

DANIEL TILLES

THE USE OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF DIGITISED NEWSPAPERS TO CHALLENGE  
ESTABLISHED HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Most historical scholarship rests upon a foundation of qualitative findings, with individual contentions supported by reference to a handful of sources, leaving the reader to trust that this offers a fair representation of the available material. Such an approach is, of course, usually perfectly valid; but equally, it is not difficult to use a small and unrepresentative set of examples to support a certain interpretation—deliberately or through unconscious confirmation bias—or to examine only a limited range of sources and reach a misleading conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

In certain cases, the likelihood of any such distortion can be reduced by the collection and analysis of a large and representative sample of data. While such a methodology is most obviously applicable to areas where numerical data are readily accessible, it can also be used more creatively in other cases, particularly given the growing availability of primary material in digital form and the development of computerised data-collection and -analysis tools. This is an approach commonly taken by political scientists, for example, who have used such tools to assess the ideological content of, inter alia, party manifestos,

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Doob's quantitative analysis of Ezra Pound's fascist propaganda broadcasts, for example, demonstrates how such biases can influence the selection and interpretation of sources. Leonard W. DOOB, *'Ezra Pound Speaking': Radio Speeches of World War II* (Westport: Greenwood, 1978), 427–35.

newspapers and judicial opinions.<sup>2</sup> Historians, of course, often do not have sufficient sources available to carry out such forms of analysis; yet in many cases it is possible either to piece together enough evidence to reach qualified conclusions or to draw wider inferences from a rich and representative sample of data.

This quantitative approach to history has developed since the mid-twentieth century, when researchers began attempting to apply techniques borrowed from the social sciences—particularly the collection, sampling and statistical analysis of historical data—in order to better address research questions. While initially such efforts explored broad, long-term economic, electoral or social trends (using data sets such as census responses or voting records), recent work has expanded to include a more diverse and specialised range of subjects, such as employing legal records and newspaper reports to examine the histories of crime and violence.<sup>3</sup>

Such quantitative methodologies have been applied to my own subject matter, Britain's interwar fascist movement. For example, two researchers, John Brewer and Thomas Linehan, have collected and analysed data on local fascist party membership in two geographical regions, offering insights into the socio-economic composition of support for British fascism.<sup>4</sup> At the national level, G.C. Webber has extrapolated from the fragmentary available historical records to provide estimates of overall membership of Britain's main fascist party during the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Stephen Cullen has mined police records to produce statistics on fascist-related disorder and violence, in an attempt to present a more comprehensive and impartial picture.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ian BUDGE, Hans-Dieter KLINGEMANN, Andrea VOLKENS, Judith BARA, and Eric TANENBAUM, *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Paul PENNINGS, "An Empirical Analysis of the Europeanisation of National Party Manifestos, 1960-2003," *European Union Politics* 7 (2006): 257-70; Matthew GENTZKOW and Jesse M. SHAPIRO, "What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from US Daily Newspapers," *Econometrica* 78 (2010): 35-71; Michael EVANS, Wayne MCINTOSH, Jimmy LIN, and Cynthia CATES, "Recounting the Courts? Applying Automated Content Analysis to Enhance Empirical Legal Research," *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 4 (2007): 1007-39.

<sup>3</sup> Margo ANDERSON, "Quantitative History," in *The Stage Handbook of Social Science Methodology*, ed. William Outhwaite and Stephen Turner (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 246-9.

<sup>4</sup> John D. BREWER, *Mosley's Men: The British Union of Fascists in the West Midlands* (London: Gower, 1984), x, 3-14; Thomas LINEHAN, *East London for Mosley: The British Union of Fascists in East London and South-West Essex* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 208-221.

<sup>5</sup> G.C. WEBBER, "Patterns of Membership and Support for the BUF," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19 (1984): 575-606.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen M. CULLEN, "Political Violence: The Case of the British Union of Fascists," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (1993), 2: 245-67.

