

Lost Imperium?

Yockey: 20 years later

Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey

Kerry Bolton

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On 16 June 1960 Francis Parker Yockey, a 43-year-old far right international mystery man and author of the 1948 fascist opus *Imperium*, committed suicide in his San Francisco jail cell by swallowing a cyanide capsule. Long wanted by the FBI, Yockey had been arrested two few weeks earlier after his luggage was lost at the San Francisco airport. It was then discovered that he was using multiple fake passports. The FBI particularly wanted to investigate Yockey's alleged ties to the Soviet Union. With Yockey's mysterious death, however, the case went cold for four decades.

In the fall of 1999, my book *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International*,¹ a close to 700-page critical investigative biography of the American fascist theorist, was released by the Brooklyn-based publishing house Autonomedia.² In the following two decades, virtually everyone who knew the mystery man, such as the Liberty Lobby leader Willis Carto, has died. The living historical trail has finally gone cold.³

In 2018, however, the New Zealand-based far rightist Kerry Bolton – a long-time Yockey aficionado – issued his own study *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey*. A passionate pamphleteer and author, Bolton has penned countless works with titles such as *The Holocaust Myth: a Skeptical Inquiry*, *The*

¹ This was reviewed in *Lobster* 39 – ed.

² Rendered wrongly as 'Automedia' by Bolton.

³ It is possible that Carto's archive might hold a historical nugget or two. However when I interviewed Carto – and in the two decades that followed *Dreamer* – he had every opportunity to contribute new revelations about Yockey but failed to do so.

Psychotic Left, Artists from the Right, Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific, The Banking Swindle, Stalin: The Enduring Legacy, and Russia and the Fight Against Globalization. Weighing in around 600 pages, Bolton's opus was issued by the alt-right publishing house Arktos Press.

Given that there now exist two extremely detailed biographies of close to a combined 1,300 pages about a man whose name still remains largely unknown, even for many on the right in both the United States and Europe, it seems reasonable to assume that the biographical hunt into Yockey largely has come to an end. Large sections of *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey* can even be read as a series of extended footnotes to my *Dreamer of the Day*.

Yet that does not mean that Bolton's research was for naught. Far from it. As a self-identified Yockey fan with connections to rightist circles around the world, Bolton had access to sources of information not available to me. Nor was Bolton a novice when it came to Yockey. In the 1990s he published a small collection of Yockey's writings that were found in unpublished manuscripts, as well as a reprint of four issues of *Frontfighter*, the publication of Yockey's British-based European Liberation Front (ELF).⁴ Although many of the FBI reports that he cites originally appeared in *Dreamer*, Bolton still performs a useful service in citing them again in a different context.⁵ More importantly, he had fuller access to valuable personal letters and other correspondence from Sir Oswald Mosley and the Canadian fascist Adrien Arcand, both of whom knew Yockey.⁶

Bolton further pursues in much more detail than I did in *Dreamer* various references and citations to Yockey from a disparate group of both Yockey fans and critics in a long chapter entitled 'Resurrection'. This highlights the work of figures such as Revilo P. Oliver and others on the right

⁴ For background on Bolton and the Yockey manuscripts, see Kevin Coogan, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Postwar Fascist International* (New York: Autonomedia, 1999), pp. 618-19.

⁵ In the early 1980s, living on opposite coasts of the United States and completely unknown to each other, Keith Stimely and I declassified the FBI files on Yockey. These files are now widely available on the Internet. However there are now also more declassified files from regional FBI offices that Bolton adds to the mix.

⁶ In the Mosley archive, for example, either Bolton or one of his researchers discovered a valuable 1953 attack on Yockey from one of his harshest far right critics, Wolfgang Sarg, a follow-up addendum on an earlier denunciation of Yockey by Sarg that I detail at length. (See *Dreamer* pp. 409-16.) Arcand's files offer more insights into Yockey's personality, although as a devout Catholic, Arcand saw Yockey from this perspective.

involved in the National Youth Alliance (NYA) and its various unruly American offshoots in the 1970s. Douglas Kaye, a denizen of the far corners of the American far right since the 1960s, also played a Virgil of sorts to Bolton's Dante. Although Kaye and I corresponded during the writing of *Dreamer*, Bolton has been able to draw on Kaye's personal knowledge of many of the characters who promoted Yockey in the American right, starting with the New Jersey-based journal *Common Sense*.⁷ One of Bolton's more entertaining revelations is that Louis T. Byers, one of Yockey's most fervent American advocates in the 1960s and 1970s and closely associated with the launch of the NYA, later made his living as a professional jazz critic. Yockey, a classically-trained pianist, loathed jazz, and opined in *Imperium* that 'music is seldom heard in America, having been replaced by the cultureless drum-beating of the Negro.'

