

Interpretations of Cable Street Information Sheet

Interpretation A

“East London workers supported by all London in united action have barred the road to Mosley. Gentile, Jew, Catholic, Protestant, Labour and Communist, men, women and children determined that Fascism shall not pass here, have given Mosley the most humiliating defeat ever suffered by any figure in English politics. East London workers have not only defeated Mosley, they have demonstrated that English people have no time for any sort of toleration for Fascism. East London has torn neutrality to shreds and given a lead to the whole Labour and democratic movement to move into action against Fascism.”

Press Release by the London District of the Communist Party, published in the Daily Mirror.

The day after the battle, Mosley flew to Berlin in Germany to marry his second wife, Diana Guinness (née Mitford). The wedding took place in Joseph Goebbels home; the best man was Adolf Hitler. This caused great embarrassment amongst ordinary BUF members.

Mosley lost a lot of authority amongst senior BUF members after the battle. There were sackings, resignations and splits in the party, and Mussolini reduced his funding. This led the BUF to move closer to Hitler and the party renamed itself the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists.

The Public Order Act, 1936, (a direct result of the Battle of Cable Street) made party political “defence corps” illegal as well as banning political uniforms. Sir Phillip Game, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, believed that this would lessen the “spectacular appeal to the young and foolish” of the BUF. The BUF could no longer hold provocative meetings guaranteed to incite protests as such meetings now need police permission.

Modern antifascists often refer to the Battle of Cable Street as “the moment at which British fascism was decisively

Writing about the anti-fascist clashes in Brighton on June 13th, 2026, Tony Greenstein made explicit comparisons with Cable Street:

“From Oswald Mosley in the 30s to the Neo-Nazis of today's 'Patriots', Brighton remains a No-Go Area for Fascism”

“the Police ... did their utmost to force a way through for the fascists as they did in the 30s for the openly antisemitic British Union of Fascists.”

Interpretation B

A brief timeline of antisemitism in Britain after the Battle of Cable Street

Date	Event
October 1936	Mile End anti-Jewish attacks show antisemitism continues.
August 1947	Anti-Jewish riots in several British cities, including Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds and London.
1960s-80s	Growth of anti-racist campaigns; overt antisemitism less acceptable.
1984	The Community Security Trust (CST) begins systematic recording of antisemitic incidents.
2000s - 2026	Spikes in antisemitic incidents linked to international crises.
2023	CST records 4,103 incidents (record annual total).
2024	CST records 3,528 incidents (second-highest total).

Police statements in the immediate aftermath of Cable Street include:

- “abundant evidence that the Fascism [sic] movement has been steadily gaining ground in many parts of East London,” with around 2,000 new members joining (its London membership before Cable Street was fewer than 3,000).
- among the new joiners were those with “grievances against the Jews.”
- according to the police, the BUF had “conduct[ed] the most successful series of meetings since the beginning of the movement.” It had been “enthusiastically received” at East End meetings that attracted thousands, with almost no organised opposition.
- police concluded that “a definite pro-fascist feeling has manifested itself throughout the [East End] districts ... and the alleged fascist defeat is in reality a fascist advance.”

The main far-right parties after the BUF:

- Union Movement (1948-73)
- League of Empire Loyalists (1954-67)
- British National Party (1960-67)
- National Front (1967-82)
- British National Party (1982-2018)

BUF candidates received an increase in votes at council elections. In Bethnal Green in October 1937, for example, the BUF won 20% of the vote.

Between August and December 1937 there were at least 647 fascist meetings in the East End, a 27% increase on the same period the year before.