To:

(1) BBC Complaints Dept, Darlington, County Durham DL3 0UR.

[BBC Complaints - Case number CAS-6686338-M7T8X8 / CAS-6566992-X3Q7F3] and

(2) Ofcom, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA.

SUBJECT:

Detailed complaint brought by **Martin Webster** against the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for and on behalf of himself and the former members of the lapsed political party known as the **National Front** (NF) of which he was National Activities Organiser from 1969 to 1983. This complaint is also referred in identical terms to the Office of Communications (Ofcom) for its consideration as the complainant has no faith in the BBC's ability to be an impartial judge in respect of a complaint against itself and willing to impose on itself the necessary actions to correct injustices perpetrated by its employees and associated other persons.

This complaint relates to **"Britain's Fascist Thread"**, **Episode 2**, presented by Camilla Schofield, and broadcast on Radio 4 on Friday, 26th February 2021 at 11:00am and available for listening and/or download at <u>https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000sbdx</u>. This episode deals primarily with a march through Lewisham by members and supporters of the National Front that tool

march through Lewisham by members and supporters of the National Front that took place on Saturday, 13th August 1977. The march was opposed by violent counterdemonstrators, leading to the incident becoming known as the "Battle of Lewisham".

In support of this complaint I am attaching copies of three newspaper articles published shortly after the Lewisham march of 13th August 1977. [*MW file note:* Attachments all as per 'Battle of Lewisham' complaint.]

(a) A report covering the whole march and counter-demonstrations in Lewisham publish

(b) An interview with Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Helm published in the Jewis

(c) A report on the sentencing of four London youths to six years' imprisonment for con October 1980.

It is submitted that both the 30 working days time limit specified in the **BBC Complaints Framework** and the 1,000 word content limit do not apply to this complaint on the grounds that:

(a) there are no less than forty three (43) complaints embodied in this one complaint, each c contains a little under 11,000 words; and

(b) common sense dictates that it would be more convenient for all concerned to have all 43 c (c) in view of the above, this complaint is a wholly exceptional and serious complaint that fully

I General Complaint

(a) This programme is in breach of the BBC Charter (2016), paragraph 6 (1) and the BBC Agreement (2016), Schedule 3, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. The only relevant voices heard were those of the presenter, who was openly "anti-fascist" and left wing, and interviewees whose opinions were, without exception, left wing or extreme left wing.

(b) The subject matter of the programme was the National Front and, more specifically, the march held by the National Front in Lewisham on 13th August 1977. The duties of fairness and impartiality imposed on

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the BBC by its Charter (paragraph 6(1)) demand that, in such programmes, representatives from the National Front be interviewed and allowed to give their

accounts of the events covered, to counterbalance the views of the presenter and interviewees.

(c) No effort was made by the programme makers to contact myself, being the person who could have not only given the NF's viewpoint on the numerous allegations levelled at it by the presenter and interviewees but also given further, crucial, information concerning the subject matter of the programme, that would have enlightened listeners and provided them with a fairer, more complete account of what happened. I am still alive, easily contactable, and have been so contacted by BBC TV and radio producers on several occasions in the years after the NF lapsed out of existence (*circa* 1986). The last contact came from a BBC radio producer who included an interview with me in a programme about the National Socialist writer Savitri Devi broadcast about three years ago. Specifically, I was the NF's National Activities Organiser and Publicity Officer from 1969 to 1983 and, hence, have a had close knowledge of all the circumstances prior to, during and after the event which was the subject of this programme: "The Battle of Lewisham".

(d) Additionally, I could have been a useful interviewee as I had close knowledge of the situation in S.E. London at the relevant time. I worked for more than a year (1963/1964) at the surgery of the late Dr William J. Mitchell LRCP at 387 Queen's Road, New Cross SE14. Dr Mitchell's GP practice had patients of all races from all parts of New Cross, Deptford and Lewisham. His partner in the practice, Dr McConnachie, was an Anglo-Indian. On several occasions during my period with the surgery I encountered elderly white female patients who had been attacked by young Black males for their handbags. These women had been taken to the local hospital A&E in the first instance, then they resorted to Dr Mitchell for follow-up treatment. I will not forget the sight of elderly women with their faces covered with black and blue bruising. I maintained contact with Dr Mitchell's family for decades thereafter, and thereby maintained my knowledge of goings-on in that part of London. In the 1979 general election Dr Mitchell's son, Robert, stood as the NF candidate for Deptford winning *circa* 1,500 votes. Robert qualified as a medical doctor, became a FRCS, and married before taking up a GP practice in the north of England.

(e) The programme contained numerous factual errors which could have been easily avoided if a reasonable amount of research and fact-checking had been carried out, together with the action mentioned in paragraphs (c) and (d) above.

(f) The tone of the programme implied, contrary to fact, that the National Front was a "fascist" organisation, and that it encouraged and practised violence and intimidation to achieve its objectives. This insinuation is completely false, and could have been easily rebutted had I been interviewed. In fact, the National Front was a political party that contested elections and won serious levels of support, being arguably at that time Britain's third party, not (as implied) a mere street gang. For example, almost 120,000 Londoners voted for the National Front at the GLC elections on 5th May 1977, just three months before the "Battle of Lewisham", and in parliamentary by-elections (Stechford and Ladywood) shortly before and after the "Battle" the National Front polled ahead of the Liberal Party (now the Liberal Democrats). So far from being "smashed" by the "Battle of Lewisham" as the programme-makers suggested, the NF was able to nominate 303 candidates in the 1979 general election. Further, the NF had a comprehensive Constitution which provided for:

(i) A governing body (the National Directorate) a third of the places on which fell vacant every year and were filled by an annual postal ballot of the entire membership of the party;

(ii) An Annual General Meeting at which all members were entitled to attend and vote on resolutions concerning the party's policies and Constitution submitted by a sufficient number of members;

(iii) A constitution for branches requiring annual elections for posts on branch committees. (g) Numerous interviewees made serious and unsubstantiated allegations against the National Front, its members and supporters, including allegations of violence, intimidation and other unlawful activities, which were unchallenged by the presenter. Again, my inclusion as an interviewee on the programme would have provided a counterbalance to these left-wing interviewees, as well as further, vital, information that would have given a fairer account to listeners of the events covered. For example, I append a copy of page 4 of *The Times* dated 22nd October 1980 reporting on the sentencing of four London youths to six years'

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imprisonment for conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm and being in possession of petrol bombs at the time of their arrest in Lewisham on the day of the National Front march on 13th August 1977. Note that "the prosecution said that they intended to use the petrol bombs on some of the marchers" (i.e. NF members and supporters). (h) When I heard about the series of programmes, of which this episode is one, being about to be broadcast, I contacted someone who had been involved with a previous interview of myself by the BBC to establish how I might make contact with the producer/s of the programme about which I am complaining. That person contacted the BBC producer and was told that,

"...the whole series is a historical one and they only spoke to or interviewed academics and used archive. They didn't interview anyone around who was there."