Bolton likewise offers a close read of otherwise obscure pamphlets from some of Yockey's staunchest supporters, in particular Fred Weiss and his sometimes collaborator H. Keith Thompson. With grad student-like zeal, he offers detailed summaries of commentaries on Yockey from different rightists in North America, Europe, and the Antipodes, often from obscure texts in long-forgotten journals.⁸ In short, Bolton's study has undeniable value. In what follows, I first wish to highlight Bolton's contributions in unearthing some valuable information that even a moderately sophisticated reader can easily separate from the stench of Bolton's ideology displayed most toxically in *Yockey* by his grotesque indulgence in Holocaust denial.⁹

Yet at the end of the day *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey* too often reads more like a leaden tome than a revelatory biography. In part, this was because Bolton had to structure his book in the wake of *Dreamer*. Very few people truly interested in Yockey would not have come across *Dreamer* in the years preceding Bolton's text. Bolton simply didn't find all that much new

⁷ For more on Kaye, see Coogan, *Dreamer*, pp. 524, 528-29.

⁸ Unfortunately, they all focus on differing interpretations of *Imperium* because none of the writers had any knowledge of Yockey's activity on the right as his past was so shrouded in mystery.

⁹ 'This [Allied postwar policy in Germany] was therefore a deliberate policy of mass starvation, quite different from the food situation that the German concentration camps faced during the closing months of the war, when Allied bombing of railroads ensured that supplies could not reach the camps.' (p. 39.) In other words, Bolton not only claims there was no Holocaust but that the Allied powers – not the Nazis – were to blame for the mass deaths in the camps.

that was left to reveal in Yockey's past. However Bolton's need to cast Yockey in the best possible light makes his *Yockey* needlessly dull at times, while avoiding a truly hard examination of just how relevant *Imperium's* author remains today even on the far right.

Part 1

It is first worth noting that there are no breathtaking surprises in Bolton's study for readers of *Dreamer*. Bolton argues, as I did, that Yockey really did commit suicide in jail and was not murdered. His passing claim that somehow Yockey was an eyewitness to the 'Rudolf Slansky trial' in Prague, Czechoslovakia in November 1952 is put to rest on page 236 when Bolton correctly reports that Yockey returned to Europe from New York in January 1953. Bolton, in short, arrives at the same conclusions both about Yockey's death and about the fake Prague story as I did two decades earlier.¹⁰

Bolton also remains as mystified as I was at the strange story of the reported death of Bruderschaft leader Alfred Franke-Gricksch at the hands of the Russians. Nor can Bolton make sense of Yockey's strange Jewish friend Alexander Scharf. On the core issues of Yockey's past, then, Bolton reaffirms the findings in *Dreamer*. Best of all, he often supplies valuable background information on the quirky cast of characters around Yockey. Bolton, for example, communicated with the children of Baroness Alice von Pflügl, who financed the publication of *Imperium*, and obtained from them a much more

¹⁰ Bolton was told the Prague story by Douglas Kaye. The claim, as far as I know, first appeared in print in the Tom Francis introduction to *The Enemy of Europe*, which Francis told me he got from Kaye. Kaye may also be responsible for the zany claim that a mysterious German spy service called 'Z-16' confiscated the German edition of *Enemy of Europe*. If the book was confiscated, which is quite possible, it would almost certainly have been by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, West Germany's FBI.

