 'the very embodiment of English tradition';¹⁶ and Wordsworth is manipulated into position as a cultural version of him, his thought co-opted as part of a tradition which lives and breathes in the modern age: 'the first characteristic of Ur-Fascism is the cult of tradition'¹⁷ as Umberto Eco puts it. Just as Wordsworth invoked the guiding spirit of John Milton in 'London, 1802' ('Milton, thou shouldst be living at this Hour!') so later poets appealed to the guiding fascist presence in the British Isles, a 'tutelary Spirit of these regions',¹⁸ in Wordsworthian phrase. This comparison is made explicit in a sonnet published in the *Blackshirt* in November 1933, an imitation of Wordsworth's famous apostrophe:

'Milton, thou shouldst be living at this Hour!
So Wordsworth sang, for he had felt the need
For nobleness in thought and word and deed
When mean and grasping selfishness held power;
Still less now when we know the lavished dower
Of Science, which the Engineer has freed.
Must we allow dull Ignorance or Greed
Or Party Aims our ENGLAND to devour!
But those things who, blind to newer things,
Content with worn-out shams are pleased to wait;
And those who urge the Anarchy that brings
All level to the beggars at the gates,
We bid 'Look Up! The dawn upon its wings
Bears nobler aims to serve the Fascist State!'¹⁹

This imitation, signed 'J. V. R', employs Wordsworth to berate the usual suspects, the 'mean and grasping selfishness', and the left-wing 'Anarchy', which 'brings / All level to the beggars at the gates'. Most often, as here, fascist admiration for the poet's work takes little account of its formal qualities but simply amounts to enthusiasm for its sound patriotism and poetic nobility of mind. Wordsworth is seen as a provider of inspirational words, especially about what it meant to be British and to love one's

country, as is the case in another *Action* piece, ‘Fervent Devotion to Duty’ (1937) by B.U.F. stalwart E. D. Hart (who contributed to *Action*, *Blackshirt* and *Fascist Quarterly* alike). This sees the fascistic in the ‘Ode to Duty’: ‘A century ago’, it begins, ‘Wordsworth wrote lines which might well serve as the inspiration of fascists:

*Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty, if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe!*²⁰

(Hart’s italics.) ‘Duty is the fascist ideal’ -- something of a ‘dull virtue’ Hart admits, and ‘British fascism would have had a smoother course had it sought to attract men by a gay uniform, a popular name [and] glossing over the hard points of its doctrine’. ‘But’, he concludes resolutely, ‘it would have ceased to be Fascism. It has chosen the rough road because that is the path of Duty’.²¹ In something similar to the manner in which some German national socialists placed themselves in the line of Fichte and Hegel, on account of the nationalism of the former and the supposed totalitarianism of the latter, so Wordsworth served within the British Union of Fascists as an inspiring ancestral relation. What Jenks praised in Mosley - his ‘uncompromising championship of the British people’²² – is seen as an estimable Wordsworthian trait; and the poet who, according to Byron, ‘seasoned his pedlar poems with democracy’, who wrote with righteous scorn about what *The Prelude* calls ‘the traffickers in Negro blood’, and who composed a fire-breathingly radical ‘Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff’ (1793) is set ‘to serve the Fascist State!’

For Fascists like poetry too. The notion bears repetition, and perhaps we should not be surprised at it. (Sir Oswald Mosley had readings by ‘Goethe, Nietzsche, Paul Valéry and Swinburne’²³ at his funeral.) Art was frequently loaded with philosophical significance in fascist writing. What Mosley labels in *Tomorrow We*