My own research focuses on the conflict between fascists and Jews in 1930s Britain. The central cause of this conflict was the use of antisemitism by Britain's main fascist party, the British Union of Fascists (BUF), which provoked an angry response from Jews. In examining this antisemitism, my primary interest has been how it was expressed: the forms that it took, its relationship to the party's programme and ideology, and the way in which it was presented in the party's discourse.

The idea of quantitatively assessing something as complex and subjective as antisemitism may appear problematic. Indeed, the one other attempt to do so in a historical context, William Brustein's study of anti-Jewish activity and attitudes in five European states from 1899-1939, had a number of methodological flaws. It is, first of all, far too ambitious in its conception: making direct comparisons between such a large number of countries over such a long period of time is extremely challenging. Moreover, the ways in which Brustein collected and interpreted his data leaves much to be desired, particularly his use of newspapers as a gauge of attitudes towards Jews in each country. The idea that the media accurately reflects public opinion is questionable, but even more so given that Brustein analyses just one newspaper in each country. The potential distortions inherent in such an approach are exemplified by his choice for Britain, the *Daily Mail*, a right-wing publication which at one stage supported the country's fascist movement and whose owner sympathised with the Nazis. This political position is very likely to have influenced the newspaper's discourse on Jews—and indeed when Brustein took a small comparative sample from the left-wing *Daily Herald*, he found that it produced very different findings.<sup>7</sup>

The problems with Brustein's work should not, however, discourage future efforts to quantitatively study antisemitism; rather, they offer warnings as to some of potential defects to avoid, and reinforce the importance of establishing a reliable methodology. In this regard, it should be noted that my own study avoids the problems of both scope and sample selection that characterise Brustein's approach. It examines the anti-Jewish discourse of a single political party, over a limited period of time, using that party's own propaganda.

Moreover, it is accepted that on its own such a methodology can provide only limited insights, offering just a general framework of certain trends and

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<sup>7</sup> William I. BRUSTEIN, *Roots of Hate: Antisemitism in Europe Before the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8–10, 17–8, 25, 30–1.

themes. Such quantitative data alone can be, as critics argue, “reductionist [and] brittle”.<sup>8</sup> My findings have, therefore, been combined with more traditional forms of qualitative analysis of the substance, tone and context of the party’s discourse. Together, these two approaches complement one another, and when combined help produce a far more comprehensive and representative picture than either alone, allowed me to challenge certain established aspects of the current historiography.

This is a subject that has already received academic attention. Although the British fascist movement was relatively small, there has been a great deal of interest in it among British historians—and in particular in its anti-semitism, which was the most significant and unusual feature of its activity.<sup>9</sup> Yet, within the historiography, there is actually almost complete consensus regarding how the BUF’s antisemitism developed over the party’s eight years of existence. The accepted version of events is as follows.

First, when the BUF was founded, it officially rejected antisemitism, and continued in this vein for the next two years. Then, in autumn 1934, the party adopted antisemitism as official policy, as a result of its declining popularity, the need for fresh ideological impetus, and because of the growing anti-fascist opposition it faced, which included many Jews. Subsequently, from 1935 to 1937, antisemitism became the central feature of BUF campaigning, as the party focused its activity in east London, an area that contained Britain’s largest Jewish population, where it exploited tension between Jews and other communities. Finally, from 1938, the fascists moved away from the east London and attempted to broaden their ideological appeal, with antisemitism therefore declining in potency and prominence.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> M. ANDERSON, “Quantitative History,” 257.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Martin PUGH, “Hurrah for the Blackshirts”: *Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (London: Pimlico, 2005), 213–34; Robert SKIDELSKY, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Papermac, 1990), 18, 379–410; W.F. MANDLE, *Anti-Semitism and the British Union of Fascists* (London: Longman, 1968); David Stephen LEWIS, *Illusions of Grandeur: Mosley, Fascism and British Society, 1931–81* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 95–7, 101; Richard THURLOW, *Fascism in Britain: From Oswald Mosley’s Blackshirts to the National Front* (London: IB Tauris, 2006), xiv, 72–5, 78, 86, 126–8; Thomas LINEHAN, *British fascism 1918–39: Parties, ideology and culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 176–7, 190.