Kaye said that his source for the notion that Yockey spent time in Prague sitting in balcony of the courtroom watching Slansky's trial was Fred Weiss, whom Kaye says told him this story long after Yockey's death. Besides the fact that Yockey didn't understand a word of Czech, the FBI files show he was living in New York City during this period and only returned to Europe in early 1953. H. Keith Thompson, whom I pressed on this issue, said the idea that Yockey attended the Slansky trial was absurd. Thompson, in fact, worked hard to help get Yockey out of New York and back to Europe all that autumn, a story detailed in *Dreamer of the Day*.

Bolton also suggests (p. 226) that it is 'plausible' that Yockey visited Argentina, but there is absolutely no evidence to suggest he actually did so. Still, Bolton's book is largely free of such unproven claims, and by and large he accurately follows the same historical trail that I did earlier.

detailed description of her than I was able to provide in *Dreamer*.

Bolton further offers evidence, in a suggestive if not entirely convincing way, that Yockey's ideas were more significantly influenced by his Catholic background than I noted in *Dreamer*. While Yockey took his cues from Spengler, his Catholic upbringing may have disposed him (even subconsciously) to embrace both Spengler and a more 'spiritual' style of fascism than the crude biological materialism advanced by the Nazis.¹¹ For these reasons alone, *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey* is a welcome historical contribution.

Bolton's target audience, however, is fellow members of the far right, not academics. For this reason, at times he reads more like Yockey's defense attorney in intra-right squabbles, no more so than over Yockey's strong rejection of biological determinism, an issue Bolton addresses most directly in a chapter entitled 'The Race Question'. Bolton advances the argument that Spengler and Yockey both drew from the 'spiritual' nature of German Idealism; the Nazis, in contrast, embraced a more British or 'materialist' view of race.¹² In defending both Spengler and Yockey, Bolton even favorably references the famous Columbia University anthropologist Franz Boas, a cardinal sin for most on the racist right.¹³

Bolton, not surprisingly, embraces Yockey's notion of the Jew as a 'cultural distorter'. He simply avoids any deeper examination of Yockey's convoluted relationship to Spengler, who dismissed Judaism (along with

¹¹ Spengler saw Mussolini as the embodiment of the coming 'Caesarism', but he viewed Hitler with disdain.

¹² In so doing, Bolton seemingly downplays the possibility that the Italian interpretation of fascism that stressed its 'spiritual' side, may have affected Yockey more than German Romanticism and Fichte. Of course, the Italians were also influenced by German thinking so there is no easy answer to this riddle. Some of Yockey's closest British collaborators such as John Anthony Gannon, however, were devout Catholics; *Frontfighter* numbered its issues using dates from the fascist era. As Bolton notes (p. 155): 'The ELF took their date from the practice of Fascist Italy, starting from the assumption to power in the year of the Fascist March on Rome in 1922. Hence 1951, for example, was XXIX E.F. ("Era Fascista").'

¹³ Bolton, pp. 80-84. Bolton tries to justify his nod to geographical determinism by a long quote from Carl Jung. Following a 1909 visit to Buffalo, New York, Jung opined that the 'American presents a strange picture: A European with Negro behavior and an Indian soul.' (p. 87.) Of course in citing Jung, Bolton may have been exhibiting a Māori sense of humor.

Islam) as a fossilized 'Magian culture' that had lost its mojo centuries ago.¹⁴ As for Yockey, even in his notion of 'cultural distortion' in *Imperium* – a book dedicated 'to the hero of the Second World War', namely Hitler – he argued that the Jews merely aggravated a deeper crisis in the West that began organically developing around the time of the Reformation. As he writes in *Imperium*:

'But the soul of the West itself was slowly externalizing. The decisive turning point of 1789 was prepared for by centuries of slow changes. The old inwardness of the West, which gave to the feudal centuries their self-evident spiritual cohesion, gradually was undermined by the new conflicts especially those of town versus country, of trade-nobility versus land-nobility, of materialism against the spirit of religion. The Reformation was a schism in the whole soul of the West. In it appeared as a symbol of the coming triumph of materialism the system of Calvinism. Calvin taught the sanctity of economic activity; he sanctioned usury; he interpreted wealth as a sign of Election to salvation. This spirit was abroad; Henry VIII legalized usury in England in 1545. The old Western doctrine of the sinfulness of usury was rejected.

