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Collinson, Marc

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A ‘fertile ground for poisonous doctrines’?[1] Understanding far-right electoral appeal in the south Pennine textile belt, c.1967-1979

Historical far-right organisations have long proved pervasive, but are rarely interpreted as competitive political parties. While these minority parties and movements never secured significant representation, they influenced municipal and constituency political activity. Focusing on the ‘textile belt’ of Eastern Lancashire and West Yorkshire, this article seeks to understand how far-right organisations engaged in local electoral politics. It considers the influence of regional economic changes, caused by industrial realignment, and how opponents, primarily local Labour parties, interpreted post-war fascism and the concerns it engendered. The article then examines the growing influence of Labour’s anti-fascist campaigns, the popular appeal of far-right politics, and the composition of such group’s memberships. As far-right institutional archives are limited, the article uses material produced by predominant local Labour parties. Alongside providing new perspectives, it encourages scholars to interpret far-right organisations as electoral actors, rather than mere cultural and political pariahs.

Keywords: National Front; Far-right; Decline; Yorkshire; Lancashire.

Introduction

British far-right organisations have seldom endured, while historical reassessments of them remain uneven.[2] Great fascination in the British Union of Fascists (BUF) continues, making it becoming the third most written about group after the German Nazi party and Mussolini’s Fascist Movement.[3] However, the attempted post-war revivals Oswald Mosley and Neo-Nazism during the 1950s and 1960s have inspired some rigorous interventions, engaging with new sources and innovative approaches.[4] Similarly, thorough reinterpretations of anti-fascist activism, understanding how opponents have reconsidered the activities of far-right groups, have reignited debates

about the very meaning of fascism.[5] Although these do not compare with the quantity of outputs related to the BUF, they have informed serious historical debate regarding how and why far-right extremism remained pervasive. Much of this retains a national focus, with local case studies limited to contemporaneous studies with little perspective.[6] There is, therefore, great opportunity to contribute to this growing literature of fascist studies within a British local and regional context.

Although further analyses of their activities problematic, due to a restricted source base, inter-disciplinary readings have provided new frameworks for renewed investigation. Electoral geographers have proposed that local socio-economic conditions and electoral patterns are both interdependent and inseparable.[7] Journalistic reportage and activist memoirs have advanced colourful accounts of idiosyncratic political cultures.[8] Social researchers, often writing during peak National Front newsworthiness in the mid-1970s, provided urgent and immediate analyses.[9] However, as political history, their perspective is limited, and current academic interest in the far right mainly focuses on present-day politics. Often national surveys, these primarily interpreted published material and dedicated polling data, but lacked access to institutional records.[10] Such contemporaneous studies focus interprets such organisations in their present or very recent past.[11] More recently, scholars of historic anti-fascism have primarily examined non-Labour opposition to the far right, interacting with Labour activism at the strategic, national level.[12] Any renewed scholarship, therefore, requires alternative sources and approaches.

In many cases, archival evidence is scarce, with far-right organisations rarely depositing unpublished records. However, alternative evidence exists for examining historic fascist group activities. Previously, local and regional case studies have illuminated the often ‘polymorphic nature’ of interwar fascism.[13] Similar considerations

must be applied to studies of the National Front. Geographically, their voters were concentrated in the same troubled heavy industrial areas, primarily the Pennine textile towns, Midland manufacturing districts, and parts of East London.[14] While London has received most attention due to the density of Front support, a commonality is that activity was present in many Labour party heartlands.[15]

In such seats, constituency Labour parties (CLPs) recorded, often at length, the issues, pressures, and organisations achieving electoral purchase among local voters. Although these sources are problematic, their strength is that they provide opinions and perspectives otherwise forgotten.[16] Often underexploited, they provide a rich, distinctive, and politically aware commentary of local electoral dynamics and political activity.[17] As National Front candidates participated in elections against local Labour candidates, CLP minute books recorded the concerns they engendered. This encourages interpretation of the relationship between influential local factors, such as socio-economic change at the local level and socio-cultural and political peculiarities, to determine the National Front's electoral appeal in the 1970s.

When studying political organisations, terminology is important, and requires definition. This article uses the term 'far-right' as an umbrella to describe and discuss the activities of the National Front and similar organisations, accounting for their views on migration and race. It takes in the world-views of members who considered themselves 'fascists' and 'Nazis', alongside fellow-travelling populists, authoritarian nationalists, and organised intolerants.[18] Defining the historic far right is difficult. However, work undertaken among political scientists, differentiating between a 'radical right' (populists) and an 'extreme right' (fascists) has proved significant. [19] While accepting Herbert Kitschelt's caution regarding the historicist origins of interwar fascism, the National Front clearly grew out of the union of a number of smaller fascist

groups, as anti-fascist group publicity campaigns often reminded them, with a leadership drawn from the memberships of these fascistic, predecessor, organisations.[20] For the historian, drawing on these useful nuances reinforces complexities present in the evidence.

Post war, ‘fascism’ remained a protean and flexible term, but greater subtlety is required to locate fellow travellers.[21] Some groups discussed in this article, such as the Yorkshire Campaign to Stop Immigration, were Powellite radical populists, while other National Front antecedents were clearly of fascistic origin.[22] There is also a practical reason, as how their voters and supporters perceived them was important. As with the French far right, the recentness of the Second World War forced these organisations to design policies obscuring some members more fascist inclinations, for obvious reasons.[23] However, as this does not mean that their leaderships ceased to be fascists in worldview, but that they presented themselves as something else. Only through examining localised, far-right political activity is it possible to discern the impact of their appeals to voters. To better interpret localised electoral dynamics, this article considers the south Pennine textile belt, located along the border between Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire.[24]

Intense industrialisation, focused in wool, worsted, and cotton, alongside associated dying and commercial industries, created mill towns with unique political cultures.[25] While textiles were not such settlements only industries, wool and cotton were fundamental to their development, informing local cultures and stereotypes.[26] By using a case study, we also avoid generalisation and nation-centric focus.[27] Similarly, taking in a broader, regional case study, larger than a solitary settlement, addresses problems inbuilt into the single case study through illuminating deeper, comparative issues, affecting similar but different localities in diverse ways.[28] For example, a

researcher can consider how the National Front sold an economic 'policy' simplifying international finance management along racial lines to unemployed textile workers in the south Pennines.[29] To do this, the article explores historical upsurges of anti-migrant activities in the south Pennine textile belt, and the institutional origins of the National Front. It then discusses the importance of political and socio-economic realignments in 1970s Britain to the far right's attempts to garner sufficient electoral appeal to concern established parties. Finally, it examines the nature of Labour anti-racist campaigns in the textile belt in the late 1970s, to interpret how mainstream, party-political activists interpreted and addressed far-right appeals.