<sup>10</sup> Colin CROSS, *The Fascists in Britain* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1961), 125–6; Colin HOLMES, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876–1939* (London: Arnold, 1979), 120–3, 176–7; W.F. MANDLE, *Anti-Semitism and the British Union of Fascists*, 9–10, 61; R. SKIDELSKY, *Oswald Mosley*, 381–8; R. THURLOW, *Fascism in Britain*, 73–5, 77; Thomas LINEHAN, *East London for Mosley: The British Union of Fascists in East London and South-West Essex* (London: Frank Cass,

My own preliminary research, however, suggested that this established narrative may not be completely accurate. In particular, it appeared that the evidence used to support it has been chosen very selectively: it has been very easy for historians to pick out individual examples that fit this pre-existing framework, without looking at the sources in great breadth or depth. Moreover, researchers have not spent a great deal of time analysing the BUF's anti-Jewish discourse in its own right; they have been more interested in using antisemitism as a lens through which to look at other aspects of the movement's history—in particular, the reasons for its adoption and the impact that it had on the party's fortunes. My own feeling is that one must first establish accurately *when* and *how* antisemitism developed, and *what* forms it took, before speculating on issues such as *why* it was adopted and the effects that it had.

#### METHODOLOGY

To address these concerns, I decided to re-examine this issue using a quantitative approach, rather than relying on evidence that is potentially selective, impressionistic or unrepresentative. One of the main challenges I faced was the fact that there is understandable scepticism towards the suggestion that one can numerically quantify something as subjective and complex as antisemitism. (Indeed, there is not even any universally agreed definition of the term 'antisemitism' itself).<sup>11</sup>

As such, my approach has been not to attempt to measure antisemitism *per se*, but rather to trace the prevalence of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the discourse of a single political party over a set period of time. Moreover,

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1996), 12–3, 48, 154–5, 162, and *British fascism*, 98–9, 103, 109, 111; Claudia BALDOLI, "Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?: The Shift from Italophobia to Naziphilia in the BUF," in *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, ed. Thomas Linehan and Julie Gottlieb (London: IB Tauris, 2004), 156; Robert PAXTON, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin, 2004), 75; Geoffrey ALDERMAN, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 283.

<sup>11</sup> Gavin LANGMUIR, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 16; Yehuda BAUER, "In Search of a Definition of Antisemitism," in *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum*, ed. Michael Brown (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1994); Samuel ETTINGER, "Jew-Hatred in Historical Context," in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 9–10; Hannah ARENDT, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1986), xi; Richard LEVY, "Introduction," in *Antisemitism in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Levy (Massachusetts: Heath and Co., 1991), 3–4, 12–3, 16.

I accept that this type of methodology offers only limited insights on its own, providing just a broad outline of trends and themes. These findings have been supplemented by a more traditional analysis of the substance, tone and context of the BUF's propaganda. It is only through this combination quantitative and traditional analysis that any conclusions have been drawn. Indeed, when employed together, these complimentary approaches produce a far more comprehensive picture of the development of BUF antisemitism than either alone, and help to challenge and refine aspects of the standard historical narrative.

The next issue I had to tackle was how to construct a representative sample of BUF discourse for analysis. The party left behind extensive records of its written and spoken discourse, meaning there were a few different possible sources available. But most of these had certain characteristics that precluded them. The party published a large number of books and pamphlets, for example, but these often focused on just one particular aspect of the BUF's programme and were usually written by a single author, meaning they are not representative of the party's discourse as a whole. Fascist leaders made thousands of public speeches, but, in addition to having the same problems associated with books and pamphlets, they were often focused on local issues and occurred unevenly (both geographically and temporally). Moreover, they were not always under the control of the party's official leadership. The BUF also published a pseudo-academic journal, called *Fascist Quarterly*, but this was not founded until the party was already three years old and it was aimed at a very limited readership.

