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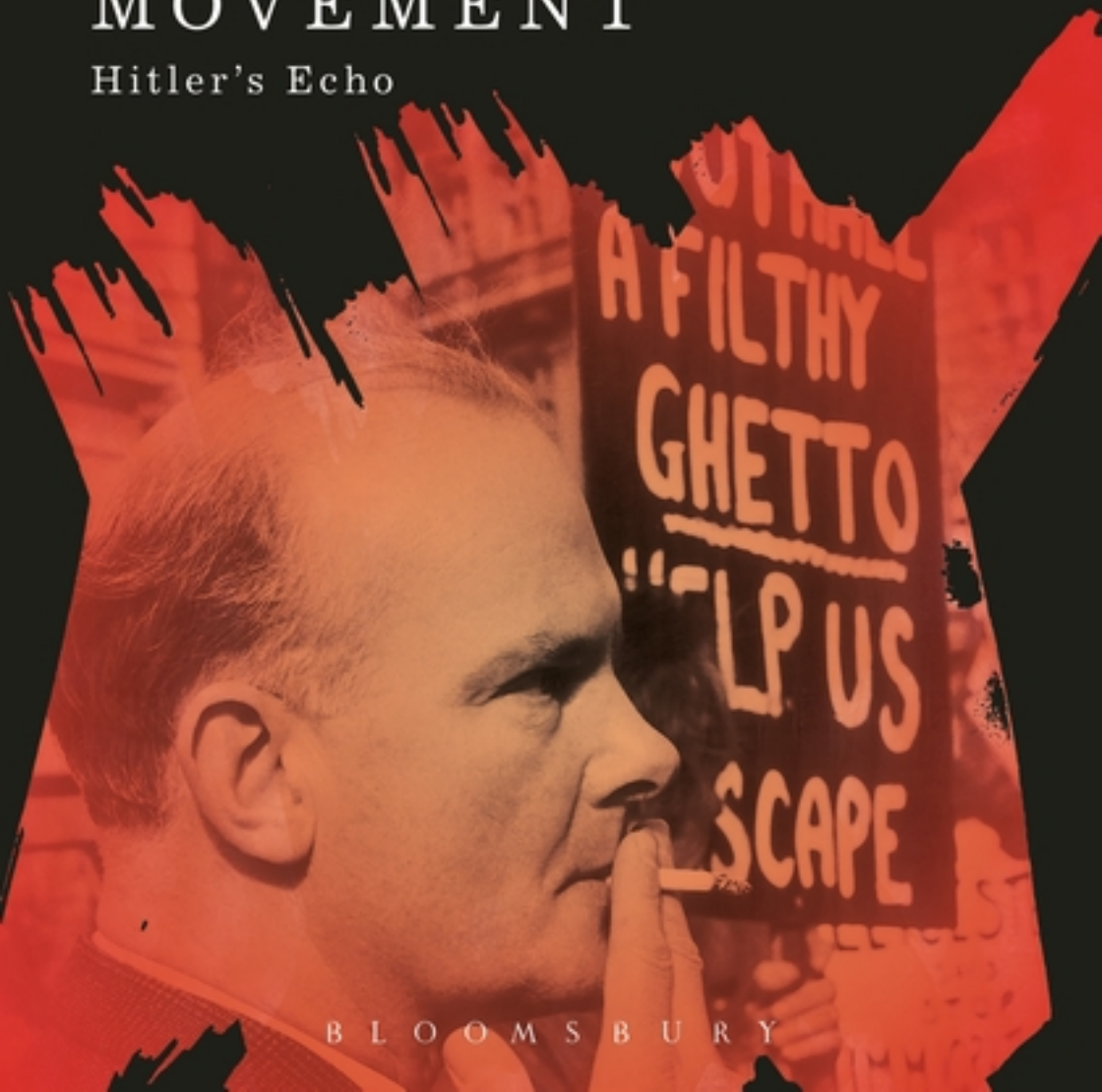
PAUL JACKSON

COLIN JORDAN AND BRITAIN'S NEO-NAZI MOVEMENT

Hitler's Echo



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Contents

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Introduction

This is a book about the political life of Colin Jordan, one of Britain's most vociferous neo-Nazi activists. It is a study of him that tries to understand wider cultures of neo-Nazism as well, and has been written in order to help historians, academics in related disciplines and others better comprehend the complex phenomenon Jordan epitomized. British neo-Nazism has been, and remains, a quite marginalized political milieu, and, apart from some more journalistic accounts, is one that is usually ignored, especially by historians. As such, despite some excellent studies, neo-Nazism remains rather poorly documented and scrutinized. Outside academia, journalistic accounts can often be steeped in a language that either seeks to exaggerate the significance of neo-Nazis, or one that regards the milieu as worthy merely of ridicule. Neither is helpful for a serious exploration of this marginalized movement. In contrast, historians in particular, with their expertise in archival analysis, have a crucial role to play in creating new interpretations of this culture's recent past, establishing a more accurate, considered and balanced perspective. As this introduction will stress, detailed, archival histories of neo-Nazism, and wider cultures of fascism and extreme right politics after the watershed of 1945, are much needed too, not least for their role in fostering a deeper understanding the contemporary impact of such political extremism. With this in mind, this study of Colin Jordan has been written as part of a growing effort by some historians to overturn neglect in the study of the history of fascism after the Second World War ended.

Moreover, despite focusing on the life of a single figure, this study has not been written as a conventional biography. The approach to Jordan developed here uses him as a window into a wider, extremist world. Though the book is based on creating a very detailed, biographical profile that scrutinizes in detail Jordan's activism from the end of the Second World War to his death in 2009, it is not intended to be a full-fledged biography of him. It only takes a secondary interest in the details of his childhood, or his personal relationships, for example. These aspects of the 'Colin Jordan story' have a significance at times, but they are not the main topic of this analysis. The aim of the study is to explore the political life of Jordan. In so doing, it will study him as a highly motivated, resourceful and for some inspirational revolutionary ideologue, as well as a man who developed a series of complex relationships with a wider, marginalized neo-Nazi movement in Britain and internationally too. To achieve this, the analysis in this book attempts to combine a detailed, empirical scrutiny of his political life with a conceptual framework that draws on current debates within fascism studies regarding

approaches to conceptualizing fascism. By so doing, it offers a new reading of Jordan's life that argues that, though he was a quite unique and singular figure, in many ways he also was a typical, lifelong neo-Nazi activist. It also suggests that the theoretical model set out here offers an approach that historians of many other aspects of extreme right politics, focused on other national case studies or time periods, or other elements of 'fascism studies', will also find of some value.

Why study Colin Jordan?

Probably the most obvious criticism aimed at historians, as opposed to those from other academic disciplines, who take an interest in forms of fascism that have emerged since 1945 is that it represents the study of a phenomenon that has been highly marginal, and so has been of limited political and cultural significance, especially when compared to fascism in the interwar period. Neo-Nazi activists have never really posed any threat to the political mainstream, especially in Britain, so why bother studying them? There are those who will never be dissuaded from this dismissive viewpoint, but it is a nevertheless a problematic position to take. In recent times, the impact of what can be more loosely termed the far right, from populist parties to extreme right networks to neo-fascist and neo-Nazi terrorists, is an issue that has an impact across Europe, and in America too. At its most extreme, figures within this milieu often engage with elements of the Nazi heritage, and play in complex ways with the fascist past. Names of individuals and groups who have committed murders, inspired by contemporary forms of fascism and neo-Nazism, include Anders Breivik, Wade Michael Page, the National Socialist Underground and in Britain, most recently, Pavlo Lapshyn, a Ukrainian student influenced by elements of neo-Nazi culture emanating from America. At the time of writing this book, the murder of Jo Cox MP seems to have had an extreme right connection while Britain also hosts a number of quite open neo-Nazi organizations, such as National Action,[1] which demonstrates there is ongoing level of vitality in what also remains a highly marginal neo-Nazi political fringe.

