

Sources C – E: The Jewish Chronicle; Friday, October 16th, 1936

1936

JEWISH DEFENCE

THE TERROR IN EAST LONDON

Fascist Outrages Continue

Child Thrown Through Shop Window

JEWISH SHOPS RAIDED AND PILFERED

Motor-car Overturned and Set Alight

[From our Special Correspondent]

On Sunday afternoon last, there passed through the streets of East London one of the largest and most orderly demonstrations ever seen in the district. The general sympathy and applause of the crowds along the route was in marked contrast to the hostile feelings aroused by Mosley's intended military parade on the previous Sunday. I walked with several thousand other people in this anti-Fascist demonstration from Tower Hill to Victoria Park, and all incidents that I noticed were entirely due to the provocation of the Blackshirt sympathisers at certain points on the route, who made foul signs with their hands, while from their mouths came a stream of vile abuse.

The demonstration was headed by the Ex-Servicemen's Movement against Fascism and anti-Semitism, with ex-Servicemen wearing medals. Banners carried included those of the Stepney Council for

youths, aged from sixteen to eighteen, had descended on his car, which he had left standing in Bancroft Road, had smashed all the windows and then turned it over, setting fire to the petrol tank. They had done this and made off before anyone had appeared on the scene.

The worst atrocity, however, is reported by Mr. Samuel Jelen, a hairdresser, of Mile End Road, who told the Press: "I heard the noise, and went to the shop door. A crowd of about 200 youths rushed towards me. Four or five of the foremost members got me. One hit me across the face with a large piece of wood. Before I could get on to my feet again, I was seized and hurled through the window of Mr. Philip Levy's tailor's shop. The crowd then picked up a little girl and hurled her after me. Luckily she fell on me, otherwise she might have been seriously injured. The crowd then seized articles in the window."

Scotland Yard issued the following statement: "A demonstration organised by the Communist Party formed up on Tower Hill this afternoon and marched to Victoria Park, where they held a meeting. Some opposition was shown to them as they entered the park and in the park itself, but no serious disorder occurred. After meeting, the demonstration marched to Shoreditch. During the afternoon, an attempt was made to cause damage to property, and a few windows were broken in the Bethnal Green area. This disorder was quickly checked by the police."

MIDNIGHT TERROR IN STEPNEY

House Attacks by Fascist Bands

INVADERS CHASED BY RESIDENTS

[From a Special Correspondent]

At approximately 11 p.m. on Monday of last week, the inhabitants of Stepney Green were thrown into a state of panic by an attack on the Stepney Green Buildings during the course of which two persons were injured and many windows smashed by stones and other missiles. Shortly before 11 o'clock my attention was drawn by shouts at the entrance to the Buildings, where, I was told, Fascists had entered and a man had been injured. A policeman arrived on the scene and after a perfunctory investigation decided that the inhabitants were suffering from "bad nerves."

True, the people were in a state of jumpiness and were quite prepared to cry "Blackshirt" at any moving shadow, but subsequent events proved that the terror shown was well-founded; for hardly had the policeman passed on than the noise of crashing windows was heard and about a dozen men were seen approaching the passage-way between the Park and the Buildings hurling stones, etc., at people and windows. I managed to get close enough to see the colour of the shirts under their jackets and the glint of the silver buckles on their belts—they were Blackshirts. Police vans were soon on the spot, but not before the local inhabitants had succeeded in chasing the attackers to the lower end of Stepney Green, where they were lost sight of.

A little later I saw a large number of people march from the Green towards the Fascist headquarters in Essian Street, but was informed that the police had evacuated the Blackshirts and that a cordon had been thrown across the entrance to the street. Nevertheless, Blackshirt bands were still abroad; for later that evening, Mr. Pearson, the well-known local speaker of the Blue-and-White Shirts, was set upon and had to receive hospital attention. During the evening a man with a foot injury was escorted to the Jewish Hospital for attention. He had with him a Fascist belt—more weapon than belt, indeed—that he had wrested from one of his assailants.

Fire at Fascist Headquarters

Jewish Neighbours' Fear of Consequences

[From our Special Correspondent]

At 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning, the door of the B.U.F. Bethnal Green Headquarters in Green Street, was found to be alight. The fire brigade extinguished it in a few moments.

Yet all sorts of stories have reached the Press. A woman in the building (why should there have been a woman on business premises at that hour?) is said to have "rushed through the flames" in an heroic endeavour to read the number of a fast car that was speeding away. A man living on the top floor is supposed to have said: "The room was lit up by flames."

One is reminded of the Reichstag fire stunt. To the Jewish shopkeepers of Green Street, it seems very much like this. They fear that they will be made responsible for a happening with which they have had no connection. As it is, their position in this anti-Semitic street is rather precarious.

I spoke to a number of them and they, like the shopkeepers in Mile End Road, are very much afraid of what is going to happen. Those who have come from the Continent to seek refuge from pogroms in democratic England see in these terrorist acts the forerunners of English pogroms. I am not exaggerating when I say that they are

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