Regional political culture and origins of the National Front

The electoral purchase of anti-migrant sentiment, which underpinned the popular appeal of the National Front, was neither new nor revolutionary in the south Pennine borderlands. Before 1914, anti-Irish discrimination had sometimes erupted into violence, such as the 1860's Murphy Riots.[30] Volatile anti-migrant politics had a long history, but none was more prescient than Sir Oswald Mosley's BUF. Despite some exaggeration of their influence, they possessed some appeal in Northern England.[31] Through intricate rhetorical strategies, the BUF capitalised on interlinked opportunities provided by the Great Depression, ineffective established parties, and popular dissatisfaction.

Mosley's party constructed a multi-layered appeal, which did not require all voters to purchase its darker, ideological elements.[32] Similar complexities were existent with its membership. Not all fitted the Wodehousian stereotypes of heavy drinking, criminality, and extreme viewpoints. Many reflected popular concerns regarding deprivation and unemployment, seeing fascism as an untried, potential antidote to the Great Depression.[33] This idiosyncratic mix of apparent concern, 'real' experience, and

ideology had potential appeal in areas of economic trouble, particularly southern Lancashire.

It is worth dwelling on the appeal of the BUF, as the National Front reinterpreted many of its ideas and strategies. Similarly, Labour adopted similar approaches to those utilised in the 1930s to combat them. Fascism's ideological elasticity facilitated the construction of a complicated, if limited, electoral coalition that played on the concerns of working class Conservatives and industrial workers generally. Importantly for the textile belt, its working class support in these areas involved many trades linked to the cotton, wool and associated industries, including chemical workers, mechanics, and mill workers themselves.[34] BUF rhetoric problematized global markets, foreign competition, and limited state support for industry and infrastructure, and argued a 'Corporative State' within the British Empire would save the ailing textile industry.[35] It appealed to those who feared socialism and felt attacked by capital.[36] By 1934, Lancashire branches had significant memberships, forming the hub of BUF activity.[37]

Regional historical context was important here. At this time, the south Pennine's once world-leading textile industry appeared in decline. Contemporaneously, BUF activists became very effective in articulating the concerns various demographics' during the south Lancashire 'cotton campaigns' of the mid-1930s.[38] At the time, many local Labour parties maintained an internationalist critique of fascism that differed little from is interpretation of other extreme groups.[39] Its 1933 national party statement conceptualised Mosley's activities and in terms of authoritarian dictatorship, and applied similar terminology to Communism.[40] This simultaneously underlined their philosophical opposition to fascism and unwillingness to collaborate in a popular front with other left wing groupings. This created initial political space for BUF activity,

giving it room to grow without directly opposing it. However, through what Nigel Copsey has termed Labour's 'legalist anti-fascism', the party's adherence to constitutional norms acted to reinforced Britain's Parliamentary, liberal democratic consensus against extra-parliamentary extremism at both ends of political spectrum.[41] The politics of the ballot box and the division lobby were prioritised over that of the street.

Through this approach, Labour denied the BUF political space to develop their political appeal by avoiding formal involvement in anti-fascist protest (although some members did take part in a personal capacity). This strategy ensured that no traditional, parliamentary parties appeared on an equal footing with the fascists, to avoid gifting Mosley greater respectability. Local parties replicated this approach, only discussing BUF activities when a march took place nearby and when Labour local authorities denied fascists public building meeting space. All the while, national party literature focused on European (not neighbourhood) instances of fascism.[42] BUF campaigns were rarely considered a threat, appearing sporadic and circumstantial, dependent on the availability of capital, willing activists, and specific economic circumstances. However, Depression-era northern England's high unemployment ensured fascist leaders retained their interest in the area for both membership recruitment and potential voters.

Financially and organisationally, the BUF received support from the local elite, with members of the Lancashire Cotton Exchange and Lancashire-born aviator and entrepreneur A.V. Roe financing Mosley's ambitions.[43] In fact, when BUF national popularity faded after 1934, Mosley considered moving his headquarters to Manchester, to be closer to assumed support in Lancashire and Yorkshire.[44] By 1934, after Labour sent out a questionnaire to local parties to discern BUF strength, they appeared less concerned by fascist appeal.[45] BUF support was clearly in decline between 1934 and

1937.[46] This demonstrated a decline in party support even before the passage of the Public Order Act (1936), which prohibited political uniforms, militarized organisations and governed acceptable behaviour at processions and public meetings.

Despite this, BUF leaders continued to hope Lancashire proved amenable to its appeals. As late as 1938, with 12.9 per cent unemployment and one-third of cotton weaving capacity and one-quarter of spinning capacity unused, Mosley undertook recruitment campaigns in Lancashire.[47] These were unsuccessful, and BUF appeal declined despite continued economic problems. Although the war lessened unemployment statistics, BUF electoral appeal had clearly dissipated long before 1939. Within the context of the article, however, BUF activities demonstrated that far-right policies and methods were neither original nor path breaking; lessons learned addressing it influenced Labour's later approach in the 1970s.

Although the war had a counter-cyclical effect on British industry, with some improvement during the late 1940s and early 1950s, problems in several Lancashire towns such as Preston had recurred by the 1955 election. Workers were on short time and mills were shutting down, creating a localised electoral problem.[48] Labour promised full employment for cotton workers and suggested government intervention was required.[49] Similar concerns existed in Yorkshire, where the regional Labour party later argued for diversification in response to the decline of its wool-dominated textile industry.[50] However, despite their concern, this never really materialised into political support. It was during this period that migrant workers started taking jobs in the industry, often aided by their own governments.[51] Prospective employees were attracted by comparatively well paid opportunities that in Britain no longer supported the job security and living standards expected by working-class communities.[52] For a while, this even led to a short-term boom.

By the mid-1960s, there existed potential support for a movement that opposed immigration. An effective political consensus after 1965 remained acceptable to both main parties, but not necessarily the public.[53] Labour's polling expert Mark Abrams briefed a party policy-making study group that 80 per cent of white adults approved of restrictions, 40 per cent believed there should be a 'complete ban on coloured immigration', and 75 per cent believed that restrictions were not tough enough.[54] Immigration controls potential appeal to these voters was, therefore, significant and concerned leading party officials. The simultaneous popularity of Enoch Powell, post-'Rivers of Blood' speech, had a catalytic effect and facilitated greater appeal for stricter immigration controls.[55] Immigration was now a major political issue, and the main parties had to redevelop platforms, addressing this reality, to appeal to their voters. While uncompromising 'immigration control' had great appeal, how this translated into votes was unclear. In the post-war textile belt, what was apparent was that local economies were under pressure, and this affected local politics.

Economic, social, and cultural convulsions from the early 1960s, and the failure of government to act convincingly, created opportunities for those seeking to replace established parties. Throughout its existence, National Front literature pointed to Labour's 1920s displacement of the Liberal party as a major party to evidence the feasibility of its political ambitions.[56] However, greater far-right unity was required. By 1967, this encouraged various small groupings of radical conservatives, still-committed imperialists, and Hitlerite fanatics to form a new alignment.[57] In both local and national elections, the now 'National Front' and similar candidates attracted voters, which although comparatively insignificant, concerned the Labour party locally and nationally.[58] It constructed a policy platform around a more radical approach to immigration, opposing what it considered the liberal, bipartisan approach of the major

parties.[59] While its criticisms of British society and government during the 1970s views reflected those held by many voters, its totalitarian ambitions and divisiveness appeared less so.[60] From the outset, whether its Mosley-esque demands for revolutionary transformation and racial purity had direct electoral appeal was less clear.