Experts in other academic disciplines, from criminology, to ethnography,[2] to terrorism studies, are already taking interest in such developments, and recognize these are obviously important phenomena to scrutinize. Academia as a whole ought to be able to explain to others concerned by the impact of such phenomena what neo-Nazism, fascism and the extreme right are, and this includes being able to convey accurately interpretations of their recent past too. Yet currently, historians have not engaged with this field as fully as they could. The answer to the 'why study this' question for historians is simply that this contemporary milieu cannot be properly understood unless historians make more effort to develop a satisfactory understanding of its historical roots, and underlying dynamics, and generate a much better understanding of the many marginalized groups as they have changed over time since the end of the Second World War. Historians have a crucial skill set capable of asking research questions based on assessing a wide range of archival source material, and are well placed to develop a rich understanding of the recent past, in an authoritative, empirical manner. Without setting out this historical context, it becomes far more difficult for analysts of contemporary developments to recognize longer-term patterns, and see the

many links between past and present-day activity. One leading historian bucking this trend of a neglect of post-1945 forms of fascism, Andrea Mammone, has explained this need succinctly. He has reflected on the problems raised by the relative lack of interest in the extreme right among historians after 1945, identifying that it has the twin effect of 'bypassing . . . the (uncomfortable) burden of the (fascist) past', and inadvertently allowing 'different perceptions of such parties which thereby seem less dangerous in people's eyes'.[3] This is an important statement to consider.

Nevertheless, although still a limited pursuit among historians, assessing post-1945 forms of fascism is now an expanding field for enquiry too. This includes growing appreciation of the British case, in which this study seeks to make a particularly significant contribution. This new appreciation of a neo-Nazi milieu in Britain has built on a wide-ranging analysis of fascism in the interwar period by historians. Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in particular has been much studied, not merely politically but also as a cultural phenomenon,[4] as have other elements of the interwar history of fascism in Britain. For example, Mathew Worley has written a major study on Mosley's New Party;[5] while Julie Gottleib has explored the complex relationships between politicized women and fascism;[6] and Thomas Linehan has written a definitive general overview, concerned with the culture as well as the politics of the milieu.[7] Spanning the interwar and post-war periods, Dan Stone has also explored what he calls the 'Extremes of Englishness', intellectual sympathies for fascist themes found in Britain from the Edwardian era into the post-1945 context.[8] Nevertheless, the analysis of developments after 1945 remains a much more patchy one. This is despite the fact that, since 1945, British forms of fascism have evolved into a complex, though for the most part highly marginal, movement. There have been periods where this Nazi-influenced milieu has been more impactful too. Especially in the 1970s, through the efforts of the National Front, figures such as John Tyndall were able to cultivate a more significant role in British political life; and again in the 2000s, a more successfully masked variant of neo-Nazism gained greater prominence as a result of the political breakthroughs of Nick Griffin's British National Party.[9] Indeed, in the 2000s, the British National Party became, electorally speaking, the most successful fascist party Britain has ever seen. It is possible, then, for organizations produced by Britain's neo-Nazi and wider fascist milieu to be able to develop an impact on mainstream British politics and society. Though its impact should not be exaggerated, such potential to grow again suggests there is a history worth exploring here.

To help build this analysis of the recent past, Jordan's narrative as explored by this book is presented as just one piece in a much larger history that is still in need of being written. Despite a growing interest in post-1945 forms of fascism among historians ranging from the classic account of fascism in Britain by Richard Thurlow[10] to the work of Nigel Copsey,[11] Martin Durham,[12] Steven Woodbridge,[13] Janet Dack,[14] Graham Macklin and John Richardson,[15] there remains many lacuna in the study of British fascism after the Second World War, especially its more extreme, neo-Nazi variations. As Copsey and Richardson note in a recently edited volume, dedicated to understanding this milieu after 1945, 'the cultural landscapes of post-war British fascism have yet to be examined in any detail'.[16] Their volume was a necessary corrective, but the cultural, as well as the political, elements of what is actually very complex culture need further consideration too. Upcoming studies include another edited collection, by Copsey

and Worley,[17] and a new study of leaders by Macklin;[18] both books will offer new perspectives, as does a new volume on Britons Publishing Society by Nick Toczec,[19] which came out at the time of completing this manuscript. The latter includes a chapter on Jordan, which identifies the subject of this book as a man of particular influence within Britain's wider milieu of conspiratorial anti-Semitism as a whole. Finally, the nature of British neo-Nazism has even recently been explored in fiction, such as Jo Bloom's 2014 novel *Ridley Road*.[20]

In order to understand the ideological extremes found in such neo-Nazi cultures, then, it soon becomes clear for those who have engaged with the topic that Colin Jordan was a central figure, from the 1940s to the 2000s. Though not a member of the more impactful groups such as the National Front or the British National Party, he chose a different pathway. He was a figure who claimed he never sacrificed ideological purity for short-term political gain, and as a result created a style of activism that, for the most part, rejected even trying to engage with the masses. He was either a prominent member of, or led, a number of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic groups too. These included the British People's Party in the later 1940s, the League of Empire Loyalists and the White Defence League in the 1950s, the 1960s variant of the British National Party, the National Socialist Movement of the 1960s and then also the British Movement at the end of the 1960s until 1975. Then, from the late 1970s to the 2000s, he published a long-running neo-Nazi magazine called *Gothic Ripples*. In these later years, he also contributed to a variety of other neo-Nazi media, including authoring a pair of novellas inspired by neo-Nazi politics in the 1990s and 2000s. Through this lifetime of activity, Jordan often engaged with the wider movement, both in Britain and internationally, sometimes supportively and other times critically. Focusing on Jordan's 'career' as an activist offers a unique perspective on the wider neo-Nazi movement in Britain from the 1940s to the 2000s.

Of course, there are problems that come with focusing on a leader such as Jordan too. For example, by definition, leaders are an atypical type of politicized activist. Most drawn to neo-Nazism are not leaders, and do not seek to inspire and direct others in the same way as Jordan did throughout his life. Inevitably, a focus on a leader figure such as Jordan offers only a limited set of conclusions on issues such as motivation or degree of ideological sophistication, especially when compared to explorations that include the many more casual supporters of neo-Nazi groups. Yet, as should be clear from this introduction, one of the arguments of the book is to stress the need for further enquiry by other approaches too. With such limitations in mind, the analysis developed here acknowledges that a focus on Jordan offers a significant, yet still incomplete, perspective on British neo-Nazism. It certainly makes no claim that scrutiny of Jordan allows for a comprehensive, general history of the phenomenon, which remains to be written.

Chapter structure and Colin Jordan's background

In creating a new analysis of Jordan, the chapters that follow attempt to assess his activism in a fair and balanced way. This is actually quite difficult, especially when researching a man as clearly objectionable to most people as Jordan. Moreover, having

written on him elsewhere, it is notable that some of Jordan's contemporary supporters already regard this book's author as an 'enemy', deemed to be working against their own aims and objectives.[21] Despite this, the approach drawn on here does not want to simplistically demonize Jordan, which many observers would probably find quite easy, especially given the levels of visceral hatred, and many quite outrageous statements, that he expressed towards others throughout his life. As will become clear to readers unfamiliar with him from Chapter 2 onwards, Jordan set out his politics using a language steeped in extreme, hateful rhetoric from the 1940s, and continued to do so in an uncompromising manner until his death. This makes studying him in a 'balanced' manner quite problematic, as it is impossible not to be affected in some way by such potent material. Despite this, in order to develop a historical account it is important to move beyond simply seeing these surface details, and rather make efforts to understand how and why these messages were seen as justified.