The party's main newspaper, *Blackshirt*, however, avoids such problems: it was published weekly, it was under the control of the party's central leadership,<sup>12</sup> it hosted a variety of authors writing on different aspects of policy and activity, and was designed to be the party's main public voice, offering its views and expounding its doctrine on a national scale, to both members and non-members.<sup>13</sup> It therefore provides a consistent, comprehensive and representative gauge of the party's discourse. The BUF's newspaper is also a particularly expedient source for this type of study because its whole back catalogue has been scanned and published in digital format, available in libraries or to purchase. This makes it far more feasible to create a large sample for analysis than would be the case using paper copies of the

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<sup>12</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 December 1969, 8; R. SKIDELSKY, *Oswald Mosley*, 385.

<sup>13</sup> M. PUGH, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts*, 223.

publication. Unfortunately, however, most of the scans are not word-searchable, making computerised analysis far harder and instead requiring more time-consuming manual coding.

Using this resource, I created a sample for analysis in the following manner.<sup>14</sup> The first and third issue of the newspaper was taken for every month from March 1933 (the first month in which at least two issues were published) until August 1939 (the last month before wartime censorship restricted the fascists' ability to express themselves freely). In each issue of the newspaper, every article on the first four pages was read (these pages were chosen because they always contained policy articles, editorials and other forms of propaganda, whereas later pages were often used for advertising upcoming events, reports on local activity and other such content). Overall, this produced a very large sample: 872 pages, containing 4053 articles (an average of 52 per month), together representing approximately 21% of all published content in the BUF's main newspaper over this six-and-a-half-year period.

As I read each of these articles, a coding scheme was employed to classify them into various categories. First of all, whether the article mentioned Jews in any way; and, if it did, whether it expressed negative or neutral attitudes towards them (unambiguously positive sentiment was never expressed) and whether Jews or Jewish issues were the primary focus of the article. Second, if an article did express negative sentiment towards Jews, it was decided whether it could be placed within any of five broad 'types' of antisemitism: conspiratorial, economic, cultural, religious and racial-biological.<sup>15</sup> Finally, articles were categorised in accordance with certain significant themes common to the BUF's anti-Jewish discourse: distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' Jews; attempting to deny that the BUF was anti-semitic; portraying Jews as aggressors towards fascism, as agitators for war, as unwanted refugees, or as criminals; or negatively caricaturing Jewish physical features and traits.

Each article could be (and usually was) placed within more than one of these categories. I do accept that the decisions made on these classifications are to some extent subjective, dependent upon the author's own judgement. But equally, analysis of primary sources in any area of historical research

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<sup>14</sup> Similar data-collection methodology has been used by L. DOOB, *'Ezra Pound Speaking'*, 413-425; Andrea VOLKENS, *Manifesto Data Set. MDS 2005 Data Handbook* (Berlin: WZB, 2005), Appendix II; W.I. BRUSTEIN, *Roots of Hate*, 355-9.

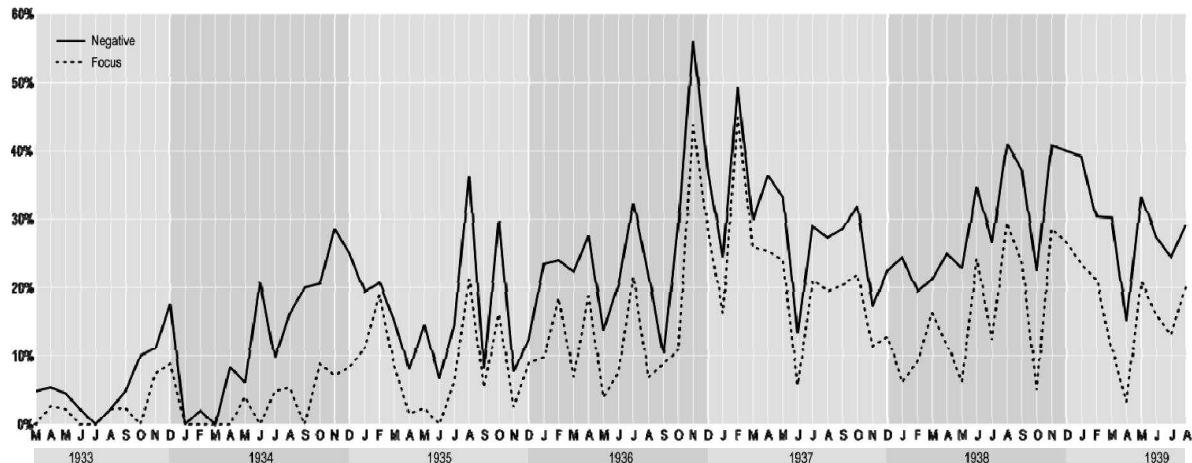
<sup>15</sup> For a similar system of classification, see Louis HARAP, *Creative Awakening: The Jewish Presence in Twentieth-Century American Literature, 1900s-1940s* (Westport: Greenwood, 1987), 24.

