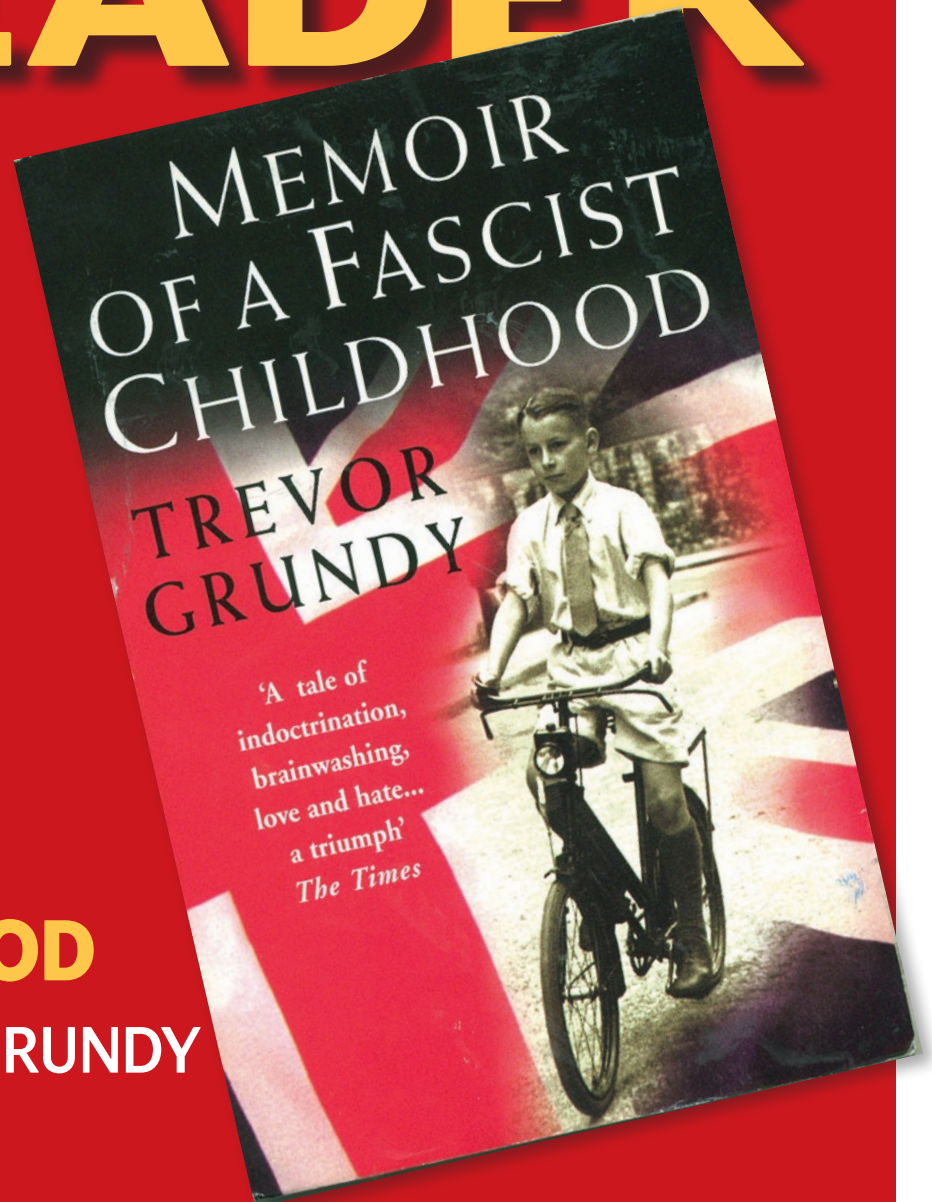
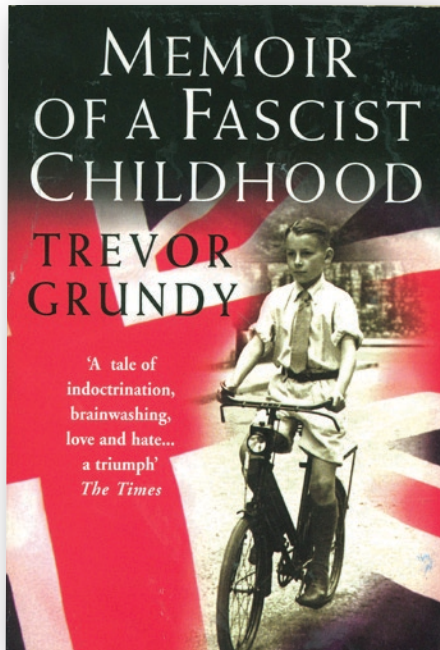


# LOVE, HATE AND THE LEADER

AN  
EXCERPT  
FROM  
**MEMOIR  
OF A  
FASCIST  
CHILDHOOD**  
BY TREVOR GRUNDY

ColdType





**Trevor Grundy** was born in Brighton, England, and attended Archbishop Tenison's Grammar School and then the City of London College where he studied economics. He became a journalist in 1963 working first for the Middle East News Agency in London and Cairo and then for a variety of newspapers and magazines in central, eastern and southern Africa. He lives in Kent with his wife Jane and works as an author, broadcaster and researcher.

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## PART ONE

# MEMOIR OF A MEMOIR

**Trevor Grundy** reflects on the birth of a book that signalled the end of a nightmare

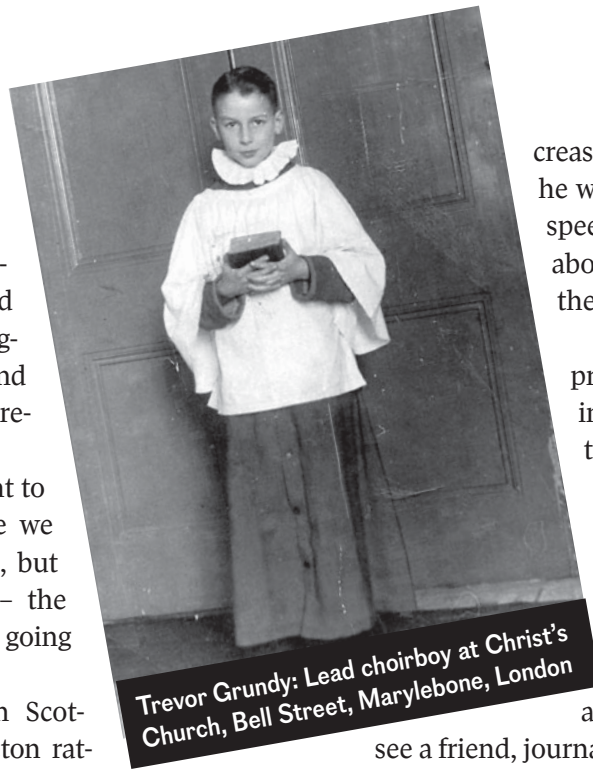
I left England on a two-year contract to work at the *Times of Zambia* in April, 1966. In the following 30 years I worked for various papers and magazines in east, central and southern Africa until I returned to Britain in 1996.

My wife Jane and I went to live in Edinburgh, where we had friends and contacts, but we didn't belong there – the truth was I couldn't face going home to London.

Soon after arriving in Scotland, a long-buried skeleton rattled out of my closet when I was contacted by supporters of the former British fascist leader Oswald Mosley, the notorious ex-leader of the wartime Hitler-supporting political party, the British Union of Fascists, to attend a dinner in London to mark the centenary of Mosley's birth.

A couple of weeks later, I read an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* written by Mosley's son Nicholas, headlined, "Was dad an anti-Semite?"

Nicholas, whose books I like and whose courage I admire, wrote: "His [Mosley's] movement provided him with a platform, but he did not pay much attention to the day-to-day running of his party or to the increasingly scurrilous items printed in its newspapers [*Action/The Blackshirt*]. He left all this to his in-



Trevor Grundy: Lead choirboy at Christ's Church, Bell Street, Marylebone, London

creasingly prejudiced lieutenants while he went round the country making his speeches to mesmerized audiences about how to solve all the problems in the world."

A strange reversal of the Fuhrerprinzip, I thought. Anti-Semitism in the BUF was decided on not by the Leader who could do no wrong (like the Pope) but by the Leader's followers! It was the line the Mosley Family had taken for years – the innocent Oswald had been misled by his awful followers.

I exploded at the blatant lie and stormed across Edinburgh to see a friend, journalist Fred Bridgland, with whom I'd worked during the Angolan War and Zambia-South African détente exercise in 1974-1975. Fred was one of Britain's most respected foreign correspondents and had in his younger days worked on *The Scotsman* newspaper with Andrew Marr, who had become editor of the *Independent* in London. Fred knew about my childhood and teenage infatuation with Mosley. He knew, too, that I was bursting to write about my early years but lacked the courage to do it. He arranged an interview with Marr, who agreed to see me in his office at Canary Wharf in London for ten minutes or so. I traveled to London and after an hour Marr said, "Write an article." I asked how long it should be. "As long as you like." He gave me a week to do it.

The article – *My Childhood* (See next page) – ap-

peared in the *Independent* of 28 November, 1996. Later, Marr said he'd had dozens of telephone calls and letters congratulating him on allowing me to write the story in what was one of the UK's leading liberal papers.

A week after it appeared Victoria Hipps, an editor at Random House, asked if I'd like to expand the piece into a book for William Heinemann.