To help achieve sustained engagement with such subject matter, the study is structured around a multifaceted, ideal typical model for studying neo-Nazism. The latter ideological category is a variant of a wider phenomenon, fascism, and many recent scholars of fascism have been keen to examine the ways fascist activists have been motivated by what they themselves perceive as a 'positive' vision for an alternate type of society. Such debates, explored in Chapter 1, suggest that utopian ideals of 'purifying' society function as an ultimate goal for fascists, and all other activity is developed as a way of achieving this aim. The means to realizing this vision are political projects that somehow will achieve this sought-after purification of society. In other words, fascists like Jordan are probably speaking quite truthfully when they say they are not ultimately motivated by hate, but rather by love for what their extreme ideology considers their 'own' kind. Furthermore, it is this very sense of love of sameness, and rejection of a degree of difference that is inherent to modernity, which allows such figures to see as justified their myriad expressions of hatred, and even violence, directed towards those who are deemed 'other' by their worldviews.

To help structure later commentary and analysis of Jordan's ideals, Chapter 1 sets out an ideal-type definition of neo-Nazism. This aims to create a paradigm that will aid the process of making sense of the wide variety of ideologically charged source material that the later chapters will explore. This ideal typical model sets out why neo-Nazism is a variant of fascism, and explains why it ought to be understood as a revolutionary ideology grounded in a mythology that opposes liberalism and pluralism, and instead promotes a countervailing mythology steeped in a vision of establishing an 'alternate modernity' shorn of any ambivalence. Later chapters will demonstrate that Jordan's ideas were articulations of these more general fascist themes, while his reference points were often derived from an idealization of the Nazi period in particular. As such, it seems quite unproblematic to identify Jordan at the outset as a neo-Nazi, though these ideas did take time to crystallize in his activism. The purpose of this ideal type for neo-Nazism is not just to identify him as neo-Nazi, but to present later discussion with a set of conceptual terms, again drawn from the wider academic literature on fascism studies, that will help draw out the political, cultural and even ontological dynamics that can be found in such neo-Nazi worldviews. Without wanting to burden subsequent chapters too heavily with jargon or 'theory', this model will be used to

inform the overall discussion, especially regarding issues of selecting and interpreting the material produced by Jordan that is scrutinized.

Moreover, as this is a book primarily focused on Jordan's political activism, Chapter 2 does not begin with a detailed depiction of his life before he became politically active. The focus of this book is on Jordan's political activity after the end of the Second World War, not his personal life or his youth. There is scant, detailed evidence for this period of his life, although one source here is Stephen Frost's sympathetic biography, which has set out a narrative of Jordan's early years in some detail. So, for readers unfamiliar with Jordan, it is probably helpful at this stage to summarize just a few details drawn from this source, which was derived in part from Jordan's own unpublished draft of an autobiography.

One main point that emerges from Frost's account of Jordan's early life is that his general interest in politics certainly appears to have started before war broke out in 1939, when he was aged just 16. However, his active engagement with politics was not really put into practice until after the conflict ended. Regarding his early years, Frost's account reveals that Jordan was an only child. His father, Percy Jordan, was a lecturer and appears to have been a caring parent too. Interestingly, Jordan later dedicated his first book, *Fraudulent Conversion*, to his father. He was also devoted to his mother, Bertha Jordan, who was a teacher. She appears to have remained supportive of her son into her old age, and he cared for her as she became frail in later life. Within this unremarkable, seemingly quite stable family situation, he was born in Smethwick and grew up in Leek Wootton, in Warwickshire. He could also later refer this period of his life in terms of what he believed was a lost idyll too. For example, his unpublished memoirs recalled: 'In the village of my boyhood all the children were fair, there were old Maypole festivities, old ways of speech, old shire horses, patriotic pride, upstanding, Britain's sense of national identity; which today is being undermined.' Of course, this is a much later recollection of his childhood, probably written in the 2000s.[22] The levels of accuracy found in such romanticized evocations of childhood are likely to be some sort of exaggeration, but nevertheless idealized memories of Jordan's early days were important to his politics. After the Second World War, he was often keen to evoke the idea that a halcyon era, essentially before war with Germany, had been destroyed by the conflict. This was also a war he claimed had been fought for Jewish interests.

Before the war broke out, Jordan studied at the respected Warwick School, where he was noted for being ill-disciplined at times. Despite his mixed reputation among the staff, he gained a deeper respect for his history teacher, Mr Bishop, after he met him in Germany, in a chance encounter in 1937. Interestingly, Jordan was visiting the country with his own family, and he appeared to have a positive experience of the Nazi regime at this time. He would later be able to recall this journey to the 'promised land' too, in a highly idealized manner. Around 1937, Jordan also encountered British fascism for the first time. He recalled that one of his fellow schoolboys brought a copy of Oswald Mosley's publication *Action* to school, though it was soon confiscated. He also later remembered first encountering the name Arnold Leese, the leader of Britain's Nazi-supporting organization the Imperial Fascist League, at some point during the first year of the Second World War itself. Jordan even claimed he tried to make contact

with Leese at this time, but had failed. Nevertheless, he remembered the name and was more successful at making this connection after the war.

It appears that Jordan and his parents were quite torn by the outbreak of war, in 1939, too. On the one hand they were patriotic, yet on the other they were deeply apprehensive about another war with Germany. Interestingly, Jordan did enter into military service in 1942, after he turned 18, again suggesting that his sympathies for the Nazi regime only really developed later on. By this point, he had also secured a scholarship at Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge, which he would take up after the war. Before the outbreak of the conflict, he had joined the Army Cadet Corp at Warwick School, in 1938. By 1942, he was well considered by his superiors, and a report from July 1942 noted that he had become an 'efficient Cadet Officer and has put a great deal of energy and interest into his work for the Corps'. After exiting the Officer Training Unit with such a positive report, he initially tried to become a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm, though he failed the required exams for entry. Reading between the lines in Frost's detailed yet rosy account of Jordan's wartime life, he probably spent too much time revelling with other young recruits, and not enough time preparing for this test. Thereafter, Jordan had an unremarkable military career in the Royal Army Educational Corps, though at times he was noted for becoming vocal in criticizing the conflict. Nevertheless, it was not until after the war ended that he really started to question the purpose of the conflict.

Picking up the narrative of Jordan's life in detail at the end of the Second World War, Chapter 2 begins with an examination of his early political messages, especially while he was at Cambridge University. At this time, he became an increasingly important figure within the British People's Party, an anti-Semitic organization founded in 1939 by the Duke of Bedford and the Nazi-sympathizing activist John Beckett, a man who had previously founded a tiny splinter group that broke away from the British Union of Fascists, called the National Socialist League, with William Joyce. This chapter also explores how Arnold Leese, who himself sought to promote Nazi ideas to a new generation of activists after the Second World War, influenced Jordan. Under the guidance of Leese, by the 1950s Jordan's activism had come to include writing for a shrill, anti-Semitic bulletin called *Free Britain*, where he developed many articles manifesting conspiracy theory themes, as well as a rhetoric highly critical of immigration. This early period in his development provided Jordan with an ideological foundation, steeped in anti-Semitism, on which his later activism would then build in a variety of ways.

Having examined his development of an outlook that was clearly compatible with rekindled Nazi themes, Chapter 3 then focuses on Jordan from 1956 to 1962. This was a crucial time for him. He was active for a year in A. K. Chesterton's anti-Semitic League of Empire Loyalists, and here he learned how to carry out provocative stunts to generate media attention. After this, he developed a potent and impactful organization, the White Defence League. He used this group to help stir up tensions in places such as Notting Hill, and again generate publicity for himself. He even capitalized on the murder of a young black man, Kelso Cochrane, in 1959. Then in 1960, he merged his White Defence League with another tiny organization, to form the British National Party. The chapter explores a wide variety of material Jordan developed in this period,

from his first book, *Fraudulent Conversion*, where he described his anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in greater depth, linking Jewish people with Communism in particular, to material developed by the White Defence League, such as the notorious newspaper *Black and White News*, to writings for the British National Party magazine *Combat*, which expressed in clear terms the Nazi-inspired future society he idealized. By this time, he openly identified with National Socialist ideas. He had developed his own paramilitary elite unit, Spearhead, and chose to describe his activism as a type of 'racial nationalism'. This extreme approach caused tensions within the British National Party, and so in 1962 it split.