Live 'the spirit and policy of British Union' is more than just his 'policy' on unemployment or immigration, it is also a matter of 'spirit'; and that spirit often seemed to have Romantic credentials. Jorian Jenks, the neo-romantic-blood-and-soil-ecologist-back-to-the-land English fascist and farmer was praised for 'contribut[ing] greatly to clarification of the British mind'²⁴ by Ezra Pound, in the first of the series of forthright far-right-wing essays the poet wrote for the fascist *Action*, 'Social Credit Asses' (November 1937). Jenks thought highly of 'Adolf Hitler, the son of Austrian peasants', describing him as a noble-minded figure who was 'romantic to the point of mysticism'.²⁵ Sometimes what Nigel Leask calls, the 'dark mythic forces of Fascism and totalitarianism'²⁶ are evident in British rightist print culture. More often, of course, such books and periodicals are primarily concerned with economic realities, as in their frequent meditations on free trade, capitalism, the National Government and so on. But they also reach for culture -- for fine art, opera, and poetry. Shakespeare is repeatedly invoked in fascist writings of the 1930s:²⁷ 'National Socialists of the 20th century turn towards the great Elizabethan poet for inspiration', as Guy Chesham put it in *Action* in 1937.²⁸ The Mosleyites, to use the words of Pound once again, knew 'the value of William Shakespeare as a SOCIAL COMPONENT'.²⁹ But the Romantics were not far behind in fascistic esteem.

That there is some relationship between Romanticism and fascism is an idea that has often been floated, perhaps most famously in Bertrand Russell's chapter on Byron in *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945). As Jonathan Gross writes, 'Russell found Byron troubling politically, more likely to be conducive to the fascist politics of the 1940s than corrective of them'.³⁰ Russell found in Byron the epitome of 'the aristocratic philosophy of rebellion' which 'inspired a long series of revolutionary movements from the Carbonari after the fall of Napoleon to Hitler's coup of 1933'.³¹

(this was also the tendency which Jenks admired in Oswald Mosley - 'an aristocrat proving his claim to aristocracy by personal leadership').³² 'Byron is not gentle, but violent',³³ writes Russell; 'nationalism, Satanism and hero worship, the legacy of Byron, became part of the complex soul of Germany'³⁴ during the Third Reich. The most notable German legatee of Byron was of course Nietzsche ('I must be closely related to Byron's *Manfred*'³⁵ declared the philosopher) whose doctrine of the *Übermensch*, as one Byronist puts it, 'for some has fascist overtones', while 'for others it constitutes Nietzsche's call for a healthy and salutary form of moral self-attainment'.³⁶ Julie V. Gottlieb has pointed out the Byronic stylings of Sir Oswald Mosley himself in her *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain's Fascist Movement, 1923-45* (2003),³⁷ where she demonstrates how 'the two men, notorious for their romance and restlessness, could be allied in the public imagination'.³⁸ Gottlieb quotes Bob Boothby saying, in the 1920s, that 'Mosley saw himself as Byron rather than Mussolini',³⁹ and the affiliation seemed widely understood. 'He is a Romantic', said Harold Nicolson of Mosley; 'That is a great failing'.⁴⁰ 'The more purple passages in Mosley's speeches', writes Gottlieb, 'testify of his debt to [the] Byronic tradition of sublimity':⁴¹ 'the Hellenic tradition, which is the soul of Europe', Mosley said in his post-war manifesto *The Alternative* (1947) 'live[s] for ever in the German genius of Goethe and Schiller ... and was reflected again in the revolt of Byron, Shelley and Swinburne'.⁴²

Wordsworth's place within fascist writing is less sensational than Byron's, but he plays no less significant a role in their attempts to trace a cultural lineage, one which testifies to British exceptionalism and virtue, a common manoeuvre in fascist journalism. [OK?] Selwyn Watson for instance, 'one of the BUF's resident musical experts'⁴³ as Roger Griffin puts it, writing in *Blackshirt* in 1934, saw the time of Queen