Political change and growing anti-immigrant sentiment, 1967-1976

Representative politics rarely stagnate, even if parties do. Fluid in nature, constant renegotiations between electors and those seeking election determined concerns, priorities, and approaches to problems.[61] When voters felt abandoned or unrepresented, therefore, opportunities for extremists of varied stripes appeared. By examining electoral politics, therefore, it is possible to discern how party politics realigned between 1967 and 1976, when far-right parties began to attract votes. After examining the national picture, and the significance of immigration control as a political issue, focus must remain at the local level. Whether other local parties and candidates were popular and effective determined electoral purchase of a far-right platform. However, before 1973, such groups performance requires disaggregation. While many of them later merged into the National Front, they were un-integrated at this time. Therefore, they must be interpreted as independent organisations, autonomous of any reductionist, 'national' explanation. Similarly, we must consider the extent to which local political parties reflected local peculiarities, problems, and political dynamics.

Labour party politics in the textile belt underwent significant economic and demographic change in the post-war years, which influenced the composition of local parties, affecting both internal party and local political culture. [62] More affluent working class members moved to the suburbs and traditional employment patterns altered, while growing numbers of middle-class activists, particularly in university towns, joined local parties.[63] To an extent, local changes affected party membership. The closure of

unionised industries disconnected their workforces from clear influence within the labour movement, and declining interest in political activity weakening the activist base of local party organisations.[64] Community-level changes interacted with a changing national political landscape. Labour's poor electoral record in the 1950s, the unpopularity of its policies in government, and nationwide organisational changes away from constituency activism, left local parties less reflective of alerted local demographics.[65] Textile belt parties reflected national trends, with declining memberships and limited funds destabilising constituency and ward-level parties, which concerned regional-level party organisers.[66] Changes in the employment, residence, and political inclinations of both working and middle class members and voters reflected wider social changes, and constrained Labour's traditional appeal. However, while this context was important, the divisiveness of some political issues emphasised cleavages already present among Labour's electoral coalition.

By 1968, immigration was such an issue. Many party members and voters, even in constituencies untouched by immigration, appreciated the impact of Powell's rhetoric.[67] Meanwhile, left-wing members opposed the Labour Government giving any ground whatsoever. For example, James Callaghan's Commonwealth Immigration Act (1968) seen as illiberal and unbecoming of a socialist party.[68] Yet, despite this legislation and the Conservatives' 1971 Immigration Act, National Front leaders rightly determined that many voters believed existing immigration controls were insufficient.[69] Immigration was not the political issue it had been in 1968, but retained a degree of salience amongst other great issues of the day, including Vietnam, Northern Ireland, and Britain's economic problems.[70] It was into the political space provided by apparent main party consensus that a united anti-immigration party campaigned in areas with large immigration problems.

In Bradford West, post-war immigration affected two out of four wards. It had the seventh highest percentage of immigrant voters in a UK constituency, and was a safe Labour seat after the boundary changes of 1974.[71] In 1970, however, ward-level parties in Bradford Moor, Little Horton, Great Horton, and Manningham barely met or functioned.[72] Dwindling memberships and underfunding undermined local activism.[73] Alongside this, in parties like the Leeds Borough party, only 10 per cent of members were 'willing to work', of more than 500 members needed to maintain solvency.[74] These understaffed parties in the textile belt were unable to interact with voters, and their union affiliates only reflected certain industries. Labour had underdeveloped historic linkages with textile worker unions, which rarely affiliated to the party or sponsored MPs; leaving local parties less attuned to their concerns.[75] Similarly, that MPs rarely visited or held surgeries compounded existent CLP organisational issues.[76] Interactions between MPs, party members, and electors were, therefore, underdeveloped.

Political participation had dwindled in post-war Britain. Prospective party members appeared disinterested, and some CLP officers were unwilling to recruit new members, who would undermine their control over local party management.[77] When attempted, novel campaign methods were unsuccessful, and even Yorkshire's Regional Organiser echoed the over-optimistic view that 'where there is life, there is hope'.[78] Changes in both community and party demography weakened urban party articulation of local concerns, as CLPs became disengaged with affiliated organisations, such as trades' union branches. Sometimes this created opportunities for so-called 'entryism', facilitating a leftward ideological shift that emphasised the cleavage between local parties and voters, but it often meant that CLPs simply struggled to maintain any

meaningful activity.[79] While local issues still dominated debates in municipal assemblies, local CLPs were less engaged.

Regional economic realignments, in particular textile industry rationalisation, brought increased unemployment in seats where Labour had struggled in 1970.[80] Much-trumpeted attempts by textile belt MPs operate as a 'textile group' in Parliament brought little relief.[81] Other industries, such as coal, iron and steel, engineering, were heavily associated with textiles, meaning that 20.4 per cent of the West Yorkshire workforce been employed directly in the industry, and many more associated with it.[82] Collaboration with extra-parliamentary groups, such as the textile unions, remained inadequate and between 1961 and 1977, two-thirds of textile jobs were lost.[83] Limited industrial investment compounded the rigours of international competition.[84] The industry was under varied and complicated stresses, linked to long-term underinvestment, changing global markets, and more efficient competitors, that no government had or could alleviate.[85] Neither nationalisation nor significant state support were forthcoming and the reorganisation that the 1959 Cotton Industry Act merely funded rationalisation, replaced the machinery, and supported the redundancies the process created.[86] Employment concerns created fears, which made voters susceptible to emotive, conservative appeals.

In this context, National Front developed promises to preserve Britain's 'traditional way of life', end the deflationary influence of international capital, and advocate for protectionism for British manufacturing, had an opening.[87] National Front literature blamed Britain's economic problems over-powerful, whose activities responded to 'real grievances' caused by the malign influence of international capital.[88] Such an interpretation, similar in conception and purpose to the earlier BUF, was purposefully vague. Anti-Semitism, isolationist nationalism, and multi-layered

conspiracies informed different aspects of party ideology, and were present on varied levels of visibility.[89] A racialized worldview underpinned other areas of rhetoric; it is notable that rather than engaging with the more comparable German *Wirtschaftswunder,* Front journal *Spearhead* obsessed over the economic success of Japan.[90] However, while racial prejudice was an undoubted ideological underpinning, National Front leaders refashioned policies to address wider public concerns over industrial realignment and worsening industrial relations. In election literature, international culpability for British problems was emphasised.[91] Local activists made links between economic problems and far-right successes. Halifax CLP activists later observed Britain's economic weaknesses provided greater opportunities to the National Front.[92] It was apparent that, if a clear political message was fashioned, and a strategy found to mobilise sufficient voters, the National Front could develop its electoral appeal in specific electoral climates.