Following on from this separation, Chapter 4 examines Jordan's time as the leader of the most unabashed neo-Nazi organization he ever developed, the National Socialist Movement. It explores how this group developed a high profile in the media, for example by holding a provocative rally in Trafalgar Square in July 1962, where Jordan delivered a speech called 'Hitler was Right'. A month later Jordan ran a neo-Nazi summer camp that again received much press attention, especially as the photogenic leader of the American Nazi Party, George Lincoln Rockwell, attended despite having entered the country illegally. In the autumn, he found himself in prison for the first time, for his role in running a paramilitary unit, Spearhead. As well as exploring this sensationalism, the chapter looks at the longer history of the National Socialist Movement too, including Jordan's marriage to Françoise Dior in 1963, a further split in the organization that occurred in 1964 and how Jordan became associated with a series of arson attacks on synagogues by the late 1960s. Finally, it assesses the cultural dynamics of the National Socialist Movement. The group produced an array of literature steeped in both the 'positive' vision of a future Nazi state and the extreme messages of hate towards anyone who was not white. Then in 1967, Jordan was jailed again, for a pamphlet called *The Coloured Invasion*. This document both epitomized the extreme material the National Socialist Movement developed and demonstrated that he could not always get away with disseminating such hate-filled propaganda. He had also been active in fostering a new, transnational organization that attempted to join together neo-Nazis across the globe, the World Union of National Socialists, and so this chapter finishes by exploring his relationship to this organization as well.

After leaving prison in 1968, Jordan created his last political organization, the British Movement, the focus of Chapter 5. This was conceived as a vehicle allowing him to contest elections, a departure from the strategy of the National Socialist Movement. The British Movement focused much of its campaigning on the Midlands, a strategy Jordan claimed he derived from the Nazis' own approach of focusing on Munich in its early days. Moreover, this period saw Jordan try to cultivate a, relatively speaking, more moderate political profile. This was still very clearly racist though, and included advocating voluntary, and even forced, repatriation of people who came to Britain after 1945. However, Jordan's small-scale party struggled to develop an identity in an increasingly crowded marketplace for such anti-immigrant politics. While Enoch Powell had added an element of legitimacy to Jordan's own efforts, the larger National Front took away much of the potential political space for the British Movement, and it became increasingly antagonistic towards Jordan's organization too. This chapter will explore Jordan's efforts to present himself to the electorate in the early 1970s, as

well as identifying the growing fissures within the British Movement. Finally, Jordan took an increasingly 'hands-off' approach to the British Movement by 1975, especially following his conviction for stealing women's underwear from a branch of Tesco. By the later 1970s, Jordan's influence in the British Movement was replaced by a rising figure, Michael McLaughlin, who then took the group in a much more clearly anti-Semitic and viscerally aggressive direction.

After leaving the British Movement, by the end of the 1970s Jordan developed a new role for himself as an elder statement, and ideologue, for neo-Nazism, the focus of Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 explores how Jordan launched a new journal as a tool to promote his ideas, *Gothic Ripples*, and used this to both comment on ongoing development within British neo-Nazi and extreme right circles and foster a sense of international solidarity. His basic message by this time was that party politics would only lead to failure, and so neo-Nazi revolutionaries needed to develop what he described as a Vanguard, in order to enact a political revolution without the consent of the masses. This was a revolutionary ideal that increasingly implied violence too, though Jordan was, to a degree, guarded about simply endorsing such a violent approach in his own words. It also called for the creation of a new faith for the elite, part of an essay series called 'The Way Ahead'. Jordan started to explore new techniques to achieve an impact in his later years, especially setting out his political ideas in a fictional form. Most notably, in this period he published the book *Merrie England 2000*, written as a satirical warning of things to come in the near future if the movement failed.

Chapter 7 explores the last years of Jordan's life, as well as the legacy he has left behind. This period saw the rise of New Labour, which Jordan again identified in the pages of *Gothic Ripples* as being controlled by Jewish interests. Meanwhile, the 2000s was also notable for the way the British National Party achieved a level of electoral success not even attained by the National Front in the 1970s. Unimpressed, Jordan delivered some stinging criticisms of the party as one selling out its revolutionary ideals, and was particularly dismissive of its leader by this time, Nick Griffin. He also engaged with current affairs issues, such as the 2003 Iraq War, viewing it as a conflict fought for Israeli interests. Jordan was also prosecuted in this period, following a series of police raids. However, in the end he was not convicted for publishing extremist material, on the grounds of his poor health by this time. He also published another fictional book, *The Uprising*, which told the story of an armed uprising in contemporary Britain carried out by an elite force and against the will of the masses, who were styled as being manipulated by a Jewish conspiracy. After overthrowing the Jewish-controlled regime, Jordan fantasized, the British public would become thankful towards the revolutionaries for setting them free. Essentially, this novella put into fictionalized form the ideals that had defined his politics since the 1970s. Finally, by the time of his death, in 2009, Jordan had also started to cultivate a new generation of activists within marginalized neo-Nazi milieus to promote his ideas. Reflecting on this development, the chapter ends with a discussion on how Jordan is being considered afresh by an emergent generation of neo-Nazi sympathizers.

The book concludes with a final discussion. It revisits concepts set out in the model for analysing neo-Nazism described in the first chapter. It briefly summarizes once more how elements included in the book's ideal typical definition of neo-Nazis

has been used to foster a new assessment of Jordan's ideas, and contextualization of his activism as a neo-Nazi variant of post-1945 fascism. This final assessment also argues that the model helps unpick how he lived a life defined by a profound sense of dissonance between the realities of living in an increasingly multicultural Britain that developed around him from the 1940s onwards and his own, romanticized ideal of living in a Nazi-style one-party state. From this perspective, his entire life can be viewed as a series of failed efforts to overcome such dissonance between fantasy and reality, an endeavour that seems to have motivated him throughout his life.

A note on sources

Before moving on to the first chapter, it is important to say a few words on source material. Neo-Nazi cultures are difficult to study, not least as their activists have tried to hide many of their true aims from public view. This study has attempted to engage with a wide range of primary sources, though undoubtedly more time (and research funds) would have produced some further material too. What has been utilized here includes propaganda material developed by Jordan for the wider public, as well as material meant for internal consumption, such as member bulletins. As well as these types of documents, it has also explored in depth magazines and other literature featuring essays by Jordan written primarily for the 'converted', but publically available too, and his contributions to such sources were often particularly detailed in setting out his political ideas. There has also been some engagement with oral history accounts by anti-fascists such as Ray Hill, that were created for a future research project, but these too have offered some illuminating insights into Jordan's life. Finally, Jordan sought to leave an impression on the public record, and so a wide range of newspapers and other publications, as well as debates in parliament and government records, commenting on Jordan have also been used, especially from the 1960s onwards as Jordan became more well known.

Finding such source material has involved visiting a number of libraries and archives. In particular, the National Archives holds some fascinating documents on Jordan's activities, especially from the 1940s to the 1960s. After the Second World War, the British state monitored a number of prominent British fascists, such as Jeffrey Hamm and Arnold Leese, and these files have been particularly useful in building up a picture of Jordan's early activities, and the National Archives holds more information on Jordan's National Socialist Movement of the 1960s as well. Aside from this material, the Wiener Library and the British Library have been invaluable sources for finding magazines, and other publications, linked to Jordan's life. Without access to periodicals such as *Combat* of the early 1960s, or *British Tidings*, the bulletin of the British Movement, it would have been far more difficult to piece together the dynamics of some of Jordan's most important movements. The newspaper collection at the British Library has also been an important resource, while other major libraries, such as the Bodleian Library, have been valuable too. In terms of US-based literature, the Southern Poverty Law Center has been of great help in facilitating access to American publications that Jordan featured in, either as subject matter or as an author.