Thanks to Victoria's prompting, the book, *Memoir of a Fascist Childhood*, was published in February 1998, coinciding with the release of a four-part Channel 4 TV series on Oswald Mosley. Two TV films were made about the book and it was well reviewed in most of the serious papers and magazines, with one of the best and longest in the *Jewish Chronicle*.

After the paperback edition came out in 1998, I received a telephone call from David Kaplan – a relative of former British Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind – who was an authority on the history of Jews in Scotland and a fundraiser for various causes in UK and Israel. He asked me if I'd like to travel to Israel to see the place and talk to some students about fascism in Britain? We went in March 2000 to Netanya, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where I talked about my childhood experiences in the bosom of Britain's fascist fanatics. Later I spoke to Jewish students at universities and other venues in London, Nottingham, Leeds, Manchester and Edinburgh.

The last meeting was in Golders Green, heartland of London's wealthiest Jews, and before I spoke to about 100 or so young people, a woman carrying a large gin and tonic came up to me and said, "I never did get it how your mother committed suicide. What did she do exactly?" I finished the lecture, drank a load of whisky and walked home to Muswell Hill, where I was then living, and told Jane I'd never speak again about Oswald Mosley or try to re-live my long gone childhood and youth. I kept my word, until I spoke to *ColdType* editor, Tony Sutton earlier this year.

Occasionally, I hear programmes about Mosley on the radio and, craning towards the speaker, listen to a tinny voice that bears little resemblance to the original, a voice yelling at unhappy ghosts in another world. And always I hear the drums and the sounds

of marching men and then the BUF version of Hitler's most famous anthem, the *Horst Wessel Lied*.

Often I travel to London from my home in Kent and when I arrive at Victoria Station I cross at the traffic lights and stand outside what used to be number 302 Vauxhall Bridge Road, the headquarters of Mosley's operation. It was there – first as a child and later as a teenager – I'd padlock my bicycle and with my mother, father, sister and one of her Union Movement boyfriends, spend the evening addressing envelopes – our part in the struggle for a Jew-free England led by Mosley.

302 is now an Italian restaurant and there's nowhere anywhere to show that Oswald Mosley or his supporters from before or after the Second World War ever existed.

My middle class English mother-in-law, who died at 86, said years ago that she had no idea Mosley had returned to Britain to speak at meetings after the war and that most people she knew thought he'd died in prison, or before the war.

Ironically, although most people knew about his imprisonment during the war, hardly a soul knew much about his post-war activities because the Home Office imposed a D-Notice on papers not to report his speeches or writings.

But Jewish ex-Servicemen knew. They formed the 43 Group and there were gigantic fights in the East End of London in the late 1940s that everyone in the East End of London knew about but which were never reported.

Today, upper class "historians" write about those glorious gals, the Mitfords, especially Unity, who worshipped Hitler and wore a diamond swastika, and Diana (Mosley's wife) who gave workers the Nazi salute in Hyde Park in 1936. They treat them with huge affection but also as loveable aristocratic eccentrics, silly gals who went astray because they were misled by that awful German guttersnipe, Adolf Hitler.

In this new age of a resurging right-wing political movement in Britain and Europe we should never trivialise, glorify or forget who these people were – or what they did. ●

# MY CHILDHOOD

His was a family where Oswald Mosley was God and anti-semitism a creed. In this essay, written for London's *Independent* newspaper in 1996, **Trevor Grundy** tells of his gruesome upbringing, how he escaped it and how he discovered his mother's appalling secret. A week after publication, he was invited to expand the story into the book, *Memoir Of A Fascist Childhood*

**W**hen I was in my late teens my father said to me: "The worst sound you'll ever hear in your life is the sound of a prison door closing behind you." When he was 32 years of age, he had heard that sound.

Sir Oswald Mosley, his Nordic masterpiece wife, Diana, and about 1,000 of his leading supporters in the British Union of Fascists (BUF) had been picked up by Special Branch between May and July 1940. My father went straight to Lewes Prison near Brighton and then to Wormwood Scrubs.

A few months later, my mother was told by Special Branch to report to a Home Affairs office in Brighton. They told her that she was a security risk. She might shine a torch or strike matches on the beach at night and guide in a German ship or submarine.

Almost penniless, although she received a small amount of money from the security people to support herself, my sister and myself, we left for London to live in a tiny place chosen by the police. But it was a good address, 66 Loudon Road, St John's Wood. She told us about a great man called Hitler who was trying to rescue us and release Mosley and daddy.

Many years later, my elder sister, Lovene, told me

that she had been taught by dad to say "Wir sind freunden". He thought that a few welcoming words would encourage the landing Germans.

When father came home in 1945, there was to be a huge street party with a bonfire, lemonade and biscuits

for every child in the area. I remember a furious row between my mother and father about whether we would be allowed to go to it. "They'll stick a Union Jack on his head and talk about Hitler," my mother shouted. My father – perhaps even then a little weary of the role he appeared to have been picked to play – argued that if I didn't go I would later be ostracised by all the kids of my age. At the end of the row, I remember my father dressing me in a grey suit and doing my tie. There is a photograph of me which shows a small boy with a Union Jack on his head – a paper Union Jack – smiling and somehow not smiling, wondering perhaps why his mother was not

with all the other mothers in the street

on that great day.

After the war, I was enrolled at a little primary school not far from the Swiss Cottage Tube station. In our class there was a small, dark, rather pretty girl who didn't say prayers at nine o'clock like the rest of us. In the playground, I called her a Jewish bitch. I was stood



Trevor Grundy: Fascist boy on his bike at Blandford Square

in front of the class and caned on the hands, three on the left, three on the right. There was never an attempt to find out why a child had used such words.

I told my parents one night, after suppressing tears for a week. “A right little Jew-baiter isn’t he, Edna?” my father said.

My mother was always a striking woman. She had met my father in the early Thirties, in the small Durham village of Seaton Sluice. He was a local boy studying for an external degree in theology at Durham University. Her origins were more obscure. She was a teenager then, and her family rarely mixed with the locals. Her younger sister was a dwarf, and she herself had been away working in London. Her mother was a stately-looking woman who used to wear a veil over her head and a black dress in the afternoons. People remember them as odd and foreign-looking, which is perhaps a key to her story.

One afternoon, she met me outside the school gates. She was clearly excited. “We’re going to live in a country called South Africa – you, Lovene, mummy, daddy, the Peronis, Victor Burgess, Jeffrey Ham, Bill Dodds ...” there was a string of names I had heard so many times in conversation – all heroes of the Mosley movement before the war.

The plan, I was told as we walked home, was to sail to South Africa, which would take about six weeks. Our fares would be paid by the South African government, and the man who was in charge of that wonderful, warm country was Dr Malan, who was a friend of The Leader and of Hitler. Hitler, said my mother, was still alive in South America, because Bill Dodds had heard him speaking on the BBC.

I told my girlfriend, Maureen, who was also eight:

“Don’t worry, we won’t be away for all that long because my dad says that we’ll come straight back when Mosley comes to power.”

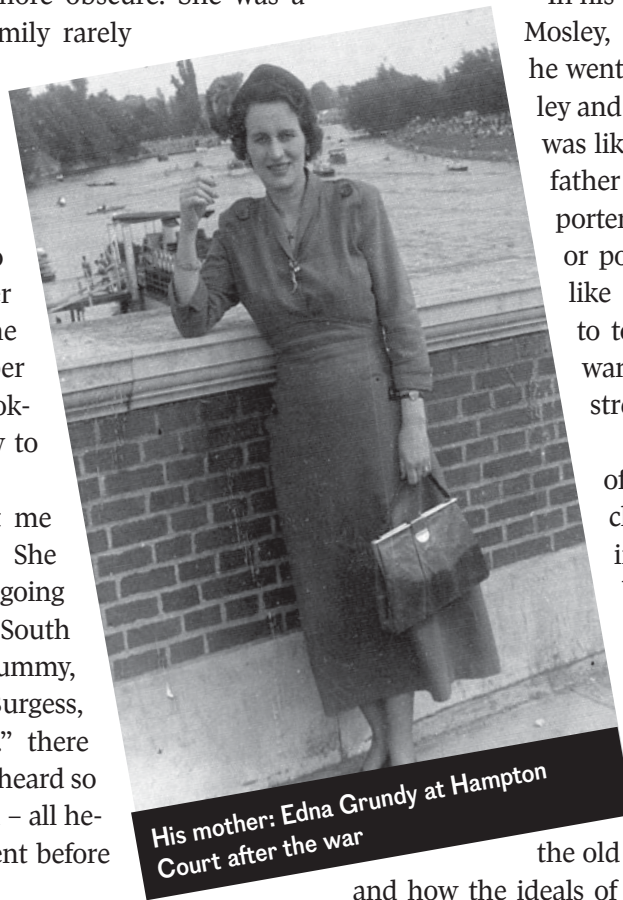
But our departure was pre-empted by Mosley himself. In 1948, aged 52, he decided to make a comeback. I remember being dressed in warm clothes and going with my sister, mother and father to Bethnal Green. We changed buses several times and were picked up in a car, and eventually – it was foggy and nearly everyone was smoking in the hall, where there were photographers with flash bulbs – Mosley appeared.

In his book *Beyond the Pale*, Nicholas Mosley, Oswald’s eldest son, said that he went to an East End pub with Mosley and Diana and experienced what it was like to walk into a room with his father and how some of Mosley’s supporters touched him to gain strength or power. He was right. It was just like that. My mother used to try to touch him and she’d say afterwards, at home: “That will give me strength till next year.”