That statement, noted and sent to me by a BBC journalistic employee — which I have archived — constitutes an amazingly frank admission of bias and journalistic incompetence. It is is a lame excuse for excluding the voices of people likely to contradict the opinions of the producer and presenter. Not all the interviewees were academics (e.g. Lord Hain) — and some of them were not even introduced by name or occupation — but all of them were left wing or what is referred to as "the far left". Why "academics" were considered by these BBC programme-makers to be truthful, unbiased, objective, etc., was not explained. Their declared presumption is clearly inane and/or cynical. The producer's statement and the biased way in which the programme was produced constitutes irrefutable evidence of grave breaches of the BBC Charter, as set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

II Detailed complaints, all of which breach paragraph 6 (1) of the BBC Charter (2016)

[The web page hosting the programme replay]

1. The short description on the web page hosting the replay includes the following: "From the formation of the British Fascisti in 1923, through the BUF, the National Front and the BNP, the history of fascism in Britain is, in a sense, an unbroken thread." This is a completely unsubstantiated statement implying that the National Front is a "continuation" of the BUF, when in fact both the Constitution and the Statement of Policy of the National Front differ in many important respects from the way the BUF was run and the policies advocated by it.

2. That description also includes the following: "a lineage of hatreds, pseudo-science, failed leaders and tactics", referring to, among other bodies, the National Front. Whether the National Front contained or formed part of "a lineage of hatreds [or] pseudo-science" is a matter of opinion. As to "failed leaders and tactics", these can be found in abundance in the establishment parties of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats, yet no mention was made in the programme of that fact.

Neither of these parts of the description of the programme on the BBC web site was appropriate for an organisation that is required to be impartial in politics.

The programme itself

[Please note that the times given refer to the time elapsed, to the nearest couple of seconds, from the start of the programme.]

3. 0:57 The presenter says, "When the British far-right National Front staged a controversial march through the South London Borough of Lewisham in August 1977 it was part of an ongoing strategy of provocative rallies intended to raise its profile and attract new recruits."

There are two unsubstantiated insinuations set out here.

(a) "the British far-right National Front". Only someone who is left wing or extreme left wing would describe the National Front as "far-right".

(b) "...it was part of an ongoing strategy of provocative rallies". This is a purely subjective statement made without any supporting evidence. I refer to *The Sunday Times* report of the following day, a copy of which I

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attach, and in particular that part of the report I have outlined in red, which confirms the real reasons that the NF decided to march in Lewisham at that time.

That part of the report reads:

"The area was chosen for a march by the National Front to capitalise on a genuine fear in the neighbourhood. Among its slogans were those underlining the fact that a police survey of street crime in South London completed in 1974 showed that 80 per cent of the attackers were black and 85 per cent of the victims were white.

"There is solid right-wing support in the Clifton Rise area. In a byelection for the local council last year, votes for the National Front and the National Party totalled more than those of the successful Labour candidate."

This information was available to the presenter but she failed to make use of it. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter, who is supposed to be impartial.

4. 1:10 The presenter refers to a misquotation from me ("to kick their way into the headlines"). This misquotation was originally taken from an interview that I did in about 1970 with a journalist who worked for the *Illustrated London News* magazine. The interview was conducted one evening at his office in/near Grays Inn Road, WC1. He volunteered to me — for some unexplained reason/s — at the outset of the interview that he was Jewish. In answer to a question from him about the NF's noisy demonstrations, I said (as closely as I can remember the quote): *"…the Establishment's mass media don't want to give us publicity — they want to ignore us to death. So we've got to jostle our way into the headlines…"*

I distinctly remember that I used the word "jostle" (and not "kick") because some years earlier I had staged a one-man demonstration against Jomo Kenyetta, president of Kenya, when he attended a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London in 1964. Kenyatta was the convicted leader of the infamous Mau Mau conspiracy. In reporting my demonstration the London *Evening News* headlined their front-page lead story: **"The Jostling of Jomo"** [my underlining]. I have never forgotten that headline because the "jostling" word exactly described my actions on that occasion — and the tone and style of subsequent NF demonstrations.

Nevertheless, when the *Illustrated London News* published the interview with me I was falsely reported to have said the word "kick". That false quote was subsequently

put to me by various press and broadcasting media interviewers. I always refuted it, much as I have done here.

In view of the controversial nature of this "quotation", the presenter had a duty of care to her listeners to ensure that it was accurate. No attempt was made by her or by any of her colleagues to contact me to confirm whether it was indeed accurate or not. Had anyone done so I would have been able to inform them of the distortion. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

5. 1:22 The presenter says, "...in this series I've been tracing the threads of fascism that have woven themselves into the British picture, a lineage of individuals, organisations and ideas that runs from the end of World War One to the present day".

The presenter here has already discarded any pretence of objectivity – something that is unbecoming for a person describing themselves as a historian, even a "political" one. She speaks as if the existence of "threads of fascism" in Britain has been long established, which it has not. She failed to present evidence of the existence of any such "thread" on which to base her subsequent comments. Just because the left slings the word, "fascism" at anyone who opposes them, it doesn't mean a "thread of fascism" exists, or ever has existed, in Britain.