Without their assistance, the transnational element of Jordan's later activism examined here would also have been far less detailed. Finally, the majority of more clandestine material related to the National Socialist Movement, the British Movement and *Gothic Ripples* has been collated over the years by the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*. Its archive, now based at the University of Northampton and available to researchers, has been vital. For those who want to carry out further research into British fascism, the Searchlight Archive will probably offer a lot of fresh material for other projects as well.

Access to such wide-ranging documents from these archives, as well as some material posted online in more recent times, has made possible an opportunity to develop an archival, empirical examination of Jordan's activities throughout his life. The range of material was far greater than I first envisaged, and importantly the picture of Jordan presented here has tried to eschew claims simply based on rumour that cannot be backed up by clear, empirical evidence. Finally, for future researchers who want to work on similar subject matter, it has become clear by engaging with these archives that there remains a bewildering array of as yet unexplored archival material for many future studies of post-1945 fascism.

1

A Working Definition of Neo-Nazism

The chapters following this opening discussion will explore, in detail, Colin Jordan's adult life and impact. Yet, the aim of this study is not primarily to develop a conventional biography of Jordan, but rather to explore the roles this significant and high-profile activist played within the British neo-Nazi movement that developed after 1945. To do this, before turning to an examination of Jordan's life, it is also important to offer a clear sense of how this case study can be related to wider themes within fascism studies. To achieve this, this chapter will address what, for the purpose of this study, central terms such as 'fascism' and 'neo-Nazism' are understood to mean, and will also set out a series of related conceptual approaches to making sense of such phenomena. Before building a picture of Jordan's activism, it is necessary to create some conceptual scaffolding.

As this chapter will stress, neo-Nazism can be seen as one strain of a wider variety of extremist responses to modernity that has attracted much academic debate in recent years: fascism.[1] The variegated debates on the nature of fascism have produced a theoretically complex, rich discourse that certainly helps establish parameters for central terms. Moreover, within these debates are a variety of conceptual approaches that offer historians the ability to develop a multifaceted analytical toolkit for exploring neo-Nazi protagonists, such as Jordan. Many of the critical concepts used in fascism studies are not mutually exclusive either, and overlap and reinforce each other. So, in order to give some clarity to the various terms and concepts that will be used to frame discussions in subsequent chapters, what follows here will unpack a working definition for neo-Nazism, an ideal type of value for analysing Jordan and other forms of neo-Nazism too. Elements included within this ideal typical description of the phenomenon will then be drawn on throughout analyses in subsequent chapters, allowing exploration of some of the deeper themes present in Jordan's ideas and activities.

Methodological reflexivity, and an ideal type for neo-Nazism

However, before discussing the literature on contested and highly emotive phenomena such as 'neo-Nazism' and 'fascism', it is important to begin with a crucial element of self-reflexivity. These are emotive terms, connected to a powerful and recent history.[2] Inevitably, there are limits to the scholarly aspiration of achieving an unproblematic, 'objective' approach to deploying them in any academic analysis. While it is, of

course, crucial at the outset to recognize the need to engage in a scholarly approach that distances analysis from a language that merely serves to demonize figures that one finds objectionable, bias is also ultimately inescapable. This point will, perhaps, be most apparent to those within the contemporary manifestation of the neo-Nazi movement. Indeed, there has already been some criticism levelled at me as an author having a political bias,[3] a point worth reflecting on. Ultimately, any academic study of this milieu will produce an approach that is at least implicitly critical of this type of such subject matter. To define terms like 'fascism' and 'neo-Nazism' is to define political ideologies, and so, inexorably, with this comes an inescapable paradox: the person doing the defining has their own political ideology and worldview too, and their own political assumptions will filter into their descriptions of another ideology no matter how assiduous their efforts to stop this from happening.[4] With regard to fascism in particular, no matter how diligently one tries to obtain a sense of 'critical distance' to the subject matter, it is highly likely that those defining the term will either explicitly or implicitly be antagonistic towards fascism, just as fascists themselves are inherently critical of liberal environments that allow for academic freedoms to flourish. Looking at the many academic voices that have contributed to debates on fascism over the years – such as George Mosse, Martin Kitchen, David Renton, Juan Linz, Zeev Sternhell, Stanley Payne, Roger Eatwell, Roger Griffin, Robert Paxton, Michael Burleigh and Michael Mann among many others – it goes without saying that their analyses are all critical, in one way or another. Yet, their scholarly critiques also come from a variety of perspectives, and biographies of this clutch of authors show they embrace a wide range of political ideologies, from Marxist to liberal to conservative.

Moreover, one response to both acknowledging an inescapable degree of subjectivity and recognizing the need to rise above demonization and offer a sustained attempt to treat such subject matter fairly, developed by such scholars, is to engage with a wide variety of conceptual approaches that each try to capture more than merely negative elements of fascism, and its sub-variants such as neo-Nazism. Such an approach helps set out a language for discussing the mindset of fascists, shedding light on core questions such as the issue of what fascists believe their activism is 'for', not merely what they oppose. Moreover, the variety of elements drawn on using such a methodologically plural perspective can be clarified by setting the various concepts within an ideal typical working definition of neo-Nazism, to bring together observations from a variety of academic models into a broadly coherent, and heuristically useful, statement.[5] Such a model is proposed in the spirit of Max Weber's stress on both the strengths and limits of an ideal type: they are abstractions, created by researchers in an abductive manner, from their engagement with other voices in the academic literature and their own previous analysis too. For Weber, ideal types are not 'true', they are merely thought pictures (*Gedankenbild*) created to guide empirical enquiry.[6] For readers well versed in the wider literature on fascism studies, many of the specialist terms found in this definition will be familiar. Key concepts have been italicized, and the remainder of the chapter will discursively unpack these italicized terms, setting out a deeper justification for this modelling.

Neo-Nazism: A variation of the wider phenomenon of *fascism*, neo-Nazism's protagonists believe their actions are driven by the *revolutionary*, or *palingenetic*,

goal of overcoming the inherent *ambivalences* found in a *plural modernity*. The neo-Nazi vision for the future foresees the need for a inclusive society to be replaced with a new order, governed by a single worldview that is understood as a continuation of Nazi ideals developed by Hitler, the NSDAP and its related organizations. Like other fascisms, neo-Nazis idealize many aspects of the past, but their political viewpoints are ultimately *futural*: its ideologues place great importance in prophesizing a new era where Nazism will once again be culturally and politically successful. As with other forms of fascism, neo-Nazism acts as a *scavenger ideology* too, drawing eclectically on ideas and arguments that can be combined with the core aim of re-calibrating a Nazi agenda to a political environment that is deeply hostile to its objectives. Its protagonists socialize themselves in the legacy of Nazism, and use this to develop their own understandings of themes of *nation* and *race* to create highly radicalized anti-liberal forms of *imagined communities*, used to make sense of the past, present and the future. Echoing interwar Nazism, neo-Nazism operates around a *conspiracy theory* narrative that specifically presents Jewish forces as an *existential threat*, deemed to control both capitalist and communist forms of modernity. For neo-Nazis, Jewish people are viewed as a manifestation of *evil* too, and their messages idealize the *purification* of the modern world through a proposed elimination of Jewish people. As such, there is a distinct *Manichean* element to neo-Nazi cultures, which can be elaborated into a rich, marginalized *culture* gravitating around myths, rituals and belief systems that sustain a profound 'us' and 'them' mentality. As such, neo-Nazism can also be deemed a type of modern *political religion*. While deeply hostile to its 'enemies', neo-Nazism is also marked by a fraternal tenor of *communitas*, and often leaders develop a *charismatic* resonance for limited sets of followers. In terms of structure, neo-Nazis tend to be highly marginalized, while individual neo-Nazi groups are sustained by a larger neo-Nazi *cultic milieu* that offers enough clarity of vision to keep the movement together, and enough variance to offer myriad possibilities of *ludic* recombination of core aspects of the legacy of Nazism with many other ideas too. In this way, neo-Nazism can also be seen to act as a modern form of a *revitalization movement*. In terms of organizational structure, as it remains marginalized, the neo-Nazi movement tends to be developed by many discrete *groupuscules* that collectively make up the movement's *groupuscular* dynamic, a milieu that is not static and changes over time. These neo-Nazi networks often stretch across national borders too, and so activism is often *transnational* in scope. Finally, as the powerful, antagonistic culture developed by this milieu is concerned with *purifying* the race and nation its environments can give *licence* to hatred, and even politically motivated violence.