relies on individual interpretation, and this methodology at least offers a more comprehensive, consistent and transparent means of doing so (and one that is supported by extensive qualitative analysis of the same material).

## FINDINGS

Once the entire sample was coded in this way, this gave me an extremely rich set of data that I could employ and present in various ways. Given limitations of space, I will focus here on just one dataset, which is illustrated in the Figure 1 below. The continuous (upper) line shows the percentage of sampled articles in the BUF newspaper each month that expressed negative sentiment towards Jews; the dashed (lower) line shows how many articles were both negative and also focused primarily on Jewish issues. So the upper line shows roughly how prevalent anti-Jewish rhetoric was, and the lower line how intense it was.

Figure 1: Percentage of articles in BUF press that (a) mention Jews in a negative context (continuous line) and (b) are ‘negative’ and focus on Jews (dashed line)

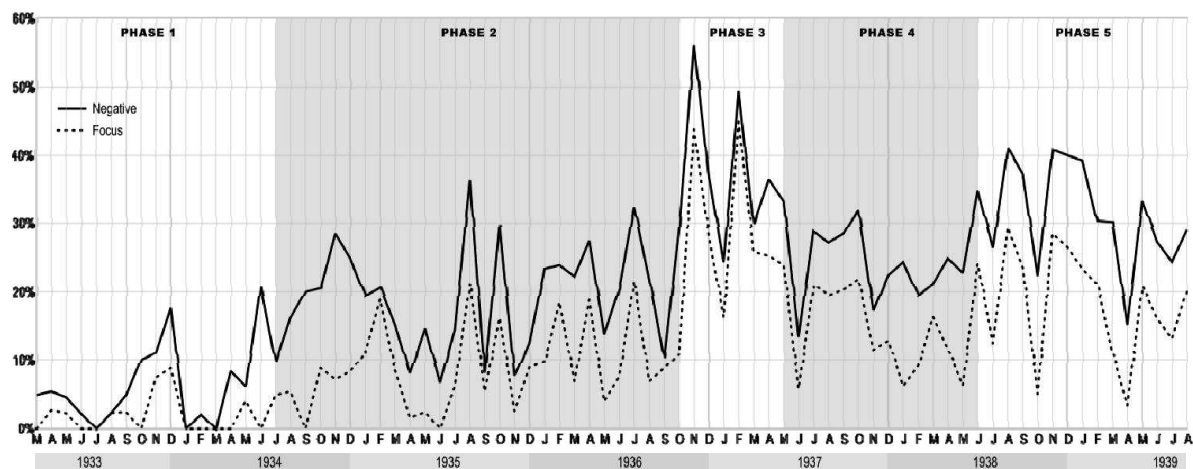


Source: *Blackshirt*, March 1933-August 1939

One of the first things I was able to do—based on this statistical data and also on closer analysis of the discourse itself—was to divide the BUF’s anti-Jewish rhetoric into five stages of development, which are shown in Figure 2. The divisions between each stage are not absolutely exact, and there is a degree of overlap, but nevertheless there are clear distinctions between them in terms of the prevalence and presentation of anti-Jewish rhetoric. Moreover, the insights they offer provide a strong challenge to certain aspects of the established historiography.