This represented liberation for the Jew, accessibility to power, even if disguised, invisible power. In the Reformation time, the Jew was found everywhere fighting against the Church, and, as between Luther and Calvin, supporting Calvin for Luther also rejected usury. The victory of Puritanism in England, an adaptation of Calvinism, gave the Jew favorable conditions.'¹⁵

Part 2

Bolton's at times defense attorney read of Yockey often glosses over more serious questions that might otherwise mar his encomium. For example: was Oswald Mosley really wrong when he decided that Europe had a better chance to survive intact on the side of America rather than Russia? Was life

¹⁴ Spengler criticized Karl Marx's economic views as being far more distorted by Marx's embrace of British materialism than by his genetics. In his 1919 essay *Prussianism and Socialism*, Spengler complains that Marx had imbibed the 'Viking' way of thinking of the British.

¹⁵ Ulick Varange (Francis Parker Yockey), *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics* (Costa Mesa, CA: The Noontide Press, 1962), pp. 421-22

in capitalist England not significantly better than, say, life in Communist Hungary? Did West Germany build a wall to keep its people from crossing over to East Germany? Were millions of Germans wrong to flee West at the end of the war?

In *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey*, Bolton suggests that Peter J. Huxley-Blythe, a one-time leading member of Yockey's ELF, betrayed Yockey by having the *chutzpah* to try to find out whether Yockey was a Soviet agent. In 2000, I spent an afternoon with Huxley-Blythe at his office in Chester, England. In the 1950s, Huxley-Blythe developed close ties to many Eastern European émigrés. A navy man, he told me that he had been involved in Cold War adventures that included covert landings on the Baltic coast. Was Huxley-Blythe really betraying the 'Imperium' by worrying about Yockey? Or had Yockey sold out his earlier vision? The idea that there could be two sides to this story never seems to occur to Bolton.

Bolton's discussion of Russia is lacking as well. For example, he ignores leading scholarship on Stalin; in particular Steve Kotkin's massive multi-volume biography of the Soviet leader that underscores Stalin's undying allegiance not to Genghis Khan and Tamerlane but to Marx and Lenin.¹⁶ Far from being a simple creature of peasant Russia, Stalin proved to be its assassin. Nor is there any examination offered of the changes in Russia following Stalin's death beyond Fred Weiss's eccentric texts from the mid-1950s so ably summarized by Bolton.

While Bolton does make a valuable contribution in calling attention to the varied and often arcane debates and discussions about *Imperium* on the fascist fringe, he simply avoids taking a hard look at Yockey as a political strategist. Yet in some ways, it is as a political strategist that Yockey remains at his most perplexing. When Yockey burst onto the European right with *Imperium*, he argued that fascism was merely the first rough outline of a future European Imperium whose contours would stretch from the Galway Coast to the Ural Mountains. This new Imperium would extend its power through the unabashed and unapologetic exercise of imperialism, starting with a massive expansion into Africa, a view that Mosley and Yockey both shared.

Yet by the mid-1950s Yockey began identifying with anti-colonial movements; he even spent time in Nasser's Egypt. When the United

¹⁶ See Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1879-1928* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), and *Stalin: Waiting for Hitler: 1929-1941* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017).

Kingdom, France, and Israel tried to retake the Suez Canal in 1956, a move opposed by both the United States and the Soviet Union, where was Yockey? When Nasser backed the Algerian FLN against France in the mid-1950s, did Yockey come to the aid of the pro-colonial French right? When A. K. Chesterton's League of Empire Loyalists (LEL) supported continued British imperial rule in the Middle East and Africa, Yockey was nowhere to be found.

In his last posthumously-published essay *World in Flames*, Yockey unabashedly allies with America's enemies in the Third World; he even gleefully predicts a Soviet victory against America in a coming nuclear showdown.¹⁷ How did Yockey ever hope to reconcile his embrace of decolonization with the views of his mentor Spengler whose last major work, 1933's *The Hour of Decision*, specifically warned about the coming clash between 'the White World-Revolution' and 'the Colored World-Revolution'? How then had Yockey gone seemingly so far through the looking glass? And in such a short time?