How can I remember some of his words from that night so clearly? I can’t recall them being written down in any of the books about him. He pawed the air, a lion in a grey suit, and said that after all the suffering of the First World War young men had returned from the trenches to find the old men in power, and how corrupt

the old men from the old parties were and how the ideals of the war generation – his generation – had been scorned and how the same thing would happen again. But this time, Britain would turn to him because he had the knowledge and the skill to lead the people, and then he reached a kind of climax and exploded: “We have not lost, we’ve won ... we’ve won ourselves and that’s what matters.”

And after that meeting and dozens like it, the pub and the drinks (I was never kept outside for some reason), there were the stories of the great, towering days



His mother: Edna Grundy at Hampton Court after the war

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when Blackshirts in their hundreds of thousands had taught the yids a lesson or two at Cable Street in 1936 and how OM, the Leader, the Old Man, had held the biggest peace rally the world had ever seen, at Earl's Court in 1939. People would try and buy Mosley pints of beer, and his tiny little male secretary would monitor the flow of booze in his direction. He would sip slowly and talk about his pride at being able to lead the real people of England, the flower of the working class.

My father – I don't know how – got a long lease to act as a landlord at a house behind Marylebone Station. He had acquired a Leica camera and had a pitch at Hampton Court, where he worked seven days a week taking pictures of couples reunited. He worked just as hard at night, printing and developing what he had shot during the day. 1948 was the year he recovered from prison and started to do well financially, probably for the first time in his life.

The little secretary of the Movement used to ring my parents and ask if the Grundy family could host some of the children of the Nazi hierarchy who would be spending summer in London. We had the daughter of Otto Schortzeny, the man who rescued Mussolini in 1945. He became a big businessman in Franco's Spain. We had the son of a Dr Neumann, said to be the last German diplomat to see Dr Goebbels alive in the bunker, and once had the daughter of Himmler to tea. I can remember walking to Regent's Park with German boys who were wearing shiny leather coats, boys my age. I was told that Mosley used to pay for them while they were in London and my mother received quite a lot for looking after them.

In the top drawer of a large wooden sideboard in the front room, my father used to keep a knuckle-dust-

er and a Luger gun. The former had the word "Peggy" printed on it.

On a Saturday or a Sunday night he would meet Mosley boys and go to Speaker's Corner at Hyde Park. Those were the days when Donald Soper spoke for the Methodists. There was usually a Communist and a couple of what would now be called Charismatic Christians. First prize for the Mosleyites would be a Communist Jewish speaker. Arguments would be provoked and violence would follow. Often my father came home with his false teeth in his jacket pocket, his face badly bruised. He would restore Peggy to her rightful place in the top drawer.

The only time my father hit me was after I had taken his Luger to my grammar school, Archbishop Tenison's in Kennington, to show a couple of doubting Thomases in Form Two C. One of the boys must have reported me and the police came to the school. My father was ordered to take the Luger to Marylebone Police Station and hand it in forever.

My mother said that I was destined to become the Mosley of the Anglican Church. She cultivated vicars, but it was hard to find the right church for this rather strange family. We tried several, I remember, but every time Hitler was mentioned in a sermon we were told to

stand up and march out. My father had already given up the Church, having decided that it was Jew-ridden and corrupt.

Eventually, my mother did find a church that suited. She was very much in love with the vicar of a church near where we lived in Marylebone and I think, looking back, that he was in love with her – he was certainly fascinated, because he was in our first-floor flat three or four times a week.

I can't remember my mother or father having any real friends outside the Movement and my beautiful



sister was encouraged to only see boys or young men from the Movement. Eventually she married one.

When my parents did split for a time, when I was 12 and my sister 17, it came as an enormous relief. Edna and Lovene went briefly to stay with her vicar and I remained with my father, who told me one night, while he was cleaning his bicycle in the kitchen, that my mother had been with lots of men since he married her and that she was a bad woman. He also told me that my mother loved the vic-

ar, but that she would get a shock because he had found out that the vicar had a Jewish girlfriend and was going to marry her.

My sister told me much later that she prayed every night that my parents would divorce and end the rows, which were violent and, for us, extremely frightening. I told her that I used to pray that my father wasn't my real father and that I was really the son of Oswald Mosley, who was obviously some sort of magician – only when his name was mentioned would there be a semblance of peace in the house. When they learnt that Mosley would soon be in London for a speaking campaign, it was if they were young lovers again.

My mother would then take command of the Grundy fascist squadron while my father disappeared for days to Hampton Court, where he was having increasing difficulty holding on to his photographer's pitch because Jewish members of the "43" Group had found out that a Mosley man was working in the area with a camera and making money. He was later forced to give up street photography and become a telephone operator at Paddington Exchange. He went into a deep depression and became almost totally isolated, sleeping during

the day and working through the night while my mother continued to groom me for the Church by entertaining the vicar – until one night, with a terrible look on her face, she told me that the Rector, as she called him, was indeed to marry a Jewess.

She told me to go and see him and tell him that he was betraying Jesus by marrying a Jew, because the Jews had killed Jesus. I did that. I was 12 and a half.



In 1956, when I was 16, Sir Oswald Mosley made a mini-comeback during the Suez and Hungarian Revolution crises. He packed halls all over the country, meetings that were rarely mentioned in the national press. Mosley was on another anti-Jewish spin, blaming high finance and the Jews for masterminding a war against Nasser. "The same people who dragged us into the last war."

I remember looking around the large hall and seeing people who had come to jeer leaping to their feet and applauding Mosley's oratory. They probably talked for a few moments at the bus stop afterwards about a vast and wasted talent. There the matter would end, and I very much doubt that when Mosley

made his last bid to gain a parliamentary seat, in Notting Hill in 1959, the Movement had many more than 500 members throughout Britain.

The Notting Hill campaign was the last time that we as a family remained solid behind Mosley. My father retained a deep affection for him right to the end, but kept saying that Mosley wasn't serious about power and was switching to attack the West Indians in Notting Hill because he no longer had the guts to take on the Jews.

It was about that time my mother started suffering from deep depressions. And in their disillusion-



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ment, they grew surprisingly close, until my mother's depressions got so bad that my father said he could take it no longer. At that time he was doing "The Knowledge", and at 56 walked proudly into the house one day with a taxi driver's badge clipped to his jacket pocket.

My mother still often spent nights plodding the back streets of Notting Hill handing out leaflets, knocking on doors and urging people to vote for Mosley, who came bottom of the poll and was never a force again.

After Notting Hill, I drifted away from the Union Movement. I had enrolled as a part-time student at the City of London College, and when I ended a business course there got a job – a rather lowly job – with a news agency in London. For the first time in my life, I was mixing with people of my own age who had never heard of Oswald Mosley.

Everyone who ever grew fond of me urged me to get away, to leave home, to make a complete break with my family and start again, preferably away from England. A lovely girl, an art student from St Albans, once said to me after I had introduced her to my mother: "Leave now. The whole place has got the atmosphere of a bunker and I thought that a bomb was about to go off."

I left England in 1966 to start a new life in Zambia, then later in Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa and finally Zimbabwe, where I became a citizen in 1980, and apart from a brief and difficult year back in England in 1973 I never returned until 1996.

It was only after her death that I learnt that my mother was Jewish, though she had always known it and my father knew it from the moment he met her and fell passionately enough in love with her to leave his secure little English world of Seaton Sluice and Durham theology to risk all in Brighton to be with her. My father told me shortly before his own death that

her family could trace its way back to the Sephardic Jews of Spain.

Once or twice I had written to her from Dar es Salaam about the past and asked her why she had been such a fanatic and why she had hated the Jews so much (I even joked that she looked like one). She told me that one day when I came back to England she would tell me, but I left it too late.

I booked return tickets to London in 1970 for myself, my then wife and brand new son. Three days before we got on the plane, Lovene telephoned me from London. She was weeping. My mother had committed suicide, ending a frightful depression.

My father told me that during a dreadful row he had told her that he was going to tell me that she was a Jewess. "Trevor will never know," she said, or rather that's what my father said she said. The last time I saw my father, he said: "Your mother was a fanatic. She really hated the Jews, you know!"

We were in his small council flat and I was then alone with him in the front room. He poured himself a large scotch, then slid open the only bookshelf in the room and slightly turned down his stereo, which had been belting out Wagner.

"These are for you." He gave me his precious copy of Mosley's book *The Alternative*, which was signed by The Leader, and a picture book of Hitler, which he said might be worth several hundred pounds. Then he looked at me with his pale blue eyes, which had known a lot of pain and perhaps seen even more hatred. It was a look common to people in the Movement from Mosley down, a look which said: *I quite like you, but I don't really trust anyone anymore.*

I find it hard to recall his words, even harder to write them. He said: "When I'm dead, I don't want there to be any memories. I want nothing to show I ever walked the earth. Do you understand? No memories". ●



Tragedy looming: Edna Grundy not long before she killed herself

# LOVE, HATE AND THE LEADER

## Chapter One of **Memoir of a Fascist Childhood** by Trevor Grundy

**M**y mother said at supper, as if she were starting a fairy-tale: “If you want to know the truth, listen to what I tell you.”

