

The author has been very successful in combining two at first sight different levels – the scientific and the popular – into a very interesting form. She works simultaneously with a scientific note apparatus and with quotations and examples from the sources. The rich colour illustrations and tables only emphasize the attractiveness of the work not only for the scientific, but especially for the wider reading public. Diana Duchoňová's work is an outstanding example of how propagation and popularization of science can and should be done on a very high expert level.

Viliam Čičaj

DRÁBIK, Jakub. *FAŠISTA: Příběh sira Oswalda Mosleyho (THE FASCIST: The story of Sir Oswald Mosley)*. Praha: Academia, 2017, 500 pages. ISBN 9788020026798.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/histcaso.2018.66.5.8>

Oswald Mosley's person is not unknown in historical research. But the potential importance of his person, in the modern history of Europe, disappears when compared to the more successful inter-war dictators who applied their political ideas at the head of states. Mosley's life was not exceptional just by failing to gain power. The publication, written by historian Jakub Drábik, points not only to the political life of Oswald Mosley.

The publication *The Fascist* can be divided into two forms. The first is about Mosley's transition between political parties. Mosley first served as a Conservative, then in the Labour Party, to finally end his career as a Fascist, who at the end of his life promoted a deformed and strictly British imperialist form of European integration.

In the second form, the author analyses the conditions of British parliamentarism and political culture, which could be preventive factors protecting society against the real success of Mosley's Fascist movement. He does so in particular by explaining the frontier position in which Mosley was located before setting up his most famous British Union of Fascists (BUF) project.

Jakub Drábik is engaged not only in the political career of Mosley but also in his private life. This is also evident in the titles of individual chapters. Words like Rebel, Fascist, Antisemite, Prisoner, etc. provide the reader with information about what period of Mosley's life the author is considering at the given place of publication. This interesting structure of the publication helps the reader to shape the picture of changes in Oswald Mosley's life attitudes in particular periods.

The positive feature of Drábik's publication is that it is not limited only to historical research. Interdisciplinary exploration of Mosley's motivation and the psychology of his personality is acting on the reader with a stimulating impression. However, the publication does not refer only to Oswald Mosley's life. A significant part is devoted to the British Fascist Union (BUF). The author notes many aspects of the organization's work, whether it is financing of the movement by Benito Mussolini or the story of the domestic sympathizers such as Lord Rothermere. In addition to describing the BUF's activities, the anti-fascist tradition of the United Kingdom is also remembered, but without un-

necessary glorification. In describing conflicts between the BUF and the anti-fascists, he also points to the role of the police and the state authorities. At the same time, the author also deconstructs some myths that are associated with the BUF activity (for example, the Cable Street Battle Legend).

The British Union of Fascists, despite Mussolini's support, was largely authentic. Many ideas and forms of the BUF expression were specific to the British environment and society, or derived directly from the visions and dictates of Oswald Mosley. An interesting element of the publication is the author's focus on the issue of anti-Semitism and its manifestations in the BUF. Anti-Semitism, which was ultimately Mosley's own, although manifested indirectly, could never be fully demonstrated in the UK. The majority of the British public never reflected on this subject. Jakub Drábik also addresses the defence of the state's establishment against the activities of the BUF. Whether it was surveillance by the secret services or the creation of new laws, the author emphasizes the international context, which often influenced the intensity and way the government dealt with Oswald Mosley's destructive activities.

With the outbreak of World War II, the situation also changed for the BUF. The independent position of the BUF towards the other fascist movements of that time in Europe is also indicated by the reaction to the outbreak of conflict in September 1939. Mosley himself offered his services to Britain. Jakub Drábik naturally deals with the attitude of the BUF and Mosley himself towards Nazi Germany at the beginning of the Second World War. He points to Mosley's statement of fidelity to the United Kingdom and effort to mediate peace, but at the same time, he also uses the secrets of the British intelligence services that saw Mosley's efforts as only a cover story. The fact that Mosley was seen as a potential threat is also shown by his imprisonment during part of the conflict.

At the end of the work, we learn about the tragicomic situation of a former prominent prisoner. Drábik follows the weakening and the gradual dispersal of the fascist movement and Mosley's transformation of it into a supposedly integrative peacekeeping movement to promote the survival of the legacy of the disintegrating British Empire. If we can balance between the populism and the aggressive fascism during the inter-war period, Mosley's life is dominated by a radical lack of self-criticism and the ability to evaluate his own abilities and influence. This rhetorically extraordinarily talented politician, considered a possible future prime minister by many at the beginning of his work, eventually ended up as an outsider. Drábik's dynamic and indeed well-funded processing of his life across a formative period of British and European history far exceeds the biographical genre. An important element of the entire publication is the author's objectivity. He does not bother with moral assessments but provides a balanced publication about one of the gifted British politicians who, however, was not successful because of his narcissism and undemocratic worldview.

Martin Posch