6. 2:00 The background chanting of "Sieg Heil!" is of left wing activists violently opposing a National Front activity, and not of NF members or supporters. Left wing counter-demonstrators frequently gave NF

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marchers ironic Hitler salutes and "Sieg Heil!" chants. This was not made clear in the programme, and should have been. It is submitted that the real purpose of inserting this irrelevant clip into the recording is to subliminally condition the listener into accepting that there is something alien and wrong about being loyal to one's own people. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

7. 2:12 The presenter says, "For others, the real world threat they posed placed them outside the norms of liberal democracy. Like at Cable Street forty years earlier when a march through east London by the British Union of Fascists was physically blocked, they felt that a proper response was confrontation. Looking back at Lewisham shows us how the threads of fascism were woven into popular politics in Britain in the 1970s. But it also shows us something of the consequences as well, for democracy, for free speech, and for those who were on the receiving end of the violence that followed."

This statement implies that the National Front were opposed to democracy and free speech, and supported violence. This is completely untrue. The National Front was a political party that contested elections. It had a Statement of Policy and a written Constitution which could only be changed by a 'two-thirds' majority vote at annual general meetings which all paid-up members were entitled to attend and vote. All its national and local officers were elected by the national/local membership.

It is the left, of which this presenter is obviously a part, that opposes democracy and freedom of speech and assembly, and engages in mass political violence, as it did against the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s and against the National Front on countless occasions in the 1970s and 1980s.

8. 2:49 The presenter says, "In thinking about this programme, about fascism in Britain after World War Two, one question kept coming back to me as a starting point. Who on earth would be a fascist in Britain after the Holocaust?"

Again, the presenter assumes that the National Front and its supporters were

"fascists", but fails to bring any evidence in support. This remark attempts to associate the National Front with what is called "The Holocaust". Such an association has no foundation in fact. The NF did not involve itself in that "Historical Revisionist" controversy. Individual members were entitled to hold and to express their own opinions on issues not adopted by the party, just so long as they did not attribute those opinions to the party or ventilate those opinions on party platforms.

9. 3:00 Joe Mulhall says, "One of the key ways, of course, that people continue to be fascists after the Second World War is through the emergence of 'Holocaust Denial'. In truth, their whole world view is built on a notion of anti-semitism, that Jews are all-powerful, that they secretly control the world. And that was fundamental to their whole politics. And so how can you have an all-powerful community or race like the Jewish people and then simultaneously have the Holocaust? For some people that was just too large a contradiction. And so it was easier for them to believe that the holocaust didn't happen."

This interviewee doesn't state which people "continued to be fascists after the Second World War". How many former members of the National Front did Mr Mulhall interview in order to form his conclusions as to why they joined the party?

I say that members of the public joined the National Front because they were patriotic, extremely concerned about the current direction in which Britain was heading and were fed up with the mainstream parties. They did not join it on account of historical issues relating to the Second World War. Had the presenter done the research required for a programme like this then she would not have made this fundamental mistake. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

10. 3:35 The presenter says, "Fascism is a series of ideas centred around the revolutionary ultra-nationalism, racial hierarchy, a recapturing of a mythic past, and of authoritarian leadership. Some things might disappear from view – the uniforms, the straight-arm salute, even the word itself, but enough remains to recognise the threads of fascism."

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This statement is simplistic nonsense. What "mythic past" were "fascists" trying to recapture? What sources does the presenter rely on to support her definition of "fascism"? The word has become, and was used by the presenter, as a term of abuse, a political swear-word. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required mto be impartial.

11. 4:00 Paul Jackson (left-wing historian and author of forthcoming book, *Pride and Prejudice*) says, "We can see three areas of continuity in inter-war fascism in Britain. The first is the sort of Oswald Mosely tradition where we see the Union Movement emerge by the end of the 1940s and become a vehicle for Mosely to create a new type of fascist politics. It's very European. It's also linked to rekindling Empire. Then we have an anti-semitic conspiracy theory tradition. People like A.K. Chesterton and his League of Empire Loyalists. And then you have that tradition that is very influenced by Hitler's ideas in various ways. So here, er, you know, it's people like John Tyndall, Colin Jordan. And then finally I suppose you just have some broader things that also sit around this culture that again in some ways just help to sustain it. In particular, the Racial Preservation Societies are a very interesting group of the 1960s."

What are these "broader things that also sit around this culture"? Why didn't the presenter ask him to expand on this? This comment appears to be just a namedropping exercise to try to convince the listener that he knows what he's talking about. 12. 5:25 Professor Paul Gilroy, left-wing intellectual, says, "We're indebted to some of the victims of Italian and Nazi fascism for their warning to us that, as fascism reappears in new clothing, in drag, if you like, it doesn't announce itself, it doesn't always come conveniently labelled, and those things were around in my own childhood as, you know, a black kid growing up in London in the late fifties and early sixties, and seventies too, and it's clear that those people were real fascists and that their presence was harder to label as such because they spoke the language of British Nationalism in its populist, violent form."

How is it clear that "...these people were real fascists"? What evidence does Professor Gilroy rely on to support this contention? Exactly what is "...the language of British Nationalism in its populist, violent form"? What recorded acts of violence does he rely on to support this contention? The presenter failed to elicit any of this information from the interviewee.

13. 6:35 The presenter says, (of A.K. Chesterton), "...he was a fascist and a committed anti-semite."

(a) This is a simplistic statement, and misleading. Mr Chesterton (a holder of the Military Cross from WW1) was a leading member of Mosley's British Union of Fascists for a while during the 1930s, but broke with Mosley and the BUF in 1938. He resumed his commission with the King's African Rifles and performed active service during the Second World War. He was not detained — as was Mosley and many of his supporters — under the infamous Defence Regulation 18b which allowed the authorities to detain persons solely on account of their legally-expressed political opinions without any charges being preferred against them or convictions obtained. (Even Winston Churchill described Defence Regulation 18b as being "…in the highest degree odious…") Why wasn't all this mentioned in the programme?