Economic restructuring created a complicated electoral context within which the Labour party had to operate, and voters had myriad concerns. Sociologist Duncan Scott's contemporaneous ethnographic study of Huddersfield recorded the presence of anti-migrant views, the influence of pro-Front activists, and the significance of deindustrialisation on voters inhabiting textile belt towns.[93] These localised issues with post-war immigration went back as far as the voluntary labour schemes after the war.[94] Migrant numbers in some wards was significant. By 1969, Huddersfield had an immigrant population of 11,400 in a town of c.130, 000 inhabitants.[95] Labour's 1965 circular, which limited the number of immigrants in classrooms to 1/3, meaning many schoolchildren were 'bussed out' to schools in parts of the city with lower migrant figures.[96] Officials deemed this a common-sense approach to facilitate integration and avoid community segregation.[97] In this context, immigration became a 'problem' local

government resolved. Despite their concerns over appearances of Nazi graffiti, local Labour parties rarely discussed migration or far-right activity.[98] Although national stances caused damage, localised party management issues, such as low membership, inactive branches and, in occasional cases, demographic changes in constituencies and the composition of constituency party memberships, were problematic.

As was often the case with the far-right electoral activity, national political intervention heightened community concerns over migration.[99] As one Huddersfield National Front organiser observed, before Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech, 'only cranks and perverts' joined the group, now it attracted Conservative voters.[100] Powell had transferred respectability onto formerly fringe and ignored political agendas.[101] In Huddersfield, there was a clear interaction between right-wing Conservative party and members of the far right.[102]Alongside this, the Front contested most of Huddersfield's council wards and maintained an average of 12 per cent of the vote in 1969 and 10 per cent in 1970.[103] Conservative voters appeared to express growing anti-migrant sentiment. Reacting to this, Huddersfield West Labour MP Kenneth Lomas then spoke in favour of greater restriction.[104] Powellism and the national debate on immigration and integration had increased the electoral purchase of continued immigration control among voters.

After their initial success, the Front planned to open a regional headquarters in Huddersfield.[105] Once again, perceived failings regarding immigration control while in government constrained Labour's ability to promote its successes, giving opponents opportunities to undermine its electoral appeal. As an organisation, the National Front influenced the agenda, rather than secured election. After the 1970 election, the Front's Huddersfield branch changed direction. Initial success impressed leader A.K. Chesterton and the group planned two demonstrations in the town.[106] Front

organisational problems undermined its electoral strategy.[107] Their initial successes came to nothing in the General Election.[108]

Whether it was due to the change in Conservative policy before the election, or the presence of Powell, voters backed Edward Heath's Conservatives rather than far-right groups.[109] There was a significant decline in electoral support compared to the 1969 municipal elections. Instead, far-right group focused on disrupting meetings of the UN Association, the Labour party and the local Community Relations Commission, rather than canvassing for votes.[110] In September 1970, National Front journal *Candour* suggested that their heckling of black politician, David Pitt, had made them a household name.[111] Again, their candidates problematized immigration, and developed its potential as a cleavage issue that reinforced their standing as a protest vote. Party loyalty was irrelevant. Such voters support was transient, reflecting their concerns over immigration rather than a wholesale purchase of a political creed.

If anything, growing anti-migrant politics was more problematic for the Conservatives. Many of their local associations developed a tougher approach towards immigration.[112] Bradford West's Conservative MP Arthur Tiley spoke of the importance to Bradford of immigration without being overly welcoming.[113] This was not without cause. From an early date, groups like the Yorkshire Campaign to Stop Immigration (YCSI) were active in the city.[114] Formed by dyer and Conservative activist Jim Merrick in June 1970 to contest a municipal by-election in Tong ward, early rhetoric commonly reused traditional tropes linking immigrant presence with increased crime and disease.[115] In Tong, Merrick took 419 votes (17 per cent of those cast), receiving only 60 less than the Conservative council candidate did, a reasonable result.[116] Local Conservatives then strengthened their anti-migrant rhetoric.[117] Within the city, the local Labour party appeared unconcerned.

Bradford Labour politicians were inconsistent on how to address Merrick's activities. One party organiser argued that Labour ignore the YCSI's impact, as it predominantly affected Conservative appeal.[118] However, when the YCSI fielded 13 candidates in the 1971 council election, it encouraged Labour's Bradford agent to underplay immigration 'as much as possible' in the campaign.[119] Among a difficult electoral environment in Bradford, Labour were right to be wary. The YCSI adapted to move beyond Bradford. They rebranded several times, becoming the British Campaign to Stop Immigration (BCSI) in 1971, and merged with the Racial Preservation Society in 1972 on their way to eventual National Front affiliation.[120] Their ambitions were clear, and despite some bemusement at sometimes-bizarre campaigning activities, they occupied an under-contested political space and targeted salient local concerns over migrant concerns and economic difficulties.[121] That Labour local government leaders organised a discussion on immigration and local politics at their 1972 conference, demonstrated some party officials were aware of potential problems.[122] Further to this, events in Rochdale demonstrated immigration control had localised appeal beyond Bradford's confines.

The Liberal victory in Rochdale was primarily due to other local and political factors. Their candidate, former Labour Mayor Cyril Smith, had substantial name recognition and popular appeal.[123] However, also on the ballot was the BCSI's Jim Merrick who was testing his electoral popularity outside of his Bradford heartland.[124] He took a significant 4,074 votes, and his presence had catalysed many Pakistani residents to vote.[125] Its presence affected the election outcome, and Merrick's limited success troubled Rochdale CLP. It decided that, where another far-right candidate to stand in Rochdale, the regional organiser must record districts where these candidates' votes originated, to determine their impact on the Labour vote.[126] In addition, national

party newspaper *Labour Weekly* conceded Merrick's campaign 'must have made some inroads into the traditional Labour vote'.[127] The BCSI's electoral appeal disturbed mainstream parties and demonstrated the potential influence of immigration electoral politics. While Merrick's organisation was small and only capable of individual, non-consecutive campaigns, they had gained a greater presence within national media consciousness.

Increased vote shares in seats like Rochdale demonstrated the appeal of immigration control was more complicated than mere localised peculiarity. A pattern of underlying economic problems, disengaged municipal and parliamentary representatives, and subsequent voter disenchantment was clearly omnipresent. Events in Blackburn further underlined this trend. Here, local textile factories were uncompetitive, wages had stagnated, and Commonwealth migrants had replaced white working class residents in their jobs and traditional areas of occupation.[128] Local government inspired slum clearances and city-centre redevelopment limited available housing stock, with migrants adding to these pressures.[129] Linked to this, the local Labour party membership declined and the Blackburn MP, Barbara Castle, appeared both distant and unaware of immigration control's appeal.[130] In this environment, troublemaking right-wing activists like John Kingsley Read (then Conservative, later National Front), tried to use local dissatisfaction over enforced clearances to gauge their political traction.[131] Seeing how these concerns underpinned dissatisfaction, Read translated his far-right worldview into rhetoric that was critical of local problems to mobilise a larger coalition of voters.