Elizabeth as a golden age of British culture, not only for Shakespeare's glories but for the music of Byrd, Dowland and Gibbons. 'In the Elizabethan era', he writes, 'the Golden Age of Britain - we were the supreme and acknowledged master of the art of music'.⁴⁴ 'We' were also pretty masterful in the age of Romanticism; in one of his subsequent *Action* articles, published three years later, Watson celebrates another age of gold, declaring that 'in the first half of the nineteenth century a new spirit was animating men', that of 'the Romantic movement'. Britain was certainly pulling its weight in this period; not only was this 'the time of Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Balzac, and George Sand', it was also 'the age of Keats, Shelley, Byron and Wordsworth'.⁴⁵ The latter epoch, according to another *Action* man, the author of 'William Wordsworth, National Socialist', was the very highest moment in English verse: 'Together with Southey and Coleridge, Wordsworth formed the Lake School and this brilliant trio hallmarked the high point of English poetry'.⁴⁶ Wordsworth, in this telling, is a key figure in the carefully constructed fascist poetic canon, which stretches from Shakespeare to the Romantics, a poet, indeed, who is himself metaphorically sixteenth-century-golden-age, 'breathing the pure simplicity and vision of the Elizabethan epoch'.⁴⁷ Wordsworth's sonnet 'England 1802' is quoted here as evidence that the Lake poet explicitly cast himself in the tradition both of Shakespeare and of British freedom: 'We must be free or die, who speak the tongue / That Shakespeare spake'.⁴⁸ Of course, Wordsworth did not have much to offer in the way of anti-semitism (which fascist commentators were ready to find in Shakespeare): fascist critics certainly did not discern the 'Judaic quality' that Lionel Trilling once identified in Wordsworth in a celebrated piece⁴⁹, and they draw a veil over Wordsworth's positively 'philosemitic poem, "A Jewish Family" (1835)'.⁵⁰

It was worth having poets on one's side in the 1930s.⁵¹ This tendency, indeed, reached new heights of tendentiousness in the St Ives by-election of 1937; in July of that year 'Archer', a contributor to *Action*, quoted Horace Thorogood's droll comment - a 'gem' - in the *Evening Standard*: 'At Penzance I heard [Liberal politician] Mr [Isaac] Foot in the space of 10 minutes quote Milton, Keats ... Wordsworth and Browning with such powerful effect that everyone seemed convinced that all these authorities were strongly against the Ottawa agreements'.⁵² Setting facetiousness aside, this is telling, testimony to a widespread poetic associationism in the British politics of the 1930s, a desire to align contemporary politics with Shelley's 'unacknowledged legislators of the world', to place a black shirt - or a cap of red liberty - upon the likes of William Wordsworth. In his essay 'William Wordsworth, National Socialist', Charles Dillon Artis praised William Wordsworth's music of humanity: 'his utterances impart a wisdom both human and sympathetic'.⁵³ Writing of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar', Artis declares that 'Wordsworth sees something fine in this old beggar, something worthwhile, and something noble in the gifts of food and clothes proffered him by humble, hard-working peasants who can ill afford it themselves'.⁵⁴ The *Lyrical Ballads* are here celebrated in the same terms as Wordsworthians have often valued them for, the commonality of Wordsworth and his concern for the common people. Artis sings the praises of the Lake Poets in general: 'their works are saturated with an intense and passionate love of the British countryside and all Britain stands for', but, for him, Wordsworth stands alone: 'Wordsworth of them all embraced in that love the people of his land - the kindly, honest, humble folk'.⁵⁵ In them, declares Artis, Wordsworth 'sees something of the real spirit of Britain'. Like Wordsworthians of our own day who repudiate the critical line which sees the poet's treatment of the poor and dispossessed as patronising and middle-class,

Artis defends Wordsworth's affection for the common people as 'a love unpolluted by ... patronising gestures'.⁵⁶

The fascist critics are deplorable, of course; but if their criticism is to be understood, rather than just deplored, it is necessary to recognise that *some* of their readings of Wordsworth are based on principles which are wholly conventional in many readings of Wordsworthian thought. They enrol Wordsworth on commonplace foundations, as in Artis's article. Wordsworth loved the common people and loved his country, says Artis, before moving up a gear: 'Nothing can more vividly portray Wordsworth's Socialism than "The Old Cumberland Beggar", an elegiac poem of an aged beggar who pathetically tramps the dusty lanes and byways of Cumberland'.⁵⁷ The socialism in question is not Orwell's nor that of Bernard Shaw; it is that of *national* socialism. From Wordsworthian particulars Artis moves into fascist universalising; 'Here is a man who loves his country and feels for it, in his own words "as a Lover or a Child." How out of place would he be now in this age of materialism and cosmopolitanism, when it is considered quite "the thing" to slight one's own country; when our Bloomsbury intellectuals look with dreamy eyes to that blood-stained and miserable land over whose skies like a dreadful blight, hangs the Soviet Star'.⁵⁸

