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FASCISTS

THE

Need For Fascism

IN

Great Britain.

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*(This Pamphlet is based on an address given by
Mrs. Nesta Webster at Kensington Town Hall
on Dec. 17th., 1926.)*

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THE NEED FOR FASCISM IN GREAT BRITAIN.

During the seven years that I have been engaged in propaganda work against Socialism and Bolshevism I have spoken or written for nearly every organisation existing for that purpose and so far I have always declined to join any, with one exception, because I felt I could be of more use as an independent unit trying to help each in turn. My great hope throughout has always been, however, that the various societies, all working for practically the same purpose, would agree, not to amalgamation which I believe would be fatal, but to some plan of co-operation by which overlapping would be avoided, as also the multiplication of appeals for subscriptions. Some central clearing house for information and distribution would reduce expenses and at the same time add to the efficiency of our propaganda. The *Socialists* have this, notably in the form of the Labour Research Department, to which all Socialist groups and individuals can apply, and which serves also to feed the Constitutional press with misrepresentations.

We have nothing on these lines.

The result of seven years' experience is therefore to convince me that it is no use working any longer for these societies in general; I see no hope of co-operation between them in the interests of the common cause. The two movements which seem to me to be the most alive and the most disinterested are the "Patriot," a paper devoted entirely to exposing the subversive movements, and the British Fascists, the only disciplined organisation formed to combat the "Reds," and I believe that if we could bring about some co-operation between them it would lead to great results. The Fascists want subscriptions as much, and even more, than other societies, yet subscriptions are not the first consideration with them. There are no figureheads amongst them, I believe that to a man and to a woman they are all enthusiasts. That is why, **AT THE END OF SEVEN YEARS I DEFINITELY TAKE UP MY STAND WITH THE BRITISH FASCISTS.**

The Appeal of Fascism.

The great thing of which British Fascism can boast is that it has got Youth on its side, it has succeeded as no other movement has done in capturing the imagination of the young men and young women of the country. Fascism alone has been able to rally youth in large numbers to its standard.

What is the appeal that Fascism makes to Youth? I think it is that it gives young people *something to do*. It provides a practical and exhilarating programme; it asks for service, self-sacrifice and courage. In its recognition of the possibility that

events may lead to a fight it adds an element of excitement. That is why its numbers are so much larger than those of other societies.

What then is Fascism?

In its spirit it is nothing new, nothing peculiar to Italy, but a perfectly normal and natural phenomenon. As most people know to-day, when the germs of disease invade the human body, certain healthy cells, the white cells in the blood known as the *phagocytes*, rise and attack the invaders. In this process they show no mercy. They do not say: "We must deal gently with these microbes; we must not irritate them, but try to win them over." No. They fight and slay them and by this process the body is preserved from destruction.

Fascists are the phagocytes of the State.

The Causes of Revolution.

Fascism is only a new name given to a very old thing. For if we consider the lessons of history we shall notice that when a country is invaded by the virus of the social revolution, now known as Bolshevism—also a very old thing under a new name, once it was known as Jacobinism—when once a country is thus invaded one of two things must happen. (1) If the population is virile, that is to say if the phagocytes are active!—resistance at once makes itself felt, as in England in 1793 when the British mob chased the British Jacobins over the housetops, or, if the Government is weak, resistance may take the form of organised counter-revolution, as in Italy and Spain to-day. (2) But if the population is more erroneous than to suppose that revolution is more likely to break out in an inflammable nation. Quite the contrary. *Apathy and fatalism* are the best grounds for it to work on. It was because in France and in Russia the peasants were fatalists, resigned to their lot and sheep-like, that a determined minority was able to establish its domination over them. It is true that in France a few attempts at resistance were made, notably in La Vendée where the peasants armed themselves and marched in defence of church and monarchy. The rising in La Vendée has been well described by a modern French historian as the only spontaneous and popular rising of the Revolution. Unfortunately by the time it was organised things had gone too far and the Terror suppressed all resistance. Then reaction momentarily manifested itself in the White Terror that followed on the fall of the Jacobins.

This is what must always happen. As surely as the day follows night a *Red Terror* is always followed by a *White Terror*. It is the inevitable sequel. Violence begets violence. This is what happened in France and again in Hungary, when the

" Move " or Awakening Magyars avenged in blood the bloody régime of Bela Kun. Once terrorism has been established reaction can only take the form of vengeance.