(b) What evidence does the presenter rely on to support her accusation that Mr Chesterton was "a committed anti-semite"? Mr. Chesterton was certainly a trenchant critic of International Communism, Zionism and the International Financial system. His researches in those subject areas, published in his magazine *Candour*, certainly prompted him to reveal activities by Jews and Jewry which were not to their credit. The programme might have noted that the last chapter of Chesterton's last published book *'The New Unhappy Lords'* was headed: *"Is the Conspiracy Jewish?"*. Note the question mark which headed a carefully nuanced text. Was the BBC presenter seeking to suggest that any and all criticism of Jews and Jewry constitutes "anti-semitism"? Any such suggestion is absurd, incompatible with the British tradition of free speech and not to be expected from a BBC presenter— representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

14. 6:45 A left-wing interviewee says (referring again to A.K. Chesterton), "And his policies of the National Front, racial superiority, the financial conspiracy of Wall Street, the 'Britain for the British' cry, all mirror the dead policies of the European dictators."

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Who is the person saying this? No indication is given in the programme. What have "the dead policies of the European dictators" got to do with the political and social problems that National Front members and supporters were concerned about in the 1960s and 1970s? Was this person, or the presenter, not aware that the slogan "Britain for the British" was first deployed by the Labour Party — I think by Keir Hardie — in the early part of the 20th century?

15. 8:08 The presenter says, "... infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech" (referring to Enoch Powell's 20th April 1968 speech), and refers to Powell's "re-framing of the meaning of World War Two, when he presented it, not as a victory against fascism, or hyper-nationalism, or anti-semitism, but as a defensive war for the nation."

Didn't most people in Britain regard the Second World War, at the time, as "a defensive war for the nation"? Isn't that how the media — not least the BBC! — presented it at the time? Surely the presenter doesn't believe that the masses believed they were fighting a war "against fascism, or hyper-nationalism, or anti-semitism"? This is left-wing re-writing of history and not serious political discussion.

16. 9:30 An unnamed commentator says, "...For them the idea of nation was indivisible from race and racism. And at its core is a very specific and visceral antisemitism. But what they attempt to do is to convert racial populists... who are angry about immigration and to try to turn them into fascists."

Who is this unnamed commentator? What evidence does he have to support what he is saying? Can he give any examples of what he says in his final sentence? The presenter had a duty to press this person for evidence to support his arguments, but failed to do so.

17. 10:05 The presenter says, "... it wasn't the threat of the ballot box that was most potent for many Lewisham residents ... but the threat on the street."

This is an insinuation that violence came from the National Front marchers, when all the violence was directed against them from the Left. It also implies that many Lewisham residents regarded the National Front as a "threat on the street". This is another lie.

I again refer to *The Sunday Times* report of the day following the Lewisham march (copy attached). This refers, in particular, to the fact that the National Front had substantial electoral support in the Clifton Rise area of Lewisham, the street where the National Front marchers were set to assemble before the march.

I also refer to the report contained in *The Times* newspaper dated 2nd October 1980, a copy of which is attached, covering the sentencing of four London youths to six years' imprisonment for conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm and being in possession of petrol bombs at the time of their arrest in Lewisham on the day of the NF march.

Neither of these reports was referenced by the presenter. If she had been objective and unbiased then these reports would have figured in the programme. She was at all times heavily biased against the National Front and as such should not have been considered by the BBC as a suitable person to present a programme such as this.

18. 10:07 Professor 'Lez' Henry says, "For me, the most important thing is, if we're going to present these things historically and accurately then we have to use the language at the time, because if we don't then we distort the whole moment." The presenter then says, "He describes them as organised and militaristic. It wasn't random. He's careful and *[unclear]* other words as well. Racist language that many people find offensive, but which, to him is essential to fully convey the violence of the time."

(a) What exactly does Professor Henry mean here? What does "distort the whole moment" really mean? The presenter failed to seek clarification from him on all this.

(b) As to the presenter's comments, what does she mean by "the violence of the time"? This is a repeat of one of the previous lies (item 17 above), i.e. that the violence came from the National Front and not from

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the left. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

19. 10:46 Professor Henry says, "The staple of the fascist when I was growing up – nigger-huntin', Paki-bashin' an' queer bashin'. How am I gonna have a conversation if I say, oh, we can't use the n-word, we can't use the p-word, we can't use the q-word? So how's it gonna make sense historically? Growin' up in Lewisham, we were actually terrorised. Once myself, my brover and some of our friends, we were playing in the local park when we were surrounded by about eight white boys, but they were much older than us. But what they did was, you know, they started to [...] the monkey chants and started insulting us, you know, callin' us nigger and coon and spade, spear chucker, those kind of fings, an' one of them kicked the hell out of my twin bruvver. They literally held us an' made us watch while one of them kicked the hell out of my twin bruvver. We were eleven or twelve years old and these guys were late teens early twenties. That was not an isolated incident. That was just what used to happen to us as black youth in the London Borough of Lewisham. An' not just in Lewisham. Y'know, across the UK."

(a) This is just a semi-literate, whinging, illogical diatribe from someone who does no credit to his status as "a professor".

(b) Can he provide us with further details of what seems to have been a very serious assault on his brother, such as the date and approximate time, and the exact place? (c) Was it reported to the police?

(d) Were there any independent witnesses?

(e) How many other such events occurred?

(f) Where and when did they take place?

(g) Was it his brother every time, or were others assaulted too?

(h) Were the assailants white and older every time?

(i) Were the police notified?

(j) Did any arrests or prosecutions follow?

(k) I see from searching online that Professor William Henry is a Professor of Criminology and Sociology at the University of West London, and has produced peer reviewed articles such as, 'Marxism as a reggaematical tool to chant down Babylon!', 'Griots, Rappers & Deejays', and 'Reggae, Rasta and the role of the Deejay in the Black British Experience'. He should therefore be more than capable of providing answers to these fundamental questions. Yet the presenter did not ask them.

20. 12:01 An unnamed commentator says, "This is the moment, of course, where they had begun to emphasise the lurid dangerous figure of the young black man, you know, as the primary, predatory object of their, you know, the salvaging of Britain. I mean, you can look actually at the placards they carried on these demonstrations, these, sort of, monstrous figures with dreadlocks with a kind of golliwog face on the front, with the slogan, *"This is your last chance"*. So that image of a kind of predatory, violent, black, youthful male monster in absolute counterpoint with the kind of imagery that Powell had created in the "Rivers of Blood"speech. This is the moment when the National Front pick up all those things and really do try to put fuel in their populist aspirations of that overtly racist kind."