What are we to make of Artis's specious account of Wordsworth's poem? Whatever socialism there is in 'The Old Cumberland Beggar' would seem much more plausibly assigned to the left rather than the right. The first time we encounter the old man in the poem, he is portrayed as clutching his 'bag/All white with flour, the dole of village dames'. Whether Wordsworth, who knew his Juvenal⁵⁹ is consciously echoing the 'panem et circensis' of Satire X here, it is clear that this is not Caesar's bread dole, or, indeed that of some village tyrant of the Mosleyite cast, but that of the common

people. The politics of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar' repudiate the influence of political leaders rather than celebrate them; the lessons learned here come from below rather than being imposed from above. Wordsworth, having introduced the old man, draws moral lessons from him; but the lessons are a long way from eugenicist, survival-of-the-fittest, and ultimately genocidal intolerance. Wordsworth attacks politicians with a 'broom ... ready in [their] hands / To rid the world of nuisances', the poor, the old, the vagrant:

deem not this Man useless. - Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swol'n, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth!⁶⁰

Wordsworth is a poet of credal statements and philosophical meditations, and 'The Old Cumberland Beggar' has several such moments, of which this is perhaps the most important, written in 'a vein of philosophical poetry as beautiful as ever the purest heart and holiest imagination suggested',⁶¹ as one of the poet's contemporaries put it:

Man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart. (ll. 140-6)

'Kindness', mutual philanthropy, and humanity in the face of misfortune and poverty: to state the obvious, these Wordsworthian values are a long way from the leader cults of British and European fascism. Neither do they assert social identity at the expense of the dehumanisation of others: the conception of community grows from the poor and the feminine ('village dames'), who are here 'the fathers and the dealers-out'.

Wordsworth is *compendious*. C.D. Artis and his British Union cohorts saw Wordsworth as fascist. But in that year of 1936, the Surrealist critic Hugh Sykes Davies was busy co-opting Wordsworth and the Romantic poets for his own political cause, ushering the poet into a rather different ideological habitat and reaching somewhat different conclusions: Wordsworth was ‘enthusiastic for the French Revolution’, and, like William Blake, ‘wore the red cap’.⁶² Wordsworth was an ambassador in chains for the fascists, but it was by no means the first time he was made hostage to fortune in the febrile politics of the inter-war years. ‘Wordsworth built up a mythology’, writes Sykes Davies in 1936, ‘which has been of the very greatest importance in English culture’,⁶³ and that influence, in the 1930s, spanned the political divide from the Marxist to the fascist. ‘Most serious-minded people are now Wordsworthians, either by direct inspiration or at second hand’, as Aldous Huxley remarked.

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NOTES

¹ George Steiner, *Language and Silence; Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New Haven and London, 1970), p. 9. It is a commonplace ‘that Nazis could enjoy listening to Beethoven in the midst of Auschwitz’: Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred* (Durham NC, 2010), p. 32..

² Letter from D. M. Evans, *Blackshirt*, 14 February 1939, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Oswald Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live* (London, 1938), p. 1.

⁷ *Action*, 8 April 1939, p. 13. *Action* was edited by John Beckett, like Mosley a former Labour MP.

⁸ Mary Kenny, *Germany Calling: A Personal History of William Joyce, Lord Haw-Haw* (Dublin, New Island, 2003), p. 57.

⁹ C. D. Artis, ‘William Wordsworth, National Socialist’, *Action*, 8 April 1939, p. 13.