Nor does Bolton explore the failure of the one real attempt by Oswald Mosley (in alliance with Belgium's Jean-François Thiriart) in the early 1960s to fulfil his 'Europe-a-Nation' vision, the closest any right-wing movement has come to realizing a pan-European order somewhat along the lines of *Imperium*.¹⁸ Tellingly, Mosley received no support in England as the British right resisted any serious collaboration with 'off-color whites' in Catholic Spain and Italy.

¹⁷ Yockey argues that because Russia was a vital barbaric power and America was decadent, in any threatened nuclear exchange America would capitulate to Russian demands because the United States was too weak to accept the threatened losses to the civilian population that a nuclear exchange would insure. Ironically, the Cuban missile crisis occurred not long after *World in Flames* was published. In that crisis, both powers went to the edge of nuclear war before working out a compromise.

World in Flames remains somewhat problematic as it includes later additions to the text by H. Keith Thompson, but the overall thrust of the argument is clearly from Yockey. Bolton (p. 148) says it was jointly written with Thompson, but Thompson told me that he added certain controversial lines to attract more readers and to make the text feel more up to date when he prepared it for publication.

¹⁸ Bolton does make an important point in citing the French far rightist and Yockey fan Christian Bouchet, who says that Thiriart read *Imperium* in the Carto English edition in the early 1960s. (p. 561) When I met Thiriart in 1986, he did not mention Yockey and I could find no citation from *Imperium* in the texts that Thiriart gave me. However it seems likely that Thiriart did read *Imperium* as it was also being read by French rightists such as Alain de Benoist around this same time.

Conclusion

In *Yockey*, Bolton cites an article by the far rightist Revilo P. Oliver written in June 1966 for the *American Mercury* and entitled 'The Shadow of Empire: Francis Parker Yockey after Twenty Years', by which Oliver referred to the 1948 publication of *Imperium*. What then do we now make of Yockey some twenty years after *Dreamer of the Day* and now bookended with the publication of *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey*? Despite his best efforts, in my view Bolton fails to make this case for Yockey's continued political relevance on the right, in part because he fails to ask hard questions of the hero of his political romance. But how much blame can be assigned to Bolton the ideological enthusiast as opposed to Yockey the theorist?

In a revealing 21 November 1950 letter to Adrien Arcand, Yockey wrote that he was 'not first anti-semitic, but an anti-semite only because they are frustrating our Western Destiny, but they are not the only group, and NOT THE MOST POWERFUL GROUP doing that. Our worst enemy is the inner enemy, the liberal-capitalist-democrat, for it is he alone who enables the Jew to enjoy his present power.'¹⁹ Yockey's hatred of 'liberal-capitalist-democrat' modernity (embodied for him above all by America) led him to embrace Russia in the late 1940s and then in the 1950s to propagandize for such Third World icons of decolonization as Nasser and Castro.

But what of continental Europe? Was it really ever the home of the new Imperium? While Yockey and other postwar fascists celebrated the 'European spirit' of the Waffen-SS, the fact remained that the Waffen-SS volunteers were clearly a small minority of the citizens of their respective nations, often nations under German military occupation. Nor were fascists all pro-Nazi. In the 1930s, for example, many French activists who turned to fascism did so because they were terrified of the rise of a revanchist remilitarized Germany, a Germany they correctly viewed as intent on reversing the defeat of World War I. Their disdain for the parliamentary chaos and corruption of the Third Republic stemmed in part from the belief that France had to adopt similar strong-state measures to counter the looming threat from across the Rhine.²⁰

In concluding *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey*, Bolton declares that while

¹⁹ Cited in Bolton, p. 172.

²⁰ For this same reason, many French fascists in the 1930s felt far more allied with Mussolini's Italy and Franco's Spain than with Nazi Germany.

both America and Western Europe are culturally dead, a new star now rises not over Bethlehem but Moscow. Should Putin falter, will Bolton next declare for Communist China? Or will North Korea now be revealed as the seedbed of the next 'culture-bearing elite'? While Bolton ponders the future fate of the West, we can still appreciate the contribution he has made to a better understanding of Yockey's murky past.

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His article 'Tokyo Legend? Lee Harvey Oswald and Japan' appeared in Lobster 70 (Winter 2015).