



# **Diana Mosley: A biography of the glamorous Mitford sister who became Hitler's friend and married the leader of Britain's fascists**

*Jan Dalley*

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Much has been written about and by the Mitford sisters, who variously dazzled and shocked their contemporaries in England and abroad: Nancy, as a celebrated novelist (**The Pursuit of Love**); Deborah, as Duchess of Devonshire; Unity, famously infatuated with Hitler; Jessica, as a young Communist, and then as the queen of muckrakers (**The American Way of Death**). But until now there has been no biography of one of the most extraordinary of them, the beautiful and ambitious Diana.

Married at eighteen into the enormously wealthy Guinness family, Diana had it all -- brains, beauty, social position and money. She bore two sons and created a sparkling society circle that included such artists and intellectuals of the interwar years as Cecil Beaton, Lytton Strachey and Evelyn Waugh (who dedicated **Vile Bodies** to her). But after only three years she was swept up in the love affair that would change her life: with Sir Oswald Mosley, MP, womanizer and charismatic founder of the British Union of Fascists.

Jan Dalley's careful and dedicated research -- which included many interviews and conversations with the subject herself, now nearly ninety and living in France -- enables her to tell Diana Mosley's story in fascinating, and sometimes grim, detail. Growing enthusiasm for the Nazis spurred frequent visits to Germany and meetings with Hitler and other leaders (the Mosleys were actually married in Goebbels's house in 1936); there were struggles to raise money for Mosley's organization and, finally, after war was declared, years of internment in Holloway prison. Yet at the same time there were friendships with people like Winston Churchill (whose affectionate nickname for her was "Dynamite") and, after the war, a comfortable, if controversial, return to respectability.

Hailed on publication in Britain last year as "a triumph: reflective, considered, intelligent," **Diana Mosley** brings an unforgettable figure to life, and at the same time throws a bright light onto an exceptionally dark episode of British social history.

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