



Centre of Discourse Studies

Centre of Discourse Studies 2020 Symposium on Extreme Right Discourses

23-27 NOVEMBER

'The economy' in British fascist discourse. Or, 'what fascists write about when they write about capitalism'

John E. Richardson
University of the Sunshine Coast

Abstract:

In this presentation I will examine the ways that British fascists have written about capitalism and the economy. There is a tendency to assume that fascist political-economic theories are a 'third way' between capitalism and communism. However, I will demonstrate that this is not accurate, at least in the British case. Following Billig's edict, I adopt a diachronic approach to my analysis in order to examine the connections and continuities between parties and so better demarcate the ideological contours of British fascist economic discourse. Over 90 years and numerous different parties, there is a remarkable consistency in the ways that capitalism is criticised. I show that capitalism is very rarely criticized in toto. Instead, British fascists tend to concentrate criticism on what they refer to as 'international' and 'finance capitalism', seeking to recalibrate and rehabilitate capitalism in the service of 'the nation'. Through inter-textual analysis I show that these terms – 'international', 'finance capitalism', 'the nation', amongst others – are code words that index antisemitic conspiracy theories.