Figure 2: Five phases of BUF anti-Jewish rhetoric



Source: *Blackshirt*, March 1933-August 1939

### PHASE 1

As was mentioned above, the widely accepted belief is that the BUF was not openly antisemitic until the autumn of 1934. My quantitative survey of the party's discourse, however, reveals that in fact during this early period anti-Jewish rhetoric regularly appeared in the fascists' discourse, albeit in a manner that was sporadic and inconsistent. In late 1933, for example, we see a sudden and dramatic rise in the quantity of articles displaying hostility towards Jews, which was further confirmed by a closer examination of the texts themselves. In September 1933, the BUF's newspaper accused Jews of 'de-basing the life of this nation' and described them as 'a cancer...which require[s]...surgical [removal]'.<sup>16</sup> Two months later, the leader of the party, Sir Oswald Mosley, wrote a front-page article in the newspaper arguing that Jews were 'an organised body within the State...pursuing an anti-British policy'. His position towards Jews was therefore made clear: 'We oppose them.'<sup>17</sup>

Thus we see that the BUF was explicitly antisemitic at least one year before it is traditionally believed. This is important not only as a matter of factual accuracy, but also because it forces us to reconsider the reasons behind the fascists' antisemitism. Normally it is claimed the BUF decided to embrace antisemitism in autumn 1934 because during the preceding summer there had been significant violence at its meetings for the first time, which

<sup>16</sup> *Blackshirt*, 30 September 1933: 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Blackshirt*, 4 November 1933: 1.

had caused its membership to collapse, making it was desperate to find a way to reinvigorate the movement. Moreover, many of the anti-fascists who had disrupted BUF events were Jewish, meaning the BUF was keen to take revenge against them. This combination of factors supposedly led the party to adopt antisemitism.

In fact, as we can see, anti-Jewish rhetoric appeared long before the summer of 1934, suggesting that antisemitism was actually not a response to the violence, declining popularity and Jewish opposition that emerged at that time. Instead, it appears that Mosley had always intended his party to oppose Jews. However, he realised that antisemitism would not be a popular policy among the British public, so he wanted to wait until he could present it as a defensive response to Jewish aggression. That was why during this early period we see alternating periods of the emergence and suppression of anti-Jewish rhetoric: Mosley's aim was for these bursts of antisemitism to provoke Jews into attacking his movement but then to quickly suppress them, to make sure he could continue to deny that his party was antisemitic.

Further evidence in support of this theory comes from the archives. A report contained in Mosley's personal papers, written in 1934, represents the only extant evidence of his private, unguarded thoughts on antisemitism. In the document, Mosley is advised by a colleague that the BUF should be careful in its use of antisemitism, because it could offend the British public. Mosley responds, in a handwritten note in the margin of the document, by suggesting that he had already considered this issue, and his 'strategy' was to reveal his antisemitism only after he had had put 'the onus of aggression onto the Jews.'<sup>18</sup> This fundamentally changes the way that the BUF's anti-semitism is viewed. In particular, Jews have often been blamed by historians for causing the BUF to become antisemitic, whereas in fact it was the other way around: Jews were responding to the BUF's antisemitism.

### PHASES 2 AND 3

In traditional accounts, it is suggested that after the BUF officially adopted antisemitism in autumn 1934, its use of such rhetoric progressively increased, particularly from late 1935, when the party began its viciously

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<sup>18</sup> Report on the BUF, University of Birmingham Special Collections OMD/B/7/4.

anti-Jewish campaign in east London.<sup>19</sup> However, what we actually see during the second phase is a long period of inconsistency. The quantity of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the party's discourse constantly oscillated, without any significant upward movement. This pattern again correlates with other historical sources from the period, which show that at this stage, when the BUF was at its lowest ebb in terms of membership and was lacking in ideological direction, serious factional infighting was taking place within its leadership, with antisemitism at the heart of these debates. To simplify slightly, one group was advocating a more radical position on the Jewish question while another urged Mosley to downplay or abandon this aspect of policy. And this dispute manifested itself in kind of inconsistent approach to antisemitism portrayed in my data.<sup>20</sup>