The Prevention of Revolution.

What, then, is the moral?

To organise in time and so avert both a Red Terror and White.

This is what Italy did—and this is why she has set a lesson to the world.

Italy under the weak guidance of Giolitti was trembling on the brink of Bolshevism. A determined minority directed from abroad was attempting to establish its domination over a proud and high-spirited people. We cannot doubt that if Mussolini had not arisen and Bolshevism had momentarily triumphed in Italy the reaction would have been terrible and seas of blood would have been shed on both sides. So Fascismo saved Italy both from the Red Terror and the White.

The genius of Mussolini was to know not only how to quell the spirit of revolution, but how to discipline the counter-revolution, to rally all the virile and patriotic elements under the banner of Fascismo—of patriotism ready to fight and die for Italy.

The Fascisti have been reproached for violence. Of course violence was at first inevitable. You cannot check the career of a mad dog down a village street without some degree of violence, and when peaceful citizens were molested and houses were being burnt down to the cry of " Viva Lenin ! " castor oil was after all a mild retort. Besides there were unruly elements among the Fascisti who could not at once be controlled. Before long, however, Fascismo was able to establish not only an orderly but a constructive and progressive system.

Counter Intimidation.

But although Fascism has put an end to acts of futile violence, nevertheless it has made itself feared. This was absolutely essential. The essence of Bolshevism is terrorism, and the only antidote to Terrorism is wholesome fear. Some system of counter-intimidation was absolutely necessary. It is still necessary. Just because Mussolini did not carry out a reign of Terror, because he allowed some of the disruptive elements to remain at work in the country;—the Communist paper " Unitá " continued publication under Fascism and the Communist leader Bombacci was left at large—just because of this, measures had to be maintained in order to prevent the incendiaries fanning up again the flames of revolution. And besides this we must remember that Bolshevism is still rampant throughout Europe, and Italy cannot afford yet to relax discipline. Yes, counter-intimidation has been organised in Italy. Would to God it were the same here !

It will be said: "We have no need of Fascism in Great Britain." England will not go the way of Italy. But is she not already going the way of Italy *before* Fascism, and the way of France, the way of Russia before their revolutions? The same apathy is apparent amongst the general public, the same weakness in the Government and the same determination on the part of a cunning and unscrupulous minority.

Our Socialist-Conservative Party.

Of course, if the Government were strong there would be no need of Fascism. After the last Election it seemed as if this might be so, as if at last we had a Government that could be relied on to slay the dragon of Bolshevism and Fascism could put up the shutters. But as the months went by these hopes faded. Instead of the huge Conservative majority we imagined we had secured we found that a section of this was not Conservative at all. This is particularly the case with the younger members in the House of Commons, who, instead of standing up for Conservative principles seem to devote all their energies to proving they are not "reactionaries." They live in dread of being thought "reactionary" and to avoid this make continual concessions to Socialism, so much so that Ramsay Macdonald was able to claim them as Socialists in embryo. On April 18, 1925, he said in a speech at Penzance:

"There is a large section of the Tory party, especially the young Tories, who are men of very great promise . . . the old reactionary machine Tories"—that is to say the Conservatives who have remained true to their principles! "have more trouble with the young Tories than they have even with us."

And Ramsay Macdonald went on to envisage the time when "the partition between us and them will be so thin that they might as well break it down and *come over to the Socialists' camp.*"

What are we to say of men who, returned to Parliament mainly on the anti-Socialist vote so betray the trust placed in them as to arouse such expectations? I am not aware that any official repudiation of Ramsay Macdonald's view was forthcoming. The fact is that the leaders of the Conservative Party seem far more concerned in winning the good opinion of the Opposition than in retaining that of their own supporters. They do not appear to mind being suspected of Socialist leanings—some, perhaps, less from lack of principle than from muddled thinking. *They simply do not know what Socialism is* and imagine it to be the same thing as social reform. The Prime Minister himself has admitted his ignorance on this point. In an interview published in the *Morning Post* on May 19, 1924, Mr. Baldwin is reported as saying:

"Every future government must be Socialistic in the sense in which our grandfathers used the word. *Personally I don't know what Socialism means.*" (My italics.)