Read's careful, comparative moderation and his creation of the 'Strasserite' (more populist) National Party enabled success in the 1976 local elections.[132] His organisation secured two council seats with significant results in six wards. With an

average vote of 29.4 per cent of votes, this was a significant coup for Read's approach.[133] To other regional CLPs, Read became exemplar of anti-immigrant activism, against which local equivalents were measured.[134] Initially presenting itself as a populist organisation, dissociated from the National Front's underlying fascism, the National Party's underlying agenda was only revealed later. Read had regularly circulated holocaust denial literature around the National Party, but only when he told a 1976 rally that the murder of a young Sikh in Southall represented 'one down, a million to go' were his views publicly clear.[135] This was a clear example of a candidate moderating his message to mobilise voters, before Read was caught out. That Preston South MP Stan Thorne requested a Parliamentary debate to discuss the speeches content demonstrates Read's success at developing this moderate image.[136] After a difficult year at the national and local level, Labour had appeared vulnerable in constituency Barbara Castle had represented since 1945.

Despite such concerns, however, National Party influence declined quickly. By the following year, the National Party only secured 11.9 per cent of the vote in the Lancashire County Council elections.[137] A series of local government by-elections throughout 1976 suggested these were aberrant textile belt concerns rather than any far-right capture of the political *zeitgeist*.[138] Labour had successfully challenged the National Front vote in Sandwell (that included the former borough of Smethwick) and the National Party's two seats in Blackburn.[139] At the latter, election irregularities forced a by-election in one of the seats, when the Labour candidate secured a majority of 830.[140] Concerns then dissipated when the National Front won a smaller average (11.9 per cent) in the Lancashire County Council elections of 1977.[141] While the Blackburn-based National Party's success had caused concern within the local Labour Party, its success was short-lived.

During the 1974 elections, the National Front had altered its image to persuade voters that it was now a 'respectable political party'.[142] This clearly failed, and if anything, the elections damaged far-right appeal due to the greater importance of national, economic issues on the campaign. A relative by-election 'success' in West Bromwich in 1973 provided momentum, and by standing over 50 candidates in each election, the party qualified for a simultaneous five-minute election broadcast on the BBC 1 and ITV, two of the UK's three national television stations.[143] After both 1974 elections, Labour's National Agency Department review of National Front activity, observed that (despite multiple legal infringements), it had succeeded in appearing respectable, as opposed to rabble-rousing.[144] While this did not directly increase far-right popularity, it demonstrated that the National Front's first wave of popularity in 1972-3 had concerned Labour headquarters.

For Labour ultra-respectability, and a clearer and more popular manifesto, was problematic. Such an opponent might syphon off Labour votes, which might prove decisive electorally, given the close nature of 1974s General Elections. In such a scenario, effective far-right parties might split the working class along racial lines, maintaining Conservative control.[145] Although much has been made of the 1972 and 1976 increases in support tied to the arrival of Ugandan and Malawian Asians, the 1974 General Elections were equally significant.[146] They altered the electoral parameters, returning focus to national (rather than local) politics. To Labour, the far-right groups remained problematic vote-splitters, as opposed to major threats, but concerns were already present. The economy determined Labour's electoral strategy, but they did not ignore far-right groupings and their previous appeal. Institutionally, at both local and national levels, many individuals had already realised they needed a more effective response to far-right populism.

Local parties and anti-fascism campaigning

At both local and national levels, Labour began to develop strategies to combat the party's declining popularity in a number of constituencies where racialism affected electoral performance. Comparative far-right (particularly National party) electoral successes at Blackburn and Deptford then crystallised and catalysed Labour thinking.[147] Senior figures within Labour's Headquarters recognised the scale of the problem. Increased discussion of race relations after the party's 1976 conference led National Organiser Reg Underhill to visit 'selected constituency parties in areas where the problem…was particularly intense'.[148] That most of these constituencies sat within the South Pennine textile belt emphasised the regionalised nature of the problem. Underhill visited Blackburn, Preston, Accrington, Nelson and Colne, Bradford, Huddersfield, Batley and Morley, Dewsbury, and Keighley.[149] In these constituencies, Underhill found insufficient action had been undertaken, and that anti-racialism campaigning was required.

Political engagement was key. Local parties wanted to oppose racial nationalists, and were aware of their appeal. Bradford CLPs reported high National Front voting intention in traditional Labour areas.[150] However, Labour tactics were ill defined, and advice was often contradictory. Several parties informed Underhill that dealing with constituents one-by-one was more effective than public meetings and mass publicity campaigns. Large events also attracted National Front members who interrupted them.[151] While Labour had many experienced members, these were volunteers trained to solicit votes. This required different talents to engaging with far-right activists willing to utilise violence to achieve their ends. It was now clear that Labour's non-engagement strategy (or non-strategy) had failed. However, in a Labour party where a changing membership had gained more influence in political activities, anti-racist activism gained purchase among party activists.

For the first time, a centrally coordinated, focused strategy was attempted. Headquarters staff organised Labour's 'Campaign against Racial Discrimination' to combat discontent and tension inspired by immigration and failed integration policies. Alongside London-based events, including a November 1976 demonstration held in London, the party undertook leafletting, demonstrations, and a national television broadcast that was well-received by pro-immigration groups within the party.[152] Leading figures, including Cabinet Ministers Michael Foot and Merlyn Rees, and union leader Tom Jackson, addressed the event.[153] This ensured it was no longer a fringe campaign, but one that engaged many activists. Several marches had already occurred in constituencies before the launch of the central campaign, with one organised jointly by the Halifax CLP and other left-wing groups occurring the day before.[154] It also signalled Labour's belated attempt to confront the far right. However, while it engaged with the campaigning interests of many party members, it is unclear how it was supposed to engage with voters concerned with immigration.

Alongside this, the central party tasked CLPs to monitor the impact of local media and increase party recruitment amongst minority groups.[155] Local party groups campaigned against 'racialism', but they also had to adapt to new electorates. Changes created by the Local Government Act (1972), that constituted new County and District level authorities, required new elections to both bodies.[156] In Blackburn, the National Front secured an average of 20 per cent of votes across two seats contested in the April election to the County Council, and 23 per cent in the June election to the new District Council.[157] The poor state of local parties in Blackburn contributed to this, despite protestations by Lancashire's Young Socialist (YS) groups; campaigns by the local Labour Party did little to alter voters' intentions.[158] Across Lancashire, and the North-West more broadly, there were concerns as to Labour's electoral unpopularity.[159]

This did not stop YS groups organising campaigns. In early 1974, a number of YS sections organised meetings to discuss the impact of the National Front on local politics, and racialism in society more generally. A meeting of Preston, Chorley, and Leyland Labour Party YS was organised for this purpose for Tuesday 15 January.[160] A further, national YS conference was organised at Bradford for 16 February 1974, which branches across the north highlighted and had members attempting to attend.[161] However, activists cancelled the event when the Bradford Labour Party withdrew support and Ted Heath called the February 1974 election.[162] Despite setbacks, YS groups remained active promoters of improved race relations, and championed the creation of local committees.[163] While many party activists were now willing to take part in anti-racism campaigning, those at the highest levels of the party and government had divided loyalties between sympathy for the cause and their status as guarantors of law and order.