Subsequently, however, we do see a sudden rise in the quantity and intensity of attacks on Jews in the BUF press in autumn 1936, which then continued over the following eight months or so. This, once more, corresponded to concrete events in the BUF history. First, In October, the largest anti-fascist event in British history took place, with over 100,000 protesters gathering in east London, where they successfully blocked the path of a fascist procession in what became known as the 'Battle of Cable Street'.<sup>21</sup> This was a great embarrassment for the BUF, which had been prevented from marching through the area of its greatest support. The fascists blamed Jews, who had organised the protest, and as a consequence the BUF decided to take revenge by intensifying its antisemitic campaign.<sup>22</sup> Second, the party had put forward candidates for local elections in east London due to take place in March 1937. The BUF realised that these were its best chance of winning political representation for the first time in its history, so began focusing most of its effort on them. And, because in east London the BUF's main attraction was its antisemitism, the campaign for the elections was fought on an almost exclusively anti-Jewish platform, meaning national propaganda now became saturated with it.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> On the East End campaign, see T. LINEHAN, *East London for Mosley*.

<sup>20</sup> R. THURLOW, *Fascism in Britain*, 111-3; T. LINEHAN, *East London for Mosley*, 5-8, and *British fascism*, 99-100; Stephen DORRIL, *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: Penguin, 2007), 321-2, 330-2.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel TILLES, "The Myth of Cable Street," *History Today* 61 (2011).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel TILLES, *British Fascist Antisemitism and Jewish Responses, 1932-40* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 152.

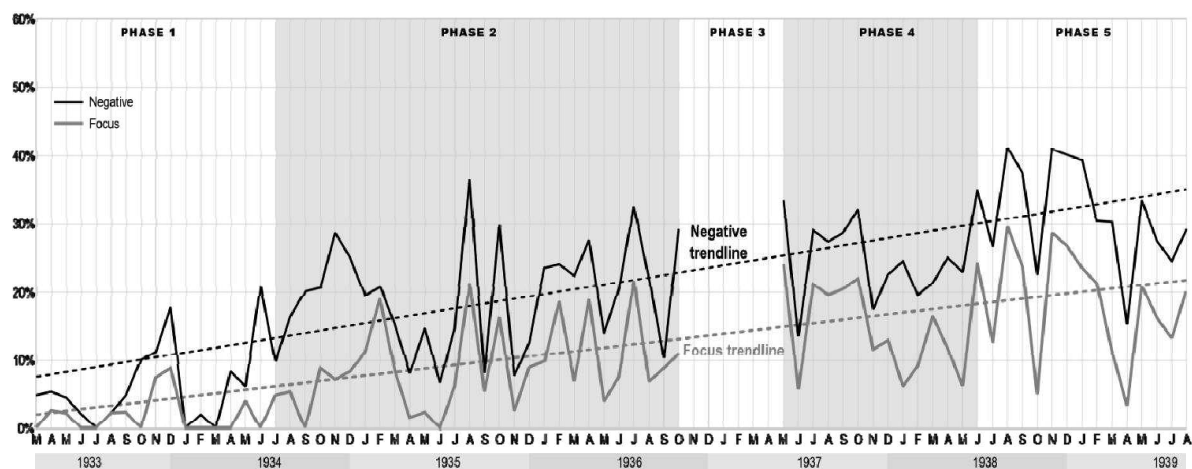
<sup>23</sup> *Blackshirt*, 18 July 1936: 4.

## PHASES 4 AND 5

This then brings us to the final two stages of development of the BUF's anti-Jewish rhetoric. The party failed to win any seats at those local elections in east London, and consequently decided to focus less energy on campaigning in that area and instead return its attention to the national stage. Anti-semitism, which had less appeal outside east London, therefore declined in comparison; however, it remained a prominent feature of discourse and become more stable than before, with a gradual upward incline. This is in stark contradiction to the historiographical consensus, which implies that after the end of its campaign in the east London the BUF's antisemitism declined sharply.