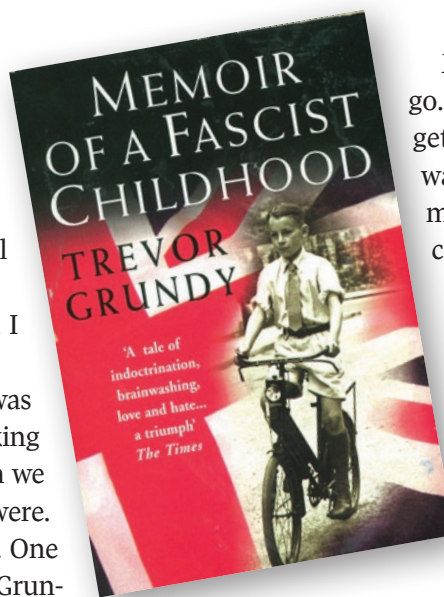
It was the summer of 1948 and I was eight years old.

“You were in your pram and I was pushing. Your father was walking along holding Lovene’s hand when we turned the corner and there they were. The Special Branch sitting in a car. One got out and asked, ‘Are you Sidney Grundy of 23 Buckingham Road, Brighton?’

“They let your father pack a few things and took him away. Before he left, he said, ‘Is this the right thing, Edna?’ And I said to him, ‘We’ll never betray The Leader.’ And they drove away with your father looking at me through the back window.”

I looked at my mother and wanted to burst with pride. Nothing could ever destroy this woman, this magnificent mother who was like a goddess. What courage when everyone else was going off to fight a Jewish war.

I had seen pictures of the men in tin hats in *Picture Post*; they were always smiling and smoking. Usually the women were crying or waving or giving the V-sign like Mr Churchill.



***Memoir Of A  
Fascist Childhood***  
Trevor Grundy  
Published  
by William  
Heinemann,  
London (1998)  
Arrow Books  
(1999)

My father hadn’t been so stupid as to go. Churchill had organized the war to get power. Churchill was Jewish but that was a secret only a few people knew. My mother, my father, Lovene, me and, of course, The Leader.

My mother put aside her knife and fork and acted out the parts.

“They let your father come home after six months. I never found out why. They stood him in front of a tribunal of old men, church people. I listened from the gallery and sent out vibes so he’d be strong and not weaken. One man said, ‘Doesn’t your conscience prick you, Mr Grundy, you safe in prison while everyone else is being bombed and everyone you went to school with fighting the Germans? Do you still object to fighting a man whose evil hordes are invading neutral countries, Mr Grundy. Neutral countries!’ “

I stopped eating and stared, knowing exactly when the earthquake would occur. My mother looked at me and turned her eyes into dark brown balls. My father called it her ‘Mosley look.’

“Then your father stared at me from the dock and said as loud as he could in front of all the church fuddy-duddies in Brighton: ‘As long as my Leader is in prison without trial, I will also stay in prison without trial.’ “

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She mimicked: “Take him away!” said the magistrate.” Take him away and lock him up until he sees sense. Next case!” and she banged her fist on the table making the fish cakes jump. “Next case!” and she banged the table even harder. Bonnie, our wire-haired fox terrier, whom my father had brought for thirteen guineas at a pet shop opposite the Classic Cinema in Baker Street, wagged her tail and barked.

After we’d eaten, my mother continued: “Two months after you were born, Trevor, in May 1940 Sir Oswald Mosley, the Leader, was arrested. And later his wife Diana, who’d just given birth to their second son, was picked up by the police.”

When Mummy told how Max, the baby, was separated from his mother who was carted off to prison, I gripped the edge of the wooden kitchen table. I felt that Max was my brother because we were the same age. My father went to prison almost exactly the same time as his. But Max was a bit better than me, even though he was one month younger, because his father was The Leader.

My mother said: “Lady Mosley was feeding him when a Special Branch man came and pulled Max off her breast.’ They hauled her off to prison. The two boys, Max and Alexander, were left without their mother and father and had to go into a home with a nanny,” and my mother’s dark eyes flashed with anger.

She told us these stories often, sometime with very little or no emotion in her voice but usually she acted it all out with great feeling. I would try to hold Lovene’s hand under the table but my beautiful dark-haired, brown-eyed sister, who was five years older than me, pushed me away. Just before my mother turned round from the sink Lovene mouthed the usual word which never failed to fix me in my chair: “Weed!”



**My father went to prison almost exactly the same time as his. But Max was a bit better than me, even though he was one month younger, because his father was The Leader**

My mother told us that one night, not long after the sirens had started and people in Brighton and elsewhere were digging holes four feet deep as bomb shelters and covering them with tin roofs, the Special Branch men came to the Grundy flat.

As she spoke my mother touched the top of her head and with both hands patted the sides of it, like a woman about to go on stage or deliver an important charity appeal into a microphone.

“I asked them what they wanted and one of them said, ‘You’ve got to leave Brighton.’ ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Because you’re a security risk. The Germans might invade and you could go down to the beach at night and shine a torch.’ ‘I haven’t got a torch,’ I said. ‘Have you ever heard of matches?’ he asked and I said, ‘Rubbish. Mosley told us all to do nothing to damage England even though we’re at war because of the Jews.’”

We knew the story by heart but Lovene and I always behaved as if it was the first time we’d heard it.

“So the three of us left Brighton for London by train.” She leant forward with her full lower lip resting on top of her crossed hands, which were already beginning to show the small lumps and bumps that signal the start of arthritis.

“Our new neighbours in London said to me: ‘So where’s your man?’ and I said that your father was on special duties and I’d been told not to tell anyone because of the Official Secrets Act. And then I’d ask, ‘And where’s your man?’ and one of them said, ‘He was killed at Dunkirk.’ I wanted to say, ‘You fools, if only you’d listened to Mosley.’

“Before he went to prison your father taught Lovene to speak a bit of German. What was it Lovene? ‘*Wir sind Freunde ...* we’re your friends.’ She laughed. “That was all your father could say in German.

That and *Sieg Heil*.”

I was two when we moved, Lovene seven and my mother thirty five, a strange little fatherless Fascist family heading for the London blitz. My mother said that the police found the flat for us, one room in a house, 66 Loudon Road, midway between St John’s Wood and Swiss Cottage.

Lovene attended a local primary school in the mornings and in the afternoons stayed with me while my mother went out on her own for long walks. Once or twice a week my mother would slip something sweet-tasting into my mouth when she was washing me. She told me that American friends gave her chewing gum and sometimes fruit sweets which tasted of real oranges or pears. Once I was clean, she’d stick a pink, prickly embrocation called Thermogene onto my chest, wrap sticking plaster over it and button up my shirt. It made me look overfed, even fat. She told Lovene, “Trevor’s like Uncle Rolly, he’s got a weak chest. If I don’t take care of him he’ll turn into a sickly child dependant on me for the rest of his life, or die of TB like your uncle.” She always made me wear a jacket and striped tie and even when it was quite hot outside I had to wear a thick overcoat because of my supposedly weak chest.

Sometimes I watched her staring out of the window when it was raining, which was most of the time. Even then I thought her an extremely beautiful woman with her auburn hair, perfectly shaped Roman nose, dark eyes, lovely soft skin and full figure. I remember that when we went across to the shops on the opposite side of Loudon Road, people treated her with respect. The butcher and the greengrocer let her pay ‘next week’, though I can’t remember her ever having any money in her purse.

When I turned four I heard women in



**Once she explained that a very great and good man called Hitler was trying to rescue Daddy and The Leader. After Hitler won the war, both would be released. Then the Jews would be for it**

the shops say that soon the war would be over. “Then we’ll show Mr Hitler who’s the boss,” laughed a big fat woman with red cheeks and blonde hair. She put her arm round my mother; I thought, “How unusual. I’ve never seen anyone touch my mother.” My mother winced as if she were in pain.

“It’ll be nice to have ‘em back again, won’t it, luv?” said the woman. My mother said nothing but pulled me along back to the flat as if I were a puppy on a lead.

At night, my mother opened the door of a small wooden cupboard next to the lavatory. When we heard the planes she would wake us up and we would all squeeze into the cupboard. She put her arms around us and the three of us would make a unit, a single cuddle. The doodle-bug was right overhead and we heard it whine, then silence and my mother counted: “Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one and ...”

Afterwards she told us that if you could hear the explosion you knew you were still alive. Once she explained that a very great and good man called Hitler was trying to rescue Daddy and The Leader. After Hitler won the war, both would be released. Then the Jews would be for it.

Towards the end, the bombing became so bad that a worried neighbour knocked on the door of our flat in her nightie. My mother left us alone in the cupboard.

“You shouldn’t be here on your own in there with two kids, missus. Your old man’s out there fighting for you and yours but this is taking a risk without reason. Come down to the shelter at the end of the road, we’ll fit you in.”

At the shelter, while the bombs piled onto London my restless and frightened nine-year old sister turned over in her top bunk and fell onto the concrete floor. She badly split her top lip and when the Ger-

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mans flew away again she was taken to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

When we went to visit her, the nurse asked my mother, “Can’t you send the children away somewhere, Mrs Grundy?”

My mother said she would write to her mother and father who lived outside Newcastle but several months later we were still at 66 Loudon Road.

In September 1944, a letter arrived. My mother read it slowly to herself and then told us to sit on the bed with her. I knew it was terribly important because on the back of the back of the envelope there was a crown. It was from the King. She read it aloud, without a hint of drama in her voice.

Sir,

*I am directed by the Secretary of State to inform you that the Restriction Order made against you under regulation 18A of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, has now been revoked.*

*I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant*

“Only a civil servant could lock you up for four years and sign himself, *Your Obedient Servant*,” my mother commented. “So your father will be home soon,” she added, gazing out of the window at the black, leafless, trees.

She put the letter on the mantelpiece next to the clock and a very small picture she had of The Leader, with his dark hair combed back and his fiercely intelligent eyes staring down a long Roman nose, just like my mother’s.