(a) Who is this unnamed commentator?

(b) What was the question asked of him?

(c) What, exactly, is he trying to say here?

(d) What does, "in absolute counterpoint with the kind of imagery that Powell had created" mean?

(e) Why didn't the programme's presenter clarify what he was trying to say? (f) Without this information, this is just a rant, unworthy of inclusion in what is supposed to be a serious look at a historical social phenomenon.

21. 12:59 Professor Henry says, "Lewisham used to have a market, and, guaranteed, every single Sa'urday you would have members of the National Front selling the *Bulldog* magazine openly. I'd be walking past, and they'd be like, "Oi! Oi! Oi! Nig-nog. You want one of these? Here y'are. Y'know what? I ain't even gonna charge you for it, son, I ain't even gonna charge you. Have some of this, mate, and you can learn a bit

about yourself." An' on the front of the *Bulldog* magazine it has those images, you know, where you go from a primate to a cave-man, an' then you'd have a picture of an African wiv these overly distor'ed

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features. Very similar to what the Nazis did in their depictions of the Jewish communi'ies, you know when they distort their images an' make them look subhuman, or less than human. An' they would give them to us. It was normal. It was normalised. It wasn't a big deal."

(a) Again, this is just a rant with no clear purpose. And if "it wasn't a big deal" then why say it and why include it in the programme?

(b) Professor Henry describes how National Front members would sell their *Bulldog* magazine "openly" (how else would he expect them to sell it?). This magazine was only launched in September, 1977 — a month *after* the Lewisham march took place! Yet later in this interview, (at 19:30) he says that the National Front "died" on the day of the Lewisham march. These statements contradict each other, yet the presenter failed to ask him to explain this irregularity. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required mto be impartial.

22. 14:03 The presenter says, "In the weeks before the march in Lewisham, the National Front advertised it with the slogan, 'Clear the muggers off the streets'. Attempts to have it banned were unsuccessful, and like at Cable Street many years before, protestors sought other means of opposition."

(a) The theme of the march is mentioned here for the first time, but not followed up. The presenter does not appear to be interested in the theme (which is vital, as it explains why the march was at that time and in that place) and it seems she doesn't want the listeners to be either. Listeners are invited to assume that it was just a pretext for causing trouble.

(b) Why didn't the presenter ask if there was a mugging problem in Lewisham at that time that the National Front wished to draw people's attention to? That was the obvious question to ask.

(c) Why didn't she ask who were the majority of the muggers and who were their typical victims?

(d) If there was no mugging problem then why did the presenter not say so?

(e) This part of the programme illustrates how inclusion in the programme of myself, or anyone else who could have given the essential background information that I could have given, would have avoided such a one-sided, distorted account of what happened that day at Lewisham.

(f) Neither the presenter nor the interviewee mentioned an extremely important and highly relevant legal action that had taken place in the High Court for a full week in the period immediately before the Lewisham march.

Lewisham Borough Council had made an application for an Order of Mandamus against the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, David McNee, to force him to use his powers to ban the forthcoming march on the grounds that violence and destruction of property were bound to occur. Mr McNee opposed the application and won his case. He thereby retained his statutory powers to decide whether or not to ban the march, and he chose to let it go ahead.

This was a massive defeat for the forces of the Left who were determined to stop the

march from taking place, and it was inflicted by

(i) a judge of the High Court, who had spent days listening to submissions from both sides of the argument and drawing his own conclusions, and (ii) the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

As a result, the Left formed an umbrella organisation called the "All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism" (ALCARAF) to promote counterdemonstrations against the march at broadly the same time and place as the march itself. It included the Bishop of Southwark, Mervyn Stockwood, a self-confessed member of the Communist Party at the time, as well as Martin Savitt, the Chairman of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. I refer, again, to the (attached) report published by *The Sunday Times* on the following day.

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I also refer to an interview with Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Helm, published in the *Jewish Chronicle* dated August 26th 1977, in which he says:

"There is no difficulty in policing a Front demonstration on its own it's only when there is opposition that you get violence".

This report also gives us the following information from Deputy-Assistant Commissioner Helm:

" 'On the Saturday at Lewisham', said Mr Helm, 'the National Front had 'obeyed directions all along the line. Before August 13 their march was curtailed. On the day they were formed up on a different route and were diverted three times - and there were no problems.

" 'They were displaying posters which were anti-mugging, which could have incited racial hatred. They were asked not to display them and they didn't.

" 'Compare this with the complete refusal by the SWP and the All Lewisham Campaign against Racism and Fascism marches to agree a route with the police and the subsequent dispersal of the ALCARAF people so that they could go to where the Front rally was starting'."

I attach to this complaint a copy of that interview, which should be read in its entirety because many of the assertions made by the presenter and interviewee were, in effect, anticipated by him and refuted.

I submit that the reason why the presenter failed to mention this "elephant in the room" event was that it would have undermined her case that the march should have been banned and that the threat of violence came only from the NF. She chose to mislead her audience and future historians rather than publish the truth. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

23. 14:17 Counter-protest organiser (unnamed): "We intend to occupy Clifton Rise." Interviewer: "In what way? When you say occupy, what do you mean?"

Counter-protest organiser: "With the forces that we will be sending for the march."

Interviewer: "You hope to fill it with them and prevent the National Front from gathering there?"

Counter-protest organiser (unnamed): "That's right."

This unnamed counter-protest organiser admits openly to participating in an illegal

activity, i.e. conspiring with other(s) to use violence or the threat of violence to prevent a group of people from exercising their lawful right to assemble. Yet no comment on this is made by the presenter, who then goes on to talk about "disinformation and racist propaganda". At the very least, she should have said something about the illegality of this person's activities. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

24. 14:30 The presenter says, "What's the best response to disinformation, and racist propaganda? To the threat of racist attacks, to hate speech framed as nationalist renewal, to a march through black neighbourhoods by a fascist organisation?"