This period of the BUF's development also provides a final insight into the BUF's anti-Jewish rhetoric. In historical accounts and public memory, the BUF's antisemitism is most strongly associated with the intense, vicious, violent antisemitism that was seen during the third phase outlined above. But, in fact, as we can see, this stage was relatively brief, and was actually an exception to the longer-term development of the party's antisemitism. Indeed, if we look at the same graph shown previously, but with the third phase removed, we can see how the party's anti-Jewish rhetoric underwent a continuous, relatively steady rise, and that the third phase—with its more intensive antisemitic campaigning—actually interrupted this.

Figure 3: Percentage of articles in BUF press that (a) mention Jews in a negative context (black line) and (b) are 'negative' and focus on Jews (grey line) (phase 3 removed; showing trendline for each set of values)



Source: *Blackshirt*, March 1933–August 1939

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing has given only a brief glimpse into some of the insights offered by my quantitative approach, but it reveals some of the ways in which it has allowed me not only to challenge factual inaccuracies in existing accounts, but also to support new theories as to when, how and why the BUF's antisemitism developed. This methodology offers an extra dimension to traditional forms of historical research, proving a framework that can be supplemented with closer analysis of various primary sources. Given that a growing amount of historical material is now being made available in digital form, it offers an approach that an increasing number of historians may be able to use to challenge old orthodoxies and establish new ones.

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UŻYCIE ANALIZY ILOŚCIOWEJ  
ZDIGITALIZOWANYCH CZAOPISM DO ZMIANY  
USTALONYCH NARRACJI HISTORYCZNYCH

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono zalety użycia ilościowej analizy cyfrowych źródeł pierwotnych w badaniach historycznych, wskazując, w jaki sposób może ona kwestionować przyjętą ortodoksyjność i tworzyć nowe wglądy. Autor użył bazy danych cyfrowych wersji brytyjskich czasopism faszystowskich z lat trzydziestych XX wieku w celu stworzenia dużej, spójnej i miarodajnej próby faszystowskiego dyskursu we wspomnianym okresie. Używając metody kodowania, zarejestrował wszystkie wzmianki o Żydach występujące w tej próbie. Umożliwiło mu to przesłedzenie w czasie rozwoju antysemityzmu faszystów w kontekście jego ilości, typologii i uwydatnienia w dyskursie. Użyta metoda – w połączeniu z bardziej tradycyjną analizą źródeł – kwestionuje różne przyjęte i powszechnie uznawane aspekty właściwej historiografii. W szczególności, przedstawia on, że dotychczasowa jednomyślność historyków dotycząca chronologii rozwoju antysemityzmu brytyjskich faszystów jest błędna. W jej miejsce proponuje nowy, pięcio-

stopniowy model jego rozwoju. Dokładniejsza linia czasu pozwala mu w bardziej przejrzysty sposób wyjaśnić motywy i ideologię przyświecającą stosunkowi faszystów do Żydów.

*Streścił Daniel Tilles*

**Słowa kluczowe:** analiza, antysemityzm, cyfrowy, czasopismo, dyskurs, faszyzm, historia, ilościowy, Wielka Brytania, żydowski.

THE USE OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF DIGITISED NEWSPAPERS TO CHALLENGE  
ESTABLISHED HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

S u m m a r y

This article illustrates the benefits of employing quantitative analysis of digitised primary sources in historical research, demonstrating how it can challenge old orthodoxies and create new insights. The author has used a database of scanned copies of British fascist newspapers from the 1930s to create a large, consistent and representative sample of fascist discourse during this period. Employing a coding methodology, the author has recorded all mentions of Jews within that sample, enabling him to trace over time the evolution of the fascists' antisemitism, in terms of its quantity, typology and prominence within their discourse. This approach—in combination with more traditional analysis of sources—challenges various long-established and widely accepted aspects of the relevant historiography. In particular, the author demonstrates that the consensus among historians regarding the chronological evolution of British fascist antisemitism is false, and instead he presents a new, five-stage model of its development. This more accurate timeline allows the author to offer a clearer explanation of the motives and ideology that underlay the fascists' attitude towards Jews.

*Summarised by Daniel Tilles*

**Key words:** analysis, antisemitism, Britain, digital, discourse, fascism, history, Jewish, newspaper, quantitative.