This working definition for interpreting neo-Nazis activism draws extensively on a wide range of theoretical perspectives for analysing fascism. It uses these approaches to present a conceptual model that views neo-Nazism as a political movement that has clear ideological features, basically regarding itself as revolutionary, and a phenomenon that is concerned with creating countercultural milieus that extend well beyond mere politics too. Indeed, for believers in the ideology such as Jordan, neo-Nazism offered

an alternate worldview, and had profound implications for ontological issues, such as the existence of God and the meaning of life and death.

Used in a considered manner, the model set out above can help make sense of a variety of features found in Colin Jordan's activism, allowing analysis to move beyond simple demonization. Without endorsing his politics, it can be used to help structure a richer appreciation of the extreme environments created by a leading neo-Nazi activist such as Jordan.

Debates on 'what is fascism?'

It is important to unpack this model too, and explain the value of key terminology. Jordan was a neo-Nazi, and, as the model above stresses, neo-Nazism is a form of fascism. Not all debates defining fascism and Nazism have been generous enough to consider fascism a coherent ideology though. Notoriously, Hugh Trevor-Roper once dismissed the ideology of Nazism as 'a vast system of bestial Nordic nonsense'.[7] Like those who casually use the term 'fascism' as a form of abuse, such statements are perhaps satisfying, but they do little to help create a deeper appreciation of the phenomenon. Debates on fascism have certainly matured, intellectually, from the 1960s onwards. In agreement with much of this wider literature, this study too regards fascism as a revolutionary form of extreme anti-liberal politics, obsessed with themes of defending and purifying race and nation from a perceived existential threat.

Such generalizations need to be issued with care though: *fascisms* come in a wide variety of forms, and there is frequent disagreement among scholars in fascism studies over what to include and what to exclude from the category.[8] Even within the more clearly bounded sub-field of neo-Nazism, a more internally coherent variant of the wider family of fascisms, this seems to be at best a quite diverse phenomenon on first inspection. For example, in America some neo-Nazi groups, like Aryan Nations of the Christian Identity movement, have developed a type of activism that also incorporates a radically revised form of Christianity.[9] Contrastingly, Jordan himself was a neo-Nazi who rejected identification with Christianity, as he deemed the faith to be an expression of Jewish-inspired culture, and he preferred to idealize a pagan-inspired belief system. Jordan was also highly critical of the White Power music scene as it developed from the 1970s, yet much contemporary neo-Nazi activism is now developed around this milieu. For Jordan, all forms of modern popular music had their roots in what he saw as the Jewish-run entertainment industry that promoted what he deemed a racially inferior African culture. Such examples of difference highlight that even neo-Nazi cultures are not coherent or consistent; rather they are expressed in a wide variety of forms. Moreover, the conceptual modelling developed in this chapter does not seek to deny such difference, and rather stresses that historians should actively seek to identify it.

To help clarify, the interdisciplinary literature defining fascism offers some quite clear, precise boundaries that help explain the phenomenon. Such academic discourses certainly move beyond a colloquial usage of 'fascism', which renders it a very fuzzy, pejorative term, often deployed to mean simply being very brutish, authoritarian and, in some way, cruel and nasty too. Academic debates on the topic acknowledge that, in

their own imaginations, fascists view themselves as people who want to create a new society, not merely destroy one they deem corrupt and unable to the needs of preserving the race or nation. Moreover, many voices in fascism studies recognize that it is this vision of an alternate society that makes fascists so destructive and violent towards a world they reject. Recognizing this dynamic allows some level of methodological empathy (distinct from personal sympathy, of course) with the subject matter.[10]

While there is still disagreement whether fascism can be seen as a politics that has ever really been 'for' something, most contemporary theorists writing on fascism do at least agree that fascism is inherently modern, that it is a product of modernity. This crucial observation can be found in some of the earliest interpretations of fascism, especially from Marxist viewpoints.[11] From the early 1920s onwards, Marxists tended to present fascism not only as a creation of the modern, capitalist era but also as a politics that in one way or another played the role of preventing the workers' revolution that Marx had predicted. Many Marxist-inspired voices have generated approaches to defining fascism that gravitated around the theme of it being a violent form of capitalist domination, often propped up by the support of the middle classes. So, for the Marxists of the 1920s and 1930s onwards, fascism was quickly styled as a new phenomenon of the capitalist era in crisis, not something to be found in earlier stages of historical development, as set out by the wider Marxist grand narrative of history.[12] Fascism was modern, a product of capitalism in crisis.

By the mid-1970s, one of the leading academic Marxist theorists to offer a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon, Martin Kitchen, again underscored fascism's inherently modern qualities, rightly claiming that it is a poor concept for the interpretation of brutal dictatorships in largely agrarian settings. Yet, Kitchen stresses that one of fascism's core aims has been to 'stabilise, strengthen and … transform capitalist property relations and to secure the social and economic domination of the capitalist class', and is basically distinguishable from conservatism mainly in its open use of violence and illegality to achieve its ends.[13] Such a reading of fascists as anti-revolutionary, and so fuelled by a 'negative' agenda is, of course, a point arrived at via Marxists's own definition of what a 'revolution' is. For most Marxist theorists, the only real modern revolution is the creation of the socialist society by transcending the capitalist era, itself an epoch defined by ongoing class conflict. Whatever fascism sought to achieve, Marxists have found it very difficult to view fascism as 'for' something, as for them its main function appears to be propping up the capitalist system. It is possible to cite numerous articulations of interwar Marxists claiming fascism to be anti-revolutionary in this manner, from the crude ideals espoused by the Comintern,[14] to the nuanced discussions of Frankfurt School intellectuals such as Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin.[15] It is an idea that post-war Marxist academics such as Kitchen proposed too, and others such as David Renton still stress.[16] So, although much of the Marxist theorizing around what fascism consists of rightly seeks to identify the phenomenon as a creation of modernity, the approach becomes far more problematic when it defines fascism as the capitalist system's violent response to fending off a true workers revolution. Nevertheless, while this study disagrees with this viewpoint from Marxist approaches, it certainly recognizes that Marxists have made a major contribution to the understanding of fascism. Indeed, in terms of British fascism,

figures such as Mark Hayes and David Renton in particular have produced some very important contributions to the historical record.[17]