My mother had shown me a picture of my father wearing a black shirt before the war. His head was turned slightly sideways, revealing a very large nose, and his hair swept back and heavily greased in the style of the time. My mother said



**In September 1944, a letter arrived. My mother read it slowly to herself and then told us to sit on the bed with her. I knew it was terribly important because on the back of the back of the envelope there was a crown. It was from the King**

he had lovely pale blue eyes but that his lips were much too thin, “Just like his Scottish schoolmarm mother’s.” My father’s most outstanding feature, said my mother, looking down at the small photograph which she kept in an envelope in the drawer, were his hands. “He had the most beautiful hands and if he had been properly trained could have been a concert pianist. His father, your grandfather Grundy, was the church organist when we got married.”

Lovene and I had never seen our grandparents either on the Grundy of the family or on the mother’s side. She told us her maiden name was Maurice. She always emphasized the spelling “*ice*”, she’d say, verbally underlining the letters “i-c-e and not r-r-i-s.”

My father returned. He picked me up and looked me full in the face. “My God, Edna,” he said, he’s the double of Uncle Jamie.” I didn’t know if that was a good thing or a bad thing. I hadn’t met Uncle Jamie or any of our relatives.

My father put me down when Lovene came into the room. He cuddled her and kissed her face. He clearly adored her. He kept kissing the stitches on her upper lip. “My poor, poor darling,” he said.

He proudly announced to my mother that he had given up smoking in prison. “That’s why I’ve put on a few pounds.” My mother said that he’d soon lose them once he started working and got us somewhere decent to live.

That night I heard the bed creak and listened to them talking. I snuggled up to Lovene and whispered, “What are they doing?” and she nudged me and said, “Keep quiet and go to sleep. You always want to know everything.” I remember thinking that even though he was my father he had no right to be in bed with my

mother, making a noise like that.

In the morning he looked through the newspapers, searching for a job. Occasionally, while he was reading he would pull me towards him without looking up and I sat on his knee. “You don’t really know who I am, do you?” he said. “But I’ve been away most of your life, haven’t I, so we’ll have to get to know each other all over again.”

Not long after that the rows started. Angry words were exchanged in the tiny kitchen but at lunch or suppertime they would pretend that nothing had happened. My mother said that Lovene and I were too sensitive and that all mothers and fathers had rows. “Trouble is, you’re both Pisces. You were both born in March and you’re both fish swimming in opposite directions. It’s a watery sign and Pisceans usually end up being drunks.”

Lovene and I would find the stars column in the *Evening News*, *Evening Standard* or *The Star* and look for the double fish sign. It always said that we were nice people to know but too easily influenced by those around us. I said to Lovene: “I’ll never drink beer like Daddy because Mummy says I’ll be a drunkard like the man downstairs.”

On Victory Day every child in Loudon Road and the adjoining area was invited to a large street party. Tables were set up in the middle of the road and there were bottles of lemonade, red, white and blue cakes, pictures of Mr Churchill doing the V-sign and at least six Union Jacks hanging from shops opposite our house. A dozen or so yards from the table was a large bonfire and on it a stuffed effigy of a man with a moustache and a lank lock of hair falling over one side of his forehead. I had seen this man sitting next to the potatoes and cabbages in the greengrocer’s



**They’ll stick a Union Jack on his head and tell him lies about Hitler!” screamed my mother. “What did you go to prison for if you’re letting your only son be paraded in front of a burning Hitler?”**

shop and women coming and going said, “Morning, Adolf! Not feeling much like bombing us today, are we?”

The day before Victory Day my parents had a gigantic row. Lovene and I stood on the landing listening to the shouting.

“They’ll stick a Union Jack on his head and tell him lies about Hitler!” screamed my mother. “What did you go to prison for if you’re letting your only son be paraded in front of a burning Hitler?”

My father opened the flat door and told us to come inside. They both calmed down. They looked like Catherine Wheels that had burnt out and stopped spinning. As if to officially end the row my mother made a cup of tea and then sat staring into space. My father went out to buy an evening paper and Lovene and I played another instalment of a radio programme called *The Way to the Stars*. I was an RAF hero and Lovene was my girlfriend. Then we took it in turns to scrape the condensed milk tin and my mother said that we would both die of tin poisoning. My future was bleak. I’d become a drunk unless I was careful or suffer a slow, lingering death from tin poisoning.

On the morning of the celebration my father took me to the wash basin and combed my hair flat against my head, with a parting on the right which some of the kids in Loudon Road said was the girl’s side. He put me into a grey shirt and shorts and knotted my tie. At eleven o’clock he took me downstairs into the road and we joined a party of boys of my own age. A large woman with an enormous bust put her arm around my shoulders and pulled me towards her. “You from 66 are you, luvvie?” She put a paper Union Jack shaped like an upside-down ship on my head and someone took a photograph. My father walked away but turned several times to check that I

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was all right. Within a few minutes, I was standing on my own holding a sticky bun and a mug full of lemonade.

“Where’s your sister, then luvvie. What’s her name again? Something French?”

“Levy something,” said a man lifting an accordion from the back seat of a small car. “I think your dad must have made a few lady friends in France during the war to come up with a name like that.” They laughed and I remembered that my mother hadn’t said a word about Lovene attending the Victory Day parade. I wondered if it was for boys only but, no, there were plenty of girls Lovene’s age in the street that day.

After our lemonade and cakes the vicar said that we were gathered together on this wonderful day in 1945 to celebrate the end of the war and to praise God for making sure that good had once again triumphed over evil. He turned to the man with accordion and said, “I think ... now!”

The bonfire was lit and a vast orange flame leapt into the air and started to lick the face of the man with the moustache, who crackled, slumped and exploded. After a while he disappeared, to the cheers of the children and the roars of approval from mums and dads, the greengrocer, the butcher, the postman and a couple of policemen who looked old and tired in their dark blue uniforms and helmets. The vicar beamed at the man with the accordion and later pretended to conduct an orchestra. Everyone was singing but I sat quite silent and on my own.

*Hitler has only got one ball  
Goering has got one very small  
Himmler has something similar  
But poor Goebbels has no balls at all.*



**I laughed and clapped with everyone else and then the Union Jack cake was cut. I kept the icing for Lovene in my pocket and told myself to remember the words of the song because I was good at that. I would sing the sing to my mother when I got back home**

I laughed and clapped with everyone else and then the Union Jack cake was cut. I kept the icing for Lovene in my pocket and told myself to remember the words of the song because I was good at that. I would sing the sing to my mother when I got back home.

That would cheer her up.

In 1946 my father got a job with Kodak and was responsible for packing and loading films and photographic paper into lorries.

We left the flat in Loudon Road. My father signed a lease with the London North Eastern Railways and became the landlord of a tall, badly bombed Victorian house in Blandford Square, behind Marylebone Station. Although he did not own the house, once it was repaired – at his expense – he could make money by letting flats. My mother was overjoyed when told she would be the landlady. She emphasized the word *lady* in the same way she always emphasized the word *Sir* when she spoke about Mosley.

Our house, number 40, was large. It consisted of a basement, ground floor and three storeys above that. The front of the house looked upon what had once been a perfectly proportioned square, now spoilt by a tall railway building. At the end of the square there was a brick wall which looked onto the back of Marylebone Station. Immediately opposite in Harewood Avenue, was St Edward’s Convent, a grey and black stone building with towers and mysterious windows. From the outside it looked like a castle for ladies and their knights, rather than a home for nuns and their pretty but undernourished-looking novices.

Our flat occupied the ground floor of the house and consisted of a fairly large front room which doubled up as a bed-

room for my parents. When I was a child, until about the age of eleven, I slept in a single bed in a corner of that room. A thin wooden partition divided the front room from my sister's room, with its bed, wardrobe, table, record player and books – mainly about Vincent van Gogh, the Impressionists and the great musicians. Later, I was moved downstairs into the cold damp basement. My parents said it wasn't right that I should sleep in their room and so a small room was whitewashed, a bed was installed along with a table and chair where I could do my homework. In the summer it was cool, like sitting inside a refrigerator; in winter, it was deathly cold and I'd stay upstairs in the front room after school until it was bedtime, when I descended into the dungeon of the house.

Two flights of stairs up from our flat was the only bathroom in the house. Everyone used it. To get hot water you put pennies in a gas meter. Out of a large copper geyser flowed boiling water, until the money ran out and then it went icy cold. All the water pipes were outside the house and they usually froze over at Christmas time. Plumbers came to the house and seemed to take it over for days on end. With their blowlamps and tools they made the water unfreeze and run again, so that the lavatory could flush and baths be run one more. And if that failed, the residents of number 40, with many others from Blandford Square, could be seen walking off to Seymour Place, towels under their arms, heading for the public baths at the council swimming pool.

By the time we moved to Marylebone, the word "square" was inappropriate because three sides of the square had been amputated to make way for the station. My father spotted a picture of Blandford Square, a crayon drawing, in a book called *Great Houses of London*. It delighted



**People who lived in 'squares' would one day support *The Leader*, my mother said, but people who lived in 'places' were nearly always communists**

my mother, the landlady. My father told us that between 1860 and 1865 a woman called Mary Ann Evans, better known as the novelist George Eliot, had lived at 16 Blandford Square. Artists and writers, he assured us, had lived in and around the square until the station had been constructed, when they'd deserted the area for the more salubrious air of Hampstead and Highgate.