If Mr. Baldwin does not know what Socialism means how can he fight it? And what does he mean by referring to "the sense in which our grandfathers used the word?" Our grandfathers used it in precisely the same sense as we use it now, as a system entailing the destruction of private property and enterprise and the control of all industry by the State. The great Lord Shaftesbury, who can surely be classed as a grandfather, spoke of Socialism as a plague deep-seated and rancorous, and saw it clearly as the great enemy of social reform.

In recognising the limitations of Mr. Baldwin nothing, however, would be more fatal than to play into the hands of his rival, Lord Birkenhead. This "first-class brain" has shown itself as amenable to belief in the integrity of the Socialist leaders as his simpler minded chief. Thus, after declaring in his Election speeches that the Socialist government had been a "nightmare government" and that "one foolish speech, one dishonest speech after another" had been made by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as Premier,¹ Lord Birkenhead proceeded, after the Election, to acknowledge "the debt of gratitude owed to those who, placed in power suddenly, became the trustees of the majestic fabric of the British Empire, and of whom he would say, plainly and frankly, that . . . they were not unworthy trustees of the British Empire. When he said this he had in mind men of the calibre of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Snowden and Mr. Thomas."²

Indeed Lord Birkenhead went on to assure his hearers that a return to the form of government which had proved "a nightmare" was inevitable in the future. They had had in Australia "to face the possibilities of Labour Governments. We shall have in my humble judgment," he said, "a similar experience here. . . . As sure as day follows the night, a change of Government will come. Our duty therefore as Conservatives, is to prepare ourselves for that change of government and postpone its coming as long as we can." Rousing words indeed for electors who had just put out all their strength to make a so-called Labour Government for ever impossible! If a British general had declared, the day after the victory of the Marne, that Belgium had endured a German invasion and that we must face "a similar experience" sooner or later, our duty as Englishmen being therefore to prepare for the time when the Germans would occupy these islands, he would certainly have been relieved of his command. But no such penalty attends the defeatist utterances of a politician, who, once in power, can commit his party to any policy he pleases. The Pétain attitude of "ils ne passeront pas!" is wholly

¹ "Evening Standard," Oct. 17, 1924. ² "Morning Post," March 5, 1925.

lacking to our present rulers, whose main preoccupation seems to be to keep on good terms with what they believe to be the coming power, or alternatively to retain their hold on the country by stealing the Socialists' thunder. Nothing could be more mistaken than to imagine that such a policy will win them votes. *If the country wants Socialism it will go for it to the Socialist Party; it will not accept it secondhand from the Conservatives.* The only way the Conservative Party can retain its hold on the country is to stand firm on the principles of Conservatism.

The Right to Criticise.

There are people who say we have no right to criticise the Government. This might be so if the British Government were an autocracy. The principle of "ours not to reason why, ours not to make reply" is all very well under the leadership of a trusted dictator; it is absurd in a democracy where we have a government elected by the people. If we, the thinking and educative elements in the electorate, are to say "our Party, or our leaders, right or wrong" and to follow them blindly wherever they may lead us how can we blame ignorant miners for following Cook blindly? We know that it is this mistaken loyalty which is destroying sane Trade Unionism and shall we commit the same error? We have been given brains and it is our duty as citizens of a free country to think for ourselves.

Face Facts at Once.

Let us face the facts of the situation. Everywhere the present Government by its weakness is losing its supporters. Everywhere people are saying: "We will never vote for the Conservatives again." The danger is that at the next General Election the Socialists may get in owing to the anti-Socialists abstaining from voting. This will be folly. To let the Socialists in out of disgust with the Conservative Party will be to play into the hands of those very elements in the Party who are the cause of its disintegration.

Consider then what may happen if at a future Election, owing to Conservatives abstaining from voting, a Socialist government is again returned to power. Either it will this time have a majority in the House and be able to impose Socialism on the country by constitutional means with the inevitable result of ruin and misery that has attended all previous Socialist experiments, or it will be in a minority as before and unable to pass Socialist legislation. What then if a resort is made to force and a General Strike is called in co-operation with the trade union leaders? None of the organisation which saved the country last May would be brought into being, for the Government would be the allies of the revolutionaries.