(a) Here, there are implied accusations by the presenter against the National Front of "disinformation and racist propaganda", "hate speech framed as nationalist renewal", and of carrying out "racist attacks". Yet no examples of any of this are given. The term, "racist attack" is not defined.

(b) Do not muggings by young black men of elderly white women, frequent in the New Cross area at the time (as recorded in the attached *The Sunday Times* report), count as "racist attacks"?

(c) This is an abuse by the presenter of her position as such. BBC listeners are entitled to be presented with

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a fair and balanced account of the subject matter of the series, and, specifically, of what happened at Lewisham that day, not to be subjected to the producer's own unsubstantiated opinions. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

25. 14:44 Interviewer (unnamed): "You do presumably have the alternative of letting them get on with it and, er, letting everyone forget all about it?"

Interviewee (unnamed): "It's not an alternative for us, because we say if the National Front are allowed to march then they are allowed to spread the kind of racist propaganda to people in the street, people in their homes, and we are determined to stop that by whatever means we can."

(a) Yet again we have a contribution from an opponent of the National Front, but no attempt seems to have been made to present a balanced picture by interviewing members or supporters of the National Front.

(b) Why were no attempts made to trace any such people still alive and willing to give an interview?

(c) Why didn't the presenter deal with the implied threat of violence (that she frequently accuses the National Front of) contained in the words, "...we are determined to stop that by whatever means we can..." These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

26. 15:29 Lord Hain (well known for his extreme left-wing views) says, "By 1977 the National Front had been polling really well in elections, and they were on the march, literally on the streets, intimidating the predominantly black citizens but also the Jewish citizens, so there was a sense of real threat, and a whole cross-section of opinion came together, and the feeling was that we had to make a stand."

(a) The presenter had a duty to question Hain as to when and where the intimidation of black and Jewish people by National Front members or supporters took place, but

she failed to do so. She should have asked him questions, such as,

(i) What form did this intimidation take?

(ii) Was it reported to the police?

(iii) If so, did any prosecutions and convictions follow?

(b) The presenter should also have asked Hain

(i) who elected or appointed him and his fellow-leftists to be the arbiters of what issues people should be allowed or not allowed to march and have rallies about;

(ii) to expand on his statement that "a whole cross-section of opinion came together". In particular,

(I) who organised the original meeting that must have taken place?

(II) Which existing organisations were invited?

(III) Which representatives of those organisations attended?

(IV) When did this meeting take place?

(V) Is he talking about ALCARAF (All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism), who held a "peace march" in Lewisham a couple of hours before the National Front march and many of whose supporters afterwards made their way to Clifton Rise, where the National Front had arranged with the police to form up prior to marching, with the intent of causing trouble?

The presenter failed to ask Hain about any of this.

(c) Talking about polling well in elections, the presenter failed to ask Hain if any of the "range of different groups" (see previously at about 15:10) ever promoted candidates in elections, and if so, how well they did. This is a point that would assist listeners in judging for themselves who were the trouble makers at Lewisham and who were not, and who was "beyond the democratic processes" (see 35 below) and who was not.

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(d) Hain speaks as if "making a stand" (i.e. rioting and using violence to try and stop NF marches) was a new strategy decided upon shortly before Lewisham. In fact the far left had been doing this kind of thing for at least 3 years by the time of Lewisham, starting at the "Battle of Red Lion Square" on 15th June 1974, when one left-wing demonstrator (Kevin Gateley) died in a riotous attack on a Police cordon, while the NF march was still about half a mile away, and which prompted a Public Judicial Inquiry led by Lord Justice Scarman (reported in HMSO Cmnd 5919) as to the cause of the rioting. Why didn't the presenter put this well-known fact to Hain? These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

27. 15:59 There were two anecdotes presented, one of which was from Hain, about what these people did at Lewisham on the day. ("We marched around Lewisham for a while, and everyone felt okay about it"). Hain emphasises that he was present at the beginning of the march and "for some period afterwards, but I wasn't actually present when the Battle of Lewisham took place". He says, "It was a very important demonstration." One left-wing interviewee mentioned that there was a suggestion that they go to New Cross to "actually oppose the fascists on the street".

(a) One of these interviewees, an active opponent of the National Front on that day, "felt okay" about marching around Lewisham that day. Why wasn't it put to him that this was because there was no-one behaving violently towards him and his comrades. According to the presenter's standards, it seems, violence BY the National Front (which was virtually non-existent) was unacceptable, but violence AGAINST the National Front was perfectly acceptable. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial. (b) The casual mention that these people were considering going to New Cross to "actually oppose the fascists on the street", i.e. threaten or engage in violence, is ignored by the presenter. That is not impartiality. Why did the presenter not refer to contemporary news reports of the events, such as that of *The Sunday Times* the following day, 14th August 1977 (a copy of which is attached)?

28. 17:09 An anonymous witness says, "There's a kind of confrontation that's pending, but the first kind of confrontation really is with the police. ... Then there's the moment when the police lead the fascists that they're trying to protect out onto New Cross Road, and my memory of that is that the police forces then charged into the crowd. They came round the corner, the fascists protected by the charge of the police forces, and a lot of the people in front of me were very brave and bold and just, you know, went at them really. People were fighting, hand to hand, and gradually they moved past, and the fighting wound down. They marched off down the road, and, I mean, I didn't chase after them. I think people did, but I didn't. I was still shattered, actually, from what I had witnessed."

This is another unnamed left-wing witness representative of the National Front's opponents. His account is transparently false. Again, no counter-view is heard. This is the first hint in the programme that the anti-National Front forces were violent towards the police. The people he mentions as fighting hand to hand were the anti-National Front demonstrators who attacked the police. The presenter failed to make this clear.

29. 18:22 An unnamed commentator says, "So the National Front clearly represents a threat to what ordinary people accept as liberal democracy, and also a threat to law and order. But the kind of violence that has terrorised Lewisham has made some people think that the opponents of the National Front are as suspect as the Front itself, and that the impact of the National Front on the public has been emphasised by opposition."