Behind Blandford Square was Sherborne Place, a maze of tiny houses converted into flats, where, my mother said, the 'poor people' lived. Proudly, she told us that in its glory Blandford Square had been protected from the eyes of the poor and envious by high, locked gates and only those rich enough to own houses in the square were allowed keys. The 'fancy people' lived in Blandford Square and their coachmen, servants and families lived in Sherborne Place. People who lived in 'squares' would one day support *The Leader*, my mother said, but people who lived in 'places' were nearly always communists.

At number 33, Mr and Mrs Adams lived with their son, Timothy, who was six months younger than me. He never stopped blinking. He was my first friend in Blandford Square and he was always being punished for something or other. Sometimes Tim wasn't allowed out of the house for days. He'd lean out of the top-flat window, wave and giggle. Then he'd be pulled back inside by his father, the window went down and the curtain closed.

My parents bought me a second-hand two-wheeler bike. I sat on it and pedalled carefully in case I wobbled, fell off and was called Weed by my sister. Tim waved frantically when he saw me. Once he opened the window half-way and shouted: "I can come out tomorrow." But as fast as



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it opened, it closed again. I kept my eyes straight ahead of me because I knew Mr Adams was watching.

When Tim was allowed out of the house we would go and play football with a tennis ball in Harewood Avenue, using the doors of the convent as goalposts. When we kicked the ball over the smoke-blackened stone wall a pretty young Irish nun would come to the gate, look through the grille and smile and frown at the same time. "This is the last time I'm giving you the ball back today, not do you hear me you naughty boys!"

Most Saturday mornings Tim and I went by bus to Swiss Cottage Odeon. For sixpence we watched Tom Mix, saw newsreels about the last days of the Germans and a vast range of cartoons. Before the show, we sang the Odeon Saturday Morning Club song which came up on the screen after the organist disappeared into the bowels of the earth. A white ball bounced over each word and we yelled out:

*We come along on Saturday mornings  
Greeting everybody with a smile.  
We come along on Saturday mornings  
Knowing it's all worthwhile.  
As members of the Odeon we all intend  
to be  
Good citizens when we grow up  
And champions of the free.  
We come along on Saturday morning  
Greeting everybody with a smile  
(That's right!)  
Greeting everybody with a smile.*

At the end of the show Tim and I stood to attention to stop the other children pushing past us, children who did not want to waste time standing up for the King. My mother said the King was there to protect people from Communists and



**I said to Tim.  
"She looks a bit  
like her but not  
really. Everyone  
in the Bible is  
Jewish and my  
mother isn't  
Jewish"**

Jews.

One Saturday morning before lunch Tim and I went to Bell Street. He found a very old Bible on one of the stalls. Tim believed that anything old must be expensive; he opened it at Kings and I pointed out an illustration. "She looks like your mother."

The colourful figure showed a dark woman in a shawl. Standing next to her in the kitchen was a small boy who looked ill. Next to the mother and son was a tall shining man in white with a long grey beard. His name was Elijah.

"A very great prophet," I told Tim, who said he had never heard of Elijah. "Don't you know about the miracle at Zarephath?" I asked. My mother had told me about it and said that if I knew the Bible I couldn't go wrong in life.

I said to Tim. "She looks a bit like her but not really. Everyone in the Bible is Jewish and my mother isn't Jewish." Then I added before we went out separate ways, "And she'd be furious if she knew you'd said that. Furious."

In 1946 my parents decided to send me to school at St Paul's, where Lovene was in the top class. At my interview I met Mr Walker, the school headmaster, who was a giant of a man with short iron-grey hair. He wore a tan coloured Harris Tweed jacket and trousers who made him look like a mountain bear.

His assistant, Mr Simon, was a sharp-faced man who rarely smiled. He wore a sports jacket, a red tie and circular, wire-rimmed spectacles, which clung to the end of his nose. During the interview he told my mother that he was well-qualified to teach at a grammar school but didn't want to. "I want to teach the children of the working class."

Mr Simon said that he liked Mr Atlee,

the Labour Prime Minister, but his personal heroes were a man called Morrison and another called Bevan who came from Wales. My mother kept remarkably quiet and listened to him with a Mosley-look on her face. She told Mr Walker that she was a *landlady* in Marylebone and that her personal hero was St Paul, which made Mr Walker look at Mr Simon and grin. He asked her why and she said: “When he found Jesus he never turned back and those who are the people who finally get things done in this world, Mr Simon.”

My father said he was delighted that I had got into a decent school at Swiss Cottage. But he warned me never to go to sleep on the bus because I’d get into big trouble if I ended up in Golders Green and didn’t have a special passport to be there.

I made a mental note to ask Mr Simons why.

Later that week to celebrate my entry to St Paul’s, the four of us went to an Indian restaurant off Regent’s Street, called Veraswamis.

At the entrance to the restaurant was a dark wooden chair shaped like an elephant and an Indian waiter told me that if I could pick it up I could take it home with me. “Indians are nice with kids,” said my father on the way home. “Yes, said my mother,” but they’d be even nicer if they were in their own country.”

The next morning and for the next three years, I put on my green school blazer with its red “SP” on the breast pocket, my school cap and picked up my satchel. I turned at the end of Blandford Square and waved to my mother, who was standing on the front doorstep. She called out my name, stood to attention and flung her right arm up into the air in a full Fascist salute. I returned it. “PJ” she shouted, Mosley-speak for ‘Perish Judah.’ I shouted it back and then ran down



**I often asked myself what I would do if I fell asleep on the bus and woke up in Golders Green and the conductor came up to me and said, “Passport please, passport”**

Harewood Avenue, past Marylebone Station, through Dorset Square and into the Abbey National entrance to Baker Street where I joined a queue of people waiting for buses to take them to St John’s Wood, Swiss Cottage, Finchley Road and Golders Green.

I often asked myself what I would do if I fell asleep on the bus and woke up in Golders Green and the conductor came up to me and said, “Passport please, passport.”

Once the floors were repaired at 40 Blandford Square people came to see the shell of the empty flats. They were delighted to move into a house so central, close to Baker Street, with a prestigious NW1 address and Ambassador telephone number.

A man who described himself as a colonel in the Free Polish Army moved into one flat with his effervescent French wife and grown-up daughter. Above them lived a single woman who my father said was the spitting image of the dancer Margot Fonteyn. In one half of the basement was a Scottish woman who had a different husband for every day of the week. She played the radio very loudly and ate so much garlic the house smelt.

In the other half of the basement lived a man who my mother said was one day going to be as famous as St Paul. His name was Jeffrey Hamm. My father didn’t charge Mr Hamm rent because he was one of Mosley’s most loyal followers and, with other leading members of the British Union of Fascists, had been in prison on the Isle of Man right through the war. Mr Hamm was extremely tall and thin and always wore the same jacket and trousers. He was planning to form a non-political organization for British ex-servicemen, even though he had not fought in the war. He lived with his wife, Lily, in a sin-

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gle room and shared an outside lavatory with the garlic eater, but they never complained about anything.

Mr Hamm sometimes spoke to me. He said that the future was with Britain's youth and that one day I might hear the greatest man England had ever produced speak. My father said that Mosley was a great man but he would never get anywhere in British politics because he had crossed swords with the Jews who would never forgive him. But Mr Hamm said: "The Leader's not looking for forgiveness. We were right, Mr Grundy. We were right and we are right."

My father told my mother that Jeffrey was wasting his life if he ever thought there would be a Mosley revival and about this time my father started bringing home maps from South Africa House in Trafalgar Square. Even though he was making good money for the first time in his life, he thought England was finished. "There's a big world out there, Edna," he said "and what's keeping us in this dump with Atlee and the Jews in control?"

One room in the house was full of photographic paper and hundreds of rolls of black and white film which my father sold for Kodak at the weekend to people he knew all around London. I was told not to tell anyone what was in the room. Then after quite a short time at Kodak, my father came home one night with two Leica cameras and told my mother that his days of working for other people were over. He had a pitch at Hampton Court and would take souvenir pictures of couples reunited after the war as they walked by the Thames. "I may as well make something out of the war." He laughed and my mother, the landlady, agreed to clean out a back room downstairs for him to use as a dark-room. A prison friend had taught my father how to develop and print pic-



**My father said that Mosley was a great man but he would never get anywhere in British politics because he had crossed swords with the Jews who would never forgive him**

tures and now he had a brass nameplate made for the front door and a rubber stamp, which he used to smack down on the back of his prints. They both read *S. Grundy Photographer*.

One afternoon as the school bell rang, I saw my mother standing at the gate. It was 1948 and Britain was recovering from a bitter winter during which the lake in Regent's Park had frozen over. Despite the cold, my mother was bubbling with excitement. She told me that Bill Dodds, a good-looking man with dark hair and a moustache, who was almost as tall as Mosley, had been twiddling the knobs on his powerful new radio set and had heard Hitler, speaking in German. Hitler had not killed himself in the bunker in 1945 but was alive in South Africa, or was it South America... Bill Dodds was not sure because there had been some static interference caused by Jewish technicians at the BBC which had banned mention of Hitler or Mosley after the war.

She told me that we, too, were going to live in South Africa. She would show me where it was on the map when we got home. The town was called Johannesburg, which meant 'City of Gold' and the whole place was under the control of a man called Dr Malan, who had supported Hitler and was a close friend of The Leader. We were going there with the Peroni and Dodds families from West Hampstead. There was a good chance we would be joined by a famous Mosley speaker called Victor Burgess, perhaps even by Jeffrey Hamm and others who had been in prison.