As most Marxist approaches do not recognize revolutionary aspirations among fascists, they have often shied away from engaging seriously with the ways fascists have claimed they make sense of their politics through a lens of fundamentally transforming the race or nation. Rather than viewing such fascist rhetoric as mere propaganda designed to entice and deceive, an alternate perspective is to take statements of aims and intent that emerge from fascists themselves as often being much more honest explanations of how they understand their political agendas. The more recent historians that have taken this broad approach of trying to understand how fascists conceive their own politics such as Roger Griffin, Roger Eatwell, Aristotle Kallis and others, regularly highlight that it is crucial to understand that fascists self-identify as revolutionaries, and (often) really do believe their claims to have a vision for a different future. Moreover, even among the Marxist contributors to the debates on what fascism is, there are some more complex positions as well that do recognize that fascists create their own, 'positive' goals and have their own radical view of how the future should look. For example, in *The Politics of Time*, one Marxist-inspired philosopher, Peter Osborne, stresses that, in their own way, fascists have tried to develop genuinely alternate visions for the future, and he argues that fascisms possess what he dubs a 'futural' dynamic. Osborne also describes fascism as a form of 'political modernism', a movement wanting to usher in 'the new' in a manner that, very loosely, echoed the way modernist artists and intellectuals responded to a crisis-ridden modernity and searched for radically new ways of expression and thought. As such, Osborn identifies a genuinely forward-looking, or revolutionary, drive within fascism that wants to turn an imagined and idealized future into a genuine lived reality. This perspective is important, as it understands that, while fascist visions of the future are constructed largely from a romanticized caricature of the past, they also use this to form the basis of the vision for a new type of modern society that they propose will exist, as Osborne puts it, 'for the first time'.[18] Through this interpretive lens, fascists can be understood as people driven by more than a reactionary or backward-looking agenda; fascists stop being seen as people with an anti-revolutionary attitude and instead can be viewed as ideologues developing a type of modern politics offering an alternate, revolutionary vision in its own right.

This viewpoint chimes with much of the discussion that has emerged outside of the Marx-inspired debates on fascism in recent years. Since the 1960s, there has been a growing body of scholarship that has claimed that identifying the revolutionary visions of fascism is central to explaining how the ideology could inspire action, including unleashing violence and hatred towards those who were deemed 'outside' the idealized community. Figures including Juan Linz,[19] George L. Mosse,[20] Stanley Payne,[21] Roger Eatwell[22] and Roger Griffin have all created a broadly compatible series of interpretations of fascism that strive to identify fascism's 'positive' ideals, as understood by its ideologically committed activists. Such voices agree with Marxist approaches that stress fascism is a product of modernity, and broadly speaking recognize that it becomes more successful when modern societies enter into a period of crisis. These historians of fascism also stress that, in one way or another, fascism's

political successes, especially in the interwar years, were the combination of several crucial factors. Firstly, fascists' relevance to a mass audience was sparked by crises in capitalism's economic system, which went on to create deep-seated social and political crises spawning a wider sense of *anomie* within which fascist movements could thrive. Nevertheless, only in a few places, such as Germany, was this mood powerful enough to create conditions where fascists entered into government. Moreover, because the fascist discourses of the interwar years, just like Communist discourses, were also genuinely future orientated, 'futural' to use Osborne's term, they could appeal by offering a powerful vision for change, based around themes of redemption. Being able to offer an alternate vision of a regenerated and 'purified' nation was central to fascism's attraction. Interwar fascists thirsted for an 'alternate modernity', to use Griffin's term, and this core quality was a feature also inherited by fascism's far more marginalized post-1945 incarnations as well.

Understood in this way, fascist ideologues are viewed by such historians as figures that rejected two models for modern industrial society that existed by the interwar years, and instead they tried to propose an alternate world view. Firstly, fascists rejected the mixture of capitalism and emergent liberal democracy across Europe by the twentieth century, which they deemed as an outdated, nineteenth-century political and social order. They also rejected the Marxist-inspired alternate form of modernity that was becoming manifest in the Soviet Union by this time. Underscoring how these interwar years helped incubated fascist visions of 'alternate modernities', Mark Mazower's history of the continent throughout the twentieth century emphasizes just how fragile consensus around the future viability of liberal democracy had become by the later 1930s. He stresses that both revolutionary fascists and revolutionary Communists had good reasons to think that history was truly on their side in the years immediately before the Second World War, and that they had the answers to the future.[23] George Mosse's approach to contextualizing fascism also stresses this theme, claiming that the twentieth century was marked by two major revolutionary ideologies: Communism and fascism.[24]

Another significant historian of fascism has stressed that the ideology's appeal lay in its revolutionary agenda is Zeev Sternhell. In some much-debated interventions, of particular relevance to challenging the historiography on the French case, he argues that fascism as an ideology has its intellectual roots in cultures that existed before the First World War in France.[25] Moreover, Sternhell stresses that the future-orientated aspirations later developed by fascist intellectuals was a by-product of nineteenth-century revolutionary visions initially inspired by Marx's anti-bourgeois radicalism, yet those figures who became fascists also came to reject most of the theoretical content of Marxism. A case in point here was Georges Sorel, whose idealization of the myth of revolution underscored a turn towards the irrational found in figures revising Marxist notions of anti-bourgeois, workers' revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Sternhell, while such figures modified Marx's ideas beyond all recognition, introducing anti-liberal, strong patriotic themes and other ideas associated with the political right, emergent forms of fascism also retained core aspirations of overthrowing what was viewed as a dated, nineteenth-century 'bourgeois' world. After the devastation of the First World War, such radical revisions of Marxism,

fusing anti-bourgeois, revolutionary ideals with strong patriotic elements, found a more complete expression in the political career of figures such as Mussolini, among others, who epitomized the move from the revolutionary left to the ultra-nationalist right in a bid to overthrow a liberal system deemed corrupt, in order to introduce a new, modern era.[26] Sternhell's analysis stresses that fascism was the product a cluster of aspirations that, while often muddled, defined themselves as being against an existing modern world, while also proposing a new and different one.

A further voice presenting fascism as a form of modern politics seeking to establish a new form of modern society is Juan Linz, whose reading of fascism as a 'latecomer' ideology is also important to stress here. Linz claims that, while fascism was an ideology that was 'for' something, this was often masked by its profound antagonistic qualities. His methodology suggests that fascism's potent negativity towards other political systems was a product of it being a 'latecomer' to the already often well-developed, plural political spaces found in Europe by the twentieth century. Fascists decided to distinguish themselves from others by setting out a wide range of antagonistic 'anti' themes: anti-liberal, anti-feminist, anti-conservative, anti-socialist and so forth. Thus, fascists offered powerful rejections of what currently existed, combined with a utopian vision for an alternate future culled from various themes found in competitor ideologies, of both the left and the right, to develop a unique political style. As such, fascism was an extreme response to liberal political environments, which it sought to overturn and replace with innovative new methods of engaging people, like the creation of a radically new style of mass participatory politics. Such features could appeal across class divisions too and so, on the level of lived experience, generate a sensation of national unity with potentially very high levels of verisimilitude across society.[27]

Echoing elements of Linz and Sternhell's positions, among others, one of the most influential voices of recent years is Stanley Payne. He too stresses that fascism's aims combined a potent antagonism towards existing political and cultural institutions with a sense of wanting to create society anew. His analysis includes a description of the core aims of the phenomenon as 'the attempt to build a new, modern, self determined, and secular culture', as well as the creation of 'a new nationalist authoritarian state not based on traditional principles or models'.[28] Such points mark Payne as another historian who argues that fascists wanted to create a new type of society, neither following the liberal democratic model nor the one developed by the Communist system in the Soviet Union. Operating in a broadly cognate framework, Roger Eatwell also sets out an approach that focuses attention on the, in their own imagination, 'positive' aspirations that fascists developed. He places as his core features of fascism a quest to create a new elite and a 'new man', a holistic 'new state' and a political 'Third Way', combining left- and right-wing ideals, such as large-scale state direction of an economy that retains an element of market principles, in order to purify the nation. These latter points highlighted the quality of fascists blurring together aspects of capitalism with socialism to create proposals for an alternate economic system. Indeed, for Eatwell fascism was by definition a syncretic phenomenon too, fusing a wide variety of ideas into novel new configurations.[29]

The approaches offered by Mosse, Sternhell, Linz, Payne and Eatwell all develop their own nuances and particularities, but collectively they represent a cluster of

viewpoints that converge around the theme of fascism being a revolutionary ideology that seeks to create some form of anti-liberal, anti-Marxist modern society. In fascism studies, this position has been dubbed the 'new consensus' approach, a term coined by Griffin, one of the key protagonists of this perspective.[30] In tune with this reading, later chapters will show that Jordan himself was deeply concerned with the establishment of a new society that eschewed liberal democracy and Communism too, and wanted to replace a plural modernity with one governed by his interpretation of a modern Nazi state. Such aspirations for an alternate future are easy to dismiss, perhaps as ridiculous, in a highly marginal figure such as Jordan. Yet, for him, having faith in a countervailing vision of a modern society was central to his activism. The concerns of fascists in the interwar period, the heyday for fascist movements, continued into their far more marginalized post-1945 successors.