(a) Who is this person?

(b) How did the National Front represent the threats that he says it did?

(c) Why is it not made clear that the "violence that has terrorised Lewisham" did not come from the National Front, but from

(i) muggers of elderly white ladies, most of whom were black, and

(ii) the angry, violent, leftist mob that tried to stop the National Front from marching that day?

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(d) Why did the presenter not put it to this person that the National Front contested elections, so how can it be a "threat to what ordinary people accept as liberal democracy"?

30. 18:46 The presenter says, "Scores of people were injured at Lewisham, including more than 50 police officers, and it was on that day that riot gear, including riot shields, were first used by police on the British mainland. We can see from their magazine, *Searchlight*, that the National Front hailed what took place at Lewisham as a triumph. The headline read, 'Establishment conspirators and red mobs fail to stop the National Front advance'. But interpretations of that success differ."

(a) The presenter doesn't make it clear that

(i) some of the injured included participants in the lawful National Front march,(ii) the police officers who were injured were all injured at the hands of the mobthat opposed the National Front, and

(iii) that the reason for the riot gear being used for the first time on the British mainland was exclusively the violence directed against the police by the left-

wing counter-demonstrators, and NOT the NF marchers.

(b) The magazine supporting the National Front at the time was called *Spearhead* (which was published privately and independently of the National Front). *Searchlight* was (and still is) a magazine run by the extreme left-wing but pro-Zionist organisation of the same name which specialised in attacking and inciting violence against the National Front, its members, supporters, premises and events. Perhaps this was a Freudian slip, showing us where the presenter obtained most of her material for this programme. The presenter failed to rectify this error before the programme aired.

31. 19:12 An unnamed commentator says, "This is a pivotal moment. This confrontation shows them that they can't just march wherever they like into a black community to intimidate and harass and represent symbolically the violence of their agenda. Lewisham says to them, 'You're not going to be able to do that'."

(a) Where is the evidence that the National Front intimidated or harassed anyone during their marches? Where is the evidence for "the violence of their agenda", and what does it mean? Isn't that just a matter of opinion? Where is the opposing opinion?

(b) What he's saying is that mob violence succeeded and was justified. Whether or not this is true, why didn't the presenter question the ethics of such a statement?

These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter, who is supposed to be impartial.

32 19:30 Professor Henry says, "That for me is why the National Front died that day. There were so many ordinary white people sayin', 'You don't represent us', that made those racists realise that they don't have the support that they believed they had."

This is yet another unsupported and unchallenged statement. Why was no contrary opinion allowed on this programme? I refer again to *The Sunday Times* report of the following day, in which it says:

"In a by-election for the local council last year, votes for the National Front and the National Party totalled more than those of the successful Labour candidate."

These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter, who is supposed to be impartial.

33. 20:06 The presenter says, "The campaigning group, the Anti Nazi League, came together in the month after Lewisham. Along with Rock Against Racism, which had formed the previous year, it harnessed popular culture to underpin its opposition to fascism. But it also treated fascism as an exception. As fundamentally antithetical to liberal democracy. Not something to be accommodated and debated, but, controversially, something to be physically confronted."

Why does the presenter openly condone physical confrontation of "fascism", which implies violence, or the

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threat of violence? How can this be impartial? These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

34. 20:41 Lord Hain says, "There was a very clear strategy adopted, that where the National Front marched, we would be there. And yes, that meant confronting them. On the one hand, it was obvious from the evidence that wherever they mobilised and marched on the streets, they chose areas of maximum sensitivity, then violent

attacks followed on those citizens. And the other thing is they used it to recruit. Now the only way you could stop that was not just by holding up a placard, because that didn't affect them at all. They just sneered. What you had to do was physically stop them."

(a) Hain talks about "confronting" and "physically stopping". Isn't the proper way to handle your political opponents to challenge them to debate, so you can show everyone how wrong they (i.e. your political opponents) are and how right you yourself are? Isn't this more in line with "liberal democracy"? Why wasn't this point put to Hain?

(b) Where is the evidence that "violent attacks followed on those citizens" and that such violent attacks, if they ever took place, were carried out by National Front members or sympathisers?

(c) Why does this programme throughout give an implied nod of approval to violence and the threat of violence being used against "fascism", whilst at the same time making unsubstantiated allegations of violence, harassment and intimidation on the part of the National Front? Hardly impartial.

35. 21:18 An unnamed commentator says, "Fascism and the wider extreme right are fundamentally underpinned by perspectives that are racist and beyond the democratic processes, and if you look at the internal material of the National Front and that's what it wanted to take Britain beyond as well, so in that sense they're really quite different things. You need to dig deeper into what these organisations are doing and not just take a superficial perspective of, 'well, they're all fighting in the streets, they're all as bad as each other'."

(a) Here is yet another unnamed leftist commentator being given unchallenged free rein on this programme.

(b) How is he qualified to say that anything or anyone is "racist and beyond the democratic processes"? Why was it not put to him that the National Front was organised along democratic lines and took part in democratic elections?

(c) What does the latter phrase ("beyond the democratic processes") mean? That it's okay to use violence against them because you've decided that they are "fascists"? Why didn't the presenter challenge him on these remarks?

36. 21:42 Hain says, "And there were all sorts of arguments about denial of free speech, but with freedom of speech comes freedom of responsibility, and you cannot have free speech which then results in incitement to violence, to breaking the law, to race hate on a vast scale. And there are historic parallels when in the battle for Cable Street in 1936 when Mosley's fascists were on the rampage through the Jewish East End communities."

(a) This comment doesn't make any sense either. What exactly is "freedom of responsibility"?

(b) Hain was allowed to get carried away on an "anti-racist" rant. How is he qualified to say in which circumstances we can have our freedoms of speech and assembly and in which circumstances we cannot? The presenter failed to question him on this.

(c) Did Mosley's fascists ever go "on the rampage"? Where is the film evidence of this? Why wasn't this point dealt with by the presenter/interviewer?