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- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² A phrase taken from another of the October 1803 national sonnets, 'Lines on the Expected Invasion, 1803'.
- ¹³ Alexander McKee, 'The Fire Beneath the Surface', *Action*, 7 January 1939, p. 5.
- ¹⁴ Simon Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict* (Oxford, 2003), p. 118.
- ¹⁵ McKee, 'Fire Beneath the Surface', p. 5.
- ¹⁶ Jorian Jenks, *Spring Comes Again*, London, Black House (2012), p. 68.
- ¹⁷ Umberto Eco, 'Ur-Fascism', in *Five Moral Pieces* (London, 2014), p. 67.
- ¹⁸ William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, Fiona Stafford (ed.) (Oxford, 2013), p. 324.
- ¹⁹ *Blackshirt*, November 11-17 1933, p. 3.
- ²⁰ E. D. Hart, 'Fervent Devotion to Duty', *Action*, March 1937, p. 7.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Jenks, *Spring Comes Again*, p. 68.
- ²³ Trevor Grundy, *Memoir of a Fascist Childhood* (London, 1999), p. 4.
- ²⁴ Ezra Pound, 'Social Credit Asses', *Action*, 18 September 1937, p. 9.
- ²⁵ Jenks, *Spring Comes Again*, p. 68.
- ²⁶ Nigel Leask, *Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 60.
- ²⁷ For instance, he was praised in *Action* in 1937 for having written 'an anti-Semitic play': 'I am quite certain that had Shakespeare written that play today he would have made [Home Secretary] Sir John Simon's blood boil and would probably have been arrested for seditious libel' (6 February 1937, p. 4). In Guy Chesham's 'British Poet or Jew Lackey?' (*Action*, 23 October 1937) he is praised as the former, as 'our national poet' whose work is 'full of patriotic sentiments' (p. 10).
- ²⁸ Chesham, 'British Poet or Jew Lackey?', p. 10.
- ²⁹ Pound, 'Social Credit Asses', p. 9.
- ³⁰ Jonathan Gross, *Byron: The Erotic Liberal* (Lanham, MD, 2001), p. 191.
- ³¹ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London, 1996), p. 676.
- ³² Jenks, *Spring Comes Again*, p. 68.
- ³³ Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 680.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Quoted in Richard Lansdown, *The Cambridge Introduction to Byron* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 159.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Julie V. Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain's Fascist Movement, 1923-45* (London and New York, 2003), p. 223. I am grateful to Dr Gottlieb for advice on the Mosleyites of the 1930s.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 224.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 223.
- ⁴⁰ Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Far Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-1939* (London, 1980), p. 36.
- ⁴¹ Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*, p. 206.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 224. 'In the end', concludes Gottlieb optimistically, 'Byron's satirical vision would exonerate him from being identified as the direct ancestor of the fascist hero' (p. 206).

⁴³ Roger Griffin: “‘This Fortress Built Against Infection’”: The BUF Vision of Britain's Theatrical and Musical Renaissance’ in *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan (eds), (London, 2004), p. 53.

⁴⁴ *Blackshirt*, 21 December 1934; quoted in *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ *Action*, 9 Jan 1937, p. 8

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Lionel Trilling, ‘Wordsworth and the Rabbis’, in *The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism* (New York, 1978), p. 109. Trilling begins thus: ‘I am not, in any case, so much concerned to prove that Wordsworth is a Christian poet as to account for a certain quality in him which makes him unacceptable to the modern world ... that the quality in Wordsworth that now makes him unacceptable is a Judaic quality’ (*ibid.*).

⁵⁰ The phrase is Michael Scrivener’s, in *Jewish Representation in British Literature 1780-1840: After Shylock* (New York, 2011), p. 200). For Wordsworth and Jewish people, see Scrivener, pp. 77-8 and p. 200, and Judith Page’s *Imperfect Sympathies: Jews and Judaism in British Romantic Literature and Culture* (New York, 2004). Scrivener glosses the latter: ‘In Page’s persuasive account, some, like Charles Lamb, do not even try very hard – or at all – to overcome their prejudices against Jews, and those who try, like Coleridge and Wordsworth, never achieve sufficient critical distance’ (p. 200).

⁵¹ Despite such Parnassian allusions, Mr Foot lost by 210 votes to the National Liberal candidate.

⁵² *Action*, 3 July 1937, p. 3.

⁵³ Artis, ‘William Wordsworth, National Socialist’, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ In 1795, with Francis Wrangham, he planned a translation and adaptation of the eighth satire of Juvenal.

⁶⁰ Stafford (ed.), *Lyrical Ballads*, p. 266.

⁶¹ ‘S. N. D.’, ‘On Poetical Scepticism. No. III’, *Monthly Repository*, vol. 11, (February 1816), p. 280.

⁶² Hugh Sykes Davies, ‘Surrealism at this Time and Place’, in *Surrealism*, Herbert Read (ed.) (London, 1936), p. 165. Lord Byron ‘died helping the Greeks to freedom’, John Keats was a ‘loyal friend of [Leigh] Hunt [the] courageous revolutionary journalist’ and P. B. Shelley ‘was a republican’ (*ibid.*).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.