"Your father has been promised a good job. It's warm. The schools are good and there are servants because most of the black people don't have jobs."

The following morning I told my eight year old girlfriend Maureen that she would

have to find a new boyfriend. Tears filled her eyes when I told her about South Africa. But I also told her that my mother had promised we would come straight back to England when Mosley came to power and that would be about 1950, certainly no later than 1955. But then we would be fifteen, almost old enough to get married.

But it was The Leader himself who stopped our plan to leave England and go to South Africa.

One freezing night in February 1948, Jeffrey came up the stone basement stairs and knocked on the kitchen door. He had on his usual light sports jacket. My mother made him some soup and he ate it quickly with almost half a loaf of bread and margarine. He nervously pushed back his hair and sat perched on the edge of his chair. He told the Grundy family that he had some exciting news from Ireland where Mosley had gone to live after his release from prison. Mosley was returning to Britain, he told us, to start his new political organization. It was to be called Union Movement. Jeffrey Hamm had done much of the spadework by helping to set up bookshops which were distributing some of Mosley's pre-war books, his defence of his position and a new book called *The Alternative*.

Jeffrey said he had heard about our plan to move to South Africa but hoped that would not happen now because Mosley needed every man, woman and child, and with a smile on his Welsh face which was probably irresistible to women, he looked at me.

I remember glancing at my parents and then at Lovene, who was thirteen and mildly interested in a new life in South Africa but not wildly enthusiastic. She felt sorry for the blacks in that country.

My mother leant back in her chair and rested her head. My father stood up and



**Mosley was returning to Britain, he told us, to start his new political organization. It was to be called Union Movement**

for some reason, I thought he was going to hit Jeffrey, but he didn't. Instead he saluted him and went to a long, low, oak sideboard, which he had bought at an auction for a few pounds the week before. The cupboard had several drawers, some of them locked. My father returned with a bottle of whisky and poured a substantial amount of the golden liquid into three glasses. The adults stood up and raised their glasses and I stood up pretending I had a glass in my right hand.

My father said "The Leader!" and we responded, "The Leader!" I put my hand to my mouth and knocked it back.

It was a moment of great meaning and passion. I remember thinking that it must have been like this when the disciples were together in the locked room, when crowns of fire settled on their heads and they went out and spoke in tongues to people who were amazed. But Jesus was dead and Mosley was still alive. There he was on the mantelpiece, looking at me, rather thin-lipped, I thought, but with piercing eyes and a large right fist which looked as if he had just thumped the table and made the fish cakes bounce. It was signed 'O. Mosley' and was my mother's most precious possession. I watched her dust it at least three times a day.

Sometimes I would stand next to the mirror and try to imitate the Mosley look, even place my small fists in front of my chest and to look aggressive, determined, a man you wouldn't play around with too quickly.

"The Leader."

I looked up at Jeffrey whose glass was being refilled and then at my mother whose eyes were shining and whose voice sounded like music. The three were laughing and clinking glasses. There was a knock on the door and Lily Hamm came into the warm room looking pale and ner-

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vous, but after a while she too was laughing and drinking my father's whisky.

They came up the following evening with the dummy of a new newspaper which would be published and sold in London, a paper called *Union*, which would be edited by one of Mosley's important followers, a man called Raven Thomson who had written a book about Superman. The newspaper and the movement would be called 'Union' because Mosley's new policy was the unification of Europe, which would end centuries of division between the English and the French, the French and the Germans. Once united, the Europeans would pool their resources so there would be one vast European Empire, which would be bigger than the British and Roman Empires put together.

"The Leader!"

I could not remember a time in my life when I had not known his name, seen his picture or loved his heroism.

To the right of the mantelpiece from which Sir Oswald glared out at the world there were three seagulls: my mother once told me that when the great man Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland from Germany to try to stop the war, three seagulls flew alongside his plane. Next to the birds on a table was a picture of the Mosley Family at the home in Ireland: Sir Oswald, his wife Diana, Max and Alexander. Mosley was wearing a corduroy jacket and looked fit, even a little fat. Max was very thin but had obviously recovered well after being pulled from his mother's breast by the man from Special Branch. I was certain that if it we met, Max would be my best friend.

Before I went to bed that night, I asked my mother, "Why is Mr Hamm like St Paul?"

She kissed the side of my face and I breathed in the smell of lipstick and her



**The newspaper and the movement would be called 'Union' because Mosley's new policy was the unification of Europe, which would end centuries of division between the English and the French, the French and the Germans**

favourite face powder which was called Cream Puff Tempting Touch. "Because when Jesus died the disciples gave up and Peter denied him three times. It took Paul to get them all going again and that's what Mr Hamm is doing, getting them going again."

"But if Mr Hamm is St Paul, who was Jesus?"

My mother replied: "Mosley." Then she told me something which frightened me and which I would never forget. "You're not to tell people what we talk about in this house. It's all secret. People outside the Mosley movement would never ever understand. Just think that you and Lovene live in two worlds, this one and the world outside 40 Blandford Square."

I discovered that living in two separate worlds when you are eight years old is not easy.

The day after my mother's bedtime instructions, the history lesson at school was about great battles and great men in history. We had been told to ask our parents for their opinions. Mr Walker and Mr Simon sat in on the class.

Most of the children said that the greatest man of all time was Winston Churchill. Mr Walker smiled; Mr Simon looked grim, but applauded loudly when a boy called Hardy stood up and said that the greatest man in the world was Stalin.

Most of the children said that the greatest battle of all time was the Battle of Britain or the Normandy invasion.

At the end of the discussion, Mr Walker stood up in his tan tweed suit and said that he though the greatest battle of all time was Agincourt and that one day we would read about it in William Shakespeare's play *Henry V*. It was great, he told us, because it showed English people could easily beat foreigners if they had

the will power.

Mr Simon rose and said, as if he was addressing a rally of factory workers, that the greatest battle of all time was the Battle of Stalingrad, where Hitler's soldiers had been defeated by Russian peasants.

At the end of the lesson I raised my hand and said that I thought the greatest battle in history was fought at Cable Street in October 1936 when Oswald Mosley marched through the Jewish areas of the East End and where a man called Tommy Moran had knocked out twelve Communists before he was beaten to the floor by Jews.

The three teachers, Mr Walker, Mr Simon and another called Miss Hill, were stunned into silence. None of the children knew what I was talking about but I remember going beetroot red because I had betrayed my mother's instructions never, whatever the circumstances, to reveal what was spoken about at 40 Blandford Square.

Miss Hill blew a referee's whistle and the school was dismissed. As I left the classroom, Mr Simon said, "Grundy, come here, will you? Who told you..." then he stopped. I stood looking at him in silence, feeling the red in my face. Then he waved his hand and I was dismissed.

We went to the playground and put on our coloured team bands for a game of football which included the girls. In our team, the blues, was a pretty dark girl who stayed outside with the wet overcoats during morning prayers. Her name was Vilma and she looked a little like Lovene. She knew Maureen was my girlfriend; Maureen hated Vilma and said she was trying to make me her boyfriend.

A couple of days later Vilma came up to me and said, "My father told me that the greatest man the world has ever seen was Moses and that the greatest battle



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ever fought was when the Jews fought the Romans at Masada."

I thought: "This is how my mother talks."

"The Romans surrounded the Jews but they refused to give in so they killed the women and children and then the men killed themselves. My father told me that even though the Jews were beaten they weren't really because they kept their honour and dignity."

When I told my mother what Vilma had said she didn't look up from the frying pan. She was cooking sausages for supper. She said that with a name like Vilma the girl must be Jewish and that Jewish parents made their children say things like that, even when they weren't true. Then she did look up and said quite fiercely, which was strange because she hardly ever told me off, "I told you never to repeat a thing you heard in this house about The Leader."

It had been snowing, so I put on my galoshes over my normal school shoes but my feet were still freezing.

"I'm cold, Beamie." It was my private name for Lovene.

"You're so weedy," she said, buttoning up her school mackintosh which was about three sizes too small for her. "When Mummy had you she said I was getting a big brother. I don't know what she told me that. Look what I got," and she towered over me.

My mother was dressed in a fur coat which my father had bought her when the tenants had paid the final quarter of their annual rent a few days before Christmas. He was in a long dark woollen coat. Both wore flash and circle badges on their coat lapels. My father's was a simple silver badge symbolizing the 'flash of action in the circle of unity' or 'a flash in the pan'

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as the Communists called it. My mother wore a far more flamboyant design which incorporated the Roman fasces, the symbol of unity and power in the ancient world, on a Union Jack with the letters BUF on it, British Union of Fascists.

The four of us walked to Baker Street Underground Station where an elderly man who owned the shop where my mother bought her expensive face powder lifted his hat and said, “Good evening, Mrs Grundy.”

A few paces down the road my father muttered, “Jewboy.”

First we went to Oxford Street where we climbed up the escalators, which were not working because of the weather, and caught a bus to Trafalgar Square. For a few minutes we stood waiting in the cold outside the National Gallery until a small van stopped and the driver said, “In you get. Evening, Mrs Grundy. These two your nippers, are they then, Sid?”

We drove past St Martin-in-the-Fields and the enormous column with Nelson on the top looking towards Parliament. I thought, “Mosley will one day be in charge of Parliament, though he might decide to burn it down like Hitler.”