It is no good saying there is no danger of this. Mr. Ramsay

Macdonald has himself admitted the utility of the Parliamentary General Strike, that is, the General Strike for enforcing Socialist legislation. And during the last strike we saw how this would be managed. The T.U.C., as everyone will remember, demanded to be given the control of food supplies. The Government, by a miracle, saw the trap and refused to allow this. But a Socialist Government would agree. It could not refuse. Eight months before the General Strike the *Daily Herald*, official organ of the Labour Party, definitely stated that the "Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies are the proper people to see to the feeding of all working members of the community" (Sept. 25, 1925)—those whom the Socialists are pleased to regard as non-workers presumably to remain unfed!—and Ramsay Macdonald in a letter to the *Times* (October 5, 1925) intimated that it was the General Council of the Trade Union Congress which should be trusted "to secure the conduct of the essential public services when such are threatened with dislocation by industrial action." So the same men who called the strike in order to paralyse the life of the country were to have the whole provisioning of the nation placed under their control! By this method all resisters to the demands of the T.U.C., concerted with its Moscow allies, could have been starved into submission in a week! It is idle to say this could not happen, this is what the leaders of the Labour Party had planned and what they would do if they were in power. The army, navy and all the forces of law and order being under their control—the control of a legally constituted government—the situation could then only be saved by unconstitutional action, by a rising against the government, in a word—civil war.

Do not let us be deluded by the differences amongst the Socialists into believing that the so-called moderates would put up any opposition to the designs of the Communists. If, as Robert Williams once said, "Bolshevism is Socialism with the courage of its opinions," then conversely "Socialism is Bolshevism without the courage of its opinions," and is bound to give way to the bolder elements. That is why Communism is increasing. Mr. Baldwin himself recently recognised the danger it now presents when he was reported as saying to a Conservative deputation that "during the next two years this country would find itself waging an increasingly bitter war against the Communists which might be expected to culminate in 1928." (*Daily Mail*, Dec. 15, 1926) This is the prospect we have to face and for which we must prepare.

Militant Fascism—The Salvation of the British Empire.

It is not impossible then that Fascism may have to play in this country the same part that Fascismo played in Italy. If under a Socialist government England is reduced to ruin and

misery by Socialist legislation or to chaos by a General Strike the result will be civil war and patriots will have to organise themselves into a fighting force. England will not submit meekly as France and Russia submitted; we shall fight—and I believe we shall win. This is where Fascism will come in. If that social order on which all our prosperity and our very existence as a nation depends, is overthrown by a Socialist Government it may be that we shall see a momentary eclipse of parliamentary institutions and the installation of a dictatorship as in Italy.

It is said that England will not stand a dictatorship. But will she not hail a dictatorship of patriots that will free her from the dictatorship of a red minority? Have we not already had a taste of what the dictatorship of the other side would mean when we endured the humiliating experience of seeing food vans going about London labelled "By permission of the T.U.C."? And the Press! The great powerful press of Great Britain, closed down in a day by an organisation calling itself "Natsopa," headed by one Isaacs!

And if the General Strike was broken, has the tyranny of the trade unions ceased? Has it not continued throughout the coal strike, preventing men returning to work, threatening, victimising, intimidating?

The Policy of Intimidation.

Fear, has not that been the principal weapon here, as elsewhere? At the beginning of the French Revolution Mirabeau, the great demagogue, expressed in one sentence the psychology of terrorism, which, in reality, is just the same as the German policy of frightfulness in war. Mirabeau said to the people: "You have nothing to fear from the aristocrats, they do not burn, they do not pillage, they do not assassinate—what harm can they do?" And the moral is: "Stand in then with those who *do* burn, who *do* pillage and who *do* assassinate, and you will have nothing to fear!" It is this feeling that has driven countless waverers not only amongst working men but amongst the intelligentsia into the enemy's camp. They imagine that by throwing in their lot with the Socialists now they will save their skins if revolution comes. If they knew a little more of history they would realise the folly of this delusion. For in every revolution those who have helped to prepare it are the first to be swept away by the tide and no one can tell beforehand which faction will triumph once the existing order is overthrown.

Is it this same fear that has hitherto paralysed the Government? Have our politicians allowed themselves to be intimidated either by threats of open violence or by the fear of that occult power at work behind the scenes of world revolution? If this is not so why have they shown so much indulgence to the Communist

Party which is supposed only to number 12,000 and so little sympathy with the British Fascists who number approximately 200,000? Is it because the Fascists do not threaten violence, and there is at present no counter-intimidation to Communist terrorism?