Labour's Organisation Committee discussed with the Home Secretary whether he would allow local party involvement in anti-racism activities.[164] With increased far-right activity across the region, the North-West regional party conference in 1977 debated motions brought forward by the Moss Side and Hulme CLPs.[165] However, not all party CLP committees were keen to engage with far right activism. In Mirfield, local activists expressed concern over their local councillor speaking out about the National Front.[166] Manchester County Borough Labour party's executive encouraged local parties to request the police to ban marches, cautioning CLPs that anti-fascist activity could lead to violence.[167] In Parliament, Salford East MP Frank Allaun demanded the Government accept that the 'National Front is a Racialist Front'. He advocated banning their marches and meetings through the racial incitement provisions in the Race

Relations Act, 1976.[168] However, despite these concerns, activists continued to organise events, and race relations became a regular discussion point in local party meetings.

Local party organisations were far from inactive. CLPs in Huddersfield and Dewsbury attempted to address social problems caused by poor integration, and formed race relations committees.[169] Oldham's Labour Council organised and oversaw anti-racism activities rather than the CLPs.[170] Correspondence from the central party and a looming national campaign, often brought immigration to the committee table.[171] Far-right activism was not ignored. As was the case in other parties, the Oldham party decided that racism and immigration should sit within the purview of constituency (therefore national) politics rather than local issues.[172] While some credited popular activism with the decline of National Front popularity, many members recognised that increased unemployment had the potential to undo much good work.[173] Indeed, the necessity to address problems that burnished the National Front's appeal led to some local parties taking unprecedented steps.

This electoral appeal facilitated a willingness to work with other local left wing groups united against racism. In Halifax, the CLP agreed to work with other local leftist groups.[174] Encouraged by the party's national campaign, the local party demanded a rigorous campaign, challenging all forms of racism.[175] Halifax CLP had acted because an active National Front branch had become active within the borough, primarily in the Mixenden area.[176] As part of this and the party's wider campaign, its General Management Committee supported the foundation of a new cross party 'Calderdale Action against Racism' group that included the local Communist party. This group organised a party rally for the day before the November 1976 national rally in Hyde Park.[177] CLPs in some constituencies actively organised against the existent local racial nationalists.

These actions were not all part of grand, overarching, and planned campaign. Solitary events and gestures were often the foundation and mainstay of local party actions on race relations. Huddersfield East CLP held several anti-racism walks, encouraged by local MP J.P.W. Mallalieu, to demonstrate its opposition to discrimination. [178] Heywood and Royton, and Rochdale CLPs' formed an anti-racism committee, and its secretary addressed the Oldham District party about National Front activity in the North-West.[179] These activities were formalised after 1976, by the formation of an anti-racialist sub-committee with the Huddersfield West CLP earlier in the year, as part of Labour's wider campaign against racialism.[180] This grouping then organised an 'anti-racist week' for September 1977.[181] Mallalieu was at the centre of this initiative, and delivered an address that opposed the twin concerns of domestic racism and Apartheid.[182] Again, much of this activity was ground-up, developed with little input from party headquarters or leadership. The changing interests of MPs and activists was more influential than any campaign organised in party headquarters.

By 1978, Labour members' liberal-left internationalism influenced the local parties' approaches, but often their efforts represented tokenism wrapped in a veneer of moral righteousness. Members sat on regional committees and MPs delivered 'vigorous and tub-thumping' speeches against Powell and the National Front, but this was gesture politics rather than constructive action.[183] In reality, such regional organisation messages only gained purchase after far-right marches took place or fascist activists interrupted CLP meetings.[184] Electoral appeal still dominated thinking. While MPs criticised racism, they also emphasised the success of immigration control and made limited references to the role of immigrants.[185] As with earlier in the decade, Labour 'shied away from controversy which could alienate potential support'.[186] As with politics in Bradford, the presence of a large immigrant community focused minds.

While anti-racist activities occurred within the party, its public rhetoric remained measured and in line with national policy.

This activism was never comprehensive, and was very reliant on the inclination and interest of the CLPs more active members. While Halifax and Huddersfield developed aggressive strategies, Bradford West refused to join activities organised by an affiliated anti-fascist sub-committee.[187] Even within Bradford, there were differing views. Suburban Shipley CLP were more concerned by the rise of the National Front, discussed fascist activities in the north, and invited the Chair of the Bradford Race Relations Board to discuss race relations.[188] The CLP then passed a resolution that demanded the Government ban the National Front and the National Party, a request forwarded to the Home Secretary Merlyn Rees and the party's National Executive Committee.[189] Demonstrating the complex mixture of viewpoints present within party and government, the Home Office responded that though they shared the sentiment, the Government had to preserve freedom of expression.[190] Within a single city, these contradictory views demonstrated the extent to which local party opinions diverged, and how the composition of a local party, as well as the socio-economic realities of their populations, interacted with a changing political climate.

While these nationally planned campaigns demonstrated that the central Labour party was willing to become more involved in anti-racialist activity, they were not the primary catalysts for action. Nationwide campaign groups, including the Race Relations Action Group, organised meetings attended by local party members, and fed into localised debates over anti-fascist activity.[191] Events were then organised by local trades' councils to facilitate activity between interested activists in the political parties and unions.[192] Context was again crucial. Many local voters did not welcome lectures on tolerance by activists and MPs from neighbouring constituencies, never mind from

party headquarters. Penistone's Labour MP John Mendelson received correspondence from Sheffield Attercliffe residents and National Front activists criticising his statements on racial discrimination from the comfort of his rural constituency.[193] Alongside these groups, it was the willingness of CLPs and activists themselves to define whether action was most effective.

What had become clear was that, while Labour's activities were significant, its leadership were unwilling (and unable) to join with other left-wing organisations in any 'popular front'. Labour's situation was more precarious than the 1930s. Its leaders held ministerial office, which tied them to conventions of British constitutional government.[194] Nigel Copsey and David Renton have both discussed the role of around 40-50 Labour MPs including Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Martin Flannery, and future leader Neil Kinnock, and activists such as Peter Hain, within the Anti-Nazi League (ANL).[195] However, their activities made little impression on local Labour parties in the textile belt, being unmentioned in their minute books. This was because Socialist Worker's party activists dominated ANL branches in Sheffield, Huddersfield, Rotherham, Bradford, Pontefract, Wakefield, Manchester, and Leeds.[196] It remained clear that Labour prioritised its own, internal campaigns, and sought to avoid alliances with the far-left, which would provide voters and opponents evidence of a leftward. However, changes in party management, with less emphasis on discipline and greater openness towards changing conceptions of socialism were likely to be significant. While leaders preferred activists to focus on Labour only campaigns, they did little to stop engagement in others.