We were driven to a derelict part of the East End where I overheard the driver talking to my father. “This was some of the worst damage, Sid. The whole area around dockland was a write-off, but at least it’s forcing this bloody government to do something about housing.” He was providing a guided tour and I heard him say, “That’s where the Old Man spoke in ‘36,” and, “Ridley Road, Sid, Ridley Road on the left.” He turned to us in the back seat and said, “Great days, you two. Great days, coming again. Not long to wait. Great days.”

When he dropped us off, he told my father to catch another bus. Cars went past



**Suddenly there were hundreds of people, most of them laughing, slapping one another on the back and talking very loudly about ‘Commies’, ‘Yids’, ‘the good old days’ and the great days to come now that the Old Man, The Leader, was back.**

and I felt a wave of icy water hit my legs. Lovene glared at me so I said nothing.

My mother bent down to me and said, “In a few minutes you’ll see The Leader.”

Then a black van stopped in the road about ten yards from us. “Sid!” someone shouted. We got in but this time there were a dozen or so people in the back and some were drinking from Watney’s brown ale bottles and smoking cigarettes. We all got out when we reached a grey stone building and walked across the playground where some fresh snow had fallen on top of the black slush. My father stopped several times to greet people he knew as we moved into the main school hall.

Suddenly there were hundreds of people, most of them laughing, slapping one another on the back and talking very loudly about ‘Commies’, ‘Yids’, ‘the good old days’ and the great days to come now that the Old Man, The Leader, was back.

I noticed that while my father threw himself into the thick of things my mother stood to one side with Lovene and me, politely saying “good evening” to East Enders who wanted to take a closer look at her badge.

One old man knelt down and breathed straight into my face. “Gonna do a bit of Jew bashin’ when you’re older,” he leered.

There were Union Jacks and several flags with flash and circles on them set against a blood red background. My father said, “It’s unbelievable, Edna. At least a thousand people. Two thousand.”

Beside the stage were men with cameras and flashbulbs and every now and again, as one of them took a picture, silence would descend on the room, then the noise, shouting and a lot of laughter, would swell up again. Someone cried out:

*Two, four, six, eight  
Who do we appreciate?  
And then the thunderous answer:  
M-o-s-l-e-y  
MOSLEY!*

And then from another part of the room:

*One, two, three  
Four, five, six  
Who can stop those Jew boys' tricks  
MOSLEY!*

And then time and again:

*The Yids, the Yids!  
We gotta get rid of the Yids!*

Someone put on a scratched 78 rpm record. It was a song about Mosley and how he was the leader of millions of people in Britain. Very few people seemed to know the words but I'd heard the record played so often at 40 Blandford Square.

The reporters, still in their hats and coats, took notes. Suddenly the room was filled with the sound of a hymn which instantly froze the audience. Cameras clicked and the room turned white under the flashbulbs. After a few bars of music, I tugged my mother's sleeve, "*The Horst Wessel Song*, Mummy. Daddy's favourite." She had her eyes closed. Next to her a woman was crying and several of the men around us raised their right arms. I had never seen my father look so stern. He made his left hand into a fist and placed it over his chest, his English lips moving to this German song –

*Comrades, the voices of the dead  
battalions.  
Of those who fell  
That Britain might be great.*



**Suddenly the room was filled with the sound of a hymn which instantly froze the audience. Cameras clicked and the room turned white under the flashbulbs**

*Join in our song for they  
Still march in spirit with us  
And urge us one  
To join the Fascist state.*

When the word 'Fascist' was sung, the room went white again with flashing bulbs.

*They're of our blood  
And spirit of our spirit  
Flushed with the fight  
We proudly hail the dawn  
See over all the streets  
The Flash and Circle waving  
Triumphant standard  
Of a race re-born.*

At the end of it, Lovene said to me, "I've got to be at school in the morning and at this rate Mosley won't be here until midnight."

"But, Beamie," I replied, "Mummy says this is the greatest night in the whole of history."

Close by, I heard a man with a camera say, "Yes, I agree but Mosley wasn't a real Fascist, not a Fascist like Mussolini or Hitler. I'd say he was a quasi-Fascist. I mean, it was the time, wasn't it? Intelligent people were either Communists or Fascists, with not much between. Now, it's different. I take your point. It's different now."

A man in a trilby hat had a cigarette dangling from his lips but it didn't stop him talking quickly and aggressively. "It's the same old Mosley, believe you me. Still the same old Mosley, the Jew-baiter. You won't change that one. He's probably worse. They should never have let him out. He'd still be inside if he wasn't a friend of your mate Winston Churchill. I tell you, I went to a lot of this man's meetings before the war and you've never seen anything like it. Anyone who asked



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a question got thumped, got set on. Mosley not anti-Jewish. You must be bloody joking!”

A brilliant flash of white light came again but this time it was accompanied by a thunderous roar which must have been heard all over the East End. Mosley entered the room through a side door and walked towards where we were standing, smiling and half-saluting at the same time. As he passed, my mother reached out and touched him. He moved quickly forward towards the microphone which was set on a wooden stage more used to morning service and nativity plays. Mosley was smiling, nodding and raising his arm; smiling and holding his head high; and then almost bowing to his followers who were chanting, screaming and yelling their souls out of their bodies as he smiled and lifted his head in acknowledgment once more.

“I touched him. Now I’ve got the strength to carry on,” my mother said. “The last time I heard The Leader was at Earl’s Court in July 1939. It was the biggest rally for peace the world has ever seen and you were conceived that night.”

Mosley spoke to a hushed audience. Sometimes there was a flash but no-one took any notice. The photographers pressed forward to the front of the hall to be closer to Mosley, who looked down and signaled to his supporters to move aside so the journalists could move around more freely. He was a giant of a man, or so he seemed to me, and he pawed the air, a lion in a grey suit. Sometimes he snarled at the microphone. At other times he moved towards it as if he was going to deliver a kiss. Then he would put out his right arm like a boxer, using his left to defend his body.

Whenever he said the worlds ‘international Jewish finance’ there was a roar of



**Whenever he said the worlds ‘international Jewish finance’ there was a roar of approval. He repeated the words again, emphasizing all the syllables, ‘in-ter-national Jew-ish fi-nance!’**

approval. He repeated the words again, emphasizing all the syllables, ‘in-ter-national Jew-ish fi-nance!’ and he froze at the end of the sentence as the lights flashed and the audience went wild.

Mosley told everyone that night that Britain had been betrayed by the old men of the old parties and it didn’t matter whether Labour or the Conservatives were in power because it was the same difference as being run by Tweedledum or Tweedledee. His generation had gone to war against the Germans in 1914 and millions of British lives had been lost. When the survivors returned home, what did they find? The old men of the old parties in soft leather chairs, men who had made a fortune out of a war which had brought Britain to her knees.

Close to the end of the speech, which marked Mosley’s return to British politics as the leader of Union Movement, he dropped his voice and became intimate with those listening to him. Later my mother said that he used his voice like an instrument to make wonderful music which brought Mosley and his worshippers together.

“Everyone of us knew that everything for which we thought we’d fought had proved illusion, had proved betrayal. But, my friends, when we rose from that disaster of that experience what happened then? It mattered not. We have not lost, we’ve gained, we’ve won. We’ve won ourselves and that’s what matters.”

With those words he lifted the roof off the East End school hall.

I thought: “We must be like Vilma’s Jews who were beaten but who weren’t beaten because they kept their dignity and their honour. But if they kept their honour and dignity, why did they have to kill themselves?”

When Mosley left the stage a group

of men followed him and I noticed one of them was Jeffrey Hamm, another Alf Flockhart and another Bill Dodds. When we got outside into the cold and dark, there were hundreds of people milling around smoking, shaking hands and beating their arms around their bodies to keep warm. Motorbike riders returned after escorting Mosley half-way to his house in Chelsea and later rode off into the night.

We returned to Blandford Square by another circuitous route. My father said that after a meeting like that you couldn't be too careful because the Jews would be out in force and they had formed a vicious gang called the '43 Group. We had to watch out for them all the time.

We drank tea before we went to bed. Lovene was exhausted and said she wished she hadn't gone. She had a headache. She told my mother that she had never seen Mosley before in the flesh and she didn't really want to again. "He looks like a fox," she said. My mother said she couldn't believe her ears, her own daughter saying something so appalling about The Leader on the night he returned to Britain.

"A crafty fox," Lovene added.

"He only mentioned the Jews a couple of times, Edna," said my father. "Do you think he's gone soft? I mean, he virtually condemned Fascism and said we'd gone beyond it. Beyond Fascism . . . beyond de-



**In the playground the following day I called Vilma Cohen a Jewish bitch. She ran away and Mr Simon found her crying in the cloakroom**

mocracy . . . I'd say beyond comprehension. But he still knows how to work you up, doesn't he? But I'm beginning to wonder if this is the same OM, or whether he went soft in prison."

I climbed onto my father's knee to kiss him, goodnight, something I rarely did but this was a special occasion. I told him that if he thought Mosley had changed and wasn't still anti-Jewish he must be "bloody joking" and my parents laughed.

In the playground the following day I called Vilma Cohen a Jewish bitch. She ran away and Mr Simon found her crying in the cloakroom.

The next day I was placed in front of the school and caned by Mr Walker, three strokes on the right hand, three on the left. For the next week I was kept inside at lunchtime and made to write lines. Vilma was swiftly taken away from St Paul's and sent to a school for Jewish children in Golders Green, so I couldn't have said 'sorry' even if I'd wanted to.

A week later I told my parents what had happened and tears stung my cheeks as I spoke.

My father stared at me and there was a long silence. Then he looked at my mother and said,

"We've got a right little Jew-baiter here, haven't we Edna?" ●

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