37. 22:44 The presenter says, "In the 1979 General Election the National Front stood more candidates than ever before. They had party political broadcasts on peak time television, as they did through the 1970s and

into the 1980s. The National Front was a fascist political party, and they were mainstream, or wanted to be."

(a) The last sentence is a glaring example of this presenter's lack of impartiality. Whether the National Front was "fascist" or not is a matter of opinion.

(b) How does the presenter align this statement with that of Prof Henry (above) when he says the National Front "died" on the day of the Lewisham march (13th August 1977)? Why didn't she at least comment on this discrepancy?

38. 23:03 An unnamed commentator says, "In the immediate term they couldn't be mainstream because they didn't know how to break through, and once they were being targeted and described as fascists again, that was always a bit of a burden for them, especially when they were, you know, dressing up in Nazi uniforms and crawling around in the woods celebrating Hitler's birthday. You could produce the photographs of that and say, well you see you think they are just patriots but we really can show you that they're in fact Nazis in disguise. And that's a great strategy while it works but after a while, you know, you can't keep flourishing that ace all the time because people are, they get habituated to the idea. There's a bigger struggle involved in how you name these things, how you classify them. I mean one person's neo Nazi is someone else's, you know, glorious patriot. And that's in some ways still a struggle."

This comment by yet another unnamed left wing commentator is just fantasy. Where is the evidence that the National Front, nationally or locally, ever organised its members to dress up in Nazi uniforms to attend celebrations of Hitler's birthday — in the woods or anywhere else?

Why did the presenter and the producer allow such an obvious tissue of lies to be included, unchallenged, as part of this programme? These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

39. 24:07 The presenter says, "Popular opposition to extremist violence and the Front's Nazi associations ensured that it was wiped out at the 1979 Election, a result that was aided by the incoming Conservative government's adoption of tough language on immigration. [Tape of Margaret Thatcher's famous "...becoming swamped..." speech] If Enoch Powell cleared a path for the National Front, Margaret Thatcher blocked it off again by reflecting their nationalist concerns." There is a kernel of truth in this assertion. Thatcher and the Tories adopted tough language on immigration before the election in order to stop an outward flow of their voters turning to the NF, but this tough language was soon betrayed after the election.

(a) The National Front was not "wiped out at the 1979 Election" any more than it "died on the day of the Lewisham march", as alleged by Professor Henry at 19:30. These statements are misleading and mutually contradictory, yet were allowed into the programme unchallenged.

(b) Why does the presenter invite listeners to accept that the violent, extreme leftwing mobs at Lewisham represented "popular opposition to extremist violence"?

(c) These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

40. 24:35 An unnamed commentator says, "So there's different ways you can kind of spin this, aren't there? You can talk about the ways in which a more mainstream party was able to take forward a more extreme political agenda, or there's the sense that

ultimately a small upstart party campaigning on these issues wasn't able to get very far in the final analysis, and it shows the strength of democracy, so there's different ways, I think, of thinking about what this tells us."

Yet another unnamed left-wing commentator, with no counterbalancing viewpoint from the National Front. This statement doesn't say anything concrete at all, so what was the point of including it in the programme?

41. 25:06 The presenter says, "It also tells us again, that, as in the pre-war years, a fascist party was only ever able to get so far. There's an unbroken thread of fascism in Britain, but there's also an unbroken thread

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of fascist failure. We shouldn't lose sight of that. And the people motivated to confront fascists, at Cable Street, at Lewisham, what part did they play in that failure? The moment of the election in 1979 might also highlight a weakness in the term, 'fascism'. To say someone or something is 'fascist' is to box up a bundle of anti-democratic, racist, anti-social ideas, allowing them to be dismissed as possessed only by those on the extremes. By fascists, and therefore nothing to do with decent society. When the truth is that many of the issues the National Front campaigned on, and the language they used, were actually quite popular with quite a lot of people across the political spectrum receptive to simple solutions to complex problems."

It's difficult to see what exactly the presenter is trying to say here. It could be argued that if there is a thread between Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the 1930s and the National Front in the 1970s and 1980s, it is that *both* were suppressed ruthlessly by the Establishment, who hated and feared them. The infliction of Defence Regulation 18b against Mosley and his BUF in 1940 (as previously mentioned herein), and the continually more oppressive revisions of the Race Relations Act (amending the Public Order Act) since 1964 are glaring examples of this. Why didn't the presenter allow any opinions other than those of the left — indeed, often the 'far-left' — onto this programme? These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

42. 26:08 Professor 'Lez' Henry says, "When people speak about you have a right to assemble, you have a right to free speech, yeah, fine, but where is the balance, where are the alternatives? Where were the alternatives for, you know, the mainstream media, especially through the red-top newspapers, endorsing that idea that blacks are the muggers, they're the ones who are more likely to go out attackin' people."

This is another rant from this professor that, again, has no real meaning. That blacks form a disproportionately high percentage of muggers compared to their total numbers in the population is well documented, so what is this person complaining about? The presenter failed to challenge him on this point.

43. 26:32 The presenter says, "The story of fascism in Britain is also the story of its opposition, the way that ordinary individuals time and time again *en masse* reject it. But there's more to it than that, and we're not doing ourselves any favours if we leave it there as a flattering and uncomplicated British story of defeating fascism."

Again, what, exactly, is the presenter trying to say? She failed to make it clear. The story of any idea is also the story of opposition to that idea. That's not saying anything new. Any new idea has deranged opposition to deal with in the early days. This final comment from the presenter is as empty as the rest of the programme. These are not the proper standards of a BBC presenter — representing a corporation whose Charter states that it is required to be impartial.

There are forty-three (43) points of complaint made above about this programme,

some of them in the form of questions. In the interests of justice and in order to display the BBC's impartiality I demand that:

(a) this episode of the programme be withdrawn from the BBC's archives and no longer made available for downloading or listening to; and

(b) consideration be given to the preparation of a fresh programme dealing with the same subject but including someone such as myself, who was involved intimately with the subject matter covered, to give the facts from the National Front's point of view and to answer questions from an unbiased presenter.

Dated...... day of 2021

Signed..... Martin Webster

Martin Webster of: 32 Kimpton House, Fontley Way, Roehampton, London SW15 4ND