As with their activities against the BUF, Labour avoided street campaigns and prioritised formal marches and administrative activity to combat National Front activity. To respond to public discussions around migration and race, the Labour leadership

utilised the central party in a strategic role, focusing on the national picture. Labour's response to Margaret Thatcher's developing anti-immigration rhetoric in the later 1970s was exemplar of this practice. As CLPs addressed local instances of racial discontent dependent on far-right activity, the central party engaged when issues entered the national press. Thatcher's intervention in the March 1978 Ilford South by-election, where she sympathised with voters feeling 'swamped' by immigration (much to the chagrin of the National Front), provided such an opportunity.[197] A London by-election, it raised little comment among local parties.

Despite this, Labour Home Secretary (and Leeds South MP) Merlyn Rees used it as an opening to criticise Conservative policy, delivering two speeches at the Oxford University Labour Club and Leeds's Rothwell Labour Club.[198] Rees' rhetoric gained reaction from the press; the formerly Labour-supporting *Sun* dubbed him a 'bully' for his forthright response to the Conservative leader.[199] Tellingly, apart from Rees' ill-fared intervention at Rothwell, there was little discussion of Thatcher's new approach within textile belt CLPs. Such limited impact demonstrates the localised nature of Labour anti-racism activism, which was rarely in-line with interventions at the national party and governmental levels. However, arguments in the press had little, if any, effect on National Front appeal. As with the BUF predecessor four decades before, by 1979 National Fronts electoral support had dissipated.[200] Even after the highpoint of 1976-77, the far right continued to attract headlines despite the fact most of their transient voters had moved on.

Conclusion

This article cannot be conclusive. Limited evidence deposited in archives by far-right activists preclude this. Similarly, CLP papers only present the motivations of those sufficiently active to produce a paper trail.[201] Such a paucity of evidence can lead to

ascribing too much credit where undue. However, it is clear that neither the National Front, the National Party, nor their antecedents' never achieved parliamentary representation, often securing more headlines than votes. What they demonstrated was an ability to affect local political contest outcomes and newspaper coverage of community-level politics. Although initially perceived as a greater threat to Conservatives due to the significance of Powellism in their late 1960s ascent, the far right became a threat to both main parties. There were clear links between long-term social and economic change, post-war migration, and the continued importance of localised factors within textile belt electoral politics, where Labour was the dominant party. While the far right did not create these conditions, they maximised opportunities within a complicated political climate, created by economic change.

In reality, this difficult socio-economic context defined the space within which all political parties operated, constraining potential strategies. Industrial realignment and associated socio-cultural change created serious policy problems, as inner city squalor and other concerns constrained Labour's appeal. Far right activists blamed migrants for the lack of jobs and poor housing stock, a situation predominantly caused by the decline of textile manufacture in its Victorian form. How a scapegoating political myth, based around immigrants, gained wide purchase among voters in areas sharing a similar socio-economic experience requires further consideration. Far right 'success' was contingent upon several factors, including an effective political strategy, sufficient amenable voters, and the clear articulation of a far-right vision of Britain. In the wider textile belt, therefore, this helps explain the significance of industrial changes including, but not limited to, textiles. Mainstream parties demonstrated an ignorance to these problems, which aided the continued pervasiveness of far-right politics.

The serious impact of post-war economic realignment on these communities requires deeper understanding, to allow better appreciate of how local contexts influenced voters' political choices. The significance of local party composition and activism is important here. Alongside changes in the wider socio-economic environment, internal party changes constrained the selection of alternative political strategies. Changing interests and approaches represented the growing influence more radical party membership. However, there were beneficial side effects. By the late-1970s, CLPs campaigned against fascism and societal racial discrimination in a way that reflected these changing party attitudes. Opposition to the National Front reflected a process of political change within the Labour party. Widely held views on internationalism, left-wing socialism, and colonial liberation reinforced anti-racialist campaigns, underpinning greater commitment to creating a more egalitarian society.[202]

Understanding the impact, as well as the intention, of such groups is important. Contested notions and interpretations of Britishness simultaneously provided members for anti-racism campaigns and the organisations they opposed. Anti-migrant, far-right organisations gained traction because some voters and many in the press believed in the continued electoral appeal of immigration control as a common-sense policy solution. Margaret Thatcher's rhetorical interventions in 1978, defending immigration control within a wider package of measures, reinforced this interpretation. As with Labour's actions in the 1930s, Callaghan's party avoided an informal, street protest-based campaign, refusing to ban any political organisations. Once again, Labour committed to formal politics and reinforced Britain's parliamentary system. Far-right organisations demonstrated credible, if limited, political strategies and appeals. To view their electoral participation as merely a smokescreen for racialism oversimplifies complex and contrary rationales for that activity. Had National Front members wanted to intimidate

migrant communities or engage in violence, there were easier routes than forming political movements and seeking election.

Rather, the leadership and activists of groups like the National Front, its rivals and predecessors were effective political operators making use of amenable, temperate socio-economic conditions to further their political agendas. While they reflected extreme minority views, they determined opportunities to use the electoral process to further their various, and often contradictory, agendas. That far-right appeal increased despite the 1964-1970 Wilson Governments adoption of immigration control, and the presence of Powell on the Conservative benches suggested more complicated factors were at play. As happened with the BNP in the 2000s, mainstream parties' earlier failure to clarify links between immigration, housing, and services clearly provided opportunities for National Front appeals.[203] Few parties were willing to admit that limited resources, administrative inefficiency and, at times, poor municipal leadership were to blame. Organised anti-immigrant parties benefitted from perceptions that established parties had failed to address problems, a view echoed (for different reasons) by Labour's radically socialist party membership from the mid-1970s. How local parties, of all political creeds, interacted with historic electoral processes and complex social issues including immigration, clearly requires further analysis.

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134. General Management Committee, 28 June 1976, Manchester Central Reference Library, Manchester Moss Side Constituency Labour Party papers, M681/3/5.
135. Hain, *Political Trials*, 273.
136. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 913, 14 June 1976, 30-1; Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 994, 26 November 1980, 437-8.
137. Husbands, *Racial Exclusionism*, 84.
138. *Labour Weekly,* 24 September 1976, 5.
139. Smethwick was the location of the infamous 'race election' during the 1964 general election.
140. *Labour Weekly,* 24 September 1976, 5.
141. Husbands, *Racial Exclusionism*, 84.
142. The National Front investigated, January 1978, Modern Records Centre, Dr Geoff Pugh papers, MSS.329/2/2/46.
143. *Guardian,* 12 October 1974, 6.
144. The National Front: Report on the General Elections, 1974, 22 January 1975, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Labour Party Research Department papers. 156/9.
145. Benn, *Against the Tide*, 109-111.
146. Copsey, "Meeting the Challenge", 182-183.
147. Copsey, 'Meeting the Challenge', 182-183; Copsey, *Anti-Fascism in Britain*, 124.
148. Hayward, Seventy-sixth Annual Conference, 13.
149. Ibid.