Let us realise that we are at war. No army can march to victory unless some penalty attaches to incompetence, still more to desertion. The armies of the French Revolution owed their efficiency less to revolutionary ardour than to the fact that they had the perambulating guillotine behind them, and the general who surrendered got it, very literally, in the neck.

There is no guillotine behind the Conservative Party! No penalty attaches to desertion or the betrayal of principles. Why should not Fascism, whilst remaining constitutional and law-abiding supply this element of wholesome fear? Why should we not make ourselves a force to be reckoned with? Already Fascism has put fear into the hearts of the enemy. At the 7th Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain in June 1925 one of the delegates observed: "*I believe that the Fascists in this country are quite capable of doing the same here as they have done in Italy and other parts of Europe*" and the Fascist Women's Units were held up as an example of efficiency to Communists. No other anti-Socialist organisation was mentioned in the discussion. It is the name of Fascist that inspires respect!

Let Fascists then stick to their name! That name stands for a policy that cannot be expressed by any other word. Patriots, loyalists, all sorts of other names have been tried but they have never brought the following that has rallied to the name of Fascist. Patriotism and loyalty may be expressed in various ways such as fighting for one's country against an alien foe. Fascism stands for a form of patriotism designed to meet a particular emergency—disintegration from within. In one word it comprises a whole programme—organised and disciplined counter revolution by means of active and if necessary militant patriotism and counter intimidation as a preparation for constructive and progressive social reforms.

There need be no question of imitating Italy. Imitation, as Emerson said, is suicide—as much nationally as individually. British Fascism will not model itself slavishly on the Italian pattern and follow the example of the Communists by taking its instructions from abroad, it must be an essentially national movement, suited to the needs and character of our race.

The Ideal of British Fascism.

This being so British Fascism has very definite tasks to perform. It must keep up the spirit of patriotism and combat everywhere the attempts to undermine our national traditions.

Already by means of the Fascist Children's Clubs it is providing an antidote to the antipatriotic and anti-religious teaching of the Red Sunday Schools. It can co-operate with the *Patriot* in the work of enlightening the public. If we could only raise the money for a central bureau of information for arming propagandists with really scientific knowledge of Socialism I believe we could sweep the country.

Then Fascism has already ensured free speech. Only six years ago, in October, 1921, a meeting of the British Empire Union with Sir Ernest Wild in the Chair was broken up by the Communists, the Union Jack was torn to pieces and Lord Derby was driven from the hall. Fascism has changed all that. It is to the wholesome fear inspired by the British Fascists that we now owe the liberty to hold patriotic meetings in peace.

As to the future, I would urge that Fascists should refrain from provocative acts but should train themselves in discipline and in patience for the time when they may be called upon to fight. At the next General Election let us concentrate on ensuring a hearing for those parliamentary candidates who show courage and stand by us now. Let no politicians think that they can disparage the Fascists in time of peace and that when the fight begins Fascists will rush to their defence. Let them further realise that if ever this country is thrown into the chaos of revolution through their cowardice or treachery they shall answer for it to the outraged patriots on whom the task of restoring order will devolve.

If only all those disgruntled elements throughout the country who now content themselves with grumbling at the weakness of the government would rally to the standard of Fascism and do some practical work instead of talking I believe that British Fascism would become in a short time a formidable body, a power to be reckoned with, a power that no Government could afford to ignore.

It is often said: "Where shall we find our Mussolini?" Here again it seems to me a mistake to imagine that British Fascism must necessarily develop along exactly the same lines as Fascismo. We have always had our own way of doing things and we shall evolve our own form of Fascism. Of course, if Heaven sends us the man we need, as Italy was sent the man she needed, we shall hail him with thanksgiving, but I think the one leader, the great popular hero, is less essential to us than to Italians. It may be then that instead of a one-man dictatorship we shall have the leadership of a group of patriots. There was no Mussolini in the General Strike, but there was organisation and leadership, moreover the same spirit prevailed throughout the country and won the day. What was that spirit? The British

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Spirit! Above all the spirit of British Youth! And that spirit is unconquerable!

NESTA H. WEBSTER,
MEMBER OF G.H.Q. COUNCIL,
BRITISH FASCISTS.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Contributions to the Special Fund for Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda are urgently needed. No amount too small or too large.

All information from:—

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