Fascism as an alternate 'way of being' within modernity

Despite some clear disagreements over the issue of revolution, both Marxists and 'new consensus' scholars agree that fascism, and so therefore neo-Nazism, is a modern phenomenon. But how do analysts of fascism refine this point? Why is 'modernity' an important concept for understanding fascism? The figures cited so far stress that, by recognizing fascism is a revolutionary response to the conditions of modernity, this allows historians to see that its protagonists want to overthrow one form of modernity and replace it with an idealized, alternative vision of a new form of modern society. As such, fascism has become one among a range of possible choices for making sense of the potentially confusing nature of the modern world. For many people, the modern experience has undoubtedly been truly bewildering. Indeed, many academics that have focused on understanding modernity have drawn this point out, via a wide variety of studies exploring issues such as the dramatic growth in competing systems of knowledge and ways of seeing the world from the late nineteenth century onwards,[31] radical shifts in boundaries of time and space,[32] the invention of many 'new' traditions,[33] and the development of ambiguously secularized societies that promote myriad forms of plurality.[34] How has the lived experiences of such dramatic changes been conceptualized?

Another Marx-inspired cultural theorist, Marshall Berman, is worth citing here. In *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, a reflection on the 'creative destruction' that modernity generates, Berman described the experience of being modern as finding 'ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are'.[35] These themes of the possibility and threat found in modernity are ones profoundly heightened within fascism. Another Marx-inspired figure, the geographer David Harvey, has written in a broadly similar way, again styling modernity as an era of constant change, deeply unsettling for some, yet rich with opportunity for others, including fascists.[36] From a different sociological standpoint, Anthony Giddens' analysis of modernity draws out what he describes as modernity's 'disembedding systems', cultural phenomena that lift people out of

preconceived, localized social realities and promote many new institutions with global reach and dynamism. Again, such dynamics can be perceived by some as situations offering rich rewards, while others may consider them as phenomena evoking elemental fears regarding the fundamental changes afoot.[37]

Modernity's promotion of the potential for achieving a very different future, when combined with the haunting image of living in environments riddled with forces that seem fearful or dangerous, even perhaps viewed as existential threats, is particularly relevant to interpreting the purpose of the future-orientated flights of imagination found in fascist, and therefore neo-Nazi, political narratives. With this appreciation of modernity as bewildering for some, it becomes clearer that the conspiring forces of 'evil' regularly identified by many fascists as undermining perceived older, rooted ideals of the nation – such as global capitalism, international Communism, or an alleged worldwide Jewish conspiracy – frame elemental fears of the 'other' in a language that also tries to explain the nature and impact of newer, globalizing forces of modernity. For Nazis, and the neo-Nazis who followed them, 'the Jews', who are deemed to control global finance and global Communism, are styled as the hidden figures actually controlling the development of a modernizing, globalizing world. The fascist conspiracy theory lens can thus simplify many globalized forces into a narrative where elemental changes being wrought by the modern era are explained by conjuring up an unseen factor, as so are used to help make sense of the confusing forces of modernity. Giddens also stresses the importance of the modern imagination's ability to 'colonise the future', highlighting in particular the way modernity offers 'the creation of territories of future possibilities, reclaimed by counterfactual inference'.[38] For those perceiving themselves profoundly disempowered by modernity, speculating on the possibilities of creating an alternate one, where the conspiracy no longer exists, allows for a narrative of liberation to be projected into the future too.

Another theorist of modernity, one who has taken a keen interest in fascism, is Zygmunt Bauman.[39] His work also explores the many tensions within modernity, and stresses its promotion of *ambivalence* in particular as crucial to understanding why modern environments can produce very extreme responses. Like many others cited so far, Bauman explains that, for those living within modernity, there can be no clear, final answers to the most profound questions in a way that probably could be found, for many at least, in pre-modern times. With modernity comes a new social realm that has become radically plural, and certainly by the twentieth century a wide variety of competing political and cultural viewpoints jostle for acceptability. Again, this promotion of both plurality and ambivalence as a response requires those searching for a sense of certainty to create strategies to deal with what seems like an unsettling, unnecessarily diverse world. For those repelled by difference, the certainties found in fascist ideologies can offer worldviews to resolve such uncertainty, and give clarity in the face of modernity's inherently ambivalent nature. As such, Bauman's framing helps to draw out how modernity both promotes plurality of cultural expressions and encourages in some at least highly intolerant responses, both of which are equally 'modern'.[40]

In this light, fascism can appeal as it is a phenomenon that offers people an extreme, alternate 'way of being' within, and of creating interactions with, the modern world that rejects modernity's pluralism and ambivalence. Thinking about fascism, and variations

of it such as neo-Nazism, as extreme ways of making sense of modernity points to a much richer engagement with questions focusing not only on the political forms of fascism, but also on what sorts of cultures variants of fascism, especially in their many marginalized configurations since 1945, offer to those seeking some form of radical alternate to the political and cultural mainstream. It creates an approach that stresses the need to take more seriously the entire milieus generated by fascist cultures too, as these are all elements of the alternate way of living within modern contexts developed by fascists. They are environments at once deeply hostile to outsiders, and also spaces offering shelters of certainty to people who reject the plurality and difference of the modern world.

The cultural and anthropological turn in fascism studies

Such points lead on to the welcome development of a 'cultural turn' in the field of fascism studies, resulting in some albeit more speculative engagement with ideas drawn from cultural anthropology too. The shift towards exploring fascist *cultures* in recent years has started to draw out the richness found in the ideas promoted by fascists. This cultural turn also stresses that, while fascisms have certainly tried to answer political questions, protagonists are also often people concerned with addressing artistic and even ontological questions. Over the years, fascist activists have generated a wide range of alternative cultural systems, of varying degrees of sophistication, to achieve this, which are now being examined anew by fascism studies. The broad approach of viewing fascisms as extreme, countercultural as well as a political responses to modernity allows for a more nuanced exploration of the 'positive' cultural and social goals and aspirations that fascist ideologues believe defines their activity.[41]

Such focus on considering fascism as creating countercultures that seek to offer alternatives to the ambivalences of a plural modernity also leads to opportunities to recalibrate the idea of what a 'successful' fascist movement looks like, as this can occur in more fields than merely the political. For example, as a political party, the interwar British Union of Fascists, led by Oswald Mosley, was clearly a total failure. Simply put, it aimed to achieve power, yet got nowhere. However, if viewed as a countercultural movement, one able to genuinely sustain an alternate fascist culture for several tens of thousands of people in 1930s Britain, then conclusions would need to point to the fact that in this regard it was a far more effective outfit. Moreover, its 'memory' has lived on, and Mosley still has followers who claim to be developing his political agenda, which shows a long-lasting impact among a select audience too. In such ways, the cultural turn in fascism studies allows for a more considered and detailed appreciation of the layers of fascist activity, political, social, cultural and so forth, as they carry out the role of sustaining milieus that allow people make sense of their rejections of plural modernity and fantasize about an idealized, homogenous new order. The growing analysis of the many marginalized fascist movements that have developed especially since 1945, such as those run by a figure like Colin Jordan, again underscore that marginalization, and 'being in the wilderness', ought to be considered fascism's 'normal' state. Only in times of profound crisis and uncertainty do the fascist movements of modernity ever