150. Campaign against racism: reports on selected constituencies, 24 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued.
151. Ibid.
152. Letter from Ian Martin to H.R. Underhill, 17 October 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Labour Party Research Department papers, LP/RD/156/6.
153. Letter to Regional Secretaries from H.R. Underhill, 26 October 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Labour Party Research Department papers, LP/RD/156/6; Letter to G.H. Parker from H.R. Underhill, 1 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Labour Party Research Department papers, LP/RD/156/6; Press Release: United Against Racialism, 5 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Labour Party Research Department papers, LP/RD/156/6.
154. *Labour Weekly,* 24 September 1976, 5; Executive Committee, 21 October 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Calderdale, Halifax Labour Party papers, HLP/4; and Annual Report, 1977, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Calderdale, Halifax Labour Party papers, HLP/4.
155. Hayward, *Seventy-sixth Annual Conference,* 14.
156. Husbands, *Racial Exclusionism,* 84.
157. Ibid.
158. Husbands, *Racial Exclusionism,* 84-85; Preston Young Socialists: Campaign against Racialism, 1973, Lancashire Archives, Preston Labour Party papers, LAB/1.
159. General Management Committee, May 18th 1976; Lancashire Archives, Blackpool South Labour Party papers, DDX 2100/3/9; Campaign against racism: reports on selected constituencies, 24 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued; and Collinson, "Commonwealth Immigration", 290, 299-300.
160. Preston Young Socialists: Campaign against Racialism, 1973, Lancashire Archives, Preston Labour Party papers, LAB/1.
161. Preston Young Socialists: Campaign against Racialism, n.1973), Lancashire Archives, Preston Labour Party papers, LAB/1; Ward meeting, 8 January 1974, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Huddersfield, Mirfield Branch Labour Party minutes, KC481/1/1; and Executive Committee, 11 November 1973, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield West Constituency Labour Party papers, HLP/1/62.
162. Collinson, "Commonwealth Immigration", 294-295.
163. General Management Committee, 29 September 1977, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham Metropolitan District Labour Party papers, uncatalogued.

164. Organisation Committee, 1 December 1977, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued.

165. North West Labour Party Conference resolution, n.d. (c.1977), Manchester Central Reference Library, Manchester Moss Side Constituency Labour Party papers, Acc.2002/28/5.

166. Meeting, 8 November 1978, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Kirklees, Mirfield Branch Labour Party minutes, KC/481/1/1.

167. National Front: An Office Note, 30 September 1977, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued.

168. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 938, 7 November 1977, 326; Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 945, 2 March 1978, 655-6.

169. Campaign against racism: reports on selected constituencies, 24 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued.

170. Ibid.

171. General Management Committee, 27 September 1976, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham West Labour Party collection, uncatalogued.

172. General Management Committee, 28 October1976, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham West Labour Party collection, uncatalogued.

173. Campaign against racism: reports on selected constituencies, 24 November 1976, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, National Executive Committee minute collection, uncatalogued.

174. General Management Committee, 30 September 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Calderdale, Halifax Labour Party papers, HLP/4.

175. Executive Committee, 21 October 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Calderdale, Halifax Labour Party papers, HLP/4.

176. Collinson, “Commonwealth Immigration”, 297-298.

177. Annual Report, 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Calderdale, Halifax Labour Party papers, HLP/4.

178. Huddersfield East Annual Bulletin, January 1978, Heritage Quay, J.P.W. Mallalieu papers, JPM/2/2.

179. General Management Committee, 29 September 1977, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham Metropolitan District Labour Party papers, uncatalogued.

180. Huddersfield East Constituency Labour Party, 24 March 1977, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield Labour Party papers, HLP/1/57.

181. Huddersfield East Constituency Labour Party, 23 June 1977, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield Labour Party papers, HLP/1/57.
182. Party meeting, 15 September 1977, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield Labour Party papers, HLP1/57.
183. General Management Committee, 24 November 1977, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham Metropolitan District Labour Party papers, uncatalogued; General Management Committee, 22 December 1977, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham Metropolitan District Labour Party papers, uncatalogued; and Scott, "Political Sociology", 276.
184. General Management Committee, 29 September 1977, Oldham Labour Party Offices, Oldham Metropolitan District Labour Party papers, uncatalogued.
185. Scott, "Political Sociology", 276.
186. Ibid.
187. Little Horton branch meeting, 19th July 1977, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Bradford, City of Bradford Labour Party papers, 60D84/6/1.
188. General Management Committee, 19 January 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Bradford, Shipley Labour Party papers, 37D83/1/1; General Management Committee, 28 June 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Bradford, Shipley Labour Party papers, 37D83/1/1.
189. General Management Committee, 26 July 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Bradford, Shipley Labour Party papers, 37D83/1/1.
190. General Management Committee, 6 September 1976, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Bradford, Shipley Labour Party papers, 37D83/1/1; Yorkshire Regional Conference agenda, 4-5 March 1978, West Yorkshire Archives Service/Leeds, Barkston Ash Labour Party papers, WYL/1179.
191. Executive Committee, 24 November 1978, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield, Huddersfield East Constituency Labour Party papers, HLP/1/57; Executive Committee, 22 December 1978, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield East Constituency Labour Party papers, HLP/1/57.
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193. Correspondence, n.d., Barnsley Archives and Discovery Centre, John Mendelson papers, A/62/L/11/15; Immigration, n.d., Barnsley Archives and Discovery Centre, John Mendelson papers, 360/J11/27.
194. Talk to Bradford school pupils, 3 March 1978, LSE Archives, Merlyn Rees papers, MERLYN-REES/2/7.
195. Renton, When we touched, 77; Copsey, Anti-Fascism in Britain, 133.
196. Copsey, Anti-Fascism in Britain, 133.

197. Thatcher, *Path to Power*, 408; *Spearhead* issue 115, March 1978, Modern Records Centre, S E Taylor collection (National Front), MSS/21/1571/1/1.

198. Speech to Oxford University Labour Club, 20 February 1978, LSE Archives, Merlyn Rees papers, MERLYN-REES/2/9; Speech to Rothwell Labour Club', 3 March 1978, LSE Archives, Merlyn Rees papers, MERLYN-REES/2/7.

199. Collinson, "Commonwealth Immigration", 262-263.

200. Edgerton, *Rise and Fall*, 425.

201. Fielding, *Labour and Cultural Change,* 28.

202. Jones, *Remaking the Labour Party*, 111.

203. For BNP, see: Goodwin, *New British Fascism*, 64; Copsey, *Contemporary British Fascism,* 61-63,177.

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