

EU arrogance proves we're right to be leaving

Iain Martin

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# Comment

## Mosley must face up to his poisonous past

Privacy campaigner's TV interview showed a failure to take responsibility for his role in his father's racist movement

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When I was a boy the ghosts of political graffiti were all over London. One sticks in my memory. It comprised a large circle with a vertical lightning flash in it and the three letters "KBW". When I asked about this symbol I was told that it had been painted by "the Mosleyites" and that the letters stood for "Keep Britain White".

This would have been around the time in 1961 that the 21-year-old Max Mosley was acting as election agent for Walter Hesketh, the candidate of the Union Movement in the Manchester Moss Side by-election. The Movement, founded by his father, Sir Oswald Mosley, was seen as the toned-down successor to the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists.

Forty-seven years later the by-election was mentioned in a court case brought by Mr Mosley against the *News of the World* concerning an orgy involving him and five women. The *News of the World*, which closed in 2011, was owned by the same company as *The Times*. In contention was the suggestion that there was a "Nazi" flavour to the orgy. The judge decided there was not but Mr Mosley was asked by the newspaper's barrister if it was true "that leaflets were put out alleging that coloured immigrants brought leprosy, syphilis and TB?" "That," replied Mosley, "is absolute nonsense".

This week the leaflet itself finally surfaced. It is largely anti-immigrant and one section reads, "There is no medical check on immigration. Tuberculosis, V.D. and other terrible diseases like leprosy are on the increase. Coloured immigration threatens your children's health." At the bottom, named as publisher, is Max Mosley.

Mr Mosley is no coward. On Tuesday night he appeared live on *Channel 4 News* to answer questions about the leaflet. The interview that took place was fascinating in every way — psychologically, legally, historically and politically.

In the first instance he doubted the provenance of the leaflet, of which the presenter Cathy Newman had a photocopy. It would be interesting to test it forensically. And he had not, he said angrily, perjured himself. In court "I said, which was absolutely true, that it was complete nonsense and that was my recollection and it

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still is my recollection. I'm not sure it's genuine."

His tone from beginning to end was indignant. He had, he said, "never been a racist". But then, he added, despite not being racist he had changed his mind on race. "You are entitled as you get older," he said, "to change your view. It is outrageous..." But he didn't finish his sentence.

Who can argue with a change of heart? But first you have to acknowledge the thing you were. Like Trevor Grundy, who was born two months before Max Mosley, in a family of Mosley foot-soldiers. In

his wonderfully candid book *Memoir of a Fascist Childhood* Grundy recalls how his parents took him, at the age of eight, to the rally where Sir Oswald launched the Union Movement (UM). It was 1948. After a while, the audience began chanting the old BUF slogan, "The Yids, the Yids, we've got to get rid of the Yids". Then someone started up with the movement's song. Those of you who know the tune of the Horst Wessel Song can sing along:

"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 reborn."

The flash and circle. Keep Britain White. Bear those in mind. By 1956 Grundy was a speaker at street corners and a UM activist. In that year he went with others into London to paint slogans. One companion was a boy he'd never seen before, "tall slim with golden hair." When they got out to paint their slogans this youth immediately painted a "huge white flash and circle" — triumphant standard of a race reborn. It was the 16-year-old Max Mosley.

By 1959 Grundy and Mosley were involved in Mosley Snr's campaign to win the parliamentary seat of North Kensington. Only months before the area had experienced rioting by white youths against West Indians. Sir Oswald's son Nicholas recalled later his father raving during the campaign about "teenage girls being kept by gangs of blacks in attics". Grundy remembered Oswald joking from the platform, "Lassie for dogs, Kitekat for wogs." Mosley finished a poor fourth.

In 1961 came the Moss Side



Max Mosley pictured around the time of the Moss Side by-election in 1961

by-election. Then, in 1962 Max was arrested at one of his father's rallies in London. A Pathé News report appears to show him throwing a punch during a street fracas. "Max", recalled Nicholas, "was acting as one of his father's right-hand men at this time."

A year later Max gave up far-right politics and carved out a successful career in motor racing.

Of course the leaflet cited in court and uncovered this week was genuine. Nor was it some aberration but absolutely typical of the political party in which Max Mosley was a leading figure. The Union Movement that published it was not only racist itself but almost frantically sought to stir up racism in support of Sir Oswald's wider philosophy. Of course Max Mosley knew all that at the time.

Yes, he was young (as jihadists are often young), in thrall to his charismatic father and entitled subsequently to change his views. But he is not entitled to change history — not even his own history. And that is what he seems at all points to want to do. At least part of his campaign against the press and the search engine Google seems to be motivated by a belief that bringing up the inconvenient past is somehow "outrageous".

In court in 2008, whatever he said, Mosley had every reason to suspect that the vile racist leaflet being referred to was one of his. If he had then made a full account of his past beliefs and attitudes, had acknowledged them for the poison that they were, no one could have reproached him. But instead he did something else. He took the path of angry denial, obfuscation and legal threats. This has undone him.

Just before Trevor Grundy's blackshirt father died in 1991, he handed over to his son a leatherbound book on Hitler and a signed copy of Oswald Mosley's *The Alternative*. And he said, "When I'm dead I don't want there to be any memories. Do you understand? No memories."

Grundy ignored his father's pleas and kept the memories alive. Writers know that attempts to erase history should always be resisted. And Grundy also acknowledged and atoned for his former fascist beliefs. If only Mosley could do the same.

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